

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 31 March 2021

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Venue: Remote Meeting - The public proceedings of the meeting will be broadcast live and recorded for playback on the Maidstone Borough Council website

Membership:

Councillors Cox (Chairman), Daley, Mrs Gooch (Vice-Chairman), Perry and Springett

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

AGENDA

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| 3. Urgent Items | |
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| 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers | |
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| 7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information. | |
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| 9. Presentation of Petitions (if any) | |
| 10. Question and answer session for members of the public (if any) | |
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Issued on Tuesday 23 March 2021

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

PART II

To move that the public be excluded for the items set out in Part II of the Agenda because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reasons specified having applied the Public Interest Test.

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INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 29 March 2021). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement at the invitation of the Chairman, please call 01622 602899 or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 29 March 2021). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to make representations on.

If you require this information in an alternative format, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES (PART I) OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2021

Present: Councillor Cox (Chairman) and
Councillors Mrs Gooch, Perry and Springett

136. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

137. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

138. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

139. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

140. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

141. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

142. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED:

1. That item 16 (Cobtree Estate Contracts Update) be taken in private as proposed.
2. That item 15 (Minutes (Part II)) of the meeting held on 5 November 2020 be considered in public but the information contained therein should remain private.

143. MINUTES (PARTS I AND II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes (Parts I and II) of the meeting held on 5 November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

144. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

145. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

146. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

147. ACCOUNTS 2019/20

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) introduced his report setting out the audited Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 for approval prior to submission to the Charity Commission by 31 January 2021.

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) advised the Committee that:

- No major issues had been identified regarding the accounts during the audit and the auditors had indicated that they were happy to issue an unmodified audit opinion.
- Some adjustments had been made to the draft accounts, but none of these had any impact upon the financial resources available to the Charity.
- The total funds of the Charity as shown on the Balance Sheet had reduced from £5.17m to £4.38m, with the Statement of Financial Activities showing a net funds decrease of £785,495 for the year. The two main reasons for this were (a) the reduction in the value of the Charity's investment in Charifund (£192,574 over the course of the year) and (b) a reduction of £620,000 in the value of investment properties.
- There were two parts to the reduction in the value of investment properties. Firstly, there was a £270,000 downward revaluation of the four residential properties on the Estate. Following the revaluations for the 2018/19 accounts where the auditors had suggested a different valuation methodology, there were further discussions and the auditors now accepted that the method used by the Council's valuer was appropriate. The values had been reset taking into account the latest valuation figures. Secondly, following discussions with the auditors, there was a reduction in the value of Tyland Barn from £350,000 to zero reflecting the fact that the property is let on a 125-year lease at a peppercorn rent.
- Accounting adjustments agreed with the auditors after the draft accounts were submitted to them included depreciation of the play area (£115,205) and reclassification of electricity works undertaken as

part of the car park construction as repairs and maintenance rather than capital spend.

- The purpose of the Letter of Representation for 2019/20 was to ask the Committee to confirm some statements relating to the audit and the information supplied to the auditors during their audit.
- The purpose of the Audit Findings Report was to bring to the attention of the Committee various issues that had arisen from the audit, including the status of audit issues raised in previous years. Two of the three issues had been resolved, but the Officers would continue to monitor the remaining one relating to a potential tax liability in respect of car park income and seek professional advice if necessary.

In response to questions:

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) advised the Committee that:

- Although there had been a reduction in the value of Tyland Barn from £350,000 to zero for accounting purposes, there would be a reinstatement valuation for insurance.
- The amounts owed to creditors in 2019/20 included the money owed to the Borough Council in respect of the car park improvement works. Last year's instalment had not been paid at the time of closure of the accounts due to uncertainties about cashflow in the pandemic situation.
- The reduction in financial assets was due to the impact of the pandemic on the value of the Charity's investment in Charifund. However, the value of the investment had now started to recover.
- The increase in financial assets measured at amortised cost reflected the car park improvement loan.

The Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee that:

- Kent County Council was made a party to the 1971 lease between the Cobtree Charity Trust Limited (the lessor) and the Maidstone Borough Council (the lessee) and its consent was needed in relation to certain transactions. It was believed that this was to ensure that the Estate continued to benefit the inhabitants of Maidstone and other members of the public. There were some things that the Charity could do without consent. For example, an agricultural lease of less than 21 years would not require consent. Requests for consent would be made to the appropriate Director at the County Council.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Trustee's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 2019/20, attached as Appendix 1 to the report of the Senior

Finance Manager (Client), be approved and submitted to the Charity Commission.

2. That the Letter of Representation, attached as Appendix 2 to the report of the Senior Finance Manager (Client), be approved.
3. That the contents of the Audit Findings Report, attached as Appendix 3 to the report of the Senior Finance Manager (Client), be noted.

148. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE FINANCIAL POSITION

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) introduced his report summarising the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 31 December 2020. The report covered the Golf Course, Kent Life, the Manor Park and residential properties. The report also included details of the proposed budgets for 2021/22.

Financial Position

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) advised the Committee that:

- The figures set out in the summary totals included the value of invoices sent to the contractors providing services at the Estate, less the agreed contract reliefs. It was assumed that these invoices would be paid, but ongoing issues relating to the closures due to COVID-19 meant that some invoices remained unpaid. Discussions with the contractors to resolve these issues were ongoing and, in the meantime, the Officers were continuing to monitor the financial position to ensure that there were sufficient resources in place to meet ongoing commitments and restricting expenditure where possible to essential items only.
- Other than the contract situation, there were no other significant issues with the budget. Car park income had continued to recover strongly and was now exceeding the original target. The year-end forecast showed an operational surplus of £29,000. After taking into account investment income and the car park loan repayment, there was a break-even position compared to the projected deficit of £11,000, assuming payment of all outstanding invoices.
- The value of the Charity's investment in Charifund had recovered strongly and currently stood at £769,426, compared to the value of £679,274 in September 2020. However, this was still considerably lower than the value of £930,938 in January 2020. Further updates would be provided at future meetings of the Committee.

Budgets 2021/22

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) advised the Committee that:

- The general approach to setting the budgets for 2021/22 was to increase running costs by the rate of inflation where applicable;

increase contract income in line with the agreed schedules although this could be subject to change depending on the outcome of the discussions with the contractors; update insurance costs in line with estimated premium increases; and update recharges from the Borough Council following a review of the services provided.

- The budgets reflected the new management arrangements for the Cobtree Manor Park which would come into effect from 1 April 2021.
- The electronic gates had now been fitted which meant that the security budget was no longer required. A small amount had been retained to cover maintenance costs, but the remainder had been transferred with some other savings to establish a one-off COVID Recovery Fund to provide for any COVID related costs that might be incurred that had not otherwise been budgeted for.
- The repairs and maintenance budgets in the Park had been reviewed and adjusted and renamed as hard landscaping. It also included the equipment purchase and maintenance budgets.
- In overall terms, the projected surplus from operational activities for 2021/22 was £79,000 compared to the budgeted surplus of £14,000 for 2020/21. After allowing for investment income and the repayment of the car park construction costs the overall net surplus reduced to £50,000. However, this was subject to the contract situation being resolved and could change.

In response to questions, the Senior Finance Manager (Client) explained that in terms of Recharges, the draft charge for services provided by Parks and Leisure reflected the increase in time spent on matters relating to the Cobtree Manor Estate.

The Committee thanked the Senior Finance Manager (Client) and his team for their work in managing the accounts and also acknowledged the work of the Leisure Manager and the Cobtree Park Manager in containing expenditure.

RESOLVED:

1. That the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 31 December 2020 be noted.
2. That the proposed budgets for 2021/22, as set out in the report of the Senior Finance Manager (Client), be approved.

149. COBTREE ESTATE UPDATE

The Leisure Manager presented his report providing an update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate since the last meeting of the Committee in November 2020. It was noted that:

Cobtree Manor Park

The Manor Park continued to be very busy. Car park income at the end of Quarter 3 was £94,695 compared to the budget of £40,195.

The winter tree works were nearly complete, and the play area repairs were being progressed.

