C L I M A T E E M O N T H L Y

manchesterclimatemonthly.net



Helping with your climate-change related blues



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Page 6

Movement Building:

What can we learn from the successes and failures of



previous social movements?

Page 5

"At the Coal Face": Interview with Helen Woodcock of Kindling Trust!

Page 4

First Time Reader?

Climate change is coming harder & faster than scientists thought. It's caused by our use of oil, coal & 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 & massively increase our resourcefulness. MCFly is for people, organisations & communities who want to do the third.

The Owl and the Pussy-cat wrote a tome On a beautiful deep green theme.

They made it funny, outrageously punny Humour in every scene.

The Owl looked up all the stats about carbon and ditching their car.

O lovely Pussy! O Pussy my love What a beautiful Pussy you are,

You are,

You are!

What a beautiful Pussy you are!'

Pussy said to the Owl, 'You observant fowl!

How charmingly sweet you write!

O let us be active! too long we've been captive:

Just what shall we challenge tonight?'

They flailed away, for a year and a day,

In the land where the wrong-tree grows

And there in a wood a councillor stood

With a ring at the end of his nose,

MAN

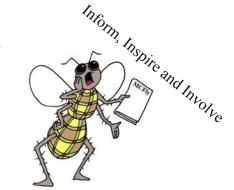
His nose.

His nose.

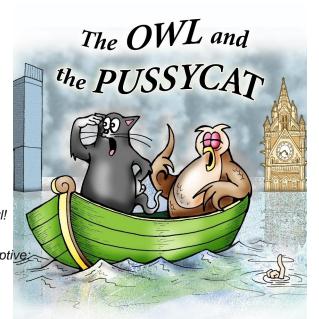
With a ring at the end of his nose

A CARTOON BOOK ABOUT MANCHESTER, CLIMATE CHANGE, WHAT IS BEING DONE, AND WHAT **NEEDS** TO BE DONE. LAUNCHED IN OCTOBER 2013!!

to be continued...



Vol 2, No. 9. September 2013



Notes on a non-scandal

If a scandal happens in a forest of words, but everyone pretends to look the other way, does it matter? Philosophers can debate it all they like, but the facts remain.

Manchester City Council is one of only two organisations with a strategy to implement the

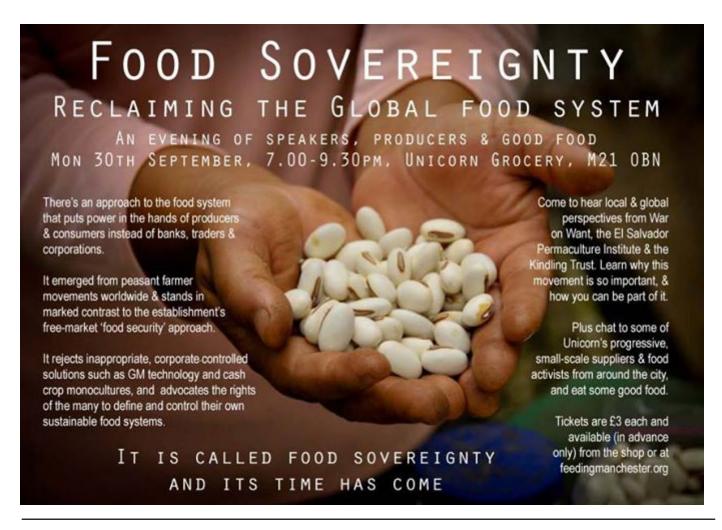
"Manchester Climate Change Action Plan." That plan was launched with great fanfare in 2009 with ambitious and specific goals.

Having (finally) spotted that Manchester City Council had been using a 2010 baseline for its "reduction" plans (see last month's MCFly for that sordid saga), we asked them "When did 2009/10 become the agreed baseline year for the Council's emissions? In the Manchester Climate Change Action Plan, agreed by the Executive on November 17th 2009, goal one was a 41% reduction on carbon dioxide emissions by 2020 from a 2005 baseline."

The reply, received a mere month later, would make Kafka weep; "the baseline for Manchester - A Certain Future is 2005. The baseline for the Council's internal CO2 reduction activities is 2009/10. Further information on the Council's CO2 emissions is available in the Annual Carbon Reduction Plans. They have been reported to Neighbourhoods Scrutiny

Committee over the last four years and are available on the Council's website."

