

Background paper: Refreshed Mount Edgcumbe Business Plan 2013-14

1.0 Introduction

On the 25 November 2011 an updated business plan for Mount Edgcumbe House and Country Park was tabled for discussion at a joint committee meeting setting out a number of recommended actions, and this paper provides a progress report against those actions.

In addition this report sets out a refreshed business for 2013-2014 so that the momentum to improve the sustainability of the park is maintained whilst a strategic service review is undertaken.

3. Visitor analysis

Since the original business plan in 2010, a visitor survey was carried out earlier this year, and some of the key findings are set out below:

- 62% of all visitors are local to Plymouth and Cornwall (33% and 29% respectively)
- More than half the visitors (55%) travel to Mount Edgcumbe by car, contributing significantly to income generation via car park fees, with 63% coming from Plymouth and Cornwall (23% and 41% respectively)
- Nearly a quarter of all visitors (24%) access Mount Edgcumbe via a ferry service with nearly 70% coming from Plymouth
- The most popular reason for visiting Mount Edgcumbe was to walk/exercise (48%) followed by visiting the grounds/gardens (37%)
- Only 9% surveyed visited the house
- Mount Edgcumbe has a high number of repeat visits with 6% visiting on a daily basis, 12% on a weekly basis, 17% on a monthly basis, 27% on a quarterly basis and over a third (35%) only once a year
- Of the 6% that visited daily, most (91%) came from Cornwall and over a third (35%) came to walk their dog
- Only 17% surveyed had heard about Mount Edgcumbe from a marketing source with over 80% knowing about the park through word of mouth or local knowledge
- The three most popular things at Mount Edgcumbe are free: the park/coastline, gardens and wildlife

Based on these findings, the key messages that any refreshed business plan needs to take into account are:

- That the greatest percentage of visitors are relatively local with over 60% coming from Plymouth and Cornwall
- That unsurprisingly the three most popular activities are free: walking the park/coastline and enjoying the gardens and wildlife
- That only 17% surveyed had heard about Mount Edgcumbe from a marketing source including the website

3. Revised business plan progress report

3.1 General

What follows in this section is a summary of progress on the revised 2011 business plan recommendations. However please see appendix I for a more detailed breakdown of the RAG rating for each of the business plan recommendations.

3.2 A new wedding offer

- A new marquee was purchased, installed and handed over in September 2012.
- High quality promotional photographs have been acquired following a photo-shoot for the interior layout of the marquee
- A new commercial website has been developed to support Mount Edgcumbe's new wedding package, and is now live: exclusive use of the Earl's Garden, reception in the marquee, exclusive fireworks display in the garden and private parking for guests in the Barrow Centre car park.
- The new wedding package has been designed to provide a comprehensive and complete solution for couples: an easily understood and straightforward offer with fixed catering and travel arrangements in a simple package
- The new wedding package has also been benchmarked with a revised pricing policy and an increase in the site hire levy for the Orangery to a single tariff of £1,200 plus VAT for any wedding reception. This is an increase from the previous rates of £400 (low season), £600 (mid season) and £800 (high season).
- The licensed caterer for Mount Edgcumbe (Estates Catering) has been secured to provide all catering for wedding receptions in the marquee. As part of the agreement the caterer will fit out the marquee kitchen facility at no cost to the park.
- The impact of this work has seen a total of 38 wedding ceremonies at Mount Edgcumbe during 2012-13 with a revenue contribution of £36,430, compared to a total of 21 ceremonies for 2011-12. For 2013-14 there are currently 22 confirmed wedding ceremonies generating an income of £20,000 with a further 10 pencilled in, which represents a small increase in numbers when compared to the total numbers for 2012-13 at the same time of year.
- For 2012-13 there have been a total of 30 Orangery receptions compared to a total of 19 receptions for 2011-12. For 2013-14 there are a total of 18 confirmed Orangery receptions, 2 marquee receptions and 3 firm pencil bookings, which represents an increase in numbers when compared to the total numbers for 2012-13 at the same time of year.
- Please see appendix 2 for some example web pages and photographs of the wedding offer

3.2 Stock ranges

- A new guide book was developed and partially sponsored by the Friends of Mount Edgcumbe at a cost of £4,200 for a 4,000 print run.
- It was launched in May 2012 with over 350 copied sold to date
- The net profit is £900 on current sales
- This guidebook provides the park with a modern and good quality 'ambassador', and fills a gap where for three years the park has not offered the public any printed interpretation of the history, landscape and buildings of Mount Edgcumbe

