

# AGENDA

## COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Friday 28 April 2017  
Time: 11.00 a.m.  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Cox (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Gooch,  
McLoughlin (Chairman), Perry and  
Mrs Wilson

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Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Notification of Visiting Members
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers
5. Disclosures of Lobbying

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on Thursday 20 April 2017**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Debbie Snook on 01622 602030**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,  
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ**

6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
7. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2017 1 - 7
8. Report of the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development - Cobtree Manor Park Cafe Easter Holiday Trials 8 - 15

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 MARCH 2017

**Present:** Councillor McLoughlin (Chairman) and Councillors Cox and Perry

**Also Present:** Mr R Hext – Cobtree Charity Trust Limited

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Gooch and Mrs Wilson.

39. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

40. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

41. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

42. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

43. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That the item on Part II of the agenda be taken in private as proposed.

44. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2017

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the amendment of the second figure on the sixth line of Minute 33 to read £21,730.

45. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2017

Minute 32 – Cobtree Manor Estate Update Report – Proposed Railway

With regard to the aspirations of the Cobtree Charity Trust Limited for a railway at the Cobtree Manor Estate, the Committee was informed that a

local construction company had confirmed that it would be feasible to build a tunnel under Forstal Road. However, the company would not be able to provide funding towards the cost of the scheme.

It would be necessary to seek the advice of Kent Highways regarding the construction of the tunnel, and Kent Highways might require a commitment to meet the cost of a feasibility study to provide that advice.

The Parks and Leisure Manager undertook to raise the issue informally with Kent Highways in the first instance.

#### 46. EXTERNAL AUDIT MANAGEMENT LETTER 2015/16

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance and Business Improvement setting out the Management Letter that had been produced as part of the external audit of the accounts.

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) explained that:

- The Management Letter had been produced by the external auditors and its purpose was to draw the attention of the Committee to various matters that had arisen as a result of the audit.
- The first five sections of the Management Letter provided background information and details of the scope and objectives of the audit and the overall audit strategy. Section 6 provided an update on issues raised in the 2014/15 Management Letter and section 7 detailed recommendations arising from the 2015/16 audit and the management response.
- Arising from the 2014/15 audit, the external auditors had made a recommendation that the Council set up a separate accounting system for the accounts relating to the Cobtree Manor Estate. This was still under consideration. Setting up a new company in the Council's financial ledger could cost the Charity around £10,000 so the possibility of using a smaller separate accounting package was being investigated, and a report would be submitted to a future meeting. The external auditors had also made a recommendation that the Council stop claiming VAT on behalf of the Charity, and set up a separate VAT registration, and this had been done.
- Arising from the 2015/16 audit, the external auditors had made the point that the Café and car parking operations could be considered to be commercial activities for the purpose of taxation, and it was possible that the tax threshold limit might be reached in future financial years. The situation would be monitored closely to see if there was a possibility of reaching the limit. It could be argued that rather than being commercial activities, the Café and car parking operations existed to provide funds to reinvest in the Estate. This point would be investigated further by the Officers, and, if necessary, a report would be submitted to a future meeting to enable the Committee to consider the potential implications.

- In response to questions by Members, the Senior Finance Manager (Client) confirmed that he would:
  - (a) Discuss with the Chairman and the Director of Finance and Business Improvement the most cost effective way to set up a separate accounting system for the accounts relating to the Cobtree Manor Estate;
  - (b) Clarify the projected deficit in respect of the Café as at 31 July 2017 referred to in the external auditor's third recommendation arising from the 2015/16 audit; and
  - (c) Make clear to the external auditors that there is only one car park at the Cobtree Manor Park.

During the discussion, it was suggested and agreed that consideration be given to increasing car parking charges at Cobtree Manor Park, possibly as part of a package linked to use of the Café.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the contents of the Management Letter and the action proposed by the Officers in response be noted.
2. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee examining the options for increasing car parking charges at the Cobtree Manor Park, possibly as part of a package linked to use of the Café.

47. **COBTREE MANOR ESTATE - CONTINGENCY AND RESERVES REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement concerning the establishment of an acceptable minimum level of reserves to be held going forward to meet ongoing commitments and unexpected events.

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) advised the Committee that:

- In recent years the financial resources of the Charity had been under considerable pressure mainly due to the reduction in the value of the Golf Course contract and the opening of the Visitor Centre/Café which had been operating at a loss to date. However, the financial position of the Charity was now starting to improve and over the next ten years, it was projected that surpluses totalling £1.4m could be generated. These surpluses could be set aside in order to:
  1. Establish sufficient funds for ongoing equipment replacement and capital expenditure;
  2. Re-invest in the permanent endowment to replace the funds withdrawn to fund the Master Plan; and
  3. Have sufficient funds in place to meet the costs of unexpected events.

