

FRIENDS OF BOGGART HOLE CLOUGH

Protecting our natural heritage

Friends of Boggart Hole Clough (FoBHC), before 2015 named Boggart Hole Clough Community Action Trust (BHCCAT), was founded in 2000.

Re-uniting Bailey's Wood & Boggart Hole Clough

Two proposals to help restore the biodiversity health of these Ancient Woodlands & help regenerate the area as a whole:

1. Re-use the Lodge Gatehouse, of the former Booth Hall Children's Hospital, as a Visitor Centre for both woodlands;
2. Create an eco-bridge or eco-duct over or under Charlestown Road physically re-connecting the woodlands.



Photo 1, taken 28.6.2016: Boggart Hole Clough visitor centre.



Photo 2, taken 3.6.2013: former hospital's Lodge Gatehouse.

Manchester City Council (MCC) appears to be planning to build a new visitor centre for Boggart Hole Clough in the same location as the present visitor centre. FoBHC opposes this plan & in contrast proposes a conservation-led, sustainable plan. For further details, please see transcripts of email correspondence set out in pages below.

In 2015, despite objections, Manchester City Council, to enable Taylor Wimpey house-building company to maximize profits from a totally cleared site, granted them permission to demolish the Lodge Gatehouse, the last remaining building of the former Booth Hall Children's Hospital. Presently the building still stands, though now boarded up.

However, the Lodge Gatehouse is located only 275 yards (250 metres) away from the present visitor centre, well positioned to serve as a visitor centre for both Boggart Hole Clough & Bailey's Wood. The Lodge Gatehouse is perfectly suited for the purpose of a visitor centre, its architecture immediately conveying a sense of the area's history.

Boggart Hole Clough & Bailey's Wood form the two main cloughs (deep, steep-sided, narrow valleys) of the Boggart Hole Brook basin / watershed. The site of the former hospital lies between these two cloughs. Both cloughs are Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands, habitats described by Natural England, the government's adviser on the environment, as "of prime ecological & landscape importance."

An eco-bridge or eco-duct green network / wildlife corridor link over or under Charlestown Road, physically re-uniting these two Ancient Woodlands, could be created, in accordance with MCC's 2005 *Wildabout Manchester Biodiversity Strategy*, enabling people & wildlife to move safely & unhindered between these two wooded cloughs.

We urge MCC to call a moratorium delaying further house building on the site of the former hospital until an eco-bridge or eco-duct is constructed, & to withdraw permission for the Lodge Gatehouse's demolition, & instead to preserve the building as a memorial to the former Children's Hospital, converting it for re-use as a visitor centre for the surrounding Ancient Woodlands, exploring the area's ecology & social history.

Building a new visitor centre whilst demolishing the Lodge Gatehouse a mere 275 yards (250 metres) away, which is tailor-made for the role of a visitor centre, would surely demonstrate MCC's support for corporate profiteering above all other considerations, its disdain for local architectural heritage assets, derisory environmental planning, waste of public money, irrational decision-making, disregard for the community it purports to represent.

CONTENTS

Page 1 title – photos 1 & 2 – summary.
Page 2 Contents – Abbreviations – Introduction – Editing – Images – Referenced & Related Documents (10 items).
Pages 3 – 8 Email Correspondence (11 items).

ABBREVIATIONS

S106 Agreement money: Planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended - monies paid by developers to planning authorities to offset costs of mitigating external impact of developments.

MCC: Manchester City Council, local planning authority & landowner of Boggart Hole Clough & eastern two-thirds of Bailey's Wood.

LNR: Local Nature Reserve; in 2008, MCC declared Boggart Hole Clough a LNR.

BHCCAT: Boggart Hole Clough Community Action Trust, founded in 2000.

FoBHC: Friends of Boggart Hole Clough; in 2015, FoBHC replaced the name BHCCAT.

PFM: Peter F. Milner, BHCCAT / FoBHC Acting Secretary, petermilner@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

This document presents transcripts of email correspondence between FoBHC members / associates & MCC officers re regenerating the Boggart Hole Clough area of north Manchester including the site of the former Booth Hall Children's Hospital which lies between the Clough & Bailey's Wood.

Emails copied to indicated number of FoBHC contacts usually including MCC Charlestown ward councillors.

If others' emails not originally shared, PFM usually forwarded emails to some FoBHC contacts, more often than not including MCC Charlestown ward councillors.

Emails were kept together (emails sent separately were pasted in) to form coherent narrative & enabling reference to be made to earlier emails.

