

Act!on

Summer
2006

www.manchesterfoe.org.uk



Summer's Here!



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**Friends of
the Earth
Manchester**

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Manchester Friends of the Earth is a prominent campaign group working on issues relating to the environment and to 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, real food, sustainable transport, waste and recycling, air quality, social exclusion and trade justice.

Member Interview: Holly Reckhouse



How long have you been involved in the group?

Nearly a year.

Why did you get involved?

I was already involved in campaigning in Manchester and wanted to do something for the environment. FoE has always been high profile and

has an impact and I agree with what they stand for.

What environmental issues most concern you?

I'm into everything but most recently I've been involved with the corporates campaign and the Big Ask. The Big Ask has been exciting because it's had so much involvement with politicians and if it does go through parliament I think it's a really good opportunity to work for change. Manchester FoE has a lot of really enthusiastic members who are really dedicated to making things happen. It's an inspirational group to be involved in. And a great social life!

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JOIN IN!

Manchester FoE's campaigns centre is located in the basement of the Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, behind Central Library. To find the campaigns centre, take Bootle Street, which is down the left side of the Friends Meeting House. The campaigns centre is run entirely by volunteers, so it is not always open. Please phone in advance.

Meetings: 7pm on the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Wednesday of the month in the Friends Meeting House.

Address: Manchester Friends of the Earth, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

Phone: 0161 834 8221 **Email:** office@manchesterfoe.org.uk **Website:** www.manchesterfoe.org.uk

As a member you get not only this newsletter but also:

- 4 free issues of "Earthmatters", the magazine from national FoE (new members only)
- 25% off a meal at Earth Cafe
- 10% off selected purchases at Harry Hall Cycles
- 10% off food and drink at Misty's Cafe
- 10% off purchases at the Manchester branch of Field & Trek
- 15% off food and drink at the Nectar Cafe in Hale
- 10% off selected purchases at Ken Foster's Cycle Logic
- 10% off main meals and hot drinks at Titchy Coffee Co

Just fill in the membership form on the back cover and get involved!

**Gift
Memberships
also available -
see back
cover...**

Contributors to this issue: Samantha Lacey, Laura Pike, Andrea Katsina, Graeme Sherriff, Holly Reckhouse, Tori Wright

Big Ask Goes Live !

Music meets politics and raises a bob or two..

Over 150 people descended on The Bierkeller on Thursday 15th June for Manchester Friends of the Earth's 'Big Ask Live' local bands night. Not even the football could keep people away! 5 bands, lots of postcard signing and a few pints later we'd achieved our aim of putting on a grand night, raising awareness of the Big Ask campaign and managing to raise some funds for Manchester FOE.

Whilst we provided the cause, Sir Yes Sir, Your Bitter Ex-Lovers, The V.Cs, GeEkgiRL and Moco provided the music with an exciting mix of up and coming talent to entertain us. A big thank you to all of the bands and everyone that helped out to make the night a great success!



So what is The Big Ask and The Big Ask Live?

The Big Ask is a National Friends of the Earth campaign asking our MPs to pledge their support for a new Climate Change Bill which will require year-on-year reductions of at least 3% in carbon dioxide emissions in an attempt to tackle climate change. The Big Ask Live is a series of gigs that have been hosted all over the country with support from the likes of Radiohead's Thom Yorke, who played a high-profile gig in London in support of the campaign.

For more information on the Big Ask Live check out www.thebigask.com or visit www.myspace.com/manchesterfoe.



photos - happy competition winners



Numerous businesses around the city showed their support for the gig by donating prizes to our raffle and a big thank you goes out to Misty's Vegetarian Café, Longsight; Eighth Day, Oxford Road; Shared Earth, Piccadilly; The Titchy Coffee Co, City Centre; Fetish For Food, Prestwich and The Bierkeller, Piccadilly.

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Corporate Law 1 - Football and Sunshine 0

Sam reports on an event to debate the importance of ethical company law reform.

On a very sunny Friday evening, the opening night of the World Cup, would you choose to sit in Manchester Town Hall and discuss Corporate Social Responsibility? About 50 people from around Manchester decided that the best way to spend their Friday evening was to listen to Sam Lacey (Responsible Shareholding Analyst for CIS and Treasurer for Manchester FoE) and Ben Gilchrist (lead campaigner on corporate responsibility for Speak) talk about how to make companies more accountable for their impacts on society and the environment. After the talks there was lots of discussion and debate about how we can be most effective at influencing companies. This is a fantastic indication that people feel passionately that companies should be systematically taking these things into consideration in a way they're not doing at the moment.

