

## Theo Simon

I have been a communicator and frontline activist for 30 years, particularly on Climate Change, GMOs and Nuclear issues. I was Green parliamentary candidate for Somerton & Frome in 2015 and 2017. Building on those campaigns, we now have 10 District Councillors and 2 County Councillors in East Somerset.



I am a part-time manual worker and a part-time musician. As a Unite member, I sit on Mendip Trades Council. As a musician, I perform regularly at union events and I was a key ally to workers in the Vestas wind-turbine factory occupation. I've also toured as a guest of Farmers and Steelworkers unions in America, and was previously an NHS shop steward.

After Covid19, the current resurgence in union membership can be expected to continue. Workers will be struggling to retain jobs and resist low pay. Our unions play a unique role in the workplace, defending employment standards, fair pay, women's rights and equalities legislation. Now we need to turn our unions into ecological defenders in the workplace as well.

In the succession of emergencies ahead, Green Party members can be leaders in building social solidarity at every level. We have some brilliant ideas and plans for making our communities resilient and fair. But these ideas need to connect better with people's everyday working lives. Our call for a Just Transition offers a realistic bridge from the needs of the present to the possibilities of the future, and I am keen to work nationally and through local branches to build a green support network for employee-led action and planning, to start making the transition a serious reality.

Workplace organisation will be necessary to drive through the changes we need at a ground level, creating irresistible pressure for changes at the top. Historical experience also shows that solidarity between workplaces through union organising can be our most effective defence against any emerging fascism or civil breakdown which might derail our efforts at collective survival.

If elected, I aim to:

Visibly support union campaigns and significant workplace struggles, and keep party members and leaders informed of these, so that opportunities to intervene are not missed;

Encourage union membership within GPEW;

Develop a network of local TU Liaison Officers who will in turn make contact with local Trade Councils, unions and workplaces;

Encourage GP branches to support local unions defending services, jobs, pay and conditions – for example, messages of support are hugely significant to workers in a dispute, and such support is rarely forgotten;

Build on existing GPEW links with unions at national and regional levels and seek new ones;

Help push plans for a Just Transition to the front of union agendas;

Encourage unions to consult with members to urgently develop such plans for every sector and workplace;

Continue the excellent initiative of Paul Valentine in building links with non-TUC unions like UVW and also extend its scope to include professional associations like the RCN.

Additionally, I will bring my experience and listening skills to bear for a strong, unified GPEX centre.