

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

Minutes

of Executive Committee Open Meeting held 7th March 2007

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

Manchester City Council (MCC) departments - **ML**: Manchester Leisure, **NMP**: North Manchester Partnership, **Zest**: healthy living project.

1. Present: Barry Gamlin, Basil Curley (Trust chair pro tem, Charlestown councillor), Brian Holmes, Colin Pilkington, Frankie Mananasy, Harry Gorton, Jean Finch (Trust treasurer), Kylie Ward (ML North Area Parks manager), Peter Milner (Trust secretary), Shirley McCardell (*Zest* Harpurhey & Moston Hub coordinator), Steve Hamilton, Suzanne O'Callaghan.

2. Apologies for absence: Ann Williams (ML North Area Parks warden), Eric Hobin (Charlestown councillor), Mark Hackett (Trust deputy chair, Charlestown councillor, MCC Executive member for Culture & Leisure), Saul Mearns (ML North Area Parks warden), Shelly Meadows.

3. Minutes of previous quarterly Executive Committee Open Meeting 13.12.06 (revised Minutes dated 7.3.07) agreed as true record.

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

4.1 Kylie: "...I will prepare a **written report** for the next Trust quarterly Open Meeting... I will copy to Trust our 5-year Clough Development Plan, a working document open to consultation..."

4.2 Kylie: "**Another Warden for North Area Parks and another Leisure Attendant**, to support Wardens, have been appointed... start work 1.4.07..."

4.3 Kylie suggests *Get Hooked on Fishing* Charitable Trust scheme to deliver training in **angling**.

5. Old Boathouse Lakeside Café.

5.1 Correspondence. Email 4.2.07 to Kylie from Peter: "...The Café has been shut every day so far this year. It was closed for much of 2006 despite repeated representations from members of the local community for it to be kept open... When the Café is closed management was requested to allow a **catering van** onto the Boathouse carpark area and to provide chemical toilets... During this prolonged period of closure we hope the opportunity has been taken to progress renovation of the Boathouse interior, as discussed at Trust Open Meetings and in our earlier email correspondence. Clough users (particularly The Coffin Dodgers Club who enjoyed meeting every day at the Café) are very disappointed by this poor start to 2007..." Email 5.2.07 to Peter from Kylie: "...we have been working with the owner of a catering van to provide interim provision at the Boathouse until the full tender is issued in April 2007. Due to fallen trees on the main drive next to the athletics track and at 5 Ways the catering van has been unable to gain access to the Boathouse. The catering van has opened at Boggart Hole Clough this morning. Toilet provision will be operated similar to the Visitors Centre where a key will be issued for access to the building. I have spoken with the Coffin Dodgers this morning who appear to be happy with the temporary arrangements. In terms of renovations for the building we have cleared the building and are currently assessing the cost to repaint. We are still pursuing the installation of an additional toilet that will be DDA compliant, that will coincide with the start of the new contract..."

5.2 Kylie: "...Café **tendering** process continues... 19 people initially interested... disappointed only 2 tenders back... both interested in Café, one in fishing, neither interested in boating on Lake... one tender offered to invest money in building if reduced rent... we will investigate tenders in depth... Probation Service didn't return tender... Manchester Fayre (MCC catering trading arm providing school meals and running Heaton Park Café etc) not interested..."

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6. Manchester Poplars in Clough (811) infected with venturia populina (poplar scab) disease making them prone to collapse. For public safety therefore most Poplars to be felled. To reduce spore mass to avoid spread of disease through airborne infected spores (innoculi) to any healthy M. Poplars elsewhere, these felled trees to be removed from Clough. Felling began 5.2.07.

6.1 “Ecology method statement for removal of Poplar trees at Boggart Hole Clough” by Derek Richardson (Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) Principal ecologist), 20.12.06: “...recommended measures to safeguard the ecological value of the site... Protection of nesting birds... To avoid disturbance to nesting birds, any required tree works should be undertaken outside of the optimum period for bird nesting. This would normally be taken as March to July (inclusive)... Protection of bats... Boggart Hole Clough is known to support important bat populations... Avoid felling trees at a time when bat breeding roosts may be present (May to August)... Control of Japanese Knotweed... it is an offence to cause this plant to spread in the wild. The tree works proposed have the potential to spread the plant... Identify stands of Japanese Knotweed and establish 5-7m-wide ‘exclusion zones’ around these stands, and avoid disturbing these areas...”