- A draft five year capital programme had been drawn up which indicated that around £0.4m would need to be allocated for a number of schemes, the most significant being the redesign and resurfacing of the car park at the Manor Park.
- It was proposed that a further report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee to enable decisions to be made regarding the establishment of reserves and the amounts to be set aside to cover the three areas identified above.

In response to questions, the Officers confirmed that the contract for the operation and management of the Kent Life attraction and the new Golf Course contract included directors' guarantees or performance bonds which protected the Charity's position. The Senior Finance Manager (Client) undertook to provide details of rechargeable costs, including management costs, as a separate line in the financial projections for the Cobtree Manor Park.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the establishment of reserves and the allocation of reserves for specific purposes.

#### 48. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE UPDATE MARCH 2017

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development providing an update on the operation of the Estate since the last meeting in January 2017.

The Parks and Leisure Manager explained, inter alia, that:

- The estimated cost of re-surfacing the existing car park at Cobtree Manor Park with tarmac, including the installation of the required drainage and kerbs, was £296,000. As part of the project, consideration would be given to how the layout and appearance of the car park might be improved.
- Confirmation had been received that the scheme to connect the River Medway cycle path with the Cobtree Manor Park and the road crossing could now go ahead.

It was suggested and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee setting out options for the re-surfacing and re-configuration of the car park at the Cobtree Manor Park in materials sympathetic to the parkland setting; the report to incorporate (a) proposals for improving the path through the woodland and the treatment of the pedestrian and cycle accesses to the Manor Park and (b) proposals for increasing car parking charges at Cobtree Manor Park, possibly as part of a package linked to use of the Café, as discussed previously.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee setting out options for the re-surfacing and re-configuration of the car park at the Cobtree Manor Park in materials sympathetic to the parkland setting; the report to incorporate (a) proposals for improving the path through the woodland and the treatment of the pedestrian and cycle accesses to the Manor Park and (b) proposals for increasing car parking charges at Cobtree Manor Park, possibly as part of a package linked to use of the Café, as discussed previously.

49. COBTREE MANOR PARK VISITOR CENTRE/CAFÉ UPDATE - MARCH 2017

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development setting out details of the performance of the Cobtree Manor Park Visitor Centre/Café since it opened in August 2015.

The Parks and Leisure Manager explained, inter alia, that:

- A number of changes would be made in April to enhance the customer experience whilst improving business in the Café. These included:

Changing the menu during holidays and weekends to food that could be served straight away - this would greatly reduce waiting times, enable the Café to operate with fewer staff and mean fewer lines had to be stocked.

Trialling the use of quality recyclable tableware at busy times rather than crockery and cutlery - this would reduce the amount of time that staff spent collecting and cleaning crockery and cutlery, and enable the number of staff required to be reduced. More bins would be installed and signage would be erected to encourage customers to use them.

Moving the counter forward on a trial basis to enable customers to collect food, drinks and ice cream on their way to the till – this would make for a much smoother operation.

- It was proposed to install a service hatch in the window next to the main entrance door. This would give a second point of sale for ice cream and drinks and a separate, faster moving queue, resulting in increased income. The Committee was asked to approve expenditure of not more than £5,000 to enable the service hatch to be installed.
- The Council would be undertaking a tendering exercise to find an external operator for its Cafés in Mote Park and the Maidstone Museum. Including the Cobtree Café in the invitation to tender would provide the opportunity to test the market for an external operator and assess the potential income from such an arrangement against the current operational performance.

In response to questions by Members, the Parks and Leisure Manager confirmed that in Table 1 giving a breakdown of the month on month Visitor Centre/Café costs and income from when the facility opened to the current time, the total staff cost in August 2015 should read £8,111 and the total outcome should be minus £31,984.

Members expressed reservations about the proposed move to recyclable tableware at busy times, but were mindful of issues associated with the capacity of the kitchen and the length of queues. It was suggested that, as an alternative, a trial be arranged for two weeks at busy times over the Easter break using recyclable tableware for customers eating outside, and that feedback be obtained. The outcome of the trial would be reported to a meeting of the Committee at the end of April 2017.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That agreement be given to the inclusion of the Cobtree Manor Park Café in an invitation to tender for an external operator for the Council's various catering outlets, reserving the right to not appoint if the Committee decides to continue operation of the Café in-house.
3. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the results of the tender exercise to enable a decision to be made on the future operation of the Cobtree Manor Park Café.
4. That agreement be given to the installation of a server hatch at the Cobtree Manor Park Café at a cost not exceeding £5,000.
5. That a trial be arranged for two weeks at busy times over the Easter break using recyclable tableware for customers eating outside, and that feedback be obtained.
6. That the outcome of the trial be reported to a meeting of the Committee at the end of April 2017 to enable a decision to be made on the tableware to be used at the Cobtree Manor Park Café.

50. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified having applied the Public Interest Test:

**Head of Schedule 12A and  
Brief Description**

Exempt Report of the Head of  
Regeneration and Economic  
Development – Cobtree Manor  
Estate Financial Position

3 – Financial/Business Affairs



51. COBTREE MANOR ESTATE FINANCIAL POSITION

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development summarising the financial position of the Cobtree Manor Estate as at 28 February 2017. The report, covering the activities at the Golf Course, the Kent Life attraction, the Manor Park and the Visitor Centre/Café, also included a forecast year end outturn position. It was noted that it was still forecast that the Estate would operate at a deficit for 2016/17. However, it was anticipated that the Estate would start to generate an annual operational surplus going forward from 2017/18.

The Senior Finance Manager (Client) explained that the funding of £30,000, previously agreed in principle for a new road crossing outside the entrance to the Manor Park to enable the River Medway Cycle Path scheme to link up with the Park, had not been included in this report, but there were sufficient funds available to meet this commitment as required.

**RESOLVED:** That the current financial position and forecast outturn be noted.

52. DURATION OF MEETING

3.40 p.m. to 5.05 p.m.

# Agenda Item 8

## **Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee**

**28<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

## **Cobtree Manor Park Café Easter Holiday Trials**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Jason Taylor – Parks and Leisure Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	Boxley

### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. To note the contents of the report on Cobtree Manor Park Café in Appendix I.
2. To approve that the trial arrangements are made permanent during school holidays, bank holidays and busy times.

### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all - Ensuring that there are good leisure and culture facilities

### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	28 <sup>th</sup> April 2017

# Cobtree Manor Park Café Easter Holiday Trials

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The information in the report shown in Appendix I is intended to give the Committee an update on the various activities that were trialled at Cobtree Manor Park Café during the Easter holidays in April 2017 and to ask for approval to continue with the new arrangements implemented during the trial period.
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## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At the March 2017 Cobtree Manor Estate Trust (CMET) meeting proposals were presented for a number of changes to the operation of the Cobtree Manor Park Café during April, to enhance the customer experience whilst improving the operation and profitability of the cafe.
- 2.2 Committee members had some concerns about the proposals and it was agreed that the options would be trialled over the Easter holidays.
- 2.3 The success of these trials was monitored; customer's feedback sought and the results are enclosed in Appendix I.
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## **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 To note the contents of the report in Appendix I. to ensure an accurate record of work across the estate is maintained and that the trial arrangements are made permanent during school holidays, bank holidays and busy times.
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## **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The preferred option is set out at 3.1 above and is recommended as the trial was a success, with a profit made over the period, and was supported by good customer feedback.
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## **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 The results of the consultation referred to in Appendix I will be provided at the meeting.
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## **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

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

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## 7. 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 objects and the corporate priorities of the Council.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Financial</b>	Financial risks are considered in the ongoing finance updates.	Cobtree Finance Officer
<b>Staffing</b>	No immediate implications.	
<b>Legal</b>	No implications.	
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	No implications.	
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	No implications.	
<b>Community Safety</b>	No implications.	
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	No implications.	
<b>Procurement</b>	No implications.	
<b>Asset Management</b>	No implications.	

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Cobtree Manor Park Café Easter Trial Report.

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## Cobtree Manor Park Cafe Easter Trial.

April 2017

At the March Cobtree Manor Estate Trust (CMET) meeting proposals were presented for a number of changes to the operation of the Cobtree Manor Park Café during April, to enhance the customer experience whilst improving the operation and profitability of the cafe. Committee members had some concerns about the proposed changes and it was agreed that the options would be trialled over the Easter holidays. The success of these changes would be monitored, customers feedback sought and the results reported back to the committee.

### 1. Changes implemented

It was hoped that these changes would reduce the time that customers waited to order and receive their food, and in turn reduce complaints. Due to the excellent weather over Easter the park and café were incredibly busy which meant that these trials were tested at the busiest time.