What Can You Do?

The main message from the meeting was that although global issues often seem insurmountable, there is a great opportunity to make a change to UK corporate law in the oncoming weeks. Either sign a CORE postcard or write personally to your MP, stating that as a constituent, you want them to help push through three very necessary changes:

1. Companies have to produce mandatory reports detailing their social and environmental impact.
2. Companies have to embrace a duty of care to local communities and the environment.
3. Affected communities have the right to take the company to court.

You can find out who your MP is at www.theyworkforyou.com.

There are also lots of other ways you can influence the way companies go about their business:

CONSUMER POWER

Choose Fairtrade and organic products where you can. Ask shops if they have an ethical policy covering their environmental impacts and labour standards in their supply chains. Either ask at customer services or write to head office.

Visit www.ethicalconsumer.org for information on which companies are abusing their power and which are taking the opportunity to improve the world we live in.

MONEY TALKS

Ask your bank if it has an ethical policy or if it offers ethical investment funds. If not, move to one that does! NB. Engagement means they invest in all companies but put pressure on them to improve, Screened funds don't invest in 'bad' companies at all.

Ask your pension fund if it has an ethical investment policy.

Ask your Trade Union to put pressure on your company to invest your pension money ethically.



photo - Sam Lacey addresses the audience at the evening event.



Transport Plan Fails Climate

One of our members gives her personal reaction to the new Local Transport Plan.

The Final Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan (GMLTP) for 2006-2011 was published at the end of March. The Transport Plan sets out a five year programme for transport improvements in the Greater Manchester area underpinned by a longer term transport strategy.

Some background

In the summer of '05 the Greater Manchester authorities published the second Greater Manchester Provisional Local Transport Plan. We reported our views and recommendations for improvement in the Winter '05 edition of this newsletter. The consultation questionnaire conducted elicited less than 500 responses from a population base of 2.5 million which suggests that the engagement with the public was ineffective. See www.gmltp.co.uk.

What's the plan?

Generally the final plan is less ambitious than the provisional plan that preceded it.

- Ambitions to see "no increase in traffic kilometres" have been dropped. The target now being to "limit increase to 2% from 2003/4"
- Targets for modal shift for school journeys have been dropped with no modal shift from the car for journeys to school envisioned over the lifetime of the plan.
- Initial ambitions to reduce CO2 emissions by 12.5% on 1990 levels have metamorphosised into a final target to limit increase in CO2 emissions to 4.5%
- The target to reduce particulates has been dropped although the final plan sets out an increased target to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by 39%
- The walking target has been revised from a 15% decline to "halt the decline" after an initial 5% decline
- an improvement but still a decline
- The plan proposed a modal shift of 4 percentage points to 65% for non car mode journeys to the regional centre (i.e Manchester and Salford), however this is against a background of more journeys so won't in fact mean a net reduction in car traffic
- For other centres no modal shift is proposed at all so this will mean an increase in car traffic as more journeys are predicted.
- Increase of 10% in cycle journeys as in the provisional plan- to be welcomed but still not particularly ambitious

What does it all mean?

In summary GMLTP2 is not the radical document that transport campaigners had hoped for and will do little to address the transport problems the region faces. The plan also includes an unaffordable wish list of major road schemes which shows that politicians have still not got the message that we cannot build our way out of congestion. Of particular concern is the disingenuous public consultation exercise- a number of fairly ambitious provisional targets were consulted upon most of which as we have explained above have been significantly watered down in the final plan without adequate explanation.

Nectar

14 Victoria Road, Hale, Cheshire,
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- Organic Produce
- Local Produce
- Natural Produce
- GM Free
- Fair Trade Foodstuffs

For Everything Good in Life

Ethical Travel in the Sun

Our cut out guide to taking your conscience on holiday with you this summer.

