

No more fossil fuels

No more fossil fuels: keep them in the ground.

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The Earth is getting hotter



Adding fuel to the fire



Corporate criminals



Change for good



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FURTHER INFORMATION

This information document is intended to support the text and pictures in the exhibition.

The exhibition was originally conceived for one of several Oxford affinity groups involved in **Extinction Rebellion**, a worldwide movement of non-violent resistance to the threat of human-caused climate change. <https://rebellion.global/>

This exhibition has been timed to link with the **26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)** in Glasgow, Scotland, 31 October – 12 November 2021. <https://ukcop26.org/>

It is equally available to other environmental, climate and racial justice, faith, community low carbon, migrant, student or youth groups, NGOs, trade unions or direct action networks.

For more details, contact Mark: m.levene@soton.ac.uk or 07899 637284

This document combines both the exhibition text – in grey text – with more detailed information which is in black text and in a larger font size. Graphics and maps from the exhibition are also included.

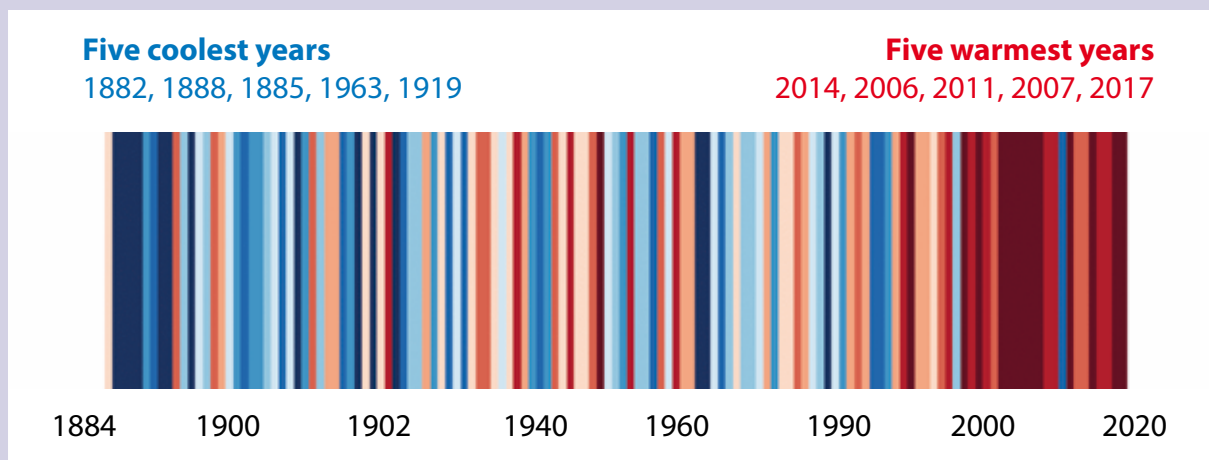
1: The Earth is getting hotter

The Earth is getting hotter – and it's happening fast. The last 19 years have all been in the hottest 20 on record.

The impact is already catastrophic: severe hurricanes, super-cyclones, floods, heat waves, droughts and

forest fires across the planet, Arctic and Antarctic ice sheets as well as mountain glaciers melting rapidly.

Annual temperatures UK



The natural environment on which we depend is collapsing, its animals and plants disappearing before our eyes.

Most scientists agree that the situation by 2100 will be much worse: temperatures three or

even four degrees Celsius higher than before the industrial revolution and with an end to a stable climate.

As temperatures rise so will sea levels, threatening billions of people who live in

coastal regions. With large parts of the planet becoming uninhabitable we'll see greater conflict over decreasing food, fresh water and other resources, as well as mass migration of climate refugees.

