

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 18 March 2020
Time: 2.30 p.m.
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

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

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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|---|---------|
| 1. Apologies for Absence | |
| 2. Notification of Substitute Members | |
| 3. Urgent Items | |
| 4. Notification of Visiting Members | |
| 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers | |
| 6. Disclosures of Lobbying | |
| 7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information. | |
| 8. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 | 1 - 9 |
| 9. Presentation of Petitions (if any) | |
| 10. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any) | |
| 11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any) | |
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Issued on Tuesday 10 March 2020

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

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In order to speak at this meeting, please contact Democratic Services using the contact details above by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. Monday 16 March 2020). If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillor McLoughlin (Chairman) and
Councillors Cox, Mrs Gooch and Mrs Hinder

50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

51. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

52. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

53. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

54. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

55. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Mrs Gooch stated that she had been lobbied regarding the need to complete the lease and management agreement to the Cobtree Young Farmers' Club as soon as possible to enable the Club to secure funding through a Heritage Lottery funded project and commence conservation grazing on part of Forstal Field.

56. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

57. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

58. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

59. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

60. LAND AT COBTREE MANOR ESTATE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Property Manager concerning a request by Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Limited for a new agreement under the Electronic Communications Code to enable it to continue to use land adjacent to the Cobtree Golf Course for the installation and operation of telecommunications equipment.

The Corporate Property Manager advised the Committee that:

- Under the Communications Act 2003, Code Operators such as Cornerstone had rights to install and maintain electronic communications equipment. If an agreement could not be reached with the landowner of the chosen location, there were statutory powers that could be used to allow the Code Operator to acquire rights with the consent of the landowner.
- There were two options available to the Council as follows:

The first option was to grant the agreement on terms negotiated by utility agent GW Finn (an agreement for a term of ten years at an annual rent of £240, plus a £3,000 one-off payment towards the Council's fees, and a premium of £5,600). This represented a reduction in annual rent of £5,100, but with the new powers granted to operators there was nothing that could be done to protect current income.

The second option was to refuse to enter into the agreement and leave the operator to use its statutory powers to install and operate the equipment.

RESOLVED:

1. That an Electronic Communications Code Agreement be granted to Cornerstone Telecommunications Limited to continue to use land adjacent to the Cobtree Golf Course for the installation and operation of telecommunications equipment under the terms outlined in the report of the Corporate Property Manager.
2. That Mid-Kent Legal Services be requested to prepare the relevant legal documents and complete the transaction.

61. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE UPDATE REPORT

The Leisure Manager presented his report providing an update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate during the period November 2019 to January 2020. The report included details of:

- Maintenance works, staffing issues, including the appointment of Nigel Holman as the new Cobtree Officer with effect from 1 February 2020, visitor numbers and the progress on the preparation of a new management plan and Green Flag submission for the Manor Park.
- The progress being made by MyTime Active with regard to the Golf Course development works.
- The success of Kent Life in winning the silver award in the best large attraction category at the Visit Kent awards and in winning the silver award in Tourism South East's Awards for Excellence for the best Tourism Festival/Experience.
- The position with regard to the completion of the lease and management agreement to the Cobtree Young Farmers' Club to enable it to secure funding through a Heritage Lottery funded project and commence conservation grazing on part of Forstal Field.
- The progress of the discussions with Planning Solutions, the operators of Kent Life, regarding the proposed Cobtree Railway project.

During the discussion on this item:

The Leisure Manager undertook to circulate the new management plan for the Manor Park and an update on the Golf Course works to Members of the Committee for information.

Concern was expressed about the time being taken to finalise the lease and management agreement to the Cobtree Young Farmers' Club. Members were mindful of the need for the documentation to be completed before 1 March 2020 to enable the Club to secure funding. It was suggested and agreed that the Corporate Property Manager be given delegated authority to put in place an arrangement to enable the Club to occupy land at Forstal Field until such time that the lease and management agreement are finalised, and that an update be provided for Members of the Committee by the end of the month.

It was also suggested and agreed that Members of the Committee should meet with representatives of the Cobtree Charity Trust Limited and the operators of Kent Life to discuss the proposed Cobtree Railway project and, in particular, the funding and operational arrangements.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate during the period November 2019 to January 2020 be noted.
2. That the Corporate Property Manager be given delegated authority to put in place an arrangement to enable the Cobtree Young Farmers' Club to occupy land at Forstal Field until such time that the lease and management agreement are finalised, and that an update be provided for Members of the Committee by the end of the month.

3. That Members of the Committee should meet with representatives of the Cobtree Charity Trust Limited and the operators of Kent Life to discuss the proposed Cobtree Railway project and, in particular, the funding and operational arrangements.

62. POND CREATION AT FORSTAL FIELD

The Leisure Manager introduced his report setting out details of a proposal for Natural England to fund and create a new pond of approximately 200 square metres on the Forstal Field. It was noted that the new pond would improve the habitat and biodiversity of the Cobtree Manor Park. It would also be used as a receptor site for Great Crested Newts displaced by development in the Borough and surrounding areas and this would provide additional income for the Charity.

RESOLVED:

1. That agreement be given to the creation of a new pond on Forstal Field.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee to confirm the precise location of the pond when scale maps are available.

63. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE FINANCIAL POSITION

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) introduced his report summarising the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 30 November 2019. The report covered the Golf Course, Kent Life, the Manor Park and residential properties. The report also included details of the proposed budgets for 2020/21 and an update on the Service Level Agreement.

Financial Position

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

- The summary totals showed a positive variance of £13,854 for the Charity at the end of November 2019. The forecast for the year was for an operational surplus of £55,920, compared to a provisional surplus of £35,596 for 2018/19.
- There were no issues to report at this stage in respect of the Cobtree Golf Course. Mytime had been invoiced for the first three quarters of 2019/20 and the first two invoices had been paid.
- In overall terms, the budget for the Manor Park was showing an underspend but there were some underlying issues:

The new Apprentice post was still vacant, and would not be filled during this financial year, resulting in an underspend on employee costs.

