

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
COBTREE MANOR ESTATE COMMITTEE

11th July 2012

REPORT OF THE COBTREE OFFICER

Report prepared by Joanna Joyce

1. Park Ranger's progress report

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider work of the Park Ranger at Cobtree Manor Park.

1.2 Recommendation of the Cobtree Officer

1.2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the actions taken by the Park Ranger and the future work set out in **Appendix A** to the report.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Committee previously resolved to receive a progress report on the work of the Park Ranger at each meeting. Attached at **Appendix A** is the report for the most recent period.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The alternative course of action is to reject the request for endorsement of the rangers work contained within the report. This is not recommended as the recommendations are in the best interests of the future management of Cobtree Manor Park.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The work of the Park Ranger directly supports the achievement of the Charity's objectives.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no additional risks to the Charity arising from this report.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

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

There are no other implications from the work proposed in this report.

1.8 Relevant Documents

There are none.

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix A - Rangers Progress update May 2012.

1.8.2 Background Documents

Cobtree Manor Park Management Plan

How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

X

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

.....

This is a Key Decision because:

.....

Wards/Parishes affected:

.....

APPENDIX A

COBTREE PARK RANGER'S PROGRESS REPORT **MARCH - MAY 2012**

1. On-going projects

1.1. Events and activities

The programme of educational guided walks re-commenced in April. Cold wet weather resulted in some low attendance, however, the family wildlife events were very popular as was the first one of the four zoo walks arranged for 2012; the remaining three zoo walks are booking up fast which reflects the high local interest in the subject. These are now fully booked.

1.2. Community involvement

Volunteer work is on-going. The student placement has been suspended for reasons unrelated to Maidstone Borough Council.

With the help of local horse riders, temporary trail markers have been designed and placed along the circular Cobtree bridleway.

1.3 Publicity and marketing

The Cobtree leaflet which includes the diary of events has been published (3,000 copies) and distributed to outlets in Maidstone and Medway. The events are listed on several websites including BBC 'Things to Do' and in free local publications.

The draft of the new Cobtree Manor Park webpage is with the Parks Team for comments and amendments.

Kent Messenger and Downsmail have published articles on proposed improvements to the park and on the proposed cycle path between the park and the river Medway.

The Cobtree monthly newsletter is now emailed to a number of interested stakeholders such as local councillors, parishes, CCTL and others, as well as appearing on the park notice boards.

2. Park maintenance and development – work completed or on-going

- installation of the "7 Ages" sculpture by Will Glanfield, donated by KCC, followed by the official unveiling on 23 April
- installation of a safety rail by the Wildlife Pond

- coppicing of several overgrown Cherry Laurel bushes as part of renovation of shrubberies and opening of sight lines
- defining the edges of several island shrubberies in order to create more formal and maintained appearance
- seasonal tree maintenance (removal of deadwood and/or low branches)
- maintenance of sight lines within the woodland area
- grass cutting following a new routine (the North Team in cooperation with the Cobtree Team)
- Cobtree Ranger and Parks Technical Officer visited Capstone Country Park and consulted with its manager

3. Work planned for the summer period:

- discussing with the Parks the draft of Cobtree Management Plan, updated for 2012-14
- labelling selected arboretum trees
- drafting arboretum leaflet
- updating Cobtree webpage
- contributing to the park improvement project
- continuing the routine maintenance and the programme of events