

My reason for speaking to you today is to ask that you revise your 2050 target for the removal of all funding support to the fossil fuel industry.

The summer picnic was always a cornerstone of the social calendar of this thriving community. From the babies born in the preceding months to the diverse and rich mixture of elders, everyone enjoyed one another's company in the sunshine on the banks of the lake that was in the centre of the park. Tragically, in 2015, this idyllic happening was forever changed by the death of a child that drowned in the lake during the festivities.

In response to this tragedy the community banded together and committed to never letting this happen again. A committee was formed with the mission to ensure the lake was made safe. Lifesaving options were explored and a solution was proposed. The committee recommended a series of life lines and floating devices. There was just one issue; in the first instance, the preferred contractor could only guarantee that the lifesaving solution would cover "most" not all of the lake. They said that their technology was developing and that by 2050 they would guarantee full coverage of the lake and install the extra equipment free of charge.

The committee championed this solution saying that, whilst it was not perfect, it was cost efficient and represented a good compromise. The community was consulted and whilst concerns were raised that the proposed solution still put lives at risk, the committee went ahead with their plan. The equipment was installed and members of the committee sought coverage in the local media championing their efforts.

The annual picnics continued and memories of the events of 2015 slowly faded. Some 10 years later the picnic was, once again, in full swing. 2 children wandered off from the main group to explore the lake. It was a while before they were missed, following a brief search they were found playing at the far end of the lake. It became clear that they had strayed too far into the lake and were in trouble. The shout went out for the life lines and floats. Fatally for them, the 2 children had chosen to play in the part of the lake not reachable by the "compromise" lifesaving solution. They died

The efforts made by Avon Pension Fund (APF) to divest from fossil fuel (FF) funding are laudable as far as they go but greater courage is needed to fully divest from FF funding well before the current proposal of 2050.

In April this year the highest ever levels of CO<sub>2</sub> were recorded in our atmosphere (421ppm, where no higher than 350 ppm is seen as healthy for humanity) and the trajectory is ever higher. Evidence grows every day of the determination of the fossil fuel industry to ensure a business as usual, growth focused model and the consequential destruction of our planet. The current investment plans of the top 12 FF companies is to spend \$103m A DAY for the remainder of this decade on the expansion of oil, gas and coal extraction.

Through the UN Conference of the Parties (COP) mechanism, Nation States and Big Oil have consistently set targets without the slightest intention of ever meeting them. For them the approach is about procrastination and diversion, greenwash and greed. Carbon emissions continue to rise at frightening rates, drought, flood, fire and famine are becoming daily occurrences rather than rare events.

In my story the 2 children died not because the efforts of the committee weren't well intended but because those efforts fell short of what was actually needed. Humanity needs people with courage to make the hard decisions, to provide examples of what a positive future could be like. This Committee has the power to show that positive leadership. I implore you to recognise that, with every day that passes, money invested in the FF Industry is money that is accelerating this destruction of our planet. Be that positive example, have the courage, get our money out of FFs NOW.