

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Thursday 9 September 2021
Time: 2.00 p.m.
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Cox, Garten (Chairman), Harper, Perry (Vice-Chairman) 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.

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers
6. Disclosures of Lobbying
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
8. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2021 1 - 5
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
10. Question and answer session for members of the public (if any)
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)
12. Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position 6 - 12
13. Cobtree Estate Update 13 - 17

Issued on Wednesday 1 September 2021

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

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 by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Tuesday 7 September 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.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Tuesday 7 September 2021). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JULY 2021

Present: Councillor Garten (Chairman) and
Councillors Harper, Mrs Joy, Perry and Mrs Ring

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Cox and Springett.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

Councillor Mrs Joy for Councillor Cox
Councillor Mrs Ring for Councillor Springett

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Garten be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021/22.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Perry be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021/22.

5. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

6. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

7. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

8. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

9. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 31 March 2021 be considered in public but the information contained therein should remain private.

10. MINUTES (PARTS I AND II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 MARCH 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes (Parts I and II) of the meeting held on 31 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

11. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

12. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

14. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE FINANCIAL POSITION

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

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

- Despite the closure of the Manor Park, Kent Life and the Golf Course at various times during the year due to COVID-19 and the contract issues which had been experienced, the provisional outturn for 2020/21 showed an overall surplus of £79,570 against a projected deficit of £10,740. There were three main reasons for this:
 - a) Car park income was higher than had been forecast;
 - b) There were staff vacancies during the year; and
 - c) There was a partial deferral of the loan repayments for the car park works.
- The figures assumed that all outstanding contract payments would be made. Planning Solutions, the operator of Kent Life, had now settled all outstanding sums. However, an outstanding payment was awaited from Mytime, the operator of the Golf Course.
- Due to the uncertainty over contract payments, there were concerns about the cashflow position. It was agreed with the Director of Finance and Business Improvement that loan repayments for the car park works could be deferred to mitigate any possible problems. Half

of the sum due for 2020/21 was paid. However, if the outstanding contract payments were received, it would be possible to repay the remaining balance together with the sum due for 2021/22.

- Subject to the contract issues being resolved, an updated cashflow projection would be reported to the September meeting of the Committee.
- The budget for 2021/22 was agreed at the meeting of the Committee held on 26 January 2021 and reflected the new management arrangements for the Manor Park and the establishment of a COVID-19 Recovery Fund to cover any COVID-related costs that might be incurred which had not otherwise been budgeted for.
- A surplus of £49,660 was projected at the end of the financial year.
- The value of the Charity's investment in Charifund was continuing to recover and currently stood at £866,198 compared to the value of £820,915 in March 2021. However, this was still lower than the value of £930,938 in January 2020. Further updates would be provided at future meetings of the Committee.

In response to questions the Officers advised the Committee that:

- A cautious approach had been taken when setting the budget for car park income in 2021/22 to avoid becoming too over reliant on it as it could, for example, be affected by a poor summer season. Any income in excess of the budget would be a bonus.
- In terms of the provisional outturn 2020/21 in relation to Repairs and Maintenance at the Manor Park, there had been additional expenditure as it had been necessary to install bollards in the car park due to the high number of visitor vehicles.
- For some years no tree works were carried out so last year a larger budget than usual was required. The budget for this year would be sufficient because of ongoing planned maintenance of trees and shrubs as part of the new management arrangements for the Manor Park.
- When the budgets for 2021/22 were set in January 2021, recharges from the Borough Council were updated following a review of the services provided. A schedule was presented detailing the services provided by, inter alia, Finance, Human Resources, Legal Services, Parks and Leisure and the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, together with the charges allocated across the service areas.
- The reason why the budget for the Manor Park had increased for 2021/22 over what was actually spent in 2020/21 was because of the additional car park income last year which was not budgeted for. This would have reduced the overall net cost of running the Park, but the

assumption had not been made that this would happen again this year for various factors, including the risk of a poor summer season.

