

# The Activist

GMB News From Around The Region **CONGRESS SPECIAL**

**GMB**

**GMB@WORK**



## Neil Derrick On Why Workers Should Not Pay The Price For Brexit

The outcome of the EU referendum has sent shock waves throughout Britain and the rest of Europe. It has changed forever the relationship this country will have with other European countries on both a political and economic level. It's clear that many working people, including GMB members, voted to leave and the challenge for the current government is to ensure that Brexit is achieved without any lasting damage to the British economy and the country as a whole. For trade unions the challenge is straight forward, we have to ensure that working people, however they voted in the EU referendum, are not made to pay the price for the consequences of Brexit. Experts are forecasting a slowdown in the economy, an acceleration of austerity and the risk of recession. It is essential that the trade union movement works hard to exercise its influence on government and employers to ensure that jobs, prospects, wages and workers' rights are not simply seen as collateral damage to be expected as part of the negotiations which will follow at government level.

Our members have been facing austerity cuts and attacks on their rights from a coalition and then a Tory Government, which has no real interest in the contribution that working people made to the success of our economy. Brexit should not be used as yet another excuse to further reduce and attack our members' terms and conditions, whether they are in the Public or Private Sector.

**Race Related Hate Crime:** The tone of the debate prior to the referendum became poisonous at times and the result has seen a dramatic rise in the number of race related hate crimes. Trade unions have a pivotal role to play in ensuring that workers wherever they are from, migrant or otherwise, are treated with dignity and respect. Polish workers have been told 'go home', people are being verbally abused on the streets because of their apparent religion or ethnicity; this is not the Britain that our forefathers fought for.

Over the weeks and months ahead our members and working people generally will need the support and guidance of GMB more than ever. We will be responding to this challenge and I will guarantee that we will do our utmost to provide help and guidance to our members on what the implications of Brexit might be and also to ensure any members faced with racial hatred or division, either at work or in the communities, feel supported by their union.

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## Labour Leadership

As 'The Activist' goes to press the situation within the Labour Party and the challenges by the Parliamentary Labour Party has been front page news.

The GMB has gone on record over recent months calling for unity and for the Party at all levels to respect the authority of the Leader and to respect the democratic mandate Jeremy Corbyn was given when elected.

If a leadership contest is triggered the GMB will consult with members right across the union, so that any position that the union takes on the leadership and/or candidates for the leadership, will reflect the views of all GMB members.

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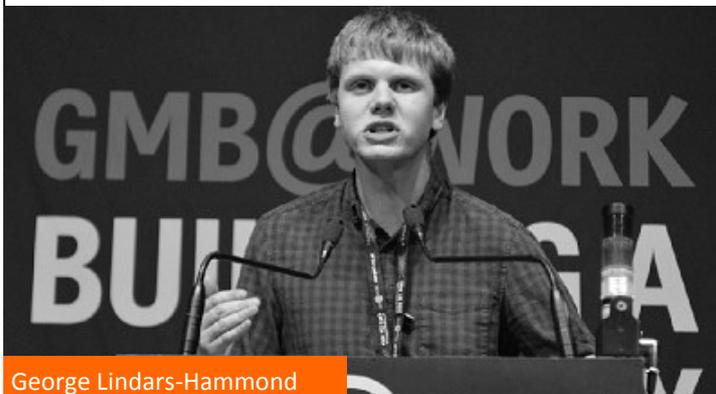
# The Activist@Congress



## CONGRESS 2016 - BOURNEMOUTH

**Fantastic!** That's the word our delegates used when describing Congress 2016 in Bournemouth, the setting for GMB's 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, where more than 500 GMB delegates met to discuss and debate the industrial, economic and political agenda of the GMB. Our 42-strong delegation did the region proud. They spoke with passion and conviction at the rostrum when it was their turn to move and second motions put forward by our region. Many of them were first time delegates and speakers but they took to it like a duck to water. No one more so than George Lindars-Hammond from Sheffield when he seconded a motion which condemned the government for reduced funding and closure of many of our libraries, museums, galleries and theatres. Our motions were varied and many, but the common theme was always about improving the lives of GMB members.

