

# COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Thursday 8 July 2021  
Time: 2.00 p.m.  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Cox, Garten, Harper, Perry and Springett

*The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.*

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## AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Election of Chairman
4. Election of Vice-Chairman
5. Urgent Items
6. Notification of Visiting Members
7. Disclosures by Members and Officers
8. Disclosures of Lobbying
9. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
10. Minutes (Part I) of the meeting held on 31 March 2021 1 - 6
11. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
12. Question and answer session for members of the public (if any)
13. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)
14. Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position 7 - 13
15. Cobtree Estate Update 14 - 18

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**Issued on Wednesday 30 June 2021**

**Continued Over/:**

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive**

## PART II

**To move that the public be excluded for the item set out in Part II of the Agenda because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reasons specified having applied the Public Interest Test.**

	<b>Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description</b>	
16. Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 31 March 2021	1 – Information re. Individual 3 – Financial/Business Affairs 5 – Legal Proceedings	19 - 24

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

In order to ask a question at this meeting in person or by remote means, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Tuesday 6 July 2021). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

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## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES (PART I) OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD ON 31 MARCH 2021**

**Present:** Councillor Cox (Chairman) and  
Councillors Daley, Mrs Gooch, Perry and Springett

152. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

153. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

154. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

155. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

156. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

157. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Perry stated that he had been lobbied on the report of the Leisure Manager providing an update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate; in particular, the issue of the tee markers at Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course.

158. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:**

1. That item 14 (Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 26 January 2021) be considered in public, but the information contained therein should remain private.
2. That the following items be taken in private because of the likely disclosure of exempt information:

Item 15. Cobtree Estate Contracts Update

Item 16. Cobtree Golf Course

- Item 17. Cobtree Manor Estate Cashflow Projection  
Item 18. Future Residential Management Arrangements

159. MINUTES (PARTS I AND II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2021

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes (Parts I and II) of the meeting held on 26 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

160. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

161. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

162. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

163. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE FINANCIAL POSITION

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) introduced his report summarising the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 28 February 2021. The report covered the Golf Course, Kent Life, the Manor Park and the residential properties.

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) advised the Committee that:

- The figures set out in the summary totals included the value of invoices sent to the contractors providing services at the Estate, less the agreed contract reliefs. It was assumed that these invoices would be paid, but ongoing issues relating to the closures due to COVID-19 meant that some invoices remained unpaid. Discussions with the contractors to resolve these issues were ongoing and, in the meantime, the Officers were continuing to monitor the financial position and restricting expenditure where possible to essential items only.
- Other than the contract situation, there were no other significant issues with the budget. Car park income had continued to recover very strongly and was now exceeding the original target despite the closure of the Park for parts of the year. After taking into account investment income and the car park loan repayment, the forecast outturn surplus was £27,350 compared to a budget deficit of £10,740, assuming receipt of all outstanding contract payments.
- There were no cash flow issues at present, but the Officers were continuing to monitor the financial position closely to ensure sufficient resources were in place to meet ongoing commitments.

- The value of the Charity's investment in Charifund had recovered strongly and currently stood at £820,915 compared to the value of £769,426 in January 2021. However, this was still considerably lower than the value of £930,938 in January 2020. Further updates would be provided at future meetings of the Committee.

Members thanked the teams involved in the operation and management of the Cobtree Manor Park for keeping costs down at a time of increased visitor numbers.

**RESOLVED:** That the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 28 February 2021 be noted.

#### 164. COBTREE ESTATE UPDATE

The Leisure Manager presented his report providing an update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate since the last meeting of the Committee in January 2021. It was noted that:

##### Cobtree Manor Park

The Manor Park continued to be very busy. Car park income at the end of February 2021 was £115,015 compared to the budget of £53,119.