3.3 *Events and fairs 2012-13*

- A total of 33 workshops, talks and walks were organised and led by Mount Edgcumbe during 2012-13 brining in 360 clients to the park and generating revenue of approximately £3,500.
- In addition there have been a number of major events on the estate, and include: the Fairy Festival in June, the Classic Car Rally in August, which attracted over 12,000 people, the Military Vehicle Trust Rally in August and the Sealed Knot weekend in September. In total these events have generated the park an income of around £7,000
- The two-day Christmas Fair welcomed 4,000 visitors in December 2011 and earned a total of £7,000 for the park. Projections are higher for the December 2012 event, particularly as it has been increased by 12 stall holders, and will be held inside the new marquee.

3.4 *Reduction of operating costs*

- Staff costs have been reduced: the relocation of the house, shop and ticket office and the installation of CCTV has reduced the need for house staff by 1.2FTE, and has therefore reduced salary costs by £14,579
- To provide capacity, the number of volunteers recruited across the park has increased to over 50 individuals
- The capital loan was paid off with an interest free loan of £241,000 from Cornwall Council, removing a £30,000 pressure from the annual operating costs. The interest free loan from Cornwall Council will be paid by through the sale proceeds of Picklecombe Cottage.

4. **Revised business plan actions for 2013-14**

4.1 *Weddings*

- A targeted marketing and advertising campaign is being launched to support the new wedding offer in Southwest Brides magazine, Dream Wedding magazine, the Wedding Directory, Cornish Brides, magazine, Wedding Venues & Services magazine (Southwest) and the Western Morning News Wedding Supplement. It has been estimated that these publications will have a readership of 1 million people during the life of the campaign.
- We will be negotiating with accommodation providers to include in the wedding offer additional accommodation from local hotels and the larger

B & B operators to allow couples the options of securing overnight accommodation for their guests. This has been welcomed by the Rame Traders Association and will enrich the wedding offer from Mount Edgumbee House & Country Park. We are also seeking a reciprocal arrangement with Rame Traders to gain exposure for our weddings offer through their website and leaflet distribution

- Development work will continue on the new weddings website, including the creation of two-way links with: weddingvenues.com, gettingmarriedincornwall.com, wedmagazine.co.uk, cornwall.gov.uk, swpp.co.uk, forbetterworse.co.uk and visitplymouth.com. These websites are the most popular sites for couples getting married in the Southwest and between them they receive 285,000 unique visits a month.
- Although the increased profiling of the wedding offer will have the greatest impact during 2014-15 with an estimated additional income of £20,000 through the marquee hire, we are projecting a minimum of £10,000 additional income for 2013-14 on top of the £20,200 from the confirmed 22 wedding ceremonies and the £6,430 from the confirmed Orangery receptions.

4.2 *Conferences & corporate hire*

- 2012-13 has seen a total of 13 conference bookings generating an income of £4,794.
- With the purchase of the new marquee, work is planned for 2013-14 to grow this area and realise its potential. To date a major two-day international conference has been booked in September using the marquee, house and other buildings that will yield an income of £10,000 plus catering. Moreover there are a number of additional enquiries being pursued for 2013, including a further international conference and a series of training days, which could generate a further £5,000.

4.3 *Creation of a children's play area*

- The lease of the land to the Friends of Mount Edgumbe has been completed
- The bid to SITA Cornwall Trust by the Friends has been submitted and will be considered at the meeting of SITA trustees on the 12th February 2013. If successful and approved, work on site will be completed in time for Easter 2013
- Alongside the development of the children's play area and the adjoining picnic area, there will be a comprehensive review of the Cremyll Shop. It will concentrate initial on improving the coffee and snack offer, and a properly benchmarked price strategy will be introduced for Easter 2013.
- A marketing and communication plan is being developed to open the children's play area in anticipation of a successfully completed project
- We anticipate that the impact of the play area should increase the turnover by about £2,5000 per annum

