



FUNDER COMMITMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE: YEAR 1 REPORT

APRIL 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Funder Commitment on Climate Change is a holistic, high-level framework for foundations - whatever their size, mission, or area of benefit - to play their part in tackling the causes and impacts of climate change. It was launched in November 2019, and since June 2020 has been hosted by the Association of Charitable Foundation (ACF). This UK initiative has inspired foundation networks in [France and Spain](#) to develop parallel commitments, and there are also plans for national commitments in other states and a [global version](#). The full text of the Funder Commitment, current list of signatories, and form to sign can all be found at fundercommitmentclimatechange.org

The signatories to the Funder Commitment have committed to taking action on climate change in five areas, as follows:

1. **Educate and learn.** We will make opportunities for our trustees, staff and stakeholders to learn more about the key causes and solutions of climate change.
2. **Commit resources.** We will commit resources to accelerate work that addresses the causes and impacts of climate change. (If our governing document or other factors make it difficult to directly fund such work, we will find other ways to contribute, or consider how such barriers might be overcome).
3. **Integrate.** Within all our existing programmes, priorities and processes, we will seek opportunities to contribute to a fair and lasting transition to a post carbon society, and to support adaptation to climate change impacts.
4. **Steward our investments for a post carbon future.** We will recognise climate change as a high-level risk to our investments, and therefore to our mission. We will proactively address the risks and opportunities of a transition to a post carbon economy in our investment strategy and its implementation, recognising that our decisions can contribute to this transition being achieved.
5. **Decarbonise our operations.** We will take ambitious action to minimise the carbon footprint of our own operations.

The sixth and final commitment is:

6. **Report on progress.** We will report annually on our progress against the five goals listed above. We will continue to develop our practice, to learn from others, and to share our learning.

THE ACF SURVEY

The Funder Commitment is a public statement of intent; it is not a certification scheme or quality standard. Signatories include a wide range of UK-based foundations – both ACF members and non-members – of all sizes, and with a great variety of different charitable purposes. Some foundations have been active on climate change for many years, while others are at an early stage in responding to the climate emergency and exploring how it impacts in their particular field of work. The spirit of the Funder Commitment is that every foundation can strive to do more, whatever their starting point.

The Funder Commitment does not specify a particular format of reporting. However, to assist the reporting process, ACF invited all current signatories to respond to a simple survey of actions taken under each of the elements of the Funder Commitment. Funders were invited to make a simple self-assessment of their progress in each area - the collated results of which are shown as bar charts in this report. ACF also took this opportunity to ask signatories about how ACF can best support peer learning and further action, and finally to gather some basic data about the signatories to inform future work.

The survey was open from 8 February to 5 March 2021. 43 signatories provided responses to the survey in this period. There were 55 signatories to the Funder Commitment at the time of the survey opening.

It is important to note that the public commitment by signatories is to report annually on progress, and that only around 30 signatories have been signed up to the Funder Commitment for over one year.

METHODOLOGY

The survey answers show a wealth of activity by signatories. In the report below, we provide a short summary of the types of activity that foundations have been undertaking under each pillar of the Funder Commitment, together with example text drawn directly from the reports. In selecting these quotes, we have tried to give a sense of the range of actions, from simple changes to comprehensive strategies, and have prioritised new actions that have been made in the past year. Some foundations have given excellent examples in every area, but we have deliberately chosen to draw on examples from many different foundations, to illustrate the breadth and variety of action. Responses to the survey varied considerably in length and detail. Some very short answers may represent significant activity, but we have generally drawn on examples that gave a little more explanation.

Actions on climate can often fall into more than one category of the Funder Commitment – for example, establishing an internal climate action group can be both a commitment of resources (staff and trustee time) and a mechanism for integrating a climate lens into other work; consideration of climate risk by an investment committee can be both a learning process and part of updating

investment policy. The grouping of examples quoted below does not rigidly follow the categories used by the respondents. Some quotes are a selected part of a longer survey response, and some abbreviations have been spelled out in full to aid reading. Except for minor details like capitalisation and punctuation, nothing has been edited.

The past year has of course been heavily shaped by the pandemic. As well as general organisational pressures, many foundations have been providing additional emergency funds to groups that they fund, and to meet more general public need. While foundations are privileged to have financial resources to draw on, some foundations have seen asset values or income fall, particularly those that benefit from public fundraising or a corporate parent. These factors have meant that a number of foundations have not been able to commit the resources or make as much progress on the Funder Commitment as they had hoped during the year, and this is honestly acknowledged in several responses.

The raw survey data – which respondents were given an opportunity to update before the report was published – [can be accessed here](#).

