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1. Editorial - Farewell to 2016

The 3 months since we re-launched the Greener Jobs Alliance has seen quite a few highs and lows. At the international level we had the coming into force of the Paris Agreement at the same time as a victory for Donald Trump in the US elections. Now we've had the latest announcement that a climate change sceptic, Scott Pruitt, has been put in charge of the Environment Agency. It has inevitably raised huge concerns about the future direction of US policy.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/news/greenpeace-responds-to-trumps-appointment-of-scott-pruitt-to-head-the-environmental-protection-agency/>

In the UK it's been another mixed bag of competing policy decisions. Amidst all this uncertainty it is even more important that the trade union and environment movements have a clear policy agenda. That's why we hope you'll join us in the new year to help spread the word that an alternative to wrecking the planet is possible.

2. GJA AGM – Welcoming in 2017

GJA supporters are invited to the AGM on **Wednesday, January 18th, 2017** at UCU Head Office, Carlow St, Mornington Crescent, London NW1 7LH from 2.00 - 4.30pm.

Join us to develop our policy initiatives for the next 12 months. The main presentation up for discussion will be:

'Energy and Industrial Strategy' – Alan Whitehead, Shadow Minister for Energy and Climate Change

Both presentations will be followed by a discussion on opportunities to engage trades unions and others in policy development.

If you plan to attend the AGM please email your name to [gjacom@gmail.com](mailto:gjacoms@gmail.com) so that we get a good idea of numbers on the day. We look forward to seeing you.

3. Education – latest developments globally and in the UK

The global union federation, Education International, issued a statement during the COP22 meeting in November. It emphasised the importance of education and educators in delivering the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). https://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/4189

A joint meeting was held with UNESCO and 2 new publications were launched. <http://en.unesco.org>

On the occasion of COP22, UNESCO launched two new publications: **'Action for Climate Empowerment: Guidelines for accelerating solutions through education, training and public awareness'**, a guidance document for policy-makers, developed in collaboration with UNFCCC; and **'PLANET: Education for environmental sustainability and green growth'** by UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, which looks at how education enables individuals to better cope with, and reduce their vulnerability to, the dangers associated with climate change.

Also in November the Global Regional Centres of Excellence held a conference on 'Engaging with local communities for the SDGs'. The action points are here

<http://bit.ly/2hIP3td>

In the UK, November saw the publication of the latest University League report on sustainability performance in the university sector.



<https://peopleandplanet.org/university-league>

4. Is the shift from fossil fuels about to turn into a stampede?



The warnings for trade union pension funds couldn't be clearer. The growing urgency to cut the world's carbon emissions would leave the vast majority of oil, gas and coal reserves 'stranded.' They will be *'literally unburnable'* – in the words of the governor of the Bank of England.

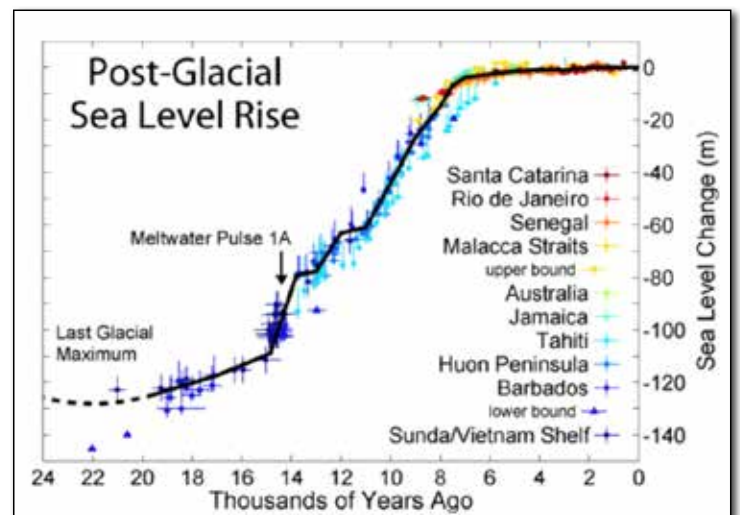
This is serious news for local government pension funds with £14 billion of peoples' savings in fossil fuel companies like Shell and Exxon.

But financial giant Legal and General is striking out in a new direction with a good paying, serious alternative to these risky assets with its pro-climate Future World Fund. Ethical pensions are good for our financial security.

Governor's warning: fossil fuels are 'stranded assets'

It's really worth having a look at this warning delivered to an audience of bankers by Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/speeches/2015/844.aspx> He said, 'The challenges currently posed by climate change pale in significance compared with what might come. Since the 1980s insurance losses from climate change impacts have increased from an annual average of around \$10bn to around \$50bn over the past decade.' He backed up his call for with the latest scientific evidence:

- In the Northern Hemisphere the last 30 years have been the warmest since Anglo-Saxon times. Eight of the ten warmest years on record in the UK have occurred since 2002.
- Atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases are at levels not seen in 800,000 years.
- The rate of sea level rise is quicker now than at any time over the last 2,000 years.



