Open Letter to Helston Downsland Charity
Divest From Fossil Fuels

divestdownslandtrust@gmail.com

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We, the undersigned, call on Helston Downsland Charity (*aka Helston Downsland Trust*, *'the Trust'*) to:

1. divest fully from all companies that damage the earth, its inhabitants and ecosystems, or fund such activities
2. be transparent about its investments

We are deeply concerned about the Trust's continued investment in fossil fuels, extractive industries, and the financial backers of such activity.

Climate leaders do not invest in fossil fuels.

All present trustees are councillors of Helston Town Council. They are bound by a commitment to protect the planet, having both declared a Climate Emergency, and pledged Helston to be an Earth Protector Town in 2019. Helston Town Council was asked by Transition Helston to consider divesting from fossil fuels in early 2019, and the Downsland Trust was urged to examine its investments in 2020.

As we have seen from recent IPCC reports, we simply do not have time for further delay.

It doesn't make sense to use money intended to benefit Helston's most vulnerable, to financially support companies that profit at the expense of ecological destruction. More environmentally and socially responsible investment opportunities are readily available. Ecological damage already falls hardest on the poorest in society; supporting companies that damage the planet hurts those the charity is most intended to protect.

Holders of public office should be transparent in their activities

The *Nolan Principles of Public Life* apply to all of the Trust's trustees, by virtue of their office as town councillors. According to these principles, information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons. Given that the stated purpose of the Trust is to benefit the people of Helston, there can be no reasonable excuse for secrecy.

We believe the Trust should publish details of its investments annually, as it used to do until 2014, and be open to discussing them in a public meeting.

In conclusion

By divesting from fossil fuels and investing in more regenerative enterprise, Helston Downland Charity can truly support its community, and live up to the aspirations of its trustees to protect the earth, its inhabitants and ecosystems, for future generations. We therefore urge trustees to take action on climate change and commit to divesting appropriately now, and to do so completely within the next six months.

Signed:

Helston Climate Action Group
Lizard Peninsula Friends of the Earth
Extinction Rebellion Helston
Wildlife Groundswell