Operating the Locks on the River Thames

Although many of the locks on the river are manned and therefore the lock-keeper will direct you and do all or most of the opening and closing of sluices and gates for may also find the lock is unmanned.

This is indicated by a **Self Service** sign at the lock.

In this case to proceed...

First of all ensure that the gates and sluices are fully closed.
i.e. the red sluice indicators are in the lowest position. **Red Down / White Up**.

To Fill the Lock
Open the sluices on the upper lock gates by winding the control wheel until the red indicators and white poles are equal.
When the lock is half full then you can fully open the sluices, i.e. wind the wheel to get the red indicator pole fully raised.

To Empty the Lock
Open the sluices very slowly on the lower lock gates by winding the control wheel until the red poles are fully raised “slowly” is important to avoid turbulence in the water.

Once the water levels are even on both sides of the gate push the lock-gates you are using open by pushing the gate beams.

Once through the lock the lock-gates and sluices MUST be left fully closed unless another boat is waiting to use the lock – or unless there is a sign or direction from the lock-keeper requesting you do otherwise.