Minutes of the General Meeting of Greater Manchester CHAR held on 19th February 1981 at St Mary's Place, Bury.

Present:

Liz Brownlow Denis Skelton Rochdale Petrus

Denis Skelton James Wood Chais Blackvel

Chris Blackwell Andy Wiggans

GHYA Homelessness Project

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Ian Guirt Anne Masterson

Bury Homelessness Project

Annie Manogue MNS Staff Richard Kirkman GM CHAR

Patrick Cornwell Dave Eckersall Stewart Gibb Tony Martin Richard Hughes

s MRS Residents Committee

Tony Baldwinson GM CHAR

Apologies: Hilary Knight
Del Langhorn

MMS Staff.

<u>Matters Arising</u>

17.iii Policy Review Meeting. A second draft is to be prepared.

17.vii Bury Metro. The two references mentioned are still being sought.

17.vi MRS/Gerald Kaufman. This has been referred to the Houses in Multiple Occupation and CHAR Sub-committee.

Correspondence

A letter has been received from Christine Chambers concerning MMS membership.

The Greater Manchester Campaign Against the Social Security Cuts submitted a draft resolution for support. It urges the assessment of Benefit should not be based on means tested or contributory principles, for example Child Benefit. This resolution was adopted and national CHAR will be informed.

Manchester Anti-Cuts Committee have organised a lobby of the Council rate fixing meeting for March 11th. Massive cuts in services are anticipated. The Housing Aid Centre will remain, but Direct Works will be cut along with housing stock maintenance programmes. It was resolved to support this Lobby. On 3rd March there will be an Anti-Cuts meeting specifically for the voluntary sector and community groups. Relating to this, it was reported that Shades (City Centre Project of the Youth Development Trust) had no guaranteed funding beyond the end of March, and consequently was being wound down. No new referrals are being taken and the workers have received Notice of redundancy. Efforts will be concentrated into producing a written account of the history, lessons and achievements of the Project.

There will be a Women's Fightback Day School on 28th March at Preston Polytechnic.

The National Housing Liaison Committee have organised a demonstration in London 28 March.

An addendum to the CHAR Guide on Supplementary Benefits is now available.

VII Shades have succeeded in getting the DESS (SB) to pay for a deposit for a flat.

Other Business

CM CHAR Conference. It was proposed that we organise a half-day conference for voluntary sector projects and Housing Associations interested in working with them. There was discussion on the merits of an open invitation, or selecting and favouring the smaller projects and HAs. It was resolved that we would invite our own members and other voluntary projects along with HAs on the understanding that representatives should only attend if they are interested in hostels of 30 places or less. Following this it was also agreed that we should write to all the local HAs explaining why we are opposed to large hostels, in accordance with the Housing Corporation guidelines. It was noted that the United HA Trust is thinking of a 100 place hostel to replace the Manchester Night Shelter. Possibilities for the Conference are sometime in late March at Miles Flatting Library. Hilary, Stewart, Annie and Richard to plan this.

17.ii The Hostel Replacement Campaign. The possibility of appealling against the decision of Manchester Council regarding fitness of the two hostels is being looked into. This would be on the basis that the Council didn't respond correctly by investigating all the facts. The deadline for this course of action is 12 March. The cost of such proceedings are being looked into. A complainant will have to stay in each hostel on the night that the summons is served. Residents from the Bishop of Middleton's shelter have reported substantial improvements recently. The Bishop of Manchester has written to Nick Beacock expressing his concern for the residents of the two shelters if the Council drag their feet on this matter. Concerning the MNS it was reported that Del, the Manager, had been suspended from duty on 17 February. There was a management committee meeting that evening and the staff went on strike, with the support and understanding of the residents. After a lengthy meeting she was re-instated though disciplinary procedures are still pending. The Residents Committee will be meeting this coming Sunday to discuss this matter. Although the HRS has been disaffiliated from CHAR, individual members of staff and residents are welcome to join. The MNS membership fee will be returned. The original proposal to the national CHAR meeting was to disaffiliate MNS if it didn't revert to planned closure by 1983 and no discrimination in company membership. This was amended to immediate withdrawal and carried 34 - 1.

Bolton Council. A useful and general discussion has been held with the Chairman of of the Housing Committee. They are interested in a hostel residents survey and symposium on local single homelessness. The current state of Bolton Nightcap was not known. It was reported that Selcare had moved out.

iv 10.i Health Care for the Homeless. It was noted that Manchester University has just received £250,000 for a primary care survey in inner city areas to be conducted by the Department of General Practice. GM CHAR feels that it can make some highly important contributions to this survey, but is handicapped by not having a Health Group and working through the Community Health Council for Manchester Central. One problem was that CHC tended not to follow CHAR policy; for example Liverpool CHC has regarded homelessness as a mental illness. It was agreed that we would write to the University welcoming the study and looking forward to closer limison, and to also write to Jane Graham on the CHC asking for a reconvened meeting with Joan Armstrong, Del. Richard and herself.

Claimants' Unions. It was reported that there are now two CUs in Manchester and suggested that we should affiliate to these. Patrick Macfail and Jane Graham will be contacted for futher details.

17.vii Bury Metro. The history of the Project will be in the next edition of the newsletter. Two houses were expected to be used as crashpads half a week each with unpaid but rent-free wardens, however there were no takers. The pads seemed to be used as a dusping ground by various statutory agencies, causing disillusionment with the local authority. The AGM was called to make the project more youth orientated and less "theraputic". On general research on accommodation in Bury there seemed to be a "gap of communication" between the corporate planner and individuals within some departments. They are looking for local authority as well as housing association help in accommodation for young people after hostels to prevent silting up.

A Bed for the Hight. Roger Hamilton from CVS has asked us to update this book. We did not feel qualified to inspect or recommend all the hostels mentioned in this book. However we could provide supplements on HA grants, fire hazards, homelessness, houses in multiple occupation, security of temure and licence agreements.

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 12 March 1981 at MARC, 61 Bloom Street,
Hanchester 1 at 7.30 pm.

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