

Act!on

Our Own Bee Tea (and) Tower

*Cat helps MFOE build up nectar points for
Manchester's bees*

Autumn 2013

Not satisfied with a single-day event talking to the public about the Bee Cause, or planting out a large wildflower meadow at Parrs Wood, Manchester Friends of the Earth took on the challenge of a nine-day urban garden event in central Manchester, Dig The City. And so, starting at 7am on Friday 2 August, with five bags of compost, Manchester FoE volunteers worked like (well, busy bees...) to create a lovely bee-friendly garden, which started to attract bees within minutes of being completed.

Located on New Cathedral Street in the centre of Manchester's shopping district, the centrepiece of the garden was described by passing Twitterati as "the mother of all Bee Hotels". Nicknamed the BEEtham Tower, this was completely made from reclaimed/recycled materials. Manchester FoE wanted to use the opportunity to talk to the public about the Bee Cause and organised a series of events and activities to do just that. As it was the school holidays, we wanted to have plenty for kids to do over the nine days. As well as a bee-themed quiz, we also made seed bombs and beeswax candles. Ceramics artist Jade Alana Ashton joined us to run a bee craft session, making bees and flowers from Plasticine.

Wanting to make sure adults also went away with a buzz, we offered a bee-friendly planting guide, which was very popular, and provided free fruit and veg—bee-pollinated of course—donated by FareShare North West. And of course, a Manchester FoE event would not be complete without the postcard action! At the end of our nine-day marathon we had ensured that 1,300 people had written to David Cameron to let him know that a robust Bee Action Plan is essential.



Anna explaining the Bee Cause to one of 1,300 people who signed our letter to the PM during the week

Having entertained adults and children, we moved on to local MPs and councillors with an afternoon Bee Tea—complete with bee-decorated cupcakes. National FoE campaigners Helen Rimmer and Rachel Hubbard joined us to talk to attendees about the campaign asks. See <http://tinyurl.com/thebeecause> for details.

The success of the event was only made possible through lots of people donating both time and props, big and small, and working together to make it happen. Thank you to everyone! A total of 1300 postcards signed, thousands of people inspired and hopefully a contribution to saving millions of UK bees!

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Cycling spokesperson Graeme reports on funding for a massive new cycle network

Manchester Friends of the Earth's Love Your Bike campaign welcomed the Government announcement this August that Manchester will be one of eight English cities sharing a £77 million investment to increase cycling levels by improving cycling infrastructure.

Greater Manchester will receive £20 million and the Combined Authority will be contributing £11.1 million over the next two years. The funding will kick-start Velocity 2025, which will create a city-wide cycle network consisting of 'spokes' leading out from the city centre to the M60 and offering opportunities to connect with public transport services. The funding promises to deliver 56 km/35 miles of new or improved cycle paths, and the proposals also include the creation of 20 mph zones in some residential areas. The Velocity 2025 ambition is to achieve a doubling in the number of cycle journeys within five years and to double them again by 2025.

Manchester FoE's Love Your Bike campaign launched their cycling manifesto 'Getting Moving' last year. With over 30 local businesses and organisations signed up to the ambitious target of 20% of Greater Manchester journeys under 8 km/5 miles by bike by 2020, they continue to campaign for stronger support for cycling in the area. We hope that the cycle ambition grant will bring a step change in the area's commitment to creating a cycling city.

It also looks very likely that the new plans for Oxford Road will see 'Dutch-style' cycle lanes created from Whitworth Park to the Cornerhouse. One of the Velocity 2025 schemes could see these cycle lanes (separated from traffic) extended to Parrs Wood in Didsbury.

Sign up to the Love Your Bike email digest to get the latest news. You can do this by emailing gmloveyourbike@gmail.com. For more information and to get involved with Manchester FoE's transport campaign, please see www.loveyourbike.org or get in contact with Graeme (graeme@manchesterfoe.org.uk).

