

Cobtree 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 Cobtree Estate and its constituent venues and facilities.

Purpose of Report

Noting

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	26 January 2021

Cobtree 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 (Client)
Staffing	Staffing implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Legal	There are no specific legal implications at present as this report is presented for noting only.	Team Leader Corporate Governance
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 this update report and recommendation.	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of our community and residents through its day-to-day operations.	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-	Head of

	day in line with council procedures and policies.	Regeneration and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Cobtree Estate continues to suffer as a result of the Covid-19 lockdowns and tiered restrictions that have been in force since March 2020. At the time of writing Tier 4 has been replaced with another lockdown.

Cobtree Manor Park

2.2 The park continues to be really busy because of the closures of all other leisure and hospitality venues. Car park income as of the end of Q3 was £94,695 which is positive variance against the budget of £40,195.

2.3 The winter tree works to 50 trees in the park have all been completed and the play area repairs continue to progress. Some repairs are still awaited where items are still on order with the manufacturer.

2.4 The car park traffic regulations order previously recommended by this committee has been implemented and the new regulations are in force in the car park. These regulations are limiting a vehicle stay in the car park to six hours. The terms and conditions for permit holders have also been updated in line with the new regulations and a daily stay for a permit holder is also six hours.

Staffing

2.5 The work to integrate the Cobtree park staff into a new parks and open spaces staffing structure is progressing in line with the timetable. The 28-day consultation period began on 11 January 2021 and by the time of the 26 January meeting all the Cobtree staff will have had one to one consultation meetings. The consultation period will end on 9 February 2021. The changes will be fully implemented in time for 1 April 2021.

Golf Course

2.6 The golf course closed for two weeks following the introduction of Tier 4 restrictions. Following changes to the Tier 4 restrictions the course was able to open again for two-ball rounds only, or for larger groups where people are from the same household. The lockdown then forced the site to close once again. As during the first spring 2020 lockdown, the site is in hibernation.

2.7 The golf course improvement works required further planning approvals related to a new access road. The golf course operator has submitted the

required reports and documents for the access road and awaits the decision from Maidstone Borough Council planning and Tonbridge and Malling planning. Applications are needed for both because the course sits in both planning authority areas.

Kent Life

- 2.8 Kent Life closed following the Tier 4 restrictions and the lockdown has made that situation more definite. It was possible to open in Tier 3 and a few days of Christmas grottos were delivered before the Tier 4 restrictions meant the site had to close. Kent Life has applied for an Additional Restrictions Grant, one of the business rates grants, and officers will be able to update on this verbally at the meeting.

Cobtree Café

- 2.9 Cobtree Café has remained open in Tier 3 and Tier 4 operating on a take-away basis only. During the January lockdown it is still able to operate as a take-away service. The café operator has taken the unilateral decision to alter its business hours with no consultation with council officers. Officers will be able to give an up-to-date account of this situation at the meeting also.

Cobtree Men's Shed

- 2.10 The Cobtree Men's Shed is not able to meet. The structural works at the elephant house have not progressed since the last meeting.

Residential Properties

- 2.11 Garden Cottage is currently vacant after the resident left at the end of their 22-year lease. Officers are now exploring the options for the cottage to ensure it continues to meet the charitable aims of, and continues to contribute to the financial sustainability of, the Manor Estate Charity. Officers are working with colleagues in the Council's Housing Team and will bring a report on this to a future meeting.

Contracts

- 2.12 Contractual discussions following the Covid-19 pandemic are still ongoing with operators. A separate report updating the Committee on these discussions is included in the meeting agenda.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Committee can note the information 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 party.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- None
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None