

BOGGART HOLE CLOUGH COMMUNITY ACTION TRUST

Protecting and revitalizing Boggart Hole Clough Ancient Woodland Park

Minutes

of Executive Committee Open Meeting held 29th November 2007

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

BHCCAT: Boggart Hole Clough Community Action Trust. **MCC:** Manchester City Council. MCC departments – **MEDC:** Manchester Engineering Design Consultancy, **ML:** Manchester Leisure, **NMR:** North Manchester Regeneration, **Zest:** healthy living project.

- 1. Present:** Andrew Geldart (United Utilities Project Manager), David Chadwick (MCC Valuation & Property Department Officer), David Schofield (United Utilities Project Coordinator), Jean Finch (BHCCAT Treasurer), Joan Kavanagh (BHCCAT Chair Pro Tem), John Biggs (Charlestown Residents Association Chair), John Howard (ML North Area Parks Assistant Manager), Kylie Ward (ML North Area Parks Manager), Mark Hackett (BHCCAT Deputy Chair, Charlestown Councillor), Mavis Clough, Michael Craig (MEDC Senior Landscape Architect), Norman Clough, Peter Milner (BHCCAT Secretary), Shirley McCardell (Zest North City Hub Coordinator), Suzanne O’Callaghan, Tony Salt (United Utilities Project Designer).
- 2. Apologies** for absence: Frankie Mananasy, Dan Silver (North Manchester Community Network Community Engagement Worker), Janet Shephard, Mervyn Romain.
- 3. Minutes of Executive Committee Open Meeting 5.9.07** (revised Minutes dated 29.11.07) agreed as true record.
- 4.** Email 5.9.07 from Tina Howard-Bryning (MCC Executive Members’ Support Officer, Personal Assistant to **Michael Kane** (MCC Executive Member for Arts & Leisure, Northenden Councillor)): “...Cllr Kane... has mentioned that he would be happy to be involved in a ‘walk-about’ along with the local councillors...” Lakeside walk-about meeting 1.10.07: Joan, Kylie, Mark, Michael K, Peter. Concern expressed about MCC withholding information from BHCCAT regarding various matters related to the Clough (lack of transparency) which thwarts meaningful & productive community engagement with these issues (e.g. Boathouse Cafe renovations & tendering: see BHCCAT Minutes 6.6.07 AGM item 6). Since 1.10.07 meeting further examples have emerged of MCC withholding information: items 5.3, 6.3, 7.1 below.
- 5. Local Nature Reserve** (LNR) designation (see also item 7).
 - 5.1** Emails from **Jon Follows** (MCC Green City Project Officer). 24.9.07: “Due to ongoing land ownership issues on Boggart Hole Clough & Highfield Country Park, we have had to postpone the designations once again. Our legal team are working very hard to get this resolved, but it is due to various encroachment issues, Legal are not happy to sign off the report. Therefore I am proposing to present the report to the Executive committee on the 21st November...” 21.11.07: “Morning, Good news, as this morning the Executive committee approved the declaration of Boggart Hole Clough & Highfield Country Park as LNRs...” 23.11.07: “...please pass on my congratulations to the group for all their hard work & enthusiasm...”
 - 5.2 MCC Executive Committee. 1. “Report for Resolution** 21.11.07. Report of Head of Environmental Services (Rachel Christie), Head of Leisure & Sports (Eamonn O’Rourke). Purpose of Report. To seek the approval of the Executive Committee to declare two sites in Manchester, Boggart Hole Clough and Highfield Country Park, as LNRs... The sites selected so far for designation have been chosen due to their rich flora & fauna and strong ‘Friends of...’ groups. The guidance to declare LNRs is that they should... be... capable of being managed primarily for nature conservation so that there are special opportunities for study, research or enjoyment of nature... LNRs are protected from unsuitable development through the planning system. Policy E2 (To safeguard the City’s Environment) of Manchester’s Unitary Development Plan and national Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 9: *Biodiversity & Geological Conservation*, set out how the City Council as Local Planning Authority should consider planning applications which affect a LNR... Boggart Hole Clough... There is a very active ‘Friends of...’ group which meets every Saturday to carry out various conservation tasks...” **2.** “Minutes of Meeting 21.11.07... LNR Declaration... **Decision...** To declare the area shown outlined on the amended ‘Location map of Boggart Hole Clough’ as the Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve...”