6.2 Meeting 3.2.07 Visitor Centre: Edward Teague, Joe Walsh (MCC arboriculturist), Kylie, Mark, Paul McCrystal, Peter, Steve North (ML Policy & Development officer) and others. Steve: “...*Contracts signed – Lowther Forestry to fell and remove M. Poplars; Biota to take measures to preserve woodland’s ecological value* (see item 6.3)... *no market for felled M. Poplars, no revenue... Lowther Forestry will take timber to Shotton Power Station, Deeside, and to Kronospan (wood based panel producer), Wrexham... work to be completed in April... followed by consultations about replacement planting... 10% of costs to go on new planting...*”

6.3 Meeting 7.2.07 Visitor Centre & walk: Joe, Kylie, Mark, Paul Hill (Biota ecologist), Peter, Steve N, Saul and others. Paul: “...*4 species of bat in Clough... We have surveyed M. Poplars – 50 identified as likely containing bat roosts or bird nests are marked for section felling / pollarding rather than straight felling... for every M. Poplar felled that has cavities for bats and birds we will put in boxes for alternative nests and roosts... perhaps 50-60 bat and bird boxes – one for each tree with potential...*” Joe suggests restoring Fish Pond Clough in long term from Sycamore to Oak dominated woodland by radically thinning Sycamores. Rather than using felled M. Poplar trunks to delineate area of marginal expansion of woodland onto meadow, to prevent mowing down of newly planted tree whips as has happened previously, Joe suggests wooden fencing or planting sizeable saplings.

6.4 Kylie: “...*regarding M. Poplars replacement planting programme there will be extensive public consultation...*”

7. Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designation proposal.

7.1 Meeting 29.1.07 Visitor Centre: Jon Follows (MCC Environmental Strategy officer), Saul, Peter. Jon: “...*For LNR status we need dedicated Friends Group – we’ve got that in BHCCAT... Management for nature conservation... how best to tailor existing management plan to include biodiversity – site specific plans... could ask Graham Jones (GMEU Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan manager) for general site survey and recommendations for improving biodiversity... Land search – check MCC owns whole Clough including Shackcliffe Green... put LNR recommendation to MCC Executive Committee in July...*”

7.2 Jon recommends “Making contracts work for wildlife: how to encourage biodiversity in urban parks” published by CABI (Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment), 2006: “...to make the most of the potential for biodiversity... specify biodiversity in grounds maintenance contracts... Management and maintenance contracts play a pivotal role in shaping the feel, look and biodiversity value of urban green space... When you encourage biodiversity, you begin a process that enriches people’s lives... integrating biodiversity into traditional forms of green space management... to stem the decline in species and quality of habitats... Biodiversity is at the heart of the government’s aim for a more sustainable future...” (pp. 5-8).

7.3 Meeting 1.3.07 Visitor Centre & walk: Jon, Pat Waring (Ecology Services UK Ltd director), Peter, Saul. Jon proposes commissioning Pat to create a **Biodiversity Management Plan** for the Clough.

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8. Nature Conservation (see also items 4.1, 6, 7, 14, etc).

8.1 Wildlife Regeneration volunteers restoring Natural Woodland biodiversity (see also items 7.3, 14, etc). Trust conservation volunteers - particular thanks to regulars Chris Shaw, Paul McC and Steve H - working with Peter on Saturdays: among other tasks, observe & record some initial effects of felling and removal of M. Poplars (see item 6).

8.2 Grant application to SITA Trust for Lake, Island & Fish Pond Biodiversity Enrichment Programme. Email 22.12.06 from Peter to Kate Engel (SITA Trust Project Manager): "...we will not be submitting a revised application before the 29.12.06 deadline as originally intended. Reaching the standard of enrichment required by the Greater Manchester Ponds and Lodges Biodiversity Action Plan has taken the cost of the project beyond the amount of the SITA grant potentially available. Stone and clay for construction of two island reed beds is the greater part of the cost. In association with our partners, most particularly the GMEU and MCC, we will rework the design of the islands in an attempt to reduce costs, and obtain further estimates. We will also try to source match funding. Our intention now is to submit a revised application to SITA before the 27.3.07 deadline..."

9. Healthy activities, Play & Sports (see also items 8.1, 10, 11, 14, etc). Proposed **Under-8s Playground** adjacent to Visitor Centre carpark and avenue to Angel Hill. *ProLudic* design chosen through public consultation. Kylie: "...still waiting for capital approval from MCC treasurer..."

10. Wheels for All scheme enabling people with learning and/or physical disabilities to ride adapted cycles under supervision in Clough; Ann and Saul run weekly Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning sessions on athletics track. Intention: move towards independent Clough Wheels Club (Boggart Bikers).

10.1 Meeting 22.1.07 Visitor Centre: Ann, Debra Pearson (*Zest* officer), Elaine Monk (*Zest* Blackley & Charlestown Hub coordinator), George Lightbowne (Neighbourhood warden), Hermine Briffa (Cycling Projects director), John Crowther (Cycling Projects officer), Peter, Shirley. Wednesday afternoons average 30 people; Friday mornings 5-10 people - aim to have sessions throughout both days. Realistic charges: presently £1 charge – actual cost £10 for each participant - need to cover costs; Ann collected £1K, to be used for maintenance. How we're going to carry on over next 5 years – yearly costings. Receive referrals from North Manchester Primary Care Trust (NMPCT) for people who need exercise. **Scheme could be supported by social services & other service providers** – MCC Sports Development & NMPCT should be more involved. Currently no cycling for disabled children. Need more people coming & helping out. Ann bought 10 non-adapted cycles with a Crime & Disorder grant.