There were some overspends on controlled running costs relating mainly to electricity, equipment purchases and security costs, but these additional costs had been partially offset by underspends on repairs and maintenance and employee costs.

Car park income continued to be high and the profit share element of the café contract had generated more income than was forecast. These two income streams together with the underspends on repairs and maintenance and employee costs meant that the issues outlined above were covered.

- There were no issues to report at this stage in respect of Kent Life and residential properties.

In response to questions, the Senior Finance Manager (Client) explained that expenditure on electricity had been investigated. It appeared that a meter reading was taken resulting in previous bills being amended to reflect actual usage. With regard to the Cobtree Golf Course, the 2/9^{ths} share payable to the Borough Council was the total share of net income payable and did include recharges.

Budgets 2020/21

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

- The proposed budgets for 2020/21 included a revised budget for the current year. The revised budget for 2019/20 should show the sum of £69,950 in respect of the repayment of car park construction costs, leaving a net surplus after repayment of £30,970.
- In overall terms the projected surplus from operational and investment activities for 2020/21 was £55,440 compared to £55,920 for the current year. After allowing for investment income and the repayment of the car park construction costs the overall net surplus reduced to £30,790 which was broadly in line with the cashflow projections previously reported to the Committee.
- Issues to highlight included the reduction in income received from the siting of telecommunications equipment on land adjacent to the Cobtree Golf Course and the disaggregation of the Manor Park repair and maintenance budget to provide new budgets for tree work, vehicle leasing and running costs, consultancy and gate locking. It had been the intention to deal with gate locking as part of the recent staff restructure, but following a review it had been decided that using a security company would be the most appropriate course of action. Consideration was being given to introducing alternative mowing arrangements to reduce costs.

Service Level Agreement

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) advised the Committee that Mid-Kent Legal Services had been asked to redraft the Service Level Agreement (SLA) to ensure that it accurately reflects the complex nature of the relationship between the Charity and the various Council departments. This was to ensure that the roles of the various Officers are clarified sufficiently to ensure that no conflicts of interest arise in their dealings with Charity matters. It was the aim to report the SLA back to the Committee in March 2020.

During the discussion on the SLA, the Chairman reiterated that a condensed version of the document was required.

RESOLVED:

1. That the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 30 November 2019 be noted.
2. That the proposed budgets for 2020/21 be agreed.
3. That the progress to date with the Service Level Agreement between the Borough Council and the Charity be noted.

64. ACCOUNTS 2018/19

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) introduced his report setting out the audited Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 for approval prior to submission to the Charity Commission by 31 January 2020.

It was noted that:

- The audit had been undertaken by UHY Hacker Young, the Charity's External Auditors, who intended to issue an unmodified audit opinion.
- No major issues had arisen regarding the accounts during the audit. A number of adjustments were made to the draft accounts submitted for audit and there was a small number of unadjusted misstatements none of which had had any impact upon the financial resources available to the Charity.
- The total funds of the Charity as shown on the Balance Sheet had increased from £4.26m to £5.17m, with the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) showing a net funds increase of £906,633 for the year. The increase in the funds included gains on the revaluations of both the fixed assets of the Charity and the investments held.
- There had been a significant increase in the value of the investment properties held following a review of the valuation approach by the External Auditors who had recommended that the most appropriate approach would be to use fair value rather than existing use value.

Fair value broadly reflected the open market value of the properties if they were to be sold whereas existing use value reflected their worth in their current form.

- The External Auditors had indicated that in their opinion this would increase the value of the investment properties by £770,000 and this had led to the increase in funds held. Formal valuations would be done on this basis going forward. This had no operational or financial impact on the resources of the Charity but ensured that the balance sheet more accurately reflects the value of the assets held.
- The accounts now included a figure for the repayment of the money loaned by the Borough Council towards the cost of the car park works. This was shown under creditors on the balance sheet.
- The accounts also included the write-off of a debt of £9,266 for a sum that was due from Mytime. This debt dated back a number of years and related to an agreement that was made at the time that MyTime would reimburse the Charity for new ovens installed in the Golf Course Clubhouse. The agreement was not followed up and recovery of the debt was now considered unlikely.
- The majority of the significant reductions in the comparator figures in the notes to the accounts were due to the operation of the café/visitor centre passing to an external contractor in April 2018.
- The purpose of the Letter of Representation for 2018/19 was to ask the Committee to confirm a number of statements relating to the audit and the information supplied to the External Auditors during the course of their audit.
- The purpose of the Management Letter was to draw the attention of the Committee to matters of interest that had arisen during the external audit process including the recommendation relating to the basis of investment property valuations.

During the discussion on the accounts, it was suggested and agreed that the Officers be requested to circulate to all Members of the Committee details of the multiplier of rental income used for the valuations of investment property and to discuss with the External Auditors the change in the valuation approach and the link between rental income and asset values. It was also suggested and agreed that the Officers seek clarification regarding the involvement of Kent County Council in the governance arrangements of the Charity.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audited Report and Financial Statements for 2018/19 be approved and submitted to the Charity Commission.
2. That the change in the valuation approach for investment properties be noted.

3. That the Letter of Representation be approved.
4. That the contents of the Management Letter and the proposed course of actions by the Officers be noted.
5. That the Officers be requested to circulate to all Members of the Committee details of the multiplier of rental income used for the valuations of investment property and to discuss with the External Auditors the change in the valuation approach and the link between rental income and asset values.
6. That the Officers seek clarification regarding the involvement of Kent County Council in the governance arrangements of the Charity.

65. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) reminded Members that at the last meeting of the Committee consideration of the appointment of External Auditors had been deferred pending the receipt of further information to include a breakdown of the quote submitted by UHY Hacker Young (UHY) (the previous External Auditors) to provide external audit services for 2019/20 and 2020/21; clarification from the Procurement Team as to whether three written quotes in advance are required; and the current statutory audit thresholds for Charities and whether an independent examination would be appropriate for the Charity.

