

Community proposal for the *North Manchester Ancient Woodlands Discovery Centre*, a

# **Biodiversity Health Centre**

## **working for the welfare of people & wildlife**

- an appropriate, necessary facility for Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve.



Present.



Future ?

Towards the end of 2018, Manchester City Council (MCC) informed Friends of Boggart Hole Clough (FoBHC) that demolition of the Clough Visitor Centre was under consideration with no plans to replace it. FoBHC responded by developing this proposal for a Biodiversity Health Centre.

Left photo, taken 6.4.2019, shows the east side of the present Visitor Centre - a substantial, useful, multi-purpose building containing MCC North Area Parks offices, public toilets, wash-rooms, changing rooms, gym / sports room, grounds maintenance depot store-rooms & central yard.

Many of these facilities / spaces are presently unused. They should be fully utilized - the changing rooms by participants in Multiple All-Abilities Outdoor Activities; other spaces by a team of social carers organizing & supervising these activities, & by archaeological & ecological conservation / education teams preserving the history of the Boggart Hole Brook Basin & restoring the Clough Lake & the irreplaceable Ancient Woodlands to a healthy condition.

Right image above gives an idea of how the Visitor Centre's present, single storey, closed-box-like structure could be converted into a more transparent, attractive & dynamic building.

In the early 2000s, the Clough Boathouse was allowed to fall into disrepair & threatened with demolition. However, MCC was persuaded to refurbish & reinvent it as the Lakeside Café, & it flourishes.

Similarly, the present Visitor Centre building could be refurbished, reconfigured, re-focused, upgraded into, in effect, a Biodiversity Health Centre working for the welfare of people & wildlife.

During January & February 2019, FoBHC outlined the above proposal in emails to MCC Charlestown councillors, MCC North Area Parks officers, the newly formed Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec Stakeholders Group, & others. Transcripts of these emails are set out in the following pages. The most recent email shows that MCC are now considering options for retaining a Visitor Centre "either as a new build or refurbishment of existing infrastructure."

## ABBREVIATIONS

**ASNW:** Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland.

**BHC:** Boggart Hole Clough.

**BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group:** BHC & David Lewis Rec Stakeholders Group, formed 2018.

**MCC:** Manchester City Council, landowner of BHC & most of Bailey's Wood.

**GMEU:** Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, local authorities' department.

**LNR:** Local Nature Reserve; in 2008, MCC in association with Natural England declared BHC 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 Secretary / FoBHC Administrator, peterfmilner@hotmail.com

-

## CONTENTS

Page 1	Title - Summary - Two images: photo & artist's impression
Page 2	Abbreviations - Contents - Editing - Image Credits - Acknowledgements
Page 3	Referenced & Related Documents
Page 4	Introduction
Pages 5 to 12	Email Transcripts including three photos: FoBHC email correspondence, December 2018 to February 2019 (6 items), with MCC North Area Parks Team, MCC Charlestown Councillors (Basil Curley, Hannah Priest, Veronica Kirkpatrick), BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group & others, provide a record of FoBHC's most recent efforts to ensure BHC Local Nature Reserve is equipped with an adequate, appropriate conservation management / visitor centre building.

-

## EDITING

Email transcripts presented chronologically - earliest emails first followed by most recent emails (opposite to how emails viewed online).

Abbreviations above usually used in the email transcripts.

**Cc** (email carbon copied to) & **Bcc** (email blind carbon copied to) abbreviations also used.

Emails received by PFM: more often than not PFM subsequently forwarded these emails to various FoBHC contacts.

As the Visitor Centre is in Charlestown ward, Charlestown councillors included among FoBHC contacts to whom PFM copied or forwarded emails.

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

Deletions (irrelevancies dealing with other subjects) indicated by 2 dots ..

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

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

In transcript of email 6, docs listed in original email are not relisted in detail but referenced to fuller list of docs on page 3.

Besides above amendments, emails presented verbatim.

-

## IMAGE CREDITS

Two photos, page 6, of Kunshan Visitor Centre, China, courtesy of archdaily.com & Vector Architects, from internet.

Photo on left, page 1, & photo on left, page 6, by PFM.

Artist's impression on right, page 1, composite by PFM: photo left partly overlaid with photo of Kunshan Visitor Centre (see above).

-

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to FoBHC members & associates including Karen Galston, Mervyn Romain, Mildred Willner, Paul McCrystal, Rob Butler, Sarah Gorman & Tony Phillips.

And thanks to supporters of our Facebook page - to date, 650 page likes.

-

## REFERENCED & RELATED DOCUMENTS

Documents referred to as Docs **1, 2, 3** etc in pages below.

