

# Manchester Climate Monthly

manchesterclimatemonthly.net



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## NEW! AGONY AUNT

Helping with your climate-change related blues  
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# Stakeholder Conference 2013 – beyond satire

*Manchester Climate Monthly spoke to Steve Connor, chair of the Steering Group charged with overseeing Manchester's Climate Change Action Plan. about the Stakeholder conference, due to take place during "Climate Week" this March.*

## MCFly: Who exactly is organising the stakeholder conference?

Connor: The Steering Group and Groundwork along with staff support from Manchester City Council and also volunteers.

## Is it a whole day/half day event?

We're not sure yet. There are some clashes that we need to avoid during Climate Week so it's most likely to be at the beginning of the week but we haven't decided anything yet. [The official manchesterclimate.com website has been saying - since before Christmas - the conference would happen on Friday 8th March.]

## What is the venue?

No venue yet.

## How will people sign up?

That hasn't been decided yet. We're working to make sure that people get 8 week's notice which is what's usually given for big events.

## Are any any fringe events being planned?

Yes, a call out for fringe events to organisations has been sent out and hoping to organise them

along the five main themes of MACF- Buildings, Energy, Transport, Green & Blue Infrastructure, Sustainable Consumption & Production.

## What's the budget?

We haven't finalised that yet.

## Is there a "sponsoring organisation"?

## What efforts have been made to get sponsorship?

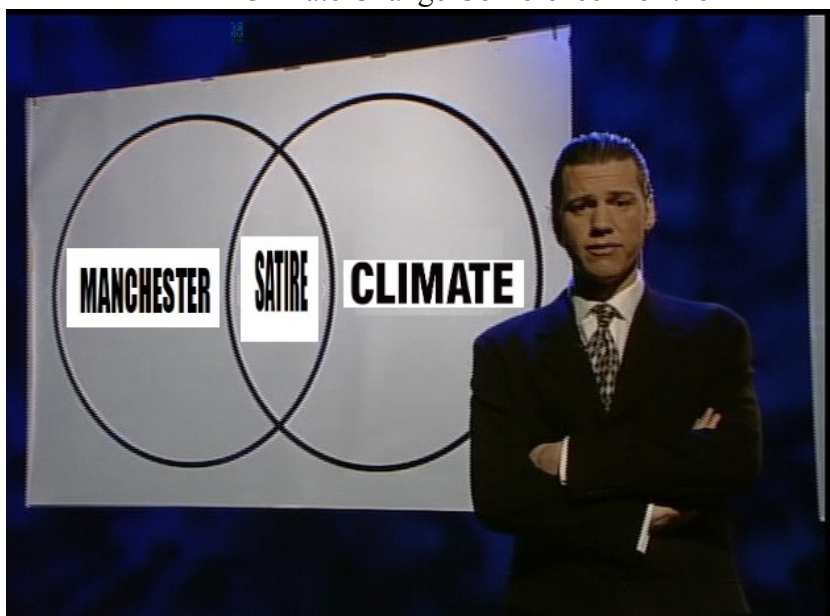
Not yet although a sub group of the Steering Group met in December to discuss details.

## Who from the steering group has "oversight" of this?

There is no lead for the conference yet although a sub-group met before Xmas meet to discuss and I haven't caught up with what was decided yet.

**MCFly says:** We have been here before. This time last year (January 13th 2012)

Manchester Climate Monthly broke the news of the date of the second (delayed-without-announcement-or-apology) "Stakeholder Climate Change Conference" for the



# AGONY AUNT



Dear Miss Movements,  
I am one of the coordinators of a large and amicable environmental group here in Manchester. We have hundreds of people on our email list,

but only a small number of those show up to meetings and are actively involved in what we do. How can I get those people who can't - or won't - come to meetings to feel involved?

Frustrated on Eco-involvement

Hello FoE. Ah yes, the Pareto problem – 20 percent of any given population does 80 percent of the work. This is one of those annoying and pervasive “laws” that covers things like complaints, profits – you name it. First the bad news - in your case, this Pareto problem is probably worse than you think.