Delegates had the pleasure of listening to an array of speakers including Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party. He gave a fantastic and powerful speech, praising the work of GMB and giving a commitment that a future Labour government will ensure that the anti-union Trade Union Act is repealed. In an emotional address Margaret Aspinall, Chair of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, spoke about how the group had fought tirelessly for the truth for the last 27 years. Margaret was awarded the GMB's gold badge and a donation of £10,000 was made to the Hillsborough Family Support Group (see thank you letter on page 5). There was plenty to cheer about too for our region when three of our activists were recognised for the work they do on behalf of GMB (see opposite).



George Lindars-Hammond

Catriona Goldhammer with Mary Turner GMB President



## ACTIVISTS HONOURED

Our region shone at Congress this year when three of our activists were recognised for the work they do on behalf of GMB. **Catriona Goldhammer** from ASDA was the winner of the Daniel Dennis Health & Safety Award for her inspirational work as a GMB rep. She has tackled a number of health, safety and welfare issues in both her own store and across the region and has done so despite the fact that her union activities have led her to face constant scrutiny from her own store management.

**Michael Hinchliffe** from Veolia Environmental Services was runner-up of the Daniel Dennis Health & Safety Award for the excellent work he does as health & safety representative in his workplace.



**Pauline Kiely** from Yorkshire Ambulance Service was the winner of the President's Leadership Award For Equality. Being a union rep can be a lonely job, especially when you are the only rep in a workplace where the GMB has been derecognised and the management and other unions are hostile. This was exactly the position Pauline was in as we fought together to win back recognition at Yorkshire Ambulance Service.



Tim Roache, General Secretary with Mary and Pauline Kiely

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# The Activist@Congress



Cindy Gavin addressing Congress

## SAVE THE GREEN CARE HOME

Delegates at GMB's Congress heard about the plight of The Green Care Home in Leeds, which is facing an uncertain future. Cindy Gavin, GMB delegate and Branch Secretary from Leeds General Branch told Congress: **"Over 4000 people have signed an online petition calling for The Green to be saved and hundreds of people have protested and supported a paper petition instigated by East Leeds Labour MP Richard Burgon.**

On the 29th April 2016, Leeds City Council's Scrutiny Board said, 'there was no definite decision to close The Green'. On the 13th May 2016, a report by the Quality Care Commission stated, 'The Green provided good quality of care'. However, on the 1<sup>st</sup> June a statement from Leeds City Council which appeared in the Yorkshire Evening Post said 'the council intended to come up with recommendations about the future of the home before the end of the year'.

Richard Burgon, GMB member and Labour MP for East Leeds said: **"The GMB trade union is doing the right thing by service users, families, staff and the local community by campaigning to save The Green care home in Seacroft in East Leeds.**

**The Conservative Government's ruthless cuts have hit Leeds City Council hard. But I believe that good quality council-run care homes for elderly local residents have to be an absolute priority."**

GMB activists call on Leeds City Council To Save The Green



Neil Derrick addressing the fringe

## GMB Credit Union at Congress

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region hosted a fringe event at Congress for GMB Credit Union, following its rebrand from Thorne Credit Union. Thousands of GMB members find themselves in debt because of low pay and job losses. The Credit Union wants to protect members from pay-day loan sharks. GMB Credit Union has lent over £40 million to GMB members since it was established in 1999. GMB Credit Union pools its member savings for lending to other members ensuring that money circulates within the GMB community and for the sole benefit of members. The combined financial generator impact of GMB Credit Union member savings and loans activity on the GMB community is now estimated in excess of £5 million annually.

### GMB Credit Union Member Loans – fair, flexible and fast :

- From £100 to £15,000
- Repay up to seven years depending on purpose
- No fees or early repayment charges
- Interest charged on the reducing balance
- Very competitive interest rates



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# The Activist@Congress

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire's banner carried by Nigel Townend and Graham Jarvis and at the opening ceremony



Barney O'Connor moving Motion 174 which called on Congress to put pressure on The Labour Party to heed the Leader's call for unity.



