

GMB

CONGRESS 2019

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BARBARA PLANT  
(President)  
(In the Chair)

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Held in:

The Brighton Centre,  
Brighton

on:

Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019  
Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019  
Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019  
Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019  
-and-  
Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019

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PROCEEDINGS

DAY ONE  
(Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019)

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**FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS**  
**SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019**  
**MORNING SESSION**  
*(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)*

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to order. Welcome to Brighton. It looks a lot different from this side than it did when I was sitting down there. A very warm welcome. We will now move to the traditional opening of Congress, which is the Banner Ceremony. This year London Region will be carrying the National Banner.

**BANNER CEREMONY**

I call Congress to order for the opening ceremony. Please stand to greet the National Banner parade.

*(The National Banner parade entered the Congress Hall to the music of Jerusalem)*

Thank you, all of you. Well done. It is not easy carrying those heavy banners. *(Applause)* Would you take your banners to the side. Thank you.

**The Congress Video**

The President: We will now see the Congress video. *(Congress video shown)*  
*(Applause)* Can I say "Thank you" to Jack, who is off screen now, from the Comms team for finding that archive footage was excellent.

Congress, I hope you all had good journeys coming to Brighton. I know when you arrived the weather was gloomy, but I'd like to wish you a very warm welcome to Brighton. Thank you for your warm wishes to me as my first Chair.

This week I will be joined on the platform by June Minnery, who has been nominated to help chair this Congress. Unfortunately, our Vice President, Malcolm Sage, who did such a sterling job in the Chair last year was unable to join us this time. I'm sure that Congress will want to thank June for stepping into the breach, and also send Malcolm all our very best wishes. *(Applause)*

On the platform, we also have Tim Roache, our General Secretary; Anna Barnes, Mel Bartlett and Lisa Johnson from National Office who help ensure the smooth running of Congress and to make sure that I am on track.

I have a small number of housekeeping announcements. Please can you ensure that you have your credentials on you and visible at all times — your delegate's badge — and this is important for security.

Can you also ensure that mobile phones are switched off or are on silent. I will still be maintaining the Mary Turner tradition that if your phone goes off there will be a £5 fine for a charity. So beware. *(Applause)*

Please can you also take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with the fire safety and evacuation proceedings, which are on page 4 of the Congress Guide. If a venue

manager appears on the stage, that is, probably, not good news. They will announce evacuation procedures. Please listen carefully if that happens.

There is a prayer room located in Office 7 on the third floor behind the stage which is available for anyone who wishes to use it.

Congress, could I express a warm welcome to delegates and visitors, especially to first-time delegates. If you are due to speak, please show your credentials to your colleagues at the front desk in the front before the rostrum so that your name can be shown on the screen. Please also say your name and region, and mention if you are a first-time speaker. That is helpful for our verbatim record but you will also get a good round of applause.

I would also like to extend our welcome and thanks to the shorthand writers, Phyllis Hilder and Michael Thear, who every year do an outstanding job of recording the proceedings of Congress.

Thanks also to Gary Maziere and everyone else at T5 Event Media who produce the set, and make the lighting, sound, and sets for fringe meetings run like clockwork. They are the unsung heroes of Congress. We couldn't do without them. Gary, thank you.

We have not received any requests for signers this year but if you require any assistance, please go to the information desk.

Please note a hand-rail has been installed on the side access to the stage for anyone who requires it or wishes to make use of it.

May I remind delegates that the proceedings of Congress are broadcast live on the internet, so please refrain from using any inappropriate language. Please can I ask you also to avoid any personal attacks on members of staff — anyone, really — who do not have the right of reply at Congress.

Just as a word of advice and warning, there are no designated smoking areas outside the Brighton centre. There are council bins with ashtrays, and the council will fine anyone who is seen dropping a butt on the pavement, so please be careful.

Congress, the point has been made that in 2017 this body passed Motion 11, titled *Don't Buy The S\*n Rag: The Real Truth*. I am happy to confirm that Brighton Conference Centre is a S\*n newspaper-free zone at Congress, and let's keep it that way. (*Applause*)

Finally, could I ask delegates to take a moment to check that you have these important documents with you. Firstly there is the One page Delegate Outline Programme and Order of Business. This gives you an overview of the order of business for the week, though changes may be necessary from time to time as Congress business progresses. The order of motions is not expected to change. This year the order of business document is presented as one continuous document. If any changes to the programme are expected, then I will try to give you a warning in advance.

Next we have the Income & Expenditure Report: These are the Annual Accounts.

Lastly, we have the Final Agenda & Congress Guide. This document provides information on motions and other business. Please do take the time to read it carefully.

#### Obituaries

THE PRESIDENT: Now we come to the sad part of Congress. I now call on Congress to stand in silence as a mark of respect for departed GMB colleagues. (*The Congress members stood in silent tribute*) Names will be shown on the screen and a copy of the Obituary list is on page 6 of the Congress Guide.

We remember all the members we have lost, but I wanted to say something about Gary Doolan, who touched the lives of so many people as an activist, officer, councillor, family-man, and friend to many people in this hall. He was a true hero of the Labour Movement. Gary, you are gone but never forgotten. Thank you, Congress. (*Obituary list was shown on the screen*) Thank you, Congress. It is only fitting that we pay tribute to all those people who have gone before us. If any family and/or friends are watching, then our deepest sympathies go out to you.

Announcement: Mary Turner book

THE PRESIDENT: I am now going to ask Tim Roache to introduce a little item about the new Mary Turner book. Thank you.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Good morning, Conference. It is lovely to see you all. Can I ask Barbara Benham and Lisa Fulwell to come up and join me, please. Come on, don't be shy. You never have been up to now. (*Applause*) These are two of the most modest people I have ever met in my life, and I don't think they realised that this was going to happen. London Region has commissioned a book, a book about 'Our Mary', Mary Turner, our wonderful National President who passed away just a couple of years ago and yet whose memory, thoughts and whose ethics, whose very ethos, will burn brightly through this Congress for the whole of this week. Barbara knows what big shoes she has to fill and is very capable of filling them. But London Region commissioned *this* book, and it is right that I brought up to the stage as well Barbara Benham, Mary's partner in crime, and Lisa Fulwell, the closest family representative of them all. Please, go and have a look. The book is on sale at one of the exhibition stalls. Pat Kenny is there staffing it. It is a brilliant book. It's as cheap as chips. Buy as many as you can. Take them back to your branches and let's celebrate and honour Mary in the way that she thoroughly deserved. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

#### ROLL CALL

THE PRESIDENT: Before moving on to Tellers and Standing Orders, please could I ask that all Regional Secretaries notify the Congress Office of any changes to your delegation. Thank you, Regional Secretaries.

## **TELLERS AND STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

**THE PRESIDENT:** The names of the Regional Tellers are on the screen. All Tellers must remain in the Hall whilst Congress is in Session and delegates must be in their allotted seats when a vote is taken.

Could I welcome the General Member Auditors who will be supervising counting of votes. They are Dave Kempson (Birmingham), Charmaine Hyman (Southern) and Paul Gregson (Midland). Thank you.

To see if you are eligible to vote, please look down at your Congress Credential. If it says the word "Delegate" on it, then you can vote. All others in the Hall are NOT eligible to vote. It clearly says "Delegate". If it says anything else, you might be in the wrong Congress.

Could I congratulate Helen Johnson on her election as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee for the twelfth year! Well done, Helen. (*Applause*)

Congress, the names of members of the Standing Orders Committee are on page 26 of your Final Agenda. Thank you to those people who volunteered to be members of the Standing Orders Committee because you get locked away in a little room all week. Thank you.

### **Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1**

The business of Congress will be conducted in accordance with the Agenda, the Programme and the Guidelines for Congress Business, subject to changes at the President's discretion.

#### **Times for Congress**

The Standing Orders Committee wishes to draw the attention of Delegates to the starting times of the morning and afternoon sessions set out in the Congress programme as follows:

Sunday 9 June – Wednesday 12 June  
9.30 am – 12.30 pm, 2.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Thursday 13 June  
9.30 am – 12.00 pm

The Standing Orders Committee recommends that the President be authorised to close each session when appropriate, without further reference to the Standing Orders Committee or to Congress.

#### **Times for Speakers**

The Standing Orders Committee recommends the following Time Limits for Speakers.

#### **General Motions and Rule Amendments:**

Movers up to 4 Minutes  
Seconders up to 2 Minutes  
Other Speakers up to 2 Minutes

#### **Officers' Reports:**

General Secretary up to 10 Minutes  
Movers of Section Reports up to 5 Minutes  
Questions up to 1 Minute

Officers' and Section Reports, and questions to them, should relate only to matters of general

policy, and not to details of negotiations.

**Special Reports and CEC Statements:**

Mover up to 6 Minutes

Seconder up to 3 Minutes

Other Speakers up to 3 Minutes

It would help the business of Congress enormously if, wherever possible, motions could be formally seconded, and if replies to questions and debates were kept to a minimum.

The Standing Orders Committee draws Delegates' attention to the rostrum and asks speakers to be ready by the rostrum when it is their turn to speak. Chairs will be provided at the front of the hall for speakers awaiting their turn.

**Questions on Balance Sheet and Auditors' Report**

Questions on the Balance Sheet and Auditors' Report must be submitted in writing to the Congress platform no later than 5.30 pm on Monday 10 June 2019.

**Motions Out of Order**

The Standing Orders Committee has ruled that the following Motions and Rule Amendments are Out of Order for the reasons specified:

**Motion 4 Section Conferences**

The Motion calls for Section Conferences to be part of Congress so that they are not stand alone. The Motion is in conflict with Rule A3 2 which provides that Section Conferences will be held every year at a time and location approved by the Central Executive Council. Rule A3 2 was amended to this effect by CEC RA 14 carried by Congress 2018.

**Motion 6 Substitutes for Congress**

The Motion calls for branches to be able to nominate a substitute for election to Congress delegates in the event that the elected delegate is unable to attend to represent the branch. This is in conflict with Rule 8.5 that if an elected delegate is unable to attend the next highest loser in the election fills the vacancy.

**Motion 15 Full Democracy**

The Motion calls for the length of Congress not to be shortened and that if there are any changes to the dates of Congress then all members need to be communicated and consulted on. This is in conflict with Rule 8.2 which provides that the Ordinary Congress will be held every year on dates decided by the Central Executive Council.

**Motion 36 Retired Members Seat on the CEC**

The Motion calls for a place on the CEC for a Retired Members Seat with full voting rights. This would require amendments to Rule 11 and 20 and so is out of order for debate.

**RA 444**

The Rule Amendment proposes to add an additional category of "retired members" to those who are delegates to Congress under Rule 8. This would create a conflict with Rule 18 which provides that Congress delegates must pay full contributions, and under Rule 47a retired life members are able to stop paying contributions in specified circumstances.

**RA 476**

The Rule Amendment proposes a new Clause 7 to Rule 45. The Rule Amendment would leave Rule 45 deficient as it currently only contains Clauses 1 – 4 and would leave it deficient with no Clauses 5 or 6.

**RA 489, RA 490, RA 491**

These three Rule Amendments all propose a new Rule for a consultation to take place in order to bring forward a Rule Change to 2021 Congress on a new Young Members structure. The wording of the Amendments is not appropriate for a Rule Book. RA 490 would leave the Rule Book deficient in that it proposes to amend the Rule Book by inserting Rule 67 and Rule

66 when Rule 66 already exists (Rule 66 deals with Transfers of engagements). RA 491 proposes to amend the Rule Book by inserting Rule 67 (New Rule) and if adopted this is what would be inserted in the Rule Book.

### **Motions in line with Existing Policy**

In accordance with recommendation 14 of the “Framework for the Future of GMB: Moving Forward” CEC Special Report endorsed by Congress 2007, the CEC has advised the Standing Orders Committee about those Motions which are in line with existing GMB policy. The CEC Report on “Existing Policy Motions” printed in the Final Agenda explains when and how existing policy was established in each case. The Standing Orders Committee has accepted the advice and is therefore recommending to Congress that the following Motions be put to Congress for endorsement without the need for debate:

#### Motion

No:	Title
94	Political Education For Lay Members
137	Mandatory Training On Domestic Abuse
139	Force Employers To Address Mental Health In The Workplace
149	Defibrillator In The Workplace
155	Protecting Our Coastline From Erosion From 1960's Landfill Sites
156	Further Removal Of Plastic Waste
159	Pension Age
160	Early Retirement Entitlement
176	Extending Employment Rights For Unfair Dismissal From Day One of Employment
177	Redundancy Rights From Day One
186	Trackers and Other Surveillance Equipment In The Workplace
193	Pregnancy Discrimination
212	Retail Workers Losing Out To Profit Again
226	Outsourcing of Local Government Contracts
237	Stop Awarding Public Sector Contracts to Private Sector Contractors
242	Multi-Tier Employment In The NHS
247	Suitable Manning Levels In Care Homes
250	Renew the Fight Against Academies And Free Schools
258	Stop Corporations Using Tax Tricks
266	Nationalise The Economy For All
267	Safeguard For Employees Holding Shares In Previously Nationalised Companies
269	Failing Academies
271	Academies
286	Protecting Worker's Rights After Brexit
295	Renationalisation Of Services
300	Local Government Employees Standing For Election For Councillor
307	Asylum Seekers Right To Work
312	Support For Show Racism the Red Card
315	Banking And The Poor
338	A Form Of Legal Aid To Be Fully Restored So Everyone Has Access To Justice
343	Third Party Harassment In the Security Industry
351	NHS Prescription Charges
352	Free Prescriptions
353	Free Hospital Parking For Patients, Visitors, And NHS Staff Members
354	NHS Parking Charges
355	Hospital Car Parking Fees
359	GP Appointments
362	Bowel Cancer Screening
367	Care Homes
375	Fee School Breakfasts
395	Housing For The Homeless
399	Help Prevent Rogue Landlords

407	Rail Travel
413	Welfare Reform
414	Universal Credit
424	International Solidarity

### **Composite Motions**

Agreement has been reached on the 20 Composite Motions printed in the Final Agenda.

Congress 2018 carried Motion 8 Speakers On Motions:

“This Conference urges that, in the interests of the smooth running of Congress, and to maximise the time allocated for open and meaningful debate, any motion that remains unopposed should have its speakers limited to the mover and the seconder”

This will apply to Stand Alone motions and Composite Motions where up to two Regions are involved.

There are two agreed Composite Motions where there are more than two Regions involved. The two Composites are:

Composite 7 Menopause Policies, involving London, GMB Scotland, and Southern.  
Composite 17 The Gas Industry, involving London, Northern, and Southern

The SOC recognises that in agreeing Composites Regions will have given up the ability to move and second their motion as a Stand-Alone motion. In the past the Regions involved in the Composites which are not moving or seconding the Composite would have still had the ability to speak to the Composite and been allocated “Priority in debate”.

In the interests of fairness, and having regard to Motion 8 carried at Congress 2018, the SOC recommends that each of the Regions involved in each of the two agreed Composites as above should still have the opportunity to speak to the Composite motion if they so wish. This is even if there is no opposition to the moving and seconding speeches.

### **Mobile Phones**

If mobile phones are brought into the Congress Hall, they must be switched off at all times when Congress is in session.

### **Film Cameras**

The Standing Orders Committee has given permission for film cameras to be used in the Conference Hall. The Committee has been assured that filming will be carried out with no interference to Delegates.

### **DVDs, Videos etc**

Requests to play DVDs, videos, etc should be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee for approval prior to being shown at Congress.

### **Bucket Collections**

Requests for permission to hold Bucket Collections should be submitted in writing to the Committee by 11 am on the first morning session of Congress. (It is a term of Exhibitors’ agreements with GMB that they will not request permission to hold a collection.) Requests must be submitted in writing by the Regional Secretary, and must have the support of the Regional Delegation. Priority will be given to requests for bucket collections which concern trade union or related issues. Where permission is granted, those requesting the collection must organise, count and bank the collection, if necessary liaising with the Congress office for support from Congress Stewards. They must then notify the Congress office of the amount collected, so that the President can inform Congress.

In the normal course of events the total number of bucket collections to be authorised by the SOC will be limited to a maximum of 3, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances at the discretion of the President. The SOC will limit consideration of requests for bucket



collections to a maximum of 1 per Region, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. By agreement reached at Congress 96, Regional Committees will each contribute a further sum to the national Congress gift. So permission will not be granted for a collection to augment the Congress gift

## **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Darren James (BI)  
Karen Dudley (LO)  
Helen Johnson (MI) – Chair  
George Murray (NO)  
Keith Firth (NW)  
Mary Finn (SC)  
Charles Adje (SO)  
Craig Jones (SW)  
Colin Gill (YO)

## **CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OBSERVERS to the STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

Liz Blackman (MI)  
Colin Kerr (LO)  
Andy McGivern (NW)

THE PRESIDENT: I will now call Helen Johnson, Chair of the SOC to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, which is on page 23 of your Final Agenda.

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee, Midland & East Coast): Congress, I formally move SOC Report No. 1. Before I go any further, on behalf of the SOC and everyone, I would like to offer congratulations to Barbara for her first Congress in the Chair. (*Applause*)

Congress, you will find a copy, as Barbara has already said, of this SOC Report No. 1 in the Final Agenda starting on page 23. I formally move adoption of that report, and in doing so, would colleagues please note the longstanding guidelines for Congress business on page 18 of that same agenda. This will help all of you, but particularly the new delegates, in understanding the procedures and guidelines that the President and SOC work to. A copy of the SOC Report will be issued to delegates later today and any further SOC reports will be issued in the course of the week. I hope this will assist everyone in being able to keep track of decisions such as withdrawn motions.