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) then introduced his report addressing these issues. It was noted that:

- UHY had previously quoted fees of £5,410 plus Vat for 2019/20 and £5,545 plus VAT for 2020/21. UHY had provided an indicative breakdown of the estimated costs for the various phases of the audit and whilst the total costs shown were more than the fees quoted, UHY had advised that they do not generally recharge the full cost of the audit to the Charity.
- The Borough Council's Contract Procedure Rules, which the Charity follows, require three written quotes in advance where the cost of the works/service is greater than £10K. In this case, as the total of the fees cumulatively is in excess of 10K, three quotes should be sought but the Director of Finance and Business Improvement had indicated that he would be prepared to sign a contract waiver form as the total sum was not significantly in excess of 10k. This would enable UHY to be reappointed for a further period if considered appropriate by the Committee.
- As the Charity had gross income of £0.462m and gross assets of £5.47m on the 2018/19 balance sheet, then the thresholds for independent examination had been exceeded and an external audit was required.

The Committee felt that UHY should be reappointed as External Auditors to the Charity for 2019/20 and 2020/21 and that quotes be sought in line with the Borough Council's procurement rules for the provision of External Audit services in subsequent years in due course.

RESOLVED: That UHY Hacker Young be reappointed as External Auditors to the Charity for 2019/20 and 2020/21 and that quotes be sought in line with the Borough Council's procurement rules for the provision of External Audit services in subsequent years in due course.

66. DURATION OF MEETING

2.30 p.m. to 4.15 p.m.

Agenda Item 12

**Cobtree Manor Estate
Committee**

18 March 2020

Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

Final Decision-Maker	Cobtree Manor Estate Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development – John Foster
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 29 February 2020 covering the activities at the golf course, Kent Life, the Manor Park and the Café/Visitor Centre. It also includes an update on the Service Level Agreement.

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 Charity.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the current financial position be noted.
2. That the position on the Service Level Agreement be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Committee	18 March 2020

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 Charity 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 Charity if the operations cost more than predicted or fail to generate sufficient income to cover the costs of running the estate.	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.	Team Leader (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 last few years have seen a number of significant financial pressures and issues, and it is important for the future of the Estate that these are addressed and monitored.

3. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

3.1 The table below summarises the position as at 29th February 2020. **Appendix 1** provides a more detailed breakdown of the figures.

3.1.1 Overall Summary Position:

SUMMARY TOTALS

	A	B	C	(B-C)
	Budget for Year 2019/20	Budget to end of February 2020	Actuals to end of February 2020	Variance as at end of February 2020
Golf Course	-£110,390	-£75,020	-£78,428	£3,408
Manor Park	£105,950	£129,045	£83,377	£45,668
Kent Life	-£40,840	-£7,195	-£5,399	-£1,796
Residential Properties	-£10,640	-£9,700	-£10,816	£1,116
Totals	-£55,920	£37,130	-£11,266	£48,396

The table above shows a positive variance of £48,396 for the Committee at the end of February. The budgeted forecast for the year is for an operational surplus of £55,920, compared to a surplus of £35,596 for 2018/19.

Comments on the individual service areas are as follows:

3.1.2 **Cobtree Golf Course** – There are no issues to report at this stage. Mytime have been invoiced for the first three quarters for 2019/20.

3.1.3 **Cobtree Manor Park** – In overall terms the budget for the park shows an underspend. As previously advised, there are some underlying issues with overspends against some budget heads within controlled running costs, but these are offset by underspends in other areas, the most significant one being repairs and maintenance.

Car park income continues to be high, and the profit share element of the café contract has realised more income than was forecast, and these two areas along with the employee costs underspend have covered the issues arising from the areas discussed above.

3.1.4 **Kent Life** - There are no issues to report at this stage. Planning Solutions have been invoiced for the first instalment due for this year.

3.1.5 **Residential Properties**- There are no issues to report at this stage.

4. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

4.1 Members will recall from previous meetings that the format of the agreement was being reviewed to ensure that it accurately reflects the complex nature of the relationship between the Charity and the various Council departments. This is to ensure that the roles of various officers are clarified sufficiently to ensure that no conflicts of interest will arise in their dealings with Charity matters.

4.2 It had been anticipated that a further draft would be available for the Committee to consider at this meeting, however due to other work commitments within Mid-Kent Legal Services it has not yet been finalised, so it is now planned to bring it to the first full Committee meeting in the new municipal year.

5. **AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

5.1 Sections 3 and 4 are for noting only.

6. **PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Sections 3 and 4 are for noting only.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Officers will continue to monitor the financial position and take appropriate action where necessary.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Financial Position as at 29th February 2020
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Appendix 1

	A	B	C	(B-C)
	Budget for Year 2019/20	Budget to end of February 2020	Actuals to end of February 2020	Variance as at end of February 2020
GOLF COURSE				
Repairs & Maintenance	£2,950	£2,700	£1,238	£1,462
Premises Insurance	£1,190	£1,190	£1,190	£0
Equipment Maintenance	£1,020	£940	£0	£940
General Expenses - VAT	£3,100	£2,840	£2,714	£126
Licence Fees	£200	£180	£0	£180
Direct Telephones	£820	£750	£0	£750
Controlled Running Costs	£9,280	£8,600	£5,142	£3,458
Contract Income	-£159,130	-£119,350	-£119,350	£0
Rent Income	-£5,300	-£5,300	-£5,250	-£50
Controlled Income	-£164,430	-£124,650	-£124,600	-£50
MBC Staff Recharges	£13,790	£12,640	£12,640	£0
Rechargeable Costs	£13,790	£12,640	£12,640	£0
Cobtree Golf Course	-£141,360	-£103,410	-£106,818	£3,408
MBC 2/9ths share	£30,970	£28,390	£28,390	£0
CMET Total	-£110,390	-£75,020	-£78,428	£3,408