4.4 *Segway tours 2013-16*

- This development comprises an operating license, overnight storage and charging for nine electric two wheeled off-road adventure vehicles that will be used to take visitors on safaris through the amphitheatre and round the Deer Park.
- Negotiations are nearing completion with a local operator to run the Segway Tour from the Barrow Centre. The operator will bear the capital and liability risk and pay a percentage return on turnover
- We expect this initiative to generate an additional £2,000 per annum

4.4 *Coach operator initiative*

- We will continue to engage directly with the major coach operators for the South West, and in particular the German market. The UK product manager for Wolters Reizens has been for a site visit and is planning to feature Mount Edgcumbe as the 'star property' in their 'Rosamund Pilcher' South West tour for 2013.
- We are contacting all regular operators to offer a special out-of-season package during the winter 2013-14 to increase the house income. This package will include an operator incentive deal.
- We have set a target of growth of 400 visitors from the coach market sector for 2013-14, which is projected to net an increase in ticket yield of £1,720.
- In addition - and in the light of price sensitivities (going forward) - we are introducing a car park incentive scheme where the retained portion of each parking ticket will include an incentive offer for entry to the house (providing those who pay for parking a percentage reduction on house ticket prices).

4.5 *Disc golf (Frisbee golf course)*

- In the summer of 2012 our Park Rangers designed and created a nine 'hole' disk golf course in the lower park. The layout used the treescape, the natural lie of the land with ground level 'fairways' cut through the scrub undergrowth (which also provided the general public with new pathways to stroll through the woodlands).
- Although there was little press interest at the time of its launch, interest has been growing and recently we have been visited by representatives of Disc Sport Southwest, Catch the Spirit and Lion Forty Four who arrange tournaments and local publicity for disc sport initiatives. They are keen to look at the possibility of setting up an annual tournament at Mount Edgcumbe and are also engaging with their wider community to get more people involved here
- There is currently no registered Disc Golf Course in Cornwall, and we will be investigating this possibility with them for 2013-14. The club itself would simply be a collection of enthusiasts who independently arrange events utilising the course – this is could work well to encourage more patronage for our secondary spend opportunities.

- There is already talk of ‘battle of the boarder’ competitions against Plymouth University teams and against the disc enthusiast group using Central Park in Plymouth

4.6 *Marketing plan 2013-14*

- All activities described in sections 3 and 4 are the result of the original SWOT analysis and business plan completed in 2010 and later revised in November 2011.
- In the context of the medium term strategic service review, a new marketing plan will emerge from one of the work streams being undertaken as part of the viability plan, and will set the direction for the park over the next 8 years
- In the mean time, a new marketing strategy will be developed to support the 2013-14 initiatives to ensure that the full potential of these short term actions can be realise

Appendix I

Item	Description	Rating
Outsourcing catering	Completed – review and strategy required (see 'Review of catering license' below)	GREEN
National Trust ownership	South West NT Board rejected the opportunity	RED
Holiday lets	QS reports and external testing show the five buildings considered were not economically viable	RED
Photovoltaic installation	This was pulled at the last moment due to a change in government policy. With the release of capital money this should be pursued	AMBER
Design and installation of a ticket/merchandise area in House	Completed	GREEN
CCTV installation at entrance and exit to House	Reduction in staff requirement - completed	GREEN
Children's play area and the SITA Cornwall Trust	Requires some liaison to complete the transfer of the land to FOME and support for/creation of the bid – lease and application completed/submitted – considered 12 th Feb 2013	AMBER
Sale of Picclecombe Cottage	Offer rejected – now going to auction	AMBER
Wedding Reception Marquee Purchase	Ongoing – procurement process completed – marquee installed – wedding business strategy to be delivered 2013	GREEN
Marquee events	Looking to develop the new marquee (above) beyond just wedding receptions: for example – a Cookery School (evenings); Line Dancing events; Murder Mysteries; corporate parties and conferences – in time this will require a review of staff resources	AMBER
Cremyll Shop	Overhaul of the offer and installation of kitchen – business case required – to be completed ASAP	AMBER
Circus	They require a general South West itinerary to be tempted – cannot include animals – difficult to arrange	RED
Theatre Company/ Travelling Players	Profit share - arranging for a company (Pantaloons – Sherlock Holmes) for summer 2013 – open air risks (taken by partners)	AMBER
Sculpture trail/weather interactive/evening lighting of selected areas/formal	Currently looking to put together a bid – at concept stage – needs thorough research and consultation – being undertaken. The issue of bat	AMBER