### **Withdrawn Motions**

The SOC has been informed that the following motions and rule amendments have been withdrawn: Motion 11, Transparency in the Final Agenda, standing in the name of London Region; Motion 77, Unpaid Volunteer Workers, standing in the name of Wales & South West Region; Motion 78, Unpaid Work Experience New Contribution Rate, standing in the name of Wales & South West Region; Motion 132, Supported Employment, standing in the name of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, and Motion 260, Sales Tax Not Rates Tax, standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

The following rule amendments have been withdrawn: Rule Amendment 466, standing in the name of Midland & East Coast Region, and Rule Amendment 476, standing in the name of Wales & South West Region.

The following rule amendments, all standing in the name of London Region, have been withdrawn: Rule Amendments 446, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 483 and 488.

Would Congress delegates please note that if any further Congress motions are to be withdrawn during the week, you must advise your regional secretary who then, in turn, inform the SOC.

#### Agreed Composite Motions

The SOC would like to thank the delegates and their regional secretaries for agreeing 20 composite motions that also appear in your Final Agenda, starting at page 20.

As delegates will be aware, Congress 2018 carried Motion 8 about speakers on motions so that for any motion that remains unopposed the speaker on the motion will be limited to the mover and the seconder. This will apply to all stand alone motions and composite motions where up to two regions are involved.

There are two agreed composite motions where there are more than two regions involved. These two composite are: Composite 7, Menopause Policies, involving London, GMB Scotland, and Southern; and Composite 17, The Gas Industry, involving London, Northern and Southern.

The SOC recognises that in agreeing these composites regions will have given up the ability to move and second their own motion as a stand-alone motion. So, in the interests of fairness, and having regard to Motion 8 carried at Congress 2018, the SOC recommends that each of the regions involved in each of the two agreed composites I have mentioned should still have the opportunity to speak to the composite motion if they so wish. This is even if there is no opposition to the moving and seconding speeches.

#### Existing Policy Motions

Congress, in accordance with Congress decisions adopted since 2008, the SOC is recommending that motions which are existing policy are endorsed by Congress without the need for debate following advice from the CEC on the particular motions in question.

The existing policy motions are listed in SOC Report No. 1 at page 148 of your Final Agenda. You may also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC which is at page 144 of your Final Agenda. The letters “EP” also appear at the side of each motion in the Final Agenda.

#### Emergency Motions

The SOC has accepted an emergency motion as being in order for debate. This is Emergency Motion 1: “Violent Collapse of the Banana Sector in Cameroon”, standing in the name of London Region. The SOC is recommending that this be heard in the International session on Thursday afternoon.

#### Motions and Rule Amendments out of order

Congress, the SOC has ruled that the following motions and rule amendments are out of order for debate:

#### Motion 4 Section Conferences

The motion calls for section conferences to be part of Congress so that they are not stand alone. The motion is in conflict with Rule A3 2 which provides that section conferences will be held every year at a time and location approved by the Central Executive Council. Rule A3 2 was amended to this effect by the CEC Rule Amendment 14 carried by Congress 2018.

#### Motion 6 Substitutes for Congress

The motion calls for branches to be able to nominate a substitute for election to Congress delegate in the event that the elected delegate is unable to attend to represent the branch. This is in conflict with Rule 8.5 whereby if an elected delegate is unable to attend the highest loser in the election should fill the vacancy.

#### Motion 15 Full Democracy

The motion calls for the length of Congress not to be shortened and that if there are any changes to the dates of Congress then all members need to be communicated and consulted on in points 4 and 5 of the motion. This is in conflict with Rule 8.2 which provides that the ordinary Congress will be held every year on dates decided by the Central Executive Council.

#### Motion 36 Retired Members Seat on the CEC

The motion calls for a place on the CEC for a Retired Members Seat with full voting rights. This would require amendments to rules 11 and 20.

#### Rule Amendment 444

The rule amendment proposes to add an additional category of 'retired members' to those who are delegates to Congress under rule 8. This would create a conflict with rule 18, which provides that Congress delegates must pay full contributions, and under rule 47A retired life members are able to stop paying contributions in specified circumstances.

#### Rule Amendments 489, 490 and 491

These three rule amendments all propose a new rule for a consultation to take place in order to bring forward a rule change to 2021 Congress on a new young members structure. The wording of the amendment is not appropriate for a rule book. There are further drafting issues in that rule amendment 490 would leave the rule book deficient in that it proposes to amend the rule book by inserting rule 67 and 66 when rule 66 already exists and deals with transfers of engagements.

Rule amendment 491 proposes to amend the rule book by inserting 'rule 67 (the new rule)' and if adopted this is what would be inserted in the rule book.

President, Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No. 1. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Is there any delegate who wishes to speak on any of the SOC's recommendations? If so, come up.

FEVZI HUSSEIN (London): Good morning, Congress. President, I rise to challenge the SOC decision to rule out of order Motion 15. The basis of our challenge is, essentially, that we have not been provided with the full response to the Congress 2018 review. The CEC has confirmed that seven regions responded. Only the SOC are in possession of the full responses and, to date, have failed to share it with us, the regions and the members. In the interests of transparency, we believe we have a right to see the full responses. It is possible that some of the recommendations that the London Region put forward have been put in place, but they must disclose the full responses. We also challenge the SOC to confirm that it will carry on Mary's legacy not to shorten the Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Do any other delegates wish to speak?

JAN SMITH (London): Congress, I am speaking against Standing Orders Report No. 1, Motion 36. Congress, this is no surprise to me. I said the last time I brought this matter up that as long as I've got breath in my body I will fight this, and fight this I will! It appears that the goalposts keep moving, the reasons being that, at one time, it was and it was certainly the same at the pre-Congress meeting, we have representatives of the National RMA sitting on the CEC. But those delegates do not sit there as an RMA member. Now the goalposts have changed again and this time it has to be a rule amendment. So what has the change going to be the next time I put this in?

I remind the General Secretary, when he stood at his husting in King's Lynn, that I asked him what were his views of an RMA member sitting on the CEC? Had he any objections? To that, he replied "No". When he was elected, he told me to get the motion put in.

Congress, please support Motion 36. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

GORDON CULLUM (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* I will be changing SOC on rule amendment 448 on rule 8.5: Congress of the Union, without the support of my region.

Our Congress is built on democracy, giving our members from the branches we represent a voice and real representation. I am not here to be a substitute for solely my own personal opinion. I am here to echo part of the organised working class, the GMB members in my area, whose motions and decisions have been collectively agreed to be put forward. Unfortunately, life happens. People get taken ill or have family emergencies. Now, wouldn't it make sense if, instead of depriving the local branch of their representation and go to a pool of people outside that branch, we had an elected one from the branch itself? Our Cambridge area branch has more than 3,000 members. Like every other branch, our collective will should be delivered by our elected representation. That is common sense. That's democracy. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: If there are no more delegates wishing to speak against the SOC, can I ask Helen to reply.

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair of Standing Orders Committee): Congress, I am responding to the challenges to SOC Report No. 1. Before I give you an answer to the challenges, I would like to remind everyone here that when the SOC looks at motions, we don't consider the content. It is not about the subject. It is about whether it is within rule and within the submission guidelines.

On the response to the challenge to Motion 6, it has simply been moved out of order because it is against the current rule book.

Motion 15 was ruled out of order because there are two points in the motion that conflict with the rule book.

Lastly, Motion 36 would require changes to two rules which have not been submitted. I move SOC Report No. 1.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Because there have been challenges, I now have to take separate votes on the challenges and the reference backs, so putting the motions back into the agenda. In relation to Motion 6, the CEC is asking delegates to vote against to all reference back proposals, but I will take a vote on each one.

On Motion 6, can I see all those in favour of the reference back? That means putting that motion back into the agenda. All those in favour? All those against? Hands up, please. That is lost.

*The Reference Back challenge on Motion 6 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 15, can I see all those in favour of supporting the challenge to put it back into the agenda? All those in favour of the challenge, put your hand up. All those against, put your hand up. That is lost as well.

*The Reference Back challenge on Motion 15 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 36, all those supporting the challenge, the reference back, put your hands up, please. All those against. That is lost as well.

*The Reference Back challenged on Motion 36 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: Rule amendment 448 was not even in Standing Orders. I now have to put the rest of the Standing Orders Committee Report to Congress, so I shall take the vote. All those in favour of Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, please raise your hands? All those against the Standing Orders Committee Report No, 1? That is carried.

*Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. These are the rules that you have adopted for the conduct of Congress for the coming week. Thank you. I am now going to ask June Minnery to take the Chair.

## **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

THE VICE CHAIR (June Minnery): It gives me great pleasure to call on our President, Barbara Plant, to give her first address to Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Acting Vice-Chair, Congress and visitors, I think you can guess what I am going to say. First-time President, first-time Chair! (*Applause and cheers*)

This time last year I stood before Congress as your newly-elected National President. What an honour that moment was, and how quickly the first year has gone by. I made a pledge to myself that in the intervening year, from last Congress to this one, I would visit all regions of the GMB, and I am proud to say that in April I achieved that goal. I have criss-crossed the country and attended the Durham Miners Gala in Northern Region — you can cheer if you want to. I don't mind. Northern Region! (*Cheers and applause*) — the Regional Council in Wales & South West (*Applause*); the Branch Activists' Week in Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region (*Applause*) — I can tell the troublemakers now, can't I? — Pride in London Region (*Applause*); two Women's Conferences, one in Birmingham & West Midlands Region (*Cheers*) and one in North West & Irish Region (*Applause*); the Regional Council in Midland & East Coast Region (*Applause*); this is a whisky bottle from a shipyard in GMB Scotland (*Cheers*) and then I laid a wreath at the Martyrs' Grave at Tolpuddle in Southern Region (*Cheers*). They are only a few of the events that I have managed to get to, and how well I now know the rail network and the complexities of its ticket pricing.

First, I want to say thank you to the regional secretaries, your PAs and your staff for your invitations and hospitality. Please do keep inviting me. Above all, I want to thank you, the members for your welcome, your warmth and your support. You have treated me as a friend. You have shared with me your stories, told me your personal hopes and fears and voiced how you want to see us as a union grow and improve. For all your kindness, your trust, your honesty, your commitment and your hard work, I truly thank you. We are one trade union, one GMB family.

In 2004 I experienced that GMB family spirit for myself. In April that year my home was gutted by a house fire. My youngest daughter died from smoke inhalation and we, literally, had nothing other than the night clothes we escaped in. I would, therefore, publicly like to thank my branch and its officers at the time, my region and GMB as a whole because, somehow, the word got out of the situation that I was in, and suddenly GMB branches from across all regions were donating small amounts of money so that my family and I could rebuild our lives and our house. I still have the letters from all the branches that sent me sympathy and support.

There is not a long history of trade unionism in my family. My parents were both working class Tories, and we didn't discuss politics much at home. But they did give me a love of reading, and I found my own values through education, which is why I am a staunch believer in lifelong learning. They did, however, share stories about their childhoods, growing up in the 1920s. My mum would tell me about how her dad, a London docker, would go to the docks each day and wait to be picked for work. If he was not successful, then he would spend the rest of the day in the nearest pub, spending money that the family did not have. My dad would tell me about how, as a

child growing up in Poplar, East London, he would be carried at night from the room they rented in one house during the day to the bedroom they rented in another house around the corner, and then how the legs of the beds would be greased to prevent cockroaches climbing up. Both of those descriptions are from 90 years ago, and you would have hoped that those practices and that level of poverty would have ended. But the casual practice at the docks sounds very much like the present-day zero-hour contract, and the living conditions that my dad experienced are still here today with bad housing, high rents and rising levels of homelessness.

Poverty is still with us, whether we describe it as “food” poverty, “pension” poverty, “in-work” poverty, “period” poverty, “benefit” poverty or “child” poverty. Regardless of what adjective you put in front of it, poverty is poverty. As a rich, developed country, we should be ashamed. But we know who is to blame for creating this growing unequal society, because cuts and austerity are a political choice.

A recent report by a leading UN expert on poverty and human rights lawyer, Professor Philip Alston, has compared Conservative welfare policies to the creation of 19<sup>th</sup> century workhouses. He warns that unless austerity is ended, the UK’s poorest face lives that are still ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’. What a sad comment on our society that is, but as trade unionists we know it to be true. We see it every day in the work that we do, supporting and fighting for our members against redundancies, low wages and poor terms and conditions. Fourteen million people in the UK are living in poverty, and local authorities have seen a 49% real-terms reduction in funding from 2011 to 2018. 16 per cent of people over 65 live in relative poverty, and millions of those in work are dependent upon food banks and various forms of charity to cope.

Although the Tories talk about rising employment, it is predicted that 40% of children — 40% of children! — will be living in poverty two years from now. Austerity and cuts take their toll. Both physical and mental health are impacted, which in turn puts more strain on an under-funded Health Service. Only last week a study by the Institute for Public Policy Research found that 130,000 deaths in the UK since 2011 could have been prevented if there had not been austerity cuts preventing improvements in public health policy. Austerity is not only cold-hearted and uncaring, but it is a cruel approach to people’s lives, and it punishes people in the most severe way.

Earlier this year we read about the story of Steven Smith, who died after he was deemed fit to work and told to visit a jobcentre once a week, despite having multiple debilitating illnesses. Behind all the statistics, there are real people both loved and missed, and there are many such stories out there.

One hundred and thirty years ago East London gasworkers came together to form a union, and today as reps and activists we are still doing what they started. It’s the same fight, the same issues, the same values. We use our collective strength and voice to be agents of change for the better because it is trade unions that redress the balance of power with employers and governments, a power imbalance that has always existed. Ordinary people, like you and me, do extraordinary things every day, standing alongside working people, fighting to end exploitation and bring dignity and

decency into people's lives. Sometimes we don't win, but we never give up that fight. *(Applause)*

This week at Congress we will hear debates around many issues that affect people's daily lives, and I look forward to hearing your passion and commitment. A very special welcome, if this is your first Congress, as a delegate. If you think your nervous then, boy, just imagine how I am feeling chairing my first one. So, please, be gentle with me if I get something wrong.

All I ask is that speakers keep to the time limits. Malcolm and I did think about installing a trap door so that we could just pull a lever, but we thought that might be a bit harsh. As someone who got the red light in my first speech, and knows how it feels to be caught like a rabbit in the headlights, my one bit of advice is to make sure that you have timed your speech before you come to the rostrum.

Malcolm, if you are watching, I am sorry that you can't be here with us this week but we all send you and Lynn our very best wishes. I, personally, thank you for your support and guidance over this past year. *(Applause)*

Thank you, June, for agreeing to be Vice-Chair at the last minute, and having spent time with June in Palestine recently it will be a pleasure to have her alongside me.

Thank you, Tim, for welcoming me as the new President and for being so willing to listen to our members' voices and new ideas. We both want to see a democratic, transparent, accountable, member-led, campaigning union, but one whose structures are representative of our membership and our workplaces. Secondly, as trade unionists, we are always on the side of the underdog, so I know that you were nothing more than pleased when earlier this year my team Crystal Palace beat Arsenal. *(Cheers)*

I would like to finish by quoting a small part of a poem by Jo Solo that I heard at Wakefield at the Banners Held High event. Don't worry. I am not going to attempt to do a Yorkshire accent. Our Banner Ceremony is always a moving part of Congress, and this poem puts into words what our banners represent. An old man is explaining to a group of young boys why a banner is just a rag and two poles, and how they have been carried on marches and demos for hundreds of years. He says to the boys:

*"This struggle is not only theirs, boys. It's yours.  
It beats in your hearts. It runs through your veins;  
It's a yearning for justice, to shake off these chains.  
It's a burning defiance that's locked in your soul;  
And it's raised up as that there 'A rag and two poles'.  
When we're dead and gone, they'll be marching here still  
Cos we're part of something that power can't kill;  
We are the spirit that will never die,  
And that's why we march here with Banners Held High".*

At the end of Congress, I know that you will go back and continue to do what we have always done: educate, agitate, organise.



To be your President is a real privilege. Thank you. (*A standing ovation*)

Vote of Thanks to the President

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara, and thank you for your kind words. I now call on Mary Hutchinson, a CEC member from Northern Region, to give the vote of thanks to the President.

MARY HUTCHINSON (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress and President, I have to say that I am standing here and totally surprised. As you know, I had a sad event myself this year. My husband died and I wasn't sure if I would get here. So when they shouted my name, it was a complete shock. Obviously, I am going to be short and sweet. I don't know Barbara that well, but I have been on the taskforce. We were all pleased, including my own region, that she got the job as the stand-in for Mary who, as you all know, will be a very hard act to follow. But I am sure that Barbara will do it her own way. As she has shown us, she has given her first speech to the Congress as the President of our great Union. So, like I say, I have nothing prepared, it was a complete shock, so I can only wish Barbara well in her first Congress. Long may she reign. Thank you very much Barbara. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. That was really kind of you. Short and sweet is fine. That suits me down to the ground.

Colleagues, before we move on to our first debates, I would like to invite our first guest speaker to the stage. She is the new Labour leader of Brighton City Council, and a long-standing friend of the union. I've checked her credentials and she has declared her membership of the GMB in the register of interests, so that is all fine. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Nancy Platts. (*Applause*)

### **Address by Nancy Platts, Labour leader of Brighton City Council**

NANCY PLATTS: Congress and President, welcome to the People's Republic of Brighton & Hove. (*Cheers*) Thank you for inviting me to open your Congress today. I am very proud to be here as a GMB councillor and Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council.

