

1-3. In November last year, Manchester City Football Club signed a deal with Polar Print Group to produce the UK's first environmentally credible match day magazine (the first issue was for the home game against Fulham in mid-November, cover and

spreads shown). "As a club, we are committed to delivering positive change through football," commented MCFC's corporate social responsibility officer, Pete Bradshaw. "Producing a more environmentally-credible match day

magazine in a greener, more ethical way, is an obvious extension to this commitment."

## We Print... Football's First Green Programme

Manchester City are the first football club in the UK to produce their match day programme in an environmentally sustainable way. Gavin Lucas asks Anthony Rowell of the club's printer, Polar, about the project

**CR:** What is Polar's role on this job?

**AR:** This contract represents a departure from the normal print-supplier relationship, as we take responsibility for publishing, editorial content, design and print, as well as managing the sales and distribution of the programme on match days. Manchester City's CSR manager, Pete Bradshaw, considered that our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and printing responsibly philosophy sat equally well with the club's own vision and values. CSR underpins everything that we do: this allows us to offer a very socially and environmentally credible product. The environmental credentials we give to our printing are not job specific, it's the way we approach every project.

**CR:** There are a lot of companies claiming to be "green" – how do you research the papers and inks you use and how much did MCFC check and double check these things?

**AR:** Above all, when approaching new opportunities like this, we talk honestly and openly about what we are doing, and the research we have carried out. We are acutely aware of the need to be factual in our claims. If we were not robust in our research and actions our credibility would

become worthless. And yes, working with clients like [Friends of the Earth](#), [Greenpeace](#), [The FTSE4Good](#) and [The Soil Association](#) does give us a lot of credibility in this field, but we've had to earn it.

The papers we use are sourced through a "partnership" sourcing approach. You will find that many merchants purport to have strong environmental purchasing procedures, but we make sure they are robust. We use several merchants that are very open about their own environmental credentials and of the materials they supply, and are happy for us to dig deep. We have also produced our own in-house guide to environmental papers which helps us look at the credentials of a given sheet. There are also online resources through most of the merchants, but also independent websites like [www.ppe.uk.net](http://www.ppe.uk.net), endorsed by FoE, Greenpeace, [WWF](#), [WRAP](#), [BPIF](#) and The Soil Association. These resources, along with support from our paper supply partners, helps us to make informed decisions and give qualified advice.

The inks we use were, again, sourced through a partnership sourcing agreement. We moved from mineral-oil-based inks to vegetable-oil-

based inks, whilst at the same time reducing the amount of alcohol we used in our production process. [Ink supplier] [Stehlin + Hostag](#) met all of our requirements, continue to give us excellent technical support, and we are currently helping them achieve [ISO14001](#) environmental accreditation.

**CR:** So have any of your clients been particularly helpful with all of this?

**AR:** We work closely with David Shorto, paper and print buyer for both FoE and Greenpeace, who we consider an expert in the field. David routinely provides great technical support while we work hard to improve our clients' environmental footprint. David also has very exacting requirements when it comes to environmental credentials. He routinely visits us and, as he obviously needs to seek out companies that offer highly-competitive and cost-effective solutions as well as printing in a way that minimises environmental impact, he shows great interest in how we are continuously improving.

**CR:** Tell us how you worked with Man City – how green did they want to go? Is this just a token gesture?

**AR:** CSR is prevalent throughout the entire club and whilst cost is important, we and City know the real issue is getting financial and ethical goals to balance. I know that Pete Bradshaw has been vocal about choosing printers that use vegetable-oil-based inks, ensuring the club has recycling opportunities throughout the site, and how important the turbine project with Ecotricity has been to him [City plan to install a wind turbine at their stadium]. When you meet the man, you cannot help but be inspired by his enthusiasm.

**CR:** Can you tell us the facts and figures involved: how many copies of each programme are produced? How many per season/year? What is the format/size of the magazine and how many pages...?

**AR:** Average print run is approximately 15,000 copies, 270mm x 240mm finished size, 80 pages of text with an eight-page fold-out cover. It's published approximately 20 times per season (subject to European and domestic cup runs and pre-season friendlies).

**CR:** Is creating these programmes in a green way more expensive?

**AR:** The vegetable-oil-based inks used and low-alcohol printing process make no difference in terms of cost or quality. The cost of paper, however, is another issue altogether.

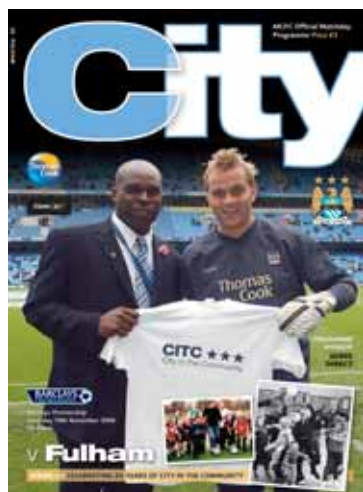
We need to raise awareness about papers with better environmental credentials which will increase demand to help bring the prices more in line with conventional paper stocks. The stock used for the

Fulham game was [9Lives 55](#) and is a combination of 45% virgin fibre ([FSC](#), [PEFC](#) and [SFI](#) approved) with 55% pre- and post-consumer waste. We considered this a responsible, cost-effective solution, but it still represents a 20% increase in paper cost. However paper accounts for approximately 30% of a typical job so the overall percentage is much lower.

Our standard stock is [Creator](#) and is produced at mills with PEFC "chain of custody" and ISO14001, but the extra credentials for 9Lives 55 are more robust.

**CR:** Did MCFC also ask your advice about recycling excess stock of the programmes? Do you know what happens to them?

**AR:** We were prescriptive about collecting the excess programmes as we felt it was important to ensure that unsold programmes are recycled responsibly as well as printed responsibly. It makes absolute sense to utilise the delivery vehicle to also pick up the excess stock from previous matches. And as the season has gone on we have been able to hone in more accurately on the print run required – resulting in only the odd box being left over. ☺



### Manchester City's match day programme facts

**Format:** 270mm x 240mm

**Average print run:** 15,000

**Issues per annum:** Approx 20

**Paper stock used:** 9Lives 55, composed of 45% virgin fibre (FSC, PEFC and SFI approved), 55% pre- and post-consumer waste

**Inks:** Vegetable oil-based