gardens	conservation could prevent the development of the idea of an evening 'attraction' around the Orangery	
Bush craft/survival school	Undertaking this with schools and colleges – can be expanded but requires resourcing (staff time)	GREEN
Film location	ME have hosted a German filmmaker recently - providing considerable income – more potential for future income. Industry connection for ME needs to be made centrally by PCC. ME would benefit as a location of (say) an episode of Dr Who	GREEN
Archery	Has been costed and could be delivered – but will not stand alone – external operator required (seasonal?)	AMBER
Laser Clays	As above with Archery	AMBER
Bike Hire	As above with Archery	AMBER
Segway Tours	To be delivered for Easter 2013 – Heads of terms and operating license being completed	AMBER
Zip Wires; Aerial Assault Courses ; Conversion of Plant Centre into Outbound Adventure Centre	All require a specialist operator and capital investment in equipment – all costed and investigated. Initial surveys complete – there is interest from the private sector (finding the right partner is the issue) – planning should not restrict this. Current – awaiting detailed engineering drawings and costs (exact topographical layout to be provided). This has been put on hold whilst future governance issues are explored.	AMBER
Coastal Kayaking	Requires a motorised safety boat and a minimum of two highly qualified staff - expensive to set-up and expensive to run. The tidal nature of our foreshore makes this problematic (£40k for safety boat alone). Direct competition already exists	RED
Tree Top Tour	Capital outlay is too great - the operating risks are also considerable on an unknown product	RED

Camping	This is an essential component part of creating a sustainable model for ME. All the current economic drivers and forward trends show this as the growing UK tourism sector. ME is restricted by 28 day planning consents – we need a really good quality summer camp site with showers and toilets (run by a third party) to support the other activities. Planning has put a stop on it.	RED
Conferencing	Looking at the possibility of outsourcing the Belvedere and attached suite of rooms (with the caveat of retaining summer and Christmas holidays for 'community activity'). These needs to be carefully considered in the light of the Strategic Service review. Major issue is lack of connectivity. There may be the need to go to tender?	AMBER
Review of catering license	Review and recalibration of percentage yield, exclusivity, general thrust of the relationship in the light of the Strategic Service Review	AMBER
Provision of licensed pitches (ice-cream bikes etc)	Dependent on license and Strategic Service Review above	AMBER
Large events/concerts	Seek a third party operator/promoter – dependent on Strategic Service Review/Viability Plan and new Business Plan 2013 - 2020	AMBER
General infrastructure	Additional toilets are required as numbers and events increase – especially in the lower Park. Wifi connection is required for the corporate conferencing spaces. Three phase power is needed to facilitate the development of the Barrow Centre. Park wide signage review and reinvention is required	AMBER
General events	Filling in the annual cycle – there is the possibility of creating a May Fayre (Punch and Judy, Maypole dancing, jousting, traditional ales and food). Looking at the possibility of a 'Destination Mount Edgcumbe' motorcycle rally. The 'Worst Dog in the West' Show (don't laugh – a Dog Walkers Breakfast Club and dog friendly events will be well received). Schools lantern parades up the hill.	AMBER

Appendix 2

Example of a wedding advert

This advert ran in *Pure Weddings Magazine* along with editorial and images from the estate.



Mount Edgumbe...

Mount Edgumbe

...where dreams come true

With three licensed rooms and an outdoor summer house for civil ceremonies plus two stunning reception venues the choice is yours

Mount Edgumbe House and Country Park
Tel: 01752 822236 email: mt.edgumbe@plymouth.gov.uk
www.mountedgumbe.gov.uk

New Website Pages



Photo Gallery

- About Mount Edgcumbe
- Civil Ceremonies
- Receptions
- Photo Gallery**
- Testimonials
- Special Offers
- Contact us



Ceremony Venues



Reception Venues



Out And About



Transport



The Great Hall

This stunning marble floored central room has an imposing staircase - a magnificent entrance for a bride. The seating in the hall is theatre style and will seat up to 80 people. To give you more flexibility and the opportunity to increase your guest list, the gallery is available for hire and can accommodate a further 40 people standing.

- The Great Hall
- The Drawing Room
- The Library
- ✓ Like You and 732 others like this.



The Orangery

- Orangery
- ✓ Like You and 732 others like this.



Marquee Layout

