

GMB condemns sacking of striking workers at tile factory in Beenham



We wholly condemn the sacking of the Marley strikers, whilst the manager who drove his car at them is lauded

GMB, the union at Marley Tiles in Reading, believes the dismissal of the three members and the final written warnings given to two other members, was for engaging in lawful industrial action at the tile factory in Beenham.



The industrial action took place in December 2020 and resulted in disciplinary action for five members including the workplace rep on 23rd February 2021, who between them have 101 years employment with the company.

In contrast, no action has been taken against the manager who was reported by many members as having 'driven his car at excessive and dangerous speed at the picket line' of workers, as well as encouraging a lorry driver to also drive at the picket line, which was captured on CCTV.

Despite reports to the police about his behaviour, the company have instead sacked the workers who were driven at aggressively and dangerously.

GMB has been balloting members over action to defend its members undergoing disciplinary action.

Staff at the site are currently Working to Rule by following all safety protocols in place in their hazardous factory environment, and have also been balloted separately on strike action over the disciplinary action against their colleagues.

GMB have also reported the company for multiple breaches of Health and Safety regulations, including serious breaches of Covid laws.

The ongoing dispute is over pay, with the company, which was taken over by Inflexion Private Equity Partners in August 2019, having made £21.5m profit on sales of £143.5m in the same period, but refusing to make any sort of decent pay offer to its hard-working staff this year.

GMB Regional Organiser, Nikki Dancey said:

"The three dismissed workers have an incredible 101 years in employment at Marley Tiles, between them, far longer than many of the company senior management. The manager who displayed total disregard for his own staff during the strike has been lauded by the company, while they have been sacked."

"Marley Tiles supplies household names such as Bovis Homes, Crest Nicholson, and Jewsons. GMB urge these long-established companies not to allow the actions of Marley Tiles Senior Management to affect their reputations."

"GMB has balloted members about strike action in defence of the disciplined workers and is preparing the ground for Employment Tribunal claims to be made against the employer for discrimination on grounds of trade union activity."

"This was a lawful strike, undertaken after a stringent postal ballot, by workers engaged in keeping the building industry supplied with roof tiles. The work is dirty, noisy and potentially dangerous, and their



pay offer was derisory. These workers deserve an apology from the company, not to be penalised for standing up for their rights.”

“GMB will continue to seek justice for our members through the appeal process, by pursuing industrial action against the company, by taking action in the legal system, and any other action GMB members feel appropriate.”



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