

Events to mark National Day of Divestment on campus

[Lily Robertson](#) gives details of what the University of York is doing for the National Day of Divestment

Tuesday 20 November 2018



Oscar Bentley

York Students will be supporting a National Day of Divestment on 21 November as part of a National Union of Students campaign to divest and end investment in fossil fuel. At 10am, there will be a protest outside Heslington Hall. At 12-noon, there will be a 'Carbon Footprint Stall' in Market Square, where one can learn all about the carbon footprint of both one's own footprint and the University in an interactive experience. At 6:30PM, there will be a roundtable event at P/L/001. Attendees can come and hear from speakers, including student activists from the Universities of York and Loughborough, and Chris Saltmarsh, Co-Director of Climate Change Campaigns at the People & Planet. A representative from the University has also been invited to speak. This is part of a wider campaign that YUSU Environment & Ethics Collective (E&E) have launched, which includes a petition calling for the University of York to pledge to completely divest York from Fossil Fuels, in line with the university's ethical investment policy that 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".

They have stated that this is important to them because the combustion of fossil fuels is responsible for 87 per cent of all human carbon dioxide emissions, which drastically contributes to anthropogenic climate change, in turn killing approximately 600 000 people yearly. As of last calculations, the University of York has £217,000 invested in Fossil Fuels, and with 68 Universities already having pledged their commitment to divest from Fossil Fuels. This comes after students protested in Greg's Place in March earlier this year. A group of students and an unconvincing polar bear handed out flyers and circulated a petition for staff and students. YUSU Environment and Ethics Officer Oscar Bentley said: "We really hope this day of activities will persuade the University they need to divest from fossil fuels, or

face being left behind the times. 68 other universities, including York St. John, have pledged to divest. Edinburgh has divested over £6.3 million, so surely York can afford to divest over 200k. With news that 80 per cent of fossil fuels need to stay in the ground to avoid the worst effects of climate change, the University needs to stick to its progressive, forward-thinking values and divest.” Union President James Durcan also commented “It is great to see that students here in York are passionate about bringing about social change! We look forward to continuing to supporting every member of our Union in any way we can in making a difference.”

E&E have also introduced a Green Impact Award for societies to encourage them to reduce their environmental impact. The award incorporates a variety of measures societies can take such as the use public transport; reducing printing; and abandoning single-use plastics. A University of York spokesperson said: “The University has no direct investments in fossil fuels and only 3.4 per cent of our total in-vestments are in the energy sector, which includes renewables.”The University is committed to pursuing a gradual increase in the amount of renewables it procures, as part of a practical and ethical en-ergy policy.“Reducing our carbon footprint remains a priority for the University and we have a number of initiatives designed to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel.



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