

# AGENDA

## COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Wednesday 11 February 2015

Time: 5.15 p.m.

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 14 January 2015

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**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on 3 February 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**

7. Report of the Cobtree Officer - Cobtree Manor Park Operational Costs and Car Park Charges 3 - 11

**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 reason specified having applied the Public Interest Test.**

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

8. Exempt Appendix to the Report of the Cobtree Officer Relating to Cobtree Manor Park Operational Costs and Car Park Charges 3 – Financial/Business Affairs 12 - 15

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2015

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

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Blackmore had indicated that she would be late in arriving at the meeting.

52. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

53. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

54. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

55. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

56. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER ADJOURNED TO 22 DECEMBER 2014

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December adjourned to 22 December 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Note: Councillor Mrs Blackmore entered the meeting during consideration of this item (5.37 p.m.).

57. CHARITY KNOWN AS THE COBTREE MANOR ESTATE - ACCOUNTS 2013/14

**DECISION MADE:**

That the Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 2013/14 and the Letter of Representation, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources, be approved.

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

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AIId=20132>

58. DURATION OF MEETING

5.35 p.m. to 5.42 p.m.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COBTREE MANOR ESTATE COMMITTEE**

**11<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

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

**Report prepared by Joanna Joyce**

#### **1. Cobtree Manor Park Operational Costs and Car Park charges**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the updated operational costs for Cobtree Manor Park and the management of the car park charging regime within the park.

##### 1.2 Recommendation of the Cobtree Officer

It is recommended that:

1.2.1 The contents of the Cobtree Manor Park Operational Costs as further updated and set out at **Exempt Appendix A** are noted.

1.2.2 That the car park is run in accordance with the proposal as set out in **Appendix B**.

1.2.3 That car parking option A (shown in **Appendix B**) is agreed and the car parking charge is set at £1.50 per day and £40 for an annual season ticket.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 At the December 2014 meeting, the Committee requested further detail of the Cobtree Manor Park Operational Cost. That detail has been added and is set out in **Exempt Appendix A**.

1.3.2 Following discussion with the council's Parking Services Manager the car parking operation proposal was produced, and this is shown in **Appendix B**. Parking services operate car parks in Maidstone Borough giving additional benefits to going with this proposal. Cash collection, machine repairs, maintenance and enforcement can all be brought in with the existing operation giving a saving to the charity. This system is already proven and will therefore be straightforward to introduce.

The council's parking services team is able to provide a service that covers the whole installation and operation of the new car park.

- 1.3.3 A pay and display system with 3 machines ensures there is back up should one fail.
- 1.3.4 The Committee has already resolved that a car parking charge should be introduced. Option A is considered the best as this continues to ensure that the park remains affordable, whilst providing sufficient income to cover the cost of running the park, ensuring it is self sufficient.

#### 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The Committee could choose not to note the contents of the operational costs set out at **Exempt Appendix A**. This is not recommended as the Committee have previously resolved to request further detail on this point.
- 1.4.2 Another method of operation for the car park could be chosen. This is not recommended as the proposed option of using the council's Parking Services team means that any future issues can easily be resolved as they will be internal to the council.
- 1.4.3 Option A enables the costs of running the park to break even. Alternatively the Committee could choose to go with Option B and set the charge at £1 with a £30 season ticket. This is not recommended as the park would still be reliant on subsidy from other parts of the estate. Given the financial uncertainty for the golf course this is not considered to be in the best interests of the charity as it would leave it exposed to increased financial risk.

#### 1.5 Impact on Charity Objectives

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 parking charges should be affordable and not excessive, and should always be reasonably priced when compared with similar facilities locally.

1.5.2 The charity is required to ensure its assets are maintained and that the estate as a whole does not run a loss, it is therefore important that the operational costs of the park are carefully monitored and that income is generated to cover this where possible.

1.5.3 It is considered Option A meets both requirements set out in 1.5.1 and 1.5.2.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There is a risk that the operational costs of running the park will not be covered by the income generated under the new operational cost model. As the park currently makes a loss any increase in income will decrease the dependency on subsidy from the rest of the estate. It has been agreed that the initial agreement for 5 years will be subject to an annual review by the Committee with an option for the Charity to terminate the agreement if the conditions of the contract are not being met.

1.6.2 There is a risk that the introduction of parking charges could lead to bad publicity amongst park users. In other parks where this has happened there has only been a short term effect. Key to reducing any problems will be ensuring that charges are always proportionate and similar to other local country parks, as well fully advertising that all money raised will go back into the running of the park.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment

x
x
x

- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

X

1.7.2 The financial implications for the scheme are set out in the appendices.

1.7.3 The committee has already agreed to the additional staffing required to run the park. The implications on staff with reference to the operation of the car park and visitor centre are set out in **Appendix B**.

1.7.4 A parking order will need to be introduced, and the legal team will need to undertake the appropriate arrangements and discussions with the Cobtree Charity Trust Limited (CCTL) as to how best to enact this order given CCTL’s funding of the cost of constructing the visitor centre.

1.7.5 The pay and display machines will have maintenance requirements which are set out in **Appendix B**.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Exempt **Appendix A** – Cobtree Manor Park Operational Costs.

**Appendix B** - Cobtree Manor Park Car Parking Proposal.

1.8.2 Background Documents

Record of the decision of the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee on 22 December 2014 on the future management of Cobtree Manor Park and the Visitor Centre/Café.