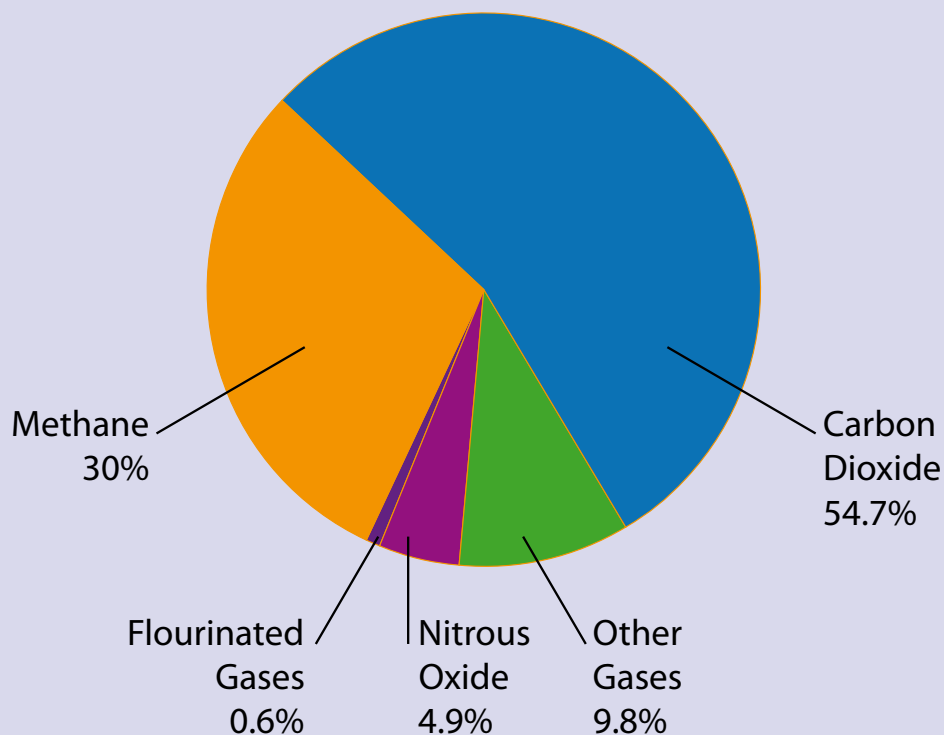
What is to blame?

The Earth is heating up because of greenhouse gases being emitted into the atmosphere through human activity.

Carbon dioxide emissions which come through the burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – are

today's main cause of global warming.

Major greenhouse gases from people's activities



Fossil fuels

Burning fossil fuels re-introduces into the atmosphere (as CO₂) carbon that was removed from it by natural processes many millions of years ago.

Today's fossil fuels are extracted from below the Earth's surface: in seams, oil reservoirs, shale gas, or tar sands, on land, or under

the sea. Fracking is another method of forcing oil and gas out of rocks by high-pressure pumping.

Some fossil fuels are more harmful than others. Coal burning produces the most greenhouse gas per unit of energy output and natural gas produces the least. But the repeated

exploitation of all of them leads to massive environmental damage, ravaged landscapes and air pollution. Equally, it degrades the lives of usually very poor people whose land is taken away, livelihoods wrecked and health and life expectancy ruined. And serious human rights violations often occur.

Rising CO₂ emissions as the result of the industrial scale extraction of coal, oil and gas – going back more than two hundred years – have accelerated in recent decades far beyond the level (350 parts per million) which scientists deem safe.

There has not been this much carbon in the atmosphere – now 415

parts per million – for three million years.