The people coming to your meetings – in the evening, I'd guess, in the city centre – are more likely than average to have no responsibility for children (either haven't had them or are empty nesters), more likely than average to be university-educated, and not have a grinding day job to go to the following morning. And there's social phobia too – for many people walking into a roomful of strangers is a daunting prospect.

Now the good news. We have the technology to mitigate the Pareto problem. Here are some ideas;

- + make sure that a brief summary of what happened, what was decided, what is coming up next is sent out on the email list/blogged.
- + Make sure to have a list of “jobs that need doing cos no-one at the meeting was able to volunteer”
- + Look at live-streaming of your public events – start with audio perhaps, but think about video too!

# THE MONTH AHEAD

## Workshop: Everything you want to know about Steady State Economics

Saturday 19th January, 2013

2-5.30pm

Methodist Central Hall, Oldham St., Manchester.

The workshop will be an opportunity to:

- Learn about steady state economics
- Discuss the suggestions in the report for developing steady state economics in Manchester - Add your ideas

Please read the reports beforehand - they can be downloaded at <http://tinyurl.com/a96bzqt>. Places are strictly limited to 25. If oversubscribed, we'll run it again. Book now by sending your name, e-mail address/ address and a refundable deposit of £5 on attendance at the day to 'Steady State Manchester', 37 Chandos Rd South, Manchester, M21 0TH.

### First Time Reader?

Climate change is coming harder and faster than scientists thought. It's caused by our use of oil, coal and gas. Manchester will not be immune. We have three choices: we can bury our heads in the sand, we can talk a good game or we can cut our energy use and increase our resourcefulness. MCFly is for people, organisations and communities who want to do the third.

+ Find out what it is that people want from their membership, and try to supply it for them. For many it will be a “warm inner glow”, and those are unlikely to respond to any number of inducements. Others will want to feel involved in a group of friends. Others still will be looking for specific tasks within a larger project that has a realistic chance of making a worthwhile difference. Unless you are telepathic, you are going to have to ask!

It can all seem like more trouble than it is worth, but groups that don't do this work shrink, harden into cliques and often disappear altogether. If we want a growing movement, we have to take practical steps. Good luck, and let me know how you get on.

Disclaimer: All allusions and insinuations to people living in Manchester are entirely intentional.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

## Reduce your personal footprint

All the standard personal stuff - drive less, cycle more, fly less (cough cough cough). Eat less meat. Buy less stuff. Insulate your house! 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? Doing all that is important in its own right, but also so you have credibility (and aren't accused of hypocrisy) when you...

## Increase your political footprint

Join a group (see calendar on page eight) or go to an event. You could also volunteer with Cooler Projects on their Carbon Literacy programme - see [www.coolerprojects.com](http://www.coolerprojects.com) for more information.

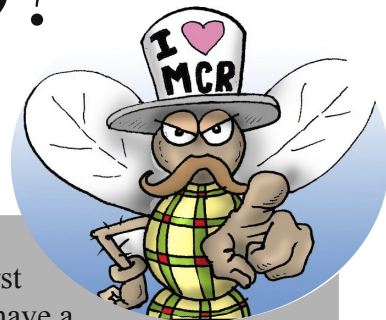
Find out who your local councillors are (even if you are deprived enough not to live in Manchester City Council's area). What have they done to get the council more active? What could they do? Do they even know about climate change as a local government issue?

## Get involved with MCFly

Subscribe, forward articles to your friends. Send us news! Write for us, volunteer...

## What you may have missed...

If you're reading MCFly for the first time, you may not realise that we have a website. We publish news stories, event reports, book reviews, opinion pieces and loads more. Go to [manchesterclimatemonthly.net](http://manchesterclimatemonthly.net)



## FROM THE COALFACE: Katrina Pickering from AfSL

### **What is your campaign trying to achieve?**

Action for Sustainable Living or AfSL as it's known helps people to live more sustainably by harnessing the power of individuals to become more active in their own communities. All of our work is rooted in the core values of holism, positive solutions, people-centred, local and lasting change.