Docs listed chronologically according to publication date.

MCC has given FoBHC permission to publish various MCC docs on our website including Docs **5 & 24** listed below.

All BHCCAT/FoBHC docs listed below can be seen on our website.

Internet links are given for the other articles/PDFs listed below - Docs **1, 2, 3, 8, 25, 26 & 27**.

1. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Karl Marx, written 1875, first published 1891.  
Link - [https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx\\_Critique\\_of\\_the\\_Gotha\\_Programme.pdf](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_Critique_of_the_Gotha_Programme.pdf)
2. *A Framework for the Future - Green Networks with multiple uses in & around towns & cities*, Research Report 256, English Nature, 1997. Link - <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/77041>
3. *Biodiversity & human health: What role for nature in healthy urban planning?* Built Environment issue 31, University of the West of England, 2005. Link - [http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/7856/2/Biodiversity\\_human\\_health\\_post\\_print.pdf](http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/7856/2/Biodiversity_human_health_post_print.pdf)
4. *Birds injured, some fatally, by fishing hooks & lines during 2006*, BHCCAT, 16.3.2007.
5. *Biodiversity Management Plan for BHC*, Ecology Services UK Ltd, 29.6.2007; report commissioned by MCC.
6. *Restoring the Clough's biodiversity health - introduction*, FoBHC, 19.2.2015.
7. *Japanese Knotweed in Boggart Hole Clough environs*, FoBHC, 24.9.2015.
8. *Connecting global priorities: Biodiversity & Human Health - a state of knowledge review*, Convention on Biological Diversity & World Health Organization, 2015. Link - <https://www.cbd.int/health/SOK-biodiversity-en.pdf>
9. *Combined archaeological & ecological preliminary proposals to sustainably regenerate Bailey's Wood*, FoBHC, 14.5.2016.
10. *Re-uniting Bailey's Wood & Boggart Hole Clough*, FoBHC, 10.7.2016.
11. *'BHC & the 1896 Campaign for Free Speech' by Rod A. Peters*, FoBHC, 24.8.2016.
12. *Angel Hill War Memorial description & related information*, FoBHC, 11.11.2016.
13. *Weekly Waterbirds Survey flyer / poster*, FoBHC, 20.3.2017.
14. *North Manchester Ancient Woodlands Discovery Centre - a community proposal*, FoBHC, 29.4.2017;
15. *Update re North Manchester Ancient Woodlands Discovery Centre - a community proposal*, FoBHC, 28.5.2017.
16. *Socialist environmentalism*, FoBHC, 21.6.2017.
17. *Ancient Woodlands Park proposal*, FoBHC, 18.10.2017.
18. *Wildway Network proposal*, FoBHC, 30.11.2017.
19. *Revivifying the Lake*, FoBHC, 17.10.2018.
20. *Submission to MCC's 16.6.2018 BHC&DLR Stakeholders Meeting*, FoBHC, 15.6.2018.
21. *Submission to MCC's 20.10.2018 BHC&DLR Stakeholders Meeting*, FoBHC, 19.10.2018.
22. *Submission to MCC's 1.12.2018 BHC&DLR Stakeholders Meeting*, FoBHC, 30.11.2018.
23. *'Do not feed the birds' Lakeside signage proposal*, FoBHC, 7.12.2018.
24. *Park Development Plan for BHC, Version 1*, MCC, undated; FoBHC received this doc 17.1.2019, see email **5**.
25. *An NHS for People & Planet*, Tribune magazine, 8.4.2019.  
Link - <https://tribunemag.co.uk/2019/04/an-nhs-for-people-and-planet>
26. *Human society under urgent threat from loss of Earth's natural life*, Guardian newspaper, 6.5.2019.  
Link - <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/06/human-society-under-urgent-threat-loss-earth-natural-life-un-report>
27. *A million species threatened with extinction, UN-backed report warns*, World Socialist Web Site, 14.5.2019.  
Link - <http://intsse.com/wswspdf/en/articles/2019/05/14/spec-m14.pdf>
28. *Weekly Waterbirds Survey 2004 to 2018*, BHCCAT/FoBHC; survey ongoing.

## INTRODUCTION

“Biodiversity encompasses the whole variety of life on Earth” - GMEU website, 11.1.2019.

Most of the Boggart Hole Brook Basin / Valley / Watershed green space is Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) presently separated by roads into three isolated fragments - the Clough, Bailey’s Wood & the woodland between Rochdale Road & Lion Street / Slack Road.

To successfully restore the biodiversity health of this ASNW requires its defragmentation (Docs **10, 17, 18**), besides the removal of invasive non-native plant species (Doc **5**).