The changes that were taken to committee in March 2017 are shown below in bold with the results shown below in italics:

- 1.1. **During holidays and weekends change the menu to food that can be served straight away. This will comprise of food that customers can select, pay for and go, as opposed currently where customers queue, place an order, wait for food to be cooked to order and served by a member of staff. This will greatly reduce waiting times, enable us to operate with fewer staff and mean fewer lines have to be stocked.**

*A 'Schools Out Menu' was introduced and immediately pressure was taken off the kitchen with the waiting time for food reduced. Instant grab and go hot and cold food was trialled but with the changes and simplification of the 'Schools Out Menu' it meant that the kitchen was able to deal with the reduced food orders adequately. It was also observed that the thing that generated most of the waiting time was ice cream and drinks sales. **We recommend that this is continued.***

- 1.2. **Through benchmarking we know that our prices are considerably lower than other park cafes in the area, we will increase our prices so that they are more comparable to the offer elsewhere. We have not increased our prices across the board since the café opened 20 months ago.**

*Café prices were increased by around 15%; this was rounded up for ease of change management. The prices were set to be comparable with other park cafés in the surrounding area, and notices were put up informing customers of the price increases.*

*The introduction of price increases did not appear to concern customers, with only one verbal comment from a customer. The increase had no impact on sales. **We recommend that prices are reviewed twice a year.***

- 1.3. **Using quality recyclable packaging at busy times rather than crockery and cutlery. To reduce the amount of time that staff spend collecting and cleaning crockery and cutlery, which should reduce the number of staff required.**

*Quality recyclable packaging was introduced and was used both inside the cafe and outside. This helped keep the café and kitchen clear of dirty crockery at the busiest time, and enabled the café to operate with 5 rather than 7 staff, which ultimately helped to make the café more profitable. Whilst there were one or two comments from regular customers the recyclable disposable packaging was received well by customers. There is an increased cost to this packaging when compared to the foam equivalent of on average about 7 pence per item. We are happy that this increased cost can be passed onto the customers. **We recommend that this is continued.***

- 1.4. **The installation of a service hatch in the window next to the main entrance door. To give a second point of sale for ice creams and drinks and a separate, faster moving queue.**

*In order to experiment with this a second point of sale selling ice creams and drinks was set up at various locations in and around the building. What we did find was that wherever the second point of sale was opened it reduced the queue to the main counter very quickly. What worked most effectively was monitoring the main queue and when it started to get too long moving a member of staff from the main counter to the second point of sale.*

*The best location for the second point of sale was the far corner of the café next to the office. To set this up permanently requires a small counter to be purchased, a drinks fridge and an ice cream freezer will be obtained free of charge from the product suppliers. **We recommend that this is continued and a counter purchased.***

*The only disadvantage to this option is that there would be no hatch to serve people outside.*

- 1.5. **Trial moving the existing counter forward so that customers would collect their food, drinks and ice cream on their way to the till.**

*We did trial this in a very limited way by using tables and having products that customers could pick up whilst queuing. This did have limited success but compared to the improvements made by having the second point of sale made a very small difference to the operation of the café. It was also very difficult to monitor what was being picked up by customers and could lead to increased levels of theft. In order to do this properly there would need to be a major reconfiguration of the counter. **We recommend that this is deferred.***

## 2. Customer Feedback.

Whilst trialling these changes to the café we were obviously very keen to get feedback from customers, we did this in three ways:

**2.1. On site observation and talking to customers.**

Either the Cobtree Manger or Leisure Manger was on site at all times to not only observe but to talk to customers and staff regarding the changes.

**2.2. Customers Survey.**

A special customer survey was put in place for the two weeks of the trial regarding the changed menu and all aspect of their experience. To encourage people to fill this in and ensure that we had an adequate number of responses, we offered a prize of a £20 family meal voucher.

**2.3. Social Media**

Social media sites, particularly Trip Advisor give a very good honest opinion of what visitors think of the park and café.

**2.4. Results**

The feedback from customers has been very positive with very few complaints. At the time of writing this report customer surveys were still being completed but these, along with Trip Advisors feedback will be brought to the CMET meeting.

**3. Conclusions of Trial**

The conclusions from the trial are:

- 3.1 The introduction of a weekend and holiday menu was a success and should be continued on during holidays and busy periods.
- 3.2 The grab and go offer was received with limited success so in future should just be used for cold items presented on the counter such as cake, biscuits and confectionary.
- 3.3 The increase in prices was a success.
- 3.4 The use of quality recyclable packaging was a success. It was liked by customers, reduced the amount of table clearing and washing up, which in turn meant staff numbers could be reduced.
- 3.5 The proposed introduction of a service hatch and remodelling of the existing counter is not required, if a second point of sale for busy times is introduced at the back of the café.
- 3.6 All methods of customer feedback showed us that customers are not only very happy with the park and café but also there were very few negative comments about the changes introduced over the Easter period.