We've had quite a journey together during the past few years and I owe you a debt of gratitude. You have supported me through two Parliamentary elections; my election to be a councillor in east Brighton, and now as Leader of the Council. We have shared some moments. Paul Maloney, the Southern Regional Secretary, will recall the occasion when the GMB asked me to speak at a rally on public service pay. We marched together through the City with me all the way clutching my speech and trying to remember my lines. By the time I got there, my nerves were jangling at the thought of speaking in front of thousands of people. I walked up to the platform, which was a flat-bed truck, parked in front of a steep grassy bank at the edge of the park. But people blocked my way and refused me access to the ladder up to the platform because they said that my name was not on the list of speakers. Some people might have accepted it and walked away, but my nerves turned to anger. Paul came over and asked me what was wrong. "They won't let me speak", I said. "We'll

see about that”, he said. “Give me your hand”. With that, he hauled me up the grassy bank and physically lifted me on to the back of the flat-bed truck. I looked at the MC with the mike and said, “Well, I’m here now so you might as well let me speak because I’m not getting down until I have”. Congress, nothing stops a GMB sister from speaking out, especially when they’ve got Paul Maloney behind them!  
(*Applause*)

Determination is something we have in bucket loads here in the south. We never give up. If you take a wander along the coast going east, you will come across Telscombe Town, Peacehaven and Lewes. Considered unwinnable by some, we worked and worked, we door-knocked, ran campaigns and got involved in community events. In 2015 we achieved our first Labour councillor, just the one. So we worked some more. This year we achieved seven councillors being elected in Peacehaven Town Council; six in Telscombe Town Council and three in Lewes District Council. This is the first time in 30 years that we have had Labour representation on Lewes District Council. One of those councillors is my very good friend and your very own member of GMB Southern Region staff, Christine Robinson. (*Applause*)

On Brighton & Hove City Council, I am delighted to be in the company of several GMB councillors, including your former GMB rep, Jane Grimshaw. (*Applause*)

Congress, we have already run many campaigns together, one of the most recent being a campaign to stop unpaid trial shifts. An unpaid trial shift is when someone is asked to work for free to see if they are good enough to do the job. This mainly affects young people looking for part-time work in the hospitality industry, an industry that forms a major part of our local economy. Congress, I don’t think anyone should be asked to work for free, especially when they are looking for paid work, so I was proud to work with the GMB and support young people to end this unfair and exploitative practice. Many people told us that they used as free labour during busy times, such as weekends, on celebratory days, such as St. Patrick’s Day or Mothers’ Day. They said they work hard and go home waiting to hear if they will be offered a job. But no one contacts them afterwards. This is because, in reality, no job exists. Our campaign *Together* has forced Government to clarify policy, and people can now report an unpaid trial shift direct to HMRC through our website: *no-one paid.com*.

I am pleased to tell you that we have many good employers, too, and they are listed on our *no-one paid.com*. So, please, do check that out and spend your money in those outlets where they treat staff well. When young people ask me how we can stop such practices, I say “Join a trade union”. We have recruited new GMB members as a result of this campaign.

Congress, we have much more to do. As a council, we have pledged to provide a minimum of 800 new council homes during the next four years. (*Applause*) We will independently audit all outsourced services and see if we can bring them in-house. We will defend the NHS and work to create a joined-up health and social care system. Our manifesto is bold, ambitious and socialist. It is a manifesto for the many and not the few. I look forward to making it a reality with GMB members.

I want to thank all of the GMB for their support over the years but, particularly, Lisa Johnson, Paul Maloney, Michelle Gordon, Mark Turner and Gary Palmer.

Before I make a presentation to the General Secretary, I just want to say thank you for choosing Brighton & Hove for your Congress. Enjoy our City. We will make you feel welcome. Thank you. *(Presentation made amidst applause)* This T-shirt is for Whitehawk FC. It is a non-league football team, which is sponsored by the GMB. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Nancy, stay there. Thank you for that, and thank you for your hard work with the GMB. We have a gift for you. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

Congress, before we begin our first debate, I would like to explain a few points of procedure, so please listen carefully. To save time, I will take motions in groups. Your session programme will show the groupings. If you are speaking on any of the motions, register at the desk in front before going to the chairs here in front of the rostrum ready to speak. This saves time. You have to make sure that you have registered and shown your GMB credentials. I will call movers and any seconders. In line with Motion 8, carried at Congress last year, I will not be calling for additional speakers on motions or rule amendments unless a delegate is speaking in opposition. The mover of a motion then has a right of reply if there is opposition, and I will call those speakers at the end of a group of motions.

Congress, we have two composites where more than two regions are represented. For these debates, all regions represented will have an opportunity to speak. I will then call the CEC speaker to reply at the end of the group, rather than deal with each motion individually. Where the CEC is supporting a motion, I will advise Congress. Where the CEC has any other position, the CEC speaker will give the reasons for their decision. We will then move to a vote of all the motions in that group. For the avoidance of doubt, I shall take the vote on each motion individually. I know that was quite a long explanation but it will become clear as we go through.

Finally, could I remind Congress that as you have voted in SOC Report No. 1, all existing policy motions are considered carried and will not be debated.

### **CEC Rule Amendments**

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC Rule Amendments are on the Final Agenda and the CEC is supporting all of these. Can I also ask that the movers and seconders of the next items of business please make themselves ready. That is for Rule Amendment 443, Rule Amendment 445, Rule Amendment 448 and Rule Amendment 451. If you want to start making your way down to the front, that would help.

### **CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RULE AMENDMENTS**

#### **CEC RULE AMENDMENT 1**

##### **CECRA1**

Rule 12.1

Line 3 delete "chair the Congress after that at which they are elected"

Line 12 after 'term of office' insert "(which commences at the end of the Congress at which they are elected)"

Line 12 after 'will chair' insert "Congress and"

Clause to read

1 The president will be elected in 2005 and at every fourth Ordinary Congress from then on, from among the members of the Central Executive Council. The president will hold office for four years, and be eligible to be nominated and re-elected after their four-year term of office. With effect from and including Congress 2018 in the event an election is required at Congress in an intervening year to fill a casual vacancy, it shall be from among the members of the Central Executive Council and the president then elected will serve the balance of the period of office until the next election is due in line with this rule. Nominations for president will be made by a regional committee, a regional council or a regional pre-Congress delegation meeting. During their term of office (which commences at the end of the Congress at which they are elected), the president will chair Congress and all meetings of the Central Executive Council and other union meetings the Central Executive Council may hold. They will also:

- be responsible for making sure Congress carries out its business in a proper way;
- sign the minutes (the general secretary and treasurer will also do this);
- make sure all members of Congress keeps to these rules; and
- go to the TUC and Labour Party Conferences, and other conferences as appropriate.

*(Carried)*

## **CEC RULE AMENDMENT 2**

### **CECRA2**

Rule 13.1

Line 11 delete "If the president is absent from a meeting of the Central Executive Council, the vice-president will chair the meeting"

Insert "The vice-president will deputise for the president in chairing any meetings which fall to be chaired by the president under rule 12.1

Clause to read:

1 The vice-president will be elected in 2005, and at every fourth Ordinary Congress from then on, from among the members of the Central Executive Council. They will hold office for four years. Nominations for vice-president will be made by a regional committee, a regional council or a regional pre-Congress delegation meeting. In the event of a casual vacancy the Central Executive Council will appoint a vice-president to hold office until the next Congress. With effect from and including Congress 2018 in the event an election is required at Congress in an intervening year to fill a casual vacancy, it shall be from among the members of the Central Executive Council, and the vice-president then elected will serve the balance of the period of office until the next election is due in line with this rule. The vice-president will deputise for the president in chairing any meetings which fall to be chaired by the president under rule 12.1 and be responsible for making sure business is carried out in a proper way.

*(Carried)*

## **CEC RULE AMENDMENT 3**

### **CECRA3**

Rule 35.15

Line 10 delete "If successful,"

Clause to read:

15 The regional committee will have the power to suspend or remove from office any branch officer who:

- acts incompetently or dishonestly; or

- fails to carry out any instructions or decisions of the Central Executive Council, regional council or regional committee; or
- for any other reason it considers reasonable

In giving its decision, the regional committee must tell the member, in writing, of their right to appeal.

Branch officers who are suspended or removed from office can appeal in writing within one month to the general secretary. The general secretary will refer the case to the Central Executive Council, who will make the final decision. Before the regional committee and the Central Executive Council, the branch officer will have the rights set out in rule 5.8. The Regional Committee or Central Executive Council may order an appeal to be struck out for scandalous, vexatious or unreasonable behaviour by an appellant or for excessive delay in proceeding with the case. Before making such an order the appellant will be sent notice giving them an opportunity to show why the order should not be made. A member who, for any reason, has been disqualified from holding a particular office will not be eligible to be nominated for and elected to any office without the regional committee's approval.

*(Carried)*

#### **CEC RULE AMENDMENT 4**

##### **CECRA4**

Rule A3.3

Line 2 delete "second", insert "fourth"

Clause to read:

3 A section national president will be elected in 2008 and at every fourth Section Conference from then on, from among the members of the Section Conference elected in line with rule A3.2 for that year, and from the members of the Section National Committee. The section president will hold office for four years, chair the Section Conference after that at which they are elected and be eligible to be nominated and re-elected after their four-year term of office. In the event an election is required to fill a casual vacancy at an intervening Section Conference the section national president then elected will serve the balance of the period of office until the next election is due in line with this rule. During their term of office the section president will chair all meetings of the Section National Committee.

*(Carried)*

#### **CEC RULE AMENDMENT 16**

##### **CEC RA16**

Rule 15 Electing a general secretary and treasurer

Clause 1, Line 2 after "five years" insert ", or some shorter term, if this is agreed by the holder of the office and the Central Executive Council"

Clause to read:

1 This rule will apply to how the general secretary and treasurer is elected. They will hold office for five years, or some shorter term, if this is agreed by the holder of the office and the Central Executive Council.

*(Carried)*

#### **CEC RULE AMENDMENT 17**

##### **CEC RA17**

Rule 15 Electing a general secretary and treasurer

Clause 2

Delete Clause 2 and substitute :

2 The Central Executive Council will ask branches for their nominations on whichever is the earlier of:-

- a. six months before the 5 year term of office of the holder of the office runs out, or
- b. dates determined by the Central Executive Council if a shorter term of office is agreed in line with clause 1; or
- c. if there is a vacancy, as soon as **possible** after taking account of any relevant matters.

Branches should send their nominations to a returning officer appointed by the Central Executive Council.

*(Carried)*

*(CEC Rule Amendments 16 and 17 will take effect immediately, if agreed by Congress 2019)*

THE PRESIDENT: June Minnery is going to move CEC Rule Amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, 16 and 17 on behalf of the CEC. Thank you.

JUNE MINNERY (VICE CHAIR): President and Congress, I move Rule Amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, 16 and 17 on behalf of the CEC.

Central Executive Council Rule Amendments 1, 2, 3 and 4 are tidying-up rule amendments. CEC Rule Amendment 1 makes it expressly clear in rule that the President has to chair all Congresses, not just the one after the one at which they are elected, and also to define the “term of office”.

CEC Rule Amendment 2 makes it expressly clear in rule that the vice-president deputises for the president in chairing any meetings in the president’s absence.

CEC Rule Amendment 3 clarifies the process of appeals received under rule 35.15. These are referred directly to the CEC Appeals Committee by the General Secretary. The current words “If successful” suggest a veto which does not exist in practice.

CEC Rule Amendment 4 brings the process for electing section presidents into line with last year’s Congress decision to hold section national conferences separate to Congress each year. The rule change ensures that section national president elections are held at every fourth section conference, not every second, and preserves the four-year term of office.

CEC Rules Amendments 16 and 17 pick up from the CEC Special Report on GMB Elections adopted by Congress 2018 and brings the rules governing the term of office of a General Secretary into line with legislation. At present, our rules are more inflexible than the law allows, so introducing some flexibility allows a union to react to external circumstances and avoid unnecessary costs. The change means that the term can be up to five years so it can be less than five years if the incumbent and the CEC agree. This protects the post-holder and also protects the union from abuse of the system. If CEC Rule Amendments 16 and 17 are adopted they will come into effect immediately.

Please support CEC Rule Amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, 16 and 17 for the reasons I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June. Can I have a member of the CEC to formally second those rule amendments? Will somebody shout out from the CEC? (*Formally seconded*) Does anyone on the floor wish to speak in opposition to any of these rule amendments? (*No response*) No. Okay. Then I can go to the vote. I will take CEC Rule Amendment 1. All those in favour, please put your hand up? All those against? That is carried.

*CEC Rule Amendment 1 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: CEC Rule Amendment 2. All those in favour of that rule amendment, please show? All those against? That is carried.

*CEC Rule Amendment 2 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: CEC Rule Amendment 3. All those in favour of that rule amendment, please show by hand? Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

*CEC Rule Amendment 3 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: CEC Rule Amendment 4. All those in favour, please show? Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

*CEC Rule Amendment 4 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: CEC Rule Amendment 16. All those in favour, please show? Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

*CEC Rule Amendment 16 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Lastly, CEC Rule Amendment 17. All those in favour, please show? Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

*CEC Rule Amendment 17 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank was nice and straightforward. I like those. Thank you.

### **Rule Amendments**

THE PRESIDENT: We are now moving on to the first of the rule amendments. Could the mover and seconder come forward of Rule Amendment 443. Make sure that you all show your credentials

## **RULE AMENDMENT 443**

**RA443.**

**RULE NO: 8 TITLE: CONGRESS OF THE UNION  
CLAUSE NO: 2 LINE: 2**

Delete full stop after the word "Council" and insert:

"and shall be of at least five days duration".

Clause to read:

2. The Ordinary Congress will be held every year from dates decided by the Central Executive Council and shall be of at least five days duration".

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
London Region.

*(Lost)*

SARAH HURLEY (London): Congress, I move Congress of the Union. President, this rule amendment has happened because of exactly what has happened during the past few years. Congress, I stood on this very stage last year and highlighted the importance of not shortening Congress because of the strain it put on delegates. Unfortunately, that motion was not supported, but after I could not count the number of delegates who approached me from all the regions and said that they wished they had voted the other way.

Congress, let me remind you what our General Secretary stated back in 2017, which was: "I am not going to speak for long, comrades, because you have been so co-operative in getting the Congress in two-and-a-half days, which ordinarily have been five. No, that is not going to set precedents for the future, believe me, although I have heard the rumours." So taking this into account, you can imagine what I thought when I read and saw the response of this CEC, which was that there is going to be no doubt in future occasions when it will be in the interests of the union, delegates or members generally, that Congress is shortened! This has twice happened this century because of a general election, but it could equally be because of bad weather, transport problems or other industrial or political emergencies. If this rule change passes, neither Congress nor the CEC would be able to act in these circumstances.

After hearing that, it was clear that the CEC needed to be reminded that this Congress for many years has run absolutely fine, regardless of the weather or transport systems. If there was another general election, our members have already proven that they are more than happy to support.

The last two years have proven, though, that this Congress cannot and should not ever be cut. We cannot allow the CEC to take away our democracy and our voice. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. Secunder?

CATHY HOLLAND (London): Congress, I've known Barbara a long time and she's brilliant! Congress, I am speaking without the support of my region on Rule Amendment 443. I support what Sarah has just said, that as a result of last year's Congress I feel we should ensure that the rule book reflects some sense to future



congresses so that there is enough time to conduct proper business, allowing people, especially new delegates, to be able to talk without feeling harassed and, ultimately, putting them off attending future congresses. What made matters worse, the sectional conferences were held in the middle of Congress, which confused everyone. It did not help. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. I think you do have the support of your region. Yes, I can see that you do. I call the mover of Rule Amendment 445.

## **RULE AMENDMENT 445**

**RA445.**

**RULE NO: 8 TITLE: CONGRESS OF THE UNION**

**CLAUSE NO: 4 LINE: 3**

On Line 3 delete the word "September" and replace with the word "August".

Clause to read:

4 All delegates must be fully financial members. Each region will be entitled to send one delegate for every 1,500 financial members, as stated in the membership figures for the previous August. These delegates will be selected in line with clauses 5, 6 and 7 of this rule.

PLAISTOW BRANCH  
London Region

*(Lost)*

CATHY HANLON (London): Congress, I move Rule Amendment 445. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Cheers and applause)* Congress, this is a straightforward rule change that we are proposing. We are proposing the date of the calculations of Congress delegates from using membership figures at the end of September to using those at the end of August. What happens now is that National Office waits until the end of September to see what membership figures are. Then they send the regions paperwork early in October, and regions send that paperwork to branches who normally receive them in mid-October. By adopting our rule change and using August figures, National Office will be in a position to start a whole new administration process earlier in the month. Congress, I am a branch convenor and administrator. The rule book says that we should hold our branch meetings at least once every quarter. At the moment, we have to wait until the fourth quarter, normally mid-December, to meet branch members to discuss Congress arrangements, to nominate and think of motions. This allows for sectional conferences every year and the time of the branch plans. There is already a lot happening in the last quarter.

We would normally until mid-September to hold our third-quarter branch meeting due to holidays, so by adopting our rule change we would already have Congress paperwork earlier in the month and could start our discussions on Congress nominations and motions sooner. We could then have another Congress meeting in mid-October to look at progress and make sure we engage with all our members. This makes a lot of sense to us. In fact, two of our branches have the same idea and our rule change is identical. Please support our rule amendment. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

MARY GOODSON (London): Congress, as Cathy has just described, this is a simple change to Congress administration. No other rule needs amending and we are not changing the dates for nominations for branches. Otherwise, we would also have to change rule 8.5. We know the reasons why the CEC is opposing, namely, that we should try and use the statistics as close to the delegate-nomination process as possible. This does not ring true as, with the new nomination process, for 2019 section conferences in November we are using March 2019 stats to determine our delegation size. That is seven months difference. Therefore, using membership statistics as at the end of August for Congress, it won't have any impact at all on how many delegates a region can have unless the region loses 1,500 members that month, which is highly unlikely.

Congress, I am a more experienced branch secretary and find that we have a lot of business to cover in the last quarter. We think that the earlier we can send in the Congress papers, the better. So why not start the ball rolling for Congress nominations earlier. That way we will have longer to engage with our branch members, chase them up and really focus on Congress rather than hurry at the end of the year. Please support our rule amendment. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. I call the mover for rule amendment 448, please.

