

**COBTREE MANOR ESTATE  
CHARITY COMMITTEE**

**24 July 2024**

**Cobtree Estate Update**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	24 July 2024

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

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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

<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Leisure Contracts Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	Procurement implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	Updates on biodiversity and climate change are included within this report.	Leisure Contracts Manager

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 This report includes operational updates from across the Cobtree Estate.

### **Cobtree Manor Park**

2.2 In the quarter April to June 2024 there were 12,154 vehicle visits to the park, which is around 7% lower than for the same period in 2023 (13,093). Overall, for the most recent four quarters there have been 48,263 vehicle visits, compared to the previous four quarters where 51,886 vehicle visits were made; also a reduction of 7% .

2.3 The Elmer the Elephant sculpture that is themed on Maidstone Zoo and Cobtree Manor Park is being installed in the café by the Cobtree Charity Trust who attended earlier this month to unveil it. Earlier this year it was part of an exhibition on the history of Maidstone Zoo that was on show in the Mote Park Visitor Centre. The exhibition showed the history of the zoo and its role in the town. It included memories, photographs and audio clips from the zoo and enabled residents to add their childhood memories of Maidstone Zoo to the exhibition.

2.4 There are many positive comments made by visitors to Park staff about the café kiosk operator and the long-awaited re-opening of the main café draws ever closer; expectations are the main cafe will again be in use during late August.

2.5 The operator has taken responsibility of maintaining the café toilets and again visitor comments are very positive with improvements in cleanliness evident to those who can compare the previous toilet cleaning regime.

2.6 The new storage container for park operations was granted planning permission in June. The new container will be more sympathetic to the park setting and will replace the existing container that is beyond the end of its useful life. Delivery and installation is planned and will be arranged when all planning conditions are discharged.

## **Cobtree Golf Course**

- 2.7 In the most recent quarter the number of rounds of golf played at Cobtree under the tenure of the new operator has significantly increased. April to June 2024 had 13,800 rounds played which is the highest single number since the same period in 2018, when 14,200 were played. Indeed, in the three quarters since the new operator took over there have been 23,700 rounds played which is the highest amongst current records.
- 2.8 The operator is planning to invest in water harvesting capabilities where the lake will be increased in size to capture natural sources of water for use around the site. This will aid with course drainage in the winter and water usage needs in the summer.

## **Kent Life**

- 2.9 Kent Life received 47,992 visits in the last quarter, which is 12% lower than for the same period in 2023, when there were 54,803 visits. Overall, there were 176,172 visitor visits in the last four quarters compared to 184,426 visits in the previous four quarters, which is a 4.5% decrease.
- 2.10 Works are due to start this month on repairs to the barn's thatched roof.
- 2.11 A range of summer activities are in place and the site is gearing up for the school holiday period with family orientated events focused around the children's TV character Bluey.

---

## **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