

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER
2018**

Present: Councillor McLoughlin (Chairman), and
Councillors Daley, Mrs Hinder and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Mr Roger Hext and Mr Laurence Martin
from Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cox, Mrs Gooch and Perry.

24. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Cox
Councillor Mrs Hinder for Councillor Perry

25. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman advised that he had agreed to take Agenda Item 13 - Kent Life Play Barn Timber Treatment Work as an urgent item as the works needed to be completed at the earliest opportunity.

26. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

27. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

28. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

29. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

30. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 AUGUST 2018

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 August 2018 be signed as a correct record.

31. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

32. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

33. FINANCIAL POSITION 2018/19

Mr Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client) presented his report which summarised the current financial position of the Estate as at 30 September 2018.

The Committee noted that there was an overall positive variance of £7,000 over the four service areas.

It was noted that:-

- A budget would be set up for VAT costs.
- The Sage financial management system was considered the most suitable and implementation was intended for January 2019.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Holland advised that:-

- The gas and electricity charges for the Café were still the responsibility of the Trust.
- Trade refuse would have to be separated out as waste arising from the bins in the park needed to be paid for by the Trust.
- There had been ongoing discussions with the Café Contractor, DAGT concerning recharges for staff seconded over to them during the transition period. Officers were confident that this would be resolved shortly.
- He would clarify with colleagues whether the Trust should pay VAT on departmental recharges and report back.

RESOLVED: That

1. The current financial position be noted.
2. The progress to date with the separate financial management system be noted.

3. Officers clarify the position on whether the Trust had to pay VAT on departmental recharges.

Voting: Unanimous

34. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the report of Ms Lizzie Buckingham, Cobtree Manager which provided an update on the day to day work of the Estate.

Ms Buckingham provided an update on events and maintenance issues that had taken place during the period from August 2018 to October 2018.

Following concerns from Members about the lack of resources to carry out some fauna surveying Ms Buckingham advised that:-

- Proposals to increase the number of staff employed at Cobtree would be brought to the meeting in December.
- A Habitat Report would be brought to the Committee at a later stage. In the meantime a visit was scheduled to be organised for Members to assess the health of the shrubbery undergrowth and it was suggested that this could be combined with one of the Committee's scheduled meetings in the Spring (20th March 2019).

The Committee felt that more signage around the park might assist visitors to walk on the properly constructed pathways.

The Committee heard from Mr Paul Clarke, Senior Public Health Officer who gave an overview of the health improvement project that was taking place at the Cobtree Manor Golf Course.

It was noted that Mytime had delivered three programmes which consisted of Dementia Golf, Escape Pain (targeted for people with knee, back and hip pain) and Prime Time Exercise (targeted for women over 60). Further programmes would take place at a later stage.

The Committee felt that this should be publicised more and requested that a good news article (based on a case study) should be put in the Spring edition of the Borough Insight Magazine.

Laurence Martin, from the Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd advised that he had approached Kent County Council to obtain the drawings of the Forstal Road services in order that they could ascertain what issues they faced with the general topography. The Chairman suggested that Cowie, the consultants employed on this, might have a better chance of obtaining these and Mr Martin agreed to pursue the matter further.

The Chairman also requested Mr Martin to provide the Committee with a copy of the estimate for the works.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

35. KENT LIFE PLAY BARN TIMBER TREATMENT WORK

The Committee considered the urgent report of Mr Mike Evans, Leisure Manager on the beetle infestation in the Play Barn building at the Kent Life visitor attraction.

Mr Evans explained that the reason for urgency was that in order to cause minimum disruption to the Kent Life Play Barn the work should be carried out in January when the venue is normally open weekends only.

It was noted that the quotation did not include the dismantling and re-installation of the play equipment, or the safety inspection that needed to take place once the equipment was re-installed.

Mr David Guest, Property Officer confirmed that the quotation included treatment to all the beams in the barn, although at the time of quoting, the Company could not access all areas due to the play equipment being in place.

In order to make an informed decision, the Committee felt that a full schedule of works needed to be produced and broken down into costings and then emailed to Members of the Committee before a decision could be taken. It was suggested that if there were any representations against the works then the work should not be undertaken.

RESOLVED: That

1. A full schedule of works be undertaken, including costings, and circulated to all members of the Committee for comments. Any comments by members of the Committee should be sent to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
2. The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, to authorise the necessary expenditure to enable the works to be undertaken.

Voting: Unanimous

36. DURATION OF MEETING

2.30 p.m. to 3.50 p.m.