

Kept in the Dark

Manchester FoE teams up with 10:10 to show how househunters lack vital energy information

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In 2014 the issues of cold homes and fuel poverty are at the top of the agenda. March has seen the report *Kept in the Dark* published, in which Manchester FoE and climate campaign 10:10 highlighted the issue of missing energy performance data in the private rented sector.

Homes make up 27% of the UK's carbon emissions, which means home improvements can have a massive impact in reducing the country's carbon footprint—and our fuel bills. A survey by the British Property Federation has shown that it is possible to reduce the annual fuel bill of a terraced house from over £1,700 to less than £400. Of course, homeowners are in a better situation than tenants, who are reliant on their landlords to carry out home improvements.

So how do househunters who are aiming to rent find out how energy-efficient their prospective home is? The Department for Communities and Local Government has issued guidance stating that all property advertisements should show the energy rating (Energy Performance Certificate or EPC). So househunters should be able to find a property's EPC in its online listing. The current market leader for online property searches is Rightmove, with an 81% market share. We therefore decided to check Rightmove's figures, to find out how many properties in Greater Manchester have EPC data online.

In the middle of 2013 we carried out a survey on Rightmove of all properties to rent in Greater Manchester, amounting to over 10,000 houses and flats, to determine how many properties had EPC data online. Recently, we updated a smaller set of the data to see if there had been a change in the meantime.

When we looked at the complete set of Greater Manchester properties, only 40% had any data at all—even as little as the statement 'EPC rating C', for instance. The recent update saw a slight rise, to 44% of the properties surveyed.



To publicise our findings, in collaboration with the climate campaign 10:10 we have now released the research in the report *Kept in the Dark*. Learn more at <http://files.1010global.org/docs/kept-in-the-dark-march-2014.pdf>. We presented our findings to Manchester City Council's neighbourhood scrutiny committee, who were interested in our report, especially as areas with higher fuel poverty are less likely to have EPC data and also have less energy-efficient homes. We also highlighted fuel poverty at the No More Cold Homes public debate (see above), in partnership with the Energy Bill Revolution, on Thursday 10th April.

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We'll Keep Riding Smooth(ie)

Whether pedalling means getting you places or quenching your thirst, the transport campaign has something for you

Over the last few years we have focused a lot of our campaigning energies on cycling, with the Love Your Bike campaign. More recently, we have opposed the planned A6–Manchester Airport road, raised the issue of ‘zombie’ car parks, organised PARK(ing) Day events and debated the pros and cons of HS2. There are many sustainable ways of getting around and Manchester Friends of the Earth will continue to campaign to help create a more sustainable transport network across Greater Manchester.

But back to cycling. With so much focus on cycling across the board, it is a vital time to ensure that the momentum continues. We are busily working on an update of our Cycling Manifesto, which we hope to use with election candidates in May. We have also been ensuring we make critical contributions to the consultations on any cycling infrastructure plans. In carrying out research for the manifesto, it has been inspiring to see what other cities across Europe and North America have done to support their citizens in taking to the road on two wheels.



Animal costume not compulsory! MFoE's pedal-powered smoothie maker in action last June

Our bicycle smoothie maker has been undergoing a transformation ready for the summer events we hope to attend, with new labelling and instructions to make it easier for those who hire it to make delicious smoothies.

And in the fifth year of Bike Friday, our monthly bike rides into town continue to run from eight locations around Greater Manchester. Numbers over the winter months have been low, but with some better weather and a bit more promotion we hope to inspire a few more people onto their bikes on the last Friday morning of the month. With a coffee waiting for you at the other end—what's stopping you?! To find out more, please email graeme@manchesterfoe.org.uk or see our website www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/transport for further details.

Bee Cause: It's Here

Two ways you can help us make the UK a nation of pollination

Even though we are only three months into the New Year, the Bee Cause campaign has already made progress at both national and local levels. The Government's National Pollinator Strategy has finally been published. However, it has been found to fall short in several vital areas—it relies too heavily on voluntary action and in addition it neither includes effective action to curb pesticide use nor addresses the issue of intensive farming. You can add your voice to Friends of the Earth's call on the Government to strengthen its action plan. Visit www.foe.co.uk/beesp petition to respond to the public consultation on the strategy.

We have also got the go-ahead for a larger-scale version of last year's Bee World, this time in the village centre at Ashton on Mersey, near Sale. In partnership with the Friends of Ashton Village, we will be planting a mixture of bee-friendly garden flowers, herbs and wild flowers at several sites in the village. We aim to get schools involved, with an art competition to be judged on the day, and a beekeeper will also be taking part. If you are free on Saturday 10th May, you are more than welcome to help us spread the word about the Bee Cause. Just get in touch with Cat at cat@manchesterfoe.org.uk. If you can't make it, but you have a patch available to plant with bee-friendly flowers, you can always send off for a seed pack at <http://www.foe.co.uk/beeworlds>

Fracking Our Climate Targets

Ali explains why our councils need to consider the climate impacts of fracking, as well as the risks of water and air pollution

There's been lots said about the impact of fracking on local communities, such as the risk of water pollution, the air pollution from gas flaring, and the congestion caused by up to 50 trucks a day taking fresh water to each well and removing toxic flowback water. But what about the impact on our local climate change targets?

The Greater Manchester Climate Change Strategy set a target to reduce our region's emissions by 48% on 1990 levels to around 10 million tonnes per annum in 2020.



Pete (left) and Ali bring our message to the City Centre on one of the largest anti-fracking rallies yet

An environmental report published by the Department for Energy and Climate Change in December 2013 assessed the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production of unconventional gas, such as shale gas and coal bed methane.

