

Act!on

MP is Hit with Chicks

As part of World Food Day on 16 October 2009, we were joined by Liberal Democrat MP John Leech and Chorlton councillor Paul Ankers in our office on Oldham Street. In this unique indoor picnic event, Mr Leech was invited to strike a blow against intensive farming by hitting an egg-shaped piñata. This giant papier-mâché egg contained hundreds of animal-shaped postcards which had been signed by his constituents in support of our Food Chain Campaign.

During the course of the eggshellent evening, guests were invited to savour delicious vegetarian and vegan dishes which were prepared by our volunteers using organic and Fairtrade ingredients. A short film was also shown, 'Killing Fields: the battle to feed factory farms', which reveals the true cost of growing soy in South America. The film was produced by a coalition of campaign groups including Friends of the Earth, Food and Water Watch and Via Campesina.

Following the film screening, a lively discussion took place where guests talked about what actions the UK government and the EU must take in order to reduce the global environmental and social impacts of factory farming.

The Food Chain Campaign highlights the link between factory farms and rainforest destruction to grow animal feed, and calls on MPs to fix the food chain by supporting small farmers and spending taxpayers' money only on planet-friendly farming.

We want each political party to promise to fix the food chain by including their commitment to planet-friendly farming in their election manifesto.



John Leech MP has a smashing time cracking the food chain, no yolk.

The piñata event was the finale of our group's summer of action, during which we've raised awareness at many of Manchester's summer festivals and collected 672 postcards from local people who support the campaign.

To see what actions you can take to help, visit www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/food/action.htm. If you would like to lobby your MP on the campaign asks, please contact us.

✿ georgia@manchesterfoe.org.uk

So don't be a chicken, lobby your MP.

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Get Dead Serious

In the run up to the Copenhagen summit in December 2009, Manchester FoE are doing lots that you can get involved with.

On October 31st, we held a Halloween event demanding a Treat deal at Copenagen in December instead of a Trick, full of carbon offsets.

We paraded down Oxford Road from 6:30pm dressed as skeletons and green faeries, accompanied by a samba band, raising local awareness by giving out leaflets and talking to people along the way. We started at the Peveril of the Peak pub on Great Bridgewater Street and walked to the Bowling Green on Grafton Street, where we hosted our trick or treat benefit gig. We



**left: the spectre of climate change marching down Oxford Road with the dancing skeleton;
right: band Heartstring perform at the party.**



had live music from Heartstring and I Am Mechanical as well as cabaret from Guy Bloke.

More about Copenhagen December 2009 marks an important meeting, the outcome of which will decide the future of our climate and our world. The United Nations are holding the Cop 15 conference in Copenhagen to decide the successor of the Kyoto protocol which expires in 2012. This meeting is being hailed as the most important ever to take place in human history. Climate Change is upon us whether we like it or not and this meeting is an international opportunity to make our voice heard not only to our Government and the European parliament, but echoing all around the world. It's important to keep up the pressure.

The Wave On the 5th December – join thousands in London as we march on Parliament to demand climate justice and a fair green deal for all global citizens. This needs to be the biggest climate demonstration ever to take place in human history as we need to send a loud message for our Government to take to the Copenhagen talks. Make sure you're there! For more information please visit www.stopclimatechaos.org

Please sign the International petition: www.demandclimatechange.org and show global solidarity. The time is now, to make our stand.

Sewing the Seeds of Change

On Monday 28 September 'The Sewing Room' workshop took place at 8th Day Cafe, on Oxford Road. The Sewing Room is a sewing workshop, designed to teach basic sewing skills which used to be commonplace learning in schools. The workshop targets people who have little or no sewing experience, focusing on basic skills needed to repair clothes, such as repairing an unraveled hem.

We live in a consumer society; more people than ever buy cheap clothes which aren't durable. When the garments are damaged they are thrown away and the garments eventually end up in landfill. By repairing your old clothes this can be avoided, giving your clothes a new lease of life, which will also save you money in the long run.

The aim of the workshop is to provide an opportunity for people to learn new, useful and sustainable skills, which will have a positive impact on the environment through teaching people skills so they can repair their clothes and keep them out of landfill! The workshops are small, informal and relaxed. To join a session, no skills are required and all equipment is provided. The feedback received regarding workshops which have taken place so far has been positive.

"Wendy was very clear and gave good explanations. She had prepared little practice pieces for us as well as a handy sheet with all the information on it. I got stuck straight in on a tear along the seam of a work shirt and am very happy to say I've worn it. I've since sewn a button and fixed a bag. She was great at inspiring confidence", Ben (Novice Seamster)

The intention is to continue these workshops at a basic level and introduce a session where people can bring garments to be repaired with guidance at the workshop.

To find out about future workshops please contact either Wendy at

*wendy_allport@hotmail.co.uk or
sarah@manchesterfoe.org.uk

2009 – The Year the Earthmoved

In August this year, Manchester Friends of the Earth received an unexpected email. It was from national Friends of the Earth, nominating us for an Earthmover award. The Earthmover awards are given out by national FoE to recognize the most outstanding campaigners and groups of the year. We were nominated for Group of the Year, and so when we sat down to discuss what to put in our nomination form, many of us thought, "Well, we didn't do that much..."

