

Last update: 20 Sep 2021

## Bulletins

### GMB ENERGY NEWSLETTER – 20th SEPTEMBER 2021

Posted on: 20 September 2021

#### GMB Energy newsletter- 20th September 2021

GMB are working hard to fight for members' jobs and the future of your industry. As you will have seen over the weekend, the issue of energy prices and supply is rapidly becoming a national emergency with genuine fears as to how the country are going to cope over the coming winter.

#### Energy Crisis

GMB are holding meetings with employers across the industry to ensure that our members are kept abreast of any changes and the steps being taken to protect the flow of power during this crucial time. We also need to know what actions are being taken and how they will impact on our members to ensure that we get the best deal for you. The energy crisis exposes the fragility of our energy supplies and underlines the need to ensure that there is a long-term plan in place, which will keep the lights on over the coming months.

The issues effecting the energy market are those we have long warned of with a fragmented system which is no longer fit for purpose. The failure of numerous energy companies has created massive problems for consumers and the fear is that this boom-and-bust approach will create issues for members' jobs if not resolved quickly. GMB have always been clear that energy is too important to be left to a market system that discourages long term strategies in favour of quick profits and the failures of these energy companies underlines this view. Members need certainty that the energy supply will continue uninterrupted, both to protect their jobs and to ensure that their domestic needs will be met,



and we are working with both employers and politicians from all parties to ensure that your voice is heard throughout this debate.

## **Just Transition**

GMB are committed to protecting the long-term future of our energy industries. We are working hard to secure investment in green hydrogen to protect the long-term future of the gas industry. Green hydrogen is a safe, clean fuel that can utilise the current gas network and protect our members' jobs in both gas transmission and heating. It is vital that we get the funding to ensure that this fuel is developed with a long-term goal of converting current boilers to the new fuel.

So far, the Government has introduced a number of initiatives to support the development of hydrogen heating. However, we need greater investment and a longer-term strategy if this is going to be done in a manner that supports the good quality jobs that our members and their communities rely on. As a result, GMB are continuing to lobby both parties and employers to ensure that we have a plan which will guaranty members skills and jobs moving forwards.

We also need significant investment in battery plants, to protect against the uncertainties in the supply renewable energy. As we have seen over the last few years, our renewable energy industries have been hampered by a lack of investment, with companies preferring to ship wind turbines from across the world as opposed to building them in the UK and letting plants like Bi-Fab go to the wall when they could be the cornerstone of our renewable industry.

GMB have always been clear on this, that if we are to keep emissions low, we need to ensure we focus on domestic manufacturing rather than simply shipping in products made in countries with low environmental standards before being transported halfway across the globe.

## **Labour Party and TUC Conference**

GMB worked hard to get support from the union movement for the expansion of our nuclear industry. The fact that the current energy crisis has been exacerbated by the fire in Ashford, which has reduced our ability to import energy from the continent, exposed the fragility of our energy supplies, and underlined the need for investment in new nuclear power stations to support both domestic and commercial energy. GMB believes that nuclear is a key part of the energy mix and provides a clean fuel that will be instrumental in helping us achieve net zero carbon emissions.

We are also working hard to get support for our energy policy from the Labour Party Conference. To get the long-term investment necessary to support the development and implementation of these initiatives, cross party support is key as it provides the necessary assurances to large investors to fund the changes. As such, we are working to ensure that Labour take a position that supports our members, and which will lead to an energy policy that both provides a pathway to net zero whilst supporting jobs and communities. This will mean taking a stand against the wilder calls from the green lobby which



threaten members' jobs and skills, and which seem to have little regard for the necessity of the broad base support for changes needed in a democracy.

Whilst not arguing as to the need to reach net zero, we strongly believe that this can only happen if working people are at the heart of the plans, with the support of communities being seen as vital if we are to take the steps necessary to ensure the future of our planet. We are clear that this will need investment in all parts of our energy supply, protecting jobs in our key industries whilst moving towards net zero in a managed and sustainable way.

### **Next Steps**

GMB will keep you updated of developments as they occur. If you require extra information or support on any issue, please contact your local GMB shop steward.

Yours sincerely

**ANDY PRENDERGAST**

**NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

## **Noticeboard Bulletin - 30-07-2021**



**Posted on: 30 July 2021**

Dear Member,

Last week GMB wrote to you about the future of gas and defending those high-quality jobs in the sector. We wrote to you to say that we will not be quiet on defending the future of the industry and asked you to tell us your views on what we should be telling politicians from all the political parties. We got the message back from you loud and clear and the message is already being passed on.

