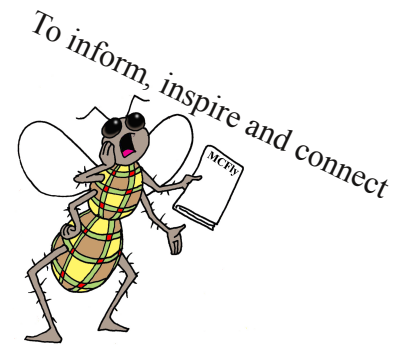


Manchester Climate Monthly

manchesterclimatemonthly.net



Vol 1, no 1, January 2012

OFF TO A FLYING START?

In November we asked - via the formal legal channels - for some pretty straight-forward information from Manchester City Council. It's information they are legally obliged to give, and we think it's of interest to readers. Those questions were -

- * A breakdown of the number of flights (dates, destinations and numbers of people), both domestic and international, including flights that did not originate or end at Manchester International Airport, taken by elected members and officers of the Strategic Management Team in the period from December 1st 2009 to November 21st 2011.
- * The name of the company (companies) with which Manchester City Council has offset those flights
- * The total tonnage of carbon dioxide "offset"
- * The total amount of money spent on offsetting these flights.
- * Are there any formal procedures or protocols through which an assessment is made as to whether a flight can be substituted with a) teleconferencing b) train

And, after many assurances via email and phone calls from council officers that they would indeed meet their obligations, here are the answers we've received...

Watch. This. Space.

And in the meantime, read our editorial "Fingers burnt, lessons learnt" on the website.

INSIDE: The year just gone & the year ahead. Competitions! Book reviews!

COUNCILS OF DESPAIR

This page *will be* a news round-up of what's happening (and what's not) from all the Town Halls of Greater Mank. We need your leads and leaks! If you live in one of the other 9 local authority areas, please, find out what's happening and tell us. For more detailed reports, see our website., manchesterclimatemonthly.net

Executive

Manchester City Council has 96 councillors. Decisions are taken by a 9 member Executive (MCFly has made a short video about the 2011 Exec – click on the “watch videos” tab on our website). At its next meeting, on January 18, the Exec may well be agreeing a big green (lots of newbuild, lots of retrofit) regeneration project in Gorton West. Watch this space.

At its July meeting, the Executive will be agreeing Manchester City Council's Annual Carbon Budget.

More on that in t' next issue of MCFly, out February 6.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

There are six “overview and scrutiny” committees. They are made up roughly 18 councillors each, and their job is to, well, overview and scrutinise. (We made a youtube – see the “watch videos” tab on our website). In December MCFly attended the “Communities and Neighbourhoods” O & S, at which a progress report on the progress on the Climate Change Action Plan was delivered. (See the 'tag cloud on our website).

Meanwhile, the Economy, Employment and Skills O&S committee is going to be working with a group of people who signed an open letter to produce a report on the concept of a “Steady State Economy.”

<http://manchesterclimatemonthly.net/2011/12/07/newsflash-council-and-campaigners-to-investigate-steady-state-economy/>

The signatories (including a MCFly editor) have not yet heard back from the Council, but the report will be presented sometime after May.

Planning and Highways Committee

On January 19 the Planning and Highways Committee (the clue is in the name) will decide whether Christie's Hospital should be allowed to build a multi-story car park in Withington. MCFly will be running a story on this on the website in the coming two weeks, and plans to report from the meeting itself.

The **Manchester Climate Change Action Plan** (also known as “Manchester: A Certain Future”) has been in existence now for over two years. It aims for a 41% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, and a process that creates “low-carbon thinking” in the lifestyles and operations of the city. Only 219 organisations have endorsed it (the target was 1000). Only three have actually produced implementation plans, including the City Council and Northwards Housing (an “arms-length management organisation” controlled by the Council.)

Steering Group and "Annual" Stakeholder Conference

Set up in the middle of 2010, a 12 member steering group was supposed to, well, steer climate action in Manchester. It didn't exactly set the world on fire in 2011, and/but has recently decided to expand. It accepted all applications, so is now a 32 member body. It will next meet in mid-January. One of the decisions the version 1.0 group took was to ignore the commitment made to elect people to the Steering Group at the “annual” stakeholder conference (which was due November 2011). They didn't even set up a “devil's advocate” group to look at how elections *could* be held, or the reputational consequences of cancelling elections.) Now THAT'S the way to show consistency and respect for democratic processes, eh?