1. Air travel is the fastest growing source of carbon dioxide emissions and therefore a major contributor to climate change. If you're planning on flying check out www.climatecare.co.uk where you can work out the amount of carbon emitted on your flight and balance it by 'buying' the equivalent in trees. Even better, look at holiday options in the UK or explore the possibility of taking a train to European destinations: route and fare information at www.raileurope.com.
2. Try to learn a few words of the language spoken at your chosen destination. Sadly there are areas where the locals have been made to feel alienated from their own culture and an unhealthy 'us and them' atmosphere has arisen. Simply learning a few words and phrases (hello, thank you, my grandmother loves aardvarks too, etc.) will hopefully make the locals much more receptive to you, you'll learn more and might make new friends to visit again.
3. Avoid package holidays, or at the least check your tour operator's responsible travel policy. All too often the money we spend on our holidays goes back to corporations in richer countries rather than to the holiday destination, where it may be much needed. Staying in local hotels, buying local produce and eating in local restaurants will not only enrich your holiday experience, but will mean that your money supports the local economy rather than multinational businesses.
4. Be water and energy conscious. Water is precious wherever we are but can be an extremely scarce resource in some countries. Remember to turn the tap off or restrict your showers as using up water can mean prices rise for locals; something many cannot afford.
5. Pass the message on!!! Take your cut-out-and-keep guide to sustainable tourism with you on holiday, to the pub and tell your mates...(Continued Page 7)

Manchester Loves Bikes

Graeme reports on the launch of the ongoing Love Your Bike campaign.

March 21st saw the launch of the much awaited Love Your Bike Campaign. Over 80 cyclists gathered at the Castlefield Roundabout for a press call at 8am. I arrived just in time, having been interviewed by BBC Radio Manchester at 7:30 as 15 cyclists and I set off from Withington library on our 'critical commute'. After the photo call, with Cllr Neil Swannick, the cyclists dispersed into the morning traffic, wearing their brand new fluorescent jackets carrying the LoveYourBike.Org message on the back. Motorists were being exposed to 27 billboards around the cities, a hundred adverts on the backs of Manchester's buses, media coverage and cyclists whizzing by on their left carrying our website address!

The biggest surprise was the amount of international coverage, which included America, Australia, Chile, Bulgaria, Holland and Portugal! The website has been very popular. Over 65 cyclists have taken advantage of our Google map facility to draw and describe the routes they often cycle and contribute towards our rapidly growing resources for cyclists, especially those new to or returning to their bikes. Have a look at www.loveyourbike.org and get involved!

The campaign vests are available for 8 quid from the website.



Cllr Neil Swannick shows the Council's support for our campaign. Credit: Vincent Walsh

Cultural Right to Murder?

And Katsina gives a personal account on the plight of the dolphins.

Every year a handful of Japanese fishermen slaughter up to twenty five thousand dolphins, and small whales, for financial profit!

Because the international businessmen, the marine parks, dolphinarium, SWTD (swim with the dolphins) program and aquaria owners, are offering the provincial Japanese fishermen very large sums of money to capture show quality marine mammals, the fishermen enthusiastically scour the waters to hunt down every single family of dolphins they can find, thereby guaranteeing the businessmen the pick of the bunch.

Photo and video footage: seashepherd.org/taiji/taiji_video.html

The Chase

The fishermen find a family, drop long metal pipes into the water and fanatically hammer the pipes disrupting the animals' sonar senses. The dolphins, deprived of all sense of direction and defenceless, are thus easily manoeuvred and trapped into small shallow water beach coves.

Capture or Kill

Nets are lowered to prevent the dolphins escaping the cove. A selection is made and the fishermen then lay into the unwanted, unprofitable dolphins, hacking and slashing them with machetes and spears until each one is fatally wounded and left to bleed out the remainder of their formerly happy peaceful lives, which can take anything up to six minutes to extinguish! Dolphin lovers unknowingly fund Annual Dolphin Slaughter!! It is the paying spectators, customers, whose money ultimately keeps the captive marine mammal industry alive.

With the profits earned from these international marine mammal entertainment venues the owners are able to return year after year to the few remaining places, like Taiji in Japan, to reinvest their dolphin yielded profit and have the Taiji slaughters conduct more eradication drives (Actually called 'drive fisheries').

I'm starving

Due to the amount of oil spillage and the unchecked amounts of toxic waste we dump in our oceans, dolphins are so contaminated with mercury, PCBs and other metal toxins that their flesh more than qualifies as dangerously toxic and if consumed hazardous to human health, especially pregnant women. The Japanese government has been advised on numerous occasions that dolphin and whale meat consumption is now a scientifically proven health hazard, not to mention immoral. However the government continue to allow the sale of this contaminated flesh in supermarkets and has done nothing to alert its people to the danger of consumption.