MANOR PARK				
Salaries	£70,960	£65,050	£59,693	£5,357
Overtime	£4,000	£3,670	£226	£3,444
Employers NI	£6,370	£5,840	£5,199	£641
Employers Superannuation	£10,070	£9,230	£7,990	£1,240
Employee Insurances	£1,120	£930	£930	£0
Employee Costs	£92,520	£84,720	£74,038	£10,682
Repairs & Maintenance	£52,600	£48,220	£35,505	£12,715
Gas	£3,960	£2,970	£1,700	£1,270
Electricity	£11,860	£6,645	£9,063	-£2,418
Water Metered	£1,180	£885	£750	£135
Sewerage & Env Services	£1,080	£810	£0	£810
Trade Refuse Collection (Internal)	£13,260	£12,160	£12,153	£7
Premises Insurance	£1,610	£1,610	£1,610	£0
Equipment Purchase	£5,020	£4,600	£8,823	-£4,223
Equipment Maintenance	£2,040	£1,870	£0	£1,870
Equipment Hire	£510	£470	£0	£470
Materials & Supplies	£1,020	£940	£2,066	-£1,126
Cash Collection	£2,370	£2,170	£537	£1,633
Protective Clothes	£510	£470	£297	£173
Photocopying	£510	£470	£93	£377
General Expenses	£1,380	£1,270	£51	£1,219
General Expenses - VAT	£10,200	£9,350	£8,682	£668
Audit Fee	£5,130	£5,130	£5,430	-£300
Professional Services Security	£17,640	£16,170	£16,867	-£697
Direct Telephones	£210	£190	£46	£144
Mobile Telephones	£110	£100	£82	£18
Computer & Software	£5,000	£4,580	£3,627	£953
General Insurances	£180	£170	£1,310	-£1,140
External Print & Graphics	£170	£160	£0	£160
Qualifications & Training	£0	£0	£685	-£685
Vehicle Repairs & Servicing	£0	£0	£757	-£757
Controlled Running Costs	£137,550	£121,410	£110,134	£11,276
Fees & Charges - Car Parking	-£91,470	-£84,495	-£95,389	£10,894
Other Income - Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd	-£40,000	£0	-£1,203	£1,203
Other Income	-£5,000	-£4,580	-£5,300	£720
Licences	-£420	-£390	-£80	-£310
Rent Income (Café)	-£34,000	-£30,500	-£41,703	£11,203
Controlled Income	-£170,890	-£119,965	-£143,675	£23,710
MBC Staff Recharges	£46,770	£42,880	£42,880	£0

Appendix 1

	A	B	C	(B-C)
	Budget for Year 2019/20	Budget to end of February 2020	Actuals to end of February 2020	Variance as at end of February 2020
Rechargeable Costs	£46,770	£42,880	£42,880	£0
Cobtree Manor Park	£105,950	£129,045	£83,377	£45,668
KENT LIFE				
Repairs & Maintenance of Premises	£10,300	£9,440	£13,271	-£3,831
Premises Insurance	£7,110	£7,110	£7,110	£0
General Expenses	£1,600	£1,470	£0	£1,470
General Expenses - VAT	£2,000	£1,830	£1,265	£565
Controlled Running Costs	£21,010	£19,850	£21,646	-£1,796
Contract Income	-£71,170	-£35,585	-£35,585	£0
Controlled Income	-£71,170	-£35,585	-£35,585	£0
MBC Staff Recharges	£9,320	£8,540	£8,540	£0
Rechargeable Costs	£9,320	£8,540	£8,540	£0
Kent Life	-£40,840	-£7,195	-£5,399	-£1,796
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES				
Repairs & Maintenance	£12,500	£11,460	£8,237	£3,223
Premises Insurance	£550	£550	£550	£0
Controlled Running Costs	£13,050	£12,010	£8,787	£3,223
Rent Income	-£26,000	-£23,830	-£21,723	-£2,107
Controlled Income	-£26,000	-£23,830	-£21,723	-£2,107
MBC Staff Recharges	£2,310	£2,120	£2,120	£0
Rechargeable Costs	£2,310	£2,120	£2,120	£0
Residential Properties	-£10,640	-£9,700	-£10,816	£1,116
OVERALL TOTALS	-£55,920	£37,130	-£11,266	£48,396

Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee

18 March 2020

Cobtree Manor 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 estate’s day-to-day work and the work and achievements of the different sites that make up the estate.

Purpose of Report

For the Committee to note the work of the estate since its last meeting in January 2020.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the contents of the report are noted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	18 March 2020

Cobtree Manor 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
Staffing	Staffing implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
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 which will be undertaken by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement. There are no specific legal implications at present as this report is presented for noting only.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no new implications as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Equalities	No impact identified as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of residents through its day-to-day operations	Senior 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-day in line with council procedures and policies	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development and [Section 151 Officer]

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 This report covers the period 1 January 2020 to 29 February 2020

Cobtree Manor Park

- 2.2 The new Cobtree Park Manager has made a really good start in the role, getting to know the park rangers and understanding the day-to-day challenges and opportunities. He has submitted the park's Green Flag application and we look forward to our Green Flag inspection visit at some point in 2020.
- 2.3 The wet weather experienced across the borough has impacted on the park's visitor numbers and parking income over the last two months, but the February half-term holiday was a busy week and numbers have been increasing in late February. Car park income analysis shows that there were 10,750 paid vehicle visits in January and February 2019. The same period in 2020 had 8,346 visits. For the year to date there have been 56,541 paid vehicle visits. The same 48-week period in 2018/19 had 65,801 vehicle visits. These figures do not include season ticket visits.
- 2.4 The park rangers' container suffered a break in during the half term week and unfortunately some key items of equipment were stolen. Insurance claim works are progressing to replace these items. This claim is for approximately £3,500. The container building is no longer ideal for park staff so the Leisure Manager and Cobtree Park Manager are working on alternative solutions. Capital spending of £30,000 for new containers and associated compound works is in the current capital programme. A future report on this subject will be brought to this committee. The Cobtree Park rangers have temporarily relocated to the Elephant House building.
- 2.5 The park's 2020–2030 management plan is in the final draft stage. The Leisure Manager will distribute it to committee members and bring the final version to this committee with a report for formal sign off. The new plan enables the park to focus more closely on sustainability, climate change and biodiversity.
- 2.6 The overflow car park area has not been opened this year because of the weather. Investigations of the area have also identified significant root

damage to the trees, caused by continued car parking. This area is being rested for the time being while a plan is developed that will balance the protection of trees with the needs of park users.