While all the information is provided by the foundations themselves, these short survey answers should not be relied upon as a full statement of foundation funding guidelines or organisational policies, and interested readers should refer to foundation websites for current information. The Funder Commitment relies on self-reporting, and ACF has not independently verified the actions that foundations have reported.

The report was written by Nick Perks, independent consultant, and Joanna Pienkowska, Senior Policy and Engagement Officer at ACF (joanna@acf.org.uk)

OTHER REPORTS

The survey also asked whether foundations have already produced stand-alone reports on their actions under the Funder Commitment, and two were identified:

- [Esmée Fairbairn Foundation](#)
- [John Ellerman Foundation](#)

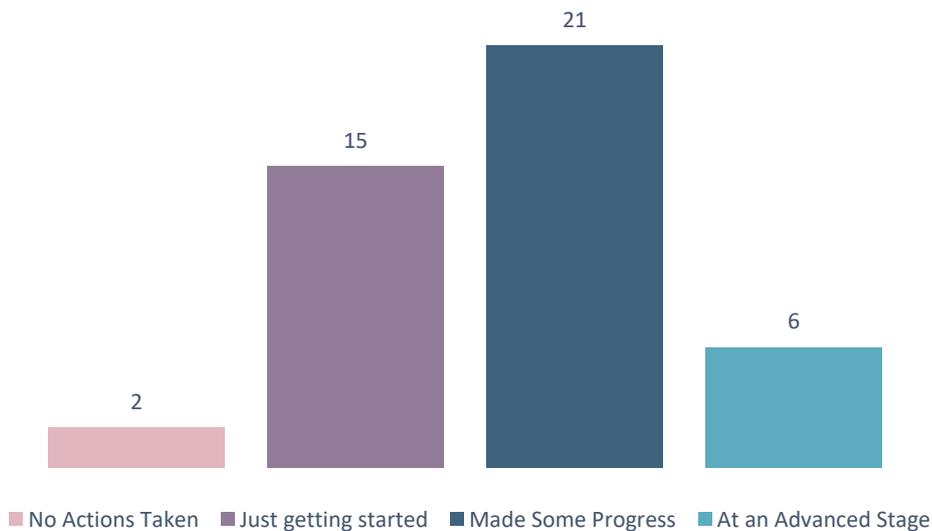
Unprompted, six more foundations mention that they have included information in their annual accounts (Global Greengrants Fund, Lankelly Chase, Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation, Southall Trust) or as part of wider sustainability reporting on their website ([Arcadia](#), [Kreitman Foundation](#)) and four further foundations stated plans to publish more information (The Blagrave Trust, Cattanach, Friends Provident Foundation, Quartet Community Foundation). Other signatories may also have future plans for such reporting, as this question was not explicitly asked.

RESULTS BY THEME

1. EDUCATE AND LEARN

We will make opportunities for our trustees, staff and stakeholders to learn more about the key causes and solutions of climate change.

Self-assessment of progress



Actions reported

Many trustees and staff foundations are concerned about climate change, but some may feel confused by the volume of information, lack confidence to discuss the issues, or simply be overwhelmed by the scale of the challenge. Foundations need to build up the climate literacy of their organisations if they are to take effective action.

Foundations have been learning more about climate in many different ways, including inviting a speaker to address their board, investment commitment or other internal groups, circulating relevant articles and reports, or attending external training. A few foundations have introduced comprehensive climate training for staff. The [Environmental Funders Network](#) has been a useful resource for many, with some signatories joining as members for the first time. Many other external sources of expertise and advice were mentioned, including the [Carbon Literacy](#) project, the [Climate Leadership Initiative](#), the [Fit for the Future](#) network, [Impatience Earth](#) and [Zero Waste Scotland](#).

Foundations are also learning from the projects and organisations that they fund. Those foundations whose core work is about climate have significant expertise in

house, while some others have brought in new trustees with expertise or allocated a staff member to lead. For several foundations learning on climate is part of wider organisational developments to increase learning and reflection. Almost every reporting signatory felt they had at least made a start on learning about climate, but relatively few felt that they were yet at an advanced stage.

Examples

Access – the Foundation for Social Investment:

We presented a concept paper to our Board outlining the potential areas of work. We have focussed these more around encouraging behaviour change rather than new reporting requirement. We also acknowledged our limited knowledge and to some extent limited position to dictate trends in the sector. Therefore, the approach focusses on creating space for the discussion and sharing idea generation with partners (and whereby necessary external experts).

Arcadia: We lead quarterly cross-team meetings (senior management and sustainability champions) to discuss sustainability issues across our donors' business and private operations. We delivered an internal webinar on the climate crisis and the history of the green movement. We are considering further activities for staff: online TED talk-style events, encouraging and celebrating staff innovation in making our operations more sustainable, carbon literacy project and integrating sustainability goals in annual staff appraisals.

