

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 22 November 2023
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Burton (Chairman), Cooper, Parfitt-Reid (Vice-Chairman) and Perry

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.

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Urgent Items	
3. Notification of Visiting Members	
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
5. Disclosures of Lobbying	
6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
7. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023	1 - 3
8. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
9. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public (if any)	
10. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)	
11. Cobtree Estate Update	4 - 8
12. Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position Report	9 - 15

Issued on Tuesday 14 November 2023

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, 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 Monday 20 November 2023). 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 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on Monday 20 November 2023). 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 26 JULY 2023

Present:

Committee Members:	Councillor Burton (Chairman) and Councillors Cooper and Parfitt-Reid
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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Perry.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Burton be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Parfitt-Reid be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24.

4. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

5. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members, although Councillors Garten and Russell attended the meeting as observers.

6. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

7. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

8. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting should Members wish to discuss the information contained within the exempt Appendix to item 14 (Cobtree Golf Course) because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified having applied the Public Interest Test.

9. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 APRIL 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

10. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

11. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

13. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE FINANCIAL POSITION REPORT

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) introduced his report summarising the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 31 March 2023. The report covered activities at the golf course, Kent Life, the Manor Park and the residential properties.

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

- The report provided an update on the provisional outturn position for the activities of the Estate for 2022/23 and showed a surplus of £133,119 for operational activities which was £58,149 more than budgeted for. The main reasons for this were:

The golf course contract payment had been received in full, against a prudent budget that assumed that only 80% of the contracted sum would be received. This meant that additional income of £34,541 had been received.

There had also been underspends across the controlled running costs budgets which reflected prudent budget setting during the pandemic. There was an opportunity going forward to review these underspends with a view to offsetting some of the anticipated impact of the new golf course contract.

Car parking income was slightly down against the budgeted figure, but this was offset by additional income from the café and, overall, the budgets for the Manor Park were underspent.

- Given the positive outturn performance and with a healthy bank balance towards the end of the year, an additional repayment was made to the Council in respect of the car park construction costs. This meant that the loan would now be repaid a year earlier than was anticipated.
- There were no issues to report in relation to the 2023/24 budget, and a more detailed update on the financial position would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 31 March 2023 be noted.

14. COBTREE GOLF COURSE

RESOLVED:

1. That Heads of Terms for the lease of Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course including the clubhouse building, ancillary buildings and facilities are exchanged with Applicant 2 in order to begin the due diligence work required.
2. That, subject to satisfactory completion of the due diligence work, the lease of Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course including the clubhouse building, ancillary buildings and facilities is granted to Applicant 2.
3. That delegated authority is given to the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to agree the final lease with Applicant 2.
4. That delegated authority is given to the Head of Mid-Kent Legal Services to enter into such lease documents and complete any relevant statutory notices and similar statutory documentation in order to complete the lease process.

See Record of Decision:

[Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

15. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.

Agenda Item 11

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

22 November 2023

Cobtree Estate Update

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	22 November 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
Lead Head of Service	Katie Exon, Head of Property and Leisure
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mike Evans, Leisure Contracts Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

An update report on the venues and activities that comprise the Cobtree Estate

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Cobtree Estate update be noted

Cobtree Estate Update

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the Strategic Plan objectives for the council.	Leisure Contracts Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross-cutting objectives of the council.	Leisure Contracts Manager
Risk Management	There are no risk management implications in this report.	Leisure Contracts Manager
Financial	Financial implications from this update are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Senior Finance Manger (Client)
Staffing	Staffing implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Legal	There are no specific legal implications at present as this report is presented for noting only.	Team Leader, Contracts and Commissioning MKLS
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	The report is for noting and contains no recommendations that would propose a change in service, therefore no equalities impact assessment will be required.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of our community and residents through its day-to-day operations.	Leisure Contracts Manager

Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies	Leisure Contracts Manager
Procurement	Procurement implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Biodiversity and Climate Change	There are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change within this report.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In the first half of 2023 this committee took some strategic decisions that would impact the long-term future of the estate. These included decisions at the café and the golf course. This report includes operation updates across the estate since those decisions were enacted.

Cobtree Manor Park

- 1.2 In the period April to September 2023 there were 28,893 vehicle visits to the park. This compares to 32,965 visits in the same period in 2022 and is a 12% decrease, taking park visits back to pre-pandemic levels.
- 1.3 The works to the Llama House have been completed and further works to the park ranger office and the park storage container, which were reported to the committee earlier in 2023, will be completed soon subject to planning feedback and approval. The play equipment continues to be monitored and investment in these assets will be required in the short to medium term.
- 1.4 The new café operator is progressing with their internal fit out works and the café will be fully open to visitors this winter. The standard of toilet cleanliness continues to be monitored closely to ensure standards are as park visitors would expect.
- 1.5 The Elephant House has been advertised as a premises available to local business or organisations and tenants who complement the operations of the park are sought. Any new tenant would have restricted vehicular access to the building and restrictions would be placed on regular opening hours, but the building is in a great location and would make an ideal premises for a local small business or group. We are investigating the feasibility of installing mains drainage to the building to make it appeal to a wider pool of applicants. The decision to grant a lease will be one for this committee to take and this item is on the Forward Plan as a separate issue when fully-drafted offers are ready.