It is for human society to protect the Earth's marine dolphins and whales and support the Japanese people by informing them of the truth and thereby giving them the right to choose!

The Japanese government claim slaughtering, selling and eating both dolphins and whales is an intrinsic part of Taiji's tradition and culture, historical privilege no less. Claiming that they have been doing it for thousands of years, and no one has a right to criticise them because of it. Reminiscent of claims of rights to keep slaves. A right to sell the drug thalidomide. And thank goodness people from all walks of life and all nations stood up to be counted and forced these atrocities to fall.

Can you help?

For more information, and to volunteer to help organise the global challenge to stop this dolphin slaughter, or to request copies of the petition please check: <http://seashepherd.org>

Fun in the Sun (continued from page 6)

www.tourismconcern.org.uk A campaigning organisation that works with local communities to reduce social and environmental problems related to tourism.

www.responsibletravel.com Aims to help travellers book real and authentic holidays that also benefit the environment and local people.

www.c-e-r-t.org An independent, voluntary, non-profit making organisation, which aims to show how tourism can protect the environment, wildlife and culture at holiday destinations.

Take action

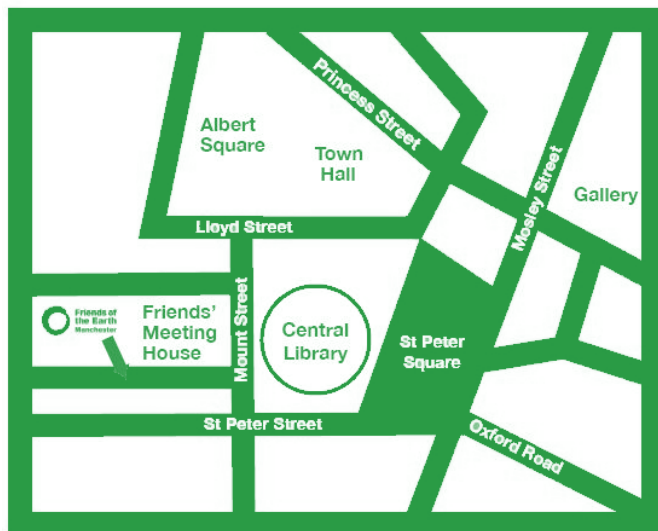
Campaigns Meetings

Our campaigns meetings take place from 7pm to 9pm on the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Wednesday of each month in the Friends Meeting House on Mount Street, near Central Library.

Events

Saturday 5th August and Saturday 2nd September - Fairly Traded Market, Piccadilly Gardens
Friday 8th - Sunday 10th September - Local Groups' Conference

See our website for the latest on forthcoming events:
<http://www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/calendar.htm>



Time to Save the Planet...

If you have...

15 minutes... Write to your MP and demand that he or she support company law reform to make companies more accountable for their environmental and social impacts (see page 4).

If you have...

30 mins... next time you go shopping take a little more time to consider buying more ethical products (see www.ethicalconsumer.org).

If you have...

one hour... then check out our calendar of activities and get involved! (above)

For more money- & planet-saving tips, visit www.savecashsaveplanet.org.

Manchester Friends of the Earth Membership Form

Please complete the form below and post it to Manchester Friends of the Earth, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS. Pay by standing order and receive three months free membership! To do this, fill in sections 1 and 2, setting the first payment date three months into the future, not forgetting to sign and date the form.

1. Your Details

Name: _____ Address: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____ Postcode: _____

Membership type (please tick one box): Armchair Active (including meeting/event notifications by e-mail)

Membership rate (please tick one box): £3 unwaged £6 low waged £12 waged £20 household

Method of payment (please tick one box): Cheque (made payable to Manchester Friends of the Earth)

Standing order: Please complete section 2 below.

Tick here if you prefer to receive our newsletter by email rather than through the post.

Tick here to receive four free issues of the National FoE magazine, Earthmatters (new members only).

2. Standing Orders

Name on the account: _____ Branch name and address: _____

Bank account number: _____

Branch sort code: _____ Postcode: _____

Instructions to the bank: Please pay the sum of £_____ on the _____ day/date of each month/year (delete as appropriate) until further notice to 'Manchester Friends of the Earth' account number 65164538, sort code 08-92-99, bank address: The Co-operative Bank Plc, PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

3. Gift Membership: If you would like to make this membership a gift to someone, please add the recipient's details:

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Postcode: _____

Message (up to 30 words): _____