### **What sustains you?**

Mostly, I draw on my life-long Buddhist practice as well as a very enthusiastic inner child - however, there is one single life-changing event that springs to mind. A few years ago, when I was struggling under the weight of a lot of work in the Transition Towns movement, Ben Brangwyn, one of the founders turned to me and said "Cat, do you think it's up to you to change the world?" He explained that when you're part of a movement, it's never just up to you.

Rather it's up to you and everyone else that you're working with. Since that day, I've always thought of what I'm trying to do on climate change in terms of "we" rather than "I" and I can honestly say life has not only been more

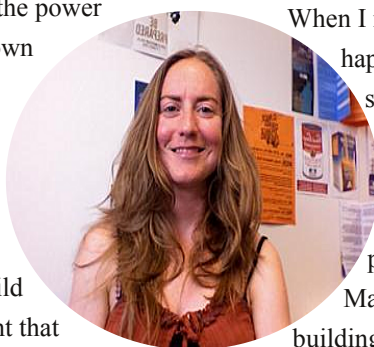
productive but much more enjoyable and sustaining since then.

### **What was the last big success?**

When I moved to Manchester a few months ago, I was happily surprised to find that so many of the sustainability projects around Manchester that I got to know about had been seeded by AfSL. Didsbury Dinners, Moss Cider, the Fallowfield Secret Garden, Stitched Up! All of these projects can be traced to a Local Project Manager training. Also, this year, we've been building up our Energy Academy project which works in housing associations to support residents on energy efficiency.

### **If people got involved in your group, what sorts of things would they end up doing?**

We do free 3-4 day training in being a volunteer "Local Project Manager". The training supports people to develop a project in their community around sustainability and covers the complete range of project management skills. We also provide 6 months of mentoring or more to help get projects off the ground. We're currently recruiting for our next training on weekend of 1st-3rd March. [www.afsl.org.uk](http://www.afsl.org.uk)



# Looking Ahead to 2013 - Manchester's Green Organisations

“

What were the big successes of 2012?

Starting to recruit members, carrying out 40 whole house retrofit property surveys and getting the opportunity to deliver a £400,000 Community Green Deal programme

What were the big lessons learnt?

That the more environmentally aware of us routinely under-heat our homes to the detriment of our health and that government are well intentioned on making reductions in carbon emissions but overly reliant on market-based, corporate-led solutions - time for a bottom up approach!

What we can expect from the Carbon Coop your in 2013?

Manchester's first programme delivering 80% CO2 reduction homes fit for 2050 living and exciting developments in the field of open source energy monitors.

How will you know that 2013 has been a success and the lessons of 2012 have been implemented?

When the open source energy monitors are showing 80% reductions in energy usage and, where applicable, improvements in air quality in at least 8 households in Greater Manchester. When the Carbon Co-op model is refined and able to be rolled out at scale in streets and communities around the North West



Jonathan Atkinson of The Carbon Coop

”

CarbonCo-op



What were the big successes of 2012?

Our 2 reports: In Place of Growth and Living Well. The launch, establishing the collective and web-site and keeping it alive. Putting ourselves on the map by being at as many events as poss. The leaflet and a programme for first 3 months 2013.

What were the big lessons learnt?

There is a lot of interest in what we are trying to do which we can harness. While the reports put us on the Manchester map, what happens next in terms of implementation of recommendations will depend greatly on our ability to stimulate conversations, action on the issues raised. - Judith Emmanuel

Big successes for Manchester Climate Monthly (that's us!) in 2012?

We published a print edition on the first Monday of every month, we updated the website very regularly and broke a lot of stories that no-one else is covering.

Aims for 2013?

- \* We will have 15 fully fledged "volunteers" working for us, using the "Activist Skills and Knowledge" scheme for their personal development

- \* That we have a website that is averaging 150 hits on weekdays

- \* That we have published another 12 print editions

- \* That we have got people willing to devote time to making the print edition happen in 2014, when both the current editors have Other Plans.



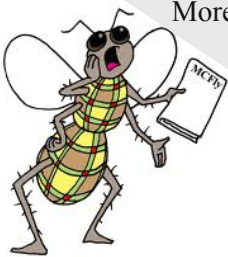
# What we can expect from the Manchester Green Party in 2013?

