

Ed Fordham, Lay Leader,
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3 Gladstone Road,
Chesterfield, Derbyshire.
S40 4TE

25th January 2023

To: The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak, The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street, London, SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

THE EROSION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO PROTEST

We write to express our alarm at the lack of action in halting climate change. The warning signs are all around us and the conclusive evidence from scientists and environmentalists is too numerous to cite.

However, the right to protest has been restricted. Instead of arresting climate change, this government seems more interested in arresting climate change protesters.

It has always been claimed that anti protest law would only be used in extremis. However, following a series of laws passed in 2022, we already have climate activists in prison.

How can it be right that protesters are imprisoned for urging the implementation of sensible environmental protections?

Protest and the right to protest is not an abstract art form that takes place in isolation; social impact is precisely the point of protest.

Many of the rights we now cherish - including the vote - were achieved by protest - *and history has shown that jailing protesters simply delays change and reflects badly upon the law makers.*

We call on the government to review this legislation and reflect upon the principles at stake. And please, hasten the protections and measures needed to protect our planet from climate abuse and fossil fuel degradation.

Yours in faith, in tolerance and yes, in protest,

Ed Fordham, Lay Leader, Great Hucklow Unitarian Chapel, Derbyshire

Rev. Jo James, Minister, Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel, Leeds

Rev. Sue Woolley, President of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches and District Minister, Midland Unitarian Association

Liz Slade. Chief Officer of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

4 lead signatories plus 54 additional signatories from within and across the movement of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. They have taken the individual decision to sign this letter in their own name, and the letter cites their role and position within their respective chapel or church community(s):

Dr Susan Millington, Leader Newbury Chan (Buddhist) Group

Rev. Dr John Philip Carter, Hull and Lincoln Unitarians, Chair of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship.

Rev. Melda Grantham, Unitarians Wales Secretary

Rev. Dr. Peter Bertram Godfrey, Unitarian Minister

Dr Dave Wood, Secretary, Tenterden Unitarian Church

Lucy Harris, Unitarian living in Christchurch, Dorset.

Rev. Mark Hutchinson, Unitarian Community Minister

Sheila Cass, Secretary, Chorlton Unitarian Church

Rev Anna Jarvis, Unitarian Minister, Monton Unitarian Church

Rev. Celia Midgley, former President of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches

Rev. Elizabeth Birtles, retired Unitarian minister

Rev. Dr. David Usher, Retired Unitarian minister

Ms Brigid C Benson, Frenchay Unitarian Chapel, nr Bristol.

Rev. Charles VanDenBroeder, former President of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches

Rev. Lynne Readett, Retired Unitarian Minister

Adrian Isaac, Chairman Boston Unitarian Meeting House

Professor Emeritus Robin Attfield, Cardiff Unitarians

Laura Autumn Cox, Vice President of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union

Rev. Robin Hanford, Minister, Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel, Hinckley, Leicestershire

Robert & Viv Crick, Administrators, Unitarian Old Meeting Chapel, Sidmouth

Rev. Sheena Gabriel, Unitarian Minister

Dr Robert Oulton, retired G.P (Godalming)

Jenny Jacobs, Secretary, York Unitarians

Adrienne Wilson, Friend of York, Lewisham, Kendal, and Kensington Unitarian Chapels

Andrew Sterling, Quaker, Ipswich Meeting

Rev. Chris Newsam, Interfaith Minister and Unitarian Worship leader

Mrs Amy Shannon. Unitarian, mother, daughter, primary school teacher

Rev. Duncan Voice, Unitarian Minister

Rev Andi Phillips, Minister, Upper Chapel (Unitarian)

Peter Bruce, President Frenchay Unitarian Chapel
Rosemary F Ruston, Watford Unitarian fellowship
Susan Sampson, Didymus. Unitarians in Ringwood, Hampshire
Lyndsey Westwater, Dundee Unitarian Church
Dr Meg Thomas, Oxford Unitarians
Patsy Clarke, Manchester College Oxford Chapel Society
Dr. M. Evelyn Taylor, Oxford Unitarians
Barbara Barnes, York Unitarians
Richard Mayo, Horsham Unitarian Church
Mary Douglas, Horsham Unitarian Church
John Prickett, Treasurer, John Pounds Memorial Unitarian Church, Portsmouth
Jill Allen, Horsham Unitarian Church
Dr Elizabeth Kingston Harrison, Congregational Connections Lead for the General
Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
Jill Kaige, Oxford Unitarian Church
Rev. Phil Silk, retired Unitarian Minister, Newcastle-under-Lyme
Rev. Dr Maria Curtis, Unitarian minister, Editor of "Cherishing the Earth- Nourishing
the Spirit "
Linda King, Ipswich Unitarians
Anne Mills, Secretary to the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry, and former President
of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches
Frances Tulley, Brighton Unitarians
Helen White, Secretary, Brighton Unitarians
Trisha Purchas, Brighton Unitarians
Margaret Pelling, Chapel Society, Harris Manchester College, Oxford.
Rev. Cody Coyne, Minister, Cross Street Unitarian Chapel
Fran Pitt, Lay Leader, Mary Street Unitarian Chapel, Taunton
Rev. Matthew Smith, Unitarian Minister (Suffolk)