- 2.7 Quotations have been sought for electronic park gates, which will give greater flexibility to the park team and make savings in future years. Initial conversations include solar powered and mains powered solutions. Capital expenditure of £20,000 for security is in the current capital programme and initial quotations indicate the gates can be delivered within this budget. The 2020/2021 budget also includes £11,000 revenue for park security, so budgetary savings can be realised as early as the 2020/2021 financial year.

Cobtree Young Farmers at Forstal Field

- 2.8 A separate report is also on the agenda for this project. The Cobtree team continue to work with Kent County Council, Old Chalk New Down project representatives and the Cobtree Young Farmers to deliver conservation grazing on Forstal Field as per committee's decision from the 6 November 2019 meeting.

Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course

- 2.9 The wet weather has proved problematic at the golf course as well. Numbers of rounds are down on 2019 and the course had to be closed for one week in January, which is believed to be the longest closure period in the course's history. Offers and pricing is being used to combat this and pay and play income from visitors is helping to reduce the impact of the closure.
- 2.10 At the time of writing archaeological works are being completed in preparation for the course upgrade works. The planning conditions for the course works have now all been discharged. The planning application for the clubhouse building extension will be submitted in March 2020 to enable building works to commence at the end of the 2020 season.
- 2.11 The course will operate as an 18-hole course for the summer of 2020 and the landscaping works for the new course layout will begin in autumn 2020. This news has been well received by members and customers who are committing to Cobtree for the 2020 season. This will help achieve financial targets in 2020.

Kent Life

- 2.12 Kent Life have won a Red Rosette tourism award, formally known as the Visit Attraction Quality Assurance Service Award, for their customer experience and customer service.
- 2.13 The works to complete the play barn have been completed and came in significantly under the budget set aside in the 2019/2020 capital plan. As well as these works Kent Life have also completed their annual maintenance works in readiness for 2020. They have refurbished toilets and completed remedial works on some of the buildings.

- 2.14 New for 2020 are two ponies that have been rescued from the RSPCA. They are a welcomed addition to the cuddle corner aspect of Kent Life as well as being available for photographs for some birthday parties and weddings.

Cobtree Railway

- 2.15 At the time of writing, a meeting at Kent Life with Cobtree Charity Trust and Planning Solutions will explore the viability of the railway operation in greater detail. A verbal update on the railway will be given at this meeting.

Residential Properties

- 2.16 The leisure manager has been working with the senior finance manager and colleagues in housing to understand the rental cottages in more detail. Through those discussions it has been identified that one of the properties could become vacant in the near future. The leisure manager will investigate this further and bring an update to this committee's next meeting.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Committee can note the information contained 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.

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 parties.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- None
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee

18 March 2020

Cobtree Manor Park financial delegations

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

A report on the current financial delegations for officers at Cobtree Manor Park and the impact that the spending limits have on park operational matters

Purpose of Report

For the committee to make a decision on increasing the spending limits for officers relating to operational matters and emergency situations.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the officer spending limit is increased to £10,000 as per Maidstone Borough Council financial procedures and
2. That in emergency situations and in consultation with the committee chair the officer spending limit is increased to £15,000

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	18 March 2020

Cobtree Manor Park financial delegations

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.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross cutting objectives of the council.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Risk Management	The risks of not implementing this recommendation are references in paragraphs 1.10 to 1.20, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Financial	The Committee will continue to receive regular financial performance updates and will be able to assess the impact of this decision going forward.	Paul Holland – Senior Finance Manager
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	John Foster – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
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 which will be undertaken by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement. Accepting this recommendation will align the committee’s procedures more closely to the Council’s constitution.	Jayne Bolas – Principal Solicitor
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 as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy & Information Manager

Public Health	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of residents through its day-to-day operations.	Senior Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Procurement	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for all future spend. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.	John Foster – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Maidstone Borough Council, through Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee, is the corporate trustee of the charity known as Cobtree Manor Estate. Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee operates Cobtree in line with Maidstone Borough Council procedures and policies in all areas including employment, procurement, health and safety, and legal.
- 1.2 The Cobtree budgets are set annually and agreed by Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee. Cobtree Manor Park finances are managed by the Senior Finance Manager and day-to-day spending is overseen by the Leisure Manager.
- 1.3 The Cobtree Park Manager, the Leisure Manager and the Senior Finance Manager meet regularly to monitor and discuss the Cobtree Manor Park budgets.
- 1.4 Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee follows the majority of Maidstone Borough Council financial procedures, although there is one key difference and that difference is having an impact on the day-to-day operations of the park and on the ability of the park team to deliver the best possible service to customers.
- 1.5 The Leisure Manager sign off limit for budgetary spend at Cobtree is set at £5,000. For Maidstone Borough Council budgets, under Director discretion, the Leisure Manager would have a sign off limit of up between £25,000 and £50,000. The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development also has a sign off limit of £5,000 at Cobtree compared to a limit of up to £75,000 for Maidstone Borough Council budgets.
- 1.6 The constitution says that the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development has “responsibility for the management of the Cobtree Trust and Estate” but he must do this with a sign off limit of £5,000.

- 1.7 Mid-Kent Legal Officers have been investigating the background of Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee for the Service Level Agreement work that the Senior Finance Officer is leading on. Legal documentation relating to Cobtree has not been easy to find. Mid-Kent Legal officers rely on a 2006 memorandum written by Ian Trueman that explains the relationship between the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee and Maidstone Borough Council. It explains that Full Council establishes policies for Cobtree Manor Estate Charity but it doesn't explain what those policies are.
- 1.8 To date, no documentation relating to how and why these financial limits were set for officers has been identified. The Leisure Manager has conducted his own searches and consulted with Democratic Services and the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance but he is yet to find any previous decisions or reports relating to the setting of these limits.
- 1.9 The current procedures may be convention, and not based on previous decisions. However Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee has made decisions on financial limits in the past. Sections 1.10 and 1.12 give detail of some previous decisions that Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee has taken to alter spending limits. This may suggest that the committee has the authority to set its financial delegations as it sees fit, providing it does not exceed the limits set by the Maidstone Borough Council constitution.
- 1.10 The minutes from the meeting in 20 November 2009 show that previous reports have requested Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee to authorise spending for items that cost £15 and £300. Searches of subsequent minutes have not revealed a report that sought to change that practice and give officers the current spend limit, but it is certainly true that today officers do not need to take requests to spend £300 which suggests at some point since 2009 this practice was altered.
- 1.11 The Senior Finance Manager believes committee discussed and approved the £5,000 limit "around 10 years ago". If that were the case, and that amount were index linked, today's limit would be £6,757 (using an average inflation of 3.1% per annum since 2010).
- 1.12 The 9 November 2011 meeting included a resolution "that officers be given delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman or the Leader of the Council to authorise unbudgeted expenditure up to the value of £3,000 in emergency situations subject to any such expenditure being reported to the next meeting of the Committee." This resolution shows that Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee has previously altered its financial procedures and limits to better suit the operational needs of the park.