EDITING

Abbreviations above are used in the email transcripts.

Occasional notes inserted into the transcripts, which were not in the original sent emails, are [bracketed] in red type.

Deletions, including irrelevancies dealing with other subjects, indicated by 2 dots ..

For brevity, job titles etc of MCC officers are given once but not usually repeated thereafter.

To further condense the text, greetings ('Dear' etc) & farewells ('Yours sincerely' etc) are also usually omitted.

Besides above amendments, emails presented verbatim.

IMAGES

2 photos on page 1 above - taken by PFM. Both photos were attached to email 1 on pages 3 & 4 below.

REFERENCED & RELATED DOCUMENTS

REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

1. *A Framework for the Future - Green Networks with multiple uses in & around towns & cities*, Research Report 256, English Nature, 1997.
2. *Wildabout Manchester Biodiversity Strategy*, MCC, 2005.
3. *Irk Valley Local Plan - Final Report*, MCC, January 2007.
4. *Addendum Report* re planning application 086932/OO/2008/N1 re site of former Booth Hall Children's Hospital, MCC Planning & Highways Committee, 24.11.2011.
5. *Save former Booth Hall Children's Hospital administration building from demolition*, BHCCAT, 27.6.2013.
6. *Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland & Veteran Trees*, Forestry Commission & Natural England, 7.4.2014.
7. *Objection to proposed demolition of Lodge Gatehouse of former Booth Hall Children's Hospital*, FoBHC, 6.5.2015.
8. *Objections to demolition of former Booth Hall Children's Hospital*, FoBHC, 23.2.2016.
9. *Combined archaeological / ecological preliminary proposals to sustainably regenerate Bailey's Wood*, FoBHC, 14.5.2016.

RELATED DOCUMENT

10. *Twelve suggestions for Site Specific Allocations in the Irk Valley - Submission to MCC Local Development Framework - Core Strategy Issues & Options Consultation*, PFM, 8.2.2008. Suggestions 2, 6 & 9 are relevant.

Docs 1 & 6 can perhaps be found at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england. If not found there, PFM can forward copy of docs upon request.

Docs 2 to 4 can perhaps be found on MCC's website – www.manchester.gov.uk. If not found there, PFM can forward copy of docs upon request.

Docs 5 & 7 to 10 can be seen on our website – www.boggart.org.uk

-

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

1. Sent: Sun 10 July 2016 15:30

From: PFM. To: Jon Atkin @ MCC. Copied to: 44 FoBHC contacts.
Subject: Re-uniting Bailey's Wood & Boggart Hole Clough.

To: Jon Atkin, North Area Manager, Citywide Parks Team, Manchester City Council (MCC).
Copied to: some Friends of Boggart Hole Clough (FoBHC) ...

.. Section 106 Agreement money relating to site of former Booth Hall Children's Hospital.

As stated in previous email correspondence with your predecessor Pauline Clarke (see below), we consider most of the S106 money should be spent on restoring the biodiversity health of Bailey's Wood (see also *Combined archaeological / ecological preliminary proposals to sustainably regenerate Bailey's Wood*, FoBHC, 14.5.2016, on our website).

Ms Clarke's 12.8.2014 email below stated that some of the S106 money may be spent on "a new visitor centre at Boggart Hole Clough" which she confirmed in her 5.3.2015 email below.

We asked, in 22.3.2015 email below, "What architectural designs are being considered for a new Visitor Centre ?" but received no answer.

Please see 2 photos attached:

1st photo, taken 28.6.2016, shows the present Boggart Hole Clough pre-fab visitor centre [[Photo 1 on page 1 above](#)].
2nd photo, taken 3.6.2013, shows the Lodge Gatehouse, the last remaining building of the former Booth Hall Children's Hospital [[Photo 2 on page 1 above](#)].

The Lodge Gatehouse still stands although Manchester City Council has granted Taylor Wimpey house-building company permission to demolish it.

Among others, we objected to this proposed demolition, which is being permitted to enable Taylor Wimpey to maximize profits from a totally cleared site, as it robs the community of another architectural heritage asset, erasing our local history (see *Objection to proposed demolition of Lodge Gatehouse of former Booth Hall Children's Hospital*, FoBHC, 6.5.2015, on our website).

The Lodge Gatehouse is located 275 yards (250 metres) away from the present Boggart Hole Clough visitor centre on the other side of Charlestown Road.

These two buildings are approximately the same size.

