

Friends of Boggart Hole Clough (**FoBHC**), before 2015 named Boggart Hole Clough Community Action Trust (**BHCCAT**), was founded in 2000. FoBHC works with, among others, Manchester City Council (**MCC**), landowner of Boggart Hole Clough (**BHC**) & most of Bailey's Wood, & with the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (**GMEU**) local authorities' department.

Submission to MCC's 16.6.2018 Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec Stakeholders Meeting

1. Community proposals for revitalizing the Lake & Island Waterbirds Sanctuary.

1.1 In March 2015, acting on the GMEU'S recommendation, MCC installed floating islands in the Lake. A few months later, thick widespread algae appeared & re-appeared during the summers of 2016, 2017 & again this year. Cause & effect seem clear enough.

However, the GMEU illogically argue that this thick widespread algae is caused by Island edge trees overhanging into the Lake & recommend their removal. These overhanging trees have been there for decades without causing any problem, indeed they provide Great Crested Grebes, Coots & Moorhens with a habitat where they can build their floating nests attached to branches overhanging into the water.

In February 2018, acting upon the GMEU's new recommendation, MCC removed some of these overhanging trees, destroying two Coots' nests in the process.

We urge MCC to proceed no further with this wrecking of the Waterbirds' habitat & instead remove the floating islands, the most likely cause of this thick widespread algae.

1.2 Climate change, global warming, is likely a factor causing this thick widespread algae. We suggest a **sweep of White Willows** is planted beside the southern promenade, where a sweep of Manchester Poplars once stood, to shade & cool the Lake.

1.3 Dredging the Lake to **remove accumulated rubbish** would also improve water quality.

1.4 This year at the beginning of February, we observed Coots building nests on the Lake at the Island edge & Herons building nests in Island trees. Therefore, to accord with the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 prohibiting disturbance of nesting birds, & taking into account global warming causing birds to nest ever earlier, we suggest **any works in the Lake and/or on the Island are limited to a 2½ month window between November & mid January**, outside the nesting season.

2. We understand MCC carried out a *Feasibility Study* re **restoring the David Lewis Recreation Ground memorial**. FoBHC requested copy of this study which we have not received. Some cleaning of memorial's stonework carried out last week; presume restoration delayed ?

3. MCC, liaising with Karen Galston, propose **planting more trees on David Lewis Rec** around small wetland area adjacent to football pitch. FoBHC supports planting only Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland species e.g. for this area - Oaks, Alders, Willows & evergreen Holly.

4. Drains need unblocking especially along north side of the main Avenue, section leading from the Lakeside to 5-Ways; water overflows across the Avenue in several places, dangerous in Winter when turns to ice. Includes blocked drain catching water from Fish Pond Clough Brook, taking water under Avenue into Boggart Hole Brook; entrance to this drain / gully still requires installation of heavy duty steel grate grid as FoBHC discussed with MCC in 2012.

5. Dangerous footbridge across ravine 100 yards below Fish Pond. We have been urging MCC to make this bridge safe for pedestrians since 2010, see e.g. Minutes of 15.3.2010 Open Meeting on our website. Prior to 2010, MCC's replacements with metal railings were repeatedly vandalized. Wooden railings were suggested but MCC have not installed any replacement railings since 2010.

6. Very visible security signage needed around Park re who to phone in case of emergency. FoBHC 3.6.2018 received following via Facebook Messenger re incident on Saturday 2.6.2018: “Is there a security number for the park. 3 cars in park behind visitor centre - dancing, drinking, swearing, music blaring out at 10am on sat am when I was at cycling. I tried to ring 101 - did not answer. About 10.50ish we rang emergency police as I was worried about drink driving more than anything. Not good for parents with kids who left cycling early. Joggers were harassed too - didn't know who to contact - for this type of situation. Nothing on council website that I could see.”

7. Re Multiple All-Abilities Outdoor Activities, see item 8.6 below. Should include a variety of guided walks & outdoor arts events in the Clough. Examples below of sort of events FoBHC would support & publicize.

7.1 GMEU have led **specialist wildlife walks** in past years in the Clough. Hopefully these can resumed & regularized & include e.g. walks looking at wild medicinal plants.

7.2 *The Boggarts of the Clough* musical fairy tale play in 2008, performed by local group Purple Expressive Arts, organized by BHCCAT, took place in the woodland. *Company Chameleon* production of *Illuminate* at Harpurhey (North City) Library 1.2.2018 - **promenade dance performance** which required audience to *move around the building*; audience could move around the Clough following performance in same way. Suggest MCC organize such events.

7.3 FoBHC was instrumental in reintroducing **music** to the Clough in 2004 in form of brass bands & in later years in form of series of smaller concerts outside (inside when inclement weather) the Lakeside Café - for further info see our website. Taking the Clough's Local Nature Reserve status into account, musicians played acoustically or with only low amplification. Bands keen to play in the Clough include *Salford Media City Band* & Manchester bands, *The DN5, Cult Party & Errant Monks*.