We asked the people responsible for the 2012 “Annual” Stakeholder conference, due in early March, repeatedly for answers to the following questions;

1. A statement on the decision to delay the conference
2. Plans for the March conference and what kind of things we can look forward to
3. You will be working with a non-existing budget, so how will that affect plans?
4. And finally, have you had any success reeling in sponsors and supporters?

We got no answers. The event is two months away and a “hold the date” email has not even been sent out.

There may, as the song goes, be trouble ahead...

The **Environmental Strategy Programme Board** has been meeting every couple of months, but without posting its minutes on the Council website. These minutes were recently prised out of the Council and can be seen at www.scribd.com/ManchesterClimate.

We will be taking a closer look at these minutes in the coming weeks. For more info

<http://manchesterclimatemonthly.net/2011/12/15/mind-reading-ability-no-longer-required-for-esp-board-minutes>

what YOU can do

Contact your local councillors! Point out that the current action on climate change is too little and too late. Ask them /suggest to them how things could and should be done better. (While getting on with stuff yourselves, naturally)

News Wrap

This page is going to contain news about what is (and isn't!) being done by community groups, businesses, churches, mosques, tenants and residents associations etc etc. Please please please send us your news!

Business

Yearsley Group, the largest cold storage company in the UK has taken delivery of 20 "low emissions" trucks, costing £1.4m. This follows the installation of solar panels at its HQ, and a scheme to reduce "wasted" road miles. The company is headquartered in Heywood. MCFly has submitted some questions to them, not heard back yet. Watch this space.

Pannone, the Manchester-based law firm (which, incidentally, took part in a July 2011 seminar on Manchester's "Airport City") announced that it had "*gained accreditation to the rigorous ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standard, which involved establishing an environment and sustainability policy...*" We asked them some questions, not heard back yet. Watch this space. [CORRECTION: 4/1/2012 - Pannone had NOT been contacted when this was published. The error is mine. See apology post 3/1/2012 Marc Hudson]

National

Green Investment Bank

Manchester is one of twenty cities which has made an official bid to host the Green Investment Bank. The bank will be government funded to the tune of £3 billion and is expected to funnel £15 billion of private finance over four years into green projects. Main areas of work are offshore wind, energy from waste, waste processing /recycling and supporting the Green Deal. Although a blip saw Manchester accidentally copy the text from the Leeds bid for their website, they are hoping to tempt the bank with cheap rent. The final decision will be made by Vince Cable this February and the bank will be launched in April 2012.

MCFly will be speaking to John Ashcroft who is leading the bid for Manchester this week so keep an eye out for that on our blog.

Solar Energy Feed-in Tariff

The government recently lost a High Court case (go FoE!) about its high-handed reduction of a feed-in tariff before the "consultation" had even finished. What does this turnaround mean for Manchester's ambitious scheme? Watch this space...

Green Deal

This is the financial means by which the Government hopes to encourage homeowners, landlords and businesses to insulate their properties. The consultation on it finishes on January 18th. Secondary legislation (the primary legislation was the Energy Act) is scheduled to go through parliament before July. If everything goes according to plan, the scheme starts rolling out in the Autumn. There are lots of questions about this - MCFly will be asking 'em. And maybe getting answers too.

<http://manchesterclimatemonthly.net/2011/12/04/event-report-greening-the-green-deal/>

International

Durban Climate Conference

Well, they agreed to meet to talk some more. Quelle surprise.

<http://manchesterclimatemonthly.net/learn/international-policy-stuff/analysis-of-durban-by-climate-action-tracker/>

Next April "**Rio + 20**" happens - another big international conference because... it's 20 years since the Rio "Earth Summit" of 1992.

MANCHESTER CLIMATE MONTHLY READING GROUP



Monday 6 February, 7pm for a 7.30 start
Waterhouse Pub (front room on the right)
Princess St (in the shadow of the Town Hall...)

