

Appendix I

Cobtree Estate Progress Report September 2015

Introduction

This report sets out the work on the estate and covers the period November 2014 to September 2015.

Cobtree Manor Park

Maintenance of the park over this period covered the winter and spring. Works to the park included the following;

- Ongoing shrub renovation throughout the park
- Planting of new shrubs and trees
- Delivery of the 2015 events programme; the mini beast safari walks have proven particularly popular with all of the walks in the summer holidays being fully booked. The new autumn/winter events of bird feeders and Christmas decorations are also booking up quickly.

Works undertaken as part of the Master Plan for phase three of the project.

- Completion of the Visitor centre and opening of the café.
- Installation of the final sculpture by Jason Mulligan; thereby completing the master plan project.



The final sculpture has been installed, completing the sculpture trail. More information can be found on the blog written by sculptor Jason Mulligan <http://thecobtreesculpture.blogspot.co.uk> This main piece is sited next to the visitor centre.



The new visitor centre has been completed and handed over by the builders. The café has opened and is gradually increasing the menu, now serving hot food and breakfasts which are proving to be popular. Car parking charges will begin on 5th October 2015.

A new Cobtree Manager, Lizzie Buckingham has been appointed to manage the park and set up and run the new Visitor centre. A catering supervisor, assistant and casual staff have also been appointed.

The Park Ranger, Eva Girling has left Cobtree and a review of the staffing arrangements in the park will be undertaken to consider the new visitor centre and team working. It is hoped that existing park staff currently employed under agency arrangements will be able to be offered permanent employment.

Cobtree Footfall Totals

Unfortunately a technical fault led to a loss of data for six months of 2014, the machinery has now been repaired. Figures show a decrease in footfall for the first 2 quarters of 2015. This could be due to various factors including advanced publicity of parking charges and weather changes with January 2015 being wetter than normal resulting in lower figures, March 2014 being sunnier than average, hence the high visitor figures for that month and June 2015 being colder than average, hence the lower numbers then.

Cobtree Monthly and Quarterly footfall figures

	2012	Quarterly	2013	Quarterly	% on previous year	2014	Quarterly	% on previous year	2015	Quarterly	% on previous year
Jan			14675			18133			13163		
Feb			12092			17626			17474		
Mar			12144	38911		24503	60262	+ 35	19891	50528	-19
Apr			19012			28012			27093		
May			26325			24733			23254		
Jun	10347		27906	73243		25971	78716	+ 7	20472	70819	-11
Jul	18509		32277			Data missing			3326		
Aug	25461		38100								
Sep	20268	64238	23070	93447	+ 31						
Oct	20745		18605								
Nov	19296		15869								
Dec	13255	53296	13767	48241	-9						
Total	127881	117534	253842	253842		138978	138978		124673	0	

until 6/7/15

Elephant House

The Cobtree Sheds group have started on the Elephant House renovations. The Elephant House is to become a hub for volunteering in the park and will provide an excellent facility for community projects. They hope to make bird boxes and other small items that could be sold. The building now has water and electricity connections and the sheds volunteers have started with tidying out the inside of the building.

Cobtree golf course

Roundage figures for the golf course are below. These show the roundage is up each month on the same period the previous year, except for December 2014, the change in figures are relatively minimal with 2154 (14%) more rounds over the 6 month period. Whilst foot golf is not included in the figures the addition of a new facility at the course may have attracted new players to the normal course.

December 2014	1832	December 2013	1975
January 2015	1439	January 2014	1118
February 2015	1567	February 2014	427
March 2015	2429	March 2014	2365
April 2015	3849	April 2014	3552
May 2015	4036	May 2014	3561
Total	15152		12998

Westfield Wood

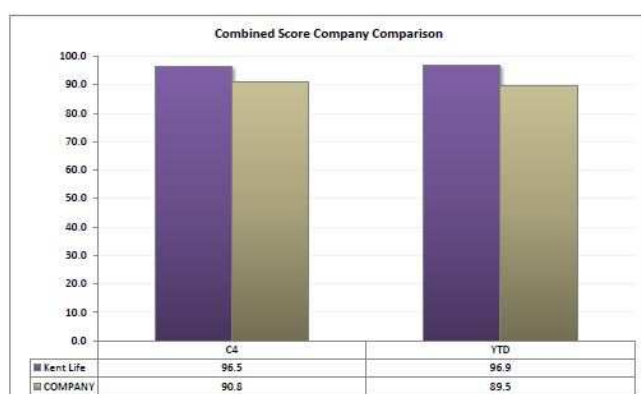


New fencing has been installed at Westfield Wood to try and reduce the problems of 4 x 4 vehicles, quad bikes and motorbikes accessing the site. CCTV has also been installed with those caught on camera being prosecuted. Regular police patrols are also continuing in order to try and catch cyclists. The natural

environment of the site is highly sensitive, pedestrians are welcomed but significant damaged can be caused by those accessing the site with vehicles.

Kent Life

Kent Life continues to perform well with an increase in profits on the budgeted figure and a higher than budgeted predicted year end. The attraction continues to have excellent customer satisfaction scores in comparison with the Continuum group as a whole. In April 2015 Kent Life was awarded best in Customer Service at the national Museum and Heritage Awards beating many of the large London Museums.



Young Farmers

Following a meeting with the Young Farmers group concerns regarding the Heads of Terms have been resolved and the lease for them is being drawn up in line with the report brought to the committee on 12th November 2014.

Friends of Kent Life

The Friends of Kent Life have drawn up Memorandum of Understanding (MoA), which is currently being discussed. This document is to form the basis of an agreement between them and Cobtree Manor Estate Trust (CMET). They are looking to build on the new volunteering policy that has been introduced by Continuum. The MoA will enable them to have a secure basis in the attraction thereby ensuring that funding can be applied for and helping them continue their support of the historic collection held at Kent Life. Once the document has been finalised it will be brought before the Committee for approval.