#### **RULE AMENDMENT 448**

**RA448.**

**RULE NO: 8 TITLE: CONGRESS OF THE UNION  
CLAUSE NO: 5 LINE: 3**

After the word "Congress" remove full stop and insert the following sentence "and may also nominate another member as a substitute".

Rule to Read:

5. For 90% of delegates, each branch of a region may nominate one member to stand for election as a delegate to represent the region at the Congress and may also nominate another member as a substitute. These nominations must be sent to regional office no later than 31 December. The region will then print and issue lists during the third week of January, setting out the name and branch of each candidate. The closing date for voting will be 28 February. The candidates who receive the largest number of votes will be elected.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH  
London Region

*(Withdrawn)*

GORDON CULLUM (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and second-time speaker. (*Applause*) I will be challenging the SOC on rule amendment 448 on rule 8.5. I would like to say that whoever is doing the Twitter feed, that's a horrible picture of me. So can you do better this time, please.

I am not going to read the same speech again. It is quite simple. If a delegate from a branch pulls out in between to come from Congress, all our branch is asking is that the delegate be chosen from that specific branch and not from another pool of elected people who cannot speak for their branch on motions. That is all I am going to say. I

am speaking without the support of our region. That's the motion we've got to put forward and what I would like to put forward. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder? Is there a seconder for rule amendment 448? I am sorry to say that if there is no seconder, that motion falls. (*Formally seconded from the floor*) Can we have the mover and seconder for Rule Amendment 451?

### **RULE AMENDMENT 451**

**RULE NO: 9 TITLE: BUSINESS OF CONGRESS**

**CLAUSE NO: 4 LINE(S): 2 & 11**

Words to be amended or deleted:

Line 2, after "Ordinary Congress"

Line 11, after "Clause 3 above"

Nature of Amendment e.g. Delete, Amend, Insert:

Insert:

Precise Words (if any) to be inserted:

Line 2: "Any branch may submit up to three motions under this rule"

Line 11: "Any branch may submit up to two rule amendment proposals under this rule"

L25 BRANCH

North West & Irish Region

(*Carried*)

VINCENT MAWDSLEY (North West & Irish): Congress, I move the Business of Congress, Rule 9, Clause 4, lines 2 and 11. "Line 2. after 'Ordinary Congress' insert 'Any branch may submit up to three motions under this rule'." The reason for this is because if there were any more, three motions would be, roughly, 2,500 motions. The second one is: "Line 11, after 'Clause 3 above'", which is all in the books that you have, "Insert: 'Any branch may submit up to two rule amendment proposals under this rule'." Rule 2 amendments relate to separate issues. If a rule amendment encompasses more than two rules, that is acceptable as one issue. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: May I have a seconder to that proposed rule change, please? (*The proposed rule change was formally seconded from the floor*) Are there any delegates who wish to oppose any of these rule amendments?

SARAH HURLEY (London): Congress, I oppose rule 451. President and Congress, it is with sadness that we find it on the agenda and supported by our CEC. Congress 2015 agreed to widen the democracy of our great union and the North West Region spoke passionately in support of raising the engagement with our branches. This rule change is a massive step backwards. Other unions restrict the number of motions but the GMB, thankfully, is not like others and does not dictate democracy to our members. We pride ourselves on being a member-led democratic organisation with the ability to allow our members to shape policy and direction. So what has prompted this rule change and why now?

There is no proof that this would result in less motions or benefit our union in any way. Once motions have been sifted, identifying existing policy, compositing and ruled out of order, a number of motions are greatly reduced for the final agenda. Also how can we ask a branch that wants to put in four motions to decide which is the best three to submit? Why put this unreasonable pressure on branches? These changes would also restrict branches from submitting multiple rule changes which may be required if amending consequential rules just as we would have to do for the SOC. This would leave the rule book incomplete and open to challenge. It is also unclear whether these restrictions would also apply to the CEC.

Colleagues, our late, great President, Mary Turner, who fought all her life to ensure that our members were at the centre of the Union, spoke from *this* very rostrum saying “This is our union”, and we must always speak to defend its fantastic democracy and ability to be a member-led organisation. All branches should be encouraged to submit motions in lines with the democracy of our union. We are proud to be a vibrant and democratic union and we should give serious thought to the long-term negative impact such a damaging rule change would bring. Please oppose this restrictive and damaging rule change. (*Cheers and applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anybody else want to come in on the debate regarding rule amendment 451?

JOHN STEVENSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress and President, this rule amendment is so difficult to deal with that our region has made it a free vote. I am not speaking on behalf of the region. I am speaking on behalf of the branch. We have heard some brilliant talk and speeches up to now. Barbara, yours was excellent, but you talked about democracy. Where is the democracy when you are stifling branches? (*Applause and cheers*) What about the branches that have more than one section? There are large branches which have all three — three motions, three rule amendments! What’s going on? I thought that this was a member-led union. If we are starting to stop that, when did we cease to be member led? I move that Congress rejects this rule amendment. Please follow. Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak on that debate? If not, would the mover of that rule amendment like to have the right of reply? Do you want to exercise your right of reply to the opposition?

VINCENT MAWDSLEY (North West & Irish): My reply to that is that this was done so that all members could attend Congress without it being too long. If we are going through 2,500 motions, would we get through Congress? That’s all I have to say. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Are there any other delegates who wish to come in on these rule amendments? (*No response*) If not then, I ask Kathy Abu-Bakir to respond on behalf of the CEC.

KATHY ABU-BAKIR (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and responding to rule amendments 443, 445 and 448.

Congress, rule amendment 443 seeks to make all future Congresses at least five days long, setting aside entirely the argument about whether we need five whole days for Congress. This year the CEC has approved around four-and-a-half days. The problem with this rule change is that it ties the hands of the CEC and Congress itself. Twice this century this Congress had to be shortened because of an unfortunate clash with the general election, but no Congress delegate objected because of the importance of these elections to our members. But there might be other reasons to change the timings, such as bad weather, transport problems or some industrial or political emergency. This rule change would make it impossible for the CEC or Congress itself to alter the length of Congress, no matter how strong the reason for it. It should be opposed.

Rule amendment 445 asks that the membership stats used to calculate the size of a region's Congress delegation should be based on the August rather than the September figures. The CEC can see no good reason for this change. If anything, we should be using the most up-to-date stats available, not older ones. As a growing union, the later the stats the more delegates we have. Please oppose 445.

Rule amendment 448 seeks to give branches the option to nominate a substitute Congress delegate. The CEC is asking for withdrawal because we think the current method of the regional nomination of delegations, if necessary, works well, and helps to ensure gender, minority, industrial and geographical balance in the delegation. We also don't think that the rule change is workable because it does not specify how the election would work. Would each nominee and their substitute be on the ballot paper, or would the substitute automatically join the delegation if the 90% quota for the delegates was not filled? If so, would we run another ballot for which substitutes were to be selected? Congress, we ask that this rule amendment is withdrawn.

Congress, please oppose amendment 443, 445 and we seek the withdrawal of rule amendment 448. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kathy. I now move to the vote on those rule amendments. I need to ask if London agrees to withdraw rule amendment 448? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

*Rule Amendment 448 was WITHDRAWN.*

THE PRESIDENT: So we are taking the vote on rule amendment 443. The CEC is opposing this. I am asking all those in favour of the rule amendment to show by raising your hand? *(Inaudible calls from the floor)* You are voting on the rule amendment. You are not voting on the CEC stance. You are voting on the rule amendment. All those against rule amendment 443? Okay. So that rule amendment is lost.

*Rule amendment 443 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: Rule amendment 445. The CEC is opposing this rule amendment. You are voting on the rule amendment. This is your chance to say whether you are for or against. All those in favour of rule amendment 445, please show? All those against? That is also lost.

*Rule amendment 445 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: Rule amendment 451. The CEC is supporting this rule amendment. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Rule amendment 451 was CARRIED.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION: CONGRESS**

THE PRESIDENT: That is the rule amendments. We are now moving on to Union Organisation so could I ask the movers of Motions 1, 8, 12, 13, and 14, to come to the front, please. Again, make sure as you come to the rostrum that you show the table your delegation credentials so they can put your name correctly up on the screen. If the mover of Motion 1 is at the front would they like to come to the rostrum?

## **TIMING OF CONGRESS MOTION 1**

### **1. TIMING OF CONGRESS**

This Congress will always remain the body of the GMB with supreme authority.

We need to ensure that the content of motions are always relevant to building and growing our union and the social welfare of our members.

We also need to ensure that the duration of Congress is not such so that it makes it difficult for working people to attend, particularly those who may have other caring responsibilities, for whom a week away from home is out of the question.

Congress therefore reaffirms that, as in rule, the CEC remains the body that sets the duration of Congress each year, taking the needs of all members into account.

L25 BRANCH  
North West & Irish Region

*(Carried)*

BILL MAWDSLEY (North West & Irish): This Congress will always remain the body of the GMB with supreme authority. We need to ensure that the contents of motions are always relevant to building and the growing of our union and to the social wellbeing and welfare of our members. We also need to ensure that the duration of Congress is not such that it makes it difficult for working people to attend, particularly those who may have other caring responsibilities. In this day of mental health that is actually growing, the amount of people who will have caring responsibilities for whom a week away from home is out of the question. Congress therefore reaffirms that it is the rule that the CEC remains the body that sets the duration of Congress each year taking the needs of all members into account. I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

ANDY COOPER (North West & Irish): Good morning, President, Congress. We second the motion as it is a clear statement of how the rules should be applied. The CEC should be the body that determines the length of Congress, taking into account all relevant considerations. As an example, caring responsibilities, delegates with young families and delegates who have to take time off as part of their holidays where a week away is too long. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The mover of Motion 8?

**EMPOWERING VISITORS TO BECOME CONGRESS DELEGATES OF THE FUTURE  
MOTION 8**

**8. EMPOWERING VISITORS TO BECOME CONGRESS DELEGATES OF THE FUTURE**

This Congress recognises the importance of ensuring our Congress is more representative of our membership.

Congress calls upon GMB to examine the barriers that prevent women from attending Congress including the ability to secure paid time off work, the lack of knowledge that childcare is provided for delegates and lack of public speaking experience.

Congress calls on GMB to evaluate visitors participation particularly looking at how many visitors return to Congress as delegates and how visitors participation could be improved to be more inclusive and offer training/mentoring opportunities to those who are keen to attend Congress in the future,

BARNET PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
London Region

*(Carried)*

MARY GOODSON (London): President, Congress, as I look around our Congress Hall today I would like to hope that there are many like me who felt empowered to put themselves forward as delegate nominees. From a visitor to a delegate can be a daunting journey but with the help and support, and encouragement, of all of us that journey should be a walk in the park. If Congress is to be a true representation of our members we must encourage members to step forward and say, “Yes, I want to be a delegate. I want to represent my branch. I can show that no matter what my age, gender, sexual orientation, race or ability, is I am a valid participant. I am worthy of standing before you. I am here.” Let’s convert these first-time visitors into first-time delegates. There are no special qualifications, skills, or talent that you need to be a delegate, maybe just confidence to know that what you have to say will be listened to and you all are really a part of the GMB family. Congress, we need to see more members involved. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

LESLEY STANSFIELD (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, members are the bedrock of our union. There is something quite empowering seeing democracy at work at Congress. All members should come to Congress at least once to experience and witness how our union debates are argued and brings about life-changing policies. We invite our members as visitors hoping to convert them to delegates in following years but we need to learn

from any failings we have from branch to Congress so that each year we improve the experience of both visitor and delegate. Positive steps have occurred at Congress and information for a visitors guide has been produced alongside with the code of conduct. There is more we could do, for example, a dedicated visitors stall with material to help visitors through Congress, act as a meeting point and resolve problems, a buddy system where visitors are teamed up with other visitors for support, a workshop during Congress to explain processes and systems and how everything works. Previous visitors have commented on the lack of underlying documents, daily session programmes, reports, and other useful material. A suggestion was also made of putting a *How GMB Congress Works* video on the website. At regional level training could be offered on Congress for visitors, public speaking, and motion writing, and branches could encourage and nominate members new to Congress. By supporting this motion you will be increasing democracy in the union. Congress, I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Mover of Motion 12?

## **BANNER CEREMONY AT CONGRESS MOTION 12**

### **12. BANNER CEREMONY AT CONGRESS**

This Congress notes a full banner ceremony should take place at the inception of Congress.

This is an opportunity for the Union to come together with their banners from all regions. The banners not only are a display of the solidarity and collective spirit of the union but they have woven in them the rich history of the union's ancestors and Industrial past. There is even a book on GMB banners.

As trade unionists our banners speak about our pride and solidarity and honour the industrial part of us as well as our history.

ALL regions should parade and display their banners at every Congress.

We call on Congress to ensure that there is a national and regional banner ceremony at each Congress where all regions should take part in the banner ceremony at the start of each Congress.

EALING GMB BRANCH  
London Region

(*Lost*)

EVELYN MARTIN (London): President, Congress, a full banner parade has always been part of the opening ceremony for many decades and has been a traditional way to start Congress making all delegates feel proud to be part of the historical organization. Guests, visitors, and first-time delegates always remark on the pomp and splendour of this ceremony where regions' flags follow the national banner as a mark of strength of our great union and showing our full history and regional spread. However, 2017, as we celebrated 100 years of Congress this was no longer part of the programme. We know that Congress 2017 had to be cut short because of a sharp election but we should not snatch minutes from the start of Congress. When we saw that the full ceremony was also cut in 2018 and regional banners were not paraded with the national banner we submitted this motion to stop this happening in the future. We are pleased that the conference planner returned to the full banner ceremony this



year but our motion calls for this to continue for all Congresses henceforth. London Region were proud to parade the national banner this year and in fact the banner party was made up of some delegates who were let down in 2017.

Our region did not withdraw this motion as the wording of the CEC position indicated a return to this practice. There was no resolution that this will be set in stone for all future Congresses as our motion was clearly expressed. It is for these reasons that we felt we wanted to speak to this motion. Congress, please support this motion to ensure that we have a full banner ceremony at this and every future Congress, especially this year where we celebrate 130 years of the founder of this great GMB union. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Evelyn. Secunder?

JAN SMITH (London): Congress, it is a pageantry to see all the banners arrive on the opening of Congress. Emergencies can happen but, surely, we can spend even in an emergency to have the banner parade. It is an important part of our history and a part of our history that we wish to retain, not just for any Congress but for every Congress. Evelyn has spelt it all out and what was said there was on the 100 years when we did not have a banner parade. Congress, please support that we have a banner parade for every Congress. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. The mover for Motion 13, please?

## **NEW WAYS OF VOTING MOTION 13**

### **13. NEW WAYS OF VOTING**

This Congress recognises that the backbone of GMB Congress is the motion. It's really why we are here. Each year we listen to hundreds of motions, sometimes we debate them and finally we vote. And we vote in the same way trade unionists have voted for years with a show of hands. It makes a great picture, hundreds of people agreeing with each other.

But sometimes we don't agree and then we rely on someone from the platform to decide what has and has not passed. How accurate is the human eye in these conditions? Last year much of the room was more than sure that at least one motion which was passed should not have done. The floor had an opinion, the gallery had an opinion and so did the platform and the first two seemed to be at odds with the third one

We call on Congress and GMB as a democratic union of the 21st century to implement a form of digital voting.

All the acrimony could have been avoided with a simple remote control voting mechanism. In moments we would have had an instant and accurate result.

We are supposed to be democratic but we are also supposed to have opinions and not be sheep. If we are all sheep then there would be no point in voting at all.

Electronic voting is quick, reliable and provides statistics. It's the way for a union in the 21st century to go

**BARKING & DAGENHAM LGO BRANCH**  
London Region

*(Referred)*

BRENDAN DUFFIELD (London): President, Congress, the Congress recognizes that the backbone of GMB Congress is the motions. It is really why we are all here. Each year we listen to hundreds of motions, sometimes we debate them and finally we vote on them. We vote in the same way trade unions have voted for years with a show of hands. It may make a great picture with hundreds of people agreeing with each other but sometimes we do not agree and that is where we really rely on someone from the platform to decide that what they have seen has not passed.

How accurate is the human eye in these conditions? Last year much of the room was more than sure that at least one motion which was passed should not have done. The floor had an opinion, the gallery had an opinion, and so did the platform, and the first two seemed to be at odds with the third one. A year on from this uncomfortable event we call on Congress and the GMB as a democratic union of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to implement a form of digital voting. All the acrimony of 2018 could have been avoided with a simple remote control voting mechanism. In a moment we would have had an accurate result. Over 15 years ago I sat in a room with hundreds of council workers from the Borough of Barking & Dagenham. The borough managers gave us a primitive hand-held voting device similar to what you would use to change channels on your TV. Then they asked us questions and they wanted to predict the outcome and on several occasions they were completely wrong. Allowed to vote without intimidation the workers gave their opinion.

We are supposed to be a democratic movement but we are also supposed to have an opinion and we are not sheep. If we were all sheep, then there would be no point in voting at all. Democracy, like justice, has to be seen to be done and electronic voting is quick, reliable, and provides statistics. It is the way to go for the union in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brendan. Secunder?

TONY CHOLERTON (London): President, Congress, this Congress believes that democracy is the cornerstone of GMB and that the smooth running of Congress depends on it being fair and transparent. The main way of voting at Congress is through a show of hands. This method is fine when the outcome is clear but it is more complicated when the vote is close. Last year there was one such motion that divided the hall. Many felt that the result did not reflect the will of the delegates and that the vote should have gone to the tellers or a card vote. It is difficult to announce a result and then backtrack but not doing so leaves a bad taste for those who feel they have not been listened to. A change of mind would have led to either a show of hands vote with the tellers counting or a card vote, both of these options are time-consuming and each year there is pressure to get through all of the business of Congress.