Continued on page 3



AGONY AUNT

Dear Miss Movements,

I'm old enough to remember the miners strike, which strikes the minors in my action group as kind of cute. Most of them weren't out of the womb when Maggie Maggie Was out out out. They like having me around, I think, but some seem to be rolling their eyes and then checking their – I believe it is called "bookface"? - whenever I propose an activity or caution against the group making the same mistakes that I made in my youth. How can I help them all to see I am an invaluable resource, not an old lonely codger?

Geriatric Radical Alienating Novice Doers and Demonstrators

Well, GRANDAD.

You've reached that dreadful age – just when you start realising your parents were right, your children start telling you that you're wrong. It was ever thus.

Nobody likes to be told they're doing it all wrong when they're doing it for the first time, even if they are. Rather than giving specific advice, perhaps you could encourage and support habits of reflection, so that no matter what your group gets up to, it learns from its own successes and failures? That's better than shouting advice from the sidelines of history, no?

It may also be that you have to cultivate one or two of these and let them be the yoof voice of reason, with you as an eminence-gris (or blanc) in the background. Ideas are rarely, after all, judged on their merit alone, but by the "social capital" of their advocate.

It shouldn't, of course, have to be like this, but these are the games the species insists on playing...

ACT NEW CRANT

F

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 or two. You may need to "shop around" until you find one you like. Make sure it's one where they give a damn about your development, your morale, and the long-run. Climate change activism is a marathon, not a sprint, after all.

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 their council more active? What could they do?

Do they even know about climate as a local government issue?

Get involved with MCFly

Subscribe, forward articles to your friends. Send in news! Write for it, volunteer... In the next month, that is...

"Inspiring" Quote of the Month



"Instead of saying that *everyone* – i.e. every *one* – is responsible for climate change, we all have to do our bit, it would be better to say that no-one is, and that's the very problem. The cause of ecocatastrophe is an impersonal structure

which, even though it is capable of producing all manner of effects, is precisely not a subject capable of exercising responsibility. The required subject – a collective subject – does not exist, yet the crisis, like all the other global crises we're now facing, demands that it be constructed. Yet the appeal to ethical immediacy that has been in place in British political culture since at least 1985 – when the consensual sentimentality of Live Aid replaced the antagonism of the Miners Strike – permanently defers the emergence of such a subject."

Page 66 of Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative? by Mark Fisher

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.

- * Government wanting to gag citizens? #whatasurprise #Trafford
- * Art Gallery patrons left in the dark #Manchester #climate #toptrumps

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1: We then asked "Is [the Council] happy for all the other organisations that have endorsed the climate change action plan and are busily working towards Goal 1 to do the same?"

The reply came the same day (!): "individual organisations are best placed to decide how they best develop and deliver their plans, including the establishment of baselines."

We then approached various organisations that say they are trying to make Manchester greener. And asked;

- a) is your organisation happy that the Council has set itself an easier target
- b) is your organisation happy that other endorsing organisations can choose their own baseline year and
- c) if your organisation is not happy, what it is going to do about it.

We asked Friends of the Earth. They suggested that 2010 baseline might lead to greater savings, and said they'd give us a statement. They didn't.

We asked Climate Survivors. They said they'd give us a statement. They didn't.

We asked Steady State Manchester, Cooler Projects (purveyors of "Carbon Literacy"), the Tyndall Centre and the Sustainable Consumption Institute of University of Manchester. None replied. We asked the chair of the Environmental Sustainability Subgroup of Manchester City Council. She didn't reply. We asked the Chair of the Steering Group. He was on holiday. Two groups did reply. Carbon Coop told us; "Carbon Co-op's work is focused on individual households. We baseline people's energy usage and carbon emissions, propose ways to reduce these in order to meet 2050 carbon emission targets and look for methods to evaluate and verify these reductions. We advocate a similar approach to carbon reduction on a city-wide scale utilising clear, transparent and accountable methodologies. However, our expertise doesn't reside on this wider, macro scale and so at the moment we are neither qualified nor able to comment on city or city region approaches."

