

Winter 2012

Green Is Working, Say MPs

Friends of the Earth's campaign gets cross-party support in Manchester, reports Damian



Some of you may remember the famous Saatchi and Saatchi election poster designed for the Conservatives back in 1979, showing a long, snaking dole queue with the caption *Labour Isn't Working*. Looking back on it, this campaign may seem controversial, but one thing we can be sure about in 2012 is that we already have one million people employed in green jobs in the UK.

The source for this figure is no less than the Confederation of British Industry, which has published a graphic showing that this is equal to the combined populations of Edinburgh, Liverpool and Brighton. It also states that “‘green or growth’ is a false choice’ and green business is ‘mainstreamed across our economy, in all regions and in all sectors’.

Backed up by these figures, and in the face of continued uncertainty as to whether the Government is serious in supporting green business, Friends of the Earth have staged a series of actions updating the 1979 slogan. Under a banner reading *Green Is Working*, and wearing green hard hats to represent low-carbon jobs, over 250 people took part in a protest at the Treasury asking the Government to take the green economy seriously.

Manchester FoE invited local MPs to take part in a photo call to back this campaign, and we are pleased to have the support of Wythenshawe and Sale East MP Paul Goggins (*pictured*, on the Clean British Energy Day of Action in October) and Manchester Withington MP John Leech.



Wythenshawe and Sale East MP Paul Goggins (left) supports Friends of the Earth's campaign Green Is Working

You can help us ensure the Government backs a greener economy. The Energy Bill is due to be published in November, and we need to make sure it contains a commitment to carbon-free electricity generation by 2030 so the UK can meet its targets under the Climate Change Act.

Ask your MP to get the Energy Secretary, Ed Davey, to commit to carbon-free electricity by 2030. See <http://tinyurl.com/decarbonisation>.

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Where does the money come from to run the group?

The group consists entirely of volunteers, and our campaigns are funded entirely by membership fees, individual donations and grants. Many people expect that we are funded by Friends of the Earth nationally, but this is not the case. All Friends of the Earth local groups are self-financing and thus an amount of our time is spent fundraising to pay our campaign overheads. If you'd like to become a member, please fill in the membership form which is available on our website or at our meetings.

Current Officers

Co-ordinators

Cat 07956 577206 cat@manchesterfoe.org.uk
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Pete 07951 642858 pete@manchesterfoe.org.uk

Treasurer

Rhian 07980 986382 rhian@manchesterfoe.org.uk

Membership Officer

Ali 07786 090520 ali@manchesterfoe.org.uk

Newsletter Officer

Damian 07821 683603 damian@manchesterfoe.org.uk

2. What issues does the group campaign on?

Manchester Friends of the Earth campaigns on a wide range of issues and most members have areas of special interest on which they tend to focus. See the articles in this newsletter for more details about our current campaigns.

3. How does the group campaign?

We use a range of different methods to get our views across, including:

- Organising public meetings and events;
- Working directly with community groups directly affected by environmental problems;

- Writing press releases to publicise our views and events and get environmental issues and debate into the local media;
- Appearing on local radio and TV discussing the environment in relation to current affairs;
- Responding directly to local, regional and national government consultations;
- Leafleting the public and collecting signatures as part of national campaigns;
- Attending and contributing to many events about sustainability and local issues.

4. What do I do next?

Keep informed You can sign up to our email lists by emailing office@manchesterfoe.org.uk. For more about our campaigns and details of group activities and meetings, see our website at www.manchesterfoe.org.uk. We are on Facebook at www.facebook.com/manchesterfoe and Twitter at www.twitter.com/mcrfoe.

Come to meetings and get involved

We don't expect everyone to speak up as soon as they arrive, but the more involved you can get in discussing the issues and active campaigning, the sooner you will start to make a difference.

Ask questions, seek out other people in the group with similar environmental interests, and speak to the lead campaigners of the campaigns that interest you. A great way to start is to help out at one of our stalls for an hour or two.

Become a member

We wouldn't be able to campaign without the financial support of our members and the more members we have, the stronger our voice is when it comes to influencing politicians to back our campaigns.

Membership costs just £1.50 per month (or even less if you're low-waged or unwaged) and if you join today by standing order, you can choose from a battery charger or a copy of the book *How Bad Are Bananas?* by Mike Berners-Lee as a welcome gift. Just fill in the membership form on our website or at our meetings.

Get Active, Get Creative, Get Involved

Find out about what you can do with the group and what campaigns we plan to run next year



Our November Full Group Meeting on Tuesday 13th will provide people with an opportunity to find out more about the group, what you can get from joining in and what campaigns we hope to run next year.

Join us for a glass of wine (or something non-alcoholic) and nibbles from 6.30pm onwards, giving you ample opportunity to chat to our campaigners in a relaxed environment.