There is, however, an alternative that can solve the problem of human error and also help to speed up Congress business, that is, electronic voting. Electronic voting has been tried before and it did have issues but modern technology is far more advanced and has far greater accuracy, and is much quicker. This motion calls on the GMB to look to the future and introduced an electronic voting system as soon as it can. Congress, please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. The mover of Motion 14?

## **SAFETY AT CONGRESS MOTION 14**

### **14. SAFETY AT CONGRESS**

This Congress is aware that In the wake of the #metoo campaign, and numerous revelations of endemic cultures of sexual harassment in various industries and sectors, we must make sure our union events are welcoming to all.

Congress is a vital part of our union. It's where we make our policy, but also where we come together across all sorts of work and backgrounds and celebrate what is great about the GMB and the solidarity of the trade union movement.

To make sure this is the experience that everyone gets at Congress, this motion calls for steps to be taken to ensure that everyone feels safe from any form of harassment, and has someone to contact if they feel uncomfortable or if they need advice about any incident that they may have experienced or witnessed. While the union must be sure that if there are any serious incidents they are appropriately dealt with, we believe that having nominated individuals specifically available to confidentially discuss any uncomfortable situations or incidents, people are more likely to discuss and potentially report harassment or incidents.

This motion calls upon GMB to agree to nominate, train and support staff and lay individuals to be available at Congress for delegates, visitors and staff to talk to in confidence around any potential or actual harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH  
London Region

*(Carried)*

MARY GOODSON (London): Our Congress is the most important event in the union's year. Not only is this the place where we make our policy but it is the place where all GMB activists, experienced and new, come together to learn about our different fights at work and to support each other. It is an incredible welcoming place and many of us make a massive effort to welcome new delegates, to catch up with our union brothers and sisters, and to show what support we can. It is rare that one of our GMB family has a bad experience at Congress, or at another union event, but it does happen.

Over the past few years we have all become much more aware of the culture throughout society, which means unwanted sexual comments and advances are too often dismissed as banter, where serious sexual harassment is not reported, and serial offenders are not dealt with. The vast majority of victims are women but, of course, sexual harassment can also be aimed at men.

In a 2018 survey 68% of women in the UK said they had experienced sexual harassment in their life and in the TUC survey 52% of women had experienced sexual harassment at work. The reasons that sexual harassment is tolerated or not dealt with seriously are really complex and we cannot deal with them all as one union. Some reasons are that women are afraid they will not be believed and they may not want to cause a fuss, or the person seemed to be in a position of power or supported by friends. Many incidents may happen during social events where what is acceptable behaviour may seem to be less clear. The incident could be sexual, racial, or a matter that may involve a visitor. What then?

One step we can do is identify trained designated individuals to take on a welfare role who delegates and visitors can approach to discuss in confidence anything they may feel uncomfortable about. This in particular will help women talk about any incident in confidence to someone trained, for example, HR equality officers. The member could seek advice on how to deal with a difficult situation and decide whether they need to make a formal complaint.

Congress, our region supports this motion but we cannot accept the CEC qualification on this saying that there are already people in place, namely regional secretaries, or their equivalent. We believe the CEC has misunderstood the aim of the motion. We think that the new code of conduct issued to delegates prior to Congress was issued as a reaction to this motion but this code also reinforces the CEC position and creates too much of a formal process when an informal process is needed. As I said, often some of us who have experienced incidents that may be sexual harassment might feel ashamed, uncomfortable, and maybe blame ourselves.

What we need is a place of safety where those affected can speak in confidence before they decide whether formally to report an incident or give the opportunity for an incident to be reported anonymously without feeling that that is a formal step straightaway. This does not stop anyone approaching their regional secretary or their regional president but in the majority these tend to be men, so gives us an alternative that for many will feel more accessible. Please support this motion, and not the qualification, to ensure Congress is a welcoming place for anyone who attends.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Secunder, please?

TONY CHOLERTON (London): This Congress believes it is the right of all delegates to be able to attend Congress without fear of sexual harassment or assault. Congress should be a time for all delegates to come together to share our stories and in doing so strive to make everyone safer, whether here or in the workplace. The phrase “Me too” was around as early as 2006 but went global following the Harvey Weinstein scandal. On October 15<sup>th</sup> 2017, actress Elisa Milano encouraged spreading the hash tag “Me too” to attempt to draw attention to sexual assault and harassment in the workplace. The first Tweet was at 12 noon and had been used more than 200,000 times by the end of the day and tweeted more than 500,000 times by the end of the next day. On Facebook the hash tag was used by more than 4.7 million people in 12 million posts during the first 24 hours. This shows just how widespread sexual harassment is.

The GMB has always campaigned against all forms of harassment and bullying in the workplace and Congress is GMB’s workplace. This motion calls upon Congress to set the highest standards possible in order to make everyone safe and free to go about their work. By having dedicated staff that have had the best training and have a greater awareness of the issues we face, GMB can demonstrate that it is at the forefront of setting high standards. Having nominated people that we can trust will make us all feel safer. Congress, please support this motion but not the qualification. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Is there anybody who wants to come in to oppose any of these motions, speak in opposition? No? Then can I ask Martin Jackson to respond on behalf of the CEC, please? Thank you.

MARTIN JACKSON (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, Motion 12, the Banner Ceremony at Congress, the CEC is asking for this motion to be withdrawn. All regions can display their banner at every Congress. The Congress working party is responsible for organizing the presentation of Congress and they have already determined that we should return to the practice of one region carrying the national banner followed by the regional banners for the opening ceremony parade.

On Motion 13, New Ways of Voting, the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. The guidelines for Congress business as published in the preliminary and final agendas state it shall be within the discretion of the President to determine the manner of voting. It is not accurate to state voting is only by a show of hands. Procedures already allow the teller or the card vote.

The Chair of Congress has always acted in a fair and dispassionate way. Previous experiments with electronic information gathering at Congress have proved unreliable and consequently systems were not considered stable enough to use as a reliable voting method. There are also considerable costs involved in providing electronic voting systems for all delegates to use. However, the motion can be referred for further investigation by the CEC into more modern electronic voting systems.

Motion 14, Safety at Congress, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. The GMB always takes delegates and visitors' safety and comfort very seriously and I would like to echo the GMB's zero tolerance statement in the Final Agenda, reinforcing expectations of all Congress attendees. Furthermore, a code of conduct has also been issued to all delegates and visitors, the qualification being that there are already people in place, the regional secretary or equivalent, to report any incident to, and any incident should be reported immediately to them.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking for Motion 12 to be withdrawn, Motion 13 to be referred, and for your support of Motion 14, with the qualification, for the reasons that I have laid out. If Motion 12 is not withdrawn, the CEC will be asking Congress to oppose the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Can I ask, does the London Region agree to withdraw Motion 12? No? In that case the CEC is opposing it. Just to clarify, on Motion 14 you are not supporting the CEC qualification, that is correct, is it not? Yes. Again, the CEC will then be opposing that motion. All right, I will now put those motions to the vote. On Motion 1, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour of the motion please show? That is carried. All those against? Thank you.

*Motion 1 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 8, all those in favour of Motion 8, the CEC is supporting, please show. All those against? That motion is carried.

*Motion 8 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 12, the CEC is opposing. Can I see all those in favour of Motion 12? All those against? That is lost.

*Motion 12 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry, I forgot to ask London Region, are you accepting the reference back, that Motion 13 is referred back? Are you accepting that? Yes. Thank you. On Motion 13 it is referred back, the CEC stance. Can I see all those in favour of Motion 13. All those against that motion? That motion is carried.

*Motion 13 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 14, the CEC is opposing the motion. Can I see all those in favour of Motion 14? All those against? That is quite tight. Yes, I have to call the tellers. Oooh, exciting! In that case, I need to know what to do. I think we are all agreed on the platform that a show of hands was very close. I am now calling for a teller vote on Motion 14. We will follow the procedures in the Congress Guidelines in the Final Agenda. You are reminded that only elected or appointed lay delegates seated in the Congress Hall can vote. Please listen carefully. Could the stewards please close the doors? Delegates, please remain in your seats until all votes have been cast.

Do I have all the tellers in the hall? Could the tellers please go to the General Members Auditor desk and collect your voting sheets? There should be Birmingham, Brian; London, Tony; Midland, Rob; Northern, Craig; NW & Irish Region, Cameron; GMB Scotland, Raymond; Southern, Sonia; Wales & SW, Wendy; Yorkshire, Amanda. Are all you tellers in your places and ready? The tellers know what they are doing: Birmingham you are counting GMB Scotland; London you are counting Southern; Midland you are counting GMB Wales & South West Region; Northern you are counting Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region; North West & Irish you are counting Birmingham & West Midlands Region; GMB Scotland you are counting London Region; Southern you are counting Midlands & East Coast Region; Wales & South West – Northern Region; and Yorkshire it is North West & Irish Region. This is the tellers. This is not a card vote.

I will now repeat the call for the vote on Motion 14, the CEC position is oppose. All those in favour of Motion 14, please show. Sorry? Are all the tellers ready? No. Are you all there? Yes? Thank you. I will now repeat the call for a vote on Motion 14. The CEC is opposing.

So, all those in favour of Motion 14 please show. Delegates, please hold up your hands and keep them raised until the teller has counted your vote. Could the tellers please report the count to the General Members Auditors? Are all the tellers happy they have counted? Yes? Okay.

All those against please show. I think there has been a change actually now in the voting. Okay, when tellers are ready could they please report their count to the General Members Auditors. Have all regions now voted? Yes? Are all the tellers finished?

Thank you, delegates. When it was first voted on that looked very close. The teller vote is now completed. General Members Auditors are ready to count the votes and, Congress, if there is a tied vote then the motion must fall but I will report the result back later. Thank you. Oooh, a little bit of excitement!

## **UNION ORGANISATION: General**

THE PRESIDENT: I now call the movers and seconders for Motions 16, 19, 20, 23, 25 and 26. Thank you, if you would like to come to the front. Do we have the mover for Motion 16? No? London Region, Motion 16? Anybody? Shall I take Motion 19, then? Is the mover of Motion 19 ready? We will have to come back to Motion 16.

## **COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS MOTION 19**

### **19. COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS**

This Congress asks the CEC to update and promulgate improved Guidance to Regions on Rulebook Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures, including how best to investigate complaints to ensure that we are compliant with best practice and in order to ensure that the Union is able to deal with disciplinary issues or complaints against and between members quickly and fairly; and to also ensure that our procedures are up to date in the social media age when complaints may arise from online conduct or where comment online about a disciplinary process might be damaging to fair process or to the Union's reputation.

FIFE PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
GMB Scotland

*(Referred)*

BRENDA CARSON (GMB Scotland): Congress, the sentiment behind this motion was a question of transparency and fairness to members who find themselves being investigated by the union on the back of a complaint. We as shop stewards would be the first to complain and to fault the employer for not following the ACAS code of practice for disciplinaries. Congress, we as members of the union are not covered by the same sort of code of practice due to not being an employee of the union. Congress, we need a process that is not only transparent but equitable and not weighted towards Regional Committees and the CEC. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The seconder of Motion 19? Is that formally being seconded? Formally. Thank you. Is the person ready for Motion 16? No? If they are not back soon it will fall. Okay, Motion 16? Okay, that is fine.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE RULEBOOK MOTION 16**

### **16. UNDERSTANDING THE RULEBOOK**

This Congress understands the work that went into creating a "Plain English" GMB Rulebook and we welcome the opportunity for members to be able to make changes to this every other year.

However, not all branches fully understand the terminology and consequential rules that can exist in the Rulebook and so submitting rule amendment motions is a complicated process.

We feel that this is further complicated by the Rule Amendment template sent to Branches in October, with no guidance.

We feel that it would be simpler if branches could submit the exact wording of how they want any amended Rule/clause to read and then add in some narrative as to reasons for the rule change and leave the exact instructions i.e. "insert", "delete" etc to experts. If the amended rule is agreed then National Office could work with the branch to ensure that the plain English element is maintained.

BEDS COUNTY BRANCH  
London Region

*(Referred)*

WENDY REIS (London): Congress, for a delegate to propose a new rule or to try and amend a rule is quite daunting. It is forever hampered by the complexity of the rulebook. Although many may understand it, to most it is not simplified enough. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: A seconder, or is that being formally seconded? No?

DOUGLAS RIGBY (London): Congress, whilst some people understand some of the GMB rules, there are a lot of members, especially new speakers to Congress, who do not fully understand the rules. They are still not in plain English. If someone wants to make a new rule or amend a rule, they need the rules that cross over each other. They do not allow you to challenge or amend a rule. They are very difficult to find in the rule book. When a delegate submits a motion they must then be told it cannot be submitted as it may not be or could coincide with other rules. Congress, I ask you to consider looking into this. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Douglas. The mover of Motion 20, please?

## **GMB MEMBERSHIP & IT SYSTEMS MOTION 20**

### **20. GMB MEMBERSHIP & IT SYSTEMS**

This Congress recognises the need for a Union fit for the 21st Century and that we need to ensure that this applies to our information systems.

We note that in today's world of work many workers have more than one job and from speaking with GMB staff, there does not seem to be an easy way to record this on our membership system as it currently operates.

We understand that there have been a number of previous consultations with stakeholders regarding IT and the membership system functionality and that the current system broadly meets our needs but requires some amendments.

We call for a further consultation exercise to be considered for any possible future amendment(s) to the current membership system and any online support services.

We also call for amendments to the current membership system to allow the Union to enter information where more than one job can be entered as this will enable us to better organise and represent our members.



As we move more of our support services online, including branch accounting, new websites and membership online surveys, we must always ensure that these systems are rigorously tested, quality proofed and led by our IT staff at the National Administration Unit (NAU) and that regions and branches are kept informed of changes before being introduced and made live.

BEDS COUNTY BRANCH  
London Region

*(Lost)*

DAVE KENT (London): Congress, GMB needs a membership system fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. High quality information is vital in order to enable stewards, branches, offices, and officers, properly to organize members. GMB has made great strides in recent years to bring the system up to date but more still needs to be done. 1.1 million workers in the UK have more than one job. A substantial proportion of those have more than two jobs. Our system does not identify those members with more than one job well enough. We run the risk that one or more members in a workplace may not get a vote in an industrial action ballot simply because their second or third, or fourth, employment is not properly identified on the system. This would open up GMB to legal challenges and dissatisfied members. Congress, this needs to be dealt with as soon as possible with the full involvement of branches. Please support. I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. A seconder for Motion 20? Formally seconded. Thank you. The mover for Motion 23?

## **CHRISTMAS COVER MOTION 23**

### **23. GMB CHRISTMAS COVER**

This Congress believes that there should be a skeleton staff in each region (maybe one Organiser, one Secretary) to provide a service where required for our members, the majority of which work over the Christmas period.

Two weeks is a long time in employment and with no regional cover and Unionline also in shutdown. Our branch feels that there should be some cover to support both our members and branches.

WILKO HARDWARE BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Referred)*

CLAYTON TINDLE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am a newly elected councilor in Bassetlaw, first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, this motion is asking our union provides a skeleton cover service over the Xmas shutdown period. At Wilkinsons we are organized, we have reps and we have branch secretaries who do a great job of supporting our members with the support and training they receive from the union. We will continue to do that. We rarely need to call our officers for assistance with the day-to-day support that we provide to colleagues. As we are all aware most workers and many thousands of GMB members do not have those well organized trade unions structures in their

workplace. Where that is needed the case for some members their only hope of getting support and advice is to contact their branch or their local GMB office. Like many of us, thousands of workers, especially in the retail sector, Christmas is a very busy work period and without access to the support members may struggle with challenges at work needing to be able to access advice.

We are not asking for the union to force GMB employees to work over Christmas; far from it. We are asking that we put something in place to ensure that we, the GMB, are available for those workers who need our support over the Christmas period. We appreciate that we are not asking for something that may impact on the holiday break that our dedicated staff officers need and that they have enjoyed for many years. Again, we are not asking for that change. For example, a voluntary arrangement could suffice. The CEC have asked for referral. We have no problem with that but we ask that the union explores and finds a solution to the need to have some skeleton cover for those members who need it. That is all. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Clayton. Thank you. A seconder for Motion 23?

DOMINIQUE GILLOTT (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, I am seconding this motion in support of a change in how the union membership is covered over the Christmas period. Times can be challenging for our members, especially in the retail sector. It is, after all a growing area for the union and the busiest time of the year for those who work in it. Congress, as my brother says, whilst like Wilko's we have workplaces organized and covered by conveners and reps, sadly, it is a matter of fact that we still have a huge number of members that do not have those support structures in place.

Congress, our view in this motion is not to take organizers, who already work unspecified hours, for a longer working calendar but rather to a basic level of cover to give our membership a service that is reflective of what our union principles are, that being with an organized system we need to be there at the time, at the point, wherever it is needed. Congress, the voluntary arrangement negotiated with our employed staff needs to be considered and then the GMB could create a guidance document in that all members clearly state who, how, and when to contact GMB during closed workplace holiday periods.

Congress, we manage to cover and in most cases exceed our members' expectations within our great movement that has our welfare and livelihoods at its heart. All we are looking for is at the Christmas period surely it is not beyond us to give a minimum level of service and some expertise for those that need it over this period. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Dominique. Thank you. The mover for Motion 25?

## **RECOGNISE OUR SHOP STEWARDS DAY MOTION 25**

### **25. RECOGNISE OUR SHOP STEWARDS DAY**

This Congress instructs the CEC to set up in each Region of our Union a 'Recognise Shop Stewards Day' event, to which each Region will have autonomy on how its run and the criteria

of how Awards are given out to Shop Stewards for outstanding work on behalf of the Union in the workplace; recruitment, activities, campaigns, and above and beyond support to members.