The park's operational needs

- 1.13 In June 2019 there was an emergency committee meeting to approve spending for the emergency repair of a roof at Kent Life at a cost of just over £5,000. In January 2019 there was a last-minute report to the committee for the Play Barn works at Kent Life, which were at a final total cost of £8,543.48. On both occasions the Maidstone Borough Council Property Team followed procurement rules and the best price and solution

were obtained for the works. Also on both occasions the completion of works were delayed by the need to take a report to Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee and the Leisure Manager's efforts, instead of being focused on completing the works, were focused on compiling the report and obtaining the required sign off from colleagues.

- 1.14 In November 2019 the capital programme was agreed. That programme includes £9,000 for a new golf buggy. The Cobtree Park Manager has found a suitable vehicle that can be purchased for a nett price of £7,260. This purchase of a nearly new vehicle is reliant on being able to make a timely authorisation and the park risks losing out on this sale because officers do not have a sufficient operational spend limit.
- 1.15 Not having a utility vehicle that can access all areas of the park is classed as an emergency situation, but the 2011 decision (referenced in paragraph 1.12) only enables officers to approve non-budgetary spend of £3,000 in emergency situations.

Emergency situations

- 1.16 Cobtree Manor Park continues to attract more visitors, who come to enjoy the park and the play equipment. The park's reputation as a family destination is growing and key to that is the availability of play equipment.
- 1.17 Individual items of play equipment all cost above £5,000 to purchase. The play items are at an age now where spending money on repairs is not the best use of resources. The capital programme reflects the need to invest in play equipment with £50,000 identified across the next three financial years. Officers want to use Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee's resources as efficiently and prudently as possible and would prefer to re-invest than repair older items. The current financial procedures do not easily allow for that.
- 1.18 If a piece of play equipment were to break on 19 March 2020, and that item was irreparable or a repair was not best value for money, officers would not be able to replace it and bring it back in to action until after the next Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee meeting which, assuming no emergency meeting were arranged, is likely to be in the second week of June 2020. This is a period of 12 weeks that would cover three weeks of school holiday time and three bank holiday weekends. Officers would not be able to deliver the best service to park visitors and are risking the reputational damage that this would attract.
- 1.19 This situation not only applies to play equipment but could also apply to the property or other assets, such as the building shutters or gates.
- 1.20 In 2019/2020 Officers have managed the budgets well and Cobtree Manor Park is set to achieve a surplus. Officers show good diligence with the charity's money. This will not change with an increased transactional limit. It will increase the efficiency of the park operations and ultimately lead to future savings.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Not increase the financial limit

- 3.1 Committee could choose to leave the financial limits as they are and only allow officers to continue to spend up to £5,000 in one transaction. This item will not remove the risks already identified and will not enable Cobtree Manor Park to capitalise on its operational potential. **This option is not recommended.**

Increase the financial limit for officers to £10,000 per transaction

- 3.2 This increase is needed to enable officers to best manage the budgetary spend in the park and respond to day-to-day repairs, activities and improvements across the park and estate. This amount is in line with the previously agreed capital spend items and means those items can be purchased at the appropriate time and deliver best use of budgets without negatively impacting on the park visitors' experiences. **This option is recommended.**

Increase the financial limit in emergency situations to £15,000 per transaction in consultation with the committee chair

- 3.3 This mechanism, only to be used in the rarest of circumstances, will build in more resilience and keep fundamental park services and infrastructure in good repair and available to park visitors. **This option is recommended.**

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 This report has two recommendations. The first is to increase the operational spending limit for officers from £5,000 per transaction to £10,000 per transaction.
- 4.2 The second recommendation in this report is to increase the emergency unbudgeted spend limit from £3,000 per item to £15,000 per item and for the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development to consult with the Committee Chair in such circumstances.
- 4.3 The reasons for these recommendations are explained in paragraphs 1.10 to 1.20. The recommendations commit Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee to spending no additional funds beyond what it has already agreed in its capital and revenue budgets. The recommendations are proposed to enable officers to be more responsive in times of need and more proactive in times of investing in play assets.
- 4.4 Procurement policies and procedures governing the correct and proper use of public and charity money will still apply to officers. That will not change as a consequence of increasing the financial limit to £10,000 per transaction.

- 4.5 Enabling officers to manage the park more effectively will increase the visitor experience and the park's reputation.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Charity Trust does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. They are included in this report in paragraphs 1.10 to 1.20, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 No consultation regarding this matter has taken place
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Should committee agree to these recommendations the Senior Finance Manager, the Leisure Manager and the Cobtree Park Manager will work on implementing this change and then monitor and manage it on an ongoing basis.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- None
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Agenda Item 15

Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee

18 March 2020

Purchase of park utility vehicle

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

A report requesting authority to purchase a park utility vehicle to support the day-to-day work of the Cobtree Park Team

Purpose of Report

A report requesting authority to purchase a park utility vehicle to support the day-to-day work of the Cobtree Park Team

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That budgetary spend of £9,500 is approved for the purchase of a nearly new utility vehicle.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, in consultation with the Chairman of Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee, to agree the final expenditure on the nearly new utility vehicle should the cost be above £9,500

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Park Charity Committee	18 March 2020

