

Appendix A

Cobtree Estate Progress Report

Introduction

This report sets out the work on the estate and covers the period of October to December of 2014.

Cobtree Manor Park

Maintenance of the park over this period is usual autumn works. Works to the park included the following;

- 20m excess vegetation cut back along the Horse Ride/Estate Walk
- ground prepared for the first instalment of shrub re-planting, loosely following the original design

Over the past year in addition to information already received in the annual report:

- Crimes reported to police – none
- Incidents of ASB – none
- Volunteer hours – 58
- Number of volunteers – 1
- Number of events scheduled – 22
- Number of educational tours with Ranger – 2 with 43 participants plus one talk for the Beaver group with 20 participants
- 1 Self-guided session by local Tree Wardens with 22 participants
- Self-managed visits by groups from local schools approx 15

Works undertaken as part of the Master Plan for phase two of the project.

- The start of the build phase for the Visitor Centre which commenced on Monday 10th November 2014.
- The final sculpture continues to progress.

The progress of the final sculpture to be installed can be followed on the blog written by sculptor Jason Mulligan <http://thecobtreesculpture.blogspot.co.uk> this main piece is to be installed next to the visitor centre.

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	

Unfortunately due to a fault with the equipment the foot fall figures for July to September are unavailable. The fault is being investigated and will be repaired as quickly as possible.

Cobtree Golf Course

Golf course roundage figures for the September and October are as follows:

September	4133
October	2836

These are in line with what would be expected for the time of year and the weather. A separate report on the golf course is included for the December meeting.

Estate properties

Nothing to report. The tenant of Garden Cottage has not yet given notice to quit.

Kent Life

Following the fire at the chalets in the summer the Council's loss adjusters have offered the following:

To rebuild as per the estimate stated at £26,128.00, please note the insurance excess of £10,000.00 is deductible. If these sheds were to be rebuilt this would be payable by the charity.

If CMET do not wish to reinstate and opt for an indemnity settlement the insurers would be able to offer full and final settlement in the sum of £12,500.00. This money could potentially be put towards improving the sewerage system on the main site, thereby saving considerable maintenance sums on the facility.

Continuum Kent life have been advised that there will be a procurement exercise to tender for the facility from the end of their existing contract in November 2015. They will continue to take wedding bookings into the period beyond this and the future operator will be required to honour these bookings.

The Estate Manager Emily Hirons has sent the following update:

Visitor Numbers currently 9% ahead of budget

Income currently 17% ahead of budget

Operating result currently 49% ahead of budget

We have had an excellent season so far, with good weather and great feedback seeing us busy from the start of season. Our autumn events went well, with our best ever hop bines for our Hops n Harvest event. We still have great events coming up, including our Christmas on the Home Front Re-enactment this weekend.

Autumn/Winter also sees our busiest time for education. So far this year we have welcomed over 12,000 schoolchildren for educational workshops and we have adapted to the new curriculum with an extra set of Theme Days for local schools to select from. Another 4,000 school children are expected over the next few weeks! We have also continued to host work experience visits for local colleges, with an average of 8 students volunteering each week.

Our team continue to get great feedback, and we will be undertaking further training with them during the quiet days. Sadly, our longest serving team member, Tony Read, is leaving us after almost 10 years service. Tony has been instrumental in helping to run the site since 2005 and he will be sadly missed by both the team and guests.

As we head towards January we are working up plans to ensure all maintenance and repairs can be completed prior to the new season, giving us the best start to 2015/16. If the Young Farmers are successful in their grant, we will assist them in moving to a larger home on site in January. This gives us the change to refurbish the farmyard, adding more animals, activities and interpretation for our guests. We also hope to improve our fencing and field shelters to improve our animal displays. A final plan is to move a number of historic wagons back on display, to enhance our heritage offer.

Kent Life is proving that it can deliver great experiences to a variety of audiences and has found a way to be sustainable in a very competitive market- all very positive news!

Summary

Work continues across the estate to improve the facilities and to ensure its future success.