Cobtree Golf Course

- 1.6 We welcomed the new golf course operator to Cobtree Manor in October and golfers have enjoyed a seamless transition. The new operator has increased the level of marketing for Cobtree Manor, but the time of year and the weather makes this a difficult period to be pushing and promoting sales. Spring time will be targeted and be a key growth period for the course.
- 1.7 New greenkeeping equipment is already improving standards across the golf course. This is despite the winter weather, and so we look forward to much greater increases in standard next spring when the full benefit will be realised.
- 1.8 Now in residence at the clubhouse, the operator is developing their refurbishment and development plans with the ambition to deliver these upgrades in time for spring/summer 2024.

Kent Life

- 1.9 Kent Life has seen increased visitor numbers for the period April to September, with 95,323 visits this year compared to 94,555 in the same period in 2022, despite a disappointing period of weather in July 2023 when expected numbers were affected.
- 1.10 The team at Kent Life have installed a large marquee to support the weddings that are held there. It also provides an additional indoor aspect to other events, such as Hops n Harvest. They have built a new stable for the shire horse in the top paddock and installed additional rain water harvesting bins around the site.
- 1.11 Following the success of the recent Halloween and fireworks events, attentions are now turning to Christmas and the Winter Wonderland event.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee can note the information in this report.
- 3.2 The Committee can choose not to note the information in this report, however previous iterations of this committee requested regular updates on the operations of the estate so knock-on impacts and decisions can be foreknown.

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 for the purposes of this 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

**Cobtree Manor Estate
Committee**

22 November 2023

Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

Final Decision-Maker	Cobtree Manor Estate Committee
Lead Head of Service	Director of Finance, Resources & 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	22 November 2023

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	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
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.	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
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.	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>	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)

Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Public Health	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Crime and Disorder	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Procurement	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
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. A pending decarbonisation study recommendations aims to support areas of the Cobtree Manor Estate to reduce costs from energy consumption, insulate, find low carbon heating solutions, and seek renewable energy options which will save costs in the longer term.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)

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. As these are charitable funds there is a 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 October 2023. **Appendix 1** provides a more detailed breakdown of the figures.

	Budget for Year 2023/24	Profiled Budget as at 31st October 2023	Actuals as at 31st October 2023	Variance: Underspend (+) Overspend (-)
Golf Course				
Expenditure	£40,660	£23,718	£20,365	£3,353
Income	-£100,240	-£50,140	-£44,777	-£5,363
Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)	-£59,580	-£26,422	-£24,412	-£2,010
Manor Park				
Expenditure	£267,940	£141,365	£123,715	£17,650
Income	-£189,080	-£98,995	-£91,171	-£7,824
Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)	£78,860	£42,370	£32,544	£9,826
Kent Life				
Expenditure	£31,760	£18,527	£15,477	£3,050
Income	-£73,130	-£36,565	-£36,567	£2
Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)	-£41,370	-£18,038	-£21,090	£3,052
Residential Properties				
Expenditure	£16,880	£9,847	£8,486	£1,361
Income	-£30,000	-£17,500	-£15,767	-£1,733
Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)	-£13,120	-£7,653	-£7,281	-£372
Operational Total	-£35,210	-£9,743	-£20,239	£10,496
Investment Income	-£40,000	-£30,000	-£33,772	£3,772
Interest Paid	£0	£0	£0	£0
Car Park Repayment	£69,650	£0	£0	£0
Total for the Year	-£5,560	-£39,743	-£54,011	£14,268
Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)				

3.2 This is the current outturn position as at 31st October 2023 and shows a surplus of £20,239 for operational activities. This is £10,496 greater than budgeted for. There are no significant issues to report, but the following points should be noted:

- Golf course income is slightly down on the profiled budget. The budget was set at a time when the new contract had yet to be awarded so this was an assumed figure based on our best estimate of what the contract might be. This figure will be updated when the new budgets are brought to the committee in January.
- Gas and electricity costs at for the café are to be largely recharged to the contractor, but the Estate will retain the charges for the toilets and the staff area. The exercise to calculate the recharges will be done shortly and invoices raised. This will largely eliminate this overspend.
- No invoices have been raised for toilet cleaning to date. Standards are under review and invoices will be raised and paid when standards are more acceptable. This will then largely eliminate the underspend on this budget.
- As outlined in the Estate Update report elsewhere on this agenda, visitor numbers are down this year compared to 2022, and this is reflected in the shortfall in car parking income. This budget will be reviewed to see if it should be reduced slightly, as it was previously increased when visitor numbers were higher during the pandemic.

- The budget for income from the café will also need to be reviewed as this contract has also been re-let since the budgets for this year were agreed.
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4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Section 3 - for noting only.
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5. PREFERRED OPTIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Section 3 - 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.