Designating this whole green space area as a LNR (not just the Clough as currently), by emphasizing the Basin’s necessary re-integration / integrity, would facilitate / promote this conservation project. Enlarging the LNR to include Bailey’s Wood was also discussed in Doc **17**. So, the proposed *Biodiversity Health Centre* would in fact serve the proposed **Boggart Hole Brook Valley Local Nature Reserve**.

In 2017, FoBHC proposed upgrading the present Visitor Centre into the **North Manchester Ancient Woodlands Discovery Centre** (Docs **14, 15, 17**).

FoBHC’s emails **3** & **6** below develop this proposal by focusing on radically remodeling the present visitor centre building rather than a new build. The layout of the present building with a central yard is appropriate for the practical physical conservation management work required to restore the Basin’s biodiversity health.

Email **6** also examines MCC’s *Park Plan* (Doc **24**) - FoBHC’s comments elaborate various matters pertaining to the proposed *Biodiversity Health Centre*.

The name *Biodiversity Health Centre* describes the building’s critical purpose (promoting / working for the welfare of people & wildlife / **biodiversity health care**), *North Manchester Ancient Woodlands Discovery Centre* being the specific name appropriate for this particular *Biodiversity Health Centre*. Hopefully the first of many such *Biodiversity Health Centres* in Manchester, in the British Isles & in the world at large, all working for the welfare of people & wildlife / biodiversity health care.

The 8.4.2019 Tribune article (Doc **25**) - “An NHS for People & Planet. It’s time to design an NHS [National Health Service] fit for the twenty-first century - public, universal, free, and fighting climate change” - might more logically have argued it’s time to design an *International Health Service*, i.e. a **Biodiversity Health Service** / Earth Health Service.

The World Health Organization’s *Biodiversity & Human health* report (Doc **8**) says “a healthy biosphere is recognized as a precondition for human health .. linking human health to the underlying integrity of Earth’s natural systems .. protecting Planetary Health .. Health is a state of complete physical, mental & social well-being & not merely the absence of disease or infirmity ..” (Doc **8**, pages xi, xii).

The proposal for a *Biodiversity Health Centre* is not suggesting replacing hospitals / clinics treating cases of acutely sick people & wildlife. The proposed centre would be more outreaching - carrying out ecological conservation & education (the Clough Lake has suffered outbreaks of avian botulism during recent years - Doc **19**; the Clough’s ASNW is diagnosed as being in an “unfavourable condition” - Doc **5**; “unfavourable condition” probably also apt diagnosis of the biosphere’s condition) & organizing multiple all-abilities outdoor activities (“Health is .. not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” - see above).

The 6.5.2019 Guardian article (Doc **26**) says “nature is being destroyed at a rate tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the past 10 million years .. The UK has commissioned .. a professor at Cambridge University, to write a study on the economic case for nature ..”

*The economic case for nature !*

“Nature is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labour, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labour power ..” wrote Marx in 1875 (Doc **1**, chapter 1).

Recent & ongoing protests demonstrate the necessity to protect biodiversity / nature from global warming, pollution, degradation, warfare, ecocide, obliteration.

“Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself” - attributed to Chief Seattle, 1854 (Doc **3**).

## EMAIL TRANSCRIPTS

**Email 1**, sent 12.12.2018, 08:13

From: PFM. To: Jon Atkin @ MCC. Cc: Paul Rosenbloom @ MCC, Charlestown & Harpurhey councillors. Bcc: 68 FoBHC contacts.

Subject: Boggart Hole Clough environs.

To: Jon Atkin, Manchester City Council (MCC) North Area Parks Manager.

Cc to: Paul Rosenbloom (MCC Charlestown & Blackley Engagement & Delivery Officer) & some local MCC Councillors.

Bcc to: 68 people including some Friends of Boggart Hole Clough (FoBHC).

.. As mentioned when we met briefly outside the Lakeside Café, 8.12.2018, here is the email containing a few reminders.

1. At the 1.12.2018 Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec Stakeholders Meeting, you said you would email MCC's latest planning proposals for the Visitor Centre.
2. At the same 1.12.2018 meeting, you mentioned MCC had carried out an "appraisal" re grounds maintenance of the Clough, which you would also forward by email.
3. At the same 1.12.2018 meeting, Biomatrix was mentioned. There is a growing consensus that their floating islands should be removed & we hope MCC will expedite this matter so the Lake is soon free of these harmful eyesores. Please see PDF re-attached: *Revivifying the Lake* (FoBHC, 17.10.2018) [Doc 19].
4. Your colleague Paul Rosenbloom didn't acknowledge receipt of 3.12.2018 email [not included in this doc] .. which requested forwarding of a Word doc or PDF version of the Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec Stakeholder Group's constitution so people interested may read it.
5. Also, FoBHC's 1.11.2018 email [not included in this doc] .. wasn't acknowledged. Among other matters, it requested information about a Swan which had recently died on the Lake. Was an autopsy carried out ? Do you know cause of its death ?
6. FoBHC's 1.11.2018 email .. also suggested improved Lakeside 'Do not feed the birds' signage. Please see 2<sup>nd</sup> PDF attached: amended version of this proposed signage, dated 7.12.2018 [Doc 23].

