

Cobtree Manor Estate Update Report

Final Decision-Maker	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Elizabeth Buckingham - Cobtree Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Boxley

Executive Summary

The information in the report is intended to give the Committee an understanding of the day to day work of the Estate and the issues that affect its management. It also provides a record of all that is achieved across the different parts of the estate.

The estate update covers the period from when the Committee last met in January 2019.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the contents of this report be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	9 th April 2019

Cobtree Manor Estate Update Report

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This report covers the period from January 2019 to April 2019.

Cobtree Manor Park

1.2 Maintenance of the park over this period covers winter and spring works

Works to the park include:

- Pathway vegetation management
- Removal of fallen trees
- Seasonal shrub pruning
- Further tree works following survey recommendations

1.2.1 Following a successful recruitment campaign, an additional ranger has been appointed. It is hoped she can be in post before the Easter holidays. Recruitment for an apprentice is underway.

Events

1.3 An events programme for Spring and early Summer 2019 has been completed.

April 6th-22nd Easter Trail -£3 per child

Tuesday 9th April, Pollinator Party 10am - 3pm - Free

A day celebrating the UK's pollinators! This event will include bee and butterfly walks, crafts, games, story-telling and face painting, all themed on pollination.

Tuesday April 16th Spring Crafts 10am -12pm - £3 per child

Thursday April 18th Easter crafts 10am -12pm - £3 per child

Love Parks Week 24th July – 2nd August 10:00 - 16:00 Drop in games, craft sessions and competitions.

26th and 27th July Shakespeare in the park -Much Ado About Nothing

Performed by the Handlebards (ticketing by the Hazlitt Theatre)

Adults £17.50, 11-18 years £11.50, Under 10s Free

Community

1.4 A volunteers' gardening session saw work start on the bund of earth around the visitor centre to create a wildflower bank. The volunteers will attend further sessions to continue work on this area and to work on the community garden.

Three students studying conservation at Hadlow College will be carrying out three weeks of work experience during April.

Visitor Numbers

- 1.5 A verbal update on the first quarter's figures for 2019 will be given at the meeting.

Cobtree Manor Park Visitor Numbers 2017-19

	2017	Quarterly	% on previous year	2018	Quarterly	% on previous year	2019	Quarterly	% on previous year
Jan	21652			<i>9644</i>					
Feb	19574			<i>17940</i>					
Mar	25676	66902	33.94	<i>11768</i>	<i>39352</i>	<i>-41.18</i>			
Apr	30554			<i>30444</i>					
May	24952			34489					
Jun	25694	81200	10.85	30519	<i>95452</i>	<i>17.55</i>			
Jul	31187			33522					
Aug	37491			45813					
Sept	23675	92353	25.3	31009	110344	19.48			
Oct	24995			<i>42395</i>					
Nov	12290			<i>11393</i>					
Dec	16623	53908	6.28	<i>7064</i>	<i>60852</i>	<i>12.88</i>			
	294363		18.87	<i>306000</i>		<i>3.95</i>			

Bold italic figures are estimates.

Car park

- 1.6.1. Car park income to week 51 was £85,293, a 3% increase on the same period 2017-18.
- 1.6.2. The car park was completed on 29th March, the due date. Several minor modifications to the design were identified as necessary during construction.

The use of the car park is being observed to identify any additional signage that may be necessary.

The design incorporates several new areas for planting and these will be established over the coming weeks with predominantly native and native cultivars of trees, shrubs and ground cover with a focus on plants beneficial for pollinators.

- 1.6.3 A digger belonging to the car park construction contractor was stolen from the works compound while they were working on site on the night of Tuesday 26th March. This was used to move some of the recently installed boulders and then driven on to the golf course and transported away.

On the following evening, the golf course was again driven around.

The boulders have been repositioned and it has been identified that access to both sites would be prevented by replacing the gate on the driveway to the Manor House and cottages on the Forstal Road. This is currently under investigation.

The entire boundaries of both sites are being assessed to determine what further security measures such as fencing, hedging and placement of boulders can be implemented.

A report on these findings and proposals will be brought to the next committee meeting.

Cafe and Visitor Centre update

- 1.7.1 Further security measures have been installed which includes the connection of the container to the alarm system.

Cobtree Manor Golf Course

- 1.8.1 A verbal update on the fourth quarter's figures will be given at the meeting.
- 1.8.2 The planning application for the new club house and redesign of the course was approved by committee on February 21st. An additional archaeological survey was required as a condition of approval. This has been completed and a start date for the works is anticipated soon.
- 1.8.2 The Cobtree Wellbeing Programme

A well-attended health and wellbeing event was held at the golf course on February 22nd with taster sessions, free health checks, nutrition information and healthy food samples.

Kent Life Farm Attraction

- 1.9.1 A verbal update on the fourth quarter's figures will be given at the meeting.
- 1.9.2 Maintenance

Works to treat the timbers of the Kent Life play barn have been deferred to January 2020 so as not to disrupt site operations now that they are in to their busy season. The timber contractor is holding their price until then and we reserve the right to cancel the works at a later date without financial penalty.

The situation is being monitored month to month and we also reserve the right to bring those works forward if they become necessary before

January. They are part of the monthly monitoring of the contract and the Kent Life staff are monitoring the situation on site as well.

Works will take up all of January 2020. Exact dates will be scheduled with the timber contractors, play equipment contractors and Kent Life staff in autumn 2019.

Cobtree Railway

1.10.1 A meeting to discuss the Railway project was held on February 20th, attended by CMET members, the Cobtree Charity Trust and officers. Further investigations into the costings for engineering works, the business plan and sources of funding are to be undertaken.

1.11 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

The committee could choose not to note the information contained in this reports, however the committee has requested regular updates on the operations on the estate.

1.12 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1.13 RISK

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

1.14 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

No consultation has taken place since the last report.

2. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

2.1 Any comments from the Committee will be passed on to the relevant parties.

3. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objects and the corporate priorities of the Council.	Head of Regeneration and Economic

		Development
Risk Management	Risks to running the estate are dealt with in the annual Estate Risk Management Report.	
Financial	Financial risks are considered in the ongoing finance updates.	
Equalities	No Implications	

4. REPORT APPENDICES

- None

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None