

NEWS RELEASE**Manchester shoppers unite against excessive packaging****Embargoed until
Saturday 23rd
June****Photo Opportunity**

Campaigners will be delivering trolley-loads of excess packaging to South Manchester supermarkets in Hulme (ASDA, Fallowfield (Sainsbury's), Chorlton (Morrisons), from 10.15am and Didsbury (Tesco) at 9.45am on Saturday 23rd June.

Shrink-wrapped swedes, over-protected oranges and cakes cocooned in cardboard are really starting to grate with shoppers. Now Manchester supermarkets are set to get a wake-up call about the excessive amount of irresponsible packaging on their products.

On the morning of Saturday 23rd June trolleys full of wasteful packaging will be returned to supermarket stores in and around Manchester. Customers will be encouraged by Manchester Friends of the Earth [1] to peel unnecessary packaging from their purchases and leave it in trolleys at the exit. If the environment doesn't prove a worthy incentive for supermarkets, hopefully the cost of disposal will spur bosses into improving their packaging practices.

Manchester Friends of the Earth plans to target major Asda, Morrisons, Tesco and Sainsbury's stores to spread the message to shoppers as they complete their big weekly shops. Examples of horrendous over-packaging include fruit packed in polystyrene dishes covered with plastic film and cakes like apple pies, which are often packed in four layers comprising a cardboard carton, plastic film, a plastic box and individual foil cases. The event is designed to stimulate consumer awareness of 'bad' packaging and to steer them to purchase the products with the most environmentally friendly and minimal packaging, as well as to demonstrate to retailers that customers don't want – or need – bulky, excessive packaging.

Sarah Redman is a campaigner with Manchester Friends of the Earth. She says:

"25% of land filled domestic waste is currently packaging. At the moment, most of our plastic and mixed-materials packaging is neither suitable for recycling, nor will it ever break down in land fill, which, given the increasing scarcity of land fill, is a serious and growing problem. Yet retailers continue to sell grossly over-packaged products."

CONTACTS FOR COMMENT

**Lynda Searby, 07866 130093
Sarah Redman, 07905 369737**

“We are calling on retailers to take responsibility for the waste they generate and to minimise and “environmentalise” all of their packaging. This not only means reducing packaging at source but also supporting the latest bio-degradable technologies which make packaging compostable when it is not recyclable or re-useable.”

More than 88,000 tonnes of weekly household waste - 4.6 million tonnes per year - is packaging. This is the weight of more than 6,000 London buses every week. Consumers actually pay for packaging twice: for every £50 spent on food by the average household, £8 goes towards the packaging costs, adding approximately £470 to the average annual bill. Consumers then have to pay for the disposal of the packaging through their council taxes.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Manchester Friends of the Earth is a prominent campaigns group, raising awareness and lobbying for policy changes at a local, regional, national and international level. The group consists entirely of volunteers, and its campaigns are funded by membership fees and individual donations. Up-to-date information is available on their website: <http://www.manchesterfoe.org.uk>. Manchester Friends of the Earth is part of a national network of local groups, affiliated to the national organisation (further information can be found at <http://www.foe.co.uk>).