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5.3 North & East Manchester Advertiser 22.11.07 newspaper: “**Clough is now a reserve.** Boggart Hole Clough has won its campaign to be designated a Local Nature Reserve. The Clough, with Highfield Country Park in Levenshulme, joined the city’s burgeoning list of LNRs on Wednesday, when the council’s executive committee approved the plan. Its new reserve status means stronger protection for wildlife and benefits to residents and visitors... Councillor Mike Kane, arts and leisure spokesman, said: ‘The sites chosen so far have been selected because of their rich flora and fauna and strong Friends groups. The designation of LNR status... is great news for the two sites... I hope more people will become involved in enjoying these two areas and I’d like to congratulate the Friends groups on both sites for making the LNR designation possible’.”

5.4 Shackcliffe Green, higher Boggart Hole Clough, not included in LNR. Agreed this area should be included in LNR at 29.1.07 meeting with Jon (see BHCCAT Minutes 7.3.07 Executive Committee Open Meeting). Reasons for area’s omission not yet explained.

6. ML management (see also items 4, 5, 7, 8, etc).

6.1 ML Manager’s Report written by Kylie. Quoted from below (items 6.4, 6.5, 7.2, 8). Copies distributed.

6.2 Green Flag Award 07-8 assessment: “...Recommendations... Consider carrying out habitat and species surveys within the site as a baseline for what is there and to see if management is having a positive effect...”

6.3 ML Clough 2006-7 and 2007-8 budget breakdowns requested. Email 4.11.07 from Kylie: “...The breakdown of spend for the financial year 2006-2007 outside of running costs such as electricity, water, uniforms, telephones etc is as follows: Benches £4400, Litter & Dog Bins £4137, Picnic Tables £1760, Lecterns £2515, Entrance Signs £2084, Knee Rail £463, Graffiti Removal £675, Painting £7010, Vehicle Barrier £400, Lexan £210, Kissing Gate £498, Track Lighting £708, Knotweed Removal £660, Orienteering £230, Paint £108, Bedding Plants £654, Track Equipment £300. I am in the process of reviewing and profiling this years budget. I will include as many costs in the Managers report as I can...” Total 2006-7 budget including ‘running costs’ not divulged. Manager’s Report does not include any 2007-8 budget figures.

6.4 ML Manager’s Report: “The contract for the operation of the catering facilities at the **Boat House Cafe** has been awarded to Pure Innovations. As part of the contract for the operation of the facility Pure Innovations will be investing approximately £50,000 into the building to bring it up to relevant requirements for health and safety and environmental standards. In addition there are a number of repair and maintenance tasks that will be carried out to the roof and exterior of the building. These works will be carried out as part of MCC’s Asset Management Plan (AMP). The start date of the AMP work should be released in the next 2-3 days...”

6.5 ML Manager’s Report: “...investigations with a number of interested parties regarding the operation of the **fishing facilities** took place. As a result of the meetings we have decided on an organisation that we would prefer to run the facilities, although this has not been formalised at this time...”

6.6 United Utilities infrastructure improvements. New sewer pipeline along Charlestown Road with (just within Clough boundary, 10 yards east of Charlestown Road entrance) Combined Sewer Overflow underground concrete chamber, 2 x 3 x 7 metres, to screen out sewage solids with fail-safe relief weir, and ground level brick Control Kiosk 4’6” high with steel doors. To deal with surface water overflowing into sewer when heavy rain to stop pollution of watercourses downstream. 4 trees (2 Hawthorns, 2 Wild Cherries) to be removed; will plant 2 or 3 trees for each tree removed; for 12 months will replace vandalised trees. Will keep impact low and reinstate site. Work starts 15.1.08, lasts 5 months.

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7. Nature Conservation (see also items 5, 6.2, 6.3).