In response to a question about whether more interpretive signage was required to assist visitors in identifying tree species etc. at the Manor Park, it was suggested that consideration of this matter be deferred until after the proposed briefing and tour of the Estate as other approaches such as guided tours might be more appropriate in delivering a positive visitor experience.

RESOLVED: That the current financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate be noted.

15. 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 March 2021. It was noted that:

Cobtree Manor Park

The Manor Park continued to be very busy. Car park income for 2020/21 was over £137,000, which was a positive variance of £63,000. Car park income for 2021/22 was currently £13,000 ahead of budgeted targets.

The new staffing structure for the Manor Park was implemented on 1 April 2021 bringing savings to the Cobtree Manor Estate and efficiencies for the Parks team.

Cobtree Golf Course

The Golf Course had re-opened on 29 March 2021. Golf trade during April, May and June had been strong with limited food and beverage sales also achieved. A further increase in trade was projected during the second half of 2021 with the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

Kent Life

Kent Life had re-opened on 12 April 2021 with activities adapted/alterred to make them COVID-compliant. In May 2021 the indoor play areas and refreshment outlets re-opened for takeaway sales. Visits by school groups had resumed on site, but children's birthday parties were still suspended until the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted fully. Events and activities were being planned for the second half of 2021 and could be adapted in response to any changes in restrictions that might occur.

Cobtree Café

The 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/Cobtree Shed Group

The structural works at the Elephant House had not progressed since the last meeting, but the Cobtree Shed Group had been unable to meet due to the COVID-19 restrictions and vulnerabilities within the Group. The Leisure Manager was working with colleagues to bring forward proposals for the project.

Contracts

The Committee's decisions regarding the Cobtree Estate contracts had been implemented and the contracts were operating on a stable footing.

Cobtree Charity Trust Limited

The Cobtree Charity Trust Limited, holders of the freehold interest in the Cobtree Manor Estate, would be holding a meeting on 19 July 2021 and had invited the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Committee to attend together with the Leisure Manager.

In response to questions, the Leisure Manager explained that:

- He would be meeting with representatives of the Cobtree Shed Group the following week to talk about resuming their activities.
- Mytime Active, the operator of the Golf Course, had reviewed its decision regarding tee markers and tee measuring and all tee marker options had been measured.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate since the last meeting of the Committee in March 2021 be noted.
2. That a briefing and tour of the Estate be organised for Members and Substitute Members of the Committee.

16. DURATION OF MEETING

2.00 p.m. to 2.35 p.m.

Agenda Item 12

**Cobtree Manor Estate
Committee**

9 September 2021

Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

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

Executive Summary

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.

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the current financial position and any other relevant matters that may impact the financial position of the Trust.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the current financial position be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Committee	9 September 2021

Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	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
Cross Cutting Objectives	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
Risk Management	There is a potential reputational risk if the facilities are operated poorly. This is addressed in the annual risk management report.	Leisure Manager
Financial	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)
Staffing	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Leisure Manager
Legal	<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

Privacy and Data Protection	There are no specific privacy or data protection issues to address.	Policy and Information Manager
Equalities	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Policy and Information Manager
Public Health	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Procurement	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Biodiversity & Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

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 financial position of the Estate as at 31st July 2021. **Appendix 1** provides a more detailed breakdown of the figures.