Liz Robinson moving Motion 136 on Umbrella Companies And Bogus Self-Employed



Cath Pinder speaking on the CEC's Special Report on the Trade Union Act



Aafaq Butt moving Motion 249 calling for Extra Funding For Mental



Jason Greene seconding Motion 192 on the Abolition Of Hereditary Titles



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## Jo Cox, MP

1974-2016

Bright, vivacious, courageous, caring: all words we would use to describe Jo Cox, MP and GMB member. Along with committed, passionate, and tenacious. There aren't enough words to describe Jo who was taken from us so violently on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> June.

She was killed doing her job, a job she loved, representing the people in the area where she grew up. Jo radiated happiness and it was infectious – you couldn't help but smile when in her company.

She wanted to do so much and had so many plans to try and improve things in her constituency. We are all the poorer following her death.

On behalf of all GMB members, we have sent our sincerest condolences to Jo's husband Brendan, her two beautiful children, her family and all her constituents in Batley and Spen on the sad loss of such a wonderful person.



L to R Emily Warrillow, Desiree Wilburn, Andy Burnham and Rachel Harrison pictured with Jo Cox at a trade union and politics event



Mrs M Turner  
c/o Paul McCarthy, North West and Irish Region GMB  
Regional Office  
Columbus Quay, Riverside Drive  
Liverpool L3 4GB

14 June 2016

Dear Mary,

I am writing to thank you most sincerely for making Sue and I so welcome at the GMB Congress last week. Thank you too for presenting me with the GMB gold award, it was such a surprise and I was honoured to accept it. We have had such great support from everyone in the GMB for many years now and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Please can you pass on my sincere thanks to everyone of your members, from every branch? We look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Margaret Aspinall  
Chairman, HFSG

The Hillsborough Family Support Group  
Anfield Sports and Community Centre, Breckside Park  
Lower Breck Road, Liverpool L6 0AG

**Have we got your correct contact details?**

**Contact GMB to update your GMB profile**

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L to R Deanne Ferguson, Bill Adams, Joanne Thomas, Tim Roache and Neil Derrick

## Magic Roundabout Brings In New Members

At a recent recruitment drive outside ASOS in Barnsley, GMB unveiled a community sponsorship initiative showing the workers of ASOS that we will always be here to support them. Signs encouraging ASOS workers to join GMB have been placed on a roundabout directly outside of ASOS. Coming together for the unveiling of the new signs were GMB General Secretary, Tim Roache, Regional Secretary Neil Derrick, TUC Regional Secretary Bill Adams and newly elected TUC Regional Chair Joanne Thomas.

GMB has recently learnt that ASOS plan to step up security at the site by installing 300 additional security cameras to spy on workers 24/7. GMB members have reported increased car searches. This has resulted in a member being suspended for asking that the car search take place after they had finished eating lunch. We have also been informed that ASOS owe its workers 100's of hours in flex-time, potentially putting them way under the legal minimum wage bracket.

Deanne Ferguson, organiser, said: **"I wish I was surprised at these shocking findings but sadly I'm not, it's yet another means for ASOS to treat its workforce in such a shoddy way."**



The Banner Company provide entertainment outside ASOS



L to R Elizabeth Dixon, John Sanderson and John Hall

## Boxing Clever

Pictured are GMB activists from West Yorkshire Police Branch presenting a cheque for £100 to John Hall from White Rose Boxing Club. The club is run by John Hall who himself started off as an amateur boxer and has been with the club for over 60 years.

It accommodates both boys and girls with an age range of eight upwards. It doesn't just promote fighting but exercise, professionalism, dedication and respect.

## Farewell Bill Innes

The region has bid a fond farewell to our Legal Officer, Bill Innes, who retired last Friday. Bill joined GMB in 2000 as the Legal Officer having previously worked for the Low Pay Unit in Manchester.

He played a pivotal role in the GMB team and was held in high regard by all those who worked with him. We'd like to wish Bill a long and happy retirement.