Philippa reports on the Community Energy Day organised by the Co-operative Group

On 31 August, a diverse group of individuals united with a common purpose—to learn more about the UK's potential for community energy through the examples of two co-operatively owned hydropower plants: Stockport Hydro and Torrs Hydro. Sponsored by the Co-operative Group, this event aimed at informing about the extraordinary possibilities harboured by community-owned energy, a recent and much-discussed addition to the UK's projected future energy mix.

As well as being able to see the turbines in action, the trials and tribulations of establishing a hydropower plant were detailed, giving an insight into some of the frustrations that such fledgling projects can face, but also paying testament to the power of goodwill and determination to break down bureaucratic barriers. Several individuals also expressed an interest in investing money in the schemes.

On returning to Stockport Town Hall, the group enjoyed a talk from Colin Baines, Campaigns Manager at the Co-operative Group, a fierce advocate of community-run energy schemes. At a time when the Group is facing substantial criticism over its capital hole, a reminder of its fundamental values was very welcome. We left the event buzzing with ideas and inspiration. Thank you to all those who came together to make it a success!

For further information please see <http://www.stockport-hydro.co.uk/> and <http://www.torrshydro.org/>

750 kg of food gets divided by 4,800 people
with nothing left over

If we include the spinoff event in Wythenshawe, organised by the Dandelion Community and Real Food Wythenshawe, we estimate that over 4,800 people got a free curry made from leftover veg donated by various local food suppliers. Amazingly, the food all went within two hours. After rain early on, the sun came out just as the event was getting under way and shone all day.



We would like to thank all the volunteers who gave up their time to chop veg, cook, steward, print flyers, look after bins—and dress up in a variety of animal costumes to attract people’s attention!

Damian joins the Glean Revolution in the lettuce fields of west Lancashire

For several years farms in the US have allowed volunteers onto their land to glean leftover crops, and this trend has just taken off in the UK. On 25 June I went along with the Gleaning Network, an initiative set up by Feeding the 5000, to take part in the first gleaning action in the North West. Martin (*see picture, below left*) took us to the village of Tarleton, between Preston and Southport, to glean iceberg lettuces which would not otherwise have been harvested.

This event took place in partnership with large-scale commercial growers Huntapac, who started off by showing us their root vegetable packing shed, before driving us out to their lettuce field half a mile away. Once we had been shown how to use the (seriously sharp!) harvesting knives to cut through the lettuce roots safely, as well as how to spot diseased and rotten lettuces, we were left to fill crates up ready for the van to take back to FareShare in Manchester.

Thanks to a large turnout and the sunny (but not too hot) weather, we managed to glean enough lettuces (one and a half tonnes) to fill FareShare's van twice over! Many thanks go to Corin and Adele for making an extra round trip to FareShare with the lettuces. For more about the Gleaning Network, see <http://feeding5k.org/gleaning.php>

Basecamp Fires Up Enthusiasm

A new, greener location for FoE's Local Groups' Conference, reports Cat

Each year Friends of the Earth hold a Local Groups' Conference—usually workshops and mediocre tea in dingy lecture halls, but thankfully this year was different!

Basecamp was held in the lovely village of Hartington, in the Derbyshire countryside, in July. With the sun shining all weekend, and many of the events held outdoors in beautiful surroundings, it was more festival than conference.

Ten of us from Manchester joined 300 other local group members, staff and Board members, as well as other community activists, to learn from each other across three days of interactive workshops, debates and activities.

Highlights from the weekend included:

- Participating in an active discussion on the question: "What are the questions, if answered, that would enable us to rise to the challenges we face?" and listening to the 50 or so responses that came back.
- Watching Craig Bennett, Director of Policy and Campaigns, juggle 20 toilet rolls into column graphs as he tried to express where the UK population sits on climate change issues.
- Shifting my view of the UK countryside after listening to George Monbiot's rewilding manifesto. I will never view sheep in the same way again!
- Cheering our group at the Earthmover Awards, where we had been nominated for our Feeding the 5000 event.