After the meeting, we looked at our notes of all the things we had done... and realized we had totally underestimated ourselves. Maybe we did deserve that nomination after all. In the end, we would like to congratulate the Leeds group who deservedly won the Group of the Year award.

But that's not all, because we also nominated ourselves and... [drum roll] we won CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR... This was for our tireless work in 2008 as part of the YES campaign in the Greater Manchester Transport Innovation Fund referendum so, as we look back over the year, we'll start with that.

Transport Referendum We like challenging campaigns, and what bigger challenge than to take on some of Manchester's biggest players in a battle over the future of the city's transport? Some ingenious campaigning, like "World Toilet Day" posters and the "Let Me Breathe" video, having speakers in many public debates, and hours spent on the streets handing out leaflets, won us the Earthmover for Best Campaign. Ali, Dave and Graeme accepted the award on our behalf at the Local Groups Conference.

Innovative Campaigns Following on from the successful Love Your Bike campaign, the Bike

Friday campaigns have encouraged many people in Manchester to get wheely serious about biking to work. We got impressive media coverage when we took a cardboard bike on a tram – to prove that bikes can fit on trams! In our Carbon Clinic campaign we created a great survey to ask “How big is your carbon footprint?” and got our campaigners dressed up as doctors and nurses to give an eco-examination the public will not forget (really – who could forget Ben in a nurse’s dress?). We took on the Marinet campaign, getting a long article published in the Big Issue, and hundreds of postcards signed at stalls around Manchester.

More active members and a great atmosphere

Our group has only been able to take on so many campaigns because we have more people along at our meetings, and more people are involved than ever before. It is great to go to meetings when there are such enthusiastic, passionate and fun people in the group. So thank you to everyone who has helped our campaigns be successful and enjoyable – you all deserve credit for our nomination!

Events and Stalls We have had some great events, such as the talk we hosted with the Co-op about the destructive Alberta Tar Sands operation and its damaging impact both on climate change and on the welfare of indigenous people. We got around 200 people to attend despite only having a week or so to organize it! We have helped run swap shops, sung at festivals, performed theatre on the streets, smashed piñatas, and talked at the “Age of Stupid” screening. We have run more stalls than ever, in many different areas of Manchester, in total getting a huge amount of postcards signed for the Get Serious, Marinet, Food Chain and Biofuels campaigns.

Improved Campaigning We have improved our campaigning a great deal in the last 12 months. There are now regular meetings with groups across Greater Manchester to co-ordinate campaigns, and to target MPs together. We have

the advantage of new technology, setting up new websites, communicating through Facebook and Twitter (@mcrfoe), and creating a wiki, which has enabled us to share information better than ever!

Now after thinking back through the year, I realize it has been a crazy year – there have been highs and lows, but I really feel that, with some great new members active in the group, we can achieve even more next year. As a new co-ordinator of the group, it’s definitely a very exciting time to be involved!

Conference of Not Eat Ham

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Vegetarian food, parties and inspiring campaigns, Damian reports. Nottingham has always been famous for Robin Hood and his campaigns for justice for the poor, so where better to hold Friends of the Earth’s Local Groups Conference? Among the leafy glades and lawns of Sherwood Forest (cunningly disguised as the campus of Nottingham University!) we spent the weekend of September 12–13 at the East Midlands Conference Centre, networking with, and being inspired by, hundreds of fellow FoE members from across the England/Wales/Northern Ireland network.

Manchester FoE sent along a nine-strong contingent to join the fun, our group comprising familiar faces such as Ali and Graeme as well as newbies such as myself, Damian. On arrival we were brought up to date with national FoE’s activities by Executive Director Andy Atkins, who informed us of how we are adapting to the shortfall in funding due to the recession, while still being empowered to carry on with our campaigning activities.

Open Space We spent the rest of the afternoon in the Open Space sessions, which gave us the opportunity to discuss our own ideas in round table sessions spread across the centre and in a marquee outside. One of the sessions I attended was ‘*How do we aim at a zero waste society?*’ chaired by Samantha from the Leeds group; here



The Earthmover t-shirt, modeled here by Leeds FoE, was collected by Graeme, Dave and Ali.

we discussed the problems with plastics recycling and how some local authorities are more ahead of the game than others in promoting composting of kitchen waste. As a result of this I signed up to the Waste mailing list, where I've learnt lots of useful information about anti-incinerator campaigns—for example, how local councils sometimes end up having to compensate incinerator firms when waste is recycled rather than sent to be burned.

After some vegetarian Thai curry it was time for the Earthmover awards. We all know about Manchester's triumph in the campaigns category for Clean Air Now, helping to support the TIF bid process. I would also like to congratulate the Leeds campaigners (best group), the group at Penistone for winning the community project category with their Energy Project, and David Longthorn of Hull FoE who won the individual award for setting up and managing wildlife areas in the city. The evening drew to a close with drinks in the bar, music in the marquee and a massive barn dance in the main hall—please take your partners for a Cumberland Square Eight!

