

# AGENDA

## COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Wednesday 11 March 2015

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Greer, McLoughlin and  
Perry (Chairman)

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Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Visiting Members
3. Disclosures by Members and Officers
4. Disclosures of Lobbying
5. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
6. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2015 1 - 2
7. Cobtree Shed 3 - 15

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**Issued on 3 March 2015**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEBBIE SNOOK on 01622 602030**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,  
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ**

# Agenda Item 6

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2015

**Present:** Councillor Perry (Chairman) and  
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Greer and McLoughlin

59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

60. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

61. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

62. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

63. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That the item on Part II of the agenda be taken in private as proposed.

64. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2015

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

65. COBTREE MANOR PARK OPERATIONAL COSTS AND CAR PARK CHARGES

The Committee, wishing to consider the information contained in the exempt Appendix to the report of the Cobtree Officer in private:

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

**Head of Schedule 12A and  
Brief Description**

Exempt Appendix to the Report of the Cobtree Officer Relating to Cobtree Manor Park Operational Costs and Car Park Charges      3 – Financial/Business Affairs

Having discussed the information contained in the exempt Appendix to the report of the Cobtree Officer in private, the Committee:

**RESOLVED:** That the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

**DECISION MADE:**

1. That the updated operational cost predictions for Cobtree Manor Park, as set out in exempt Appendix A to the report of the Cobtree Officer, be noted.
2. That agreement be given to the operation and management of the car park at Cobtree Manor Park in accordance with the proposal set out in Appendix B to the report of the Cobtree Officer.
3. That car parking Option 1, as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Cobtree Officer, be approved and that the car parking charges be set at £1.50 per day and £40 for an annual season ticket.
4. That the car parking charges be implemented with effect from the opening of the Visitor Centre at Cobtree Manor Park.

For further information regarding this decision, please follow this link:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AIId=20403>

66. **DURATION OF MEETING**

5.15 p.m. to 5.40 p.m.

# Agenda Item 7

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COBTREE MANOR ESTATE COMMITTEE**

**11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015**

#### **REPORT OF THE COBTREE OFFICER**

**Report prepared by Joanna Joyce**

#### **1. Cobtree Shed**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider allowing a Cobtree Sheds group to be established in the Elephant House at Cobtree Manor Park.

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Cobtree Officer

It is the recommendation of the Cobtree Officer:-

1.2.1 That a new Cobtree Sheds group is given permission to set up a shed in the Elephant House at Cobtree Manor Park.

1.2.2 That the new Sheds group is set up and overseen by Medway Valley Countryside Partnership in accordance with the proposal set out in **Appendix A**.

1.2.3 That in addition to the renovation of the Elephant House the Sheds group is asked to provide volunteering time across the estate in lieu of rent.

1.2.4 That the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services draws up a service level agreement with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership on behalf of the Cobtree Manor Estate Trust (CMET) to that effect.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Cobtree Shed was originally hoping to set up at The Kent Life Sheds following their renovation by the charity Futures for Heroes. Last Summer the building that was due to be used was completely destroyed by fire. After meetings with Futures for Heroes and the Sheds group it was decided that a more public site would be preferable and the Elephant House at Cobtree Manor Park was identified as a possible location.

- 1.3.2 The Shed will provide a hub for volunteering in the heart of Cobtree Manor Park. The Elephant House is currently unused and would provide an ideal venue for restoration and will make an excellent base for a future Sheds workshop.
- 1.3.3 Hosting the Shed in the park will encourage and enable lots of opportunities for volunteering and help in kind across the estate. There will be a wide range of tasks that the group could assist with from conservation and woodland management to mending fences and building bird boxes.
- 1.3.4 The Cobtree Shed has support from a number of professional partner organisations and has funding already established. The Sheds group will be expected to carry out the majority of the work themselves under the supervision and guidance of the Sheds Officer who will be employed by Medway Valley Countryside Partnership.

#### 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The alternative is not to allow the Shed to be set up at Cobtree Manor Park Elephant House. This is not recommended as the park and estate stand to gain a great deal in volunteering time and skills from a project based on site. The Elephant House is currently unused so this proposal would ensure the building is put to good purpose.

