

Minutes

of Annual General Meeting held 30 June 2004

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

1. **Present:** Amy Dowd, Ann Williams (Manchester City Council [MCC] Manchester Leisure [ML] North Area Parks warden), Bob Hill, David McCracken (MCC/ML North Area Parks manager), Erin Dowd, Frank Dowd, Gwen Hanson, Jean Finch, Jo Dowd, Judy Crook, Leanne Mason, Mark Hackett (Charlestown cllr/MCC executive member for Culture and Leisure), Mervyn Romain, Michael Cowlshaw (MCC/ML North Area Parks leisure assistant), Peter Milner (secretary pro tem), Ray Malone (Whitemoss Club for Young People chair), Rose Mason, Sam McCormick (Community Health Development worker), Sean Dowd, Sue Hudson, Suzanne O'Callaghan.
2. **Apologies:** David Wilson (treasurer pro tem/Lakeside Café leaseholder).
3. **Minutes of previous meeting 28.4.04** (revised Minutes dated 30.6.04) agreed as true record.
4. **Unscheduled meeting 16.6.04** held at Visitor Centre to reconsider proposed demolition of disused building corner of Rochdale and Charlestown Roads, formerly barber shop etc. Present: David McC, Mark, Peter, Bill Risby (Moston cllr), Eric Hobin (Charlestown cllr), Joe Warburton (MCC Property and Valuation Dept technical assistant), John Swindells (MCC Chief Executive Dept structural engineer), Paul Baron (MCC Property and Valuation Dept buildings inspector). Mark: *Cllr Basil Curley couldn't attend this meeting...he believes an historic building is going to be needlessly destroyed.* Eric: *Basil feels he's not been consulted, he doesn't want it pulled down, other uses could be found...it's one of the oldest buildings in the ward and should remain up.* Bill: *It's in your ward but it's in the park and the Trust was set up to make recommendations about the park...* Peter: *The building could be reused e.g. as an Irk Valley Conservation Centre...* John: *If retain building for use will cost between £50K and £100K to repair basement including wall which supports Rochdale Road...Demolition is costing £27K. If cancel demolition will still cost £10K...* Matter unresolved (see items 5 and 8).
5. **Resignations.** Emails dated 16.6.04 from Bill (trustee) and Stephen Holt (chair) referring to meeting held earlier same day (see item 4). Bill: *...I...tender my resignation...if each and everyone of us (councillors) can boycott any decision according to whether that part of the park is in their ward then there is little point in coming to useless meetings...* Stephen: *Having given full thought of the present situation...I feel that I cannot continue as a member of the trustees...*
6. In lieu of **Chair's annual report** copies of Minutes of previous several meetings distributed.
7. **Election of Trustees and Officers.** Bob, Eric, Frank, Jo, Judy, Mark, Peter, Ray, Rose and Sam elected as trustees. Mark, Ray, Peter and Sam elected as chair, deputy chair, secretary and treasurer respectively.
8. Proposed **demolition of presently disused building** corner of Rochdale and Charlestown Roads, formerly barber shop etc (see also items 4 and 5).
 - 8.1 Letter dated 27.6.04 from Rose: *...the building...could be utilised as a (community arts) workshop and visitors centre which could be of great value to the Clough generating income and interest for the building and its surrounding area...* Others put forward various further **arguments against demolition.**
 - 8.2 David McC: *...the building is coming down anyway...councillors and Council officers have already agreed demolition should proceed...* Mark: *...we are stuck with a deteriorating building...water is seeping under the concrete base...the wall supporting Rochdale Road likely to collapse, not immediately, but within years...I think we should campaign for new-build facility in that part of Clough which would help breathe life into traditional centre of Clough...*
 - 8.3 Many felt decision to demolish mistaken and unnecessarily rushed before full consultation including e.g. preparation of structural survey which could be read by interested parties. Strong support for proposed new-build facility, to replace condemned building, coalescing around idea of **Woodland Heritage Centre**. Opening up and revitalizing lower Rochdale Road quarter of Clough should, in turn, increase flow of walkers through the Clough thus improving security.