Blagrove Trust: [We] facilitated a session at the ACF annual conference where we brought two young climate change activists to the conference, including Jake Woodier, UK School Climate Network, and Daze Aghaji (who at that point was not a trustee!) to discuss the topic and issue a call to action for the foundation sector. In March 2020 we recruited two new trustees to our Board – Daze Aghaji is a climate activist working with XR youth, and Boudicca Pepper is also a youth campaigner, making

music for social change and with a passion for environmental issues.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation: We circulate key pieces of research on climate change to our staff and trustees and also invitations we receive to external presentations and events. [GMO's Race of our Lives Revisited](#) paper has been influential, as have [Generation Investment Management's Sustainability Trends](#) reports and the work of [CarbonTracker](#). We have an annual budget for staff development for those who wish to attend more specific courses and we actively use our social media channels to highlight key pieces of work by our grantees. Recent examples have included the [final report of the Climate Assembly UK from Involve](#) and the work of the [Green Alliance](#) who aim to ensure that political leaders deliver ambitious solutions to global environmental issues...The annual strategy day for both our Investment Committee and our main Trustee board included presentations from external speakers on climate change and discussions on the associated financial risks. We are active members of a number of UK and European networking organisations, for example the [Charities Responsible Investment Network \(CRIN\)](#), where issues related to climate are regularly on the agenda. We have been particularly active in 2020 in terms of speaking at online events, such as those hosted by ACF (Association of Charitable Foundations) or seminars and roundtables organised by fund managers. We have also had individual conversations with other foundations and endowments who are either in the process of taking the first steps to incorporate climate considerations into the way they manage their operations or

who are updating more established procedures and looking to adopt net zero carbon targets on their investment portfolios.

OVO Foundation: OVO Foundation participated in OVO Energy's internal sustainability week in September 2020 which focused on why climate change is important and what individuals and organisations can do to address it. The Foundation delivered a session for OVO Energy employees with one of our charity grantees which showcased the environmental project we are working on

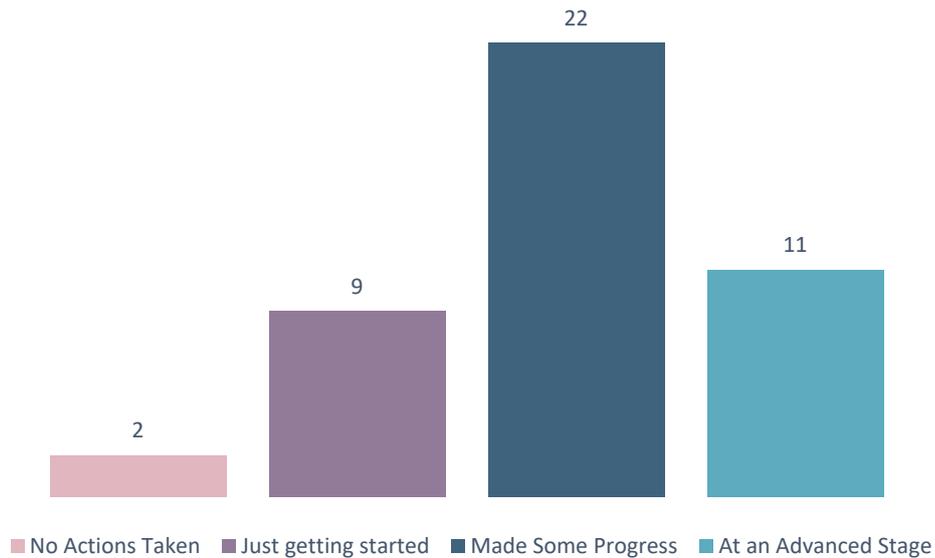
together and addressed broader environmental questions. OVO Foundation staff have access to OVO Energy's Plan Zero hub for employees, which provides sustainability training modules giving an overview of the causes and solutions of climate change, as well as expert speaker events.

Wates Foundation & Wates Family Enterprise Trust: We have developed a learning agenda for 2021 for family members (over 100) and trustees. One section relates to climate and the Foundation's commitment to tackling this.

2. COMMIT RESOURCES

We will commit resources to accelerate work that addresses the causes and impacts of climate change. (If our governing document or other factors make it difficult to directly fund such work, we will find other ways to contribute, or consider how such barriers might be overcome).

Self-assessment of progress



Actions reported

By definition, foundations are organisations with resources at their disposal. Addressing climate change needs large scale, urgent action. Money is needed for activism, for advocacy, for education, for business development, for practical action, and to support local communities through transition. Internal resources will also need to be allocated by foundations in order to follow through on all the other elements of the Funder Commitment.