The book? George Orwell's Animal Farm

Come along, meet new friends, get a free copy of MCFly's February issue.

more info at

manchesterclimatemonthly.net/about/readinggroup

MAKING UP FOR

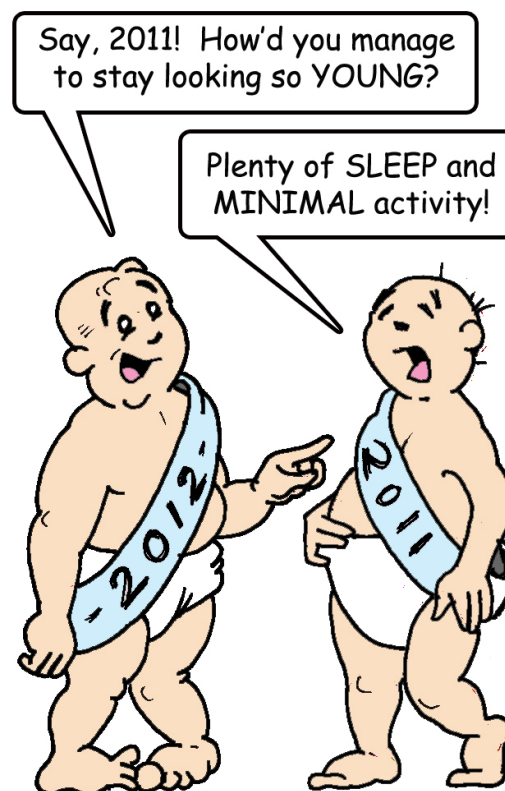
MCFly editor Arwa Aburawa investigates the year just gone and the year ahead.

In the immortal words of Oasis, MCFly will not be looking back in anger at the quiet and uneventful year of 2011. Live and learn, we say. So in the spirit of the new year, we have asked various groups from around Manchester about the success/disappointments of the past year, plans for the year ahead and what they want to see council/businesses/campaigners do in the next three years to deal with climate change.

So, the major success stories of 2011 in Manchester?

Well, Manchester's Green Party have set up a Young Green Group at the University which has already established a food co-op. Manchester Friends of the Earth (MFoE) have been successfully challenging the UK government's decision to cut support for solar energy, they helped stop plans to degrade a cycling route near Didsbury Park and also hosted a second Bike Fabulous event in the city. The Campaign Against Climate Change group attended Camp Frack and helped inform local campaigners about the dangers of fracking (a method of extracting natural gas from underground) and how to stop it. Stop the Expansion of Manchester Airport (SEMA) found it encouraging that Manchester City Council had acknowledged the concern of local residents and campaigners against the continued expansion of the airport.

Manchester Environmental Student's Society managed to write and submit part of a business plan to redevelop the Fallowfield Botanical Garden at Manchester University into an organic, aquaponic growing space. The University of Manchester was placed in the top 15% of the Carbon Reduction Commitment league this year and is part of a organic veg co-op. According to Cllr Nigel Murphy, the executive member for the Environment at Manchester City Council, the main achievement of the year for the council was being ranked in the top 5% of the Carbon Reduction Commitment league and joint fourth highest local authority in the country.



And the major disappointments?

Unsurprisingly government cuts and lack of resources feature quite a lot in the major disappointments of the year. Manchester City Council state that the cuts to the Feed in Tariffs for solar panels meant the amount of panels that could be installed fell from 6,000 to under 500. Transition Chorlton state they were unable to secure the resources to carry out the activities they had planned and Manchester Environmental Student's Society (MESS) add that they were unable to run a series of free, public lectures due to a management decision to charge for room bookings. The Green Party acknowledged that whilst their local election results were fairly good in some places, they were disappointed to fall well short of winning a seat. SEMA's major disappointment was the council's failure to respond to the Department for Transport's 'Scoping Document' for a new aviation policy which was "an opportunity for the Council to act on its green-speak - and encourage a sensible airports policy."

LOST TIME?

Looking at the year ahead, Manchester Greenpeace want to expand by establishing a student group and the Green Party want to get back into the city council where they can influence policy. MFoE not only want to see the UK achieve its 2050 climate targets and get more people talking about environmental issues but they also want to encourage Manchester council to lead the way in responding to climate change. In particular, with a focus on sustainable transport and food-related issues. MESS are also hoping to encourage more people to get involved by hosting lectures and discussions.

The Council's main goals are to deliver actions set out in the council's Annual Carbon Reduction Plan for 2011-12 and also to work with other Greater Manchester authorities to write their climate change implementation plan for 2012-15. The Campaign Against Climate Change are hoping to hold a meeting in March to set up a national anti-fracking campaign and to help stop Quadrilla drilling in Lancashire. SEMA want to see as many people from Greater Manchester responding to the government's draft aviation policy which will be released for public consultation in March 2012 and for people to hold the government to its promises to be the 'greenest government ever'.