The previously agreed changes to the Traffic Regulation Order in force in the car park at the Manor Park had been implemented, limiting a vehicle stay in the car park to six hours. The terms and conditions for permit holders had been updated in line with the new Regulations and the daily stay for a permit holder was also six hours.

The work to integrate the Manor Park staff into a new Parks and Open Spaces staffing structure was progressing in line with the timetable.

Cobtree Golf Course

Following the imposition of a third national lockdown, the Golf Course was now closed. Planning applications had been submitted by the operator for a new access road in connection with the Golf Course improvement works.

Kent Life

Kent Life had closed following the imposition of the Tier 4 restrictions. The operator had applied for an Additional Restrictions Grant, but there was no update on the outcome of the application at present.

Cobtree Café

Cobtree Café was operating on a take-away basis.

Elephant House

The situation regarding the works required at the Elephant House would be kept under review, but the building could not be used by anyone at present due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Residential Properties

One of the properties was now vacant and the Leisure Manager was exploring the options for its future use with the Housing Services team.

In response to a question, the Leisure Manager advised the Committee that comments received from Golf Club members were being sent to the operator through the Club Committee and Club Captain so as not to undermine the democratic process.

The Committee thanked the Leisure Manager and his colleagues for their work in managing the Cobtree Manor Estate and the associated contractual issues at this difficult time.

RESOLVED: That the update on the activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate since the last meeting of the Committee in November 2020 be noted.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business 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**

Cobtree Estate Contracts Update 3 – Financial/Business Affairs

150. COBTREE ESTATE CONTRACTS UPDATE

The Leisure Manager introduced his report providing an update on the contractual discussions with the operators of the Cobtree Manor Estate venues and facilities. It was noted that the operators were given contract relief by the Committee in June 2020 to ensure service continuity during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. There were ongoing issues relating to the closure of the venues and facilities due to COVID-19 which meant that a number of invoices remained unpaid.

The Committee gave instructions to the Officers as to the way to proceed in the circumstances including the development of financial resilience plans to protect the interests of the Charity going forward.

151. DURATION OF MEETING

2.00 p.m. to 3.20 p.m.

Agenda Item 12

**Cobtree Manor Estate
Committee**

31 March 2021

Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

Final Decision-Maker	Cobtree Manor Estate Committee
Lead Head of Service	Director of Finance and Business Improvement – Mark Green
Lead Officer and Report Author	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Boxley

Executive Summary

The report summarises the current financial position of the Estate as at 28 February 2021 covering the activities at the golf course, Kent Life, the Manor Park and the residential properties.

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the current financial position and any other relevant matters that may impact the financial position of the Trust.

This report makes the following recommendation to this Committee:

1. That the current financial position be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Committee	31 March 2021

Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The operation of the Estate directly supports the objects of the Trust as set out when the Council became the Corporate Trustee	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	The operation of the Estate supports the Council's strategic objective to ensure there are good leisure and cultural attractions in the Borough.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Risk Management	There is a potential reputational risk if the facilities are operated poorly. This is addressed in the annual risk management report.	Leisure Manager
Financial	There is a financial risk to the Trust if the operations cost more than predicted or fail to generate sufficient income to cover the costs of running the estate. This risk is currently heightened by the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 situation on the operations of the estate, particularly in relations to the various contractors.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Leisure Manager
Legal	Under the Council's Constitution the Committee as Corporate Trustee is responsible for all matters relating to the Charity with the exception of daily management. Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. This update report assists in meeting those requirements There are no further implications arising from this report.	Principal Solicitor (Corporate Governance), Mid Kent Legal Services
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no specific privacy or data protection issues to address.	Anna Collier Policy and Information Manager

Equalities	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Anna Collier Policy and Information Manager
Public Health	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Procurement	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 This is a regular update report on the financial position of the Estate, which enables the Committee to see how the various areas of activity are performing. The current Covid-19 situation is presenting a significant risk to the finances and operations of the estate, emphasising the need for robust management and monitoring of the budget.

3. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

3.1 The table below summarises the position as at 28th February 2021. **Appendix 1** provides a more detailed breakdown of the figures.

