

Making Cycling Count

Transport campaigners make their contribution to the region's Local Transport Plan, reports Graeme



Our November Bike Friday ride kicked off our involvement with Local Transport Plan 3. This plan sets the priorities for transport in Greater Manchester for the next 25 years, and naturally this was something Manchester FoE's transport group wanted input into.

While the official consultation was not set to finish until Christmas Eve, we felt it was important to input early into wider discussions as we knew that the ten Greater Manchester local authorities would also be considering what to write in their responses.

Bike Friday participants presented a letter to Cllr Keith Whitmore, the vice-chair of the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority (GMITA), setting out what we wanted in terms of a sustainable transport system for the conurbation. The letter is available at <http://tinyurl.com/686oald>. We followed this letter up with a 41-page document (available at <http://tinyurl.com/6al62lm>) with more detail and supporting research, and an email lobbying campaign using a web interface to enable people to send messages to GMITA and the councillor with responsibility for transport in their borough. This generated over 300 responses, which is around a third of all the consultation responses that GMITA received. The next stage in the process is the formation of Local Implementation Plans, which the individual councils need to produce. We are organising email lobbying actions for each of these.

In February we coordinated a special Bike Friday for National Heart Month on the British Heart



The Make Cycling Count team get their message across to Cllr Ian Macdonald, chair of GMITA

Foundation's 'Wear Red Day' in which participants wore red and raised money to help the BHF's work. Katy launched her new Bike Fabulous blog on Valentine's Day with some stylish 'wear red' ideas. Alongside the blog and Twitter feed, we'll be seeing more Bike Fabulous events this year. We have secured funding to promote Bike Friday across Greater Manchester, and to research the potential for establishing core cycle routes across the conurbation using interactive mapping. We're also continuing to finalise our cycling manifesto. Our pedal-powered smoothie maker has been a hit at events, raising awareness and funds. To get involved with the transport campaign, which includes the Love Your Bike campaign, email Graeme at Graeme@manchesterfoe.org.uk.

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(plus a recipe for vegan pumpkin pie!)

Recipe – Pumpkin, Courgette and Green Lentil Pie and Mash

A real filling treat from the Cornucopia vegetarian restaurant in Dublin, courtesy of Cait Patrick

● Ingredients

For the base:

- 2 onions
- 2 carrots
- 3 cloves of garlic
- ½ medium pumpkin (or 1 medium butternut squash, about 700g)
- 3 courgettes
- 300g green or Puy lentils
- 4 bay leaves (2 for lentils, 2 for sauce)
- A few sprigs of fresh thyme (dried thyme is fine too)
- 2 heaped tsp paprika
- 150ml vegetarian red wine
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 300ml vegetable stock
- 4 tbsp (60ml) tamari or soy sauce
- Olive oil

For the mash:

- 6 large floury potatoes, such as Roosters – about 1.6kg
- 25g (small bunch) fresh dill
- 1–2 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- Pinch of ground nutmeg
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 200°C. Chop the onions, carrots and garlic very finely and set aside. Chop the pumpkin/squash into medium-sized cubes, toss in olive oil, salt and pepper and roast in oven for 30 minutes or until soft, turning once. When cooked, reduce oven temperature to 180°C and set pumpkin aside. Meanwhile, slice the courgettes into rounds ½ inch thick. Heat a little olive oil in a pan over a medium heat and brown courgettes on each side, in batches if needed. Set aside.

Add 2 bay leaves and the lentils to a small pot of boiling salted water, then reduce heat to simmer.

Stir occasionally, cover with lid and cook for 15–20 minutes until lentils are tender but not mushy. Rinse well under cold water, drain, remove bay leaves and set aside.

Coat the base of a large pot generously with olive oil and place over a medium heat. Add the carrots, onions and garlic as well as 2 bay leaves and the thyme. Stir briefly, cover with a lid, turn heat to low and sweat the veg for 15 minutes. Next add the paprika and red wine and, when most of the liquid has reduced, add the tomato puree, tamari or soy sauce and vegetable stock. Simmer the sauce until well reduced and all the vegetables are cooked – about 15 minutes. When the sauce is ready, stir in the pumpkin, courgette and lentils. Check the seasoning – a bit of pepper is usually nice but because of the tamari no additional salt may be needed.

While the sauce is cooking, peel and quarter the potatoes, place them in a large pot of salted water and boil. Reduce to a low heat, cover and simmer till soft. Drain and then return the potatoes to the same pot over a very low heat to release as much moisture as possible. Remove from heat and mash. Place the mustard, dill, nutmeg and about 75–100ml of olive oil into a small container and blend till smooth – a stick blender works well for this. Pour this mixture over the mashed potato and mash until well mixed. Season with salt and pepper.