10.2 Agreed: apply for *Local Network Fund for Children & Young People* grant to purchase **adapted cycles for disabled children** to enable them to participate in Wheels sessions - fresh air, healthy, enjoyable, physical, peer group activity.

10.3 Boggart Bikers Family Funday 1.7.07, 1 - 4 p.m., athletics track. Shirley: "...includes non-adapted cycles... races for different age groups perhaps including adapted cycles races and mixed cycles races... help draw people together into Club... no Cycling Club between here and Bury... next year perhaps whole day special event..."

10.4 Some members wary of encouraging cycling in Clough bearing in mind steep ravines; suggest **generally restrict cycling to athletics track.**

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11. Arts & Heritage (see also items 5.1, 6, 7, 8, 14, etc). **Summer 07 Sunday afternoon Musical Picnics.** Meeting 27.9.06 NMP office: Ada Nzeribe (NMP Cultural Regeneration officer), Heath Cole (NMP Charlestown & Moston Wards Support officer), Jean, Peter. Proposed: bid for MCC *CASH* grants. After consulting with members 2 bids submitted 5.1.07 for 2 events.

11.1 Bid for Charlestown ward *CASH* grant of £3,310 to deliver **Teddy Bears Musical Picnic** which aims to engage and celebrate young families and provide them with a unique outdoor experience in the heart of North Manchester through the opportunity to explore the Clough's beautiful woodland enclaves. The event will not only encourage people to explore a local natural asset but will provide fun, educational activities for young people such as storytelling and music-making workshops, as well as the opportunity to share in healthy food treats with a picnic buffet.

11.2 Bid for Moston ward *CASH* grant of £5,930 to deliver **World Music Wonderland** which will be a unique celebration of diversity. Working with arts organizations such as the Grand Union Orchestra who pioneer cross-cultural music-making, the concert will be host to a number of different world music styles.

11.3 These events aim to appeal to and be **inclusive of all communities** in particular those under-represented communities such as children & families and culturally diverse groups e.g. the growing number of refugee communities in the Moston area. Through partnership work with agencies such as Refugee Action who work extensively in the Moston area – working to support and promote cross cultural understanding - and the Community Safety Officer for the area, the events can help to become a focal point for activity being established by these agencies. The events also aim to build on links with groups such as *Zest* who have established a successful buggy push event in the Clough recently. All this will help make the events more sustainable in the future.

12. Anti-social behaviour / Safety & Security (see also items 4.2, 11.3, etc).

12.1 Five **Police Community Support Officers** (PCSOs) appointed for Charlestown ward. PCSOs also to be appointed for Harpurhey and Moston wards. PCSOs intended to be “a return to local policing” according to Charlestown & Higher Blackley Local Action Partnership newsletter.

12.2 Draft **Child Protection Policy** pertaining to all Trust's activities / projects. Discussed, amended, adopted. Finished document to be signed by Chair pro tem.

13. Administration. Application to Community Foundation for Greater Manchester (CFGM) for £1,998.31 grant to purchase Information Communication Technology (ICT) for use of Trust members particularly the treasurer who has no ICT. 15.2.07 letter from CFGM: bid unsuccessful due to “pressure on funds.”

14. Trust awarded Mersey Basin Campaign (MBC) Unilever **Dragonfly Award 2006 - Group Winner** trophy & £1K cheque: “BHCCAT is a group with impressive ambition that organises a series of imaginative activities. For example, since 2002, volunteers have carried out conservation work on the Clough's broadleaf woodland, brooks and ponds. In 2006 the group also launched a project to promote greater appreciation of the Clough's history and environment. A Boggart Festival was held on Midsummer's Day. Three hundred children from seven local primary schools exhibited and performed work exploring the mythology of boggarts and the ecology of their ancient woodland habitat.” 12.1.07 Bev Mitchell (MBC Community Support coordinator) presented trophy & cheque to Jean and Peter on behalf of Trust. 15.1.07 cheque deposited Trust a/c. Agreed: money to be spent broadly progressing projects mentioned in above citation.

15. Treasurer's report (see also items 8.2, 10.2, 11, 13, 14, etc). Copies of accounts distributed. Jean signed on 17.1.07 as Lloyds TSB account cheque signatory, replacing previous Trust treasurer (Sam McCormick), joining existing signatories (Mark & Peter).

16. Next quarterly Open Meeting is **AGM - Wednesday 6th June 2007, 6 p.m., Visitor Centre.**