PFM.

**Email 2**, sent 12.12.2018, 16:47

From: Jon Atkin @ MCC. To: PFM. Cc: Paul Rosenbloom @ MCC.

Subject: Re: Boggart Hole Clough environs.

.. Thanks for getting in touch and good to see you on Saturday. With regards to the points raised:

More detail will be available about the Visitor Centre after the first project meeting which will hopefully take place prior to Xmas. As stated at the Stakeholder meeting, the current plan is to progress with the changing rooms as Phase 1 and then the VC as Phase 2 so it may be a while before there is any detail on the VC specifics.

The appraisal of the grounds maintenance forms one section of the Park Plan and as soon as we have written up the notes from the meeting and officers have checked them, the full draft plan will be circulated to all stakeholders.

The islands in the lake will be covered under the Lake section of Section 6 of the plan - soon to be circulated for comment. Improved lakeside signage will also come under this section.

The committee adapted [sic] the draft constitution so I will ask them to pass on a copy.

I will find out about any deceased birds and report back. [To date, no further info received re Swan mentioned in email 1]

.. Jon Atkin, North Area Manager, Citywide Parks Team, The Neighbourhoods Service, Neighbourhoods Directorate, MCC, Visitor Centre, BHC, Charlestown Road, Blackley, Manchester, M9 7DH. ..

-  
-

**Email 3**, sent 10.1.2019, 10:19

From: PFM. To: Jon Atkin @ MCC. Cc: Paul Rosenbloom @ MCC, Charlestown councillors, BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group. Bcc: 68 FoBHC contacts.  
Subject: Boggart Hole Clough Visitor Centre.



To: Jon Atkin, Manchester City Council (MCC) North Area Parks Manager.

Cc to: Paul Rosenbloom (MCC Charlestown & Blackley Engagement & Delivery Officer), some local MCC Councillors, & BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group.

Bcc to: 68 people including some Friends of Boggart Hole Clough (FoBHC).

.. Thanks for your 12.12.2018 email below [\[email 2 above\]](#).

Re the 1.12.2018 Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec Stakeholders Meeting, which you chaired, & your 12.12.2018 email which is quoted from:

1. As stated at the meeting, FoBHC opposes the “plan .. to progress with the changing rooms as Phase 1” which refers to putting another portakabin (containing a changing room) in the Athletics Track area, further filling up this area with portakabins & transport containers. FoBHC proposed instead that MCC should refurbish the already existing changing rooms in the Visitor Centre.

2. However, your email wording - “the current plan is to progress with the changing rooms” - suggests this item may have been pulled out of “the Park Plan .. the full draft plan will be circulated to all stakeholders”. We request that all matters related to the Clough are included in “the Park Plan” & selected items (e.g. regarding the Visitor Centre) are not pulled out in order to avoid community consultation.

3. At the Stakeholders Meeting, you said MCC was considering demolition of the Visitor Centre with no plans to replace it. Speaking for FoBHC, I opposed this idea because losing the Visitor Centre & associated facilities would be a step backwards for the Clough. Your subsequent 12.12.2018 email said “More detail will be available about the Visitor Centre after the first project meeting which will hopefully take place prior to Xmas ..” We are still awaiting to receive “more detail”.

In the meantime, as you may remember, in 2017 FoBHC proposed that if MCC demolishes the Visitor Centre, MCC should replace it with a better centre along the lines of the North Manchester Ancient Woodlands Discovery Centre proposal which I emailed to you in 2017; link to this doc [\[Doc 14\]](#) on our website:

[https://boggartholeclough.files.wordpress.com/2008/02/fobhc\\_29-4-2017\\_north\\_manchester\\_ancient\\_woodlands\\_discovery\\_centre\\_a\\_community\\_proposal.pdf](https://boggartholeclough.files.wordpress.com/2008/02/fobhc_29-4-2017_north_manchester_ancient_woodlands_discovery_centre_a_community_proposal.pdf)

Alternatively, the present Visitor Centre could be refurbished & reconfigured as FoBHC has also proposed - see page 4 of *Ancient Woodlands Park proposal* (FoBHC, 18.10.2017) - this was also emailed to you in 2017; link to this doc [\[Doc 17\]](#) on our website: [https://boggartholeclough.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/fobhc\\_18-10-2017\\_ancient\\_woodlands\\_park\\_proposal.pdf](https://boggartholeclough.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/fobhc_18-10-2017_ancient_woodlands_park_proposal.pdf)

The present Visitor Centre is a substantial, useful, multi-purpose building containing public toilets, wash-rooms, changing rooms, sports room, North Area Parks offices, grounds maintenance depot store-rooms & central yard.