Manchester Green Party gave us a statement after our deadline, which we will publish on the MCFly website.



HELEN WOODCOCK Kinding Trust

www.kindling.org.uk

What is your campaign trying to achieve?

It sounds cheesy but our longer term aim is to create the world that we want to live in (more sustainable, fairer, socially and environmentally just), by:

Securing land and using/protecting it for sustainable food production (i.e. production so we can live well now but that looks after the soil/eco-systems for people to carry on living well in the long term),

Working with farmers shows that we can lower the carbon of a city the size of Manchester by supplying it with what we grow near by.

Supporting other people who want to get on and do it too. Actively opposing unsustainable/unjust practises. In the shorter term (while we're working towards getting the land) we are working with others to change the food system in Greater Manchester – to make it more sustainable and fairer.

Why did you get involved?

Because I didn't like the way it was and I realised it would be less depressing to try and change it than to carrying on sitting on my bum feeling sad about it all.

Luckily at the time when I was feeling like it was all hopeless and that maybe I'd been born with a gene missing that made me not understand the things that everyone else seemed to think were completely acceptable (not really the case – bit of a dramatic teenage the world is against me moment), I met some amazing and inspiring direct activists who pulled me up on to a bulldozer and showed me you could say no to things you didn't agree with and have a lot of fun doing it.

After many years of saying no I got a bit worn out and felt like I wanted to also be able to say here's a different and better way we could live. After setting up and working with various projects (MERCi, community food projects), I got more interested in food, and a childhood dream of living and working in a community on a farm – we eventually started The Kindling Trust.

What sustains you?

The amazing things that people are doing all over the place to try and create a fairer world (especially in places like Guatemala where your life gets threatened for doing things that we would just get a bit of a telling off for here).

......And my amazing and very patient friends and family who make me laugh a lot and keep me sane.

......And yeast extract and peanut butter on toast for breakfast.

What was the last big success your campaign had?
Hmmm I don't know - Manchester Veg People achieving its crowd funding target was a big success (and relief!), but probably my favourite was getting FarmStart going and getting to work with Tim and Janet at Abbey Leys farm and all the new growers (and at last getting to do some growing myself).

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

Most of what we do at the moment is focused on food (though in the future we'd like it to be more rounded). So depending on how you got involved you could come out with us to volunteer at organic farms on Land Army days, or attend the commercial growers course get a bit of land at

FarmStart and start down the route of becoming a

commercial organic producer yourself. You could come to a FeedingManchester event and meet a community food project and end up volunteering for them. Or you might end up working with Fiona on a food heritage project with schools. Or you might come with an idea for a sustainable enterprise and work with us to make the longer term vision of kindling happen so you could base your enterprise there.

If you could wave a magic wand and change one thing in the world, what would it be?

Land ownership. I wrote that very definitely and then started thinking of all the other things like climate change, capitalism, sex trafficing, etc. But I think I'll stick with it because the route of a lot of the worlds troubles do seem to come down to land ownership, and somehow it feels like if the system of land ownership was fairer it would follow that everything else would be too (we'd look after it more so climate change wouldn't have happened, there wouldn't be wars over territory, people wouldn't have to work doing horrible things for other people - and the world would be a more just place generally (does that count as one thing?!).

What advice do you wish you could give your younger self?

To pay more attention in science lessons and learn to love it, to get into reading the news, to believe in yourself a little bit more (and take other people's reactions to heart a little bit less), and try and make sure that everything you do has joy in it.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM OTHER SOCIAL MOVMENTS?

Building and sustaining social movement organisations is hard work. If it were easy, do you think this species would be over-its-neck-deep in the grotesque mess that is unfolding before our eyes? And if we fail to learn from the "history" of our social movements, we are doomed to repeat it. We are doomed anyway, of course, but it would be nice to go out with our heads high, no?



Personal matters

1) The social movement campaigns from the 1960s that are still going strong(ish) are the ones that name and try to change problems that affect people "where they live" - around racism, gender and sexual orientation "The Environment"

remains an abstraction, regularly falling off the shopping list of Leftist demands. We don't have conscription any more, so the anti-war stuff tends to "come and go." Lesson #1; politics is "local" and "in your skin."