Senior Organiser Desiree Wilburn pictured with Bill Innes

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## The Pride of York

It was great to see so many people from York and the surrounding area showing solidarity with the LGBT community at the York Pride celebration that took place on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

The horrific attack in Orlando a week earlier made the event even more poignant and it was clear that the attendance at this year's Pride was much higher than usual as people showed their support for the LGBT community.

It was great to see GMB activists showing their solidarity and enjoying the event on the day. The photograph above shows Sally Harris GMB Rep at York Asda, Cindy Gavin GMB Branch Secretary from Leeds and Neil Derrick, GMB Regional Secretary.



Revellers parading through the streets of York

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 www.unionline.co.uk

## Join the GMB Equality Forum

GMB's Equality Forum is going from strength to strength. At our recent meeting in Sheffield some great ideas and initiatives were discussed which will now go towards formulating our Equality Action Plan for the next 12 months.

It was great to see so many new faces too who joined our regular attendees in a meeting that was full of energy and enthusiasm.

It was decided that the next equalities campaign would focus on mental health in the workplace. Employers will be asked to sign up to a Mental Health Pledge and our Equality Officers will highlight workplace policies that will help members.

An Equality Summit will be held at Grove Hall on the 23rd July and all those who have an interest in equalities are invited. The aim of the summit is to formally decide on the campaigning calendar for the next year. If you would like to attend please contact Lou Foster-Wilson on 0345 337 7777 or you can email: [louise.foster-wilson@gmb.org.uk](mailto:louise.foster-wilson@gmb.org.uk).



Equality Forum Gets Active in Sheffield

## Design Our New Equality Banner And Grab Yourself An Ipad

The Equalities Forum is calling on GMB members to design a new equality banner that can be used for campaigning and at events. We would like a design that highlights all equality strands and gives a clear statement of our values. The closing date for entrants is **1st September 2016** and judging will take place by the Equality Forum at its September meeting.

You can email your design to Lou Foster-Wilson at the above address or post it directly to Freepost GMB Wakefield.



**Get designing and good luck!**

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## Leeds Branch Gets Behind A Great Cause

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, Leeds Local Government Branch decided to make a contribution towards Murray House, a specialist Dementia Care Unit in Leeds. The nurses at the facility do a great job in caring for those vulnerable adults with severe dementia.

Families and staff raise funds throughout the year to help pay for day trips, entertainers and activities for those residents living with dementia.

The branch made a donation of £500 towards this worthy cause. Pictured with Mark Sykes, Branch President, are Activities Organiser Karen Mitchell and some of her colleagues receiving the cheque.

Speaking to *The Activist* Mark said: "We couldn't think of a worthier cause and it seemed fitting to make the donation as part of our support for Mental Health Awareness Week. The team at Murray House do a fantastic job and we hope that the money we have donated goes some way towards supporting the service users in their care."

## May 2016 Latest Inflation (RPI)

Headline Inflation Rate (RPI All items)  
**1.4%**  
 Consumer Prices Index (CPI)  
**0.3%**

Figures for June 2016 are due to be published on 19 July 2016.

Have you got an article for The Activist?  
 Email it to: [steve.jennings@gmb.org.uk](mailto:steve.jennings@gmb.org.uk)

## Hilary Shepherd Flying The Flag For GMB

Hilary Shepherd, Branch Secretary from York General Branch and Labour Councillor for City of York Council has been elected Chief Whip for the Labour Group in York. Hilary was an active GMB Shop Steward during her employment with York City Council and after retiring was successfully elected as a Labour Councillor. Hilary hasn't wasted any time in spreading the GMB message and has managed to recruit 6 of the Labour Councillors into GMB. Good luck in your new role Hilary.



Hilary Shepherd flying the GMB flag

## Young Members' Training Day

The region held its first Young Members' Training Day on Saturday, 11th June. It was well attended and everyone said how useful they found the day.

If you're interested in attending the next event then please contact Rachel Harrison, Young Members' Officer on [rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk](mailto:rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk) or you can ring: 0345 337 7777.



GMB young members' planning session

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