Unaccountably, many of these facilities / spaces are presently unused. They should be fully utilized - the changing rooms by participants in Multiple All-Abilities Outdoor Activities; other spaces by archaeological & ecological conservation teams preserving the history of the Boggart Hole Brook Basin & restoring the biodiversity health of the Clough Lake & the area’s irreplaceable Ancient Woodlands.

-  
-

Re the metal building occupied by your North Area Parks offices - I think you said the roof was leaking among other problems. This metal building could be scrapped leaving intact the main breeze block structure built around the central yard. North Area Parks offices could move into this main building.

Please see 3 photos attached [\[page 6\]](#):

1<sup>st</sup> photo taken 8.4.2017 shows view of south & east sides of the Clough Visitor Centre.

2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> photos (courtesy of archdaily.com, retrieved 27.12.2018) shows views at different times of day of Kunshan Visitor Centre, China. Designed by Vector Architects to “harmonize with nature”, this building provides a “multi-functional activity space .. for an eco-farm ..”

These 3 photos demonstrate how the Clough’s present, single storey, closed-box-like structure could be converted into a more transparent, attractive & dynamic building.

In the early 2000s, the Clough Boathouse was allowed to fall into disrepair & threatened with demolition. However, MCC was persuaded to refurbish & reinvent it as the Lakeside Café, & it flourishes.

Similarly, the present Visitor Centre building could be refurbished, reconfigured, re-focussed, upgraded into, in effect, a Biodiversity Health Centre working for the welfare of people & wildlife - an appropriate, necessary facility for Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve.

PFM.

**Email 4**, sent 11.1.2019, 10:51

From: Jon Atkin @ MCC. To: PFM.

Re: Boggart Hole Clough Visitor Centre.

Many thanks for all the info Peter - I do like the images that you sent. I will be providing an update on the changing rooms/VC at the AGM this Saturday ..

**Email 5**, sent 17.1.2019, 00:12

From: BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group. To: 26 people including Chris Cooper, David Jackson, Gillian Patman, John Biggs, Jon Atkin @ MCC, Karen Galston, Marc Hodges, Marise Lyndsey, Mervyn Romain, Paul Rosenbloom @ MCC, Tommy Brown, Charlestown councillors, PFM.

Subject: Minutes from AGM and Park Plan for your feedback.

.. Thanks again for attending the first Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec. (BHC & DLR) Stakeholder Group AGM. Everyone was really positive and we are very glad to have a healthy Committee consisting of 13 people that represent the many and varied interest groups that belong to the Clough.

Attached are the meeting minutes. Please let me know if there is any incorrect information or if anything has been missed.

Also attached is the Park Plan for BHC & DLR [\[Doc 24\]](#) for you to provide feedback on. Please email your feedback to this address by February 11th, 2019. This will give us a couple of weeks to organize all the information you provide in time to be discussed at the next Committee meeting. We will email the Committee shortly with details on when this is being held.

We look forward to our next general meeting in the Summer, but in the meantime please keep in touch!

Best wishes, BHC & DLR Stakeholder Group Committee.

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

**Email 6**, sent 11.2.2019, 18:00

From: PFM. To: Chris Cooper @ BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group. Cc: John Atkin @ MCC, Paul Rosenbloom @ MCC, Charlestown councillors. Bcc: 70 FoBHC contacts.  
Subject: RE: Minutes from AGM and Park Plan for your feedback.

To: Chris Cooper (BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group Chair).

Cc to: Jon Atkin (MCC North Area Park Manager), Paul Rosenbloom (MCC Charlestown & Blackley Engagement & Delivery Officer), MCC Charlestown ward Councillors.

Bcc to: 70 people including some members of the Stakeholders Group & some Friends of Boggart Hole Clough (FoBHC).

.. Thanks for the 17.1.2019 email below [email 5 above], received from boggart.rec@gmail.com, to which two documents were attached - *Minutes of BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group 12.1.2019 AGM* (undated) & *MCC's Park Development Plan: Version 1* (undated) [Doc 24].