But how on earth do you make climate change a personal threat to motivate people to try to change the system from within (#20yearsofboredom)?

"Said whatever happened to the protests and the rage? Whatever happened to the voices of the sane? Whatever happened to the people that gave a damn Didn't they just apply to die in the jungle of Vietnam" Gil Scott-Heron:South Carolina

2) If you don't look after how your "new" members feel, they will leave and your group will shrink and harden and – unless it is a big enough name to keep attracting new recruits - it will disappear (Transition Manchester, Call to Real Action, Campaign against Climate Change, Manchester Climate Action etc etc).

New people need to be orientated, offered the right amount of autonomy, mastery and purpose.

Burnout happens – the right-sized and winnable tasks matter. Morale maintenance, at both an individual and a group level, matters.

Dark Victory

While you need *some* specific measurable achievable goals ("votes for women" "civil rights now" "stop this incinerator/bypass/gm food"), victory can make things go pear-shaped because it's much much harder to motivate people to pressure bureaucrats to implement specific promises than it is to get a new law/policy onto the books. See Civil Rights Act 1964, or the Climate Change Act 2008.

"Just after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, Randolph warned of a "crisis of victory". Had the movement done enough?"

A dream deferred by Ayana Mathis Financial Times August 24/5th 2013

And once the big NGOs have access to the "decision-makers" they often mistake access for influence, and become nervous of biting the hand that feeds. So, don't look to NGOs for innovation or guts...

Groups as unit of selection

Hopefully, once we have lessened the pathology of our "culture" we can move from the idea that the individual is the unit of "fitness" and look at groups. Individuals, after all, usually join one or two groups rather than the "movement" as a whole. And if those groups are dysfunctional then the individual tends to return to inactivity rather than "shop around."

See also: smugosphere, ego-fodder, transruptive, emotathons, the meetings charter, legitimate peripheral participation

Excellent non-fiction books about social movements

"Democracy in the Making: How Activist Groups form" by Kathleen Blee

"And We Are Not Saved: A history of the movement as people by Debbie Louis

"Co-operative and community group dynamics : ..or, your meetings needn't be so appalling" by Rosemary Randall and John Southgate ; illustrations: Frances Tomlinson.

"Oppose and Propose" by Andrew Cornell

NEXT MONTH: What might we learn from the two glorious years of Manchester Climate Monthly's existence? (Submissions welcome! mcmonthly@gmail.com) _



NANTES? CANT

What a difference four years makes. In 2009 Manchester City Council actually got off its backside and briefly grasped the nettle that is climate change. After wasting two years of flubbing and flapping they worked with a wide-range of stakeholders to produce the "Manchester Climate Change Action Plan."

And what made them do this? Well, quite probably the fact that there was a nolonger-moveable-deadline. Sir Richard Leese, leader of Manchester City Council since 1996, wanted to be at the Climate Conference for Mayors being held in December 2009 in Copenhagen. And he needed to be there with something in his hand. Thanks to the Council's adoption of a working-group format that had been pioneered by activists, he was able to go (he flew, naturally) proudly brandishing the "Manchester: A Certain Future" document. Well, there's another World Mayors Summit on Climate Change happening in September, even closer than Copenhagen, in Nantes. And will Sir Richard be attending, perhaps brandishing the laughably 'refreshed' MACF? No.

Could it be that after four years of talking (and not even very much of that), Manchester has very little to show for its 'efforts'? Is anyone else from Greater Manchester going? No.

Are the leaders of any of the other Core Cities intending to travel there? Yes; we are reliably informed that the top bod in Bristol will report back to the other 7 Core Cities. Manchester leads yet again! Bravo.

ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE WHAT EXACTLY?

Action for Sustainable Living, the "awardwinning" charity, has refused to answer

basic questions about how it will take action for sustainable... democracy.

In July this year it took over the "secretariat" function for the "Steering Group," the largely invisible and secretive group that is supposed to be, well, "steering" climate action in Manchester. The group meets behind closed doors, has never held the elections it promised to and hasn't updated the "upcoming events" page on its website for over a year.