The Lodge Gatehouse, built in 1908, with its flat-roofed shelter supported by three red pillars & a stone archway revealing its former function as the hospital gatehouse, immediately conveys a sense of the area's history.

In fact, this evocative building is tailor-made to serve as a new visitor centre for both Bailey's Wood & Boggart Hole Clough, & could be extended to the rear if required.

It is well positioned on the Bailey's Wood side of Charlestown Road to help re-unite this woodland with Boggart Hole Clough. They form the two main cloughs (deep, steep-sided, narrow valleys) of the Boggart Hole Brook basin / watershed. The site of the former hospital lies between these two cloughs. Both cloughs are Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands, habitats described by Natural England as "of prime ecological & landscape importance."

Bailey's Wood has been neglected since Boggart Hole Clough became a Municipal Park in 1894. Locating the visitor centre for both cloughs in the Lodge Gatehouse should help to reverse this detrimental woodland management neglect of Bailey's Wood. Declaring it a Local Nature Reserve would also help in this regard (see page 5 of FoBHC *Bailey's Wood* doc cited above) - Boggart Hole Clough was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 2008.

-
-
-
-
-
-

A wide, pavement-level pelican / zebra pedestrian crossing over Charlestown Road, connecting Bailey's Wood to Boggart Hole Clough, would be required near this proposed Lodge Gatehouse Visitor Centre, at least until an eco-bridge or eco-duct green network / wildlife corridor link over or under Charlestown Road, physically re-uniting these two Ancient Woodlands, is created (see page 5 of FoBHC *Bailey's Wood* doc cited above).

Natural England's 1997 Research Report 256, *A Framework for the Future - Green Networks with multiple uses in & around towns & cities*, stated "Green networks are natural, or permanently vegetated, physically connected green spaces .. Multifunctional green networks are important components in making towns & cities sustainable" (page 3, 18). MCC's 2005 *Wildabout Manchester Biodiversity Strategy* recommended creating wildlife corridors, over or under roads, to enable people & wildlife to move safely & unhindered between otherwise separated green spaces / areas of wildlife habitat (pages 11, 33). MCC's 2007 *Irk Valley Local Plan - Final Report* stated "Creating a connected open green space network .. is a feasible concept" (page 27).

Taylor Wimpey's 'development' of around 260 new houses on the site of the former hospital is already partly built but not yet on the eastern part of the site where an eco-bridge or eco-duct over or under Charlestown Road could be constructed.

In 2013, objectors to the demolition of the former hospital's Administration Building suggested various ways it could be re-used e.g. as a "visitor centre" (see page 2, item 13, of *Save former Booth Hall Children's Hospital administration building from demolition*, BHCCAT, 27.6.2013, on our website) & as a "medical museum", "library", "community building" & "nature wildlife centre" (see pages 4, 5, 7, 18 of *Objections to demolition of former Booth Hall Children's Hospital*, FoBHC, 23.2.2016, on our website).

Such ideas are equally applicable, on a smaller scale, for re-using the Lodge Gatehouse - a visitor centre for the surrounding Ancient Woodlands, with displays / information exploring the area's ecology & social history (see also e.g. page 4 of FoBHC *Bailey's Wood* doc cited above), perhaps including a community café, becoming in effect a focal point of north Manchester's regeneration.

These proposals, re-uniting Bailey's Wood with Boggart Hole Clough, by converting the Lodge Gatehouse into a visitor centre & constructing an eco-bridge or eco-duct over or under Charlestown Road, will help restore the biodiversity health of these two Ancient Woodlands & help regenerate the area as a whole.

In conclusion, therefore, we urge MCC to call a moratorium delaying further building of houses on the site of the former hospital until an eco-bridge or eco-duct is constructed as suggested above, & to withdraw permission for the Lodge Gatehouse's demolition, & instead to preserve the building as a memorial to the former Children's Hospital, converting it for re-use along the lines suggested above.

Building a new visitor Centre, as MCC appears to be planning (as detailed at beginning of this email), whilst demolishing the Lodge Gatehouse only 275 yards (250 metres) away, which is perfectly suited for the purpose / role of a visitor centre, would surely demonstrate MCC's support for corporate profiteering above all other considerations, its disdain for local architectural heritage assets, derisory environmental planning, waste of public money, irrational decision-making, disregard for the community it purports to represent.

We trust you will forward this email to relevant MCC councillors & officers, & we look forward to your response to our proposals outlined above.