The weekend was also an opportunity to find out what other local groups are up to. We have since 'borrowed' Havering Friends of the Earth's bee-friendly planting leaflet idea for our own event in Manchester. There was also a chance to hear about the upcoming campaign plans from Friends of the Earth's staff—low carbon cook-offs, fracking—and more bee and wildlife campaigns!



The final action at Basecamp: Solidarity with the people of the Paraguayan community of Luz Bella against large-scale soya producers.

Overall the weekend was an opportunity to relax, learn and be inspired in equal measures. I would recommend that if you have the chance to get along next year, make sure you do! And the tea wasn't bad either!



Special guest George Monbiot (centre) taking an open-air question and answer session at Basecamp

*Next year Friends of the Earth's Local Group Conference will follow the same format—a weekend in the Peak District countryside, this time in Castleton. Make a date for **13–15 June 2014** and hope to see you there!*

If you are not already a member of Manchester Friends of the Earth and this has inspired you to join up, you can do this by completing the membership form on the page opposite and posting it to our office at the Green Fish Resource Centre. Membership entitles you to a range of discounts at local shops and free gifts (while stocks last).

Membership Application Form

To join Manchester Friends of the Earth, please complete this form (in CAPITALS) and post it to:

Manchester FOE, Green Fish Resource Centre, 46-50 Oldham St, Manchester M4 1LE

As a member you will not only get our quarterly newsletter and a free subscription to national Friends of the Earth's online magazine, "Earthed" but also, if you wish, a membership card offering discounts at selected local businesses. The latest deals are listed on our website (www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/discounts) and will be included with your card.

SPECIAL OFFER: Join by standing order today and receive a FREE* battery charger or a limited edition "Love Your Bike" fluorescent vest

* While stocks last. Offer subject to paying at least £2 per month by standing order. For vest sizes, see <http://bit.ly/vestsizes>

Most of our members kindly pay by monthly standing order, which saves us time and money and helps with budgeting. If you are taking out a standing order, please complete the standing order section below (in CAPITALS) and remember to sign and date it before returning the form to us (do not send it to your bank). **Thank you for your support!**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone/Mobile: _____

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Where did you find out about us? ☐ website ☐ national FOE ☐ stall ☐ newsletter ☐ friend/family ☐ other

☐ Tick here if you would like to receive our weekly email digest of the latest news, online actions & local events

☐ Tick here if you would prefer to receive the Manchester FOE newsletter by post rather than by email

☐ Tick here if you'd like us to send you a membership card offering discounts at selected local businesses

☐ Tick here if you'd like a free battery charger ☐ Tick here if you'd like a free Love Your Bike vest (size: _____)

Your details will be stored in a database and used to send you information about Manchester Friends of the Earth. We will not pass your information on to other organisations. If you do not wish us to keep your details in our database, please tick here ☐

Membership Type (tick one):	Monthly membership rates (tick one):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Active: I hope to get involved with the group's activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Unwaged:	£0.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Armchair: I'm happy just to support the group financially	<input type="checkbox"/> Low waged:	£1.00
Method of Payment (tick one):	<input type="checkbox"/> Waged:	£2.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Standing order: I have completed & signed the standing order section below.	<input type="checkbox"/> Household:	£3.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque (made payable to Manchester Friends of the Earth):		
I enclose my membership fee of £_____ (plus a donation of £_____)		

Complete this section for standing orders (please use CAPITALS):

Name on account: _____

Account number: _____ Sort code: _____

Bank name & _____

branch address: _____

Instructions to the bank

Please pay the sum of £_____ each MONTH on the _____ day of each month starting on (enter date at least two months from today) _____ / _____ / _____ until further notice to:

'Manchester Friends of the Earth', account no. 65164538, sort code 08-92-99, bank address:

The Co-operative Bank Plc, PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Banana Bread

If you have bananas that have gone soft and are almost black, this will use them up!