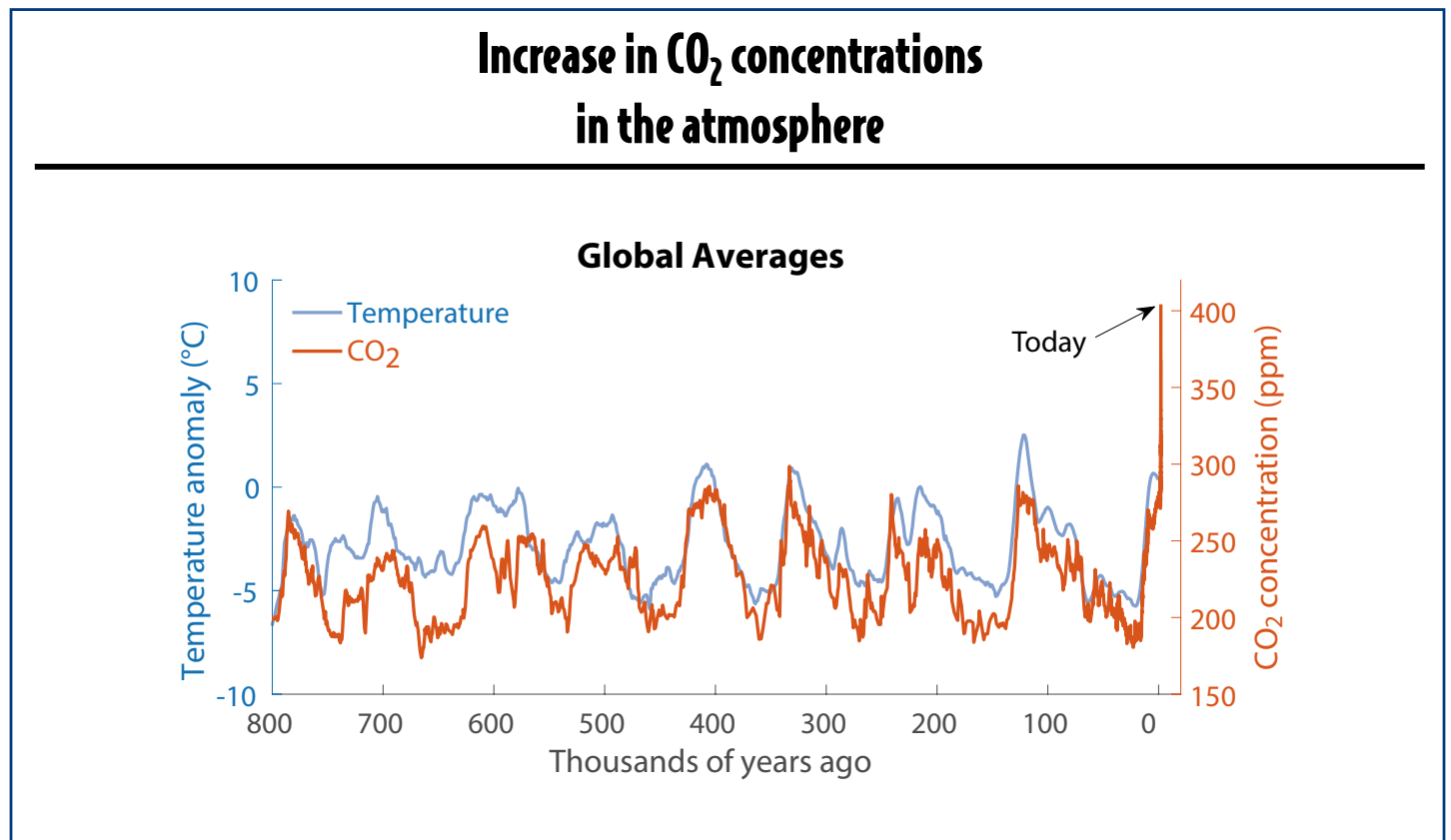
Accelerating greenhouse gas emissions threaten to breach the United Nations 2016 Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

195 countries, including Britain, agreed to keep the global temperature rise to well below 2°C

compared with pre-industrial levels, and with the aim to limit this rise to 1.5°C.¹

Corporate-led fossil fuel expansion plans will not only breach the spirit of the 2016 Paris Agreement but lead to climate catastrophe.

¹ see IPCC special report 2018, <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>



Thanks to Ben Henley & Nerilie Abram for their article <https://theconversation.com/the-three-minute-story-of-800-000-years-of-climate-change-with-a-sting-in-the-tail-73368>

2: Adding fuel to the fire

Today as many of the world's easy to exploit fossil fuel sources have become exhausted the major oil and gas giants, often working with national energy companies, have sought to develop ever more remote, inaccessible or technologically challenging reserves.

These increasingly involve drilling offshore in deeper waters or in extreme conditions with much greater risk of disastrous accidents.