Now place the lentil and roast vegetable sauce into the base of a large, deep ovenproof dish. Spoon the mash on top and smooth over with a spatula. Use the back of a knife to mark out a lattice on the smooth surface (or simply crumble mash potato over the base with your hands). Place the pie in the preheated oven for about 30 minutes, or until mash is crispy and light brown in colour and the juice is bubbling around the edges. Serve with lightly cooked winter greens.

(This keeps well in the fridge for easy reheated meals during the week if you make it at the weekend!)

Manchester Friends of the Earth Veg Out at Fundraising Event

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Manchester has a great night out fundraising to fight climate change, says Rebecca Stacey

Did you go to the Manchester FoE event of the year? If you did, what a fab evening! If you didn't, bad luck...maybe next time? Manchester FoE's fundraiser Dine Out Veg Out, held at Kro Piccadilly, was not only informative, but also entertaining – that's no mean feat. The aim? To launch the group's Meat Free Monday campaign, which aims to have a significant positive impact on lowering carbon emissions in the UK.

Charismatic local comedienne Kerry Leigh acted as compère, managing the evening smoothly with a good helping of humour between courses. The evening kicked off with introductions by Manchester FoE food campaigners Al and Rachel, then Lib Dem councillor Paul Ankers was first guest speaker, providing the audience

with plenty of reasons to get on board the MFM campaign. Helen Rimmer, food campaigner for national FoE, gave an uplifting speech, closely followed by several beautiful tunes from the very talented Blackpool singer/songwriter Rae Morris. <http://www.myspace.com/raemorrismusic/shows>.

Colette, co-ordinator of Manchester FoE, remarked 'I don't recognise half of the people', a positive sign that the message had extended beyond 'the converted'. I sat with a couple of friends who had never attended a FoE event before, but the concept of going meat-free one day of the week had piqued their interest. Lively debate was the order of the day with lots of information on hand to answer questions.

If you want to get involved in this campaign, contact al@manchesterfoe.org.uk or come along to the campaigns meeting at Green Fish on the last Thursday of each month.

More pumpkin pie, anyone??



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Exchange Square, Corporation Street, M14 3TR.

Coming Up

Ongoing till Sunday 8th May

Tarnished Earth street gallery, Spinningfields, off Deansgate, central Manchester.

The Co-operative presents Tarnished Earth, a free exhibition of photographs telling the story of the Alberta tar sands, one of the world's greatest ecological disasters.

Saturday 16th April

Big Green Festival, St Clement's Church, Edge Lane, Chorlton, M21 9JF.

South Manchester's annual celebration of sustainable living – this year's theme will be Bike To The Future. Workshops, stalls, live music, a bike parade, ceilidh and much more. From 11am onwards. Free entry.

Saturday 7th May

Amaretti Chamber Orchestra fundraising concert to raise money for national FoE, in conjunction with Stockport FoE. Music by Purcell, Walter Leigh, Handel, Walters, Holst and Piazzolla. 7.30pm at St Andrew's Church, Cheadle Road, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 5ET. Tickets £7, accompanied children free.

Regular Events

Second Tuesday of the month 6.45 for 7pm.

Full group meeting. Green Fish Resource Centre, 46–50 Oldham Street. New members very welcome to come along and find out more about the group!

Last Thursday of the month 6.45 for 7pm.

Campaigns meeting. Green Fish Resource Centre, 46–50 Oldham Street. All welcome. We split into groups to focus on our main campaign areas: Fix the Food Chain, Get Serious About CO₂, Meat Free Mondays and Transport.

Last Friday of the month (except April)

Bike Friday. Rides from a range of locations in Greater Manchester to work, college or university. Starting points are Worsley (Worsley Road/Chatsworth Road), Stretford Mall, Chorlton Library, Withington Library, Levenshulme Station and Prestwich (Bury New Road/Scholes Lane).

www.bikefriday.org

Manchester Friends of the Earth Coordinators and Officers 2011

At our Annual General Meeting on Monday 6th December, elections were held to fill the positions of Group Co-ordinators and Officers for 2011.

The results were as follows:

Group Co-ordinators

Colette Humphrey, Cat Thomson and Alex Lee

Treasurer

Dave Coleman

Newsletter Editor

Damian Cross

We will let you know as soon as we have a new Membership Officer in place, as Jonathan Berens (who was elected) is no longer with the group.

Contact details for the Group Co-ordinators are:

alex@manchesterfoe.org.uk

cat@manchesterfoe.org.uk and

colette@manchesterfoe.org.uk

Many thanks to all the contributors to the April 2011 issue. Please email me if you have any contributions or ideas for future articles (newsletter@manchesterfoe.org.uk).

Thanks a lot! *Damian*

Manchester FoE is an award-winning campaign group working on issues relating to the environment and social justice. We campaign on issues with a local connection and also lobby for policy changes at local, regional, national and international levels. We work on a diverse range of issues including climate change, corporate responsibility, real food, trade justice, sustainable transport and aviation, and waste and recycling.

For more information about Manchester FoE and our campaigns, see www.manchesterfoe.org.uk