

1. **Shell acknowledges the power of the divestment movement - and government gets serious about positive investment**

1. Damning words from the Committee on Climate Change
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1. One of the most cheering developments over the last 6 - 7 years has been **the rapid rise of the divestment movement**, starting with just a few students in the US, then engaging students the world over, and now the largest, **most powerful institutional investors**. This has happened so fast. In **Shell's 2018 annual report, the risks that climate change pose to their bottom line was acknowledged for the first time** - divestment is just one of them. Shell is one of the most indebted oil companies so their investors matter. And Eureka! - the most extraordinary thing is that **our government is proposing to make it compulsory for all pension providers to explain to you and me how they are taking the environment - and specifically climate change - social and governance issues into account when investing and voting at AGMs**. This is amazing! **ShareAction** have pushed hard for this, but clearly the finance industry is on board. The government needs you to **respond to a quick consultation**. Even if you don't have a pension, please pass those sections and fill it in, and then pass on to others. Changing where the money goes is our biggest hope....
2. You may have heard on the news that the **Committee on Climate Change (headed by Lord Deben, AKA John Gummer,) is warning again that the UK is not going to meet its Climate Change Act legally binding budgets - because of lack of progress on our transport and heating**. They are calling for a repeal of the ban on onshore wind (our lowest cost renewable) and for the government to end its start-stop approach to energy policy. They also state that the government's plans for woodland creation lack are inadequate. **Please write to your MP and make clear that for communities that want onshore wind, the government should not impose a ban**.
3. **Can you make it to London on Wednesday (July 4th)?** Sir David King, the government's Chief Scientific Advisor 2000 - 2007, is heading up the **Plan B legal**

[challenge to our government](#), demanding that our Paris 100% zero emission target should be enshrined in law. As the campaign states, **The Time Is Now. [They are encouraging supporters to go to the Courts of Justice on the Strand for 9am.](#)** I hope to see you there.

4. **Will cutting our single-use plastic affect oil consumption?** Yes. The world currently consumes almost 100 million barrels of oil per day and it is estimated that **around 2% could be cut by stopping the wasteful use of plastic.** That may not sound like much but 2 million barrels/day is enough to impact markets. So apart from just the plastic pollution issue, **there are good climate change reasons to cut our plastic use.** To make an even bigger impact on oil and gas, we also need to cut our petro-chemicals and for most of us, that means buying a bit more organic food and [clothing](#).
5. Many people tell me they can't afford to move to a 100% renewable tariff - but that is forgetting the second part of the equation, **monitoring your usage** and understanding where there is waste. [Stuff on standby is approximately 5% of our bills.](#) This [Ovo article](#) is slightly out of date but gives a really clear breakdown of how households consume power. The **proportion that is 'unknown' and continues throughout the night** is interesting - presumably our alarm systems, doorbells, toothbrushes etc? Also interesting to note that there's a fair proportion that **could be moved from peak hours - particularly washing and drying.** Many people find [energy monitors](#) in the house useful; submitting monthly readings, paying for what you use, and keeping a record will also get you more in touch with your consumption. **Perhaps the biggest aid is actually discussing your bills with your household - it is never too early or too late to learn what a kWh is!**
6. One of the surprises of the last few years has been that **the oil majors (ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, Total) have come out in favour of a carbon tax. The fact that they have offered to help write the law may explain this.** In the US, James Baker and George Schultz, who have both worked as oil industry lobbyists since leaving government, have together put forward a plan that involves taxing carbon within the country and also at the border (to combat imports with 'embedded' emissions appearing cheaper). [Here's a really good article](#) looking at why the plan is more flawed than it looks. **One reason is that by guaranteeing families a cash dividend from the tax, individuals actually have an interest in the continued use of fossil fuels.**
7. The government has given **the go-ahead to the [Wylfa nuclear power plant](#), with we taxpayers taking an 'equity share'** - ie we will help pay for the construction which, in the nuclear industry, *always* involves cost and time over-runs (think Hinkley Point C, Flamanville, Olkiluoto etc). [Greenpeace is helping to launch a legal challenge on this.](#) **The government has also announced a [£200 million funding boost for the industry in a special 'sector deal' to help it survive.](#) This includes [£56 million for more research into small modular reactors to be dispersed around the country.](#) **This is despite overwhelming evidence that the public do not want these.****
8. **Meanwhile Japan is facing the problem of what to do with its [47 tonnes of stockpiled plutonium](#), 37 tonnes of which are held in the UK and France.** This is because their own nuclear plants were designed to take reprocessed ['mixed oxide](#)

fuel' but few have restarted operations since the Fukushima disaster. It is speculated that the UK will be paid to keep it - despite the fact that we still have no prospect of a geological disposal facility and serious safety & management problems at Sellafield.

9. You may remember the Desertec plan to **cover the Sahara in solar panels and bring the power to Europe** via interconnectors. That plan foundered, partly because it was seen as another European land-grab, with little benefit to the host countries. However, a new proposal has been put forward by a UK-led consortium to build a 4.5 GW concentrated solar power plant in Tunisia and export the electricity to France and Italy, with some of it reaching the UK. Whether this will be acceptable to Tunisians who face regular power cuts at home remains to be seen. Interestingly, there is a separate proposal, backed by the Africa Development Bank and several other big investment groups, to put 10GW of solar across the Sahel (below the Sahara), potentially bringing clean electricity to 250 million people in some of the world's poorest countries - and avoiding their current use of wood, straw, dung and kerosene, all of which are highly polluting and high in CO2.
10. You may have heard that China has unexpectedly slashed its support for solar power. This seems to be a response to worries over national debt and the fragility of the banking sector - more great exports from the West. It means that **approximately 20GW of solar in China, the world's biggest solar market, won't be built.** But on the plus side, it means that there is a glut of very cheap solar panels that are likely to be exported. **India is a key country to watch** as the government has dashed to fulfil its promise of bringing electricity to every village, principally using coal-fired power plants. Although the government is claiming it has reached its electrification target already, two years early, there is still massive demand for more power. The good news is that the government is planning new regulation to strengthen its goal of 21% renewables by 2022. We urgently need the Global South to leapfrog fossil fuels and move directly to renewables - but this means massive investment from the Global North. You can play a part by investing in government-backed schemes (even very small amounts) on Trine and Ethex, and of course supporting organisations such as SolarAid.

The UK's solar has been doing well in this heatwave, but last night's news was all about water stress throughout the country and potential mass crop failures if we do not get significant rain soon. The peat land of Saddleworth Moor is likely to burn for weeks. Yet in early March we had the coldest spring temperatures on record. It seems we are experiencing a great deal of extreme weather - but still not quite joining the dots.....

I hope to see you at tonight's event (see below), and on Wednesday outside the Courts of Justice.

As ever, if you would like to come off the mailing list, please just let me know.

Nikki



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