Purchase of park utility vehicle

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.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross cutting objectives of the council.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Risk Management	There are no risk management implications in accepting the recommendation in this report. There are risks associated with not accepting the recommendation. These are outlined in 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 4.3	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Financial	Funds have been set-aside in the capital programme for the purchase of this vehicle.	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	John Foster – Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
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 which will be undertaken by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement. There are no specific legal implications in accepting this recommendation.	Legal Team
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no new implications as a result of this report and recommendation.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	No impact identified as a result of as a result of this report and recommendation.	Policy and Information Team
Public Health	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of residents through its day-to-day operations	Senior Public Health Officer

Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Procurement	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for the purchase of the utility vehicle. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.	John Foster – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Since 2014 the Cobtree Park Team have used a second hand golf buggy to access the site and complete routine tasks. This vehicle is battery powered golf buggy with no modifications for maintenance or utility work.
- 1.2 The golf buggy suffered a break down in November 2019 and £908 was spent repairing it and making it useable again. Since then, with the winter rainfall and soft going in the park, it has not been possible to use the golf buggy which does not have modified tyres.
- 1.3 A utility vehicle is a key piece of park equipment. It enables the park rangers to access all areas of the park quickly, to transport tools and materials with them, and to complete tasks efficiently and effectively. The disadvantages of not having a suitable vehicle to use have been felt in February and March 2020 when rangers have to walk long distances, carrying tools with them, before commencing routine tasks. This is adding to the inefficiency of tasks and having a demoralising effect on the staff as they undertake their routing duties.
- 1.4 The 2019/2020 capital programme includes £9,000 for a “new golf buggy for the ranger”.
- 1.5 The Cobtree Park Manager has worked with colleagues at the Maidstone Borough Council depot to obtain quotations for more suitable vehicles and trade in quotations for the current golf buggy which does have some trade in value.
- 1.6 Permission is now requested to purchase a utility vehicle.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Not purchase a utility vehicle

- 3.1 Committee could decide to not purchase a utility vehicle. This would lead to continued inefficiencies, continued physical strain and continued demoralisation on site at Cobtree Park. **This option is not recommended.**

Defer the purchase of a utility vehicle

- 3.2 Committee could decide to defer the purchase of a utility vehicle. This would also lead to continued inefficiencies and continued impact on site. It will also leave the park looking less attractive than is possible as we head in to the peak season. **This option is not recommended.**

Purchase a brand new utility vehicle

- 3.3 Quotations have been obtained for a brand new utility vehicle. These come in more than the agreed capital budget. On inspection, they will deliver what is needed for the park, but better value for money can be obtained by looking at nearly-new options. **This option is not preferred.**

Purchase a nearly new utility vehicle

- 3.4 Through the collection of quotations from suppliers Cobtree Park has been offered a nearly new utility vehicle that has 50 hours usage, is still under warranty and has the potential of additional equipment being added to it. **This will support the work of the park team and is the preferred option.**

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The nearly new vehicle (appendix 3) has been test driven at Cobtree Park by the park rangers. It is in good condition, having only been used for 50 hours, and meets the needs of the rangers for their day-to-day tasks. It matches the outline spec of the vehicles in appendices 1 and 2, albeit there are a few differences. The nearly new vehicle comes with £2,000 of added extras already fitted to it.

Price

- 4.2 The quotation for the nearly new vehicle (appendix 3) shows the vehicle is available for £7,860 inclusive of VAT. A new Kawasaki Mule, without £2,000 of extras already fitted, retails at £8,495. Appendix 1 is a new vehicle costing £10,794. Appendix 2 is a new vehicle costing £11,994.
- 4.3 The preferred quotation also allows for some further modifications, which will tailor the vehicle to the park setting even further. These items will make it more useful in all weathers and will maximise the work that park rangers are able to deliver in the park. Fitting road lights and orange lights to the vehicle will make moving around the park when the public are present more safe. Making the vehicle accessible to the road is essential and will make it possible to store the vehicle at a nearby secure storage facility. It will also make it easier to access other areas of the estate when required.
- 4.4 The total price of the utility vehicle is £7,860 inclusive of VAT. A £600 buy back option on the current golf buggy is available. The nett spend on the nearly new utility vehicle is £7,160. The additional items, which will maximise the benefit this vehicle will bring to the park and enable it to be stored securely in Aylesford will take the total nett spend to £9,387.55.

- 4.5 Appendix 1 is for an electric utility vehicle. The price of this vehicle is £11,994, without the same level of utility as the preferred option. This vehicle would be more environmentally friendly and would be viewed as more environmentally friendly but practically there isn't currently a facility to charge this vehicle in the park because of the recent security concerns of the park ranger storage container. This vehicle would not be chargeable at the new storage facility.
- 4.6 The environmental impact of a petrol vehicle will be offset by other park sustainable park improvements, deliverable as part of the park's new management plan.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. That consideration is shown in this report at paragraphs. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 No public consultation has been undertaken but staff have been consulted
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once permission has been granted the necessary steps to complete the purchase will be undertaken
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Quotation for new Yamaha UMX AC utility vehicle
 - Appendix 2: Quotation for new Yamaha UMX Petrol utility vehicle
 - Appendix 3: Quotation for nearly new Kawasaki Mule
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Accounts The Park, Port Way Wallingford Crowmarsh Oxfordshire, OX10 8FG t: 01491 838 388 f: 01491 836 702	Concept House Henwood Road Ashford Kent TN24 8DH t: 01233 619 290 f: 01233 637 575	Redhill Farm Elberton Bristol Nr. Thornbury BS35 4AG t: 01454 415 428 f: 01454 419 241	Love Lane Industrial Estate Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 1YG t: 01285 652 272 f: 01285 653 117	3 Hopton Park London Road Devizes Wiltshire SN10 2EY t: 01380 730 003 f: 01380 730 006	South End Farm Long Reach, Ockham Guildford Surrey GU23 6PF t: 01483 286 837 f: 01483 283 936	White House Farm Spencers Wood Reading Berkshire RG7 1HR t: 01189 884 888 f: 01189 885 454	Southam Road Ufton Southam Warwickshire CV33 9PF t: 01926 612 442 f: 01926 614 022
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Ref: Cobtree Manor Park / NEW Yamaha UMX (Petrol) Utility Vehicle
1st November 2019

Ashford

Cobtree Manor Park
Forstal Rd
Aylesford
Kent
ME20 7AG

Attention Of: Mrs Lizzie Buckingham

Dear Lizzie,

Further to our recent conversation, it is with pleasure that we submit the following quotation.

