

Global Frackdown—Local Action

*Manchester FoE ask the people of Salford to say
the F(racking) Word is a dirty word*

Winter 2013

As part of the international campaign against shale gas, coal bed methane and other forms of unconventional fossil fuel extraction, Friends of the Earth joined in the Global Frackdown on Saturday 19 October. At Manchester FoE, we played our part by holding a stall in Eccles market, where we got well over 100 postcards signed, as well as posing for photos outside the old Town Hall (see picture). We also appeared in the local community newspaper Salford Star (see <http://www.salfordstar.com/article.asp?id=1998>).



Manchester FoE's Renate and Damian say we don't want fracking to go ahead in Salford

Why did we decide on Eccles for our stall? As you may be aware, the oil and gas company IGas has long had planning permission to start exploratory drilling for coal bed methane on Barton Moss, on a site next to the M62, to the north of Barton Aerodrome (City Airport). IGas is aiming to test the coal seams below the moss for their methane potential and will also drill below the coal measures to a depth of 10,000 feet, where shale deposits are located.

In response to IGas starting work on the site, a local campaigning group has been set up to fight this project. We met some members of this group at the Eccles stall. You can find out more about them on Facebook where they have formed a group called Say No to Fracking on Barton Moss (search for this on Facebook using the Search window). This group has amassed a depth of knowledge about the streams on Chat Moss, in danger of contamination in the event of fracking fluids escaping, the local birdlife and the history of the Lancashire coalfield, where mining caused the ground to subside, forming new lakes. Learn more at <http://frackfreegtrmanchester.org.uk/>.

You can join in the fight against unconventional fossil fuels yourself. Here are some ideas:

- Try checking your local council's website (planning section) to see if there are any applications involving terms such as 'shale', 'methane' or 'exploration'.
- Write to your local paper saying you've heard about the IGas project and you would like your council to come out against fracking.
- Talk to your local ward councillors or draw up a petition to your local authority. We would be happy to help you with this.

In case you need more background knowledge, there are FoE briefings at www.foe.co.uk/fracking (see 'More fracking resources' under Resources).

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Cat explains the group's position on this controversial transport project



On the one hand, we might be expected to support public investment of over £42.6 billion on a high-speed north–south rail line linking London with the north of England. After all, it's a public transport project encouraging a move from plane and car to train, but there are many concerns that need to be addressed before the project is welcomed with open arms.

- Provide future rail capacity
- Encourage economic growth and job creation
- Rebalance the country's economic geography by tackling the north–south divide
- Contribute to Britain's low-carbon future

Our views were consolidated by the knowledge that over the last year more and more organisations, including the TaxPayers' Alliance, the Institute of Directors and the Public Accounts Committee, have added their voices to doubts about the economic, social and environmental credentials of HS2.

When making spending decisions on transport, FoE believe we must focus on those projects with the lowest carbon emissions, as well as those that deliver the most equitable outcome across the UK. HS2 will have huge environmental implications in construction and running and would not offer the low-carbon transport the UK needs to achieve the necessary carbon cuts. It is also believed that the taxpayer-funded project would benefit wealthy businesspeople, rather than improving travel for everyone.

Investment should encourage greater use of low-carbon alternatives, including upgrading existing railways and other modes of public transport and encouraging cycling, walking and car sharing. Measures should also reduce the carbon emissions of the UK car fleet and encourage viable alternatives to travel including superfast broadband and videoconferencing.

Despite a broad church of voices expressing their grave concern over the Government's flagship infrastructure project, those in power seem determined to push it through. This week cross-party support was granted for the project to be worked up over the coming months, signalling that we are edging closer to the biggest transport white elephant in recent UK history getting the green light.

Lobbying Bill Public Meeting

Manchester FoE takes part in a meeting in Chorlton to help the public find out more about this controversial new legislation

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There has been a lot of concern expressed by voluntary organisations about a bill passing through Parliament at the moment. Technically known as the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill, the bill is more commonly called the Lobbying Bill or Gaggling Bill. This bill would affect the amount of money that an organisation would be able to spend on political campaigning in the year before an election.