Carney warned that cutting our carbon emissions would render the vast majority of oil, gas and coal reserves 'stranded.' They will be '*literally unburnable without expensive carbon capture technology, which itself alters fossil fuel economics.*'

He argued: '*The more we invest with foresight; the less we will regret in hindsight.*'

Further drilling for oil and gas, including shale gas, will take us well into the realms of dangerous climate change <http://priceofoil.org/2016/09/22/the-skys-limit-report/>

So in order to be ethical, pension funds should get out of these companies. Protect our financial security and ensure a more sustainable investment, right?

'Divestment' successes



Local campaigners and councillors have persuaded councils like Waltham Forest <https://www.foe.co.uk/news/local-campaign-group-helps-make-divestment-history>, South Yorkshire, Haringey and Hackney <https://www.foe.co.uk/green-blog/haringey-moves-millions-out-fossil-fuels> to start to get their pension fund investments out of fossil fuel companies, on either ethical or financial grounds.

Local authority pension funds have used **three big excuses**:

1. There aren't alternative low-carbon investments that are big enough for us to move into.
2. They'd lose out financially because fossil fuel shares are big earners.
3. Investments in Shell and BP are a way to engage these companies. We can help them become more socially responsible companies.

But using shares to persuade these companies to change their behaviour doesn't work. In October, BP announced it was going for new drilling in yet another wilderness in the Barents Sea <http://www.offshoreenergytoday.com/aker-bp-buys-eight-norwegian-licenses-from-tullow/> And that was after the biggest shareholder effort yet to get them to take meaningful action on climate change.

Future World Fund explained

Legal and General's divestment move is likely to be a game-changer. This is how it deals with the big three excuses:

1. **So there is a major alternative to investing in fossil fuels.** Legal and General's new **Future World Fund** <http://www.legalandgeneralgroup.com/media-centre/press-releases/press-releases.asp?newsid=2973> excludes a large number of fossil fuel companies. It's not perfect, but is a big step in the right direction.
2. **This alternative investment fund is a big earner.** The new fund is high performing, so people can't say addressing climate risk harms short-term returns. The index has out-performed the Financial Times shares index in the last five years.
3. **Legal and General will divest if persuasion does not work.** The Fund will divest from companies that fail to meet its minimum criteria after an engagement period.

This is what campaigners in West Yorkshire have been arguing for <https://fossilfreewywpf.wordpress.com/2016/11/04/our-response-to-wywpf-report/> in the case of companies like BP and Shell, and say that if they continue with greenwash, then the fund will divest.

Peabody Energy <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-04-13/peabody-majority-of-its-u-s-entities-file-for-chapter-11>, the world's largest private coal producer, went bankrupt this year. As the Governor of the Bank of England warned, fossil fuel companies are an increasingly risky bet, financially as well as ethically. More and more money goes into clean energy every year. It's time more of our pension money went the same way, and out of fossil fuels.

So Legal and General's move is another big step towards a safer future for us all, and an endorsement of socially responsible investing where our investments do good, not harm.

So here's your chance to support a divestment campaign near you! <https://www.foe.co.uk/page/campaign-fossil-fuel-divestment>

Many thanks to Simon Bullock at FoE for this news item: <https://www.foe.co.uk/green-blog/investment-ethical-pensions-about-sky-rocket>

5. How Google spreads fake news on climate change



Google is under pressure to tackle the influence of the far right because there is compelling evidence that it is being manipulated by rightwing propagandists. While it's at it, Google might want to have a look at its search offerings on **global warming and climate change**. Because its web pages are dominated by rightwing climate change deniers and links to fake news – as the GJA found in our research.



The climate change rot sets in as soon as you begin to type a question. Ours was about global warming, but after typing just the first six letters Google offered us, Is global warming real? And, Is global warming a hoax?

Seven of the top 10 sites Google served up were in outright climate denial, or at best climate sceptic. Just one site, seventh in the top 10, was a reputable climate science research centre, the US-based National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). NASA provides a wealth of accessible, peer reviewed information. And it was the only site to report that, 'Scientific evidence for warming of the climate system is unequivocal,' quoting evidence from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

I don't understand why Google left out links to other reputable climate change research centres based in the UK, like the Grantham Institute, the Hadley Centre, or the Committee on Climate Change, or the daily bulletin from the Energy and Climate Information Unit.

Instead, I'm offered in fifth place above NASA a pathetic article in the Daily Express of June 2015, telling me why 'Global Warming is the greatest scam in history...because it has been categorically proved not to exist.' Apparently, polar ice is 'increasing.'

NASA was also ranked below *ConserveEnergy*, a climate sceptic site with the headline, Is global

warming real: Top five arguments in favour and against it? This website manages to ignore the fact that rising levels of CO2 are linked to our consumption of fossil fuels. But then you notice this site links across to the site of a US oil and gas company, which (my guess) probably funds it; and to a particularly troubling US-based site, TownHall.