#### 1.5 Impact on the Charity Objects

The governing object is stated as;

"To hold Cobtree Manor and Cobtree Manor Estate for the benefit of the inhabitants of Maidstone and other members of the general public in one or other or all of the following ways:

- i) By maintaining the Cobtree Manor Estate as an open space as defined by the Open Spaces Act 1906 and if the lessees think fit providing thereat facilities for organised games and other sports".
  - ii) With the consent of ...[the Cobtree Charity Trust Limited and the Kent County Council]... in such other way for the benefit of the inhabitants of Maidstone and other members of the general public as the Council shall from time to time think appropriate."
- 1.5.1 It is the object of the Charity to use its assets for the benefit of the people of Maidstone; therefore the setting up of a Shed at Cobtree Manor Park directly supports these aims.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There is a risk that the number of Shedders will be very small and that as a consequence the project will be too large for them. This is considered unlikely because of the large amount of partnership support and funding assisting the project. The previous group at Medway Valley Countryside Partnership was successful and with better long term premises this can be built on.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1.	Financial	x
2.	Staffing	
3.	Legal	x
4.	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6.	Community Safety	
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset Management	x

1.7.2 The Shedders will raise any additional finance required themselves.

1.7.3 A Service Level agreement will need to be drawn up by the legal team.

1.7.4 The Elephant House will have some improvements and therefore be an improved asset for the estate.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

**Appendix A      Kent Sheds – Supporting positive mental health, Elephant House, Cobtree Manor Park**

1.8.2 Background Documents

None.

<b><u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u></b>			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan? .....			
This is a Key Decision because: .....			
.....			
Wards/Parishes affected: .....			
.....			

## **Appendix A**

### **Kent Sheds – Supporting positive mental health Elephant House, Cobtree Park**

#### **1. What is Kent Sheds?**

**1.1 Kent Sheds is about building communities and growing the resilience of people by helping them connect-up and share ideas and interests.** A Kent Shed can be anything from equipped workshops where people can work together on a range of practical activities, conservation projects or activities that may focus on wood-working and furniture restoration, even knitting! Members ('Shedders') can put their skills to good use, share their knowledge, learn new skills and generally put the world to rights over a cup of tea. Members are often aged 60+, can come from a wide variety of backgrounds ranging from highly skilled to those with little or no experience, but all work together and there is a role for everyone.

**1.2** The programme is being delivered through Kent Shed partnership which includes the following:

- **Kent County Council Public Health** has commissioned Kent Sheds to help maintain and improve the resilience of people of all ages in Kent, with a particular focus on the Six Ways to Wellbeing campaign themes. Kent Public Health has matched a grant from the Libor Fund which has a focus on improving the wellbeing of ex-service men and women.
- **ActivMob CIC** is a Social Enterprise that works with communities across Kent on Health and Wellbeing projects. Their role in Kent Sheds is to support groups to create Sheds that will meet the need of local people.
- **Groundwork South** is a charitable organisation who, for over 30 years, has been delivering projects and programmes that support and invest in local communities. Our role in Kent Sheds is to support community groups and organisations establish a network of Sheds across Kent and to administrate the funding.

#### **2. Aims of Maidstone 'Cobtree' Shed**

**2.1** The project aims to:

- Increase the activity levels of participants.
- Provide the means for skill and experience sharing within the group.
- Improve and maintain participant's health and mental wellbeing (combating isolation and increasing sense of value/place/role in the community).
- Develop and support social and decision making skills such as team working and planning tasks.
- Increase confidence and skills levels in the groups.
- Increase volunteering in the community through practical environmental and community projects.

2.2 It achieves this by giving 'Shedders' the chance to:

- Make new friends.
- Experience the camaraderie of working with other people.
- Put practical skills to good use and also share them with others.
- Try something new and learn new skills.
- Support their local community.
- Learn about other activities and services in the area.
- Encourage positive mental health.

2.3 Positive Outcomes

- Improved mental health and wellbeing
- Increased involvement by local people in decision making and involvement in a community project.
- Provide a community resource for practical assistance on a local site

### **3. Proposal for the Elephant House 'Shed'**

3.1 The Cobtree Elephant House Shed aims to provide a practical workshop and a social space for retired older people and ex-service personnel living in the area, including those from recognised areas of deprivation and isolation. The existing Shedders from the Medway Valley project are looking forward to developing the project by reaching out to wider communities, and are keen to encourage intergenerational participation by working with local schools, the college and youth groups in other areas of need.