The science is very clear that increasing oil and gas production is an engine for planetary destruction. In spite of this the two major

British-based oil and gas multinationals, British Petroleum (BP) and Shell, are among the worst offenders.

Both companies have known about the climate science since at least the 1970s. They know that what they are doing is criminal.

'We're going to get as much out ... for as long as we can'

Steven Fries *Shell chief economist, 2019.*

Reneging on public promises

In recent years, both BP and Shell have made very public promises to tackle climate change and switch to renewable energy. Their advertising also encourages their customers, and the public at large, to believe that they are pursuing green, carbon-neutral programmes.

Neither commitment

is true.

While both companies spend a fraction of their revenue on environmentally friendly projects and renewables, they are investing billions of dollars in opening up oil and gas reserves in tropical ocean deep waters or in the Arctic. All these projects are environmentally

devastating and contravene the spirit and letter of the 2016 Paris Climate Change Agreement.

In May 2021 a Dutch court made a landmark ruling that Shell was not complying with the Paris agreement and must reduce its CO2 emissions by 45% compared to 2019 levels.

British banks are complicit in increasing fossil fuel production

Barclays, the major high street bank, has the worst record on climate change among European banks. Since the 2016 Paris Agreement it has financed fossil fuels to the tune of \$85 billion, including \$24 billion for fossil fuel expansion.

Barclays' fossil fuel portfolio includes ultra-deep water, the Arctic, tar sands, fracking and coal mining.

Barclays' chairman, Jes Staley, claimed at the bank's 2019 AGM that they have 'moved

away from the dirtiest fuels.' This is a blatant untruth.

HSBC is also a major lender: \$58 billion for fossil fuels, including \$19 billion for fossil fuel expansion.

However, it has begun to pull back on funding from Arctic drilling and tar sands.

Some global banks are moving slowly towards renewables. But overall, they continue to stoke the flames of the climate

crisis and have poured a staggering \$1.9 trillion into fossil fuel production since the Paris Agreement.

The same sum would be sufficient to install solar power on every house on the planet.

In 2019 a scientific report in *The Guardian* revealed that just 20 fossil fuel companies, including Shell and BP, are responsible for a third of the greenhouse gas emissions which are fuelling the climate crisis.

The British government is also complicit in fossil fuel expansion

Officially the British government is committed to moving away from fossil fuels and towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. It also says that it does not give subsidies to fossil fuel companies.

The practice is quite different.

It's 'intimate' relationship with Shell and BP, especially BP, goes back more than a hundred years and is still described as one of 'revolving doors'. And while the government does not give direct subsidies it supports oil and gas production in the UK through £10.5 billion

per annum of tax-breaks, considerably more than it offers to renewable energy. These are subsidies by another name.

Until a recent moratorium bowing to grass-roots opposition, it has also supported UK fossil fuel exploration through the highly controversial and dangerous technique of fracking.

The government's UK Export Finance (UKEF) also provided £2.6 billion in the period 2014–9 to help British firms secure fossil fuel

contracts, mostly in developing countries.

The environmental campaign, Global Witness, has called the government position, 'utter hypocrisy', while Swedish climate activist, Greta Thunberg, has described its support for new fossil fuel exploitation as 'beyond absurd' and 'irresponsible behaviour'.

Despite repeated pledges to end public money for fossil fuels, the most powerful G20 countries in the world are still subsidising these toxic, ecocidal industries to the tune of an average \$584 billion per annum.¹

¹ <https://www.iisd.org/publications/g20-scorecard>.