7.1 Planning application to build 50 houses on site of former Clough Top School adjacent to Clough. MCC ref 082039/FO/2007/N1. BHCCAT informed 26.11.07 by John B about this application. BHCCAT not informed by MCC although surely incumbent upon MCC to inform community groups representing areas next to a proposed development about any such proposal. Site owned by MCC Education Department. Proposed development would entail change of use from site's former educational use to residential housing. There's been no public consultation about this change of use. No published report re ecological effect on Clough e.g. an Environmental Impact Assessment (see item 5.2.1). Possible Section 106 agreement (Planning Obligation: legal agreement between developer & planning authority & any others that have an interest in the site) - planning gain money for facilities in Clough e.g. better pedestrian access to Clough around White Walk. Mark: "We want to see improvements in Clough as part of planning application..." Arrange to meet 5.12.07 at site. 11.12.07 deadline for objections to Peter Babb (MCC Head of Planning).

7.2 Lake & Island biodiversity enrichment. **1.** ML Manager's Report: "[LNR] status will support the application to the third phase of the **Breathing Places** [BBC / Big Lottery Fund scheme] funds focusing on improvements to the boating lake that we hope to progress in partnership with BHCCAT..." **2.** Meeting 23.11.07 Visitor Centre: Catherine Hartley (Irk Valley Project Officer), Rebecca Cleaver (Natural England / Pond Conservation Trust Officer), Saul Mearns (ML North Area Parks Warden), Peter. Agree provisionally as follows. **Need proper project plan before apply for grant.** Aim for Lake – greater biodiversity, better water quality, more aesthetically pleasing. Grazing pressure - Canada Geese will decimate any unprotected planting. Bread & bird faeces cause blue-green algae; meat-based fishing baits also pollute water. Water quality of Lake effecting River Irk downstream. Bread not good for birds, no nutritional value unlike grain. Buy grain with grant for swopping sessions: bread for grain. Wean people off feeding birds so return to natural bird numbers: off bread to grain then off grain to no feeding. Low protein fishing baits: no meat-based baits. Fencing off Island (C.Geese nesting / breeding ground) will lead to long term C.Geese decline. Willow fencing 1.5 metres above water level. Put fake eggs (plaster, wood, plastic) in C.Geese nests, if any nests after fencing off Island. Remove old eggs because of vermin. Swan nesting inlet where swans nest on Island - bring fence in and around this area. Spaces in fence to allow movement through for Mallards, Coots, etc. 2-3 floating rafts / islands made out of willow fencing on side, for nesting by e.g. Coots & Grebes, to compensate for disturbance of installation of fencing & marginal loss of nesting areas. **1st phase:** **1.** fence around Island, **2.** floating islands for nesting, **3.** fake eggs, **4.** alternative bird feed, **5.** education e.g notices around Lake explaining project & requesting feed grain not bread and use low protein fishing baits; **2nd phase:** year 3 reassess - if these measures successful reducing C.Geese numbers then start planting e.g. reed beds.

7.3 Manchester Poplars felled 2007. **1.** Michael C proposes planting scheme. See BHCCAT 8.1.08 'Manchester Poplar replacement planting proposals' doc. **2.** Lowther Forestry's map of the Clough showing locations of the **50-60 bat & bird boxes** they supposedly installed, to compensate for habitat loss due to M.Poplar felling during 2007, which understood to be stipulated in their contract. Email 4.11.07 from Kylie: "I have not yet received a map from Lowther Forestry. I have sent the contract manager an email this evening and will let you have the response as soon as I have one."

7.4 Wildlife Regeneration volunteers restoring natural woodland biodiversity (see also item 7.5). **1.** Particular thanks to regulars Frankie Mananasy, Michael Riley with dog Tara, Noah Mananasy, Paul McCrystal, Steve Hamilton, Sylvie Mananasy, working with Peter on Saturdays. Among other tasks unblock 18 inch diameter pipe taking Fish Pond Clough Brook beneath Avenue to Boggart Brook; **excavate seasonal pond, lower Fish Pond Clough**, upstream of pipe. **2.** Proposed bid to **Northwards Housing Sponsorship Fund** for £500 grant to cover Wildlife Regeneration volunteers' projected expenses for 4 months.