3.2 The Elephant House shedders also have ambitions to support the set-up, and help promote smaller sheds run by community volunteers, offering skill sharing and support to other communities within the local wards that Maidstone Borough Council have recognised as having high levels of elderly residents, those with poor physical and mental health, low physical activity levels and/or experiencing social isolation.

3.3 The Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and Sheds initiative provides exciting opportunities to form new and innovative links between environmentally based organisations, local authorities, support services, volunteers and Public Health. This exciting partnership working opportunity will bring a wealth of added value through partners' expertise, local knowledge and contacts.

3.4 Regarding ex-service personnel, Maidstone Borough Council has links with 36 Engineer Regiment within Maidstone through the Armed Forces Community Covenant. As part of the covenant, the council support service personnel at risk of redundancy and/or leaving through career choice to settle within the borough and use the existing skills they have in the community.

3.5 The Maidstone Elephant House shed will build on these links to recruit existing and ex-service personnel to the project as well as through our partner agencies such as Royal British Legion, local armed forces charities and support organisations. There are also close links with MIND in Maidstone who also are well connected to service personnel.

**3.6 Mutual benefits to Cobtree Manor Park and the opportunities available for the Cobtree 'Shedders' include:**

- **Volunteering** - with the Cobtree Manor Park ground staff, participating in site landscaping/conservation projects and maintenance.
- **Assisting** - Volunteering to deliver guided walks to visitors to learn about the Elephant House, the Park and the Sheds scheme.
- **Make/Create** outdoor equipment such as owl boxes, other bird and bat boxes and furniture for the site e.g. way markers, benches.
- **Revenue** – Some items that are made may be purchased by visitors to the Park (all monies generated would go straight back into the project).
- **Opportunities for intergenerational learning** -Linking with schools, the college and youth groups and encouraging volunteering across the Cobtree Estate.
- **Outreach** - assisting with events and celebrations at Cobtree.
- **Promotion** – the site of the shed has great potential in enabling promotion and championing the positives of the 'Shed' movement as well as green gyms, volunteering, conservation and health and wellbeing programmes.

**4. Financial**

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<b>Total Cost of Project</b>	<b>£25,000</b>
<b>Match Funding</b>	<b>£10,000 Total</b> <b>£8,500</b> Maidstone Borough Council (allocated to revenue) <b>£1,500</b> In kind contribution Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCMP)
<b>Total overall amount from Kent Sheds</b>	<b>£15,000</b>

<b>Breakdown of Sheds costs for Year 1 and 2</b>	
<b>Year 1 Capital Costs</b> <i>(equipment/premises/training/tools/expenses etc.)</i>	<b>Year 2 Capital Costs</b> <i>(equipment/premises/training/tools/expenses etc.)</i>
Capital costs to get building fit for purpose TBC but approx. £20,500 £10,000 to come from Shed bid. Shedders to raise rest with support from MBC and MVCP	No additional buildings costs in year 2 from Shed fund
Premises –£0 (In kind contribution)	£0 – (in kind contribution)
Tools/Equipment £1000	Tools/Equipment £500
Materials/sundries £1000	Materials/sundries £1000
Premises £0	Premises £0
Volunteer expenses £250	Volunteer expenses £250
<b>Year 1 Capital Total = £12,250</b>	<b>Year 2 Capital Total = £1,750</b>
<b>Year 1 Revenue Costs</b> <i>(Includes insurance)</i> Up to 30% of total project cost Total = £10,000	<b>Year 2 Revenue Costs</b> <i>(Includes insurance)</i> Up to 30% of total project cost Total = £1000
Officer to support project. (incl. on costs) £10,000 (approx. 1 day per week support in year one)	Officer to oversee move to independence and support where required. £1000
Insurance (Groundwork to advise)	Insurance
<b>Total of Year 1 and Year 2 Capital Costs</b>	
	<b>£14,000</b>