- 1 x NEW 2020 Yamaha UMX AC Electric Utility Vehicle (Choice of Colours) £9,995.00
 - Skid plate for non-extreme off road protection
 - Two separate seats with centre console
 - Wide tyres for on and off road use
 - Convenient fuel filler location
 - Tough, stylish and compact design
 - Aluminium cargo bed with one-touch tailgate 363kgs capacity
 - AC electric motor
 - 29-litre front storage box with one-touch opening
 - Roof canopy and front screen
 - Rear towing drawbar



*2 years Manufactures Warranty Cover

Total Selling Price

£9,995.00

All Prices are subject to VAT @ 20%

This quotation is valid for 28days

Thank you for your custom

**We recommend payment by BACS. Our account details are Barclays Acc no. 10575046, sort code 20-47-06.
Reference details to include your account number please.**

If you wish to pay by debit/credit card phone 01491 821652 or 821653

We trust our quotation meets with your approval, should you wish to contact me regarding further details please do not hesitate to call the office on 01233 619290 or mobile 07766725019 or via email oliver.gerrish@listerwilder.co.uk



Yours sincerely,
On behalf of LISTER WILDER LIMITED

Oliver Gerrish

Oliver Gerrish
Area Sales Manager (Kent)

Thank you for your custom

**We recommend payment by BACS. Our account details are Barclays Acc no. 10575046, sort code 20-47-06.
Reference details to include your account number please.**

If you wish to pay by debit/credit card phone 01491 821652 or 821653

Accounts The Park, Port Way Wallingford Crowmarsh Oxfordshire, OX10 8FG t: 01491 838 388 f: 01491 836 702	Concept House Henwood Road Ashford Kent TN24 8DH t: 01233 619 290 f: 01233 637 575	Redhill Farm Elberton Bristol Nr. Thornbury BS35 4AG t: 01454 415 428 f: 01454 419 241	Love Lane Industrial Estate Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 1YG t: 01285 652 272 f: 01285 653 117	3 Hopton Park London Road Devizes Wiltshire SN10 2EY t: 01380 730 003 f: 01380 730 006	South End Farm Long Reach, Ockham Guildford Surrey GU23 6PF t: 01483 286 837 f: 01483 283 936	White House Farm Spencers Wood Reading Berkshire RG7 1HR t: 01189 884 888 f: 01189 885 454	Southam Road Ufton Southam Warwickshire CV33 9PF t: 01926 612 442 f: 01926 614 022
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Ref: Cobtree Manor Park / NEW Yamaha UMX (Petrol) Utility Vehicle
1st November 2019

Ashford

Cobtree Manor Park
Forstal Rd
Aylesford
Kent
ME20 7AG

Attention Of: Mrs Lizzie Buckingham

Dear Lizzie,

Further to our recent conversation, it is with pleasure that we submit the following quotation.

- 1 x NEW 2020 Yamaha UMX Petrol Utility Vehicle (Choice of Colours) £8,995.00
 - Skid plate for non-extreme off road protection
 - Two separate seats with centre console
 - Wide tyres for on and off road use
 - Convenient fuel filler location
 - Tough, stylish and compact design
 - Aluminium cargo bed with one-touch tailgate 363kgs capacity
 - 400cc petrol
 - 29-litre front storage box with one-touch opening
 - Roof canopy and front screen
 - Rear towing drawbar



*2 years Manufactures Warranty Cover

Total Selling Price

£8,995.00

All Prices are subject to VAT @ 20%

This quotation is valid for 28days

Thank you for your custom

We recommend payment by BACS. Our account details are Barclays Acc no. 10575046, sort code 20-47-06.
Reference details to include your account number please.

If you wish to pay by debit/credit card phone 01491 821652 or 821653

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We trust our quotation meets with your approval, should you wish to contact me regarding further details please do not hesitate to call the office on 01233 619290 or mobile 07766725019 or via email oliver.gerrish@listerwilder.co.uk



Yours sincerely,
On behalf of LISTER WILDER LIMITED

Oliver Gerrish

Oliver Gerrish
Area Sales Manager (Kent)

Thank you for your custom

**We recommend payment by BACS. Our account details are Barclays Acc no. 10575046, sort code 20-47-06.
Reference details to include your account number please.**

If you wish to pay by debit/credit card phone 01491 821652 or 821653

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LAMBERHURST ENGINEERING LIMITED

PRIORY FARM
 PARSONAGE LANE
 LAMBERHURST
 KENT
 TN3 8DS

Telephone: 01892 890364 - 4 Lines

Proforma

Page 1

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VAT Reg No: 702 8949 20

CASH SALE
 nigel.holman@maidstone
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR CUSTOM

Invoice No. 175708
Invoice Date. 05/03/2020
Order No.
Account Ref. CASH01

Quantity	Description	Stock Code	Unit Price	Net	Discount	Vat
1.00	KAWASAKI SX 4X4	S1	6550.00	6550.00	0.00	1310.00
1.00	WINDSCREEN AND ROOF	S1	1128.00	1128.00	0.00	225.60
1.00	UNDER SEAT STORAGE	S1	64.96	64.96	0.00	12.99
1.00	ROAD LIGHTS AND NUMBER PLATE	S1	580.00	580.00	0.00	116.00
0.00	EZEGO PX £600 OFF THE PRICE	M		0.00	0.00	0.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS - PROMPT PAYMENT APPRECIATED
 BACS PAYMENT DETAILS: HSBC BANK- SORT CODE: 40-18-48 ACCOUNT No:51387146

Total Net Amount 8,322.96
 Total VAT Amount 1,664.59
 Carriage 0.00
 Invoice Total 9,987.55