This bill was brought before Parliament without the proper consultation required for a measure that would affect a great number of charities and NGOs. To remedy this, Manchester FoE, together with campaigning organisation 38 Degrees, organised a public meeting at Chorlton Central Church to allow people to question local MP John Leech, as well as Ian Palmer of 38 Degrees and Beth Plant of the Manchester Alliance for Community Care.

Beth was concerned about the ambiguous wording of the bill—she was unsure if voluntary work would be counted—and that it would add an extra burden to already increasingly stretched organisations.

Ian said the Electoral Commission had first been notified of the bill the evening before it was published, and Graham Allen MP had said the bill was ‘an object lesson in how not to produce legislation’. He also mentioned it adding to admin costs for small organisations, and it would be hard to decide when a campaigner was doing political work and when not.

John said the concern about the bill arose out of misunderstandings on both sides—the Government and those organisations objecting. He pointed out that some provisions of the bill weren’t new, but had already been brought in by the previous Labour government in 2000. Also, he claimed there was a danger of one organisation spending huge sums of money in a

single constituency, with the aim of unseating the MP. In answer to the objections put by charities, John said their campaigning would be non-political anyway (in line with charity law) and the bill would only cover ‘expenditure that could reasonably be regarded as intended to procure or promote the electoral success of a party or candidate’.



*John Leech responding to the audience's questions—
Beth Plant on right of panel, Ian Palmer second right*

According to John, press releases and ad hoc replies to the media would not be covered; press conferences would. Annual conferences of organisations would not; market research, canvassing and public meetings would. Some FoE literature would fall within the scope of the bill. He also said that if a political party uses an NGO’s leaflet for its own purposes (presumably without the NGO’s consent or connivance) this would not count as electoral campaigning. John disagreed with the interpretation of Oxfam’s lawyers and a range of legal experts consulted by 38 Degrees.

In our opinion, the wording of the bill leaves a lot open for debate as regards what precisely it would cover. Our campaigners Pete and Ali said the bill as it stands has ambiguities and should be paused to allow for a proper consultation to take place.

Manchester FoE would like to thank 38 Degrees for helping to organise this event, our hosts Chorlton Central Church, John Leech MP and not least Enid Pinch of the Society of Friends for chairing the meeting and ensuring an often lively crowd kept to the issues being discussed.

Interview—Little Green Press

Cat interviews local ethical designer and printmaker Claire about her business



Who are you, where are you based and what are you making?

I'm Claire, an ethical designer/printmaker based in Manchester. At the moment I'm focusing on illustration, which I then print onto bags and cushion covers.

Why have you chosen to call your business 'Little Green Press'?

The business is little in the sense that I'm a one-woman band, green because I use organic cotton, as well as eco-friendly ink and materials. And the press comes from the printing part, and a bit of artistic licence.

What influences your designs and what influences your method of production?

My work is influenced by things like organic shapes, children's books, intricate patterns, furniture and anything with a bit of personality really. I find that looking back over old sketchbooks is really good for inspiration.

I try to live sustainably, and so there was no question as to how I would go about producing my work. I did a lot of research online prior to starting out and was inspired to find so many successful designers and printmakers producing beautiful work using environmentally friendly methods.

Why should people purchase your items rather than cheaper, more mass-produced products?

One of the reasons this is so important is the poor working conditions that many people (including children) in developing countries have to endure while making the clothes we wear. The Savar factory building collapse in Bangladesh, where 1,129 people died and over 2,000 were injured due to unsafe working conditions, was a wake-up call for many who were unaware of where their clothes came from.

Furthermore, the practices used by the non-organic textile industry cause huge environmental damage. Because I use fair-trade organic materials, my products are also better for the planet.

Where can people find your products?

At the moment I am selling at www.etsy.com/shop/thelittlegreenpress, and I hope to have my website up and running in the New Year. I am also planning to sell my products at upcoming markets and events around Manchester. Come and have a look!

Stop Your Pension Funding Fossil Fuels

Why you should ask that your pension fund takes the climate into consideration



Most of us are aware now of two basic facts relating to climate change: the need for the world to make rapid cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and the failure (so far) of governments to take effective action to bring this about.

