

Appendix A

Cobtree Estate Progress Report

Introduction

This report sets out the work on the estate and covers the period from July to October 2014.

Cobtree Manor Park

Maintenance of this period covered the summer months and as such was taken up predominantly by routine maintenance tasks.

The park achieved Green Flag status at the first attempt gaining an overall band score of 75-79%, which is very good and in the second to top banding. As a result of this it will be mystery shopped rather than judged next year.

The Elephant House mural has been completed by artist Suzue Dafforn.

Work on the final sculpture continues. Progress on this can be followed on the blog written by sculptor Jason Mulligan

<http://thecobtreesculpture.blogspot.co.uk>



Cobtree footfall continues to be good. We now have two complete years worth of figures from the footfall counter at Cobtree. In the last quarter we had 78,716 recorded visits between April and June, this is a 7.47% increase on the same time last year.

Taking into account both years figures there were 229,688 recorded visits between July 12 to June 13, verses 280,666 recorded visits between July 13 to June 14. This is an increase of 22.19%.

Cobtree Monthly and Quarterly footfall figures

	2012	Quarterly	2013	Quarterly	% on previous year	2014	Quarterly	% on previous year
Jan			14,675			18,133		
Feb			12,092			17,626		
Mar			12,144	38,911		24,503	60,262	54.87
Apr			19,012			28,012		
May			26,325			24,733		
Jun	10,347		27,906	73,243		25,971	78,716	7.47
Jul	18,509		32,277					
Aug	25,461		38,100					
Sep	20,268	64,238	23,070	93,447	45.47			
Oct	20,745		18,605					
Nov	19,296		15,869					
Dec	13,255	53,296	13,767	48,241	-9.48			
Total	127,881	117,534	253,842	253,842		138,978	138,978	

Cobtree Visitor Centre

The details of the visitor centre are in a separate report. The build is due to begin in October provided the required consents from the Committee are in place.

A meeting has been arranged with the Cobtree Trust to begin the design of the interpretation for the new Visitor Centre.

Cobtree Golf Course

Discussions are ongoing with MyTime regarding an extension to the existing contract. This will enable a full procurement process to take place.

Recommendations will be brought to Committee as part of this process.

Mytime have introduced Foot-golf at the weekends after 2pm, this is claimed to be the fastest growing sport in the UK.

Estate properties

The tenant at Garden Cottage has expressed an interest in moving in the near future, when suitable accommodation becomes available. It is recommended that consent is sought from the committee to re-let the cottage on a long term let at the market rate. Currently the rent is £5682.88 per annum, and it is estimated the revised rental could be at least £9000 per annum. Once it becomes vacant the property section will assess whether any work is required

prior to re-letting. Any works over the threshold of £5000 will be brought before the Committee for prior approval.

Kent Life

Dilapidations works, including improvements to the car park have been completed.

The current year is progressing well with visitor numbers up 9% and income up 20% on last year. This should result in a profit share to CMET of £60,000 (based on current forecast accounts). Continuum are currently planning developments and safety improvements to site which this could go towards, including pathways, fences and other basic infrastructure to ensure compliance with latest regulations.

In August there was a food hygiene inspection and the attraction was awarded the maximum 5 star rating.

This Autumn, a number of events are being hosted including the Apple Fayre, Bonfire Night and the re-enactment weekend 'Christmas on the Home Front'. The recent event 'Hops n Harvest' was a great success, with the Oast house being fired up (it is the last coal fired Oast in the country).

Kent Life will also be welcoming over 8,000 school children to their award winning workshops. Continuum has plans underway to improve the guest offer even further next season to help sustain the current growth.

Meetings have been held with the Young Farmers and the Friends to improve ways of working on site. As part of this, plans to move the Young Farmers to one area are being progressed. They are looking for an agreement to be on site as part of this move. The terms of the agreement will be brought before the Committee for approval prior to being finalised.

Discussions are underway to consider the future of the site and the best way forward at the end of the current lease in November 2015. It is vital if the success of the attraction is to be built on that these discussions are finalised quickly so that a recommendation can be brought to the Committee.

Summary

Work continues across the estate with improvements over the period of the report to Cobtree Manor Park, Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course and Kent Life.