7.5 Stephanie Banks (MCC Environmental Awareness Officer) organized 8.10.07 afternoon MCC 'Clean up the world' campaign event. Saul, Stephanie, Steve, Peter, joined by 12 MCC Corporate Personnel volunteers including Jon Redfern (MCC Head of Corporate Personnel) and Richard Paver (MCC City Treasurer). Among other tasks **plant 150 Sessile Oak whips (Provenance Zone 302 specification bought from Alba Trees) marginally expanding woodland into meadow.**

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- 8. Rochdale & Charlestown Roads corner, site of building demolished 2004. **Corner pedestrian gateway proposal.****
Email 4.11.07 from Kylie with one of two revised artist's impressions attached: "...the other one is too large to attach... I have returned it to the designer so that they can scale it down..." ML Manager's Report: "At the last Trust meeting it was decided that the options for the entrance would be displayed within... [the] Clough Visitors Centre for a week, culminating in an open meeting where stakeholders could voice their opinion about the preferred scheme. A provisional date for 18th - 24th January 2008 has been booked for the display, with the open meeting being held on the evening of Thursday 24th. In the interim we will be attending a number of local residents meetings to advise them of the proposed scheme and the timescale for getting involved..."
- 9. Healthy activities, Play & Sports (see also item 7.4, etc). **Wheels for All** scheme enabling people with learning and/or physical disabilities to ride adapted cycles under supervision on Clough athletics track. Ann Williams (ML North Area Parks Warden) & Saul run weekly Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning sessions. Intention: move towards independent Clough Wheels Club.**
- 9.1 *Local Network Fund for children & young people* grant.** £6,541 cheque dated 3.10.07 to Cycling Projects, Pendlebury, paid in advance to enable them to order specialist cycle equipment. Delivered to date: portable hydraulic hoist. Delivery of remaining items (adapted cycles: handcycle, quadcycle, gokart, 2 tricycles) due by end of December.
- 9.2 Meeting 16.10.07 Visitor Centre.** Present: Ann, Elaine Monk (Zest Blackley & Charlestown Hub Coordinator), Hermine Briffa (Cycling Projects Director), Joan, Peter, Shirley, Tony Cramp (Neighbourhood Warden), Vicki Smith (Northfield Day Centre Worker). Minutes written by Shirley: "...**Across City Schemes.** Shirley indicated that it was still Zest's intention to try and pull the schemes [3 Manchester Wheels for All schemes: Boggart, Debdale, Wythenshawe] together to get an element of running costs for each scheme included in the mainstream budget of [MCC] Departments and the Primary Care Trust... If every scheme received £10,000 a year, this would enable them to run in whatever way they wished, but would give the opportunity to buy in support and a great deal more security..."
- 9.3 **Boggart Bikers Family Funday 24.10.07**** planned to coincide with schools half term. Organized by Zest. Funded by, among others, Zest & FLAMA residents association. Rerun of rained-off 1.7.07 event. Integrated event with people riding adapted & non-adapted cycles, plus cycle repairs (Bikeright), cycle security marking (Police Community Support Officers), miniature electric cars (Neighbourhood Wardens), fire engine (GM Fire & Rescue Service), crime prevention caravan (GM Police), refreshments (NEPHRA residents association), etc. Zest collected names & contact details of those interested to form Cycle Club.
- 10. Arts & Heritage** (see also items 5, 6.4, 7, etc).
- 10.1 **Summer 2008 Musical Picnics.**** 27.9.07 submit bid for Charlestown *CASH* grant of £4,370 for 2008 Teddy Bears Musical Picnic (on same lines as last year's successful event) to MCC Voluntary Sector Policy & Grants Team, Town Hall. Suggestion for a concert picnic: traditional Chinese instrumental ensemble.
- 10.2 *Quest for the Sun* – a fairy tale about the Boggarts of Boggart Hole Clough,** Purple Expressive Arts (PEA) production, North City Family & Fitness Centre, 16.12.07. PEA interested to perform show in Clough next summer.
- 10.3 **Fireworks** display 4.11.07.** Email 17.9.07 from Ada Nzeribe (NMR Cultural Regeneration Officer): "...We have secured a budget of £7.5k which breaks down as follows: Leisure £2k, Crime & Disorder £1.5k, Culture budget £4k..." Some BHCCAT Members sceptical about fireworks display believing bonfire & lanterns event more appropriate; they consider these monies misspent.
- 11. **Anti-social behaviour / Safety & Security:**** see items 6.3, 9.3, 10.3, etc.
- 12. **Treasurer's report**** (see also items 7.2, 7.4.2, 9.1, 10.1, etc). Copies of accounts distributed.
- 13. Next quarterly **Executive Committee Open Meeting**** – arrangements left in abeyance.