PFM.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

2. Sent: Sun 22 March 2015 19:21

From: PFM. To: Pauline Clarke @ MCC. Copied to 55 FoBHC contacts.
Subject: S106 Agreement money for Bailey's Wood.

To P. Clarke, Charlestown Ward Coordinator, Manchester City Council.

.. **Re Booth Hall site development S106 Agreement money.**

Further to a series of emails below including your 5.3.2015 email to Mildred Willner which she forwarded to me.

We read that £30,000 is to be spent restoring Bailey's Wood whilst over 6 times more (£203,000) is to be spent on "Sports Facilities Improvements .. Play Facilities .. Visitor Centre / Stores".

You give no reasons for giving the lowest priority to restoring Bailey's Wood *Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland*, a habitat type described by the government's adviser on the environment as "irreplaceable" (English Nature, 2002) & "of prime ecological & landscape importance" (Natural England, 2014).

You give no details about which sports facilities require improvement or what style of play equipment is proposed or where it is proposed to locate it. What architectural designs are being considered for a new Visitor Centre ?

When will you share all this information with us ?

Your 22.1.2014 email below said "We will be holding a number of workshops in the next few months at which we will be able to share initial thoughts & seek views." Over a year later we are still waiting to hear when these consultation workshops will be held.

PFM.

3. Sent: Thu 5 March 2015 14:21

From: Pauline Clarke @ MCC. To: Mildred Willner. Forwarded to: PFM.
Subject: Re: Boggart Hole Clough - Developments ?

.. Thank you for your email.

Consultation

As part of looking at a long term management plan for Boggart Hole Clough the Council supported by JBA has been undertaking consultation with a wide range of partners, user groups and residents to seek both views and help us plan for a better park - this has involved in seeking the views of in excess of 200 individuals and groups. This has taken sometime to process, and we are continuing to talk to a number of partners, we are continuing to work to develop a plan we can share. The consultation has also to be viewed in the light of the continuing financial pressures on the city council and as such we are working to look at partnerships and how we can support progress on a large number of issues and suggestions made during the consultation. **[Re MCC's long-awaited "management plan for Boggart Hole Clough" mentioned above, FoBHC continues requesting to be emailed a copy to enable us to comment upon & have an input into the plan – see e.g. page 3 of doc 9 listed on page 2 above.]**

Section 106

As you are aware the section 106 agreement and planning obligations for the Boothhall Site includes a number of projects, in order to gain maximum value for this investment funding applications are in process to develop key facilities and areas. Councillors have agreed the following allocation of the section 106: Sports Facilities Improvements £75,000. Play Facilities £50,000. Visitor Centre/Stores £78,000. Baileys Wood £30,000. The section 106 money will be match with applications to other bodies and as this funding is agreed projects will be implemented across the Clough and Baileys Wood.

.. Pauline Clarke.

Neighbourhood Manager - North & Charlestown Ward Coordinator, Community & Cultural Services, Growth & Neighbourhoods .. MCC ..

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

4. Sent: Mon 2 March 2015 09:50

From: Mildred Willner. To: Pauline Clarke @ MCC. Forwarded to: PFM.
Subject Boggart Hole Clough - Developments ?

.. I am writing on behalf of the BHCCAT to ask if there have been any developments or any news of the following projects:-

1. Consultation with Nicholas Allin from JBA landscape architects about ideas for improving Boggart Hole Clough. BHCCAT suggested (see 3rd December 2014 email which was copied to you) that the priority should be management of the woodland areas in Boggart Hole Clough. We would very much like to know what if anything is presently being considered. [FoBHC continues to follow up this matter – see note inserted into email 3 above.]

2. The allocation of the Booth Hall Hospital site development S106 Agreement money. Again there has been a long time lapse since this topic was raised, and the promises of consultations with the local community have not happened. Our own suggestion was that the money should be spent on regenerating Bailey's Wood which is an integral part of the whole area and would make a wonderful and secluded habitat for wildlife if the restoration work was done.

The council are very keen on claiming that they consult with the community over local developments, but we have heard absolutely nothing for months about either issue.

Would you please let us know what is happening.

.. Mildred Willner.

5. Sent: Sat 30 August 2014 15:57

From: Mildred Willner. To: PFM & Pauline Clarke @ MCC. Copied to 29 FoBHC contacts.
Subject: Re: S106 Agreement money for Bailey's Wood.

Hi Peter ..