In the long-term, MFoE, the Green Party and MESS want to help put climate change back on the national and local agenda by involving more people. The link between jobs and green investment was highlighted as a means to address the current economic crisis. MESS remarked that the "best thing that Mancunians, as a community, can do is to find out about low-carbon energies and how they can reduce their consumption of energy and goods". The Council would like to see more organisation endorsing their climate plans 'Manchester-A Certain Future' and more people taking advantage of energy efficiency and low carbon schemes available to them.

Who didn't reply to repeated requests for answers?

URBED/MERCI/ Man Met Uni/ Environment Commission/ GM Chamber of Commerce/ Man Airport/ Corridor Manchester/ MCFC/ Steering Group

MCFly's answers to its own questions:

1. What was MCFly's main environmental achievements of 2011?

Since starting up in late October we've put 61 posts up, covered a bunch of events, helped convince the City Council to look at Steady State Economics (again), got a draft strategic plan for the coming two years. Best of all, we've already got a bunch of cool people writing articles/making videos for MCMonthly.

2. What were our major disappointments?

We're nowhere near as organised as we'd like to be, need to be, and *will be*. Any tips on project management from our readers would be great!

3. What are the main goals for the year ahead- what counts as a success?

See our strategic plan (complete with success metrics!), but in outline - we'll publish 12 MCFly's, hundreds of blog posts, inform people about what is and isn't happening, inspire them by showing what is and can be done, locally and globally, and connect folks who are currently unaware of each others' existence. We will train up anyone who wants in the gentle arts of Freedom of Information Act requests, youtube making, facilitation. For starters.

4. How can someone who has an hour a week and an allergy to meetings participate in a meaningful way?

We have a list of "jobs that need doing" on our website. Some are easy, some are tricky and would involve being mentored. But no boring meetings with chest-beating and long speeches. Promise.

5. Given the urgency of climate action, what do we believe should the council/businesses /campaigners do in the next three years to deal with climate change?

Everyone needs to get their game face on. The council needs to take its legal obligations for transparency and openness seriously. Councillors need to scrutinise the plans and their implementation more effectively. The campaigners need to set short-term realistic targets and work toward them. Most of all, they need to keep the trickle of people who come to their meetings and events, and give them something useful to do that offers autonomy, mastery and purpose.

What you can DO

Reduce your personal footprint

All the standard personal stuff - drive less, fly less (cough cough).

Eat less meat. Buy less stuff.

Insulate your house - see the Energy Savings Trust's "Get me toasty" campaign

<http://www.getmetoasty.com>

Ask at work - is there an environmental policy? If not, why not? If there is, is it being implemented?

Has your organisation endorsed the Manchester Climate Change Action Plan?

Increase your political footprint

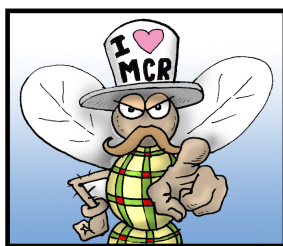
Join a group - see calendar on page eight. Don't be discouraged with how you get ignored for the first few times you go. Don't take it personally. It's just the way the environmental movement rolls at present. That can change, and it would be really good if you were part of changing it... If you get fed up, come ask us at MCFly - we've **heaps** of useful work you could do...

Find out who your local councillors are (even if you are deprived enough not to live in Manchester City Council's area.)

What have they done to get the council more active? What could they do? Do they even know about climate change as a local government issue?

Get involved with MCFly

Subscribe, forward articles to your friends
send us news!, write for us, volunteer...



Making Movies!!

We're making youtube videos about climate change and Manchester
So far we've made
"Manchester City Council's Executive in 84 seconds,"

"Bluffer's Guide to Oversight and Scrutiny Committees" and
"Why Subscribe to MCFly."

One of our volunteers has made "What motivates people"

www.youtube.com/user/McrClimateMonthly

Upcoming -

- * Airport City" for Beginners
- * The Environment Commission for Beginners
- * Climate governance in Manchester 2012, for beginners

What else should we be making?

Your suggestions are very welcome...

mcmmonthly@gmail.com

Can you help? If you have video-making expertise and/or equipment, please email us at

mcmmonthly@gmail.com

Later in the year we will be running training on basic (!!) video making. Watch this space.



Your intelligence is being consulted!

A "World-class Cycling City with More People Cycling More Often" or is Manchester on the cycle path to nowhere?

As part of a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MoU) signed in September 2010, Manchester City Council and British Cycling have published an "Interim Strategy for Cycling in Manchester" which is open for consultation until 31st January 2012.

The executive summary promises that "our vision for cycling in Manchester is to be a World-class Cycling City with More People Cycling More Often" a claim that was subject to much discussion at the Manchester Cycle Forum in December.

