



Exclusive: Unite tells Community members to cancel fuel poverty protest with Greenpeace

## Description

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Unite members protest over Tata Steel with Sharon Graham up there wearing a fluorescent jacket and holding a sign.

Unite Community (UC), set up by then-general secretary [Len McCluskey](#) is the Unite union's section for unwaged people and Unite's most politically active. But members and officials feel marginalised by new general secretary [Sharon Graham](#). They resent the union's interference in their political activities, and have now been told they can't participate in a climate protest.

Probably because of who created it, and its campaigning focus, 'workplace-only' Graham was [planning to wind down Unite Community and merge it with the retired members' section](#). Graham U-turned on the plan after Skwawkbox exposed it but the interference continues.

Graham is currently standing for re-election and appears to want the meddling kept quiet. UC's roughly 20,000 members could easily be decisive in the election, which historically has a very low turnout among Unite's members. Not all unions are ignorant of the climate crisis, however:

## [Trade Unions and climate groups call national Heat Strike](#)

## Climate outrage as Britain boils

According to outraged activists, Unite Community was scheduled to take part in a Whitehall protest and nationwide day of action on 1 July about energy price rises, fuel poverty and a just transition to sustainable energy. The planned action was in support of the 'Make Green Fair' campaign from Fuel Poverty Action. But Sharon Graham's paid staff discovered that Greenpeace was taking part in

the actions, helping to liaise with police.

The next day, the union told UC members that the union has withdrawn its support for the demo because of Greenpeace's involvement, and Greenpeace's opposition to nuclear power. Members have been told they are free to take part as individuals, but they must not take any Unite-branded banners, placards or other items. Supposedly, this is to avoid "reputational damage".

Graham's UC "national organiser" Nick Parnell wrote to UC, informing them of the order and asking them to minimise opposition and not to discuss it around Unite staff:

As promised and unfortunately mentioned.

The organisers of the Whitehall demo was Greenpeace.

Given we were making plans for some very senior figures to potentially talk at the Whitehall demo it would have cut across our industrial policy's [sic] and workforce. We took the hard decision to remove the Unite Community from this action. If anyone wants to attend the action in Whitehall by all means, however please will you do so without and Unite or Unite Community banner, literature, or anything. We are not supporting this action.

Again apologies as we needed to remove items from websites, and some literature. A email has been requested to go to branch officers explaining that we are not partaking of action in Whitehall on the 1st of July.

You may well want to discuss this. Can I ask you to do so in forums where there are no Unite employees. The team we got together just over three weeks ago to coordinate a day of action have today had lots of issue pushing down upon them. I'd like to thank them for their due diligence.

Please can we be understanding of this. Yours Hopefully and Sincerely

Nick P.

Graham has also [opposed Ed Miliband](#) as a potential new chancellor because of his "job destroying" climate activism. This is mimicked by GMB union boss Graham Smith's [pro-fossil fuel activism](#)

## Rebellion in the ranks of Unite

UC activists now report members resigning their membership over the interference and Unite's position on fossil fuels and "net zero".

It was surprising to hear [@UniteSharon](#) criticize Ed Miliband's record as "job destroying" climate activism.

We hope she reconsiders, on the day where UK is under extreme heat warnings.

The climate crisis is real, we need a Chancellor who fights it. <https://t.co/fNwautY8Xm>

â?? Daniela Gabor (@DanielaGabor) [June 24, 2026](#)

One senior figure within UC notified the *Canary* about multiple instances this week of UC members cancelling their membership over the Greenpeace debacle and Uniteâ??s generally harmful fossil fuels policy. Speaking anonymously to the *Canary*, they said:

So to remove the risk of reputational damage Unite have pulled support, and told those who do attend they are not to take Unite branded anything there with them.

Itâ??s caused a lot of controversy within Unite Community as most activists feel that we should be able to stand in solidarity with other orgs, even if we do not always agree 100%.

Members are disaffiliating. Britain suffers one of its worst-ever June heatwaves as a result of human-made (or anthropogenic) climate change caused overwhelmingly by fossil fuel combustion.

Strategically, a question could be raised about whether members should remain in UC and fight against the unionâ??s direction. Others are clearly concluding instead that [as with the Labour Party](#) that particular battle with an [out-of-touch, corporatised bureaucracy](#) is all but lost.

Only a minuscule, uber-wealthy fraction of the worldâ??s population is disproportionately responsible for GHG emissions. Therefore, itâ??s uncontroversial to say that climate change is inflicted along class-war lines. Itâ??s shameful that union bosses should find themselves on the [wrong side of that war](#)

## Unite â?? Pro-war, indifferent to genocide

Itâ??s not Grahamâ??s first time on the wrong side of a major issue. She previously tried to cancel a pro-Palestine fringe organised by Uniteâ??s international director Simon Dubbins â?? now her rival in the general secretary contest â?? and then [put him under investigation](#) after he [refused](#) Dubbins has [made](#) a return to Uniteâ??s wider political activity central to his campaign, clear water between him and Graham.

Publicly, Graham has [been almost invisible on the issue of Palestine](#) and Israelâ??s genocide. She has, though, been highly visible [advocating for a bigger UK arms industry](#)

Behind the scenes, meanwhile, she has been [accused by disgusted members of blocking activists](#) from supporting the anti-genocide movement on behalf Unite.

Graham has also [held â??secretâ?? talks with far-right Reform UK](#). Her lack of political engagement and education has seen [support for the far-right mushroom in the union](#)

Union bosses are now in an unholy alliance with the Tories, Big Finance and just about everyone benefitting from the distributional status-quo against workers

<https://t.co/pg8mw1TIBY>

Daniela Gabor (@DanielaGabor) [June 25, 2026](#)

## Anti-union union boss

And despite being a union boss, Graham has been [accused](#) of using appalling, anti-union tactics against workers employed by Unite, leading to repeated strikes. In many cases, these tactics have been seen as Unite's attempts to protect her [husband, Jack Clarke](#)

Soon after her accession in 2021, Graham created a new Bargaining and Disputes Support Unit (BDSU). [Outside of the union's usual procedures](#) Clarke was appointed to run it despite being on a final warning for [bullying and misogyny](#)

Graham's faction has staged demonstrations against striking workers and attacked their union reps.

The union's lawyers explosively admitted that Unite, after she took over, [destroyed evidence](#) gathered by workers of Clarke's bullying and misogyny. Graham had [asked colleagues to ensure its destruction](#) before she took over, but this had not been done.

Branch nominations in the general secretary contest close on 28 June 2026. Voting will open later in the year.

[This week's sweltering heat is financed by our banks](#)

Featured image via the Canary

By [Cameron Baillie](#)

[Source link](#)

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