

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 recommendation to this Committee:

1. That the contents of the report are noted.
2. That a tour of the Cobtree estate for members of this committee is organised

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	8 July 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 Contracts and Commissioning
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-day in line with council procedures and	Head of Regeneration

	policies.	and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cobtree Estate continues to recover from the Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions that have been in force in various forms since March 2020.

Cobtree Manor Park

- 2.2 Since the last meeting on 31 March 2021, the park has continued to be really busy. Car park income for 2020/2021 was over £137,000, which was a positive variance of £63,000. At the time of writing, car park income for 2021/2022 is £13,000 ahead of budgeted targets.

Staffing

- 2.3 The Cobtree team has continued to manage the park and welcome the many visitors over this time. The new staffing structure for the park was implemented from 1 April onwards. The transition was very smooth and the new Mote Park and Cobtree Manager has settled into the role.
- 2.4 The overflow car park has been reinstated to counteract an increase in dangerous parking on the highway outside the park entrance. Officers have been working with Kent County Council on further solutions to this problem to ensure the safety of park users and everyone in the area during busy times.

Golf Course

- 2.5 The golf course re-opened on 29 March, just before the last meeting of this committee. Golf trade during April, May and June has been strong, with limited food and beverage sales also achieved. The persistent rain and periods of warm weather have made work hard for the greenkeepers, but the team are working well to present the golf course for members and visitors.
- 2.6 The government announcement delaying the next stage of the Roadmap has impacted on some clubhouse bookings but these are being rescheduled. The lifting of restrictions will see a further increase in trade for the second half of 2021.

Kent Life

- 2.7 Kent Life re-opened on 12 April 2021 with activities adapted and altered to make them Covid-compliant. In May 2021 the indoor play areas and refreshments outlets re-opened for takeaway sales. School group visits have resumed on site but children's birthday parties are still suspended because the party room cannot be operated until restrictions are lifted fully. It is planned that the second half of 2021 at Kent Life will include the

popular Hop and Harvest event, ice cream festival, fireworks event and Christmas activities. Like all hospitality and events businesses, plans are being made in line with Covid requirements so that events can be adapted in response to any changes in restrictions that may occur between now and the end of 2021.

- 2.8 The Kent Life General Manager has left the role to take up a new opportunity. Planning Solutions, the operator of Kent Life, has recruited a new general manager via an internal promotion. The new general manager has been part of the team for a number of years and has lots of experience of the site. The Leisure Manager attended a meeting with the outgoing and new general manager as part of the handover process.

Cobtree Café

- 2.9 Cobtree Café has remained open and trading as a takeaway business during the latest lockdown and continues to be busy, in response to the increased visitor numbers in the park.
- 2.10 The remedial works to the building that were identified by the food hygiene report have all been completed and a re-inspection visit is being booked in by the tenant so that their five star food rating can be reinstated.

Cobtree Shed Group

- 2.11 The Cobtree Shed Group is not able to meet. The structural works to the Elephant House still need to be completed and the Leisure Manager is working with colleagues to develop proposals for this project.

Contracts

- 2.12 The previous mitigations and decisions that this committee made, in order to support the leisure operators at the Cobtree Estate, have been implemented and all contracts are operating on a stable footing.

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.
- 4.2 With new members having joined the committee it is also recommended that a tour of the estate is organised for the committee.
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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