Next morning, after the Annual Review, there followed the Motions Debate, chaired by North-West board member Dave Coleman. All eight motions submitted to Conference were passed, including committing FoE to develop a stance

on population growth and geo-engineering. The rest of the conference was devoted to seminars and workshops about our current campaigns. I learnt a lot about the food sovereignty concept and how important it is that local authorities promote allotments and source food for schools etc. from local sources. We had a discussion called *Chewing the Cud* where we exchanged opinions about the ideal mix of arable/livestock to give the most sustainable results under British conditions.

Finally, and all too soon, it was time to leave and return to Manchester. It wasn't all bad news though as along the way I had got to know members of the High Peak and Bradford local groups as well as Dina from Warrington FoE who is co-ordinating the Wave in London on December 5th. When I first heard about Conference, being a new member of the group I had thought it would be full of complicated technical debates about the details of campaigns, but it's not like that at all—there are plenty of opportunities for everyone to have a chat with like-minded people and make their own contribution. Hope to see some of you at Conference next year!

What do we want? Climate Action!

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When do we want it? Now! On Saturday 17 October, Oxfam and the Co-op organized Climate Action Now, a day of talks and group sessions at New Century Hall designed to educate people as to the urgency of taking action on both local and global levels to fight climate change, and also as a call to action in the build-up to Copenhagen. Damian reports. Obviously Manchester FoE took the opportunity to get involved: Alex Lee went on stage together with Lauren to perform Alex's Copenhagen song (go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36dMm-zW_g0 to see this song performed at St Luke's church in Liverpool) and later on Alex teamed up with Lauren and Frank Kennedy, the departing

regional co-ordinator, to stir the climate change cauldron in a re-interpretation of the famous three witches' scene from Macbeth. We also had a stall staffed by Ali, Damian, Carol and Georgia where we got more Food Chain postcards signed—the signatures came from as far afield as Cornwall and the Hebrides.

The main purpose of the conference, however, was to energise and enthuse and to this end we had speeches from Penney Poyzer (Queen of Green), Elvis Sukali from Oxfam in Malawi and Kevin Anderson from the Tyndall Centre, not forgetting Lucy Pearce from Stop Climate Chaos. Penney left us with some food for thought about water-saving and organic produce; for example, when tempted to buy organic vegetables with hundreds of food miles, we ought to think about growing our own. Elvis told us about how climate change has already affected Malawi—the rainy season has become shorter and more unpredictable leading to a 70% drop in coffee

production and a 90% fall in livestock holdings, and the shorter cold season leads to year-round outbreaks of malaria. Kevin pointed out the maths showing how further economic growth in the developed world is incompatible with stopping global temperature rises at 2C°. Finally Lucy urged us all to publicise the Wave demonstration and left us with the triple message of the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition:

- Act Fair and Fast—to limit temperature rises to 2C°
- Protect the Poorest—who have done least to cause the problem
- Quit Dirty Coal—the main contribution to CO₂ emissions

We hope to see as many of you as possible in London on December 5th!



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Coming Up

Monday 30th November 7pm to 10pm Launch of Call to Real Action's response to the Climate Change Action Plan. Comedy, music, slam poetry and much much more. Nexus Cafe, Dale St www.calltorealaction.wordpress.com

Friday 4th December Our Annual General Meeting, taking place at 6:30 at the Green Fish resource centre

Saturday 5th December The Wave: March in London in support of a safe climate future. www.stopclimatechaos.org

Monday 7th December to Friday 18th December United Nations Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen, including on Saturday **Saturday 12th December** the International Day of Action in Copenhagen

Sunday 13th to Thursday 17th December Manchester Climate Change Festival various locations

Deadline for GMPTE consultation on plans for improving Cross City Bus Travel www.gmp-te-ccbp.com

Regular Events

Second Tuesday of the month 6:45 for 7pm. Full group meeting. Green Fish Resource Centre, 46–50 Oldham Street. New members welcome.

Fourth 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 campaign areas: Shape Up for Summer, Get Serious, food. The transport campaign group meets separately. Please email graeme@manchesterfoe.org.uk for information.

Last Friday of the month (except December) Bike Friday. Rides from a range of locations in Greater Manchester to work, college or university. www.bikefriday.org

Officer Positions

If you wish to stand for one of MFoE's officer positions next year, please write to the group or email alex@manchesterfoe.org.uk at least seven days before the AGM. The roles available are:

Co-ordinator (three positions); Publicity Officer; Treasurer; IT Officer; Media Officer; Volunteer Support Officer; Office Manager; Membership Officer; Group Secretary; Newsletter Officer; Fundraising Officer; Media Analyst; Events Manager

Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey in the last issue, giving us your feedback on our new newsletter design. We are rethinking our communications strategy over the next few months and these comments will be very useful in this process.

The editor would like to apologise for the horrendous puns in this issue, only he couldn't resist it. After five years overseeing this legendary, sometimes regular, publication, he will be ceremonially handing over the much coveted Manchester FoE typewriter at the AGM on 4th December. Thank you to all those who have provided the articles, photos and cartoons that bring the newsletter to life. Onwards and upwards, *Graeme*

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