

## **Cobtree Estate Update**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Mike Evans, Leisure Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	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.

### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	9 September 2021

# Cobtree Estate Update

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the corporate priorities for the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross-cutting objectives of the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Risk Management</b>	There are no risk management implications in this report.	Leisure Manager
<b>Financial</b>	Financial implications from this update are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	Staffing implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Legal</b>	There are no specific legal implications at present as this report is presented for noting only.	Team Leader Contracts and Commissioning
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	There are no new implications as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	No impact identified as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy & Information Manager
<b>Public Health</b>	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of our community and residents through its day-to-day operations.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies	Leisure Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	Procurement implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and	Head of Regeneration

	policies.	and Economic Development & Section 151 Officer
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As agreed at the 8 July meeting, the members of this committee attended a tour of the golf course, the park and Kent Life on Monday 9 August. The tour was used to explain more about the estate to new members, and was a chance for existing committee members to see the venues post-Covid.
- 2.2 Also since the last meeting, the Chair, Vice Chair and Leisure Manager attended a meeting of the Cobtree Charity Trust.

### **Cobtree Manor Park**

- 2.3 Car park income for the year to 1 August 2021 is £53,817, which is a positive variance of £18,000.
- 2.4 The ranger has been working on clearing laurel from the shrub beds in advance of the autumn maintenance which will reduce the size of the shrub beds. These beds are larger than they ought to be and will be reduced in size over the course of the next few maintenance windows.
- 2.5 The Hazlitt Theatre will be holding two outdoor theatre performances of Alice in Wonderland in the park on 3 and 4 September 2021. These are to audiences of 250 per performance and are expected to be at full capacity. A winter lights trail called Glow Illumination Trail is also planned for the period of 15 December to 31 December. This is being delivered by an external company who is paying a daily hire fee to CMEC for the use of the park.
- 2.6 A recent monthly play inspection report has identified some additional repairs that are required to the Cobtree Manor Park play equipment. The park manager is sourcing costs for these works and these will be presented to this committee as soon as they are available. The urgency of these works may require liaison with the Chair and Vice Chair in advance of a report being brought to this committee.

### **Golf Course**

- 2.7 Performance at the golf course this summer is ahead of 2019 numbers. This is positive news because it means some of the increased footfall experienced in 2020 has been retained. With the return of indoor hospitality without restrictions it is hoped more societies and group

bookings will continue this positive trend. The persistent rain and periods of warm weather this summer have made work unpredictable for the greenkeepers and have caused greater levels of growth than would normally be expected. The team are working well to present the golf course to members and visitors who, on the whole, are happy with playing conditions.

### **Kent Life**

- 2.8 Kent Life is also recovering well from the Covid pandemic. School trip numbers are down on 2019 because of the spring time restrictions, but enquiries for autumn school trips indicate these numbers could pick up in the second half of the year. Events and functions have resumed on site and plans for Hops and Harvest festival, the ice cream festival, Halloween and Christmas are all positive with a return to the full events programme anticipated.
- 2.9 On the estate tour, members of this committee visited the Kent Life archive store which contains thousands of artifacts. To get best use out of the artifacts an archive project is required to check and update the inventory catalogue, which currently exists only in hard copy paper format. The Leisure Manager will consult with Planning Solutions and Maidstone Museum on possible options and solutions and bring a report to a future meeting.

### **Cobtree Café**

- 2.10 Cobtree Café has continued to trade well throughout the summer. Repairs to the shutters have been carried out and drains and gullies have been cleared after the heavy rainfall at the start of July. The increased footfall at the park has led to repairs and redecoration being required in the visitor centre toilets, which are being booked in by the café operator.

### **Cobtree Shed Group**

- 2.11 A surveyor is due to attend the Elephant House on week commencing 23 August 2021. They will report on what work is required to restore the structural integrity of the Elephant House.

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## **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.

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## **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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## **5. RISK**

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

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## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

6.1 No consultation has taken place since the last update report.

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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

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

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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

- None

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None