Cobtree Manor Estate	Approved Budget 2023/24	Profiled Budget as at 31st October 2023	Actual as at 31st October 2023	Variance at end of October 2023
GOLF COURSE				
Repairs & Maintenance	£5,470	£3,191	£3,128	£63
Premises Insurance	£2,960	£1,727	£0	£1,727
General Expenses - VAT	£2,680	£1,563	£0	£1,563
Controlled Running Costs	£11,110	£6,481	£3,128	£3,353
Contract Income	-£100,000	-£50,000	-£44,777	-£5,223
Rent Income	-£240	-£140	£0	-£140
Controlled Income	-£100,240	-£50,140	-£44,777	-£5,363
MBC Staff Recharges	£12,530	£7,309	£7,309	£0
Rechargeable Costs	£12,530	£7,309	£7,309	£0
Cobtree Golf Course	-£76,600	-£36,350	-£34,340	-£2,010
MBC 2/9ths share	£17,020	£9,928	£9,928	£0
CMET Total	-£59,580	-£26,422	-£24,412	-£2,010

MANOR PARK				
Overtime	£4,000	£2,333	£0	£2,333
Employee Costs	£4,000	£2,333	£0	£2,333
Hard Landscaping	£16,070	£9,374	£7,519	£1,855
Gas	£0	£0	£2,858	-£2,858
Electricity	£1,000	£583	£9,108	-£8,525
Water Metered	£1,280	£747	£820	-£73
Sewerage & Env Services	£1,180	£688	£0	£688
Trade Refuse Collection (Internal)	£8,570	£4,999	£4,243	£756
Cleaning - Toilets	£12,000	£7,000	£0	£7,000
Premises Insurance	£2,670	£1,558	£1,558	-£1
Equipment Purchase	£0	£0	£1,674	-£1,674
Equipment Hire	£570	£333	£0	£333
Vehicle Leasing & Running Costs	£2,730	£1,593	£0	£1,593
Vehicle Insurance	£930	£543	£0	£543
Cash Collection	£2,590	£1,511	£0	£1,511
Protective Clothes	£570	£333	£0	£333
Photocopying	£570	£333	£25	£308
General Expenses	£4,280	£2,497	£1,294	£1,203
General Expenses - VAT	£6,430	£3,751	£0	£3,751
Audit Fee	£5,710	£0	£0	£0
Professional Services	£3,810	£2,223	£2,881	-£659
Direct Telephones	£220	£128	£0	£128
Mobile Telephones	£120	£70	£0	£70
General Insurances	£170	£99	£99	£0
External Print & Graphics	£180	£105	£0	£105
Controlled Running Costs	£71,650	£38,465	£32,079	£6,386
Fees & Charges - Car Parking	-£110,000	-£76,198	-£64,636	-£11,562
Other Income - Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd	-£40,000	£0	£0	£0
Other Income	-£5,000	-£2,917	-£75	-£2,842
Licences	-£80	-£47	£0	-£47
Rent Income (Café)	-£34,000	-£19,833	-£26,460	£6,627
Controlled Income	-£189,080	-£98,995	-£91,171	-£7,824
MBC Staff Recharges	£53,060	£30,952	£30,952	-£0
MBC Parks Management	£139,230	£69,615	£60,684	£8,931
Rechargeable Costs	£192,290	£100,567	£91,636	£8,931
Cobtree Manor Park	£78,860	£42,370	£32,544	£9,826

Cobtree Manor Estate	Approved Budget 2023/24	Profiled Budget as at 31st October 2023	Actual as at 31st October 2023	Variance at end of October 2023
KENT LIFE				
Repairs & Maintenance of Premises	£11,480	£6,697	£4,586	£2,111
Premises Insurance	£9,490	£5,536	£5,536	-£0
General Expenses - VAT	£1,610	£939	£0	£939
Controlled Running Costs	£22,580	£13,172	£10,122	£3,050
Contract Income	-£73,130	-£36,565	-£36,567	£2
Controlled Income	-£73,130	-£36,565	-£36,567	£2
MBC Staff Recharges	£9,180	£5,355	£5,355	£0
Rechargeable Costs	£9,180	£5,355	£5,355	£0
Kent Life	-£41,370	-£18,038	-£21,090	£3,052
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES				
Repairs & Maintenance	£13,930	£8,126	£6,765	£1,361
Premises Insurance	£330	£193	£193	-£1
Controlled Running Costs	£14,260	£8,318	£6,958	£1,360
Rent Income	-£30,000	-£17,500	-£15,767	-£1,733
Controlled Income	-£30,000	-£17,500	-£15,767	-£1,733
MBC Staff Recharges	£2,620	£1,528	£1,528	£0
Rechargeable Costs	£2,620	£1,528	£1,528	£0
Residential Properties	-£13,120	-£7,653	-£7,281	-£372
OVERALL TOTALS	-£35,210	-£9,743	-£20,239	£10,496
Investment Income	-£40,000	-£30,000	-£33,772	£3,772
Interest Paid (Car park costs)				£0
Net surplus/(deficit) for operational & investment activities	-£75,210	-£39,743	-£54,011	£14,268
Repayment of car park construction costs	£69,650	£0	£0	£0
Net surplus/(deficit) after repayment	-£5,560	-£39,743	-£54,011	£14,268