With bananas often ending up in our bins at the end of the week, this recipe (adapted from the BBC's website) will help reduce food waste by making something delicious out of over-ripe bananas—the ones that have gone soft and have almost turned black. If you have too many bananas, freezing will preserve them.

Ingredients

- 285 g/10 oz plain flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 110 g/4 oz margarine, plus extra for greasing
- 225 g/8 oz sugar
- 4 ripe bananas, mashed
- 100 ml/3 fl oz soya (or dairy) milk mixed with 1½ tsp lemon juice or vinegar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp cinnamon



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Method

- Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
- Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and salt into a large mixing bowl.
- In a separate bowl, cream the margarine and sugar together until light and fluffy.
- Add the mashed bananas, soya milk, vanilla extract and cinnamon to the margarine/sugar mixture and mix well. Fold in the flour mixture.
- Grease a 20 cm x 12.5 cm/8 in x 5 in loaf tin and pour the cake mixture into the tin.
- Transfer to the oven and bake for an hour, or until well-risen and golden brown.
- Remove from the oven and cool in the tin for a few minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely before serving.

As well as addressing the problem of food waste, Manchester FoE's food campaigners are working on their 'taste before beauty' campaign. Also, we have started a series of food socials (see back page), usually on the first Wednesday of the month. For more details, see www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/campaign/food.

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Coming Up



Saturday 5 October

'Reclaim Power'—Friends of the Earth North-West Energy Gathering. Day of networking and planning on energy issues for FoE local groups and community campaigners, focusing on local clean energy and opposing fracking. St Wilfrid's Church Hall, Chapel Street, Preston PR1 3JJ, 10.30am–4.30pm.

Saturday 12 October

Black Fish Speaking Tour. Learn about the threats facing the world's oceans, with a Manchester FoE stall. Friends Meeting House, Manchester, from 2pm. See

www.theblackfish.org

Saturday 19 October

Global Frackdown. National anti-fracking day of action. Ask the leader of your council not to allow fracking in your area. For latest details check <http://manchesterfoe.org.uk/calendar/>

Regular Events



Our **Full Group Meeting** is on the second Tuesday of the month at 6.45 for 7pm at Green Fish Resource Centre, 46–50 Oldham Street. This is the perfect occasion to come and find out more about the group. The next two full group meetings are scheduled for 8 October and 12 November.

For details of our **Campaigns Meetings**, see <http://manchesterfoe.org.uk/calendar/>. These are also held at Green Fish Resource Centre, 46–50 Oldham Street—usually at 6.45 for 7pm, but times may vary. All welcome. There is one meeting every month for each of our campaigns: Climate Change and Fracking, Bee Cause, Transport and Food.

Bike Friday is on the last Friday of the month (not December). Rides from various locations in Greater Manchester to work, college or university. Starting points are Worsley/Monton, Blackley/Middleton (Rochdale Road/Victoria Avenue East), Sale Waterside (**new**), Chorlton Library, Withington Library, Levenshulme Station, Prestwich (Bury New Road/Scholes Lane) and Stockport (Mersey Square). www.bikefriday.org

Manchester FoE Monthly Food Socials

Manchester Friends of the Earth have decided we need to have a little more fun (and a little more food) in our lives. In order to accommodate both of these, we've started holding food socials (*see picture*). These are generally held on the first Wednesday of each month. The idea is to learn about sustainable food, eat, drink and be merry!



The socials include activities like bring-and-share dinners and picnics, trips to farms and orchards, and talks and discussions about sustainable food issues, including local, organic, seasonal, vegan, waste, packaging and food miles. At the heart of it all is a desire to meet new people, share food and recipes, and have a jolly good time.

If you have any great ideas for future food socials, please get in touch with Corin at corin@manchesterfoe.org.uk

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>