

For decision

Editorial board

Meeting of 9 October 2025

Paper FN-PR-2025-07

# Three printers bid for the quarterly. One of them read the brief.

The brief asked for an uncoated stock, a four-day turnaround on proofs, and a fixed price for four issues. All three bidders can print the journal. **Only one bid the brief that was issued** rather than the one they would have preferred to receive, and that is most of the reason for the recommendation below.

Ranked first

4.3/5

\$38,400 an issue  
held for four issues; plates and proofs  
included

## Marlow Press

Bid the stock we asked for, at the weight we asked for, and priced the four issues as one contract rather than as four. The proof schedule is four working days and they put a named production contact against it, which no other bidder did.

They are the second most expensive per issue and the least expensive across the year, because the plate charge falls away after the first run. **The saving is \$6,100 over four issues** against the cheapest headline price.

Ranked second

3.6/5

\$34,900 an issue  
first issue only; re-quoted each issue  
thereafter

## Kingsway Litho

The lowest headline price and the least certain one. The quote covers a single issue and is explicitly re-priced for the rest, which moves the risk of a paper increase onto us in a year when it has already moved twice.

Print quality on the sample was the equal of Marlow. The turnaround was quoted at seven working days, which does not fit the editorial calendar without moving the copy deadline forward by a week.

Ranked third

3.1/5

\$41,200 an issue  
on a coated stock we did not ask for

## Northfield Print

Bid a coated stock at a higher price, on the argument that it photographs better. It does, and it is not the journal we publish — the brief was written after the reader survey and the survey was unambiguous about the paper.

Set aside on fit rather than on price or on quality, both of which were adequate.

## Award to Marlow Press

Four issues from the spring number, at a held price, subject to the two conditions opposite.

Elena Marsh, publisher · 2 October 2025

## What the board is asked to approve

- 1 Award the four-issue contract to Marlow Press at \$38,400 an issue, held for the term.
- 2 Make the award conditional on a signed four-day proof schedule and a named production contact.
- 3 Keep Kingsway Litho on file as the reserve, and re-tender rather than roll the contract in 2027.
- 4 Note that no bid was received from Two Rivers, who were invited and declined on capacity.

Scores are the weighted mean of four assessors against the five criteria in the brief: fit to specification, price certainty, turnaround, print quality, and the strength of the reference. Weights were fixed before the bids were opened.