

GETTING MONEY OUT OF FOSSIL FUELS

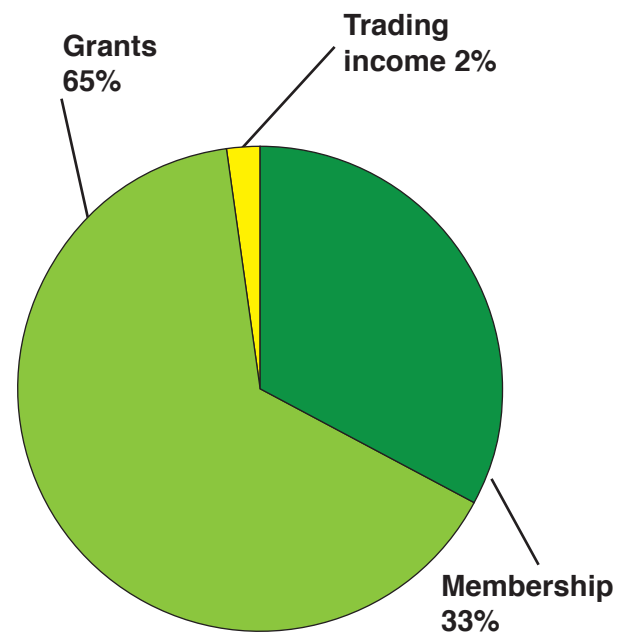
International and local divestment commitments have continued to pile up over the last 12 months from the New York City Pension Fund to the Glasgow Caledonian University and the trade union UNISON. In the highest profile decision in Scotland, Edinburgh University finally committed to full divestment after a 6 year campaign by students, staff and alumni. Where policy change remains elusive, the issue of divestment has forced exciting and provocative debates within the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

Following the 2017 elections new allies on council pensions committees have helped us put Local Government Pension investment in fossil fuels under the spotlight. In November, we revealed that these pension funds had actually increased their investment in the firms driving climate change to £1.8 billion. Thriving local divestment campaigns in Glasgow and Edinburgh are now putting serious pressure on councils to go fossil free.

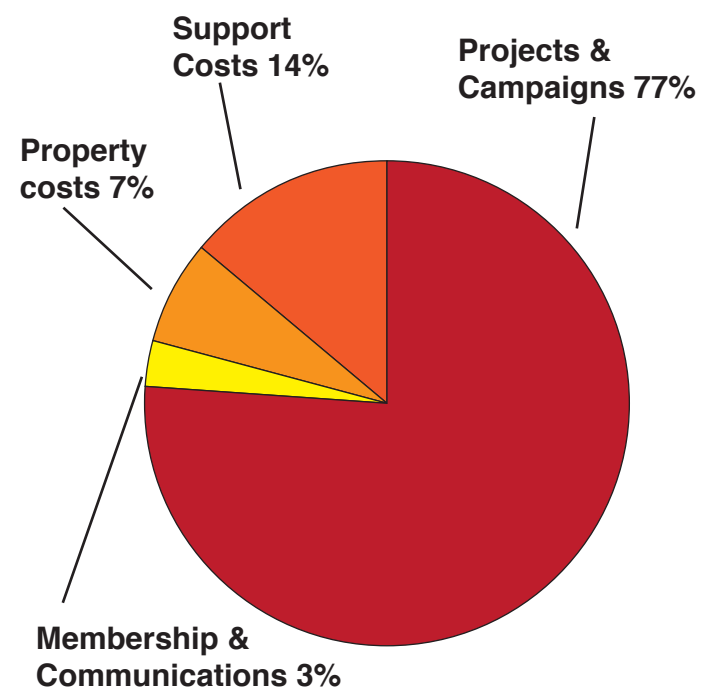
Our landmark 2016 publication Banking for the Common Good and subsequent lobbying for reform with partners led to a major victory this year as the Scottish Government announced the creation of a Scottish National Investment Bank. The First Minister has assured us that it would be “unthinkable” for the Bank not to have, as a central part of its mission, funding the low carbon transition. Such a Bank could have a huge impact in turning Scotland away from fossil fuels.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Total Income £622,149



Total Expenditure £600,615

Friends of the Earth Scotland is an independent Scottish charity SC003442
www.foe.scot



Friends of the Earth Scotland Annual Review 2017-18

INTRODUCTION

The past twelve months have been amongst the most successful in our history. We played an instrumental role in securing the ban on fracking through hard work and collaboration with key allies and communities threatened by this industry.