Activities that you can get involved in from 7pm onwards:

- Talk to some of our key campaigners about getting involved and how you can learn new skills or develop existing skills through volunteering.
- Have your say on planning and prioritising our campaigns for 2013.
- Put your creative skills to use by helping make a bee costume and banners for future events.
- Find out more about some of the key roles within the group that we are looking to fill for next year.
- Suggest other groups that we can work in partnership with, in addition to running our key campaigns.
- Find out about national Friends of the Earth and Manchester Friends of the Earth—how we work, how we are funded, how we run the local group, what awards we have won.
- See a stall in action—we regularly run stalls at local community events and always want volunteers to come and help out. If you're not sure what this entails come along to see a mock-up of a stall in action.
- See some photos and press cuttings about the group from the last year.
- Have a look around our website, find out what the wiki is and how you can use it,

see our Flickr site for hundreds of photos of our group events and actions and take online actions on environmental issues.

This is a perfect meeting for those who are new to the group and for those who want to get more involved and would like to know how!

When Drinks and nibbles from 6.30pm, event 7–9pm, Tuesday 13 November

Where Green Fish Resource Centre, 46–50 Oldham Street, Manchester M4 1LE

Each December at our AGM, our members elect two or more group co-ordinators, who share responsibility for co-ordinating the group and acting as liaison with national Friends of the Earth, and a number of group officers, who take responsibility for the other work required to keep a campaigning group like this running. We also have lead campaigners who co-ordinate the work on a particular campaign. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in 2013, including:

Treasurer

The group is looking for someone to act as group bookkeeper and help produce our monthly accounts.

You need to be:

- Organised and methodical;
- Experienced to at least a basic level in using double-entry bookkeeping software to prepare accounts;
- IT literate and comfortable using web-based applications and general office software such as Excel, Word and equivalents; and
- Ideally you are already familiar with QuickBooks Accounts, and use this or a similar product as part of your work or interests.

You would need to spend a day or a couple of evenings each month, and you would be working with, and supported by, the group's experienced officers. In return you'll get the chance to hone your business and finance skills and add to your experience for CV or personal development, but a great campaign group also needs support and this role offers a chance to make a really important contribution.

Membership Officer

The group is currently looking for a new membership officer for 2013. The role involves:

- Looking after new members;
- Thinking of ways to attract and retain members;
- Keeping a database of who has paid their membership fees;
- Putting together membership packs for our regular meetings; and
- General correspondence with members (e.g. sending out newsletters)

Publicity Officer

Promotion of Manchester Friends of the Earth is important in raising the profile of the group and in attracting new members and campaigners. We are currently looking for volunteers to help increase publicity about the group. Activities could include:

- Developing new content for our group website;
- Updating our Facebook and Twitter feeds with relevant news;
- Producing posters and resources for us to use at meetings, events, stalls, etc.;
- Producing short films for uploading to our YouTube account; and
- Finding speaking opportunities for our campaigners to attend local events on environmental issues

Events Manager

Manchester Friends of the Earth likes to attend lots of events to talk to people about our campaigns and sometimes to socialise and raise

money. The role of an events manager is to oversee this process: finding events to attend, booking and liaising with venues, and communicating effectively with lead campaigners so that events run as smoothly as possible.

The role, like most volunteer jobs, is really as big as you want to make it, and could include the organising of big fundraising events, concerts or music gigs! Or it could involve co-ordinating communication of the event afterwards, with pictures and stories on our website or in our newsletter. The group has a list of events we attend each year and established procedures to help anyone new to the group with this role.

Other ways to get involved include supporting our volunteers, media work, fundraising; and leading campaigns.

If you're interested in any of the above please come along on Tuesday 13 November to find out more, or contact the co-ordinators by email at mcrfoe.coords@list.manchesterfoe.org.uk.

Let's Send Fracking Packing

Manchester FoE joined local campaigners to say no to fracking at the Labour conference

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On Sunday 30 September, Manchester FoE took part in a protest action together with the local community groups, Ribble Estuary against Fracking and Residents Action on Fylde Fracking, to tell delegates to the 2012 Labour conference that Lancashire wants nothing to do with dirty shale gas extraction. We won the support of several delegates including Arlene McCarthy MEP (*pictured, centre*).



Grey Skies Cut Grade-outs at Supermarkets

The wet summer gives an unexpected boost to 'taste before beauty', says Cat

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The wettest June on record and hailstorms in August may have resulted in UK farmers suffering one of the worst harvests in recent years, but one bit of a silver lining has been a reversal in policy by many of the big supermarkets to stock 'ugly' fruit and vegetables. A success for our food campaign, 'taste before beauty'!

It is estimated that 25% of the fresh UK harvest, particularly apples, pears and many root vegetables, has been affected by the bad weather, resulting in retailers struggling to source their regular supply of blemish-free crops and taking the unprecedented step of relaxing their standards.

Initially many supermarkets were planning to source better-looking foodstuffs from overseas, but lobbying from the National Farmers' Union (and ourselves!) have resulted in misshapen fruit and vegetables hitting our shelves.