3.1.1 Overall Summary Position:

SUMMARY TOTALS

	Approved Budget for Year 2020/21	Revised Budget for Year 2020/21	Budget to end of February 2021	Actuals to end of February 2021	Forecast Outturn 2020/21
Golf Course	-£107,610	-£89,120	-£93,634	-£99,170	-£90,000
Manor Park	£103,830	£109,830	£130,632	£61,503	£70,000
Kent Life	-£42,920	-£24,390	£10,074	£4,024	-£25,000
Residential Properties	-£10,230	-£10,230	-£9,378	-£12,820	-£12,000
Operational Total	-£56,930	-£13,910	£37,694	-£46,463	-£57,000
Investment Income	-£45,000	-£45,000	-£33,750	-£29,710	-£40,000
Car Park Repayment	£69,650	£69,650	£0	£0	£69,650
Total for the Year	-£32,280	£10,740	£3,944	-£76,173	-£27,350

- 3.2 The figures above include the value of invoices sent to the contractors who provide services on the estate (less the agreed reliefs). This assumes they will be paid but of course as Members should be aware there are some ongoing issues related to the closures due to Covid-19 earlier this year, which means a number of invoices still remain unpaid.
- 3.3 Discussions with contractors to resolve these issues are ongoing, and an update on the current position is set out in a report elsewhere on this agenda. In the meantime, officers continue to monitor the financial position and are restricting expenditure where possible to essential items only. Car park income has continued to recover very strongly and is now exceeding the original target despite the closure of the park in the spring.
- 3.4 Other than the contract situation there are no other significant issues with the budget. The profiled budget at the end of February shows a surplus of £46,463 on the operational activities, with a forecast year-end operational surplus of £57,000. After taking into account investment income and the car park loan repayment the forecast outturn surplus will be £27,350, compared to a budget deficit of £10,740. However, it should be noted that these figures assume that all outstanding contract payments are received.
- 3.5 Given the situation with contract income there have been some concerns around the cashflow position, and the position continues to be closely monitored to ensure that there are sufficient resources in place to meet ongoing commitments. There is a separate report on the cashflow position elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.6 Members have also requested an ongoing update on the Charifund investment. The value of the investment has recovered strongly and currently stands at £820,915, compared to the value of £769,426 in January. However, this is still somewhat lower than the value of £930,938 in January 2020. Updates will continue to be provided to future meetings as part of this report.
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4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Section 3 is for noting only.
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5. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Section 3 is for noting only.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Officers will continue to monitor the financial position and take appropriate action where necessary.
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7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Financial Position as at 28th February 2021
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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Cobtree Manor Estate	Approved Budget 2020/21	Profiled Budget to end of February 2021	Actual as at 28th February 2021	Variance at end of February 2021
GOLF COURSE				
Repairs & Maintenance	£5,010	£4,593	£3,613	£980
Water Metered/Sewage & Env Svs			£0	£0
Electricity			£0	£0
Premises Insurance	£1,330	£1,219	£1,219	£0
Equipment Maintenance	£1,040	£953	£0	£953
Professional Services	£0	£0	£2,400	-£2,400
General Expenses - VAT	£3,160	£2,897	£2,897	-£0
Licence Fees	£200	£183	£0	£183
Direct Telephones	£840	£770	£0	£770
Controlled Running Costs	£11,580	£10,615	£10,129	£486
Contract Income - Agreed Budget	-£163,900	-£163,900	-£163,900	£0
Contract Income - Relief Granted	£23,770	£23,770	£23,770	£0
Other Income			-£5,250	£5,250
Rent Income	-£240	-£200	£0	-£200
Controlled Income	-£140,370	-£140,330	-£145,380	£5,050
MBC Staff Recharges	£14,210	£13,026	£13,026	-£0
Rechargeable Costs	£14,210	£13,026	£13,026	-£0
Cobtree Golf Course	-£114,580	-£116,689	-£122,225	£5,536
MBC 2/9ths share	£30,740	£23,055	£23,055	£0
Contract relief adjustment	-£5,280	£0	£0	£0
CMET Total	-£89,120	-£93,634	-£99,170	£5,536