3.1.1 Overall Summary Position:

SUMMARY TOTALS

	Approved Budget for Year 2021/22	Profiled Budget as at 31st July 2021	Actuals as at 31st July 2021	Variance
Golf Course	-£116,730	-£61,389	-£61,052	-£337
Manor Park	£94,740	£28,511	£6,655	£21,855
Kent Life	-£47,410	-£28,070	-£32,140	£4,070
Residential Properties	-£9,910	-£3,303	-£5,439	£2,135
Operational Total	-£79,310	-£64,251	-£91,975	£27,723
Investment Income	-£40,000	-£10,000	-£12,050	£2,050
Car Park Repayment	£69,650	£0	£0	£0
Total for the Year	-£49,660	-£74,251	-£104,025	£29,774

3.2 The current position shows a surplus of £29,744 for the year to date. There are no significant issues to report, but the following points should be noted:

- Since the last meeting Mytime have now made further payments regarding their outstanding rental. The outstanding sum for 2020/21 has now been settled.
- There has been a higher than anticipated level of spend against the parks hard landscaping budget, due to the need for a new door at the visitor centre and the creation of a new parking area. Officers will review the budgets to identify funding for any further hard landscaping works may be needed. (This was the repairs and maintenance budget up until last year, it was renamed for 2021/22)
- Car parking income continues to exceed the budgeted figure as visitor numbers to the park remain high.
- Repairs and maintenance budgets at Kent Life and for the residential properties are unspent at this point.

3.3 An updated cashflow projection will be brought to the next committee meeting when officers have had the opportunity to review proposals for future capital expenditure. The receipt of the outstanding sums from Mytime has alleviated the potential pressure on the cashflow and the bank account balance is now at a healthy level. This means further payments should now be able to be made to the Council in respect of the car park capital works.

3.4 Members have also requested an ongoing update on the Charifund investment. The value of the investment continues to recover and currently stands at £867,762, compared to the value of £866,198 in July. 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.

4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

4.1 Section 3 is for noting only.

5. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Section 3 is for noting only.

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.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Financial Position
-

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Provisional Outturn 2020/21	Cobtree Manor Estate	Approved Budget 2021/22	Profiled Budget as at 31st July 2021	Actual as at 31st July 2021	Variance at end of July 2021
	GOLF COURSE				
£3,946	Repairs & Maintenance	£5,110	£1,703	£434	£1,269
£1,330	Premises Insurance	£3,820	£1,273	£1,273	£0
£2,400	Professional Services	£0	£0	£4	£-4
£0	General Expenses - VAT	£2,500	£833	£0	£833
£7,676	Controlled Running Costs	£11,430	£3,810	£1,711	£2,099
-£138,995	Contract Income	-£173,890	-£86,945	-£84,413	-£2,532
£0	Rent Income	£-240	£0	£0	£0
-£138,995	Controlled Income	-£174,130	-£86,945	-£84,413	-£2,532
£14,210	MBC Staff Recharges	£12,620	£4,207	£4,207	£-0
£14,210	Rechargeable Costs	£12,620	£4,207	£4,207	£-0
-£117,109	Cobtree Golf Course	-£150,080	-£78,928	-£78,495	-£433
£26,024	MBC 2/9ths share	£33,350	£17,540	£17,443	£96
-£91,085	CMET Total	-£116,730	-£61,389	-£61,052	-£337
	MANOR PARK				
£68,958	Salaries	£0		£-10	£10
£392	Overtime	£4,000	£1,333	£0	£1,333
£5,924	Employers NI	£0		£1	£-1
£12,184	Employers Superannuation	£0		£0	£0
£770	Employee Insurances	£0		£0	£0
£88,228	Employee Costs	£4,000	£1,333	£-9	£1,342
£43,371	Hard Landscaping	£10,000	£3,333	£13,548	£-10,214
£9,475	Hard Landscaping - Trees	£5,000	£1,667	£0	£1,667
£0	Covid Recovery Fund	£20,000	£0	£0	£0
£1,411	Gas	£2,000	£667	£129	£538
£7,367	Electricity	£11,800	£3,933	£2,551	£1,382
£0	Water Metered	£1,200	£400	£68	£332
£0	Sewerage & Env Services	£1,100	£367	£0	£367
£8,009	Trade Refuse Collection (Internal)	£8,000	£2,667	£2,500	£167
£1,830	Premises Insurance	£1,930	£643	£643	£0
£25,303	Equipment Purchase	£0	£0	£1,200	£-1,200
£4,500	Equipment Maintenance	£0	£0	£0	£0
£0	Equipment Hire	£530	£177	£0	£177
£5,517	Vehicle Leasing & Running Costs	£2,550	£850	£0	£850
£0	Vehicle Insurance	£810	£270	£0	£270
£0	Cash Collection	£2,420	£807	£807	£-0
£2,314	Computers and Software	£0	£0	£0	£0
£0	Protective Clothes	£530	£177	£60	£117
£193	Photocopying	£530	£177	£0	£177
£1,441	General Expenses	£4,000	£1,333	£0	£1,333
£5,048	General Expenses - VAT	£6,000	£2,000	£0	£2,000
£5,410	Audit Fee	£5,330	£0	£0	£0
£14,693	Professional Services Security	£1,000	£333	£77	£256
£4,126	Professional Services Consultancy	£3,060	£1,020	£0	£1,020
£0	Direct Telephones	£210	£70	£0	£70
£29	Mobile Telephones	£110	£37	£0	£37
£0	General Insurances	£140	£47	£47	£-0
£0	External Print & Graphics	£170	£57	£0	£57
£140,036	Controlled Running Costs	£88,420	£21,030	£21,630	£-600
-£137,404	Fees & Charges - Car Parking	-£100,000	-£34,986	-£50,679	£15,693
-£39,358	Other Income - Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd	-£40,000	£0	£0	£0
-£5,342	Other Income	-£5,000	£0	£0	£0
£0	Licences	£-80	£0	£0	£0
-£34,556	Rent Income (Café)	-£34,000	-£8,500	-£11,762	£3,262
-£216,660	Controlled Income	-£179,080	-£43,486	-£62,441	£18,955
£48,560	MBC Staff Recharges	£51,400	£17,133	£17,133	£0
£0	MBC Parks Management	£130,000	£32,500	£30,343	£2,158
£48,560	Rechargeable Costs	£181,400	£49,633	£47,476	£2,158
£60,164	Cobtree Manor Park	£94,740	£28,511	£6,655	£21,855

