

A number of you will recognise the name Richard Curtis; he is one of Britain's most successful comedy screenwriters, well known for his romantic comedy films, including *Notting Hill*, *Love Actually* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*. He is also the co-writer of a number of award winning sitcoms, with one of *Blackadder*, *Mr Bean* or *The Vicar of Dibley* topping many of your lists of all-time favourite TV shows.

In 2020, Curtis lent his support to a project entitled 'Make My Money Matter'; a people-powered campaign fighting for a world where the public have the knowledge and power to align their pensions, savings and investments with their values.

Surely we could do something similar in Jersey and make a significant contribution to the island's net zero ambitions?

If we take a step back, whenever each of us starts a job, many will be opted into an employer's pension scheme. If we adopt a passive approach to this, our money will typically be placed in what is known as a 'default' investment fund, or strategy, and will invariably stay there. These default solutions are built to 'fit' the average staff member and countless studies have revealed around 95% of employees habitually leave their savings in this same strategy.

Again, using UK data as a benchmark, recently published research based on **average personal pension savings of £87,947, estimates 23 tonnes of CO2 is emitted per year from this portfolio of assets. To put this in context, this is almost four times the 5.9 tonnes of carbon generated by the average UK person each year – through driving, heating our houses and eating red meat.**

Individual pension savings in Jersey are similar – if not slightly higher – and the opportunity to make a collective difference is clear.

What questions should we be asking?

1. How is your company pension invested? Is there a sustainable option?
2. Should the States of Jersey enact legislation to make it compulsory for employers to offer a sustainable pension option, thereby given people the choice of how their money is invested?
3. How is the £2.3 billion in the Jersey Public Employees' Pension fund invested? If a proportion of this was managed locally then this could help make significant progress towards the Net Zero target. Be cognisant, simply having an Ethical, Social and Governance (ESG) Policy does not mean in any way that greenhouse gas emissions are being actively reduced.

Driving systemic change in the pension industry will be a challenge. But each of us have the opportunity to demand it does better in the context of sustainable investing. We can request our pension savings are invested to do good, not harm, and in doing so, engage the companies we invest in to do the same. How empowering it is to think we can influence the behaviour of some of the biggest companies in the world – and their impact on society and the environment – by simply asking our employers' default pension solution to be impactful.

Sources and further reading

G30 – Mainstreaming the transition to a net zero economy

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