The new staffing structure would be implemented from 1 April 2021. The staff had been conducting handover meetings and the transition was progressing smoothly. A fulltime Ranger would be retained working 37 hours a week supplemented by daily visits by grounds maintenance staff from the Borough Council's depot to carry out checks and litter picks. This meant that the Ranger could focus on projects rather than frontline delivery. The Manor Park would be overseen by a Manager who would also be responsible for Mote Park as the management issues were the same.

##### Cobtree Golf Course

The Golf Course re-opened on 29 March 2021 and had been fully booked. During the closure of the Course, it had been maintained by Mytime Active staff who were not furloughed. In addition, Golf Club members had been volunteering on-site, looking after flower beds, varnishing benches and decking, weeding bunkers and monitoring the site for litter.

An issue had been raised by Golf Club members regarding tee markers and tee measuring. Mytime Active had reviewed their decision not to have all the tee marker options measured and from mid-April onwards, the Course would be registered for handicapping purposes from all tee marker positions.

##### Kent Life

Kent Life was planning to re-open on 12 April 2021 in line with the Government's roadmap out of lockdown. Some activities were being

adapted/altereD to make them COVID-compliant, but others would not be permitted until later in the year.

### Cobtree Café

Cobtree Café had continued to operate on a take-away basis and was very busy due to the increased number of visitors to the Manor Park.

### Elephant House

The structural works at the Elephant House had not progressed since the last meeting, but the Cobtree Shed Group was unable to meet at present due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

In response to a question, the Leisure Manager confirmed that concerns raised by the operator of the Cobtree Café about broken sliding doors were being addressed. The doors needed to be fixed in place and some parts were required. The preferred contractor had them on backorder.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate since the last meeting of the Committee in January 2021 be noted.
2. That the Golf Club members be thanked for their assistance in preparing the Course for re-opening and that the Officers be requested to consider the most appropriate time/mechanism to recognise their efforts publicly.

## 165. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

**RESOLVED:** That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reasons specified, having applied the Public Interest Test:

	<b>Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description</b>
Cobtree Estate Contracts Update	3 – Financial/Business Affairs
Cobtree Golf Course	3 – Financial/Business Affairs
	5 – Legal Proceedings
Cobtree Manor Estate Cash Flow Projection	3 – Financial/Business Affairs
Future Residential Management Arrangements	1 – Information re. Individual

The Chairman advised the Committee that he intended to amend the order of business on Part II of the agenda to take the report relating to Future Residential Management Arrangements first.

166. FUTURE RESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Leisure Manager introduced the report of the Accommodation Manager recommending changes to how the residential properties at the Cobtree Manor Estate are currently managed and let for use as private rented accommodation. The Committee gave instructions to the Officers as to the way to proceed, including the establishment of an emergency budget for repair works to a vacant property at the Estate to return it to a lettable condition.

167. COBTREE ESTATE CONTRACTS UPDATE

The Leisure Manager introduced his report providing an update on the current position regarding the Kent Life and Cobtree Café contracts. A separate report had been included on the agenda regarding the Cobtree Golf Course contract. The Committee noted the report and gave instructions to the Officers as to the way to proceed in relation to issues that had arisen regarding one of the contracts.

168. COBTREE GOLF COURSE

The Leisure Manager introduced his report providing an update on the contract situation at Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course. It was noted that there were contractual issues that needed to be resolved and the Committee gave instructions to the Officers as to the way to proceed in the circumstances.

169. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CASH FLOW PROJECTION

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) introduced his report setting out different cash flow projections based on various scenarios relating to ongoing discussions with the operator of the Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course. It was noted that:

- The projections had been prepared before the most recent discussions with the operator of the Golf Course. The projections were for ten years to show the longer-term impact. The current contract with the operator of Kent Life would expire at the end of 2024/25 and the projections assumed that a similar level of contract payments would continue to be received. The projections also assumed that the car park loan from the Borough Council would continue to be repaid.
- The capital expenditure was based on previous projections with some adjustments to the timing of the works and made no allowance for the replacement of the current play area which would require a significant amount of expenditure. Options for funding the replacement of the play area were being examined.
- The Officers would continue to monitor the cash flow position and take appropriate action where necessary.