Although reporting signatories vary from specialist climate funders to organisations considering the topic for the first time, and some plans had inevitably been disrupted by the pandemic, there were many positive answers under this theme. A number of foundations have committed resources internally, including for example establishing cross-organisation climate action groups or appointing new staff. Money is also going out of the door, with some new funding programmes launched, existing programmes adjusted to give more focus on climate, or increases in spend. Several foundations are developing plans for future initiatives.

Examples

Aim Foundation: Trustees have agreed to initial budget of £50,000 this financial year rising over time to £200,000, using endowment capital. First grant of £15,000 made!

John Ellerman Foundation: We now specifically mention climate change in our 2020 Funding Guidelines. We have added climate change as a programme area in our environment category on our online application form. 16 out of our 54 live environment grants are climate related. £1.5m of our £5.2m current spent in the environment category is towards climate related grants.

Oglesby Charitable Trust: Developing a small climate change grant scheme for non-environmental grantees. Developing environmental element to our new Funding Plus programme. Pledged £50k to Big Give's Green Match Fund.

The Pebble Trust: Virtually all our resources are applied to work addressing climate change. We have also agreed that, in view of the urgency of the crisis, we are happy to deplete our reserves to help tackle it.

The Wolfson Foundation: Wolfson has had a longstanding tradition of supporting science projects that are environmental in nature. Since June 2020 we have funded a significant number of projects which address in different ways the causes and impacts of climate change. Examples include £1.35 million awarded to the Marine

Biological Association (Plymouth) in June 2020 to support the creation of the Marine Microbiome Centre of Excellence to facilitate research in marine microbiology and the impacts of climate change... In addition to being responsive to the capital infrastructure needs of individual organisations, we have also been proactive in committing funding of £360,000 to renew for a further three years a programme in partnership with Theatres Trust – the national advisory public body for theatres – to support the sustainability of UK theatres. The Theatre Improvement Scheme will award grants of up to £20,000 to support capital projects intended to reduce the environmental impact of theatre buildings.

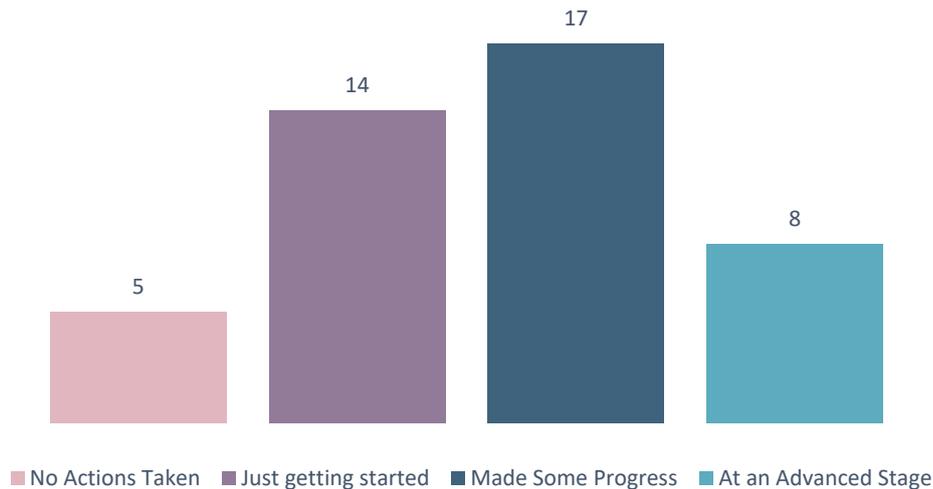
Treebeard Trust: We exceeded Treebeard's environment and climate change Impact Only Investment (grant) budget this year. We set a target of 15% for this and have deployed nearly 20%. Partners span a range of activity and include Ecological Land Cooperative, Peers for the Planet, Green Alliance, NEON, Environmental Law Foundation, Forum for the Future, and the PFLA-led food label lobbying initiative. We joined a shared platform with a few other funders to share proposals or opportunities, which has been helpful for us, and we have adopted a collaborative approach to all our climate funding.

World Habitat: We've created a new staff post with a lead role in carbon reduction and environmental sustainability.

3. INTEGRATE

Within all our existing programmes, priorities and processes, we will seek opportunities to contribute to a fair and lasting transition to a post carbon society, and to support adaptation to climate change impacts.