There are no local elections in 2013 so we can concentrate on campaigning and promoting not only our Green ideas & policies but supporting other organisations and campaigns doing good and important work in the city. We recognise that Manchester has communities under stress from local, national and international pressures and we will back groups working on these areas as well as global climate change and related issues. After our AGM on 10th Jan we are expecting to make a statement to supporters, friends and allies about plans for the year, including a major public meeting in Manchester with our party leader Natalie Bennett in the Spring.



Deyika Nzeribe of Manchester Green Party

## What YOU can expect from Manchester Climate Monthly in 2013:



More of the same, only better - more interviews, more features about what is and isn't happening in Greater Manchester

An agony aunt column

A "movement building" discussion page

A weekly "Practical McMonthly Task" for readers and supporters to do

A lot of videos about local issues

- Marc Hudson

## What were the big successes of 2012 for Manchester FoE?

- \* Celebrating (nearly) 40 years of Manchester Friends of the Earth with faces old and new.
- \* Launch of the "Getting Moving" cycling manifesto with support from 24 organisations.
- \* Promoting everyday cycling with our third Bike Fabulous event.
- \* Lobbying at the Labour Party conference - on fracking and bees!
- \* Increasing our membership from 78 to 129 - we rely on donations and membership to fund much of our campaigning.

## What were the big lessons learnt?

That it's good to try new things! We varied the format of meetings and other activities to provide a variety of ways to get involved with our campaigning activities. For example we held several themed events with external speakers (on climate change, renewable energy and food) which attracted more (and new) people to come along, rather than sticking with our traditional meeting format every month. We took our meeting outside in August as we held an urban bee walk round the city centre, thanks to Dave Barlow, biodiversity officer from MCC. In November we tried a meeting format specifically to attract new people along - and it worked as 10 new people came along and have been getting involved since.

- Pete Abel and Colette Humphreys



# NEWS AT SIX

## Beyond Belief, Beyond Satire: Manchester Climate Stakeholder Conference

*Continued from front page...*

How did the Steering Group react? Did they start planning for the next year's conference immediately, with a determination to help the city gain momentum, and to claw back squandered credibility? Did they choose a date? A venue? Establish a budget? Set up a working group to learn lessons and do outreach to ensure a wider range of attendees than 2012's pale, male and stale turn out? The questions may be rhetorical, but the answers – and their consequences – are deadly serious. The answers: No. No. No. No. No. And no.

Three and a half years after the Action Plan was agreed, a third of the way to the 2020 target, does ANYONE think this is acceptable, excusable?

Some questions arise from this farrago:

- \* What has the Steering Group been DOING all this time? (Maybe they could publish the minutes of their meetings in 2012? After all, they promised to, and they managed this difficult feat in 2011 and 2010).
  - \* Do they give a damn about the group's low (and steadily decreasing) reputation and profile?
  - \* Do members of this group – as individuals – ever wonder if continued membership of such an obviously non-functional group (dysfunctional would imply they were actually doing something) is a reputational risk?
  - \* Could they organise a piss-up in a brewery?
- Those answers: Nowt? Seems not. Seems not. No.

### Best of Bad Bunch?

From the Business Plan 2012/3 for the Greater Manchester Environment Team:

"With the exception of Manchester and Oldham, Districts have found it difficult to identify dedicated staff resources for the Environment Transition Team, but most have stated that they would consider providing some officer resource, particularly if it were linked with a particular project. Non- environmentally skilled staff may also be available for generic project work or tasks related to finance and marketing etc."

Translation - no other local authority particularly gives a damn. They will say it is because of the austerity cuts, but if you look at how little they did before 2010, you'd be shocked and despairing...



