

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER
ADJOURNED TO 22 DECEMBER 2014**

Present: Councillor Perry (Chairman) and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Greer and McLoughlin

Also Present: Councillor Mrs Ring

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

34. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Mrs Ring indicated her wish to speak on the report of the Cobtree Officer relating to the Cobtree Golf Course.

35. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

36. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

37. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED:

1. That the exempt Appendix to the report of the Cobtree Officer relating to the Cobtree Golf Course be considered in public, but the information contained therein should remain private.
2. That the exempt Appendix to the report of the Cobtree Officer relating to the future management of Cobtree Manor Park and the Visitor Centre/Cafe be taken in private as proposed.

38. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

39. 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, the Manor Park and the Kent Life visitor attraction as at 31 October 2014. The report also included details of capital expenditure and total investments held. It was noted that:

- No significant financial issues had arisen during November. The Golf Course was projected to continue to produce a healthy net surplus for 2014/15. However, the projected deficit on the Manor Park meant that there would be an overall net operational deficit on the Estate activities. The deficit was due to additional grounds maintenance and staffing costs being incurred as a result of increased usage of the Park following the opening of the new play area and costs were being monitored closely. With the on-going 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 was set at £1.065m, to be funded by drawing down from the endowment funds invested with Charifund. Additional funding of £0.3m from the Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd for the Visitor Centre would reduce the need to withdraw funds from Charifund.
- To date there had been expenditure of £678,918 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. Expenditure to date on the Visitor Centre was £22,384. An additional £124,238 had been spent on dilapidation repairs at the Kent Life attraction, the majority of the funding for which had come as part of the agreement bringing the attraction back under the control of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the financial position in respect of the Golf Course, the Manor Park and the Kent Life visitor attraction be noted.

40. COBTREE ESTATE PROGRESS REPORT AND 2015 EVENTS PROGRAMME

DECISION MADE:

1. That the progress report on work being undertaken across the Cobtree Estate, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Cobtree Officer, be noted.
2. That the lower insurance sum of £12,500 offered by the Council's insurers in lieu of replacement of the sheds destroyed by the fire at the Kent Life site be accepted.
3. That the Cobtree Officer be authorised to investigate options for improving the sewerage system at the Kent Life visitor attraction, and, in consultation with the Chairman of the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee, to assess those options and select the most appropriate solution.

4. That the most appropriate solution having been selected, the £12,500 insurance proceeds in lieu of the replacement of the sheds plus a further sum, up to a maximum of £30,000, drawn from the operating surplus generated by the Kent Life visitor attraction be used towards the improvement of the sewerage system serving Kent Life.
5. That details of Continuum's projected outturn for 2014 in respect of the Kent Life visitor attraction be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.
6. That agreement be given to the 2015 events programme for Cobtree Manor Park being made up of events that can be delivered by the Park Ranger or with volunteers to enable a programme to go ahead at minimal cost to the Charity.
- 7 That the Cobtree Officer be authorised to:
 - (a) seek at least two quotes for the appointment of a specialist consultant to investigate and advise on the range of options relating to the future re-tendering of the Kent Life management contract on a long term basis, to produce the tender document, and to manage the tender process; and
 - (b) in consultation with the Chairman of the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee, to then select and proceed with the appointment of a consultant up to a maximum consultancy fee of £10,000.
8. That the Head of Legal Partnership be authorised to enter into a professional services contract with the chosen consultant.

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

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AId=19751>

41. COBTREE GOLF COURSE

DECISION MADE:

1. That agreement be given to the extension of the existing contract for the operation of the Cobtree Golf Course dated 1 January 2011 (varied by a deed of variation dated 9 January 2014) to 9 September 2016 and other variations to the existing contract as set out in the Heads of Terms attached as exempt Appendix A to the report of the Cobtree Officer.
2. That the Cobtree Officer be authorised to:
 - (a) seek at least two quotes for the appointment of a specialist consultant to investigate and advise on the range of options

relating to the future re-tendering of the Cobtree Golf Course contract on a long term basis; and

(b) in consultation with the Chairman of the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee, select and proceed with the appointment of a consultant up to a maximum consultancy fee of £10,000.

3. That the Head of Legal Partnership be authorised to:

(a) enter into a deed of variation of contract with the current operator in relation to this extension; and

(b) enter into a professional services contract with the chosen consultant.

4. That a proposal for the long term management of the Golf Course or other options be reported back to the Committee for approval.

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

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AIId=19370>

42. THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF COBTREE MANOR PARK AND THE VISITOR CENTRE/CAFE

The Committee considered the report of the Cobtree Officer setting out the options for the future management of the Cobtree Manor Park and the Visitor Centre/Cafe.

The Committee, wishing to consider the information contained in the exempt Appendix to the report of the Cobtree Officer in private:

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

Exempt Appendix to the Report of the Cobtree Officer relating to the Future Management of the Cobtree Manor Park and the Visitor Centre/Cafe

3 – Financial/Business Affairs

Having discussed the information contained in the exempt Appendix to the report of the Cobtree Officer in private, the Committee:

RESOLVED: That the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

FURTHER RESOLVED: That since all Members of the Committee are expected to attend a meeting of the Cabinet scheduled to commence at 6.30 p.m., the meeting be adjourned to the earliest available date.

43. DURATION OF MEETING

5.40 p.m. to 6.35 p.m.