

BOGGART HOLE CLOUGH COMMUNITY ACTION TRUST
Protecting and revitalizing Boggart Hole Clough Ancient Woodland Park

Minutes

of Executive Committee Open Meeting held 16 February 2005

at Boggart Hole Clough Visitor Centre, Charlestown Road, Manchester, M9 7DF.

1. Present: Amy Dowd, Andrew Sutton, Bev Sutton, Bill Brookes, Bob Hill, David Wilson (Lakeside Café leaseholder), Erin Dowd, Jean Finch, Jo Dowd, John Howard (Manchester City Council [MCC] Manchester Leisure [ML] North Area Parks assistant manager), Mark Hackett (chair, Charlestown cllr/MCC executive member for Culture & Leisure), Mervyn Romain, Naomi Sutton, Peter Milner (secretary), Ray Malone (deputy chair), Ron Baines, Sam McCormick (treasurer), Saul Mearns (MCC/ML North Area Parks warden), Sean Dowd, Suzanne O'Callaghan.

2. Apologies: Judith Crook, Mildred Lloyd, Rose Mason.

3. Minutes of previous meeting 15.12.04 (revised Minutes dated 16.2.05) agreed as true record.

4. MCC/ML management report (see also items 5, 6, etc).

4.1 Letter dated 12.2.05 to Mark from John Biggs, Charlestown Tenants & Residents Association chair: *...motor bikes & quad bikes churning the grass up next to the gates at bottom of the old White Walk path...Can something be done to stop these hideous quad bikes etc spoiling our park?... Need **routine police presence** besides Group4 security patrols. ML to display notices at entrances to include amongst other things the words: *No Unauthorized Vehicles*. Bob: *We need legal, safe venues for off-road motorcycling in north Manchester e.g. former Go Kart track in Broadhurst Park alongside St. Mary's Road, and land behind Hollinwood Morrisons between railway and Rochdale Canal...**

4.2 **Angel Hill War Memorial.** Suggestion for ornamental bedding around monument; Suzanne and most others thought more practical/appropriate left purely as grass. MCC set aside £200K for restoration of city's war memorials: Restoration Studios at Queen's Park will first carry out surveys/reports on condition of monuments.

4.3 **Manchester Poplar**, also known as Black Poplar (BP). Most BPs in North West England infected with venturia populina (fungal) disease (in Italy called *Summer Leaf Drop*) which makes them prone to collapse. For public safety therefore, throughout Manchester, BPs adjacent to buildings, roads, etc., being marked for imminent felling – 169 in the Clough. With 811 BPs the Clough has more than any other Manchester park. The remaining non-felled BPs in Clough will be allowed to collapse within the woodland (it is possible, though unlikely, the disease will recede). Felled BPs in the Clough will be replaced, John assured the Trust, with exclusively indigenous trees e.g. Hazel, Oak, Maple, Holly, Hawthorn, Lime, Alder, Rowan and healthy BP saplings.

4.4 Several stands of **Japanese Knotweed** (JK) are growing in the Clough. The Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981, made it illegal to spread JK or allow it to spread. Under Section 34 of the Environment Protection Act, 1990, soil and waste containing JK is deemed to have the potential to cause ecological harm and places a duty of care on producers of such soil and waste to ensure that it is disposed of safely. These legal strictures make it incumbent upon MCC, as the Clough's owners, to deal with this problem rather than rely upon Trust volunteers (who are physically helping ML eradicate other harmful invasive plants e.g. Rhododendron Ponticum). John says updated ML Clough *Management Plan* will include 4-year eradication programme outlined in *Pernicious Weed Control in the Mersey Valley* (2004) published by Mersey Valley Countryside Warden Service: *Spot-treat plants with Roundup Pro-green in July...Cut stems and burn them in kiln on site in November...Monitor and spray regrowth in May...Spot treat regrowth in July...Cut stems and burn them in kiln on site in November...* etc.

4.5 **MCC 100 Days Challenge 2005** campaign. Programme of events to involve community in cleaning up environment during March, April, May. Re assisting eradication of invasive Himalayan Balsam: should be hand pulled at end of June.

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5. Conservation (see also item 4.2, etc).

5.1 **Lake regeneration.** 2.1.05 new pair of swans on lake; single male of previous pair soon flew away (for backstory see Minutes 30.6.04 meeting). Re creating balanced, biodiverse, sustainable ecology (bird sanctuary, fishery, oxygenating plants, etc), need surveys/reports/recommendations from e.g. English Nature and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

5.2 Restoring Ancient Woodland biodiversity (see also items 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 8.3). Nature Conservation Group & Wildlife Gardening Club volunteers (particular thanks to regulars Amy, Erin, Jo, Rose, Sean, Sue, Tristan) working with Peter on Sundays, started **Nature Trails renovation** programme putting 2 drainage *flexi-pipes* into path near footbridge below Fish Pond, and to further dry out this path (and increase biodiversity) began constructing above the path a seasonal pond/wetland scrape on the meadow's woodland edge.

5.3 No progress re **Tree Preservation Order** (TPO) application for 8 trees, within Clough perimeter, along Lewis Avenue. Mark: *It is not the case that Council owned trees cannot be TPOed...*

6. Arts, sports, events.

6.1 **Funding 8.8.04 Brass music concert.** At the behest of MCC North Manchester Partnership (NMP) North City Arts (NCA) Peter signed Voluntary Action Manchester (VAM) Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest Funding Agreement on the understanding that Tom Sabin (NCA projects co-ordinator & administrator) undertook tasks listed in the Agreement including submission to VAM by 30.11.04 of *Interim Grant Update Report* (account of spending, etc) a copy of which would be sent to Peter. NCA apparently received the funding (£5K) but to date Peter has not received copy of the *Report*. It transpires that Tom has now left NCA. This exemplifies a big partner applying for money in the name of, while disregarding, a small partner/community group.

6.2 Assuming, after the above (item 6.1), that partnership between NMP/NCA and the Trust is re-established, we hope to regularize Brass music making in the Clough and develop **further regular activities** e.g. other Performing arts (e.g. Boggart Halloween Lantern celebration/festival/procession/theatrical event), Visual arts (e.g. banner/lantern making, wood carving), Self-powered cycling for people with learning difficulties, Guided nature/heritage walks, T'ai chi, Speed-walking.

7. **Security issues:** see item 4.1.

8. Treasurer's report/funding issues (see also item 6, etc).

8.1 **Balance** at 10.2.05 of £1184.55.

8.2 **VAM Community Learning Chest** grant, award letter dated 30.10.03. Last of 3 instalments: £59.20 credited 9.2.05 covering Peter's internet connection (4 months only). Total grant received: £2255.31. Trust's main acquisitions: Samsung laptop, Hewlett Packard printer/scanner/copier, Fuji digital camera.

8.3 **MCC Change grant** (*Capacity building grants for Community groups*), award letter dated 21.12.04: *for running costs and contribution towards Nature Conservation Group project*. Grant: £1K credited 9.2.05.

8.4 Mark says **Charlestown Coordination Committee** considering donation to Trust.

9. Next **Executive Committee Open Meeting:** Wednesday 27 April 05, 6.30 p.m., Visitor Centre. Members of the local community and any other interested people are welcome to attend Trust meetings on the understanding that only paid-up members of the Trust have a right to vote at the AGM in election of trustees, and during the year only trustees and representatives from affiliated member organizations and co-opted appointees have a right to vote at executive committee meetings.