**RESOLVED:** That the cash flow projections be noted.

170. DURATION OF MEETING

10.00 a.m. to 11.35 a.m.

<b>Cobtree Manor Estate Committee</b>
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<b>8 July 2021</b>
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<b>Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position</b>
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<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cobtree Manor Estate Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Director of Finance & Business Improvement – Mark Green
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	Boxley

<b>Executive Summary</b>
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The report summarises the current financial position of the Estate covering the activities at the golf course, Kent Life, the Manor Park and the residential properties.
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<b>Purpose of Report</b>
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To update the Committee on the current financial position and any other relevant matters that may impact the financial position of the Trust.
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<b>This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:</b>
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|--|
| 1. That the current financial position be noted. |
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<b>Timetable</b>
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<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Committee	8 July 2021

# Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The operation of the Estate directly supports the objects of the Trust as set out when the Council became the Corporate Trustee	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The operation of the Estate supports the Council's strategic objective to ensure there are good leisure and cultural attractions in the Borough.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	There is a potential reputational risk if the facilities are operated poorly. This is addressed in the annual risk management report.	Leisure Manager
<b>Financial</b>	There is a financial risk to the Trust if the operations cost more than predicted or fail to generate sufficient income to cover the costs of running the estate. This risk is currently heightened by the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 situation on the operations of the estate, particularly in relation to the various contractors.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Leisure Manager
<b>Legal</b>	<p>Under the Council's Constitution the Committee as Corporate Trustee is responsible for all matters relating to the Charity with the exception of daily management.</p> <p>Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. This update report assists in meeting those requirements</p> <p>There are no further implications arising from this report.</p>	Contracts and Commissioning Team Leader, Mid Kent Legal Services

<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	There are no specific privacy or data protection issues to address.	Policy and Information Manager
<b>Equalities</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Policy and Information Manager
<b>Public Health</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 This is a regular update report on the financial position of the Estate, which enables the Committee to see how the various areas of activity are performing. Covid-19 has presented a significant risk to the finances and operations of the estate, emphasising the need for robust management and monitoring of the budget.

## 3. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

3.1 The table below summarises the provisional outturn for 2020/21 and the approved budget for 2021/22. **Appendix 1** provides a more detailed breakdown of the figures.

### 3.1.1 Overall Summary Position:

#### SUMMARY TOTALS

	<b>Approved Budget for Year 2020/21</b>	<b>Actuals for the Year 2020/21</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Approved Budget for Year 2021/22</b>
Golf Course	-£89,120	-£91,084	£1,964	-£116,730
Manor Park	£109,830	£60,164	£49,666	£94,740
Kent Life	-£24,390	-£31,781	£7,391	-£47,410
Residential Properties	-£10,230	-£15,534	£5,304	-£9,910
<b>Operational Total</b>	<b>-£13,910</b>	<b>-£78,236</b>	<b>£64,326</b>	<b>-£79,310</b>
Investment Income	-£45,000	-£36,157	-£8,843	-£40,000
Car Park Repayment	£69,650	£34,823	£34,827	£69,650
<b>Total for the Year</b>	<b>£10,740</b>	<b>-£79,570</b>	<b>£90,310</b>	<b>-£49,660</b>