### Local

- \* The "Low Carbon Hub" met for the first time, chaired by Richard Leese, leader of Manchester City Council. Among other things, its members were told that basically no work has been done on the adaptation agenda since a big conference last May. Quelle surprise.
- \* A Stockport-based "entrepreneur has set up an online booking service "targeting stag and hen parties as well as people seeking to book a private jet to attend sporting events." (MEN 31 Dec 2012, page 31). Meanwhile, over half the 218 North west businesses surveyed by Lloyds TSB Commercial say they have "little or no understanding of sustainability. (MEN, 31 Dec 2012 page 32)

### National

- \* It emerges that 2012 was the second wettest on record – not bad going, given that up until March or April drought conditions were in force – hose-pipe bans and all that... The Tories continue to do nothing, and Labour continue to say nothing about climate change – mustn't frighten the swing voters, after all.

### International

- \* The United Nations Framework Circus on Climate Change (UNFCCC) continues to meet – why no-one quite knows. Habit, mostly. The Doha meeting produced nothing, and the December 2013 meeting is in Warsaw, a beautiful city worth a visit anyway...
- \* In September 2013 the next (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) IPCC science report comes out. Doubtless the denialists are already laying in supplies of wax to stuff in their ears and venom and bile to spray upon all and sundry.

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# CULTURE VULTURE

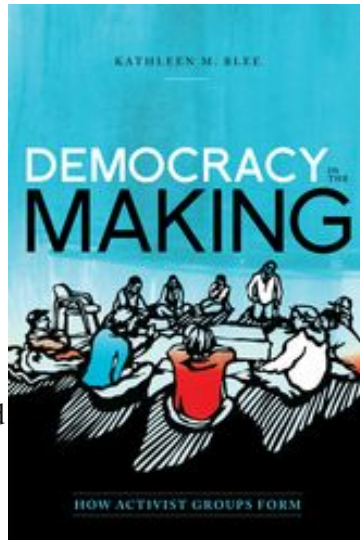
Book Review: Democracy in the making - How  
Activist Groups Form  
Oxford University Press  
2012  
211 pages  
Kathleen M. Blee

Do you give a damn about the future of democracy? Read this book. Do you want our species to respond to climate change with the speed and breadth it needs to? Read this book (although it barely mentions climate change at all). Do you need your faith in the ability of academics to have important ideas and insights and express them in real English? Read this book.

Kathleen Blee, an American sociologist, spent four years attending the meetings of new groups that sprang up in Pittsburgh between 2003 and 2007 around issues like the Iraq war, drug abuse, animal rights. She systematically charted the progress made, the techniques used. She conducted sixty lengthy interviews, focus groups and conversations with activists and former activists, people on the fringes. It could have gone horribly long – jargon and theory-for-its-own-sake and chest-beating covering up a lack of anything to say. It didn't.

Instead there are a series of stunning anecdotes and insights, backed up by intriguing but non-intrusive theory around whether people are actively recruited (the rhetoric and the reality differ), what fails to happen (plans never enacted, “silences that mark the boundaries of what can be considered”), group dynamics and what kind of leadership makes a difference. Throughout Blee shows an attention to fine detail – about who speaks, whose ideas are “approved”, how groups deal (or don't deal) with failure, success and the messy reality in between – that will prove extremely useful to anyone who thinks our future is too important to be left to Steering Groups and Strategy Boards and Scrutiny Committees.

MCFLy has a copy of this book we will gladly lend out. We encourage everyone to write to their local library and request the purchase of a copy or three. It really is the best thing you will read on social movements and democracy in 2013. \* A longer version of this review – with extensive quotation – will appear on the MCFLy website before the end of January - see [manchesterclimatemonthly.net](http://manchesterclimatemonthly.net) \*



## Film Review: Chasing Ice

The most important moments in this 80 minute documentary about the top of the world well, melting, come right at the beginning. So far right at the beginning that, if you are on autopilot, or if you are watching it on DVD, then you won't even catch them. What the hell am I talking about? I am talking about the adverts, my friend. Of which more later. The guy behind the documentary is James Balog, an “acclaimed photographer” who has been making books and films about our species' impact for a long time. “Traveling with a team of young adventurers across the brutal Arctic, Balog risks his career and his well-being in pursuit of the biggest story facing humanity. As the debate polarizes America, and the intensity of natural disasters ramps up globally, Chasing Ice depicts a heroic photojournalist on a mission to deliver fragile hope to our carbon-powered planet.”