Self-assessment of progress



Actions reported

The causes and solutions of climate change interact with many other fields of civil society activity, ranging from housing to the arts, and from scientific research to social change. Foundations have an opportunity to build on their existing expertise and networks, to make productive links across different fields, and to foster positive action on climate in their priority areas. Redesigning programmes and making these connections can take time, and this is an area where many foundations reported they were at quite an early stage or taking time to identify the best approach.

Nevertheless, there are various actions to report. Some foundations have added climate change questions to their application process, though others have considered but rejected additional application or reporting questions. Several foundations are offering additional resources to grantees, for example to enable higher environmental standards in building projects. Foundations that were reviewing overall strategies or designing new programmes perhaps had the greatest opportunity for integrating climate thinking into other work streams.

Examples

Foundation Scotland: We have just begun considering how we will do this. We are part of an emerging group of funders in Scotland (a sub-group of the Scotland Funders Forum) who are exploring this. At our meeting on 26/02/21 the group agreed to focus activity on:

- a) co-produced principles for funding that incorporate positive climate action.
- b) develop peer network to take forward actions to underpin respective organisations commitment.
- c) explore potential collective post COP legacy pot to support activity inspired by climate awareness / COP.

Our Foundation has one programme with an explicit 'climate smart' focus which we will review and draw on learning from, with the potential to translate this to other programmes. We are already working with the decision-making panel for another programme seeking to integrate climate smart action into that.

OVO Foundation: In 2020, OVO Foundation agreed on a new strategy with sustainability at its heart. This new vision aligns with Plan Zero, OVO's 10-year vision to drive progress towards zero-carbon living. Our new strategy marks the first step, to make sure all children and young people have equal access to a sustainable future. We are aligning all of our programmes to our new strategy. For example, with Future Builders - our youth homelessness programme - we are working with partners to explore how we make the properties we renovate more energy efficient for years to come. We have also realigned our OVO Gives Back programme to focus on partners and projects which address the climate crisis.

Samworth Foundation: We are encouraging our non-environmental portfolio to actively engage in this agenda and we are providing resources for them to be able to do so.

Southwood Foundation: We are setting up a service to help connect communities and charitable initiatives with environmental expertise. We are trialling the idea and hope to launch in the late summer [or] early autumn.

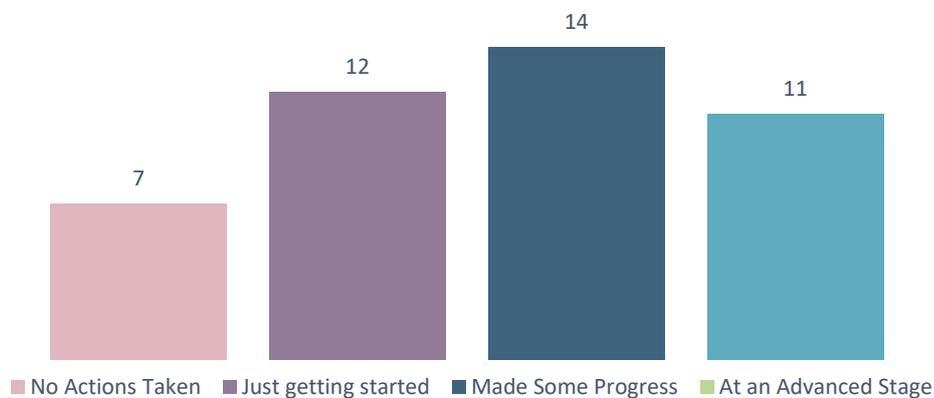
Sir Walter St John's Educational Charity: We are a very small foundation and our resources are limited. However, we have committed staff time to learning more about the issues and to making small changes within our own policies, practices, and procedures. We have also added a climate change questions within our grant applications to find out more about what the organisations we are supporting in our local community are doing.

Treebeard Trust: We have looked at [opportunities] to be more environmentally minded within some of our existing, non-climate partnerships, for example – working in partnership with Lighthouse Charity to purchase and renovate a children's residential home we have put thought and resource into developing an advanced, sustainable heating and insulation design, which will make considerable carbon savings across many years. Whilst this requires more upfront investment, it was an important factor for Treebeard and for Lighthouse.

4. STEWARD OUR INVESTMENTS FOR A POST CARBON FUTURE

We will recognise climate change as a high-level risk to our investments, and therefore to our mission. We will proactively address the risks and opportunities of a transition to a post carbon economy in our investment strategy and its implementation, recognising that our decisions can contribute to this transition being achieved.

Self-assessment of progress



Actions reported

Climate change is recognised as a risk to investments by the [Bank of England](#) and the [World Bank](#), amongst others. One manifestation of this risk has been the significant [underperformance and falls in value](#) of fossil fuel share offerings in the past decade. It is basic good stewardship to recognise and address this risk, and there are also many opportunities for foundations to take a more active leadership stance in this area.