- 3.2 The provisional outturn for 2020/21 shows the Estate made an overall surplus of £79,570, against a projected deficit of £10,740. There are three main reasons for this:
- a) Car park income was higher than had been forecast, despite the closure of the park during the year due to Covid-19.
  - b) There were staff vacancies during the year.
  - c) Only half of the projected repayment for the car park works was made (this is explained in more detail in the following paragraphs).
- 3.3 It should be noted that the figures assume that full payment will be made of the sums due for the contracts at the golf course and Kent Life (less the agreed reliefs). The contractor for Kent Life has now settled all outstanding sums. However, at the time of writing the report there was a sum outstanding of £82,681 for the golf course. Previous reports to the committee have outlined the background to the contract issues with the golf course, and at this stage it is still expected that the outstanding sum will be paid. If there are any further developments these will be reported verbally to the meeting.
- 3.4 Due to the uncertainty over contract payments there were concerns over the cashflow position, so it was agreed with the Director of Finance & Business Improvement that payments for the car park works could be deferred to alleviate any possible problems. Half the sum due for 20/21 was paid and if the contract payments resume with the outstanding sums being settled then it will be possible to repay the remaining amounts due along with the sum due for 21/22.
- 3.5 The latest cashflow projection was presented to the last meeting of the committee. If all the contract issues are resolved a further update will be brought to the September meeting. At the time of writing the report there are no issues with the cashflow.
- 3.6 The budget for 2021/22 was agreed at the meeting of the committee on 26th January 2021. The budget reflects the new management arrangements for the park and the Covid Recovery Fund, which has been established to provide for any Covid-related costs that may be incurred that had not otherwise been budgeted for.
- 3.7 The projection is for a surplus of £49,660 at the end of the financial year.
- 3.8 Members have also requested an ongoing update on the Charifund investment. The value of the investment continues to recover and currently stands at £866,198, compared to the value of £820,915 in March. However, this is still lower than the value of £930,938 in January 2020. Updates will continue to be provided to future meetings as part of this report.
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#### 4. **AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

4.1 Section 3 is for noting only.

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#### 5. **PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 Section 3 is for noting only.

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#### 6. **NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

6.1 Officers will continue to monitor the financial position and take appropriate action where necessary.

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#### 7. **REPORT APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1: Financial Position
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#### 8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

Provisional Outturn 2020/21	<b>Cobtree Manor Estate</b>	Approved Budget 2021/22
	<b>GOLF COURSE</b>	
£3,946	Repairs & Maintenance	£5,110
£1,330	Premises Insurance	£3,820
£2,400	Professional Services	£0
£0	General Expenses - VAT	£2,500
<b>£7,676</b>	<b>Controlled Running Costs</b>	<b>£11,430</b>
<b>-£138,995</b>	Contract Income - Agreed Budget	<b>-£173,890</b>
£0	Rent Income	<b>-£240</b>
<b>-£138,995</b>	<b>Controlled Income</b>	<b>-£174,130</b>
£14,210	MBC Staff Recharges	£12,620
<b>£14,210</b>	<b>Rechargeable Costs</b>	<b>£12,620</b>
<b>-£117,109</b>	<b>Cobtree Golf Course</b>	<b>-£150,080</b>
£26,024	MBC 2/9ths share	£33,350
<b>-£91,085</b>	<b>CMET Total</b>	<b>-£116,730</b>

	<b>MANOR PARK</b>	
£68,958	Salaries	£0
£392	Overtime	£4,000
£5,924	Employers NI	£0
£12,184	Employers Superannuation	£0
£770	Employee Insurances	£0
<b>£88,228</b>	<b>Employee Costs</b>	<b>£4,000</b>
£0	Hard Landscaping	£10,000
£0	Hard Landscaping - Trees	£5,000
£0	Covid Recovery Fund	£20,000
£43,371	Repairs & Maintenance	£0
£9,475	Repairs & Maintenance - Trees	£0
£1,411	Gas	£2,000
£7,367	Electricity	£11,800
£0	Water Metered	£1,200
£0	Sewerage & Env Services	£1,100
£8,009	Trade Refuse Collection (Internal)	£8,000
£1,830	Premises Insurance	£1,930
£25,303	Equipment Purchase	£0
£4,500	Equipment Maintenance	£0
£0	Equipment Hire	£530
£5,517	Vehicle Leasing & Running Costs	£2,550
£0	Vehicle Insurance	£810
£0	Cash Collection	£2,420
£2,314	Computers and Software	£0
£0	Protective Clothes	£530
£193	Photocopying	£530
£1,441	General Expenses	£4,000
£5,048	General Expenses - VAT	£6,000
£5,410	Audit Fee	£5,330
£14,693	Professional Services Security	£1,000
£4,126	Professional Services Consultancy	£3,060
£0	Direct Telephones	£210
£29	Mobile Telephones	£110
£0	General Insurances	£140
£0	External Print & Graphics	£170
<b>£140,037</b>	<b>Controlled Running Costs</b>	<b>£88,420</b>
<b>-£137,404</b>	Fees & Charges - Car Parking	<b>-£100,000</b>
<b>-£39,358</b>	Other Income - Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd	<b>-£40,000</b>
<b>-£5,342</b>	Other Income	<b>-£5,000</b>
£0	Licences	<b>-£80</b>
<b>-£34,556</b>	Rent Income (Café)	<b>-£34,000</b>
<b>-£216,660</b>	<b>Controlled Income</b>	<b>-£179,080</b>