And when I began to type another question, this time on climate change, Google popped up with, Is climate change a hoax? All of Google's 11 search results on the first page were climate sceptic.

My conclusions are these:

- It's a bun fight out there on the web, and climate change science is losing out badly.
- The type of search results you see and what they lay claim to clearly has an influence on opinion and perspective, otherwise why would the sceptics bother?
- I'm totally confused about the rules Google used to steer my own search question towards the climate sceptics.
- And, worse, the rules Google is using to filter out the answers it delivered within seconds. Because, being an environmentalist, Google has pointed me away from my usual round of internet sources of good, reliable information on climate change and the green economy, towards a landscape peppered with make believe and fake news.

If I was handed this kind of material at my local library, I'd know who to complain to, the head librarian, or failing that, the democratically accountable local authority who funds it. How does Google intend to match that standard of transparency and accountability? Or to justify its lamentable failure to provide a fair result to one of the most important questions of our time?

So, you might want to go direct to web sites that inform and debate without relying on fake news and without associations with right wing propaganda:

These two websites report every key aspect of climate change based on scientific evidence:

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASA's Science Mission: leads the nation on a great journey of discovery, seeking new knowledge and understanding of our planet Earth, our Sun and solar system, and the universe out to its farthest reaches and back to its earliest moments of existence: <https://www.nasa.gov/about/index.html>

See: Vital signs for the planet: <http://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide/>

Met Office Hadley Centre for Climate Science and Services

Provides world-class guidance on the science of climate change and is the primary focus in the UK for climate science: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-guide/science/science-behind-climate-change/hadley>

Example: Helping the UK prepare - UK flooding. 'We work with governments and businesses to help society adapt to climate variability and change.' <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-guide/science/uk>

The Energy and Climate Information Unit provides independent daily news update, blogs and in-depth research: <http://eciu.net>

Great focus on energy and industry issues for trade unions. Example: latest blog on the UK car industry: If the UK wants to stake a leadership claim it will be critical to convince the car manufacturing industry to invest in electric vehicle technology <http://eciu.net/blog/2016/accelerating-to-win-or-to-not-lose>

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) is TUED is a platform for trade unions from all sectors and countries to debate, develop and promote real solutions to the climate crisis. Includes reports and frank analysis on key issues such as the Keystone Pipeline, anti-fracking movements such as Standing Rock, carbon pricing, carbon capture and storage: <http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/resources/tued-reports-and-analysis/>

6. Air Quality – another mixed bag



The Chancellor's Autumn statement said nothing about climate change but its impacts will be felt. On transport it is true that through the exhaust fumes you can glimpse some green shoots. By 2021, Hammond promised £150m to support low emission buses and taxis and £80m for electric car charging points. Another £450m is to be spent improving rail services, though unlike fuel taxes, rail ticket prices will be going up. But the £1.3bn for roads and the fuel tax freeze, which

will cost £845m, leaves the green transport measures looking feeble in comparison, <http://bit.ly/2gkwALf>

The pressure on the UK to tackle pollution is growing. The mayors of Paris, Madrid, Mexico, and Athens have announced plans to take diesel cars and vans off the roads by 2025. <http://bit.ly/2gUbtOj>

Greg Clark, the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Secretary of State, has said that electric vehicles will be at the heart of the new industrial strategy. The GJA highlighted the lack of a strategy in our first newsletter back in September so let's see if this is more than an empty promise. We intend to make this a major stream of our work in 2017 and would welcome contributions. <http://bit.ly/2gGVvuS>

7. Report of Lucas Conference



On November 26th, a packed-out event in Birmingham celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Lucas Plan. It was a pioneering effort by workers at Lucas Aerospace to propose alternative, socially useful applications of the company's technology and workers' skills. The idea was to meet genuine social needs whilst retaining jobs.

<http://breakingtheframe.org.uk/lucas-plan/>

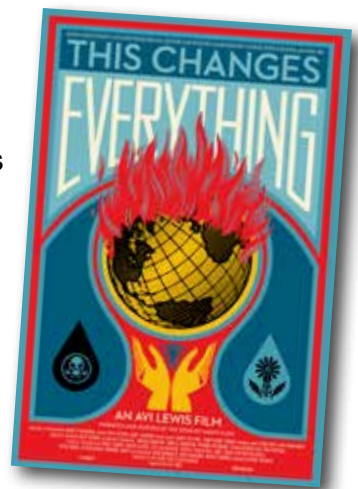
Philip Pearson, from the GJA, addressed one of the workshops on the relevance of the plan for how we transition to a low carbon economy.

8. This Changes Everything screenings

Another sold-out event took place in Freshwater, Isle of Wight on November 18th when around 60 people attended a screening of 'This Changes Everything', a film based on the Naomi Klein book organised by Friends of Freshwater Library.

Graham Petersen, from the GJA, introduced the film and conducted a Q and A afterwards. In the November newsletter we reported on

the training materials that are based on the book and please get in touch if you would like to use the film as part of awareness raising event.



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