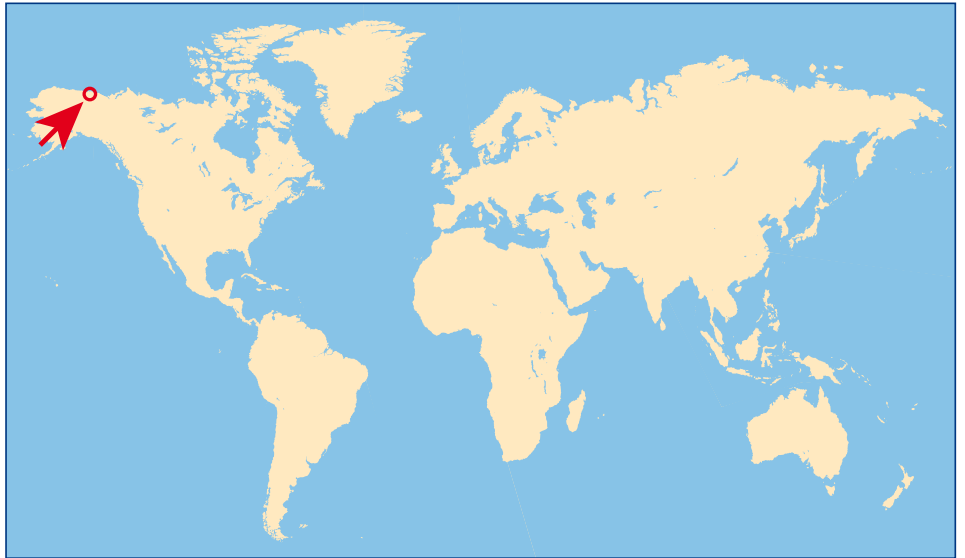
3: Corporate criminals

British Corporate Criminal 1: BP – Alaska, USA

One of the seven great oil and gas ‘supermajors’, BP likes to refer to its net-zero commitment to a world ‘beyond petroleum.’

Meanwhile it has been aggressively pursuing new oil sources.

Since 2017, these included persistent lobbying to obtain leases for drilling in the protected Arctic National Wildlife Reserve, a 19 million acre wilderness in Alaska, considered to have the greatest biodiversity north of the Arctic circle. Environmentalists agreed that drilling in this already fragile eco-system was a monumentally stupid idea. Despite that BP seized the opportunity when newly elected President Trump overturned the previous



administration’s ban on oil exploitation there.

The Trump decision was vastly controversial and was declared unlawful by a federal court pending a decision from the US Supreme Court. In late 2019 BP announced the sale of its Arctic portfolio for fear of a class-action law suit and a US government investigation against it. This would make it

the second time since 2002 that BP rapidly retreated from its Arctic oil plans when put under scrutiny.

In 2006 BP was responsible for a massive pipeline oil spill at Prudhoe Bay just 100 miles from the ANWR, with potentially catastrophic consequences for the wildlife and people of the region. President

Biden's temporary moratorium' on further oil and gas leases there may have ensured BP will never

return. Even so, a US senator, Ed Markey, has commented, "If BP thought it could have squeezed a nickel out

of drilling in the Arctic Refuge, it wouldn't have hesitated to annihilate it."

The Gwich'in people

The Gwich'in people whose home is the area around the ANWR call it *lizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit*: 'the sacred place where life begins'.

It is home to polar bears, wolves, muskoxen,

bearded seals, Arctic foxes and millions of migratory birds. Above all it is the place to which great herds of Porcupine caribou migrate three thousand miles to calve. The Gwich'in have a very special relationship with

the caribou.

Because of the intensity of climate change in the Arctic north many of the species in ANWR are already under threat of extinction.

British corporate criminal 2 : Shell – Niger delta, Nigeria

Shell is one of the world's largest companies and one of its worst carbon emitters. It has been operating in Nigeria since the 1950s where, with very close relationships with its government, it is also the most important company. Shell produces hundreds of millions of barrels of oil each year from the country's Niger delta.



The delta, with its mangrove swamp and wetlands, was one of the most diverse eco-systems in Africa, traditionally supporting millions of people who live from fishing and farming.

Today it is one of the most polluted places on the planet.