Provisional Outturn 2020/21	<b>Cobtree Manor Estate</b>	Approved Budget 2021/22
£48,560	MBC Staff Recharges	£51,400
£0	MBC Parks Management	£130,000
<b>£48,560</b>	<b>Rechargeable Costs</b>	<b>£181,400</b>
<b>£60,165</b>	<b>Cobtree Manor Park</b>	<b>£94,740</b>

	<b>KENT LIFE</b>	
£5,258	Repairs & Maintenance of Premises	£10,720
£6,980	Premises Insurance	£4,850
£0	General Expenses - VAT	£1,500
<b>£12,238</b>	<b>Controlled Running Costs</b>	<b>£17,070</b>
<b>-£53,660</b>	Contract Income	<b>-£73,600</b>
<b>-£53,660</b>	<b>Controlled Income</b>	<b>-£73,600</b>
£9,640	MBC Staff Recharges	£9,120
<b>£9,640</b>	<b>Rechargeable Costs</b>	<b>£9,120</b>
<b>-£31,782</b>	<b>Kent Life</b>	<b>-£47,410</b>

	<b>RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES</b>	
£854	Repairs & Maintenance	£13,010
£1,935	Professional Services	£0
£460	Premises Insurance	£540
<b>£3,249</b>	<b>Controlled Running Costs</b>	<b>£13,550</b>
<b>-£21,193</b>	Rent Income	<b>-£26,000</b>
<b>-£21,193</b>	<b>Controlled Income</b>	<b>-£26,000</b>
£2,410	MBC Staff Recharges	£2,540
<b>£2,410</b>	<b>Rechargeable Costs</b>	<b>£2,540</b>
<b>-£15,534</b>	<b>Residential Properties</b>	<b>-£9,910</b>
<b>-£78,236</b>	<b>OVERALL TOTALS</b>	<b>-£79,310</b>

<b>-£36,157</b>	Investment Income	<b>-£40,000</b>
<b>-£114,393</b>	<b>Net (surplus)/deficit for operational &amp; investment activities</b>	<b>-£119,310</b>
£34,827	Repayment of car park construction costs	£69,650
<b>-£79,566</b>	<b>Net (surplus)/deficit after repayment</b>	<b>-£49,660</b>

# Agenda Item 15

## Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee

**8 July 2021**

### Cobtree Estate Update

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Mike Evans, Leisure Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	Boxley

#### **Executive Summary**

An update report on the Cobtree Estate and its constituent venues and facilities.