In the feedback below, regarding these two documents, reference is made to twelve documents .. listed below chronologically according to publication date; all these docs below .. can be seen on our website - [www.boggart.org.uk](http://www.boggart.org.uk):

[List of docs on page 3 above supersedes original list in this email; the twelve docs listed in this email were 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 22, 28; all docs mentioned below have been changed to refer to the list on page 3.]

**First, re *Minutes of BHC&DLR Stakeholders Group 12.1.2019 AGM*.**

The *Minutes* are confusing, misleading.

On page 2 there's a subtitle - "Update from MCC from previous Stakeholder Group meeting" - beneath which are items from the AGM, not from the "previous .. meeting". Indeed, nothing is recorded about this "previous .. meeting" & I've received no separate Minutes for the meeting.

This "previous Stakeholder Group meeting" was held 1.12.2018 at North City Library. It was attended by Jon Atkin, Paul Rosenbloom, Duncan Mottershead, Mark Hodges, Gillian Patman, Chris Cooper & myself, & an elderly man who arrived half way through the meeting whose name I didn't catch.

I noted 5 items (A to E) during this meeting, as follows.

**A.** Copies of a Constitution for the Stakeholders Group were distributed. The Constitution concludes: "This constitution was approved by members of the association on: 01/12/2018 Signatories: Chair: Chris Cooper Secretary: Gill Patman Treasurer: Marc Hodges". Besides the Chair, Secretary & Treasurer, who are the "members of the association" who "approved" the constitution ?

**B.** I distributed copies of *Submission to MCC's 1.12.2018 Boggart Hole Clough & David Lewis Rec Stakeholders Meeting* outlining "proposals to regenerate the Clough environs .." (Doc 22). Most of these proposals are omitted from the *Park Plan*, about which, more below.

**C.** Duncan Mottershead suggested using herbicides to eliminate the invasive species Himalayan Balsam from the Clough. I objected: spraying herbicides would be harmful & unnecessary. FoBHC conservationists successfully eliminated this plant from a 200 yards stretch beside the Main Avenue by systematically pulling out the plants over 3 consecutive years. This method has not been put into the *Park Plan*, item 5. C.

**D.** I reminded the meeting that FoBHC had previously proposed that MCC build on the success of the All-Abilities Cycling scheme, which FoBHC was instrumental in starting in 2005, by promoting Multiple All-Abilities Outdoor Activities. This was supported by those present at the meeting but only appears in the *Park Plan* (item 6. I) as "Explore options for play equipment for people with physical impairments to complement existing inclusive activities such as Simply Cycling."

**E.** Jon Atkin said demolishing the Visitor Centre was under consideration & grassing over the site, so MCC North Area Parks Team would have to find new offices probably far from the Clough. Chris Cooper supported this idea saying, "its not fit for purpose so lets get rid of it". I reminded the meeting that FoBHC had previously proposed renovating the building (Doc 17, page 4), that its facilities / spaces should be fully utilized & that losing the Visitor Centre & associated facilities would be a step backwards for the Clough. Others disagreed.

After informing FoBHC re item **E** above (see e.g. 31.12.2018 Facebook post) & discussions with FoBHC, I responded with 10.1.2019 email below [email 3 above] proposing the existing building is converted into a Biodiversity Health Centre (see also Doc 17, page 4) & a post 12.1.2019 on our Facebook page re the 10.1.2019 email.

Therefore, it was gratifying to hear at the AGM & to read in the subsequent *AGM Minutes* that “a business case is being developed .. [which] will argue for the funds needed to provide a visitor centre that is in-line with the ambitions of the local residents. Councillors suggested the Lifestyle building in Woodhouse Park in Wythenshawe as an example ..” Cllr Curley mentioned that a sum of £5 million might be required. And in the *Park Plan* (item 6. D) it says “AIM .. To provide a new Visitors Centre .. either as a new build or refurbishment of existing infrastructure ..”

Our only difference of approach now it appears is that rather than a *Lifestyle building*, FoBHC considers proposals for the *North Manchester Ancient Woodlands Discovery Centre / a Biodiversity Health Centre* more appropriate & necessary for Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve, to benefit both people & wildlife.

The 3 attached photos were attached to FoBHC’s 10.1.2019 email below [email 3 above] to illustrate a way to convert the present Visitor Centre into a more attractive, transparent & dynamic building; they’re re-attached to this email because its addressed to some new addressees [see photos, page 6].

For those who didn’t attend the 1.12.2018 Stakeholders meeting, its proceedings are now reported.

At the 12.1.2019 AGM, Jon Atkin gave FoBHC permission to publish the *Park Plan* on our website; its now uploaded with a link provided on our Facebook page to the *Park Plan*.