Yes, a photojournalist so heroic that he ignores expert (medical) advice in order to keep taking footage (that other people could take) of the consequences of our species ignoring expert (climatological) advice. The irony, I think, was lost on him. Or in any case, didn't make the final cut. It's also not at all clear what “fragile hope” he is delivering, though I may have blinked.

There's nowt in the film (which I like and recommend, btw) about the insane levels of consumption that we are encouraging ourselves to indulge in. Which brings me back to the adverts:

- = Samsung Galaxy Camera
- = Boots (buy stuff for Christmas)
- = Nexus 7 (not the replicants, they were Nexus 6)
- = Dairy Lea (cow-a-bunga)
- = Volkswagen (they sponsor "independent cinema" y'see)
- = Car Insurance
- = ASDA (scenes of a typical – or aspirational - Christmas)
- = HTC smart phone

It's almost as if we are goldfish, and we simply cannot see the metaphorical water – the imperative to consume – all around us. Even (especially?) when the film we are about to watch is about the literal waters rising. Is the world a better place for the existence of this film? Well, it's a potentially better-informed place. Is the world a safer place? No, for that you need a growing, learning, organising and winning climate movement. And right now, that seems a very long way off indeed.

**Marc Hudson**



# CALENDAR

Inclusion in this calendar is NOT a guarantee of quality. If we think something is extremely likely to be worth your time, then we will put one or more little “thumbs up” icons next to it. We a) are maybe prejudiced about some groups b) have specific criteria about usefulness and c) could be wrong.

**For full listings go to our online calendar at [manchesterclimatemonthly.net/the-calendar/](http://manchesterclimatemonthly.net/the-calendar/)**

**Sat 19, 2.30-5.30pm** In Place of Growth workshop, Methodist Hall, Oldham Street. The workshop will be an opportunity to: Learn about steady state economics, discuss the suggestions in the report for developing steady state economics in Manchester and add your ideas. [steadystatemanchester.net](http://steadystatemanchester.net)

**Sat 19, 4.30pm to 7.30pm** Coffee Cranks Film Night at Pop Up Bikes Pop Up Bikes, Arch 5 Corporation Street, M4 4DG Manchester

**Sun 20, 5.30pm** “Grow Your Own” Rusholme Film Club, The Birch Community Centre, Brighton Grove, M14 5JT.

**Mon 21, 6.30 to 9pm** Climate Survivors monthly meeting Phil and Katherine’s home, Levenshulme. See [climatesurvivors.ning.com](http://climatesurvivors.ning.com)

**Tue 22, 10.30-13.00** Manchester City Council Environmental Strategy Programme Board meeting. Room 2.02 One First Street. Open to the public? I’m sorry, you must have mistaken this Local Authority for one that is genuinely interested in transparency and democratic engagement!

**Fri 25, 11-6.30pm** “Friends Meeting House open day. “In a few weeks’ time we’ll have some fantastic new meeting rooms, a much more accessible building, and a much more sustainable and eco-friendly one too. We’d love to show you what we’ve done, and our fabulous new facilities ... so we’re holding an open day. Pop in any time between 11am and 6.30pm. We’ll ply you with tea and cake, and our team will be available to chat and show you round.”

**Sat 26, 12noon** – Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Group meeting, Methodist Hall, Oldham St

**Tues 29, 7pm onwards** Sustainable Fashion Clothes Swap Party Manchester Women’s Institute. Swap an unloved good quality piece of ladies clothing (on hanger please), piece of costume jewellery, handbag or a pair of shoes (max 3 each items to swap).

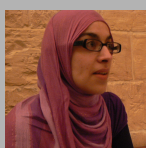
Manchester Climate Monthly exists to inform, inspire and connect people working - or wanting to work - towards a more resilient and fair Greater Manchester. Its editors are not members of any political party or employed by any local authority. MCM receives no political funding. But we have a Lush wodge of moolah. For our mission(s) and transparency mechanisms, please visit the "about" page on our website.

Our email is [mcmonthly@gmail.com](mailto:mcmonthly@gmail.com)

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