#### **Purpose of Report**

Noting

#### **This report makes the following recommendation to this Committee:**

1. That the contents of the report are noted.
2. That a tour of the Cobtree estate for members of this committee is organised

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	8 July 2021

# Cobtree Estate Update

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the corporate priorities for the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross-cutting objectives of the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Risk Management</b>	There are no risk management implications in this report.	Leisure Manager
<b>Financial</b>	Financial implications from this update are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	Staffing implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Legal</b>	There are no specific legal implications at present as this report is presented for noting only.	Team Leader Contracts and Commissioning
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	There are no new implications as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	No impact identified as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy & Information Manager
<b>Public Health</b>	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of our community and residents through its day-to-day operations.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies	Leisure Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	Procurement implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and	Head of Regeneration

	policies.	and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cobtree Estate continues to recover from the Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions that have been in force in various forms since March 2020.

### **Cobtree Manor Park**

- 2.2 Since the last meeting on 31 March 2021, the park has continued to be really busy. Car park income for 2020/2021 was over £137,000, which was a positive variance of £63,000. At the time of writing, car park income for 2021/2022 is £13,000 ahead of budgeted targets.

### **Staffing**

- 2.3 The Cobtree team has continued to manage the park and welcome the many visitors over this time. The new staffing structure for the park was implemented from 1 April onwards. The transition was very smooth and the new Mote Park and Cobtree Manager has settled into the role.
- 2.4 The overflow car park has been reinstated to counteract an increase in dangerous parking on the highway outside the park entrance. Officers have been working with Kent County Council on further solutions to this problem to ensure the safety of park users and everyone in the area during busy times.

### **Golf Course**

- 2.5 The golf course re-opened on 29 March, just before the last meeting of this committee. Golf trade during April, May and June has been strong, with limited food and beverage sales also achieved. The persistent rain and periods of warm weather have made work hard for the greenkeepers, but the team are working well to present the golf course for members and visitors.
- 2.6 The government announcement delaying the next stage of the Roadmap has impacted on some clubhouse bookings but these are being rescheduled. The lifting of restrictions will see a further increase in trade for the second half of 2021.

### **Kent Life**

- 2.7 Kent Life re-opened on 12 April 2021 with activities adapted and altered to make them Covid-compliant. In May 2021 the indoor play areas and refreshments outlets re-opened for takeaway sales. School group visits have resumed on site but children's birthday parties are still suspended because the party room cannot be operated until restrictions are lifted fully. It is planned that the second half of 2021 at Kent Life will include the

popular Hop and Harvest event, ice cream festival, fireworks event and Christmas activities. Like all hospitality and events businesses, plans are being made in line with Covid requirements so that events can be adapted in response to any changes in restrictions that may occur between now and the end of 2021.

- 2.8 The Kent Life General Manager has left the role to take up a new opportunity. Planning Solutions, the operator of Kent Life, has recruited a new general manager via an internal promotion. The new general manager has been part of the team for a number of years and has lots of experience of the site. The Leisure Manager attended a meeting with the outgoing and new general manager as part of the handover process.

### **Cobtree Café**

- 2.9 Cobtree Café has remained open and trading as a takeaway business during the latest lockdown and continues to be busy, in response to the increased visitor numbers in the park.
- 2.10 The remedial works to the building that were identified by the food hygiene report have all been completed and a re-inspection visit is being booked in by the tenant so that their five star food rating can be reinstated.

### **Cobtree Shed Group**

- 2.11 The Cobtree Shed Group is not able to meet. The structural works to the Elephant House still need to be completed and the Leisure Manager is working with colleagues to develop proposals for this project.

### **Contracts**

- 2.12 The previous mitigations and decisions that this committee made, in order to support the leisure operators at the Cobtree Estate, have been implemented and all contracts are operating on a stable footing.

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## **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Committee can note the information in this report.
- 3.2 Committee can choose not to note the information in this report, however the Committee has requested regular updates on the operations of the Estate.

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## **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the information in this report is noted.
- 4.2 With new members having joined the committee it is also recommended that a tour of the estate is organised for the committee.

## **5. RISK**

5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.

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## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

6.1 No consultation has taken place since the last update report.

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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

7.1 Any comments from the Committee will be passed on to the relevant party.

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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

- None
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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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