All the main supermarkets including Waitrose, the Co-op, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Morrisons and Asda agreed to give wonky vegetables a go.

However, that doesn't mean that grade-outs are a thing of the past. There is a real risk that this change of heart is temporary and, with an improvement in next year's growing conditions, supermarkets will revert to their old beauty pageant ways.

So over the next few months the food team at Manchester Friends of the Earth, with its 'taste before beauty' campaign, will be increasing pressure on supermarkets to keep up the good work and keep those blemished apples and undersized parsnips in their stores. The campaign will also focus on educating the public on the importance of buying these ugly crops so that retailers will be more likely to change their supply policy in the long term.

Research shows that it is more sustainable to support local independent retailers and local producers. They tend to have a grade-out rate of 5–10% compared to the supermarkets' 30–50%.

However, the reality is that most food purchased in the UK is sold by a few large companies, so it's important to send a clear message to them.



Ways you can support this campaign

- Shop at local independent grocers where less stringent grading processes will have been used. Ask them what their view is about food that has been graded out and whether they can stock food from local growers that might otherwise be wasted.
- Sign up to a box scheme which supports local growers. The amount of food wasted by small-scale producers working with box schemes is far lower than with highly packaged food in supermarkets. Contact the box scheme and ask them about what producers they work with do with less perfect food. Let them know you'd be happy to have it in your box.
- Buy fresh fruit and vegetables at your local farmers' market. Direct sales to customers do not require producers to grade out produce. Talk to the producer at the market, ask them about their less perfect food and let them know you'd buy it.
- Keep in touch with Manchester Friends of the Earth. We will be developing this campaign over the coming months and welcome involvement from anyone interested in this work!

Friends of the Earth's new resources campaign

Individuals can sign up to the campaign and, use the materials provided to write to

Recipe—Chocolate and Orange (Vegan) Cheesecake

Adapted from a recipe from the Vegan Society

To assemble Place the topping over the base and smooth the top. Cook for 30–40 minutes at 175°C. Remove from the oven, allow to cool and then chill in the fridge for several hours or overnight. Add a topping of your choice—perhaps grated orange rind or chocolate! Enjoy with a little oat cream.

Coming Up



Tuesday 20 November

In Place of Growth: Practical Steps towards a Greener, Fairer and Prosperous Manchester. Steady State Manchester event at the Mechanics' Institute, Princess Street, 7–9.30pm. Free entry. You are invited to the launch of *In Place of Growth*, which deals with prosperity, justice and climate change in a post-growth economy.

Saturday 24 November

Climate Change and Energy Network Event, Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street, 2–5pm. An event for local groups who are working on climate change and energy issues and would like some support. The afternoon will include a session with John Leech MP to improve your lobbying skills, and sessions on the Green Economy and forthcoming Energy Bill. Spaces are limited—let us know you're coming by emailing callie@stopclimatechaos.org.

Regular Events



Full Group Meeting Second Tuesday of the month—next meeting 13 November at Green Fish Resource Centre, 46–50 Oldham Street, 6.30 for 7pm. The perfect way for you to come along and find out more about the group! Learn what you can get from joining in and what campaigns we expect to run next year.

Campaigns Meetings focus on our main campaign areas Climate Change, Transport and Food. See <http://manchesterfoe.org.uk/calendar/>. These are held at Green Fish Resource Centre, 46–50 Oldham Street—usually at 6.45 for 7pm, but times may vary. All welcome.

Last Friday of the month (except December)

Bike Friday. Group rides from locations in Greater Manchester to work, college or university—starting at Worsley (Worsley Road/Chatsworth Road), Blackley (Rochdale Road/Victoria Avenue East), Stretford Mall, Chorlton Library, Withington Library, Levenshulme Station and Prestwich (Bury New Road/Scholes Lane). www.bikefriday.org

Annual General Meeting 2012

Make a date in your diary now!

Keep **Tuesday 4 December** free!

You are invited to join us at Manchester Friends of the Earth's Annual General Meeting, where we will be reviewing the highlights of the year, electing the Group Officers for 2013 and then celebrating in style with a vegetarian/vegan meal plus drinks.

The venue this year will be the **Angel** pub, which is at 6 Angel Street M4 4BQ on the edge of the Northern Quarter, between Rochdale Road and the new Co-op building.

The AGM part of the proceedings will get under way at 6.30pm, followed by the meal at 7.15pm. As soon as we have the menu and booking deadline, we will inform you by putting them on the MFoE website at www.manchesterfoe.org.uk so you can let us know your choices for the meal.

If you would like to stand for one of the Group Officer roles, please let the co-ordinators know before Sunday 18 November. Please note that, in order to stand, you must have been a paid-up member of the group for at least one month before the AGM. For more information about what the Group Officer roles involve, see pages 4 and 5 inside.

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

Manchester FoE is backing the City's climate change action plan **Manchester: A Certain Future** <http://www.manchesterclimate.com>