Strangely for a consultation document, it is not available on either the Manchester City Council or British Cycling websites. However, the 52-page document has been made available via Manchester Friends of the Earth Scribd site.

<http://www.scribd.com/ManchesterFoE>

If you would like to have your say on what is good or bad, and what needs to be added or changed in this draft strategy to help make Manchester a better city for cycling, then send your comments to Dave Whyte via d.whyte@manchester.gov.uk before 31st January 2012.

MCFly consultation on its own 2012-2013 Strategic Plan

MCFly has released a draft version of its Strategic Plan. We want readers' comments and suggestions on it.

Our tagline is "to inform, inspire and connect."

So far so straightforward - but who are we supposed to be informing? about what? how? when? How do we inspire? Who do we connect? How?

We'd love to hear people's words of wisdom, caution and even encouragement. We are especially keen to hear suggestions on how we get "beyond the ghetto" of people already concerned about climate change. Consultation closes 2 February 2012.

To comment, see our "Strategic Plan" section under the "about" tab on manchesterclimatemonthly.net

Books and Films and things...

BOOK REVIEW: **I'm With the Bears**

Verso, 2011, £8.99

reviewed by: Marc Hudson

Buy this book. Why? Two

reasons – 1) it's a

collection of great short stories (not cheerful, it has to be said!), and

2) cash from every sale goes to one of the least worst climate campaigning groups around, 350.org.

Verso, a publisher better known for slender/glossy books by Jean Baudrillard and worthy Marxist doorsteps, dreamt up the project three years ago, and sought out stories from writers like Helen Simpson, Margaret Atwood and Toby Litt. Some works were specially written, some were donated from previously published efforts. Most importantly, not one of the ten is a dud (always a concern with these Cause Related volumes). Some of them will act as depth charges, exploding days after you've read them.



BOOK REVIEW: **Earth Grab! Geopiracy, the New Biomasters and Capturing Climate Genes**

Pambazuka Press £14.95

Earth Grab! is a straight-forward

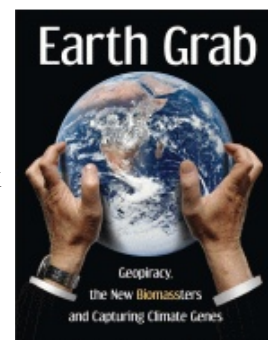
look at how the ecological crisis could get ugly(ier) if we end up relying on techno-fixes. The book is divided into three

sections/reports looking at geo-engineering, the biomass economy and genetically

engineered 'climate-ready' crops. It reads like a textbook and each chapter is filled with definitions, case studies, quotes, pictures and headings which break the topics down into very small manageable chunks.

The only down-side I can think of is that it can be a little apocalyptic. I mean, do people really believe that reflecting sunlight to cool the planet is a good idea? Or that we could realistically get everyone to agree to it?

Personally, I'd like to have a little faith in common sense. Overall, a well researched and clearly written book looking at important issues which will undoubtedly become more important as the climate situation gets more desperate.



Reviews already on the website: Shaping Urban Infrastructures (eds Simon Guy, Simon Marvin, Will Medd and Timothy Moss)

Reviews probably on t'website by the time you read this: Climate and Disaster Resilience in Cities (eds Shaw and Sharma), Cities and Climate Change by Simon Marvin and Mike Hodson, Hotter by Mark Hertsgaard

Forthcoming reviews: Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City by Andrew Ross (and no, he's not writing about Manchester) & Obesogenic Environments: Complexities, Perception and Objective Measures (eds Lake, Townshend and Alvanides)

Want to review for MCFly?

Fiction and non-fiction, documentaries and movies, plays and poetry - if you know of any recent work that you think deserves a wider audience (or is so bad MCFly readers should be warned in advance!), then please send us the details.

If you want to review for us, that'd be great. Please get in touch via mcmmonthly@gmail.com. If the book is relevant, we will ask the publisher for a review copy on your behalf.