In this special 40th anniversary year, we’ve sought to increase our membership and reach. We’ve built a new website, organised a Summer Weekender, lively activist gatherings in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and linked up with colleagues across Europe. We enabled thousands of people to contact their MSPs, Councillors and MPs to ensure that environmental protection is an inescapable part of their work. Our campaigners have met with Ministers to push for more ambition and worked with civil servants to ensure policy is turned into effective action.

We welcomed the 2017 Programme for Government as the greenest ever for its promises on air pollution, a Deposit Return Scheme for bottles and cans, and the creation of a new Just Transition Commission to help Scotland move to a low-carbon economy fairly. The commitment to 4 Low Emission Zones and a Scottish National Investment Bank were major wins for our campaigns.

This review is a brief run through major milestones in our campaigns. As ever, we are hugely grateful to our members whose support has made so many of these victories possible.



A BAN ON FRACKING

The past year has been a rollercoaster in the fight to stop fracking. We hoped that the Energy Minister’s announcement last October that the Scottish Government would ban fracking would finally remove this threat from communities and the climate. Together with community groups, allies and individuals we had built cross-party pressure that meant the ban was backed across Parliament.

Thankfully, a recent legal challenge by Ineos to the ban was dismissed by a judge who agreed with the Scottish Government’s argument that as there was no legally enforceable ban in place, there was no case to answer. However, the embarrassment and confusion this has caused has also upped the pressure on the Scottish Government to act swiftly and legislate to ban fracking.

We made a public interest intervention in the case arguing that the Scottish Government was obliged to ban fracking in order to meet its own legally binding climate change commitments. As the hearing focused on a technicality – whether a decision to ban fracking had been made or not – and there was no opportunity to look at broader legal arguments around the imperative to ban fracking on environmental grounds. However, during the hearing Lord Pentland described our ground breaking intervention as very helpful.

Thank you so much to all our generous supporters who donated to help make this intervention happen.

TRASHING PLASTICS

We launched a social media campaign to encourage people to take the Plastic Free Friday pledge and hundreds of people responded to encourage the government’s plans to ban plastic cotton buds. A nationwide deposit and return scheme for drinks cans and bottles is the next target.



PUSHING FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Scotland’s new Climate Change Bill has been a key focus of our work in the past year. We’ve been pushing Government and Parliament to set ambitious targets and policies that reflect the urgency of the climate crisis. We know that our target ask of net zero emissions by 2040 is a fair share of international efforts, given Scotland’s historical responsibility.

Working as part of the Stop Climate Chaos coalition we helped over 19,000 people respond to the Government’s consultation on the new Bill, and our climate action workshops have trained scores of activists in effective campaigning.

Collectively, the coalition will be redoubling our efforts as the Bill progresses through Parliament, to ensure every MSP knows we need to set ambitious targets for 2030 and beyond.

In November, we attended the UN climate conference in Bonn where, as part of FoE International, we took part in press conferences and actions highlighting the need for industrialised nations to step up their climate action and provide support to those countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We also met with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to discuss Scotland’s role in global climate action.

AIR POLLUTION PROGRESS

We’ve kept air pollution in the headlines this year but there has been a definite move from Government and Councils to more seriously address the problem. 2017-18 saw the Scottish Government commit to phase out the need for fossil fuel cars and vans by 2032. Whilst we welcomed this move, which is well ahead of UK target of 2040, 15 years is a long time to continue suffering from dirty vehicles on our streets. We’ve also put pressure on the Transport Minister to stop the decline in bus use and give Councils the power to run local services.

Glasgow Council has also finalised their plans for Low Emission Zones to begin at the end of 2018. We worked closely with our Glasgow local group and other key allies to push for more action in terms of the phase out of dirty buses and bringing forward the date of when the Zone would apply to all vehicles. Edinburgh Council appears to be approaching their own LEZ plans with greater ambition and we will continue to work to ensure clean air in the capital as soon as possible.



Edinburgh also saw our first Pop Up Park in June where we took over car parking spaces and instead hosted yoga, singing and cycling workshops. This is an important symbolic step to help people reimagine space in our cities and we hope that we see more Pop Up Parks across the country in years to come. support and push the issue into the media spotlight.