### **Second, re the Park Development Plan - the Park Plan.**

Please note references to the *Park Plan* already discussed above.

The *Park Plan* is noteworthy for its glaring omissions, exposing a dire lack of knowledge re the Clough, suggesting a lack of genuine interest.

**I.** The *Park Plan* doesn’t mention that Bailey’s Wood & the Clough, the two main ravines of the Boggart Hole Brook Basin, contain Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW), described by Natural England as “irreplaceable” & “of prime ecological & landscape importance”.

Ecology Services UK Ltd reported the Clough’s ASNW as being in an “unfavourable condition” due to the prevalence of non-native plant species. See Doc 5. There is no mention of this in the *Park Plan*.

*Park Plan*, item 3: “The main valley .. is clothed on both sides with trees & shrubs including heaths, azaleas & rhododendrons ..”

Azaleas & rhododendrons are non-native species which contribute to the “unfavourable condition” of the ASNW - see Doc 5.

*Park Plan*, item 3, continued: “.. On the banks of the brook flowing through the Clough there is an excellent collection of aquatic & moisture loving plants.”

The only plant growing here is invasive non-native Himalayan Balsam which has overwhelmed virtually all indigenous ground flora on the Brook’s banks. Swathes of Himalayan Balsam dominate the lower reaches of the Clough.

*Park Plan*, item 6. G: “Plan an annual ‘Balsam Bash’ community event ..”

“Balsam bashing” is likely to do more harm than good, spreading Himalayan Balsam seeds, mass trampling of the ground; its a gesture, to feel something is being done, however badly. This essential work should be done properly, carefully, systematically. See also item **C** above. A team of highly trained & properly paid woodland conservation management workers needs creating to eradicate invasive non-native species - Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed (Doc 7) & Rhododendron. See Docs 5 & 17.

-  
-  
-  
-  
-  
-  
-  
-

**II.** The *Park Plan* doesn't mention that the Clough is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). In 2008 MCC, in association with Natural England & supported BHCCAT, declared the Clough a LNR.

Omitting to mention that the Clough is a LNR distorts the Clough's declared purpose as a LNR, a sanctuary where wildlife is safe, protected, free from harm. See Doc 4.

The *Park Plan* should promote activities appropriate for a LNR such as limnology (study of lakes), ichthyology (fish), ornithology (birds), dendrology (trees), lepidopterology (butterflies & moths), herpetology (frogs & toads), entomology (insects), bryology (mosses & liverworts), chiropterology (bats), mycology (fungi) & other ecological / natural history activities which people of all abilities could enjoy in the Clough.

In 2015 & 2016, GMEU ecologists organized wildlife observation & recording events in the Clough; such events should be regularized into monthly or weekly events. See Doc 17, pages 3-4.

*Weekly Waterbirds Survey 2004 to 2018* (Doc 28) & *Japanese Knotweed in Boggart Hole Clough environs* (Doc 7) form parts of FoBHC's ongoing, developing natural history surveys of the Boggart Hole Brook Basin in which all are invited to participate.

But none of this is mentioned in the *Park Plan*.

Instead, the *Park Plan* mentions "fishing" several times including item 6. K: "Increase participation in & promotion of fishing activities .."

FoBHC proposes this be amended to read "Increase participation in & promotion of ornithology & other natural history activities which people of all abilities could enjoy."

We understand that King William IV Angling Society has "fishing rights" at 4 other waters, besides the Clough pond, at: 1. Heaton Park lake, 2. The Top & Bottom Billies, Blackley New Road, 3. Vale Lodge, 4. Sainsburys Pond located near Heaton Park Sainsburys. Surely the fishing club should concentrate on these above mentioned, underused (in terms of fishing), waters & allow the Clough to fulfil its declared purpose as a LNR.

**III.** The *Park Plan* doesn't mention that the Clough is an isolated fragment of ASNW.

For the ASNW to thrive it must be reconnected to adjacent woodlands. This natural woodland habitat de-fragmentation requires building eco-bridges. See Docs 2, 17 & 18.

The nearest the *Park Plan* comes to approaching this issue is item 6. H: ".. improve sustainable access to BHC .. Work .. on the promotion of 'green' access options .. Work .. on improving the physical infrastructure of sustainable access routes .."

**IV.** The *Park Plan* doesn't mention that the Clough Lake has suffered increasingly severe outbreaks of Avian Botulism over recent years killing many waterbirds.

FoBHC emailed Doc 19 - *Revivifying the Lake*, FoBHC, 17.10.2018 - to MCC last year but FoBHC's proposals, for stopping avian botulism recurring, have been ignored.