With regard to your email of August 26th. I agree that the S106 money should be spent on the renovation of Bailey's Wood. It is vital that we preserve this area of Ancient semi-natural woodland. It could be such a wonderful haven for wildlife, and a rich educational resource for naturalists of all ages. A site that Manchester and its people could be proud of. At the moment it is in a truly disgraceful state of neglect and urgently needs money to be spent on it.

Mildred Willner.

6. Sent: Tue 26 August 2014 21:37

From: PFM. To: Pauline Clarke @ MCC. Copied to 30 FoBHC contacts.
Subject: S106 Agreement money for Bailey's Wood.

.. Thanks for your 12.8.2014 email below which says "If you have any comments or suggestions regarding the section 106 please let me know."

You write that one of the options is for S106 money to be spent on "the overall upgrade, improvement, maintenance & management of Baileys Wood."

Bailey's Wood, like nearby Boggart Hole Clough Wood, is classified as *Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland*, a habitat described by Natural England as "of **prime ecological & landscape importance** .." (page 7, Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland & Veteran Trees, Forestry Commission & Natural England, 7.4.2014). The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit has classified Bailey's Wood, like Boggart Hole Clough, as a *Site of Biological Importance*.

Despite these high status classifications, however, Bailey's Wood appears to be in an extremely poor condition. Last year a couple of us walked through the Wood. We noted several areas of Japanese Knotweed amongst other non-native invasive plant species .. a number of areas in the woodland clogged with dumped rubble & other rubbish.

In light of the above factors, therefore, we urge you to spend as much S106 money as possible on a sustained programme of woodland conservation management to restore this important woodland to a healthy, thriving condition.

We would be grateful if you would keep us updated re your assessments of S106 money allocation proposals.

PFM.

7. Sent: Tue 12 August 2014 10:00

From: Pauline Clarke @ MCC. To: PFM.

Subject: Re: Booth Hall site development S106 Agreement money.

.. The availability of the section 106 money is dependent on various milestones and therefore the money has only recently been drawn down.

As outlined the section 106 money can be spent on:

The provision of a new 5 -12 Play - initial construction and 10 years maintenance;

A contribution towards community sports facilities/infrastructure works at Boggart Hole Clough;

and/or the provision of a contribution to a new visitors centre at Boggart Hole Clough;

and/or the overall upgrade, improvement, maintenance and management of Baileys Wood.

Officers are currently working on obtaining costings for the improvement to sports facilities as this is a priority, once this has been completed then we will be able to assess the remaining money available to support other areas and we are consulting with sports clubs and users of the facility.

There will be further consultation with residents and other stakeholders regarding Boggart Hole Clough during August and September.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding the section 106 please let me know.

.. Pauline Clarke.

Neighbourhood Manager - North & Charlestown Ward Coordinator .. MCC ..

8. Sent: Mon 21 July 2014 22:46

From: PFM. To: Pauline Clarke @ MCC. Copied to 22 FoBHC contacts.

Subject: Booth Hall site development S106 Agreement money.

.. Consultation re spending of Section 106 Agreement money.

Six months have passed since we received your 22.1.2014 email below saying that consultation 'workshops' will be held regarding how the £232,000 Agreement money will be spent.

Do you know yet when these consultations will begin ?

PFM.

9. Sent: Wed 22 January 2014 13:13

From: Pauline Clarke @ MCC. To: PFM. Copied to 14 FoBHC contacts.

Subject: Re: Booth Hall site development S106 Agreement money.

.. Thank you for your enquiry on behalf of the Boggart Hole Clough Community Action Trust regarding the section 106 agreement that relates to Boggart Hole Clough and Baileys Wood.

The agreement has been amended and now includes:

The provision of a new 5 -12 Play - initial construction and 10 years maintenance;

A contribution towards community sports facilities/infrastructure works at Boggart Hole Clough;

and/or the provision of a contribution to a new visitors centre at Boggart Hole Clough;

and/or the overall upgrade, improvement, maintenance and management of Baileys Wood.

The overall amount of money available under this agreement is £232,000 including all capital and revenue costs. The City Council will spend this money as laid out in the agreement and officers are currently formulating a number of options and looking at how we can maximise any additional grant resources.

Officers are currently working on a communication plan to ensure that we consult with all of the stake holders in the park including BHCCAT, King William Fishing Club, the resident sports clubs, elected members and residents. We will be holding a number of workshops in the next few months at which we will be able to share initial thoughts and seek views.

.. Pauline Clarke.

Neighbourhood Manager - North & Charlestown Ward Coordinator .. MCC ..

-