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

.....9<sup>th</sup> January 2015.....

This is a Key Decision because: The overall operation of the park could result in income generation greater than £250,000.

.....

Wards/Parishes affected: Cobtree Manor Park is in Boxley Ward and Parish.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Cobtree Manor Park Car Parking Proposal**

#### **Maidstone Borough Council**

**January 2015**

#### **Section A: Setting up and management of car park charges**

1. Parking Services will add Cobtree Manor Park Car Park to the Parking Order which they will be updating for other areas. There will be minimal cost in doing this. This parking order will be in place for April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.
2. There will be 3 pay and display machines installed in the car park. The recommended machine is the Metric Aura-Elite. This machine is already used by parking services elsewhere so parts will be interchangeable with other machines. The machine does have the ability to have pay by phone and the requirement to enter a car registration if required.
3. There will be a fixed parking fee (e.g. £1.50) for all people using the park (for pricing options see section B of this proposal).
4. Season tickets will be available from the visitor centre or online, these will be printed on holographic paper to reduce fraud; this is available from Parking Services. These tickets will be displayed in car windscreens and will be registered to each car. A new ticket will be needed each year. Staff parking tickets will also be provided to those staff that work in the park. (The £40 annual cost will include the administration costs). Season tickets will be available to both residents and non-residents.
5. After installation Parking Services enforcement officers will visit the car park initially once per day for the first 2 months. Following this period they will visit twice per week at random times and fine anyone with no valid ticket or season ticket. The charge for this must go to Parking Services (as part of the Traffic Order) but realistically only covers the cost of enforcement.
6. Other than enforcement and cash collection, the daily operations such as filling the machines with tickets and basic maintenance will be done by the Parks Team.
7. Cash Collection will be done by the same team who currently empty the other pay and display machines in the town. This is a sealed system which is auditable and accountable. The only other person who will have access to cash collected is the Parking Services Manager.
8. Advertising on the pay and display tickets could be sold to outside businesses, but it is proposed that this is used to promote other areas of

the Cobtree Manor Estate, such as discounts at Kent Life Attraction and Cobtree Manor Golf Course.

9. Lighting columns will need to be installed above the new machines. This can be done when the machines are installed, as they will share a power supply.

**Initial costs are set out below**

<b>Set up costs</b>	<b>Price</b>
Parking Order	£500.00
Metric Aura Elite Pay and display machines x 3	£15,000.00
Machine installation	£2,000.00
Lighting installation	£2,500.00
Initial Enforcement (2 months, at 1 hour a day £20.48 per hour, 7 days a week)	£1,270.00
Signage	£600.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£21,870</b>
<b>Revenue Costs</b>	
Tickets ( £4.41 per 1,000 x 140 for approx 140,000 cars per year)	£617.40
Machine Service Contract (£61.00 per quarter)	£244.00
Cash collection ( £6.24 per collection x 364 days)	£2,271.36
Enforcement (12 months, at 1 hour a day £20.48 per hour, 3 days a week)	£3,194.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,327.64</b>

Costs are supplied by Parking Services.

Season ticket sales have not been included in this figure as it is unknown how many there will be, figures are based on the current visitor numbers being maintained.

## **Section B: Pricing Options**

### **Option 1**

This would be to charge £1.50 per day and £40 for a season ticket.

At this option the overall cost of the park will just break even (at the current number of 140,000 cars on the day rate this would equate to £210,000, at 100,000 cars this would be £150,000). The daily charge is in the middle of the range of charging for other similar local parks with the season ticket matching the KCC price.

### **Option 2**

This would be to charge £1 per day and £30 for a season ticket (the sums originally recommended in the report of November 2013, at 140,000 cars this would equate to £140,000, at 100,000 cars this would be £100,000). These prices would still leave the park reliant on subsidy from the golf course to break even.

See next page for a summary of car parking charges at other parks.

### Car parking charges at other local parks

<b>Park</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Weekday Charge</b>	<b>Weekend Charge</b>	<b>Season Ticket</b>
Teston Country Park	KCC	£1.20	£1.70	£40.00
Shorne Country Park	KCC	£2.00	£2.50	£40.00
Trosley Country Park	KCC	£1.50	£2.00	£40.00
Manor Park West Malling	KCC	£1.50	£2.00	£40.00
White Horse Country Park	KCC	£1.00	£1.50	£40.00
Dunorlan	Tunbridge wells BC	FREE	FREE	
Tonbridge	Tonbridge and Malling BC	Town centre Parking		
Leybourne Lakes	Tonbridge and Malling BC	£0.80 up to 4 hours, £2.80 over 4 hours	£0.80 up to 4 hours, £2.80 over 4 hours	£25.00
Haysden Country Park	Tonbridge and Malling BC	£0.80 up to 4 hours, £3 over 4 hours	£0.80 up to 4 hours, £3 over 4 hours	£25.00
Bewl Water		£4.00 per person includes Parking		£35.00 per person (concessions available)
Bedgebury Pinetum	Forestry Commission	£9.50 per car Free entry to park		
National Trust		£2/£2.50 average if parking available	Cheaper if member	
Swanley Park	Swanley Town Council	£2 in school holidays	£2 weekends	

Charges correct as of January 2015.

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

Document is Restricted