

Cobtree Estate Update Report

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

For the Committee to note the work of the Estate since its last meeting in September 2020.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the contents of the report are noted.

Timetable

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	5 November 2020

Cobtree Estate Update Report

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.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross cutting objectives of the council.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Risk Management	There are no risk management implications in this report.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Financial	Financial implications from this update are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Paul Holland - Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	Staffing implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	John Foster – 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 Manager
Equalities	No impact identified as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Anna Collier Policy and Information Manager
Public Health	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of our community and residents through its day-to-day operations.	Hannah Gaston Housing and Inclusion Manager
Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Procurement	Procurement implications are managed day-	John Foster –

	to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Cobtree Estate has continued its recovery following the Covid-19 lockdown earlier this year.

Cobtree Manor Park

- 1.2 The park has continued to be busy. Car park income has recovered following the park closure in March and April 2020. The closure period resulted in car park income being £11,500 behind budget. At the end of September 2020 car park income had recovered and was £17,000 ahead of budget, meaning performance was £28,500 better than budget for the 20-week period from May 2020 to September 2020.
- 1.3 The children's play equipment is being repaired. Some repairs have been completed and others require parts which are on order from the manufacturer. The park manager has surveyed the trees in the park and identified 50 that require some degree of contractor works. Quotations have been sought for this and the preferred contractor will be carrying out these works in the next month.
- 1.4 The park gates have been automated and access to the park is now managed more tightly and in line with the advertised opening and closing times. The gates and CCTV are monitored and controlled via mobile phone so that any ad hoc openings and closings can be managed by the park manager and the other council out of hours duty officers. The automation of the gates means the mobile security contractor is no longer required to visit the park to lock the gates. This will give an annual saving of £15,000.

Golf Course

- 1.5 The golf course's busy summer period is drawing to an end. The course works being carried out by the operator will begin in late November. This will require the front nine section of the course to be closed. Following some uncertainty over these plans, communication to golfers has now improved and a timescale for the works has been advertised to them.
- 1.6 The works will involve soil being imported on to the site and used to landscape the front nine section. Two ponds will also be created. This work is in line with the planning permission granted in February 2019. The re-modelling will improve drainage in the winter, making the course more playable all year round. The two new ponds will help with irrigation in the summer which will help with utility costs. Officers are working with Mid-Kent Legal Services and the operator to ensure that sufficient protections are in place for CMEC, as landlord.

Kent Life

- 1.7 Kent Life continues to manage the recovery from the Covid-19 closure very well by managing costs and maximising opportunities where possible. The Hops Beer Festival made a profit 34% greater than last year despite delivering the event to 31% fewer visitors. Halloween tickets are selling fast and will hopefully sell out by the time the events begin. Tickets for Santa's grotto are also nearly sold out. This year there are more time slots available in a shorter period, which ensures income is maximised while costs are controlled.
- 1.8 Kent Life will be extending its seasonal closure this winter. It is normal practice to open only at weekends through January and February. This winter the site will follow a similar programme in November and December as well. The site will only be open to the public on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in November and December. The other days are still being used, with school groups booked in to visit the site on all other days in November. This approach keeps the school groups in their bubbles, allows staff to be deployed most efficiently and provides adequate availability to the public.

Cobtree Men's Shed

- 1.9 Cobtree Men's Shed group has not met since the last Committee meeting. The Elephant House building remains closed awaiting a structural survey.

Cobtree Café

- 1.10 Cobtree Café has now re-opened for customers to sit inside the building as a Covid-secure venue with government guidelines being followed.

Contracts

- 1.11 Contractual discussions following the Covid-19 pandemic are still ongoing with some operators. A separate report updating the Committee on these discussions is included in the meeting agenda.

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.
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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
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None