

Drax climate change protesters sentenced today

The 22 men and women found guilty of obstruction are expected to be handed heavy community service sentences



📷 Activists halt a train heading to Drax power station. Photograph: Martin Wainwright

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Climate protesters who [hijacked a coal train on its way to Drax power station](#) in June 2008 are expected to be sentenced today at 4.30pm. The 22 men and women, including a senior university lecturer, teachers and film-makers, were convicted in July of obstructing an engine or carriage using a railway. The judge has already ruled out prison and they are likely to receive heavy community service sentences.

Their hopes of repeating the ["Kingsnorth Six" judgment last September](#), when activists who defaced a power station chimney were acquitted by a Kent jury, were dashed by a judge in July, who refused to admit arguments that the hijack was "necessary and proportionate to prevent the greater crime of carbon pollution".

At the end of the July trial, chief crown prosecutor North Yorkshire, Rob Turnbull, [said](#): "This was not a peaceful demonstration about the

environment, but a well planned and executed crime where two defendants impersonated railway employees and went onto the trackside to stop a train lawfully delivering coal to the power station."

However, Judge James Spencer did compliment the group, who conducted their own defence, on making an "eloquent, sincere, moving and engaging" case to the court. After the verdicts, he said that sentencing would definitely not include jail terms.

Speaking in the protesters' defence at the trial in July, defendant Jonathan Stevenson said: "The prosecution have not challenged the facts we presented to you on oath about the consequences of burning coal at Drax. 180 human lives lost every year, species lost forever. There is a direct, unequivocal, proven link between the emissions of carbon dioxide at this power station and the appalling consequences of climate change."

Those expecting to be sentenced today are: Theo Bard, 24; Amy Clancy, 24; Brian Farelly, 32; Grainne Gannon, 26; Bryn Hoskins, 24; Jasmin Karalis, 25; Ellen Potts, 33; Bertie Russell, 24; Alison Stratford, 26; Jonathan Stevenson, 27 and Felix Wight, all of London; Melanie Evans, 25; Matthew Fawcette, 34; Robin Gillett, 23; Kristina Jones, 22; Oliver Rodker, 40 and Thomas Spencer, 23, all of Manchester; Paul Chatterton, 36, and Louise Hemmerman, 31, of Leeds; Melanie Evans, 25, of Stockport; Paul Morozzo, 42, of Hebden Bridge; Christopher Ward, 38, of Newport Pagnell and Elizabeth Whelan of Glasgow.