BASSETLAW & WORKSOP BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

*(Referred)*

VICKY WASS (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, GMB has a long tradition of recruiting, training, and developing our reps who voluntarily do outstanding work on behalf of members day in, day out, in increasingly difficult times. Employers are making it more and more difficult for these dedicated people to carry out the tasks that members need and expect by cutting facility time, denying time off, spreading malicious rumours, and threatening disciplinary action on trumped-up charges. However, all these attacks do not dishearten our GMB army of reps. No, in fact it often strengthens their resolve and makes them more determined to do a great job for our members so, thank you, employers.

Congress, we need to reward the dedication and whilst reps may be thanked if we are lucky on occasion, we feel it is only right and proper that we formally recognize the outstanding contribution that they make to the working lives of our members and GMB as a whole. The TUC Midlands Region holds an annual event where GMB and other sister unions can nominate reps for different awards and categories, namely, the Andy Becker Union Learning Rep, Campaigning Rep of the Year, Communications Rep, Health & Safety Rep, Mary Macarthur Equality Award. I am pleased to say that our region has had quite a few winners at this event over the years; not only has it been a formal recognition of the work and dedication of each individual but it has also given them a real sense of achievement and pride. GMB should follow this fine example.

In the Midland & East Coast Region we are adopting the style of Recognizing Shop Stewards Day and are holding our first event at our activists' weekend to be held next February to which the President and General Secretary have both been invited. We recognize that the motion has been referenced back and I believe this may be due to the wording that suggests regions should have autonomy on the criteria and categories. Under one union, the region would accept that this would need to be consistent across the union. Congress, let's finally and formally recognize the sterling work that our army of volunteers do on behalf of members in the workplace that, put simply, would be harsher and more a dangerous place to work in if it was not for our unflinching, passionate, and dedicated GMB reps. Support Motion 25. I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vicky. A seconder for Motion 25?

MATTHEW BUCKLEY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, GMB faces massive challenges now and in the future with union density. The proportion of employees who are members has fallen by half and collective bargaining coverage by two-thirds. According to official figures, just 23% of employees are members of a trade union falling to around 14% in the private sector. Strong unions help working people secure a fair share of the income that we collectively generate. The decline of union

membership and collective bargaining has led to a growing power imbalance at work and contributes to a massive rise in inequality.

GMB representatives are the fighting force against unfairness, discrimination, and inequality. Under the Tory austerity measures the significant financial difficulties and constraints faced by many organisations has meant that GMB representatives have had an increasingly important role to play in the workplace, including being involved in negotiations about pay and representing the interests of members in discussions over restructuring and redundancies. The stress, worry, and anxiety about job security and complexities of the redundancy process can be daunting. Support of GMB union reps in such situations helps to reassure members that they have someone fighting for them, that they will be treated fairly, their views heard, and options fully explored and considered. GMB Health & Safety reps tirelessly campaign to ensure that workplaces are safe, that employees are not exposed to foreseeable risk and danger. A union organized workplace remains 50% safer than a non-unionised one.

THE PRESIDENT: Matt, can I just ask you to watch the red light. Sorry.

MATTHEW BUCKLEY: Congress, we ask an awful lot of our representatives and give little in return. We can and must formally recognize our reps who put members and fellow employees' needs before their own. Support Motion 25. I second.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matt. The mover of Motion 26, please?

## **WOMEN CHAINMAKERS' FESTIVAL MOTION 26**

### **26. WOMEN CHAINMAKERS FESTIVAL**

This Congress to recognise and support the Chainmakers Festival as a 'national event' that encourages all regions to visit and support the event. We are aware of other events, such as Tolpuddle Martyrs and Durham Miners Gala where national involvement and funding is made available. As the Chainmakers Festival is the only women's festival that recognises the importance of women's contribution to the movement in Europe we believe it should have the same national recognition.

C40 CARE BRANCH  
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

*(Carried)*

YVONNE THOMAS (Birmingham & West Midlands): In 1910, the Women Chainmakers of Cradley Heath set in motion an event that would make history and engage people from across the UK and the world. On their own working class women of all ages laid down their tools and went on strike for a living wage. With Mary Macarthur leading them the strike lasted for 10 weeks and resulted in victory not only for those women but for workers everywhere. The women who went on strike in 1910 accelerated a fight for a national minimum wage. Congress, the Women Chainmakers' Festival is the celebration of women who efficiently and effectively were organizing in the gig economy over 100 years ago. It is the only trade union festival in Europe that celebrates the contribution of women to our Movement and it

deserves all the recognition we can give it. We are asking all of our regions to stand in solidarity with us and to attend and promote the Women Chainmakers' Festival as a national event. Support this motion, support history, and support women. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Yvonne. A seconder?

PAULA DEFRIEZ (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* This festival does not just celebrate an incredible victory for workers and for the union Movement as a whole but should have a very special place in our hearts, in particular. Mary Macarthur founded the National Federation of Women Workers, the union that organized the Women Chainmakers' strike. This union went on to merge with GMB meaning that this is our history, our culture, and our women. We should be so proud that women in our union have been successfully organizing for over 100 years and that we continue to learn as much as we can from the Women Chainmakers and their triumph. Supporting this motion and making this festival a nationally supported event proves that we are a 21<sup>st</sup> century union that recognizes and celebrates women's contributions to our Movement. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paula. Well done. Are there any delegates who wish to oppose any of these motions? No? Okay, in that case can I ask Ken Daniels to respond on behalf of the CEC? Thank you.

KEN DANIELS (CEC, Public Services): Speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 16, 19, 20, 23, 25, and 26.

On Motion 16, Understanding the Rulebook, the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. We accept that the template is complex. However, it is a matter for branches to resolve any proposed correct wording which will give effect to the rule amendment they wish to make. The template will be reviewed and, if necessary, amend for Congress 2021 but it is crucial that we ensure that it is branches and lay members who write motions and rule amendments, not GMB employees. Therefore, the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred so that the CEC can ask the Congress Working Party to review the template making changes, if necessary.

On Motion 19, Complaints against Members, the CEC is asking for the motion to be referred. The guidance to regional presidents, regional committees, and regional secretaries, on rulebook disciplinary and grievance procedures was last updated in 2012. The CEC asks for the motion to be referred to allow the CEC to review and update this guidance.

On Motion 20, GMB membership and IT systems, the CEC is asking for the motion to be withdrawn. The development of all GMB systems are carried out with careful planning and full consultation with users and this will continue. It is, in fact, possible to make a note on a member's record detailing a second job but our system does not allow for the member to be included in the workplace details for that second job, so if the second employ is GMB organized the member will be missed out of communications and ballots concerning their second job. The IT department is actively involved in scoping out and costing the systems work needed to enable data

about the two jobs to be properly integrated into other systems and any upgrade to the system will be consulted fully on any necessary changes.

On Motion 23, GMB Christmas Cover, the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. Most regions have a duty officer system. The CEC wishes to see if a national policy, including technological support, can be developed.

On Motion 25, Recognise our Shop Stewards Day, we of course support and want to celebrate the fantastic work our shop stewards do, and you are the foundation of this great union. The CEC wishes, however, for this motion to be referred to the CEC Organisation Committee to consider if this should be a national initiative.

On Motion 26, Women Chainmakers' Festival, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. We welcome the call to have important historical trade union events recognized within our policies and as the motion points out we support other trade union events celebrating our history. The qualification is that funds made available to this event will need to be determined by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking for Motion 16 to be referred, for Motion 19 to be referred, Motion 20 to be withdrawn, Motion 23 to be referred, Motion 25 to be referred, and Motion 26 to be supported, with the qualification as set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ken. Before we go to the vote, then, can I ask, does London agree to refer Motion 16? Yes? Thank you. Does Scotland agree to refer Motion 19? Yes. Thank you. Does London agree to withdraw Motion 20? No. In that case the CEC will be opposing. Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire agree to refer Motion 23? Yes. Thank you. Does Midland & East Coast agree to refer Motion 25? Yes. Thank you. Does Birmingham & West Midlands agree to the qualification on Motion 26? Yes. Thank you. Okay, so I will put all those motions to the vote.

Motion 16, all those in favour of Motion 16 please show – sorry, agree to refer. Anybody against? That is carried.

*Motion 16 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 19, all those people that agree to refer please show. All those against? That is carried, thank you.

*Motion 19 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 20, the CEC is opposing. All those in favour of Motion 20? All those against? That is lost. Yes, that is lost.

*Motion 20 was LOST.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 23, all those in favour to agree to refer please show. All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 23 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 25, all those in favour to agree to refer please show. All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 25 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 26, all those in favour please show to support with the qualification. All those against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 26 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I will try to go to the Women Chainmakers Festival next year. I have typed it in my phone but it came up as the Women Chainsmokers Festival! Right, we are running early so we will be continuing with this, going on to this afternoon's motions. Thank you for keeping to time. You have been really good about that, delegates. That is really helpful.

To give you the results on Motion 14: votes for 182, votes against 109. That is carried by 73 votes. It was the right thing to do. It did not look that obvious from up here. Thank you.

*Motion 14 was CARRIED.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION: RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION**

THE PRESIDENT: I am now going on to this afternoon's business. Hopefully, you are prepared. We are going on to Union Organisation: Recruitment and Organisation, so Motions 27, 28, and 31. Would all the movers and seconders come to the front, please. Motion 27 is Southern, Motion 28 is London, and Motion 31 is London. This is probably going to be the last ones before 12.30, three motions. Southern, do we have a mover and seconder for Motion 27?

### **TABLET PCs MOTION 27**

#### **27. TABLET PCs**

This conference supports the furtherance and growth of our union by centrally purchasing and providing every branch with a tablet computer with keyboard and mobile data connectivity for the purposes of recruitment.

Recruitment is the primary factor in the survival of the trades union movement in Britain. We as trade unionists must embrace modern technology to assist us in recruiting new members to our movement. It is the view of the D30 Branch that recruitment using the postal methods of the last century, inhibit our ability to grow as it allows the potential for delay in the decision of a potential new member.

D30 DORSET CC BRANCH  
Southern Region

*(Referred)*

ROBERT DONNELLY (Southern): This is my first time speaking and first time at Congress. (*Applause*) Thank you. I would like to thank everybody for being so welcoming and also welcome all the other members for whom this is also their first time. I am moving Motion 27 on the furtherance and growth of our union by centrally purchasing and providing every branch with a tablet computer with keyboard and mobile data connectivity for the purposes of recruitment. It is simply the way forward. For example, I was walking down Borchester High Street a few weeks ago and there was a pet charity using a tablet to sign up people. All they had was a lanyard, a tablet, and a little plinth with the charity name on it. On appearance she had hardly anything and yet she had everything she needed. She had access to more information to answer potential questions from new signees in a much faster way than anyone could ever do with a stack of filing cabinets behind them, or a 300-page book, and the sign-up was instant.

The postal methods of the last century inhibit our ability to grow as it allows the potential for delay in the decisions of a potential new member. Some quick figures for you: I had a quick look on Argos this morning and it showed a Lenovo tablet at £39.99 and an Amazon tablet at £34.99. These are not huge costs. Postage today is 61p for a second class stamp and 70p for a first class stamp. Online postage, instant postage worldwide by online is free. Put that in perspective, you take the figure of £34.99 for a Fire tablet and divide it by the cost of a second class stamp at 61p, you get a figure of 57, which means that once you get 58 recruits then the postage saved alone has paid for that tablet. If the tablets are centrally purchased then the cost could potentially be further reduced when buying in bulk. It also ensures that each branch has the same software which will reduce support in training costs. A tablet is easy to use and lightweight and I am sure there are a few of us who experienced a shoulder ache when looking round a huge stack of membership forms perhaps on one arm with the ballot box on the other arm. The tablet will eliminate that. It will also stop the worry of running out of membership forms to get out. With tablets and keyboard data connectivity all those problems will be a thing of the past. Equipped with tablets with the GMB App and all the questions a potential recruit may ask you, you have all the answers there with a few taps on the screen, or a few clicks on the keyboard. They can fill in their details and they can be signed up for their membership there and then. In closing, I ask for your support for Motion 27 because when it comes to recruitment centrally purchased tablets with keyboard and data connectivity will give every branch in this wonderful union the modernisation and the power to grow. With that I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Robert. Thank you. The seconder of the motion?

DAVINA BROWN (Southern): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) I second the motion to provide every branch with a tablet computer and as we know recruitment is a vital sector for the survival of the GMB with strength in numbers so we would like to recruit as many members as possible. It is beneficial to raise modern technology as it can assist us in recruiting new members. Tablet PCs are easily accessible; they empower reps to access information on the go, and improve communication. It would prevent delays in the decision-making process on potential new members, you could just sign them up on the spot, and tablets can also serve as an engaging brochure highlighting all the positive work of the GMB. They are a good



size; they are slightly larger than a Smartphone so it would be easy for people to sign up on the spot. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Davina. Thank you. The mover of Motion 28?

## **RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG MEMBERS MOTION 28**

### **28. RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG MEMBERS**

This Congress agrees that there is an urgent need to attract young members into the union. Therefore we instruct the CEC to formulate a strategy to recruit young members and devise a relevant benefits package to assist in this.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
London Region

(*Carried*)

CATHY HOLLAND (London): I am here to talk about the recruitment of young members. In my family I have several teenage grandchildren. The problem, as I see it, even living in Cardiff, which is a Labour area, unions do not mean support. Added with the extra cost of membership each month, it is a bar to young people becoming unionised. From my work helping my members, often a member would say to me, “Can you help my son/daughter because they have a problem at work?” So, I say, “Get them to join and I will help.” Although this is discounted, a family membership may help. The parents have said, “I will join them and then at least there is a link to the future,” and they will often pay for them. I also believe unions do not seem to be relevant to young people. Whatever we are doing does not resonate so there must be someone to listen and change what we are doing. I also believe they are generally not interested in politics so we need to use that medium. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. A seconder?

WAYNE OSWICK (London): I have been an activist for several years and this is my fifth consecutive Congress. In all these years we have recognised and discussed the need for recruitment of the young workforce but here we are today and nothing has really changed to help. Our Labour Party has declared in its manifesto they will abolish the outdated inequality of the young workforce who are being discriminated against when it comes to a living wage. If this is recognised by the Labour Party, why is this inequality not being recognised by our great union. We surely must look to encourage the young workers to join at a notional rate with perhaps a small payment per month up to an age limit. I am lucky that I work in an industrial environment in a commercial service section that recognises all skill levels regardless of your age, but there are tens of thousands of young people out there who are not so lucky and have to survive on a minimum wage of £5 to £7 per hour. These young people cannot afford to think about joining the union so we need to change the strategy and structure of our subscriptions. Another proposal would be when we successfully get our Labour government into power we should encourage the Education Minister to include political history in the school curriculum. This would then give insight to school leavers about why it is important to be in a union and the benefits that come

with being in a trade union. For the future of the GMB young members are the future. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wayne. The mover of Motion 31?

## **MEMBERSHIP RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT MOTION 31**

### **31. MEMBERSHIP RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT**

This Congress agrees that our Union should be constantly reviewing the services and support we provide to members from day one of joining and the ongoing need for GMB to apply a consistent message to all new members. It is vitally important that when members join our Union, they receive the very best of service and their experience with GMB is both supportive and engaging.

Equally important is understanding the reasons and rationale for members leaving and cancelling their membership. Whilst it is widely accepted there are circumstances which may remain outside of our control, it is also widely accepted that members are less likely to leave the GMB if they are engaged with at the onset of their membership commencing and furthermore, they are encouraged to actively participate in the governance and democracy of our Union.

Congress therefore agrees we should develop a cohesive and consistent approach to both new membership engagement and lapsed member retention which will be applied across all Unions. In addition, as a minimum, we will seek to ensure the following requirements.

- Introductory welcome email from Regional Secretary as soon as membership details have been added to our records.
- Consistent strategy for the introduction of all members to Workplace Reps and their Branch structure.
- New membership online survey tool to be developed and sent with introductory letter/email.
- Notification of leavers by workplace and branch to be communicated securely to each relevant branch
- Branch membership and retention toolkit to be designed and agreed by Branch Working Party.
- Work undertaken to identify leavers much earlier than the current notification from NAU.
- Regular text/communications to all members who identify as having invalid addresses on our records.
- Whenever possible, engaging workplace reps to assist in retention of members in their workplace.
- GMB National Working Party to gather all regional practices and form a national strategy of successful initiatives.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH  
London Region

(*Carried*)

STELLA IKANIK (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, you will agree with me that we need to put members first. Trade union membership in the UK has fallen. Trade unions have had a bad press and are not seen

as relevant, especially with young people. We need to deliver on issues that matter to our members. The world of work has changed dramatically but the GMB has not changed fast enough to match it, in order to match what is happening in today's society. Our culture and structures also need to change. We need to make progress especially in new areas of the economy but also in the public sector where we used to be strong but are now facing new challenges because workplaces are changing and being outsourced and dispersed.

Congress, we need to make changes in how we operate on all fronts as what we have been doing for years does not seem to be producing the right result and our membership is falling. As a member the issue of retaining members must be a priority. It is a fine balance as we need to ensure that we service and support existing members and rather than just focusing on recruiting new members we all need to work together. This is everyone's responsibility. We have seen years of outsourcing, self-employment, and changing in working patterns and employment practices. The nature and extent of collective bargaining and the power of trade unions has been weakened and the public is not seeing the relevance of trade unions.