MANOR PARK				
Salaries	£85,630	£78,494	£63,450	£15,044
Overtime	£4,000	£3,667	£0	£3,667
Employers NI	£6,520	£5,977	£5,414	£563
Employers Superannuation	£12,870	£11,798	£11,148	£650
Employee Insurances	£1,170	£1,073	£1,073	-£1
Employee Costs	£110,190	£101,008	£81,085	£19,923
Repairs & Maintenance	£28,750	£21,563	£33,835	-£12,273
Repairs & Maintenance - Trees	£12,000	£9,000	£0	£9,000
Gas	£4,040	£3,703	£1,102	£2,601
Electricity	£9,100	£8,342	£5,652	£2,690
Water Metered	£1,200	£1,100	£0	£1,100
Sewerage & Env Services	£1,100	£1,008	£0	£1,008
Trade Refuse Collection (Internal)	£13,530	£12,403	£6,285	£6,118
Premises Insurance	£1,680	£1,540	£1,540	£0
Equipment Purchase	£1,120	£1,027	£4,302	-£3,275
Equipment Maintenance	£2,080	£1,907	£0	£1,907
Equipment Hire	£520	£477	£0	£477
Vehicle Leasing & Running Costs	£5,000	£4,583	£1,170	£3,413
Materials & Supplies	£1,040	£953	£0	£953
Cash Collection	£2,420	£2,218	£2,218	£0
Computers and Software	£0	£0	£154	-£154
Protective Clothes	£520	£477	£0	£477
Photocopying	£520	£477	£0	£477
General Expenses	£1,410	£1,293	£501	£792
General Expenses - VAT	£10,400	£9,533	£5,048	£4,485
Audit Fee	£5,230	£4,794	£5,410	-£616
Professional Services Security	£11,000	£10,083	£14,693	-£4,610
Professional Services Consultancy	£3,000	£2,750	£2,464	£286
Direct Telephones	£210	£193	£0	£193
Mobile Telephones	£110	£101	£17	£84
General Insurances	£180	£165	£165	£0
External Print & Graphics	£170	£156	£0	£156
Controlled Running Costs	£116,330	£99,844	£84,556	£15,288
Fees & Charges - Car Parking	-£91,830	-£86,233	-£123,199	£36,966
Other Income - Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd	-£40,000	-£9,000	-£8,782	-£218

Cobtree Manor Estate	Approved Budget 2020/21	Profiled Budget to end of February 2021	Actual as at 28th February 2021	Variance at end of February 2021
Other Income	-£5,000	£0	£0	£0
Licences	-£420	£0	£0	£0
Rent Income (Café)	-£34,000	-£25,500	-£22,670	-£2,830
Contract Income - Relief Granted	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£0
Controlled Income	-£165,250	-£114,733	-£148,651	£33,918
MBC Staff Recharges	£48,560	£44,513	£44,513	£0
Rechargeable Costs	£48,560	£44,513	£44,513	£0
Cobtree Manor Park	£109,830	£130,632	£61,503	£69,129

KENT LIFE				
Repairs & Maintenance of Premises	£10,510	£9,634	£5,078	£4,556
Premises Insurance	£7,390	£6,774	£6,774	£0
General Expenses	£1,630	£1,494	£0	£1,494
General Expenses - VAT	£2,040	£1,870	£1,870	£0
Controlled Running Costs	£21,570	£19,773	£13,722	£6,051
Contract Income	-£74,130	-£37,065	-£37,065	£0
Contract Income - Relief Granted	£18,530	£18,530	£18,530	£0
Controlled Income	-£55,600	-£18,535	-£18,535	£0
MBC Staff Recharges	£9,640	£8,837	£8,837	-£0
Rechargeable Costs	£9,640	£8,837	£8,837	-£0
Kent Life	-£24,390	£10,074	£4,024	£6,050

