

## Protest to divest in fossil fuels return to campus

By [Imogen Bellamy](#), News Editor

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ON 2 MARCH, A group of students and an unconvincing polar bear campaigned in Greg's Place to protest University investment in fossil fuels. Fossil Free UoY, "a group of students committed to combating climate change", wanted to raise awareness of the £656 256 of University funds invested in fossil fuels.

Members of the group handed out fliers and collected petition signatures from students and staff. The campaign plans to convince the University to commit to fully divest from fossil fuels.

This is not the first time that students have done this, as former Environment and Ethics Officer Norb Gordon also staged a Divest Protest at Greg's Place in November 2016. Currently a member of Fossil Free UoY, Gordon told Nouse: "Unfortunately Ella and I failed to embed the campaign successfully in the Environment and Ethics Network, so when our term came to an end the campaign ended with us. This time around we have a core team of campaigners who won't stop applying pressure to University Management until they commit to divest."

61 universities in the UK so far have committed to removing their investments in fossil fuels as a result of the harmful nature of burning them, due to their significance in contributing to climate change.

Fossil Free UoY believe these investments are in contradiction to the University's Ethical Investment Policy. Created in March 2013, this self-policed document states: "The University will not knowingly invest in companies whose activities include practices which directly pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the mission and values of the University."

The campaign gave Nouse a statement: "With 600000 deaths attributed to climate change annually (a number which is only expected to rise) and the multitude of other risks associated with this avoidable phenomenon, we do not believe that the University can continue to reasonably defend its investments in fossil fuels.

"Promising to divest from fossil fuels does more than weaken the influence of polluting industries and

companies. It is a political statement reaffirming the University's commitment to combating climate change and championing sustainability in every way; not just through departmental initiatives, car-pooling schemes, and environmental research."

A University spokesperson told Nouse : "Reducing our carbon footprint remains a priority for the University and we have a number of initiatives designed to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, from increasing recycling rates to the Student Switch Off campaign. We are committed to sustainable development and good carbon management and we are proud of our biodiversity and position as a sustainable institution. Departments have their own Green Impact team, consisting of volunteer members of staff, that aims to create a sustainable environment.

"The University's Environmental Sustainability Policy can be found here:  
<https://www.york.ac.uk/about/sustainability/policy/>



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Yamary

27 Mar '18 at 8:09 am

Can't let all cars, calling all cars, we're ready to make a deal.

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