However, there is another line of approach to the problem—cutting off the funding of fossil fuel companies. Large-scale investors, such as pension funds, have huge sums of money tied up in these polluting and climate-unfriendly industries. We need to exert pressure on them to recognise what impacts their investments are having on climate change and resource scarcity.

On Tuesday 29 October, the Green Light Campaign was launched to encourage pension funds to make investment decisions and engage in dialogue with companies from a standpoint of climate awareness. For more information, see <http://www.shareaction.org/greenlightcampaign>.

The campaign is supported by a range of groups, including FoE, and aims to empower pension fund members to look into their funds' policies and press for change. It will be running regular training sessions and online actions to enable fund members to put pressure on their pension providers. You can see the latest online action at www.greenlightcampaign.org.uk.

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: _____

Email: _____

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: _____

Celery, Apple and Cashew Soup

A recipe with seasonal ingredients Cat recommends, courtesy of the Guardian



Celery and apples are both in season at the moment and partner each other very well.

Cashews, with their high protein content, make this soup a nutritionally balanced meal.

Ingredients

- 3 tbsp oil
- 3 medium-sized onions or leeks, roughly chopped
- 4 large celery sticks, sliced
- 6 medium-sized eating apples, peeled, cored and roughly chopped
- 3 large cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1¼ tsp dried thyme or 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 small celeriac (about 220 g), peeled and chopped into 2 cm cubes
- 2 litres vegetable stock
- 120 g cashew nuts, soaked for 2 hours, then drained and rinsed
- 3 large handfuls of parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper

Method

- Place the oil in a pan on medium heat, add onions/leeks and celery and let them sweat for 8 minutes until soft. Add the apples, garlic and thyme and sweat for a further 5 minutes.
- Add the celeriac and stock to the pan, bring to the boil and simmer on medium heat for 12–15 minutes until the celeriac is tender. Remove from the heat and add the cashew nuts and most of the parsley.
- Blend the soup, season with pepper and salt and serve with the extra parsley.
- Serves 6.

As mentioned in the last issue, Manchester FoE has started a series of Food Socials, where we get together to share recipes and talk food, while having a good time as well! The next of these will take place at the Green Fish Resource Centre on Wednesday 4 December from 7 to 9pm. For more information, please contact Corin at corin@manchesterfoe.org.uk or 07912 509665.



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Coming Up



Thursday 14 November

Rethinking Prosperity: Experiments in Local Economics. Event for those who wish to share ideas and find out how local economy experiments can make a difference.

Sessions will focus on local procurement, housing retrofit and integrated food experiments. Bridge 5 Mill, Beswick Street, Ancoats, 10am–5pm. See

<https://www.eventbrite.com/event/8400366723>.

Thursday 21 November

What a Mess! Britain's Economy and Ways to a Brighter Future. A talk with James Meadway of the New Economics

Foundation, taking us on a tour of our dysfunctional economy and proposing routes to a more sustainable future. Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, 7pm. £3 (£1 for students and unwaged).

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 full group meeting is scheduled for 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 Annual General Meeting

Make a date for your diary now!

The Annual General Meeting of Manchester Friends of the Earth will take place on **Wednesday 11 December** at the Green Fish Resource Centre, from **6.30 to 7.30pm**.

We will be electing the group officers for 2014, reviewing the group's activities over the past year and voting on a few changes to the group constitution.

Please note that in order to stand for election, vote for officers or vote on the constitution, you need to join the group or renew your membership by **Sunday 10 November**.

After the AGM, we will be moving on to eat and drink at Bakerie Pie & Ale on Lever Street (see <http://bakerie.co.uk/welcome-to> for more details, including what's on the Christmas menu). The meal will start at **8.30pm** and there will be vegetarian and vegan options available.

We will soon be circulating information about which officer roles are available for 2014, as well as the all-important menu for you to choose from. Please check our website www.manchesterfoe.org.uk.

We hope you can make it and we look forward to seeing you on 11 December!

For more information, please contact Colette at colette@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>