Provisional Outturn 2020/21	Cobtree Manor Estate	Approved Budget 2021/22	Profiled Budget as at 31st July 2021	Actual as at 31st July 2021	Variance at end of July 2021
	KENT LIFE				
£5,258	Repairs & Maintenance of Premises	£10,720	£3,573	£0	£3,573
£6,980	Premises Insurance	£4,850	£1,617	£1,617	-£0
£0	General Expenses - VAT	£1,500	£500	£0	£500
£12,238	Controlled Running Costs	£17,070	£5,690	£1,617	£4,073
-£53,660	Contract Income	-£73,600	-£36,800	-£36,800	£0
-£53,660	Controlled Income	-£73,600	-£36,800	-£36,800	£0
£9,640	MBC Staff Recharges	£9,120	£3,040	£3,044	-£4
£9,640	Rechargeable Costs	£9,120	£3,040	£3,044	-£4
-£31,781	Kent Life	-£47,410	-£28,070	-£32,140	£4,070
	RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES				
£854	Repairs & Maintenance	£13,010	£4,337	£0	£4,337
	Non-Domestic Rates				£0
£1,935	Professional Services	£0	£0	-£5	£5
£460	Premises Insurance	£540	£180	£0	£180
£3,249	Controlled Running Costs	£13,550	£4,517	-£5	£4,521
-£21,193	Rent Income	-£26,000	-£8,667	-£6,281	-£2,385
-£21,193	Controlled Income	-£26,000	-£8,667	-£6,281	-£2,385
£2,410	MBC Staff Recharges	£2,540	£847	£847	-£0
£2,410	Rechargeable Costs	£2,540	£847	£847	-£0
-£15,534	Residential Properties	-£9,910	-£3,303	-£5,439	£2,135
-£78,237	OVERALL TOTALS	-£79,310	-£64,251	-£91,975	£27,723
-£36,157	Investment Income	-£40,000	-£10,000	-£12,050	£2,050
-£114,394	Net (surplus)/deficit for operational & investment activities	-£119,310	-£74,251	-£104,025	£29,774
£34,823	Repayment of car park construction costs	£69,650	£0	£0	£0
-£79,570	Net (surplus)/deficit after repayment	-£49,660	-£74,251	-£104,025	£29,774