You might have hoped or expected that AfSL had both ambitions and plans to make the Group more democratic, less useless and less secretive. It's early days, but the signs are not promising.

On July 25 we asked AfSL's chair two simple questions -

- a) what do you understand by the bullet point "Managing the 2013/14 Steering Group election process?" [This is a quote from the tender document put out by Manchester City Council] Could you unpack that for us please? When will elections be held? For what roles? How?
- b) what do you think of Groundwork's legacy with "maintaining and updating the MACF website" - given that as of July 25th 2013 the "events page" refers to upcoming events in August... 2012. Will you be doing better?

I look forward to AFSL's reply No reply was forthcoming. We sent it again six days later, ccing in someone who told us (rightly) that it wasn't her department. Other than that, no reply.

Finally, on August 15 we sent the same questions a third time.

We got back

"Dear Marc.

My response would be "no comment". Best wishes."

The first line of AfSL's very long "values" statement reads as follows -

"AfSL covers all sustainability issues because we believe that the journey towards a sustainable lifestyle involves attitudinal change

in almost everything we do, as well as behavioural change in specialised areas."

The key word in all of that is "almost." UPDATE: The manchesterclimate.con website calendar page has, at last, been updated to show a very small number of events in September. The blog posts two so far this year. The elections? Missing in Action. Manchester shows the way... Perhaps it is something someone on the Environmental Sustainability Subgroup might ask the new chair of the Steering Group when he turns up to answer questions in October. Or November. Or whenever...

GREEN AND BLUE INVISIBLE INK

Samuel Beckett wrote a play about people waiting for something that never happened. Waiting for Godot. Well, you could do a refresh of that called "Waiting for the Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan" Promised in last year, then again at full Council in June by the Glorious Leader it was supposed to go to Scrutiny in September. It won't, now (no reason given). Maybe by the end of the year. Or maybe after a few dozen more species have kicked the Beckett?

HUB-BLE PIE

AGMA - Low Carbon Hub has its next meeting (not open to the public, don't be silly - this is Manchester, we do things predictably-behind-closed-doors here) on Friday 6th September. Papers are supposed to be onlin a week before. As of Monday 2nd September at 7pm they are not up. #democracyfail



In July 2014 a "three year plan" for Manchester City Council"s climate goals will be agreed at Scrutiny and then signed off by the Executive. Going on the quality of both the plans and the "actions" in the various Annual Carbon "Reduction" Plans since 2010, this three year plan is likely to be both unambitious and then unimplemented.

Currently there is a low-level of awareness/ concern both within and beyond the Council over the obligations and opportunities around the climate change.

There is also, sadly, little sense among Manchester activists of what they can do to lower Manchester's emissions and help make the city more resourceful and responsive, with actions so far focussing on worthy personal actions such as going vegetarian or (re)cycling.

So, what is to be done? Well, we here at MCFly think that people who give a damn — whether they are Labour, Green, Lib Dem or "a plague on all your houses" - need to get together to create a Real Climate Plan that we can then give to the Council by the end of April 2014. The Council can then draw upon that document to make a robust and radical 3 year plan that gives them a real chance of hitting their targets, not just for carbon reduction, but also culture change; above and beyond "carbon literacy."

The three alternatives – to keep on staging emotathons and feel-good smuggery, to do small-scale stuff that is good on its own but not fit for the scale of the problems, or endlessly critiquing without proposing – is not going to help us all pass the "mirror test"* ten years hence.

This is a big job, and it will needs hands on deck. One thing you can do is comment on/retweet the "Top Trumps" style cards we are making of all 44 "actions" in this year's derisory plan. If you want to be involved, at any level, please get in touch. mcmonthly@gmail.com

* That's the one where you wake up in the morning and can look yourself in the eye as someone who has been a responsible citizen.

Book Review: Negotiating Climate Change: Radical Democracy and the Illusion of Consensus

Amanda Machin

128 pages (plus index and notes)

Zed Books 2013

ISBN 978 1 78032 397 8

This is a curious book. Well-written, well-argued, yet somehow less than the some of its parts. Machin wants us to "look at climate change by looing at ourselves." She "suggests that the way we envisage ourselves as individuals and collectives affects our ability to respond to the varied impact and meaning of climate change."