Congress, members have left as they become unhappy with the cost of being a member, unhappy with the service or support, or they lose their jobs or move on and fail to take the GMB with them. We may be judged on our advice and representation so we need to ensure that our staff and officers have the skills and training to ensure that this is done professionally. We need to be seen to be relevant in the workplace or industry, and especially to young people, so we need to make sure that all our campaigns are fit for purpose. We should be seen to be proactive and part of the discussions and plans alongside our stakeholders and not on the outside. Equally important is to understand the reasons and rationale for members leaving and cancelling their membership.

Congress, therefore, agrees with me that we should develop a cohesive and consistent approach to both new member engagement and last member retention which should be applied across the union. I am aware that London Region has started some work in this area in its regional retention plan. Therefore, Congress, please support this motion. I thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Stella. Thank you. Secunder?

CATHY HANLON (London): First-time delegate, second-time speaker. Congress, GMB is like any other organisation, we are in competition with other unions and we need to make our union relevant to all, which is especially challenging as we are a great union. We know that the union is reviewing all member offers and looking into members' journeys but we need to make sure members do not take a detour on their journeys. We understand that there will be a national welcome pack for all new members and once the member has been allocated a region, London will send all the new members a welcoming email. Our region is also looking at member communication throughout the year making sure we keep members up to date and informed in what is happening in their workplace and what the union is doing as a movement.

I have a GMB activist's account and I know London Region has started sending out starters and leavers' information to branch secretaries through this activist's account. This has been working very well. We are retaining members each month and, as you know, we have to work hard sometimes just to stand still. We know that in the real world, especially where low-paid members are making choices and cancelling membership. It is so easy to do. We should be making our union invaluable and unique to our members, promote our great offers, services, and experienced reps and activists. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anybody wish to oppose any of those motions? No? In that case can I ask Margaret Hughes to respond on those motions, please?

MARGARET HUGHES (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 27 and 31.

On Motion 27, tablet PCs, the CEC is asking for the motion to be referred. The CEC strongly supports branches adopting new technology but this must be done securely to protect our members' personal details. Supplying hardware to all branches would have a significant cost and the CEC would wish to consider the best types of hardware and whether it could be funded from branch funds.

On Motion 31, membership retention and engagement: the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. Much of the work referenced here is already under way. The senior management team is reviewing all members' offers with a new package of benefits to be hosted on the new GMB website. All technologies and potential routes of automation are being assessed to find the best option to engage members properly and at the time of writing a new *Join Us* and review survey are being developed, and a new members' pack is being rolled out. However, a regionalised email upon joining is not possible because of the unique nature of our regions and branches. Manual intervention is needed to allocate members to a region. At the point a member joins they are not yet allocated to a region and therefore cannot receive a regionalised email. The National Communications Team and the National Admin Unit are working on a survey that members fill in upon joining, which is released to regions before member allocation.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking for Motion 27 to be referred and for Motion 31 to be supported but with the qualification for the reasons I have laid out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Does Southern Region agree to refer Motion 27? Southern, talk to me! Yes? Thank you. Does London accept the qualification to Motion 31? Yes? Thank you. In that case, I will take the vote.

Motion 27, all those in favour of the reference back please show. Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 27 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 28, the CEC is supporting this motion. All those in favour please show. Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 28 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 31, supported with qualification. All those in favour please show? Thank you. Those against? That is carried.

*Motion 31 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. That concludes Congress for this morning. My butterflies have gone now. You might want to go to some fringe events, and visit the exhibitors. The fringe events are listed on page 8 and the exhibitors on page 26 of the Guide to Congress. Enjoy the fringe events and exhibitors, and please be back here at 2 o'clock promptly for the next session. Thank you. Enjoy your lunchtime. Thank you very much.

*Congress adjourned.*

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

*(Congress re-assembled at 2.00 p.m.)*

THE PRESIDENT: Come to order, Congress.

## **MARY MACARTHUR HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARDS**

THE PRESIDENT: We are now moving on to the Mary Macarthur Health and Safety Awards for 2019. In 2017 we launched a new award for GMB health and safety reps who make outstanding contributions to workplace safety. This award is in honour of Mary Macarthur, who ended the barbaric practice of sweating workers and who organised safety standards for women working with explosives in World War One. I am proud to announce the winner is — I feel that I should have a little envelope to open — Wayne Kidger, Midland and East Coast Region, and runner up is Alan Moore, London Region. Would you like to come up to receive your awards.  
*(Presentations made amidst applause and cheers)*

WAYNE KIDGER (Midland & East Coast) : President and Congress, it is an absolute honour to pick up this award. I do feel privileged and proud of my region for all the support they give me, including my branch, and on a wider circuit in the Midlands as a whole. I have a colleague in the West Midlands, also a GMB member, and we have put together a health and safety forum, where we organise events for reps, across the Midlands. I would like to thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done to both of you. We now move on to Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2. I believe that Craig Jones is going to introduce that report.

## **Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2**

CRAIG JONES (Vice-Chair of the SOC, GMB Wales & South West): President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 2. The SOC has accepted an emergency motion as in order for debate. Emergency Motion 2 — Closure of the Ford Engine Plant —

stands in the name of GMB Wales & South West Region. The SOC is recommending that this emergency motion is heard in the Industrial Policy Manufacturing Session this afternoon. I move SOC Report No. 2.

THE PRESIDENT: Craig, congratulations on your appointment as Vice-Chair of Standing Orders Committee. Well done. (*Applause*) Does anybody want to speak in opposition to Standing Orders Report No. 2? (*No response*) In that case, I will put it to the vote. All those in favour of SOC Report No. 2, please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2 was CARRIED.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY**

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to the motions on Union Organisation. I ask the movers and seconders of Motions 33, 44, Composite 1 and Motion 51 to come to the front, please.

### **ELECTRONIC NOMINATIONS MOTION 33**

#### **33. ELECTRONIC NOMINATIONS**

This Congress resolves to allow all nominations to be accepted electronically, along with existing procedures and truly move our union into the 21st Century.

We agree that in some circumstance electronic nominations are accepted, however some regions still fall short of embracing technology and the reduction of our carbon footprint.

For example, Congress nominations can be completed in full, signed appropriately, scanned and forwarded to the relevant department for acceptance by submission date.

This has not always happened and has put some branches that wish to move forward at a disadvantage. With the delay in post, post going missing and paperwork being misplaced, having electronic copies ensures that this does not happen and gives a secure paper trail.

There is no disparity between one type of nomination to another, they all are equally important and are part of our democracy and this should be the same for submitting nominations. It is essential that procedural processes be standardised across our union.

The transition to receiving electronic nominations will not cause any detriment to the way procedures are completed and will not hinder or delay in anyway.

We ask Congress to support this motion.

LEEDS GENERAL BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

CINDY GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 33 — Electronic Nominations. President, are we actually and truly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century yet? I want you to indulge me. Can you, please, raise your hand if you have access to a computer, a laptop and the internet? That is fantastic. Can you keep your hands there if you have a tablet or an i-Pad? Fantastic! Keep your hands up if you have a smart

phone? Brilliant! Keep your hands up if you have an e-mail address? Fantastic. You can put your hands back down.

Congress, looking at you all in this hall it appears that, actually, yes, we have moved to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ourselves and our members — we — are embracing technology. After all, it's there, isn't it? It's at our fingertips. How many sit there with your phone at the side of your bed and the first thing you do in the morning, after you've woken up, is to check your emails? Or is it just me? Embracing this technology makes it quicker and makes communication more efficient. It also reduces our carbon footprint. Take Congress this year, for example. How many of you received that great big, thick, *War & Peace* bundle, which arrived on your doorstep, which is known as the Preliminary Agenda? Then we got another one followed by yet another one. Think of all those trees and our carbon footprint, but I digress.

Congress, some branches that nominate delegates to conference and to regional councils are all being put at a disadvantage. Every nomination, as we know, is part of our democratic make up. It's important and it is essential that we have voices and it is essential that our members' voices are being heard. Branches have duly met, had that meeting, done the nominations, strong-armed some people in coming to Congress and making a speech, completed that paperwork, dated it, signed it and sent it off by post. What happens then? It doesn't arrive or it arrives too late and it gets there after the deadline. Speaking from personal experience as a branch secretary, it is frustrating, and that is putting it mildly. I know of branch secretaries, including myself, who have posted their nomination papers off and thought, "I'll scan it in as well and send it by email just to make sure it gets there on time and by that deadline", only to be told that the papers were not received in time, that it didn't get there or, even worse, "I'm sorry, but we don't accept your nomination by email". Are we really a 21st century union? This is not the same for all regions. Some do accept nominations and paperwork scanned in and signed by email, and this variation from region to region is unfair. It is essential that in our union procedural processes be standardised across our union. We should be given the option of being able to send nominations electronically as well as by traditional methods. If you want to go down to your office and post it, or you want to send it by the post, you can do, but having that option can only assist in truly moving our union into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Think of the money we would save in postage. Think of the money we would save in printing costs. Think about our carbon footprint.

Even better is how much do you think we could engage with our members and the public more? Think about that productive involvement. Congress, I hope you support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cindy. Do I have a seconder for Motion 33?

YVETTE MITCHELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am seconding Motion 33: Electronic Nominations. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Cheers and applause*)

President and Congress, we are currently talking about the environment, climate change and the tonnes of waste produced. I know you are asking "What's this got to do with electronic nominations?", but just bear with me for a moment. Do you know

it takes on tree to make 230 average-sized newspapers or magazines? On a Sunday, 90% of the newspapers that we use or read are thrown away in Britain. That is the equivalent of throwing away half-a-million trees into landfill. The amount of waste paper thrown into landfill each year would fill 103,000 double-decker buses!

The average family in the UK throws away six trees worth of paper every year. Therefore, how much are we, the GMB trade union, be throwing away? By using electronic nominations, I believe, will help in the process of protecting and securing a better future, a better environment and save unnecessary paper waste, rather than having the fear of postal delays, forms going missing or misplaced. As stated, it will allow nominations to be accepted electronically, thus enabling more branches to have a voice at the click of a button, thereby saving costs and a huge amount of time. Congress, please support and thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 44.

## **BILINGUAL OFFICERS AND REPS MOTION 44**

### **44. BILINGUAL OFFICERS AND REPS**

This Congress, as a result of the chaos that is Brexit and the fear and uncertainty it has caused for all we have a duty as Trade Unionists to protect those most at risk from whoever seeks to use this instability as a means of exploiting workers.

B05 and M35 have been in partnership for over a year to co-ordinate the linguistic expertise and the resources of each branch to recruit in workplaces where there are predominantly non-English speaking workers.

M35 have produced translated material and B05 have paid accompanying rep expenses for any member where language is a barrier to recruitment and accessing their rights. This is being utilised in companies that employ predominantly Eastern European workers.

Furthermore a B05 member who is multilingual has undergone initial interview and has been accepted for accompanying rep training. He will be deployed in companies that are predominantly Urdu and Punjabi speaking.

In workplaces where English is not the first language there is genuine lack of understanding of what a trade union is and what it has to offer. There is also little understanding of workers' legal rights.

Migrant and non-English speaking workers are a significant number in the workplace and every effort needs to be made to capture this area of the workforce. They are employed in predominantly low paid and precarious work and as such are subservient to bosses who may and will exploit.

B05 through a member query to the branch secretary asked a bi-lingual member to visit as language was a barrier to understanding the problem. This visit identified serious issues with process and procedure and also highlighted practices which required police intervention. Possible trafficking was identified and is being followed up by a senior officer.

Evidence suggests that there is a very real need for every region to have the resource of multi-lingual officers or members to assist where language is a barrier to understanding workers' rights and as such recruitment.

If the cost of employing such officers is prohibitive then an enhanced rate should be established for multi-lingual members to assist in workplaces which have a non-English speaking workforce for the benefit of all members regardless of which branch they are in.



Congress it is critical that all branches work together in the battle for workers' rights and share best practice to ensure efficient and effective use of our resources.

Congress this significant group of workers is under-represented and the GMB should continue to lead the way in promoting the work they do for our country and give them the representation they deserve.

GMB ORGANISING BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Referred)*

CATHERINE PINDER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress and President, I am the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Regional President (*Cheers*) moving Motion 44 — Bilingual Officers and Reps.

As a result of the chaos that is Brexit and the fear and uncertainty it has caused for all, we have a duty as trade unionists to protect those most at risk from whoever seeks to use this instability as a means of exploiting workers. Migrant and non-English speaking workers are a significant number and every effort needs to be made to capture this area of the workforce. They are employed in predominantly low-paid, precarious work and as such are subservient to bosses exploit. In the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region companies such as Cova, ASOS, TK Maxx and many more employ non-English speaking workers and, faced with such inequality, GMB Organising Branch and the Migrant Workers' Branch entered into a partnership to utilise the linguistic expertise of one and the resources of the other.

The Migrant Workers' Branch has produced translated material to take to workplace leaflet drops and is in the process of producing a translated PPE book that it is hoped can be sent to all non-English speaking members. GMB Organising Branch has agreed to pay accompanying and rep expenses for any member across branches where language is a barrier to recruitment. Our region has supported this initiative by funding a bilingual member from the Migrant Workers' Branch to attend region one day a week to assist the ROC team and produce translated material for non-English speaking workers.

As a result of this partnership and the support of the region, in Yorkshire and North Derbyshire we have the ability to identify a target company, and in 24 hours have translated fliers ready for the workplace leaflet drop.

Last year, during Love GMB Week we gated many companies and following one of these visits I took a query from a member but the language barrier made it difficult for me to understand fully the issue. Luckily, I knew a bilingual member. After many conversations and subsequent visits it became apparent that there were serious issues, extreme bullying and coercive behaviour was highlighted which required police intervention. Possible trafficking was suspected. The issue is now being dealt with by a senior officer. As a direct result of this member engagement, a GMB organising branch member, who is multi-lingual, has undergone initial support training. He will be deployed throughout the region in companies that are predominantly Urdu and Punjabi speaking.

Through branches working together, VO5 and M35, they have been able to reach many more potential members than they would have done alone. Through work we have done, we have demonstrated that there is a very real need for every region to have at their disposal the resources, multi-lingual officers or members, to assist where language is a barrier to understanding workers' rights and, as such, recruitment.

Should the cost of employing such officers be prohibitive, then an enhanced accompanying rep rate should be established for multi-lingual members to assist in workplace which have a non-English speaking workforce. Congress, it is a significant group of workers and they are under-represented and often exploited. It is imperative that the GMB continues to lead the way into developing the vital work they do and give them the representation they deserve.

I welcome the Brexit statement which recognises the valuable work of the migrant workers, and I urge the GMB to immediately assess the linguistic capabilities of each region, and ensure that officers and reps are in place in order to meet this urgent need. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Can we have the seconder to Motion 44?

THERESA HUMPHREYS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, Theresa May may be resigning from the Conservatives but I am not resigning from the GMB, you'll be pleased to know. (*Applause*) Let me say that the opening speech from Barbara this morning was truly inspiration. I wanted to say that, and thank you.

Congress and visitors, as my fellow colleague has demonstrated to you, the need for more bilingual officers and reps across this union's nine regions can only be beneficial for all. As a trade union our aim is to continue to retain our membership and recruit more. By having more support financially and sharing best practice for these officers and reps, as Cathy so rightly said, it can only grow our great union nationally. Our union would be able to recruit members from workplaces where the need of a trade union is paramount and continue to retain the membership already in these exploited workplaces. I am sure we all know one or more of those. As a union this would assist to continue to build the union's profile and could save members' lives in these workplaces where exploitation is happening now. As my colleague mentioned earlier, these group of workers are under represented and often are exploited. We need to give them the right support and representation. I am proud of our region and branches B05 and M35 for working together to be able to support and assist these groups of workers within 24 hours of it being identified, and for taking the lead in this issue, I thank you. I said earlier that the need is urgent and I ask you all to support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Theresa. Can I now have the mover of Composite 1, please.

## **GMB ACTIVISTS EMAIL ADDRESSES AND GDPR COMPOSITE MOTION 1**

### **GMB ACTIVISTS EMAIL ADDRESSES AND GDPR**

This Congress understands the need for GDPR to update the old Data Protection Act to conform with new technologies.

However, GMB guidelines say that reps shouldn't use work email systems to communicate with members. Whilst we appreciate that Branch Secretaries need a secure GMB email address, we call on GMB to look into providing ALL reps with a similar system so that they can be identified with GMB.

All reps communicate with members through email, social media and work digital communication platforms. We need to make it easy for workplace organisers to communicate and organise members whilst respecting their privacy. Therefore this Congress proposes to call upon the GMB to give all workplace organisers a secure GMB mailbox for communication to and from members in the workplace.

*(Referred)*

PATRICK BONNER (London): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and first-time speaker as well. *(Applause and cheers)* President and delegates, we are talking here about the way in which we communicate with our members and the introduction of GDPR has, sort of, blown a bit of a hole in all of the process that we used to have. We had a more direct way of dealing with members, more openness, and now we have to conceal many of the things we do in order to protect the identity and information that goes to members. We work in a local authority, for example, and there we, obviously, have quite a number of unions operating besides ourselves. It is difficult to know who is who sometimes. Branch secretaries have been given access to the database, but workplace representatives don't have that facility. So we need to have the same knowledge and same access of who is a member and who is not. Otherwise we can't really progress the building of the union and approaching members to get information about what is going on within the workplace itself.

I know we all know, generally, who's who within the organisation, but in many cases I have found that it has taken me a couple of years to get to know whos's who because don't obviously, like I do with Jeremy Corbyn, carry a badge around saying this is me and I'm a member of the GMB.

The second difficulty is that we have two branches in Islington both operating within the workforce, which are Islington (1) in Haringey and Islington APEX. It is quite messy because people come to us thinking that they are a member of our branch, only because I am a shop steward and I must represent them. Even in the same office, they are part of the other branch. So we have to work that one out as well. It is fine that they shouldn't know who's who when we send out an email copying them in blindly. But shouldn't we know? We should know who is a member and who is not. We should have access to that information more readily than we do at present.