**4 Level of Business over the Easter Period**

The Easter holiday was especially busy and the park was full to capacity. The table below shows the level of trading during this time.

April	Salaried Staff	Casual Staff	Total Staff Costs	Provision (Av)	Staff + Provision s Total Cost	Services (Av)	Total Costs	Sales Gross	Outcome	Sales Net	Outcome	% Profit
Tues 4th	212	202	414	710	1124	106	1230	1080	-150	900	-330	-36.67
Weds 5th	211	257	468	710	1178	106	1284	1871	587	1559	275	17.64
Thurs 6th*	217	252	469	710	1179	106	1285	2251	966	1876	591	31.50
Fri 7th	212	317	529	710	1239	106	1345	2609	1264	2174	829	38.13
Sat 8th	99	383	482	710	1192	106	1298	1915	617	1596	298	18.67
Sun 9th	178	306	484	710	1194	106	1300	2441	1141	2034	734	36.09
Mon 10th	217	241	458	710	1168	106	1274	1997	723	1664	390	23.44
Tues 11th	206	186	392	710	1102	106	1208	2091	883	1742	534	30.65
Weds 12th	217	208	425	710	1135	106	1241	2041	800	1701	460	27.04
Thurs 13th	100	290	390	710	1100	106	1206	1804	598	1504	298	19.81
Fri 14th	217	263	480	710	1190	106	1296	2039	743	1699	403	23.72
Sat 15th	118	290	408	710	1118	106	1224	1983	759	1653	429	25.95
Sun 16th	100	339	439	710	1149	106	1255	1561	306	1301	46	3.54
Mon 17th	217	175	392	710	1102	106	1208	1806	598	1505	297	19.73
Total for period	2521	3709	6230	9940	16170	1484	17654	27489	9835	22908	5254	22.94

\* Price increases introduced on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April

Services include cleaning, electricity, gas, equipment services, IT and Communications for the whole building

The Easter Egg trail also generated £1,200 income over the holidays which is included in the above table.

## 5 Other Observations and improvements to be made

Whilst observing the Easter Trials at Cobtree Manor Park at such a busy time, a number of other potential operational efficiencies became apparent. These are listed below:

### 5.1 Poor car parking.

Visitors park very inefficiently with very large gaps between cars, as well as this there have been problems with cars blocking areas such as the entrance to the overflow car park. At busy times this resulted in a member of staff having to direct cars in the car park. On a number of occasions cars were parking along both sides of Forstal Road which needs to be avoided in future.

In the short term we need to mark out car parking bays and make it very clear where cars can and can't park.

In the long term redesigning the car park should solve these issues.

### 5.2 Limited capacity for storage of chilled and frozen food.

Due to the limited capacity to store stock, deliveries to the café are required every day at busy times. Whilst these are arranged before 10am it does mean that on occasion stock runs out, or if the delivery is late means that one member of staff has to stop serving customers to process the order and restock freezers.

Currently long term solutions to this such as incorporating a cold store room are being investigated as this would make operations more efficient, improve customer service and



reduce reliance on delivery companies to be on time.

### **5.3 Amend staff structure to improve resilience.**

Currently the team is able to cope adequately when they are all in and no one is sick or on holiday, which gives little resilience and means that customer service is reduced when the whole team is not in. Currently we have two senior members of staff who oversee operation of the café 7 days per week. There could be an opportunity to train up some of the junior members of staff to act as duty managers. Having a duty manager on at all times would not only build resilience and improve customer service but would also enable us to extend the opening hours at busy times which would increase income. Officers will model this and the increased costs associated with a new structure.

### **5.4 Improve how issues and minor emergencies are dealt with.**

The efficiency of the café suffers greatly when staff are called away to deal with issues such as lost children, first aid, to open the height barrier into the park, issue season tickets, deal with issues with toilets, etc. Going forward we need to ensure that at busy times there is a person available and contactable to deal with these issues. This could be a manager or the park ranger.

### **5.5 Increase levels of change held to reduce visits to the bank.**

This has been increased but needs to be increased further at busy times.

### **5.6 Improve signage.**

Giving directions on ordering food, to include menus on tables to encourage customers to find an empty table and make their choices *before* joining the queue, as making selections at the point of sale slows down the speed of service. Further signage to encourage customers to put their own rubbish in bins to support staff keeping the café clear of waste.