After a clear and crisp introduction she devotes four short and readable chapters to (in turn) critiquing the ideas that technoscience will save (chapter 1), the Market will save us (chapter 2), that Politics as Greener than Usual will save us (chapter 3) and that a Politics as Greener and More Deliberative than Usual will save us (chapter 4). Instead she advocates a "radical democratic " approach, arguing that "decisive action is underpinned not by consensus byt by disagreement, for wwithout a choice between real alternatives there can be no decision." So far, so Habermasian (he's a German philospher, fond of "Ideal Speech Communities"). But the question always remains — how do you deal with groups that continue to act in bad faith? Her final chapter is a bit of a tailing off, making the obvious (?) point that "nature" is socially constructed.

What's missing

Besides any sense of the collapse of social movements in the face of the (hollow) victory of neoliberal capitalism you mean? (See Ingolfur Bluhdorn and Daniel Hausknost, on "post-ecological thinking" and "agentic deadlock" for more on this). Well, a basic explanation of the mechanisms of anthropogenic climate change. Not so much as a Keeling Curve to be seen. And that leads into the major problem; The social scientist Bruno Latour made the point one time that speed humps are a "social construct" but if you ignore them because of that, your car is still going to get wrecked if you go over them at high speed. At the end of her useful book, I am not sure Amanda Machin has avoided this (see page 114, where she approvingly quotes Mike Hulme). And even after you are sold on her vision – of radical democracy – the nitty-gritty question of what is to be done, concretely, here and now, still remains. Sounds like a job for a group with an ambitious name like "Manchester Citizenship"...

Marc Hudson

mcmonthly@gmail.com



Inclusion in this calendar is NOT a guarantee of quality.

For full listing go to our online calendar at manchesterclimatemonthly.net/the-calendar/

Thursday 5th Fuelling Manchester Community renewables and retrofit social for Greater Manchester, Man and Scythe, Bolton (the pub was closed but is now re-open!) To book: if you would like food, please book in advance (info@communityrenewables.org.uk) otherwise just turn up or tweet us @carboncoop

Thurs 5th, 6-8pm Meeting the climate challenge: Is a low carbon energy future possible? in Renold Building, University of Manchester.

Thurs 5th, 6-8pm GM The Future of Food and Farming? Cross Street Chapel, City Centre. Speakers and food.

Fri 6th, Greater Manchester Low Carbon Hub meeting. Members of the public are, of course, excluded.

Fri 6th, 10am to 4pm "British Energy Challenge" at Manchester Town Hall

Sat 7th/Sun 8th Didsbury Food Trail see didsburydinners.com for more information

Sunday 8th, 10am-3pm The Big Red Bus Tour of Green Houses is an opportunity to visit homes that have made radical reductions in energy bills and carbon emissions. Everything from solar PV panels and biomass boilers to external wall insulation and triple glazed windows. Booking essential! info@carbon.coop

Sun Sept 8th, 2.30pm to 5pm Climate Survivors meeting. The Brow House, 1 Mabfield Rd

Tues 10th, 6.45pm to 9pm Manchester Friends of the Earth Full Group Meeting, Greenfish Resource Centre, Oldham St. http://manchesterfoe.org.uk/

Sat 14th 2-5pm – In Place of Growth Workshop Imagining Manchester where people thrive without harming the planet e-mail steadystatemanchester@gmail.com to book and for venue details

Weds 18, 10am to 15.45 Food, Fibre, Fuel: The Rise of the Sustainable Society502, The New Business School, Manchester Metropolitan University, Oxford Road, Manchester, M15 6BH

This seminar brings together practitioners and academics to learn from each other, connect and shape co-interests. This is an interactive event, small pitches, breakouts and more. See more at:

http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/event/food-fibre-fuel-rise-sustainable-society/2013-09-18t090000-2013-09-18t144500#sthash.pkcpRebn.dpuf

September 24-6th Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC comes out. Expect a day or two of journalistic hand-wringing and denialist mud-flinging. Then silence. Manchester's activist groups seem to be doing nowt about it.

Mon 30th Food Sovereignty event at Unicorn Grocery, Chorlton (for details, see page 2)

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

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FRESH HANDMADE COSMETICS