*Park Plan*, item 5. G: "Lake. Overhanging trees / branches in the water .. company to be brought in to complete works. Look into improving water quality whether through use of chemicals (wildlife safe) to kill off the weeds etc, or an external company / organisation to clear bottom". *Park Plan*, item 6. G: ".. ensure tree branches from the island in the lake do not impede water flow & assist the build-up of algae .."

FoBHC has repeatedly urged MCC to stop removing any more branches fallen or overhanging from the Island into the Lake, while remaining attached to the Island, as Great Crested Grebes, Coots & Moorhens depend upon these branches on which they build their floating nests. See Doc 19.

*Park Plan*, item 6. K: "Commission a new study of the water quality & recommendations on how to reduce the algae & improve water quality .."

We welcome this, but in the meantime FoBHC urges MCC to take some immediate measures to help prevent the endless recurrence of avian botulism, e.g. remove the floating islands, plant shading trees to cool the Lake, improve Lakeside 'Do not feed the birds' signage. See Docs 19 & 23.

-  
-

**V.** The *Park Plan* doesn't mention global warming which increases eutrophication / toxic algal blooms in which avian botulism bacteria grows thus increasing outbreaks of the disease & mortality of waterbirds.

“As global warming contributes to the occurrence of both eutrophication & avian botulism in the Clough Lake, it follows that campaigning, urging MCC & governments worldwide to stop global warming necessarily becomes an integral part of our activity .. MCC should lead the way by demanding Manchester's energy is generated by renewables (solar, water, wind, etc), not fossil fuels, greenhouse gases being the prime cause of global warming. This requires complete divestment from fossil fuels & reinvestment in research & development of renewables ..” - Doc **19**.

This campaign should be incorporated into the *Park Plan*.

**VI.** The *Park Plan* doesn't mention Multiple All-Abilities Outdoor Activities.

*Park Plan*, item 6. I: “Explore options for play equipment for people with physical impairments to complement existing inclusive activities such as Simply Cycling”.

This inclusiveness should be more inclusive including beginners & veterans, children & elderly, those with learning difficulties & those with special skills, fit people & unfit people, etc. And it should cover as many activities as possible e.g. participating in outdoor natural history activities discussed in item **II** above & arts activities in item **XII** below. See also item **D** above & Docs **13** & **17**.

*Park Plan*, item 6. C: “.. increase the amount of physical activity & related events ..”

Equally important is to increase the amount of mental activity & related events, e.g. natural history activities discussed above, & arts activities - see **XII** below.

At the Stakeholders Group 12.1.2019 AGM, Cllr Curley said a mental health charity called *Autisma* had expressed interest in using the bungalow at the Charlestown Road / Clough Main Avenue junction corner. FoBHC would welcome the conversion of this building into a Mental Health Information Centre.

**VII.** The *Park Plan* doesn't mention archaeology.

FoBHC considers the Boggart Hole Brook Basin as a whole - Bailey's Wood & the Clough - see item **III** above.

Archaeological excavation & permanent in-situ display of any remains of the former Lion Field Bleach Works at the west end of Bailey's Wood (until recently the Boggart Hole Brook Basin was at the centre of the textile bleaching, dyeing & printing industry) would begin to reveal & celebrate North Manchester's role in the Industrial Revolution. See Doc **17**.

The remains of a building near Five Ways in the Clough excavated several years ago should be properly displayed with interpretative signage. Doubtless the Clough environs contain further remains to be explored.

As much archaeology involves carefully excavating rubbish dumps / middens, this work could perhaps be creatively combined with removing accumulated rubbish from the area. See Doc **22**.

**VIII.** The *Park Plan* doesn't mention the Clough's staffing requirements.

MCC should create several specialized teams of highly trained & properly paid workers - archaeological & ecological conservation teams to conserve the history of the Boggart Hole Brook Basin (see item **VII** above) & to restore the biodiversity health of the area's Ancient Woodlands (see items **I** & **III** above) & the Clough Lake (see items **IV** & **V** above); & a team of social carers to organize & supervise Multiple All-Abilities Outdoor Activities (see items **II** & **VI** above & **XII** below) - to transform the Clough environs into a truly thriving place for people & wildlife.

**IX.** The *Park Plan* doesn't mention the Angel Hill War Memorial / Peace Monument.

This structure requires careful ongoing conservation.

In remembrance of the 320 local people killed in two world wars inscribed onto the memorial, & in accord with monument's spirit & meaning, FoBHC campaigns for an end to militarism, nationalism & wars. See Doc **12**.

This campaign should be incorporated into the *Park Plan*.

-  
-  
-  
-

