

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2014

Present: **Councillor Perry (Chairman) and
Councillor Greer**

Also Present: **Councillor Mrs Ring**

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor McLoughlin and Mr Richard Corben, the Chairman of the Cobtree Charity Trust Limited.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Mrs Ring attended the meeting as an observer.

3. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Perry be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

4. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Greer be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

5. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

6. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

7. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

8. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2014**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

9. CHARITY KNOWN AS THE COBTREE MANOR ESTATE - FINANCIAL POSITION 2014/15

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance and Resources setting out details of the financial position in respect of the Golf Course and the Manor Park as at 31 May 2014. The report also included details of capital expenditure and total investments held. It was noted that:

- The 2013/14 outturn position, set out in Appendix A to the report, showed the net operational surplus for the Estate was £9,252. This was lower than previous years due to a combination of increased running costs at the Manor Park and some one-off costs incurred in respect of the Kent Life attraction. The draft accounts for 2013/14 would be reported to the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held in September.
- The Golf Course was projected to continue to produce a healthy net surplus for 2014/15, but the projected deficit on the Manor Park meant that only a small overall net surplus was forecast. Costs would be monitored closely to ensure that the activities of the Estate at least break even for the year. There would also be some additional costs incurred in respect of the Kent Life attraction, but it was anticipated that there would be sufficient income to cover them. With the ongoing implementation of the Master Plan, there was an opportunity to develop additional income streams to cover these extra costs.
- The budget for the implementation of the Master Plan had been set at £1.065m. To date there had been expenditure of £678,068 on Phase 1 works in respect of the play area, car park and other associated works, and funding to the value of £506,000 had been drawn down from the endowment fund to cover the expenditure, with the balance being funded from previous operational surpluses generated from the Estate activities.

In response to a question by a Member, the Senior Accountant confirmed that regular updates would be provided to assure the Committee that costs were being monitored closely.

RESOLVED: That the financial position in respect of the Golf Course and the Manor Park be noted.

10. COBTREE ESTATE UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Cobtree Officer setting out details of work undertaken across the Cobtree Estate during the period November 2013 to June 2014. It was noted that:

- Visitor figures to date showed that the popularity of the Manor Park continued to improve, with visitor numbers up 55% on the previous year.

- Work on the tender package for the operation and management of the Golf Course was progressing, but it was likely that an extension to the existing lease would be required to enable the exercise to be completed.
- Tenders had been invited for the construction of the new Visitor Centre/Cafe, and it was anticipated that a recommendation would be made to the September meeting of the Committee regarding the appointment of a contractor.
- Quotes for the replacement of the two refurbished huts at the rear of the Kent Life site, which were burnt down in a suspected arson attack in June 2014, would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee. In the meantime, action had been taken to improve security at the site.

Members reiterated the need to ensure that the new Visitor Centre/Cafe was delivered on time and within budget.

RESOLVED: That the progress report on the works undertaken across the Cobtree Estate during the period November 2013 to June 2014, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Cobtree Officer, be noted.

11. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REVIEW 2014

DECISION MADE:

That the Risk Assessment documents attached as Appendices A and B to the report of the Cobtree Officer be endorsed.

For further information regarding this decision, please follow this link:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AIId=18322>

12. DURATION OF MEETING

5.50 p.m. to 6.05 p.m.