7.4 Victoria Park, Swinton, 9.6.2018 held “Mad Pride Salford. A family friendly festival. Be curiouser & curiouser about mental health. Mindfulness & relaxation. Poetry. Arts & Crafts. Music & family games. Free for all ages” - day of multiple stalls & activities including giant card games, giant chess, etc. Suggest MCC organize similar family friendly festival day - **Mad Pride Manchester** - in the Clough.

8. FoBHC's submission to the previous 20.1.2018 Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec Stakeholders Meeting was not acknowledged in MCC's subsequent report re this meeting - Stakeholder Action Points from 20 January 2018 doc - attached to 3.4.2018 email from Paul Rosenbloom (Charlestown & Blackley Engagement & Delivery Officer, MCC).

FoBHC's submission consisted of 2 PDFs - **Ancient Woodlands Park proposal** (FoBHC, 18.10.2017) & **Wildway Network proposal** (FoBHC, 30.11.2017) - which were attached to 19.1.2018 email to Jon Atkin (North Area Parks Manager, MCC) & Rosenbloom (see above), managers of the 20.1.2018 meeting; these 2 PDFs can be seen on our website.

The above FoBHC community proposals comprise the following:

8.1 Instead of MCC's proposed new shrunken visitor centre, build a new centre worth building - the **North Manchester Ancient Woodlands Discovery Centre** - to facilitate the appreciation, preservation & re-unification of Bailey's Wood & the Clough & the provision of multiple all-abilities outdoor activities.

8.2 Construct the 1st of a series of **Eco-Bridges** to re-unite Bailey's Wood & the Clough creating an *Ancient Woodlands Park* thus beginning to establish a green network physically re-connecting / de-fragmenting the natural woodland ecosystem.

—
—
—
—

8.3 Bailey's Wood & the Clough contain *Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland* described by Natural England as "irreplaceable" & "of prime ecological & landscape importance." The GMEU has reported both woodlands to be in a poor condition needing "**management of the woodlands for wildlife**". Restoring their biodiversity health requires eradicating invasive non-native plant species e.g. Japanese Knotweed & Himalayan Balsam, & removing accumulated rubbish. To put this into practice will require MCC employing, paying a team of trained woodland conservationists & increasing the capacity of MCC's proposed new Clough Visitor Centre in order to provide the conservation team with space to store equipment, to research & plan work, etc.

8.4 At the west end of Bailey's Wood, there is an opportunity to **archaeologically excavate the site of the former Lion Field Bleach Works** & display any remains permanently in-situ.

8.5 MCC's proposed new Visitor Centre should also provide resources facilitating the **use of the woodlands as outdoor classrooms**, developing the forest school idea, for children to learn about not only ecology & nature conservation but also about the area's wider social / industrial / cultural history.

8.6 MCC should build on the success of the All Abilities Cycling scheme initiated in 2005, by providing facilities / services for **Multiple All-Abilities Outdoor Activities** making the Clough a leading specialist provider of shared outdoor activities for people with & without disabilities, promoting social inclusion. See item **7** above.

8.7 In summary, as part of a fundamental **Public Services Regeneration** programme, we suggest, government should provide funding to implement this multi-faceted, North Manchester based proposal: to construct the 1st of a series of eco-bridges, to build a new visitor centre worth building, to create properly paid jobs, employing a team of archaeological & ecological conservationists to preserve, understand, sustainably regenerate this natural historical environment, & employing a team of social carers to organize & supervise Multiple All-Abilities Outdoor Activities, thus making this proposed *Ancient Woodlands Park* a truly thriving place for people & wildlife.

9. MCC's first 'Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting' for the Clough was held 10.30am, Saturday 30.9.2017, at the Lakeside Café which is centrally situated in the Clough, a convenient venue for meetings for Park Users.

Why has MCC changed these arrangements for Stakeholder Meetings to an earlier time & to an off-site venue, making it difficult for many Park Users to attend ? **FoBHC requests the original time & venue are restored for future Stakeholder Meetings to enable maximum attendance, encouraging public participation in decision-making re the Clough environs.**

10. FoBHC requests MCC's **permission to publish** on our website, MCC's reports re these Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec Stakeholders Meetings - see item **8** above.

11. FoBHC requests that this 3-page Submission & all its proposals be recorded / acknowledged in MCC's report re this 16.6.2018 Meeting. Besides summarizing the proposals above, the report could include e.g. a link to this doc on our website.

-
-

The above proposals are FoBHC's present priorities.

Our most immediate priority is item **1.1** - urging MCC to proceed no further with its wrecking of the Waterbirds' habitat around the Island edge.

Our general overall highest priority is item **8.3** - urging MCC to **restore the biodiversity health of the woodlands.**

-
-