

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

Decision Made: 15 January 2014

STAFFING AT COBTREE MANOR PARK

Issue for Decision

To consider the need for additional staffing at Cobtree Manor Park over the summer period 2014.

Decision Made

1. That agreement be given to additional members of staff being employed at Cobtree Manor Park during the busiest periods of 2014 to cover times when the staff currently employed in the Park are not scheduled to work;
2. That, as during the summer of 2013, additional members of agency staff be employed to cover periods when the Park is unmanned from the last weekend in March to the last weekend in September 2014, to include all school days from 3-8pm (or closing time if earlier) and weekends and bank holidays from 11am to 6.30pm;
3. That, in addition, Maidstone Borough Services' staff be employed on overtime to undertake littering duties at weekends during this period for 2 hours per visit; and
4. That the future staffing requirements of the Manor Park be reviewed at the end of the year, taking into consideration the requirements of the Visitor Centre, when completed, and the future operational needs of the Park having regard to the outcome of the retendering exercise in respect of the operation of the Golf Course, which will provide a clearer picture of the resources available to the Charity.

Reasons for Decision

The large number of visitors now using Cobtree Manor Park has led to the need for additional staffing to collect litter, undertake increased maintenance and be available to deal with any issues from members of the public as they arise. The current staffing pattern does not allow for weekend or evening working, the times at which the Park is at its busiest.

Details of the staffing options set out in exempt Appendix A to the report of the Cobtree Officer show that the proposed staffing solution using agency staffing is the cheapest option for providing staff to cover those periods when the Park is currently unmanned. These arrangements were used last summer, and worked well.

Delaying a full staffing review until the end of the year will enable the requirements of the Visitor Centre to be taken into consideration and consideration to be given to the future operational needs of the Park having regard to the outcome of the retendering exercise in respect of the contract for the operation of the Golf Course, which will provide a clearer picture of the resources available to the Charity.

Alternatives Considered and Why Rejected

The alternative is to not provide additional staffing cover over weekends and evenings and for littering at weekends. This is not considered appropriate as, with visitor numbers increasing from around 40,000 to around 333,000 per year, not littering or not having staff available at weekends and evenings to deal with issues as they arise is likely to lead to an increased number of complaints.

Background Papers

Cobtree Manor Park Master Plan

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Policy and Communications by: 24 January 2014.