During the year, many signatories discussed climate and investment, at a board level, in their investment committee, or with fund managers, in some cases for the first time. Several signatories have agreed new investment strategies that include stronger climate commitments as part of the overall approach. Alongside this or separately, some signatories have moved to new investment managers who they judge are better able to deliver strongly responsible investment approaches.

Amongst the signatories to the Funder Commitment are foundations with a strong track record of leadership and innovation in the field of responsible investment, and amongst this group there is a clear ratcheting up of expectations about good practice, and what managers should deliver. Foundation learning and practice in this area is being informed by resources such as ACF's [Stronger Foundations Investment report](#)

and joint working through groups including ShareAction's [Charitable Responsible Investment Network](#).

Note: Some foundations do not hold investments, but instead distribute funds from an external donor such as a corporate partner, so were not able to report under this heading.

Examples

Cattanach: We had a Board session on ESG factors in investment management and discussed climate change. It is now reflected in our Investment Policy Statement and will become an instruction to our portfolio managers.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation: During 2020 we started work on how we would adopt a net zero carbon target on our investment portfolio, and we are working on the implications of that for our investment strategy. In many ways this has been about formalising work which was already underway with our investment advisors. Although a long-term target is important, we are also considering the milestones that will be key over the coming decade if we are to track our progress. We are currently transitioning the whole of our investment portfolio to one which is one more closely aligned with our mission. Part of this work has included the addition of a £25m allocation within the main fund for high impact funds with market-leading approaches to ESG considerations (environmental, social & governance). These include a European manager buying companies focusing on resource efficiency and pollution control and one based in the US finding good opportunities in solar power, electric vehicles and clean water solutions. Our investment committee held a strategy day in the summer looking at the impacts of climate change on our portfolio. Linked to this, we have started to do work on biodiversity loss and how we might incorporate that into analysis of our investments going forward.

Foundation Scotland: In 2020, with a clear commitment to move our investments to a fund that focussed positively on ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) impact, our Finance & Investment Committee shortlisted and interviewed seven investment managers. Through a robust process involving further research and second interviews we decided to go with EQ Investors and have now moved the majority of our investments to a bespoke Impact portfolio created by EQ for us... This is an all equities portfolio investing in 400 companies worldwide and avoiding fossil fuel extraction companies entirely. Investments are in for example renewable energy, electric vehicles, education, healthcare, micro-finance and enabling tech. The EQ product includes an online portal that enables our donors to monitor investment performance across a range of criteria. This includes net carbon equivalent emissions. ...The portfolio is benchmarked against two indices (FTSE 100 and MSCI AC World) and shows net carbon equivalent emissions at 70% lower than FTSE 100. It is aligned with a warming scenario of 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2060.

Friends Provident Foundation: We extended our investment policy to exclude investment in companies involved in: the extraction, production and distribution of fossil fuels, and similarly high carbon fuels; unsustainable harvest of natural resources, e.g. deforestation; and intensive farming methods that degrade the environment, e.g. palm oil. We used our influence as a shareholder to 'promote a just and net-zero carbon transition, calling for the adoption of business models that are consistent with

keeping global heating below 1.5°C'. This included co-filing our first ever shareholder resolution in April 2020 at the French oil company Total. The resolution called on Total to adopt a low carbon transition plan with medium and long-term targets aligned with the Paris climate agreement and covering absolute greenhouse gas emissions. Throughout 2020, we have also been using our influence to engage energy utility companies operating in the UK to develop just and net-zero transition strategies. We have particularly favoured investments in "companies whose business model focus is on net zero carbon transition", as per our investment policy. In September 2020, we invested in Riding Sunbeams, which seeks to decarbonise the transport system by developing community owned renewable energy assets and using the electricity generated to power trains.

Lankelly Chase: Having already divested from investments in fossil fuels, we have since updated our Investment Policy to include an objective to contribute to a rapid and just transition to a post-carbon future. We have selected new investment managers who are better able to help us pursue this objective - including specialist investors in environment technologies - and we are in the process of transitioning funds. We also co-filed a shareholder resolution at the AGM of Barclays Bank, on which we engaged directly with Board members, seeking a commitment to phase out fossil fuel financing. This had some success and we are part of ongoing engagement and coordination with civil society groups. We are also contributing, as a Steering Group member, to a student campaign ("Invest for Change") on university and college investment practices in the context of climate change. We have convened a working group of charitable investors to understand and act on the implications of ecological thresholds for investment practices, including but not limited to the carbon budget.