Shell's responsibility for the damage it has caused to the delta's environment and people has led to many lawsuits. Its complicity with the Nigerian government in the rape and torture of protesters and the execution of nine environmental activists in the 1990s was fully documented in a 2018 report by Amnesty International who questioned whether Shell is 'a criminal enterprise'. But Shell's sense that it can do what

it likes in the delta was demonstrated when two particularly massive oil spills from pipelines around the fishing town of Bodo in 2008 leaked into all the nearby creeks and mangrove swamp. The fish died and with them the livelihoods of some 69,000 people. Worse, the long-term contamination of soil, water and air continues to be so toxic that a former senior Shell employee has called for 'medical mass screening'. Back in 2008, Shell offered the Bodo community a mere \$4000 in compensation. Today, after having been finally forced to make a larger settlement in a court action, Shell has still organised 'no clean up, no

health testing, no water supply testing, nothing'.¹

Shell's operation in the Niger delta is a reminder that the threat to people and planet from fossil fuel extraction is not just about the future. It is about how people's lives are being put at risk now. And for every Bodo there are a thousand daily incidents in the delta adding up to an estimated 40 million litres of oil spilt each year.

In the state-region of Bayelsa, for instance, the people were traditionally poor but healthy and always had plenty to eat. Then came

¹ Chloe Farand, 'Shell accused of concealing data on the health effects of two major oil spills on Nigeria communities', *The Independent*, 24 March 2017.

Shell and the 'filthy oil.' The air has been polluted from gas flaring causing acid rain and the soil is not just petrol-saturated but filled with toxic heavy metals such as chromium, lead and mercury. A UN report in 2011 found the water had oil and gas particles in it, 1,000 times higher than permitted under Nigerian drinking water standards.

Equally telling is that people in Bayelsa now often go hungry.

The fish, crabs and periwinkles are almost gone. People no longer talk about living long, as they used to. Now one is lucky to reach 45. Cancer, diabetes and kidney failure are increasing, while another report stated that in 2012 some 16,000 babies died in the first month of life directly because of oil pollution.

Shell has neither sought to make

partners of communities in the delta nor to provide assistance to improve their lives. It is simply moving on to damage somewhere else. Shell currently has plans to start oil and gas drilling off-shore in Mauritania, Colombia, the Gulf of Mexico and Brazil.

British corporate criminal 3: Barclays – Athabasca region, Alberta, Canada

Barclays Bank is a funder of oil from Canadian tar sands, described as 'the dirtiest fuel on the planet'.

The sands are actually a mix of clay sand, water and bitumen – only the last element producing a form of thick, treacle-like oil. So the entire sands have to be strip mined, the bitumen then separated and diluted with lighter oil before finally being transported by long-distance pipelines to be upgraded into synthetic crude oil. The pipelines are themselves dangerous



because tar sands oil is very corrosive, increasing the likelihood of oil spills.

Oil production from tar sands is also 21% more carbon-intensive than from conventional oil. So if all the tar sands were extracted and burned it would use up 15 per cent of the world's entire carbon budget as set by the 2016 Paris Agreement. Leading

NASA earth scientist, James Hansen, has said that would mean 'game over for the climate.'

Barclays is complicit in this catastrophe by helping to finance Canada's \$4.5 billion Trans Mountain pipeline and by extending credit finance to other organisations constructing related pipelines.

'An environmental holocaust'¹

In order to extract the tar sands, the destruction of the ancient boreal forests of Alberta – an estimated 25% of what remains on the planet – is a climate catastrophe in its own right as these forests critically lock up vast quantities of carbon.

But that's not all. As in the Arctic and Niger delta the oil threat to both people and nature is deadly.

The tailing ponds where the waste from the mining is dumped – as is the acid rain which is expected to contaminate an area the size of Germany – are turning an environment once teeming with wildlife

into a toxic wasteland.

As the forest, waterways, animals, fish, and migrating birds have begun to disappear so too has the economic and cultural wellbeing of First Nations like the Athabasca Chipewyan. Among them cancers, miscarriages, stillbirths and a host of other medical problems are increasing rapidly. At the British Columbia projected-ocean terminal of the Trans Mountain pipeline, on the Salish sea, other First Nations like the Tsleil-Waututh fear its

arrival. They anticipate that the soar in oil tanker traffic will spell a similar disaster for the marine species, including salmon, orca and shellfish, upon which they depend.

First Nations no longer speak just of 'dirty oil' but 'bloody oil.'

