

Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee

Cobtree Manor Estate Update Report

Final Decision-Maker	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Elizabeth Buckingham
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 of 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 August 2018.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the contents of this report be noted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	7 th November 2018

Cobtree Manor Estate Update Report

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This report covers the period from August 2018 to October 2018.

Cobtree Manor Park

1.2 Maintenance of the park over this period covers summer works
Works to the park include:

- Pathway vegetation management
- Ragwort control
- Removal of fallen trees

The completed tree survey has been returned with works recommendations for the next three years. Urgent works to several diseased trees are underway.

Events

1.3 A total of eight family friendly, wildlife themed events were run over August with 263 participants. Thirty three feedback forms were returned giving an average rating of 4.8 out of 5.

Maidstone Rocks established a rock line in the park over one weekend in August where over 100 participants added their painted stones to a line of stones. At the end of the weekend the stones were taken and placed around the borough and beyond for others to find.

Two October half-term craft sessions were attended by 87 participants. A Halloween trail over the week was completed by over 100 participants.

Community

1.4 Two Hadlow College Countryside Management students have completed work placements completing 180 hours and returning to volunteer during the summer holidays, achieving some fauna surveying, conservation habitat management and further preparing the community garden.

Visitor Numbers

1.5 Following the failure of the counting equipment to produce figures for the first four months of the year, estimated figures have been calculated for visitor numbers (shown in the table in *italic*) using the known figures for car park income and their average ratio to previous vehicle count figures.

Cobtree Manor Park Visitor Numbers 2016-18

	2016	Quarterly	% on previous year	2017	Quarterly	% on previous year	2018	Quarterly	% on previous year
Jan	15923			21652			9644		
Feb	15798			19574			17940		
Mar	18227	49948	-1.15	25676	66902	33.94	11768	39352	-41.18
Apr	22144			30554			30444		
May	29076			24952			34489		
Jun	22031	73251	3.43	25694	81200	10.85	30519	95452	17.55
Jul	21043			31187			33522		
Aug	33192			37491			45813		
Sept	19468	73703	-5.57	23675	92353	25.3	31009	110344	19.48
Oct	15124			24995					
Nov	17460			12290					
Dec	18138	50722	36.57	16623	53908	6.28			
	247624	247624		294363	294363				

Car park

- 1.6. Car park income for the second quarter, July to September, was £28,077, a decrease of £320 from the same period in 2017/18. Annual season tickets sold to 29/10/18 were 91, a decrease of three compared to the same period in 2017/18.

A reason for the decline in parking revenue despite the increase in visitor numbers is under investigation.

The tender exercise and procurement programme for the car park refurbishment is underway with selected contractors going forward to the design and build tender process.

The ITT document has been shared with contractors and an extra Committee meeting has been scheduled for 18 December 2018 to agree the appointment of the preferred contractor.

Cafe and Visitor Centre update

- 1.7. Repairs to the building following the break-in in April are finally complete.

Trading has been brisk during the summer months and October half-term. A verbal update on financial performance will be given at the committee meeting.

The upgrade to the electricity supply is due to be installed in the week commencing 04/11/18.

Cobtree Manor Golf Course

- 1.8. A meeting to present the reworked plan for the new clubhouse was presented by MyTime regional managers and the Architects on 15 August 2018. Five councillors attended. The architect gave a presentation of the updated designs and project implementation plan with a question and answer session.

Rounds Played

The team had a good quarter with the weather conditions being favourable. This is reflected in the number of rounds played.

Month	2017	2018	Difference
July	4,797	4,428	-369
Aug	3,664	4,445	781
Sept	3,829	3,640	189
Total	12,290	12,513	223

Marketing, Campaigns & Events

The golf course is currently promoting Hocus Pocus, Fireworks and Christmas which are all expected to do very well. These are on Facebook, Twitter, and the website

The venue hosted Rod Stewart tribute night in August

The carvery was available for a few Sundays in the quarter with good take up

The Cobtree Wellbeing Programme has completed the first quarter of activities. The Golf pro shop has been transformed into a wellbeing hub where the Cobtree health sessions are delivered as well as other group exercise sessions and events.

Dementia Golf- the first programme saw five participants complete the course with carers and family members also enjoying the respite and social aspects of the sessions. The second programme was completed by three participants. A new cohort is being recruited to start in February. Enquiries have been made from patients outside of the borough who wish to access the course.

Primetime exercise - the sessions started in September and run every Monday with a group of 10 ladies now attending. Another 12-week course will start in January with the aim to reach a different group of participants

Escape Pain - these sessions follow a twice-weekly format. A six-week cohort will start in November. A second cohort will begin their six-week programme at the end of January.

Promotion will increase between now and the next quarter focussing on engaging a wider audience for the Primetime sessions to ensure there are new participants. There will be presentations at three Dementia Cafés across the borough in November. There will be a focus of efforts on promoting the new Escape Pain services to GPs and other health professionals across Maidstone. Mytime will also be attending various social groups including Women's Institute meetings.

A health and wellbeing event will be held at the golf course in December with taster sessions, free health checks, nutrition information and the opportunity to find out more information. This will largely be promoted through social media.

Kent Life Farm Attraction

1.9 Visitor Numbers

The overall attendance number during this period was 43,825, against 44,319 visits in 2017. Although the visitor numbers declined slightly by 494 compared to 2017, there was a growth in school and member visits as shown in the table below.

Visit type	2018 Numbers	2017 Numbers
Schools	3,432	2,903
Members	8,059	7,382
Others	32,334	34,034
Total	43,825	44,319

Kent Life scaled back the Hops and Harvest event in 2018, which delivered considerable savings compared to the 2017 event. These savings have gone towards higher animal welfare and extra cleaning costs.

Maintenance

A recent inspection of the Play Barn has shown the timber to be infected with wood boring, death watch and furniture beetles. The Play Barn will have to be shut for two weeks in January to enable the specialists to carry out treatment. The cost of treatment is yet to be ascertained as the property team is waiting for a quote from the contractors.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

The committee could choose not to note the information contained in this reports, however the committee has requested regular updates on the operations on the estate.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the information in this report is noted.

4. RISK

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

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

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.	
Financial	Financial risks are considered in the ongoing finance updates.	
Equalities	No Implications	

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- None
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None