Paul Hamlyn: In the last four years we have worked increasingly closely with ShareAction, to whom we now provide core funding. With them we participate fully in the Charities Responsible Investment Network, which they administer. In September 2019 trustees, in conjunction with the Investment Committee, conducted an in-depth review of ESG principles and practices. 2020/2021 was a busy year on establishing priorities and searching for common ground between the investment committee, Trustees and the staff. On divestment we intend, as yet, to favour engagement. We work ever more closely supporting ShareAction, lobbying for change and to better understand and interrogate our portfolio.

Wates Foundation & Wates Family

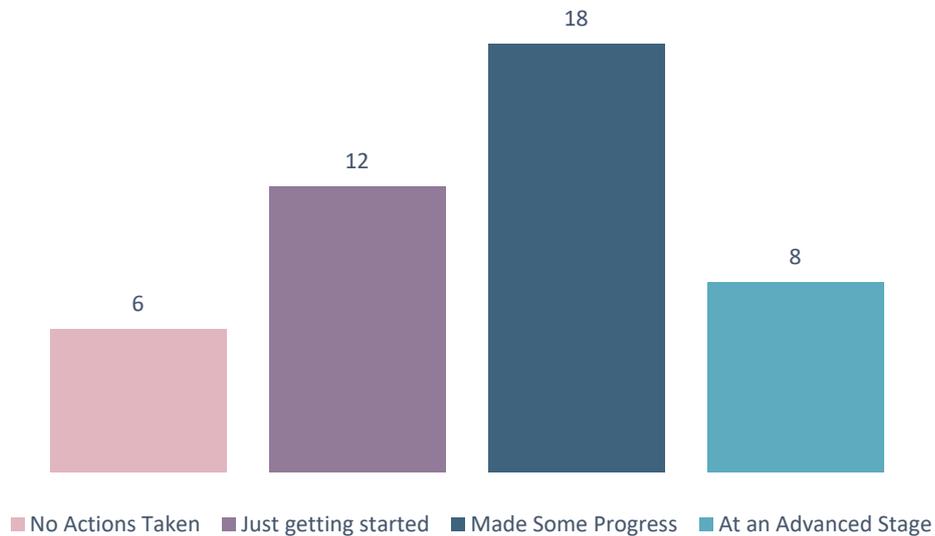
Enterprise Trust: A Socially Responsible Investment Policy was developed, approved and adopted in 2021 for the Foundation. We have identified certain SRI criteria which include a consideration to the environment. We review our Financial Advisors in Autumn 2021 and will specifically include questioning around the impact of funds, voting rights and attitudes to climate change in our criteria for selection (similar to the [ESG olympics of 2020](#)) All investment reports from our Financial Advisors/fund managers include sections on ESG, voting activity and the make-up of each fund in relation to the ESG rating of each individual investment.

The Wolfson Foundation: Responsible investment underpins our investment strategy and is a key factor in the selection of our fund managers. We work with our fund managers to take into consideration environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues, and consider that our charitable objectives apply to our investment as well as our grant-making. In June 2020 we instructed our investment managers to begin a process of divestment to exclude direct investment in fossil fuel extractors from our portfolio.

5. DECARBONISE OUR OPERATIONS

We will take ambitious action to minimise the carbon footprint of our own operations.

Self-assessment of progress



Actions reported

While for most foundations, their direct carbon footprint will be small relative to the impact they can have through their grants and investment choices, it is still important and empowering to get our own house in order. Some foundations had already begun moves towards homeworking and virtual meetings prior to the pandemic, in order to reduce travel and associated carbon emissions, and of course the past year has greatly accelerated this change.

Several signatories have agreed to maintain at least some of these new ways of working into the future, including for example online board meetings, and reducing or closing office space. For some small foundations, changes to travel were perhaps the most important change they could make, with already small operational footprints. Reducing travel may be more challenging for foundations that work internationally, though the savings of time, cost and carbon of forgoing international travel can be that much greater. A number of larger foundations have commissioned eco-audits of their operations, and some of those with more extensive and complex operations have or are developing appropriate emissions measurement and management systems.

Examples

Arcadia: We measure and report on the carbon emissions associated with our operations. We report on scope 1, 2 and 3 according to the GHG Protocol and use the DEFRA guidance for our calculations. We aim to minimize emissions, through procurement and travel policies, and 'offset' unavoidable emissions with Plan Vivo-certified projects.

Barrow Cadbury Trust: We have had a full eco audit (literally just before the first lockdown). Much of it focusses on our office operation and we have not been able to progress this much remotely. It will rise quickly up the agenda when we get back to our office!