All the big European banks have now pulled out of financing tar sands or the pipelines. Bar one – Barclays.

¹ First Nations representative, Royal Bank of Canada, AGM, 2010.

4: Change for good

“The great tragedy of the climate crisis is that seven and a half billion people must pay the price – in the form of a degraded planet – so that a couple of dozen polluting interests can continue to make record profits. It is a great moral failing of our political system that we have allowed this to happen.”

Michael Mann, *World-leading climate scientist, October 2019*

Fossil Fuel corporations: part of the answer or part of the problem?

Despite the collapse in oil prices as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and BP's promises of radical transformation both BP and Shell continue drilling while saying they will become carbon neutral by 2050. This is dangerous greenwash. The science says the

climate emergency has to be fully confronted now. To be simply 'shifting towards low carbon' – BP's words – for yet another generation in reality is placing our children and children's children in the greatest peril.

It is time that

government intervened to curb the power of the fossil fuel industry.

▶ All fossil fuel-related projects, policy, investments, regulations and legislation must be rapidly brought into line with the UK's obligations under the Paris Agreement

▶ Current UK legislation requiring the maximisation of recoverable North Sea oil and gas reserves has to cease

▶ British financing of domestic and foreign oil, gas and coal extraction must end

▶ Public subsidies for fossil fuel extraction should be terminated

Our society must rapidly switch from

one based on energy from fossil fuels to one that uses renewable forms of energy.

That requires a post-coronavirus economic recovery founded on investment in a zero carbon infrastructure. It is also one that prioritises restoring nature as the soundest way of soaking up carbon from the atmosphere.

These are huge and unprecedented undertakings requiring maximum political will and public support. But in an age of unrelenting global warming the profit margins of the fossil fuel giants and their banking partners can no longer be allowed to endanger people or planet.

Emergency or opportunity?

Rather than seeing the climate emergency as an unstoppable disaster we need instead to seize the unique opportunity now to make radical change for the good.

A Green New Deal putting people and nature first, by providing environmentally sustainable, long-term jobs, the necessities of life and wellbeing for everybody, offers arguably the most exciting prospect of modern times.

But that also must mean that the self-serving companies who have controlled and organised

our lives around fossil fuels for far too long can no longer be allowed to set the agenda for tackling the climate emergency.

The very process of phasing out fossil fuels and polluting industries and replacing them with renewable energy and a green transformation of our housing, food and transport systems will contribute to the making of a more equal, socially just and kinder society.

By the same token, investing in countries in the global south to enable their people to avoid reliance on fossil fuels and to reduce the impact of climate change would begin to redress the ills and injustices that the rich world has inflicted on them and pave the way to a safer, more peaceful global community.

How can we ensure change for good?

Coronavirus has shown many of us the way: using our cars less, walking and cycling more, thinking of a future where using public transport is the norm, not the exception. What we eat and wear, how we shop and holiday, can all contribute to less carbon in the atmosphere and to a more sustainable society.

But acting on climate change has never just been a personal life-style choice: it's also about profound institutional, economic and political change.

For instance, persistent campaigning from students and staff has led Oxford University

to cut all its ties with fossil fuels. It is now developing an investment strategy in carbon net-zero funds only. More than half of British universities have joined the divestment campaign. Many leading pension funds are also doing the same as has the European Investment Bank which has turned its former multi-billion euro support for fossil fuels towards clean energy. Not before time, companies like Shell, BP and Barclays are being forced to listen to the science –

and the people.

But the message also has to be made loud and clear to our political leaders. Governments worldwide have been far too close to the fossil fuel industry. This is particularly true of our own UK government. It needs constant reminding of what Greta Thunberg said at Davos in 2018: 'Our house is on fire'.

Destroying the planet is not our inevitable destiny. But only the worldwide voice of ordinary people can ensure that governments here and abroad act now to avert catastrophe.

Join us today!

To find out more about how you can get involved and what you can do to help keep fossil fuels in the ground contact us: <http://rebellion.global/>

Together we have the power to make change for good.