9. MCC/ML management report.

9.1 Evening 24.6.04 **fire in Visitor Centre** destroyed a storeroom and ground maintenance staff messroom and burnt out wiring cutting off electricity to Lakeside Café. Arson suspected. ML bidding for £17K Crime and Disorder grant to instal CCTV in Visitor Centre environs. Call for CCTV in other areas of Clough e.g. around Lakeside Café and Angel Hill war memorial.

9.2 Proposed **house building within Clough perimeter**. *Harpurhey and Lightbowne Local Physical Plan* presented by EDAW planning consultants 1.4.04 showed David Lewis Recreation Ground as a *potential site for development*. This proposal has evidently been withdrawn. At 28.4.04 Bhccat meeting Paul Murphy (Moston cllr) floated idea of building houses in Clough along Charlestown Road. Almost unanimous opposition to this prospect. Need to formulate response, perhaps including letter to MCC/North Manchester Partnership seeking reassurance that long-term plans will not include building in Clough, except for facilities appropriate for a public park/green space e.g. see item 8.3.

9.3 **Manchester Poplars** in danger of collapse due to *venturia populina* disease. MCC preparing city-wide report/plan. Alan Bell (ML horticulturalist) surveying/markng poplars in Clough posing most danger to public so ready for felling when money available. Poplars in the woodland proper will generally be left to fall.

9.4 David McC thanked Nature Conservation Group and Wildlife Gardening Club volunteers for their work the results of which Peter showed to him and **Green Flag** inspectors on tour 23.6.04 (see also item 10.1).

10. Conservation (see also items 4, 8, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4).

10.1 Restoring Ancient Woodland biodiversity. Nature Conservation Group and Wildlife Gardening Club volunteers (particular thanks to regulars Amy, Daniel, Erin, Frank, Geoff, Georgie, Jo, Joseph, Leanne, Leonard, Mathew, Ray, Rose, Sean, Yasmin) working with Peter on Sundays and Bank Holiday Monday 3.5.04, among other tasks, began creating first of possible series of small **wildlife ponds** on Meadow's woodland edge and on Sunday 6.6.04 investigated conditions along Bailey's Wood Brook/ravine bottom.

10.2 New Deal/Action for Employment workers and Community Service Volunteers (Probation Service) directed by Alan Bell (ML horticulturalist) began **clearing accumulated rubbish** out of Boggart Hole Clough Brook around Valley Bottom/5-Ways.

10.3 **Signet deaths**. For 2 weeks at beginning of June the Environment Agency (EA) installed and ran paddle wheel type aerators in Lake as recommended by Ian Hayes, EA technical officer, in letter dated 25.4.04 offering *Fisheries Advice* to protect...*fishery from harmful algal blooms and associated fish deaths*... During period aerators in operation 5 of 7 signets died. Two live signets and female adult caught (male flew off) and taken by Cathy Clements to Swan Sanctuary, Warrington. Peter phoned Cathy 24.6.04: *...Swans and signets reach down deeper than other birds to feed. The signets were poisoned by the toxins in the silt stirred up by the aerators*... Require RSPB/English Nature survey/alternative regeneration plan considering welfare of whole Lake/Pond ecosystem e.g. as bird sanctuary (swannery, heronry, etc) not only as fishery.

11. Security issues: see items 8.3, 9.1.

12. Organizational development. Sub groups/committees needed to work on e.g. charity registration, environmental renovation plan, arts events, projects prioritization, grant applications, historical research, website, publicity, etc.

13. No treasurer's report: see item 2.

14. Next Executive Committee Open Meeting: Wednesday 22 September 04, 6.30 p.m., Visitor Centre. Members of the local community and any other interested people are welcome to attend Bhccat 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.