Comic Relief: [We are] exploring what travel will look like, recognising we can rely on local assessors / shortlisters / evaluators etc a lot more to support with grant management.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation: We completed an audit of Esmée's carbon footprint at the start of the year and identified the key drivers and actions we might take. Some, such as a switch to vegetarian food for all internal events at our offices, were straightforward to implement. The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic led to dramatic reductions in staff travel, especially flights, and we are now looking at the implications of becoming a flight-free organisation. The move to online meetings is unlikely to be a temporary phenomenon and, even when the current situation returns to normal, our carbon footprint is likely to be structurally lower due to changed working practices.

Friends Provident Foundation: Whilst the pandemic has disrupted the delivery of some operational commitments, we have:

- reduced our catering carbon footprint by switching to meat-free catering
- considered positive incentives for reduced and sustainable travel in staff holiday policy and signed up to the 'Climate Perks' commitment from climate charity Possible to offer staff paid 'journey days' to encourage low-carbon holiday travel
- commenced engagement with our property manager and supported them to introduce building-wide recycling and basic energy efficiency measures
- reviewed our travel policy to privilege public and sustainable transport

Global Greengrants Fund: We are exploring how to be a more virtual organisation in future to maintain decarbonisation of our operations; as an international funder, this will require further discussions. An organisational environmental sustainability policy was approved by Trustees in May 2020. We are housed in a shared office space, which is committed to being fully carbon neutral by 2023.

Solberga Foundation: We have committed that within Europe, where it is feasible, we will not fly and instead opt for train or other public transportation for travel. We will continue to reduce international travel.

World Habitat: We've improved our measurement of our carbon footprint and introduced an internal carbon budget for each team. Our carbon emissions have fallen significantly since 1st lockdown with reduced travel and commuting. We are reviewing our policies to ensure we don't go back to bad old ways as restrictions are lifted

WHAT SUPPORT IS NEEDED?

After detailing what progress their foundations had made, signatories were asked to share what additional support they needed to make further progress on each commitment. We did not include these answers in the published data, but some emerging themes can be summarised.

Across the five commitments, foundations are keen to hear what other foundations are doing, how they are putting the Funder Commitment into practice, and who else is asking themselves the same questions.

Within this, there is particular interest in what smaller foundations with limited capacity could be doing and what steps non-environmental funders can take. For example, a few responses mentioned looking for best practice for non-environmental funders on supporting grantees to do more on climate.

The main question arising from the survey seems to be: “What does good look like?” Facilitating peer learning is one way of addressing this, though there were also ideas of a self-assessment tool and agreed minimum standards for foundations to benchmark against. It also requires clarity on what is meant by each commitment, and the ways in which action on the commitments might overlap.

To aid further action across all areas of the Funder Commitment, simple and easy to understand materials, reports, and resources – particularly those recommended and used by peers – can help broaden understanding for foundation staff and trustees. Some responding signatories also expressed a need for tips and examples on engaging trustees and securing board commitment on climate action.

Responses showed interest in exploring a broad range of topics, with an awareness of the wider ecosystem of climate action within which the Funder Commitment exists. There were mentions by some foundations of looking to support public activism, grassroots movements and necessary policy change, and in bringing these areas together for maximum impact. Some signatories are also keen to explore co-benefits of climate action, acting at a local level, climate justice and just transition, and how climate issues overlap with equality and diversity issues.

Acknowledging the complex and multidimensional nature of the challenges posed by climate change, there is some appetite among signatories for collaboration. This ranges from ideas of sharing learning to co-funding, co-investment, and pooling financial resources for climate action. There is interest in learning where the gaps and key leverage points are, and viewing the signatories work as collective combined progress.

NEXT STEPS

Many of the responses showed clear desire and plans for foundations to go further on implementing the Funder Commitment in the coming months and years. Several suggestions were made for ACF to convene peer exchange discussions to facilitate shared learning among signatories.

There is a role for ACF to promote relevant case studies and updates on actions being taken amongst the signatories as examples of practical steps that foundations can take to address the causes and impacts of climate change. We hope that this report and the accompanying data set offer insight in this area.

Learning events and workshops can also help to provide a good grounding for foundation staff and trustees, as well as exploring what actions could be taken to help implement commitments. These can be held virtually to enable signatories from across the UK to participate, and recordings can be made publicly available as a long-term resource.

ACF will continue to encourage more foundations to become signatories, to provide learning events and to facilitate peer learning between signatories, and to signpost other specialist resources. As part of this, ACF recently created a climate change space on its [Funder Network portal](#) for foundations to post questions and share advice.

The forthcoming COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow provides even more encouragement to all UK trusts and foundations to raise their ambition and engagement with the climate emergency in the coming year.

ACF will survey signatories again in early 2022.

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