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES				
Repairs & Maintenance	£12,750	£11,688	£854	£10,834
Non-Domestic Rates	£0		£1,354	-£1,354
Professional Services	£0		£1,935	-£1,935
Premises Insurance	£610	£559	£559	£0
Controlled Running Costs	£13,360	£12,247	£4,702	£7,545
Rent Income	-£26,000	-£23,833	-£19,731	-£4,102
Controlled Income	-£26,000	-£23,833	-£19,731	-£4,102
MBC Staff Recharges	£2,410	£2,209	£2,209	£0
Rechargeable Costs	£2,410	£2,209	£2,209	£0
Residential Properties	-£10,230	-£9,378	-£12,820	£3,443
OVERALL TOTALS	-£13,910	£37,694	-£46,463	£84,157

Investment Income	-£45,000	-£33,750	-£29,710	-£4,040
Net (surplus)/deficit for operational & investment activities	-£58,910	£3,944	-£76,173	£80,117
Repayment of car park construction costs	£69,650	£0	£0	£0
Net (surplus)/deficit after repayment	£10,740	£3,944	-£76,173	£80,117

**Cobtree Manor Estate Charity
Committee**

31 March 2021

Cobtree Estate Update

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

Noting

This report makes the following recommendation to this Committee:

1. That the contents of the report are noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	31 March 2021

Cobtree Estate Update

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.	Leisure Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross-cutting objectives of the council.	Leisure Manager
Risk Management	There are no risk management implications in this report.	Leisure Manager
Financial	Financial implications from this update are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	Staffing implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	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 Corporate Governance
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no new implications as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	No impact identified as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of our community and residents through its day-to-day operations.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies	Leisure Manager
Procurement	Procurement implications are managed day-to-	Head of

	day in line with council procedures and policies.	Regeneration and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Cobtree Estate continues to suffer as a result of the Covid-19 lockdowns and tiered restrictions that have been in force since March 2020. At the time of writing Tier 4 has been replaced with another lockdown.

Cobtree Manor Park

2.2 The park continues to be really busy. Car park income at the end of February 2021 was £115,015 which is a positive variance against the budget of £53,119. The Cobtree team has continued to manage the park and welcome the many visitors over this time.

Staffing

2.3 The new staffing structure for the park will be implemented from 1 April onwards. The staff have been conducting handover meetings and the transition is very smooth.

Golf Course

2.4 During the closure of the golf course, it has been maintained by Mytime Active, who operated a hibernation team of staff who were not furloughed during the latest lockdown. In addition some of the members have been volunteering on site to tend to the flower beds, varnish the benches, weed some of the bunkers and monitor the site for litter. Their contributions and efforts are noted.

2.5 Through discussion with the golf club members an issue has been raised regarding the measuring of the golf course from the blue tees and the yellow tees. As a requirement of the World Handicap System, which has been introduced across the UK, course need to be assessed for difficulty and measured from their teeing positions. Cobtree Golf Course has been measured from the red tees and the white tees, which are used for competition play, but not from the yellow tees and the blue tees which are used predominantly for social play.

2.6 Under World Handicap System rules any round of golf from any tee position can be used for handicapping purposes, which will not be a possibility at Cobtree Golf Course until the yellows and blues are measured.

2.7 The Leisure Manager has raised this issue with Mytime Active who are reassessing the decision to measure the course from all the tee positions.

Kent Life

- 2.8 Kent Life is planning to re-open on 12 April in line with the UK government's roadmap. The team will soon be returning to site to prepare it for re-opening. Some activities are being adapted and altered to make them Covid-compliant. Other activities, the tea room for example, will not be permitted until later in the year.

Cobtree Café

- 2.9 Cobtree Café has remained open and trading as a takeaway only during the latest lockdown and continues to be busy, in response to the increased visitor numbers in the park.

Cobtree Shed Group

- 2.10 The Cobtree Shed Group is not able to meet. The structural works at the elephant house have not progressed since the last meeting.

Residential Properties

- 2.11 A separate report on the estate's residential properties is also part of this agenda.

Contracts

- 2.12 Contractual discussions following the Covid-19 pandemic are still ongoing with operators. A separate report on this is also part of this 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.

5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.
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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

Agenda Item 14

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

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