<b>Total of Year 1 and Year 2 Revenue Costs</b>	<b>£11,000</b>
<b>Total overall amount from Kent Sheds</b>	<b>£15,000</b>
<b>Year 3</b>	
<p>The dedicated Officer will work in consultation with the Shedders to consider various methods of securing future income to take the projects forward beyond the funded period and actively encourage a long term view.</p> <p>Current ideas (carried over from pilot project) include:</p> <p>Producing products for sale, Funding to reinvest in materials will be raised through the sale of goods manufactured by the Shed.</p> <p>Raising Funds from grants and community bids with advice and support from project partners</p> <p>The Elephant House project will be integrated with existing management plans and work programs for Cobtree park, to allow them to continue after the funding period.</p> <p>The premises are owned and managed by a charitable body and local authority who will continue to allow the shedders to use the site as a 'match' contribution.</p> <p>The Shed Officer will also assist volunteers to deliver and develop their own Constitution as a community group to enable them to apply for their own funding if required to sustain the project.</p>	

## **5. Supporting Social Isolation and Loneliness**

### 5.1 Key statistics around 'trigger' factors

#### *Contact with friends and family*

- 17% of older people in contact with family, friends and neighbours less than once a week, and 11% in contact less than once a month

#### *Getting out and about*

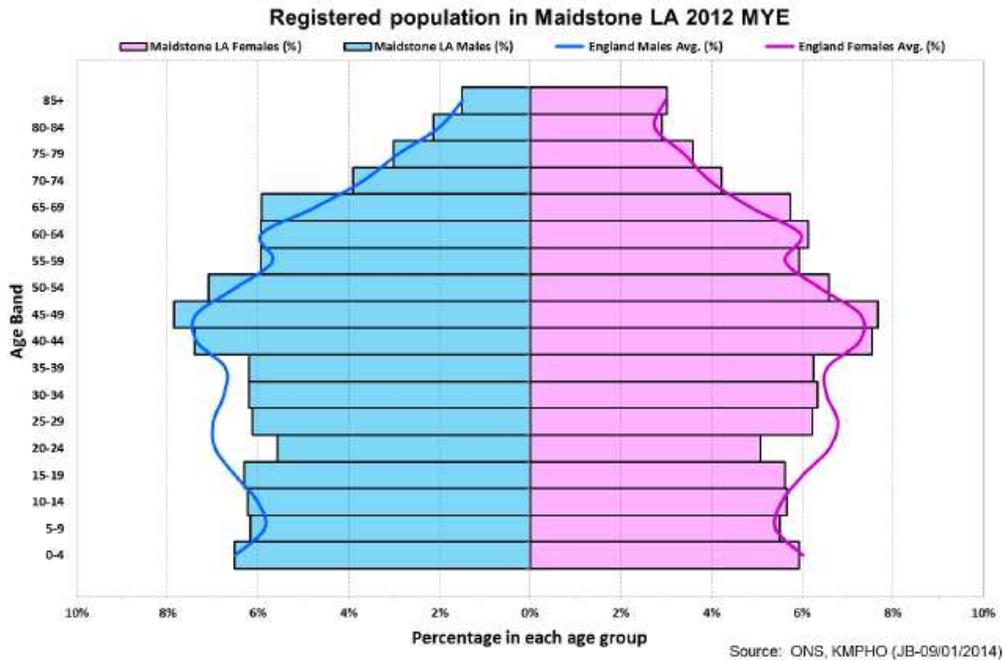
- 12% of older people feel trapped in their own home
- 6% of older people leave their house once a week or less
- 9% of older people say they feel cut off from society

#### *Living alone*

- About 3.8 million older people live alone
- 70% are women over 65
- Over half (51%) of all people aged 75 and over live alone
- It is predicted that between 2008 and 2031 these figures will increase

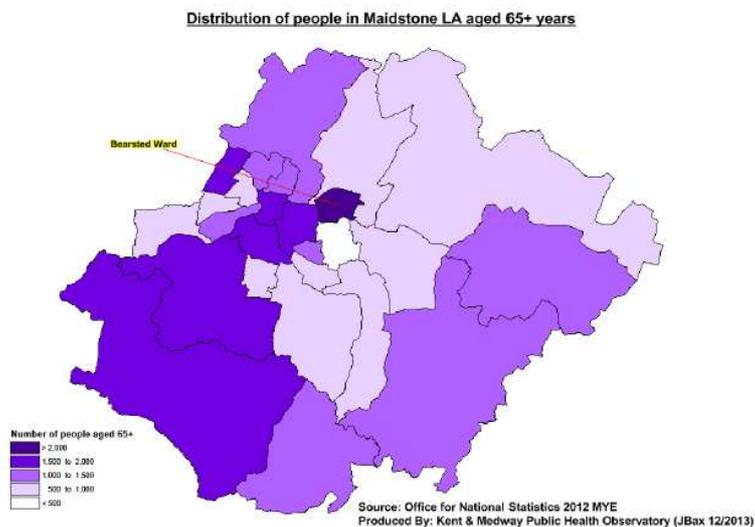
## 6. Maidstone Profile

6.1 Maidstone has a higher percentage of 45-54s and 65-69s than the national profile but a much smaller proportion of 15 to 40s. The proportion of the population in all categories above age 50 is also higher than the national average. This will have an impact on health services because older people will generally have greater health needs and service usage.