**Cobtree Manor Estate Charity
Committee**

9 September 2021

Cobtree Estate Update

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

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	9 September 2021

Cobtree Estate Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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

	policies.	and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As agreed at the 8 July meeting, the members of this committee attended a tour of the golf course, the park and Kent Life on Monday 9 August. The tour was used to explain more about the estate to new members, and was a chance for existing committee members to see the venues post-Covid.
- 2.2 Also since the last meeting, the Chair, Vice Chair and Leisure Manager attended a meeting of the Cobtree Charity Trust.

Cobtree Manor Park

- 2.3 Car park income for the year to 1 August 2021 is £53,817, which is a positive variance of £18,000.
- 2.4 The ranger has been working on clearing laurel from the shrub beds in advance of the autumn maintenance which will reduce the size of the shrub beds. These beds are larger than they ought to be and will be reduced in size over the course of the next few maintenance windows.
- 2.5 The Hazlitt Theatre will be holding two outdoor theatre performances of Alice in Wonderland in the park on 3 and 4 September 2021. These are to audiences of 250 per performance and are expected to be at full capacity. A winter lights trail called Glow Illumination Trail is also planned for the period of 15 December to 31 December. This is being delivered by an external company who is paying a daily hire fee to CMEC for the use of the park.
- 2.6 A recent monthly play inspection report has identified some additional repairs that are required to the Cobtree Manor Park play equipment. The park manager is sourcing costs for these works and these will be presented to this committee as soon as they are available. The urgency of these works may require liaison with the Chair and Vice Chair in advance of a report being brought to this committee.

Golf Course

- 2.7 Performance at the golf course this summer is ahead of 2019 numbers. This is positive news because it means some of the increased footfall experienced in 2020 has been retained. With the return of indoor hospitality without restrictions it is hoped more societies and group

bookings will continue this positive trend. The persistent rain and periods of warm weather this summer have made work unpredictable for the greenkeepers and have caused greater levels of growth than would normally be expected. The team are working well to present the golf course to members and visitors who, on the whole, are happy with playing conditions.

Kent Life

- 2.8 Kent Life is also recovering well from the Covid pandemic. School trip numbers are down on 2019 because of the spring time restrictions, but enquiries for autumn school trips indicate these numbers could pick up in the second half of the year. Events and functions have resumed on site and plans for Hops and Harvest festival, the ice cream festival, Halloween and Christmas are all positive with a return to the full events programme anticipated.
- 2.9 On the estate tour, members of this committee visited the Kent Life archive store which contains thousands of artifacts. To get best use out of the artifacts an archive project is required to check and update the inventory catalogue, which currently exists only in hard copy paper format. The Leisure Manager will consult with Planning Solutions and Maidstone Museum on possible options and solutions and bring a report to a future meeting.

Cobtree Café

- 2.10 Cobtree Café has continued to trade well throughout the summer. Repairs to the shutters have been carried out and drains and gullies have been cleared after the heavy rainfall at the start of July. The increased footfall at the park has led to repairs and redecoration being required in the visitor centre toilets, which are being booked in by the café operator.

Cobtree Shed Group

- 2.11 A surveyor is due to attend the Elephant House on week commencing 23 August 2021. They will report on what work is required to restore the structural integrity of the Elephant House.

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.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the information in this report is noted.

5. RISK

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

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

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

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

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

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None