Also this week we've seen further reports in the press that the Government plans to push back its ban on new gas boilers to 2040. We hope this is politicians beginning to wake up to the harsh realities that they need to take the public with them if we are going to reach the UK's political ambitions of net-zero by 2050.

Securing a long-term future for the gas industry and its workforce with a political approach that prioritises low-carbon solutions like hydrogen-ready boilers for home heating is the best way of securing



an affordable and familiar choice for households, keeping the heating on and meeting our climate ambitions.

We have also heard the Government is considering a levy to pay for hydrogen technology development. We absolutely need urgent investment in hydrogen but this should be funded through general taxation, not by hitting household bills.

[You can read our full press release on the reports here](#)

But all this is currently speculation. Next week we won't get all the answers to our questions but we should start to get a better idea on what the Government's plans really are for the sector when they finally release their hydrogen strategy, unless we see more delays.

Ahead of next week GMB have also written to Government Ministers on the need for urgent clarity around how future nuclear will be funded. Government needs to end the uncertainty over the vital new Sizewell C nuclear project that would urgently secure good well-paid jobs and reliable low carbon energy including the potential for hydrogen gas production.

We need new nuclear to support the efforts to build hydrogen capacity in the UK. [You can read the letter we sent to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy here.](#)

Government needs to get on with releasing its hydrogen strategy and wider plans so we can end the speculation and they can finally start to show us their ambition.

GMB is leading the push on the Government to make sure their level of ambition includes investment to secure the future of the gas industry. This also means with employers where our reps and officers are making sure employers are investing in the gas jobs and skills of the future.

**Gary Carter**  
**GMB National Officer**

## Noticeboard Bulletin - 23-07-2021



**Posted on: 23 July 2021**

Dear Member,

The future of the gas industry and defending high quality jobs is a top priority for GMB. We know that over time there will be changes to meet government targets, but this must be done with workers, not to them,



and we must come through the transition with more high-quality jobs, not fewer.

One area that has potential is the conversion of the current gas network to move towards hydrogen mixed gas. Not only will this assist in the move towards net zero carbon emissions, but it will guarantee the survival of the industry for years to come. Hydrogen based fuels can utilise the current network and would preserve jobs throughout the sector. So far, the Government has dragged its feet and has not put in the investment needed to kick start the hydrogen industry in this country.

We have been expecting the government's long-term plans for both building and home heating and hydrogen over the last weeks to meet their own climate ambitions of net zero by 2050. But both are now delayed with the hydrogen strategy delayed until the summer holidays and the home heating strategy delayed until the Autumn.

### **Read GMB's reaction to the delays:**

[Find out more](#)

GMB has long been calling for investment in hydrogen. The alternative pushed by some groups is to move towards electronic heat pump technology which we believe is not only completely unsuitable for around 75% of current properties and unaffordable for consumers, but also risks rendering the skills our members have built up over the years redundant. GMB have been involved in cross-party lobbying to get the public investment to protect jobs and the future of the sector and minimise disruptions and additional bills for households.

Politicians need to get real if they want to take the voters with them on their route to net zero. The public aren't going to reward them at the ballot box for putting up their heating bills or forcing them to significantly refit their homes by ripping out central heating systems. This goes for the Government as well as opposition parties including Labour.

It's why it was especially disappointing that this week Labour's energy spokesman Alan Whitehead MP announced the position that 'I and the Party believe the government is on course for making a big mistake in its pursuit of hydrogen development' in an article hidden behind an [internet paywall](#). Saying essentially that the only form of hydrogen that should be pursued is that produced through wind power effectively declaring an end of gas as there is no realistic alternative to meeting future home heating demand. This is not acceptable.

So, we write to tell you that we won't be quiet on these matters. But we want to hear what you think before we respond. Click below to email us before Wednesday 28th July and we'll pass on your message.

### **Let us know your view**

[Email us](#)



All the political parties, including the Labour Party, need ambitious plans for hydrogen that not only ensure the country meets its climate change obligations, but also protect and enhance jobs in the gas industry.

That starts with fully consulting the workers and their representatives in the industries affected. That means you.

**Andy Pendergast**  
**GMB National Secretary**

PS [You can find more about GMB's written submission to the select committee inquiry that the Secretary of State gave evidence to here](#)

[And the Special Report on Energy passed at our Congress here](#)