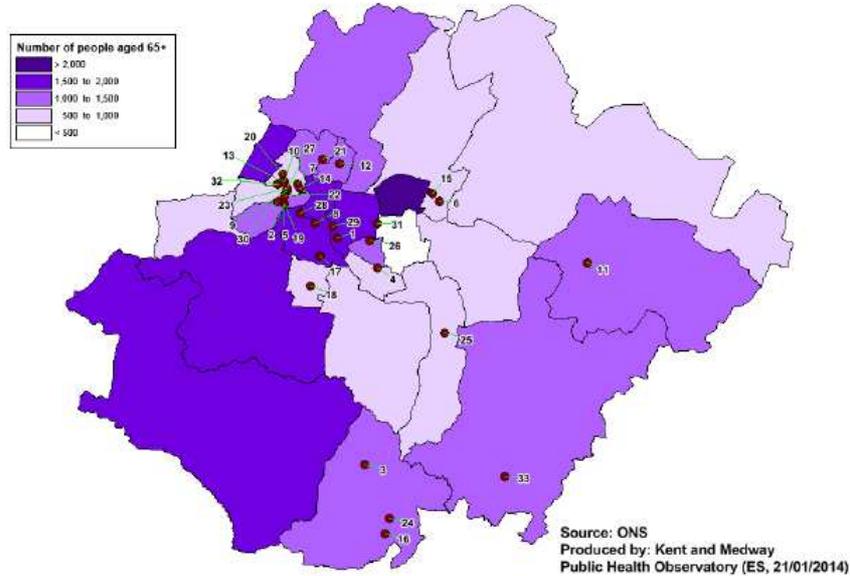


## 6.2 Maidstone borough – 65+ population

There are high numbers of people aged 65+ in the Bearsted and Allington wards. The wards with the fewest number of people aged 65+ are North Downs, Loose, Detling and Thurnham, Leeds and Downswood and Otham wards. There are approximately 28,200 people aged 65+ in Maidstone LA. This will have implications for commissioners and those providing services because the 65+ age group use health services at a higher rate than others so more provision will be needed by health services in the area.



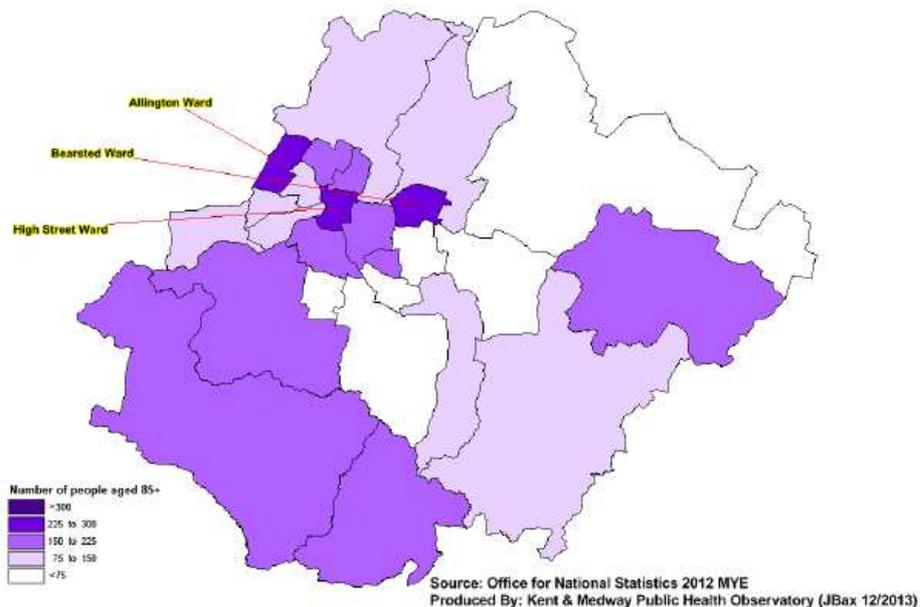
Distribution of people aged 65+ with older people homes overlayed, Mid 2012



### 6.3 Maidstone borough – 85+ population

There are high numbers of people aged 85+ in the High Street, Bearsted and Allington wards. The wards with the fewest number of people aged 85+ are Boughton, Monchelsea and Chart Sutton, Loose, North Downs, Leeds and Downswood and Otham wards. There are approximately 3,500 people aged 85+ in Maidstone LA.