This report estimates that 50,000 cubic metres of methane will leak from each production well, which is equivalent to over 7,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂e) over its 20-year lifetime. Most of this will come in the first few years, as gas flow drops rapidly with time.

That means if 200 unconventional gas wells are drilled across Greater Manchester, they would create an extra 1 million tonnes of CO₂e—more than all the homes and businesses in Salford

currently emit in a year. That's why it's crucial that our councils consider their climate commitments, as well as the pollution risks, when they decide whether to let the frackers loose in Greater Manchester. Sign our petition to David Cameron at: <http://bit.ly/no-fracking>

My Very Social Food Diary...

Since August last year, those of us involved in the Food Campaign have got much more social with our food, reports Safia

We kicked off our social calendar with a bring and share, swiftly followed by a picnic in the park and some apple picking with Abundance Manchester, rounded off nicely with learning how to brew your own and Sustainable Christmas.

This year is set to be no less busy, with the much talked-about raw chocolate Chocobananza in February starting the trend for more themed socials, along with our bee-friendly food social in March. The socials are open to one and all—anyone who has an interest in the where, how, who and what of their food... and, let's be honest, likes eating and drinking lots, with like-minded people ;-)

Food socials are usually on the first Wednesday of the month from 7 to 9pm. The venue varies and, when the occasion calls for it, so does the day—our 'T is for... well, TEA' social took place on a Sunday morning in April to help blow away any cobwebs from the night before!

The other date in our calendars that keeps us food campaigners busy is our Food Campaign meeting on the third Thursday of each month from 6.30 to 8pm at the Green Fish Centre. We are already filling up our diaries with the planned launch in the summer of a new food campaign 'Use Your Loaf' (to find out more, please join us).

Visit www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/digest to sign up to our Weekly Digest and get the latest details on these socials and our food campaign—or just turn up to the socials with some food and a friendly smile (smile optional, food a must). Hope to see you there!

Learn about Chorlton's new creative sustainable fashion enterprise

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):

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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: _____

Seaweed, Leek and Mushroom Pasta

A tasty seasonal recipe from Cat



Seaweed is a great way for us to ensure we get enough iodine, especially if we are vegan. Be careful, though, as overindulging can be too much of a good thing!

Ingredients

- ½ tbsp cooking oil
- 1 medium leek, thinly sliced into rings
- 2 handfuls mushrooms, cut into quarters
- ½ cup chopped green olives
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- ½ handful dry seaweed, soaked in hot water for 15 mins then cut into fine strips
- 2 large handfuls spinach/rocket/chard, washed and cut into wide strips
- ½–1 cup white wine or water
- ⅓ cup oat cream (or dairy cream)
- Pasta for two
- Pepper and salt

Method

- Bring a pan of water to the boil for the pasta.
- While the water for the pasta is coming to the boil, heat the oil in another pan, add the leek and mushrooms and cook for a few minutes until softened.
- Add the garlic and stir in so as to cook, making sure it doesn't burn.
- Add the seaweed, olives and water/wine and simmer for 5–10 minutes to reduce the fluid.
- Cook the pasta in the boiling water.
- Just before the pasta is ready, add the greens and cream to the seaweed, stirring well to wilt the greens, and season to taste.
- Drain the cooked pasta, reserving a little of the water, and return to the pan with the reserved water and about ½ cup of the seaweed sauce. Mix well to coat the pasta and serve, adding extra sauce on top.
- Serves 2.

You can learn more about iodine at

www.vegansociety.com/lifestyle/nutrition/iodine.aspx



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Coming Up



Saturday 19 April

Celebrate Easter Saturday at the Bicycle Village. With an MFoE stall, all-ability cycling, pedal-powered music and children's art workshops. Bike Barn, Jackson's Boat, Sale, M33 2LX. Learn more at

www.bicyclevillage.the-bike-barn.co.uk/

Saturday 26 April

Big Green Happening. Get-together for green groups and businesses, with a focus on community projects and sustainability and an MFoE stall. St Clement's Church, Edge Lane, Chorlton, M21 9JF, 1–5pm.

Saturday 10 May

Ashton Village—A Hive of Activity. Come and help Manchester Friends of the Earth plant bee-friendly gardens in Ashton on Mersey, together with the Friends of Ashton Village, a beekeeper's stall, the Cheshire Wildlife Trust and local people of all ages. Green Lane, Ashton village, 11am–4pm.

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. All welcome.

For details of our **Campaigns Meetings**, see <http://manchesterfoe.org.uk/calendar/>. These are also held at Green Fish Resource Centre, 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, Chorlton Library, Withington Library, Levenshulme Station, Prestwich (Bury New Road/Scholes Lane) and Stockport (Mersey Square). www.bikefriday.org

Basecamp Is Back (But On The Move...)

If you were lucky enough to attend Friends of the Earth's first ever BASECAMP last year, you won't need reminding what an amazing and constructive event it was.

However, even if you missed it last time, there is another chance coming up soon.

Make a date for **Friday 13 June–Sunday 15 June**, again in the peaceful countryside of the Derbyshire Peak District, only this time a little further north at Castleton (which makes it all the more convenient for transport from the Manchester area).

Camping, Youth Hostel and B&B options are all available. Book your place now at www.foe.co.uk/basecamp

Group Officers for 2014

As you may be aware, Manchester FoE held its Annual General Meeting last December. We elected our group officers at the AGM.

Please welcome our new group officers for the year 2014:

Coordinators Pete Abel and Paul Waring
Treasurer Julian Dearlove **Membership Officer** Ali Abbas **Volunteer Officer** Stephanie Lynch **Media Officer** Lyndsey Fall
Newsletter Editor Damian Cross and **Website/Social Media Officer** Graeme Sherriff.

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>