Be warned, however, we expect reviews within 30 days of you getting the book, and we operate a "one strike and you are out" policy

MCFly LIBRARY: We are going to set up a book lending library. If you have climate/environment books you'd be willing to lend to people in Greater Manchester, or if you are a librarian who can give us advice/time, please get in touch! mcmmonthly@gmail.com

Date for the diary - 28 - 30 June 2012

"Everything We Need" at Royal Exchange, Manchester

The new solo show from award-winning writer and performer Ben Mellor, directed and dramaturged by Cheryl Martin, with live music from Dan Steele and Leonie Higgins. Drawing inspiration from both classic myth and climate change research, the piece is a humorous, moving and lyrical look at a diverse collection of contemporary characters as they struggle to come to terms with a changing world.

www.benmellor.net

CAPTION CONTEST



What sign is Council Leader Richard Leese standing in front of with various Green Worthies? All suggestions - libellous and scurrilous - welcome, but sadly we can't print the libellous ones... Submit to mcmmonthly@gmail.com with "caption contest" in the header. First prize a kiss from one of the editors. Second prize, as ever, is two kisses...

Tues 10, 7- 9pm Manchester Friends of the Earth Full Group Meeting Green Fish Resource Centre on 46-50 Oldham Street (next to Mint Lounge) cat@manchesterfoe.org.uk or on 07754 042716

Thurs 12 Jan 7-9pm Manchester Green Party meeting 'Growing Food in the City' Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount St.

Thurs Jan 12, 8pm Planning meeting for the 2012 Chorlton Big Green festival upstairs at St Clement's Church. Chorlton

Fri 13 Jan, 7.30pm Abundance Manchester meeting at the Work for Change offices in Hulme, M15 5RF, in the Yellowbricks (same building as Kim by the Sea) 07967 227 981.

Weds 18 Jan Manchester City Council Executive meets – "Green West Gorton" probably on the agenda Manchester Town Hall

Thurs 19 Jan Manchester City Council Planning and Highways Committee meeting – A whopping big carpark at Christie's or no? Manchester Town Hall

Tues, 24 - 26 Jan "Retrofit 2012 Conference" The Lowry, Salford Quays." Retrofit 2012 will look to accept papers from disciplines including the sciences, economics, built environment, business and management, information technology and computing, psychology and sociology." Not cheap, though... <http://retrofit2012.com>

Thurs 26 Jan, 9.30 to 1pm Sustainability in Austerity: Communities doing more with less £149 + VAT per person Drawing

upon international insights from Liverpool to Melbourne, the masterclass will share cost-neutral ways for councils and their partners to mobilise resources and behaviour change amongst staff and residents in order to nurture communities, protect the environment and save money.

Thurs 26 Jan, 6pm Fuelling Manchester – a networking & socialising opportunity for community renewables projects across Greater Manchester. Bulls Head Pub (M1 2PN)

Thurs 26 Jan, 6.30pm Manchester Friends of the Earth Campaigns Meeting. Regular campaign groups meet at 6.30pm for transport and at 7pm for climate change and food. Contact

colette@manchesterfoe.org.uk for more info . 46-50 Oldham St,

Thurs 26, 8pm Greenpeace monthly meeting, upstairs at Ape and Apple pub, John Dalton St, City Centre.

Fri 27, 8.00am until 9.00am Critical Commute from Levenshulme, Prestwich, Stretford, Chorlton, Worsley and Withington, to Manchester Every last Friday of the month, join the communal cycle ride into Manchester. For more information contact

graeme@manchesterfoe.org.uk or cat@manchesterfoe.org.uk

CALENDAR

For more info about these events, including hyperlinks to the organisers' own pages, click on the "meet" menu tab on t'website. We make no claim to being complete, and appearance in the calendar is NOT an endorsement of the advertised group/event. If you know of events we've not included, please email us!

Thurs 5, 2pm Free Symposium: Japan Society for the Promotion of Science at Whithworth Art Gallery. The creators of Air Pressure will talk about their work and the ways that art-science collaborations illuminate the social, political and ethical issues in the public understanding of science. For more info/to book whitworth@manchester.ac.uk or 0161 275 7450

Sat 7, 10am-1pm The Riverbank Market Garden will be opening its gates, with a free cookery class run by Cracking Good Food, advice on home composting and people can sign up for free training on growing food, cooking and composting over the next few months.

Riverbank Market Garden is behind the Co-op on the junction of Barlow Moor Road and Hardy Lane in Chorlton. The Garden can be reached along a short access road adjacent to the dentist.

For further info; Amanda Benson, Project Manager on (07989) 198687 or riverbank.amanda@gmail.com

Manchester Climate Monthly exists to inform, inspire and connect people working - or wanting to work - towards a more resilient and fair Greater Manchester.

Its editors are not members of any political party or employed by any local authority. MCM receives no funding at all, yet.

Our email is mcmmonthly@gmail.com

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www.marcrobertscartoons.com

Thanks to: Laurence, Dama, Mark

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