Distribution of people in Maidstone LA aged 85+ years



6.4 Population projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show expected increases in all age groups. The largest percentage rise occurs in the 85+ age groups, with a 25% increase. The overall population projected increase for Maidstone for 2018 is just under 7%. This would result in the size of the population being just over 170,000. Commissioners will need to

take account that planning will be necessary for an increased capacity for older people's health services. Older people have the greatest need to use health services and it may be necessary to expand the capacity of certain health services such as general practitioners in areas where there will be the greatest population increases.

## **7. Partners**

### **7.1 Maidstone Borough Council**

Maidstone Borough Council's Parks and Leisure and Community Development teams will work together to support the Cobtree Shed.

The transition of skills, traditional and new, is a key aspect of community development and encourages community learning possibilities. The Cobtree Shed will support Maidstone's Health Inequalities Action Plan, supporting an emphasis on informal learning, volunteering and positive mental and emotional wellbeing.

Maidstone Borough Council's Community Development team has experience of supporting Sheds in Maidstone, based in Kent Life and Park Wood, working in partnership with residents and partners from across the public, private and voluntary and community sector.

### **7.2 Medway Valley Countryside Partnership**

Medway Valley Countryside Partnership, a non-profit organisation based in Maidstone is dedicated to environmental conservation in the boroughs of Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling.

Our Partnership Officer will be able to support the Shed group by helping them to form links to other organisations during and after the set-up process to help them to become self-sustaining. i.e. other Kent CMPs, the district health teams, older peoples' forums, mental health charities, volunteering organisations, local support services, community and youth groups, working with existing and ex-service personnel, and signatories to local Community Covenants.

MVCP and other Kent CMPs have worked on various Health and Wellbeing projects over the years including the 'Naturally Active' and 'Move, Eat , Grow' which worked in collaboration with, local residents, public health bodies and mental health charities e.g. Mind and Age UK to help improve mental and physical wellbeing using the many elements of local green space. MVCP believe this experience is all transferrable to the Shed project.

The Medway Valley CMP is very keen to continue to work with the Sheddors from the Maidstone pilot Shed to develop their ideas and help them realise their ambitions for the Shed. With all partners having individually identified the need for this project, the Sheds initiative provides exciting opportunities to form new and innovative links between environmentally based organisations, local authorities, support services, volunteers and Public Health. This partnership working opportunity will bring a wealth of added value through partners' expertise, local knowledge and contacts.

### **7.3 Family Mosaic**

Family Mosaic provide high quality, affordable homes to rent and buy, as well as care and support services to thousands of people who need extra support. They have around 24,000 homes for rent and serve more than 45,000 people.

Family Mosaic provide a range of opportunities for our customers such as training, employment and access to learning so they can improve their prospects, find new opportunities and move on. Shared ownership forms a large part of our business, helping people into home ownership. Family Mosaic make a difference to local communities by taking advantage of their size: by being big but local, they can make a more positive impact for the people who live in their homes and their wider communities. Family Mosaic develop a wide range of community activities, employment and training initiatives, financial inclusion programmes and other regeneration programmes.

Family Mosaic is focusing on social inclusion and reduction in isolation for older residents. As part of this, they have set a target of setting up 3 sheds in Kent before 2016, providing match funding and in-kind support to any funding received.

Part of Family Mosaic's organisation is the Home Improvement Agency. Home Improvement Agencies are local not for profit organisations funded and supported by local and central government. Family Mosaic provide advice, support and assistance to elderly, disabled and vulnerable people who own and live in their own property. As part of this provision, Family Mosaic has a team of handypersons located across the county, who are able to provide their time as an in-kind contribution to help both set up and refurbish sheds. If the shedders request it, the handypersons could also share knowledge and techniques.