

Cobtree Manor Estate Update Report

Final Decision-Maker	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Dawn Hudd - Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jason Taylor – Leisure Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Boxley

Executive Summary

The information in the report is intended to give the Committee an understanding of the day to day work on the Estate and the issues that affect its management. It also provides a record of all that is achieved across the different parts of the estate.

The estate update covers the period from when the Committee last met in January 2018.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	25 April 2018

Cobtree Manor Estate Update Report

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This report covers the period from January 2018 to April 2018.

1.2 Cobtree Manor Park

Maintenance of the park over this period covers autumn and winter works.

Works to the park include:

- Completion of renovation pruning of the shrubbery border to the upper meadow area bordering the Golf Course to allow access to and inspection of Arboretum specimens.
- Clearance and renovation of the border to the Forstal Road.
- Weed management
- Tree works to dangerous and diseased trees
- An application for the Green Flag Award 2018/9 was submitted in January and a date for the full judging inspection is awaited.
- An inspection of the tree border to the Forstal Road has identified works totalling circa £5,000 to ensure the safety of the trees in the road target zone and to be compliant with Highway regulations.
- Temporary repairs to the car park surface following deterioration due to two bouts of adverse weather.

1.3 Community

Three Hadlow College Countryside Management students have completed a total of 86 hours voluntary work to date, undertaking preparation of the 'community garden' for planting and carrying out some habitat surveying. To complete their placements, they are scheduled to contribute a further 180 hours this year.

1.4 Visitor Numbers

Unfortunately the electronic gate counter stopped working on January 17th which has meant that there is no data for this quarter. The reason for this is currently being investigated but it could possibly be related to the gate posts being moved as detailed later in this report.

1.5 Car Park

Car park income totalled £83,895 net for 2017/18 financial year to 31 March 2018; this was £17,595 above target with an average weekly income of £1,583. Income was marginally lower than the previous financial year by £2,041.

A project manager has been appointed to oversee the surfacing of the car park at the park.

The work has been slightly delayed due to the need for additional design work, topographical surveys and soils investigations tests. This is work that was not believed initially was necessary but the contractor and project manager now believe it is required.

1.6 Café and Visitor Centre Update

The café has continued to trade pending the takeover by DA GT, which will take place on 17th April 2018

1.7 Cobtree Manor Golf Course

The latest update on the day to day operation of the golf course will be provided at the meeting.

The new club house and golf course alterations project is moving forward and the operators, Mytime Active, have met with both planners and the landscape team leader for pre-application advice. This has resulted in some changes to the initial plans due to the proposed buildings proximity to ancient woodland, but is still hoped that the planning application will be submitted by July this year.

The meeting to show ward councillors the proposals for the golf course prior to planning consent being submitted had to be cancelled in February due to snow, but this has been rearranged for Friday 20th April 2018.

1.8 Kent Life Farm Attraction

An update on the performance of Kent Life Farm Attraction will be given to the committee at the meeting as it was not available when this report was written.

1.9 Incidents

An unknown heavy vehicle reversed into the main gates on 8th March 2018 causing damage to the posts, gates and height barrier. The estimated cost of repairs will be c£6,500. The incident was reported to the Police who were unable to take further action.

Due to MBC's £10,000 insurance excess it is not possible to make an insurance claim for this damage.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

This report is to note only.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the information in this report regarding the performance of the Cobtree Estate is noted.

4. RISK

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

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Other than through social media no consultation has taken place since the last report.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Any comments from the Committee will be passed on to the relevant parties.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objects and the corporate priorities of the Council.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Risk Management	Risks to running the estate are dealt with in the annual Estate Risk Management Report.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Financial	Financial risks are considered in the ongoing finance updates.	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager – Client
Equalities	No Implications	

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None