What we have at the moment is to phone the office or, maybe, email one of the members and get the data back to see if a person is a member or is not a member, and which branch is that person a member of. When we contact the members we will be using council IT. So I use my own email address at the council to contact the member

dealing with a case, where the member, possibly, is going to be sacked or anything else. That's not necessarily secure either. That's why part of this composite is to ask for email addresses via the GMB so that we can do it much more covertly or secretly away from the council's eyes.

The other thing is that it is recommended that we have our own email, but that sometimes means that we have to carry a second computer. I am pretty sure if we are already humping around one computer because we work in a mobile manner, we don't want to carry around a second computer to have be officially dealing with GMB business on a computer which is not registered with the council but with the GMB. I think the secure emails and correspondence is fundamental and access to the database in a better manner is fundamental. I notice that this motion is going to be referred, or that is the recommendation, but I think that some of us who are at the sharp end should be involved in discussing it and seeing how we can roll out a better system. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Patrick. Can I have the seconder for Composite Motion 1?

VANESSA SIBBALD (London): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker from the London Region. *(Applause)* I am a bit nervous so, please, excuse me.

All email addresses are not the same. With the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation, aka GDPR, workplace reps are being asked to use their personal email addresses to conduct their communications to members. I am a senior convenor at my office-based workplace. Having sent a couple of emails from my private account, I have received a number of complaints about members not receiving those communications, which included notifications of meetings and information regarding personal cases. It turns out that a number of my emails ended up in SPAM boxes or my personal email account was not recognised by the member. This also means it is harder for members to remember those meetings.

In my workplace, which may be the case in many others, we use a calendar system which is accessed for workplace emails. Hence, I can no longer use calendar reminders for the meetings. The end result is that we end up with about half the members showing up at the meetings that we had previously. Some members have also complained about receiving emails on their personal account and they see these accounts as private and they are not allowed to access them at work, or they can get in trouble with their manager if they access them at work. Therefore, if we ever need to contact members quickly for an immediate vote, it is likely that we won't get through to a number of people.

I have been told that reps continue to use workplace emails for sending communications, but it is not clear what those communications are or who I can send them to, as any email to our members would, potentially, expose their identity. Asking for more clarity on what we can and can't do with workplace emails, and for the GMB to make sure that workplace reps have the tools to communicate with their members in a way that makes sense and is appropriate, also respecting the private details of everyone involved, is essential. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Vanessa. Thank you. Can I now have the mover for Motion 51 from London Region.

## **SUPPORT FOR ESOL WORKERS MOTION 51**

### **51. SUPPORT FOR ESOL WORKERS**

This Congress is disappointed that despite calls for more support for workers who do not speak English, or where English is a foreign language, very little is available.

There are many workers who need representation, legal assistance and general knowledge of their rights and resources in other languages which have not been made available to branches or reps.

We need to encourage and support and reach out to all workers and language shouldn't be a barrier.

We understand that in terms of their support line, UNIONLINE tries to find another UNIONLINE member to assist, but this is not always available and with the introduction of GDPR we need to be cautious of having members speak on behalf of other members where legal cases are involved.

We should adapt our union to meet the needs of the labour market.

We call on regions to survey and monitor the need for language support and pool our resources to provide a service for all workers.

CENTRAL WEMBLEY BRANCH  
London Region

*(Referred)*

JAISUCLAL DARCI (London): Congress, I move Motion 51 on Support for ESOL Workers with English as their second language. My branch has workers in it with many languages. Last week *BBC News* reported that more than 300 different languages are spoken in London, with some more widely spoken than others. Approximately 13% of our total population was born abroad. It makes absolute sense for our members who want to access advice and support for their presentation that they should be accommodated and more easily understood. If we cannot provide our members who are unable to speak English fluently, then how are we able to prescribe ourselves to be an all-inclusive trade union? When a member contacts the trade union by telephone, they want to ensure that the person on the other end truly understands what they are saying without any misunderstanding regarding their issue.

Unfortunately, we live in the real world and this is not always the case. At our branch we have received reports from our friends in UnionLine who asked if we had any officer who can translate into different languages. Last year a delegate moved a similar motion to Congress asking for UnionLine to provide legal assistance in a third language. I understand that UnionLine has made some progress on this issue. Last year Yorkshire Region moved a motion asking for help with other languages and for interpreters but I cannot see that any progress has been reported for either motions. We need not need to employ interpreters. Many of our staff in branches have the necessary skills. In London Region we have carried out programmes among the staff

and found out that we have a large number of abilities within the region to be able to help a member or be able to support them. Language should not be a barrier. Our union needs to reflect the changing nature of the workplace and communities. Our motion calls on the union to do the same and this information should be pooled together. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder for Motion 51.

VARSHA UNADKAT (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause and cheers*) Thank you. I am seconding Motion 51. We need to make sure that we support our members and not insist that everyone should communicate in English. We also need to ensure that there is a mixture of male and female support for our members. I am sure you will agree that a woman will feel more at ease speaking to another woman in her own language about emotional and stressful situations. We know that the union recognises that there is a need to act on this and we hope that this motion is acted upon and that it will not be forgotten. We need action now. We should create a network across our region and have access to a communicative forum to assist and work with any language problem. Let us pride ourselves in eradicating English as the only language spoken once and for all. Please support this motion. Thanks to London Region and Central Wembley branch who encouraged me. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? (*No response*) In that case, can I ask Bob Welham to speak on behalf of the CEC.

ROBERT WELHAM (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress and Comrades, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 33, 44, Composite 1 and Motion 51.

On Motion 33, Electronic Nominations, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The CEC agreed by-laws for the 2019 CEC elections state that nomination forms can be returned electronically by branches. The qualification, as the motion alludes to, is that branches can still submit nomination forms by post if they so wish and are not restricted to electronic only returns.

On Motion 44 — Bilingual Officers and Reps — the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. The CEC recognises the need for the union to deploy speakers of languages other than English or use translation facilities not just to support non-English speaking members in the workplace but to organise non-English speaking workers across the economy. We should look at developing a network of officers with language skills who can be called upon in particular circumstances and also develop technological solutions. The idea of charging enhanced contribution rates to multi-lingual workplaces is, however, not attractive.

On Composite 1, the email addresses of GMB activist and GDPR, the CEC is asking for the motions in this composite to be referred. The union last year took the major step of providing secure GMB email accounts to all branches and is considering how many other activists could usefully and cost-effectively be supplied within this facility.

On Motion 51 — Support for ESOL workers — the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. The CEC recognises the need for the union to deploy speakers of languages other than English or use translation facilities, not just to support non-English speaking members in the workplace but to organise non-English speaking members across the economy. We should look at developing a network of officers with language skills who can be called upon in particular circumstances and also develop technological solutions.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking for Motion 33 to be supported with a qualification, for Motion 44 to be referred, for Composite Motion 1 to be referred and for Motion 51 to be referred. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bob. In that case, does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire accept the qualification on Motion 33? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Do you also agree to refer Motion 44? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does London Region agree to refer Composite Motion 1? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Do you also agree to refer Motion 51? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

In that case, I will put those motions individually to Congress. All those in favour of Motion 33 with the qualification, please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 33 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 44 with the reference back or refer, please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 44 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Composite 1 being referred, please show? Any against? That is carried.

*Composite Motion 1 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 51 being referred, please show? Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 51 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Composite 11. Could I ask the mover and seconder of Composite 11 to come to the front, please.

## **GMB ACTIVIST MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT COMPOSITE 11**

141 MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR REPS (BI)  
142 GMB ACTIVISTS MENTAL WELLBEING SUPPORT (BI)

### **GMB Activist Mental Health Support**

This Congress recognises the hard work and dedication that our GMB representatives and activists do and the huge contribution they make in supporting our members. However we also accept that because of their dedication and willingness to take on board everyone else's

problems and concerns, this sometimes has a detrimental effect on their own mental wellbeing.

This Congress call upon GMB to work with recognised support networks and provide clear signposting so reps can seek support to aid their own health and wellbeing and ensure that all Branch Secretaries and Branch Equality Officers receive mental health awareness training to support reps.

Conference, employees (our members) in most workplaces will have occupational health/ mental health support. GMB officers and staff also have this support in place when needing additional help for their own health and wellbeing. However, workplace representatives do not have this facility made readily available to them through the union.

All too often, very good reps become mentally unwell or even quit their role because of the extreme pressures and demands put on them unknowingly by our members. They may be unable or unwilling to turn to their employer for support in case they are perceived as weak and not up to the role. They are reluctant to turn to their fellow reps or branch officers who are often under the same or similar pressure.

Due to confidentiality they are unable to, or are uncomfortable in speaking to their line manager or occupational health and may not want to burden their branch officers, who themselves are lay reps and not trained in mental health.

We often talk of our reps being the lifeblood of the GMB. One in four of us will experience mental ill health and in today's environment, more and more of our casework has a mental health element, too often our members see us as counsellors as well as reps. Without realising, reps often undertake this role with little or no thought to their own mental health. This can have consequences in their own jobs and home life if they need to take time off work due to stress and mental ill health.

We therefore call on the CEC and senior management team to explore ways of providing our lay activists who may be suffering with mental ill health with extra advice and support. This could initially be in the form of dedicated regional officers who are suitably trained and available to deal with providing support to those activists who are struggling to cope with the stresses and strains that sometimes come with a commitment to our GMB family life.

*(Referred)*

STEPHEN ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Composite 11 — GMB Activist Mental Health Support. President, brothers and sisters, comrades, whilst we always try to put the emphasis on employers to be fully active in breaking the stigma of mental health illness and to treat mental health as a workplace issue, more often than not workplace representatives will be the person who our members turn to. We know that one-in-four persons suffer from mental health illnesses every year. For the GMB, that is potentially 150,000 members suffering and needing someone to talk to. Some of them might be activists, some of you sitting in the hall now.

We always recognise the hard work that GMB reps do every day, in undertaking some multiple cases, offering a shoulder to cry on and a friendly ear for our members. But do we ever stop to ask ourselves what cost does that have on the mental health of their reps? We often talk of the shop stewards being the lifeblood of the GMB. In today's environment more and more of our case work concerns mental health ailments. Too often our members unconsciously see themselves as councillors as well as reps, without realising that reps often undertake this role with little or no thought for their own mental health. Unions should not leave it up to the bosses to support the reps. When they are in times of need, we need to be there for them. Our reps may be



unable or uncomfortable speaking to line managers and occupational health advisers so where do they turn? Our GMB Health and Safety Department, our Young Members' Network and the National Equality Forum are all doing brilliant work in campaigning around the issue of mental health, but what are we, the GMB, doing to support our own activists?

Congress, we are not asking the GMB to provide councillors or to fund help lines. We are merely asking the GMB to expose ways to provide our lay activists, who may be struggling to cope, with a little bit of advice, signposting and support. This motion is only asking that we have a look at getting suitably trained individuals at the regional and branch level who can be there and available to provide support for our activists, if needed. We are asking that we ensure that the lifeblood of the union have somewhere to turn if they find themselves in time of need and need some help. It is not too much to ask for, to give a little bit of help to our own brothers and sisters who help our members on a daily basis if they happen to find themselves struggling to cope with the stress and strain as part and parcel of their work as a shop steward. This can only be beneficial to our activists, to our members and to the GMB. It is about time that we practise what we preached. I ask that you, please, support this motion. It could save lives. Comrades, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Secunder?

CHERYL BARNETT (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I second Composite 11. President and delegates, ever-increasing workloads with less staff, insecure work, redundancies and low pay all have an effect on our members, as well as potential issues at home. We often find in their time of need they will not turn to colleagues, friends, family or their doctor for support, but will often reach breaking point when faced with absentee processes or, worse, disciplinary proceedings at work.

The pressure on our reps of trying to help, advise and be there for all our members can sometimes have adverse consequences in their own jobs, home life and our reps mental health wellbeing. Congress, it may be obvious that workplace representatives should be able to access their employee's occupational health services if they need to speak in confidence. After all, our CEC members and reps are not only employees but also volunteers. It is their employer who has the duty of care, therefore, for their health and wellbeing. This is correct, but does this mean that the union should turn its back on people who have dedicated years and sometimes decades to their union when they need our support the most?

Please, Congress, support this motion and let's support our activists if and when they may be struggling to cope with the pressure that they volunteer to take on. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cheryl. Does anyone wish to oppose this motion? *(No response)* No. In that case, I ask Cath Sutton for the CEC.

CATHERINE SUTTON (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is asking Congress to refer Composite 11, covering Motions 141 and 142. Support to our hardworking activists on mental health issues has been a recurrent theme since GMB first published its guidance on mental health

for four years. It is clear that in a time of crushing austerity the mental health of our members is suffering, and this is, in turn, impacting on our shop stewards, workplace organisers and health and safety reps.

The CEC has, in the past, explained in detail why the GMB is not in a position to provide enhanced training and dedicated mental health officers. In recent years, they have had to reject motions calling for the GMB to offer its own helpline on this issue as the cost is simply too high. However, the CEC is mindful that this issue will return to Congress year after year until a decision is taken and a definite position is reached.

The CEC, therefore, asks Congress to refer this composite motion in order that a working group can be convened, drawn from all parts of the union, to operate on a one-union basis to exemplify our approach to the issue of mental health at work and to develop comprehensive and definitive positions on our campaign activity, the support we provide and the guidance that we give. The CEC believes that this is the only way in which we can ensure our viewpoints are taken into account, that the possibilities and limitations can be properly explored and that the buy-ins of the whole union for the programme of activity can be credibly secured moving forward. Given the scope of our undertaking, this is undoubtedly a long-term project but the CEC would anticipate an interim report to be made at Congress 2020 with a full CEC Special Report to be delivered by Congress in 2021. Therefore, Congress, please accept reference back of Composite 11 so that this important work can commence as soon as possible. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does Birmingham & West Midlands agree to refer? (*Agreed*) Thank you. In that case, all those in favour of referring Composite 11, please show? All those against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Composite 11 was REFERRED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask speakers in relation Employment Policy Rights at Work — Composite 12 and Motions 170 and 200 to come to the front of the hall.

## **A MANIFESTO FOR LABOUR LAW COMPOSITE 12**

163 ROLLING OUT A MANIFESTO FOR LABOUR LAW (NW)  
164 CREATE A MINISTRY OF LABOUR (NW)  
165 SUPPORT SECTORAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING (NW)  
175 EQUAL RIGHTS FROM DAY ONE FOR ALL WORKERS (NW)

### **A Manifesto for Labour Law**

This Congress supports the Institute of Employment Rights' (IER) Manifesto for Labour Law – a complete policy framework for UK labour laws which would place sectoral collective bargaining at the heart of industrial relations to stimulate economic growth and reduce inequality.

The aim of the Manifesto is to shift the focus of labour law away from individual rights to collectively bargained standards, widely recognised as a more effective way to ensure fairness and to prevent the exploitation of the most vulnerable.

The Manifesto also recommends strengthening the statutory rights' safety net; improving enforcement mechanisms to ensure laws and collective agreements are followed; and enhancing trade union rights so that workers and their representatives are protected in the workplace, and have the opportunity to build on sectoral collective agreements at enterprise level.

This Congress calls for the creation of a Ministry of Labour, led by a Secretary of State with a cabinet seat to give workers a voice in government and to plan for the workforce the UK needs. Its responsibilities should include the immediate introduction of a Collective Bargaining Act; achieving full employment in secure, high quality jobs, and a National Economic Forum on which workers, employers, government officials and independent academics will plan for future industrial challenges and scrutinize the impact of policy on all sections of society.

This Congress calls for changes in labour law to focus on collectively agreed labour standards rather than statutory minimums. Congress aspires to bring the UK up to the standard of our European peers where sectoral collective bargaining is the dominant form of industrial relations, particularly in the strongest economies such as Germany, Sweden and Norway.

Research shows sectoral collective bargaining is good for the economy by stimulating demand through higher wages, which helps to reduce the deficit by increasing tax receipts and reducing reliance on state benefits.

This Congress supports workers efforts to organize and negotiate not just within single enterprises but across entire sectors.

This Congress calls for GMB to lobby for a new universal status of 'worker', replacing the current division that make 'workers' eligible for fewer rights than 'employees' and removes the confusion over employment status in the gig economy.

Where contractors are genuinely self-employed, the onus will be on the employer to prove this, rather than the current situation where workers are required to prove they are not self-employed.

*(Carried)*

MATTHEW DENTON (North West & Irish): President and Congress, I move Composite 12: Manifesto for Labour Law. The world of work has changed and with it the nature and role of the workforce. For the UK's 31 million workers many of the changes have had a devastating impact on their working lives and living standards. Britain's 31 million workers have been devastated by 35 years neo-liberalism. They are amongst the most insecure, unhappiest and stressed workers in Europe. They endure some of the highest rates of bullying and they have the least opportunities in the European workforce for making their voices heard at work. On average, British workers work more hours per week, six more days per year, more years before they retire, after which they receive lower levels of pension than most of their European counterparts. In comparison with other European workers, they have generally received less education and training and, because of a lack of employer investment, their productivity is lower. They get fewer paid holidays than almost all European counterparts comparatively. Their pay is so low that a greater proportion of them are in poverty than almost anywhere else in Europe. The gender pay gap is at a wholly unacceptable level.

British law on trade unions is the most restrictive in the western world. This is indisputable in relation to the right to trade union autonomy, the right to strike and the right to bargain collectively. By 2011 Britain had fallen to the second lowest in Europe in terms of the level of collective bargaining coverage.

We ask that Congress supports the Manifesto for Labour Law which has, at the heart of its proposals, the need to ensure the voice of Britain's 31 million workers is heard and respected in government by the Ministry of Labour, in the economy by the National Economic Forum and in industry by sectoral employment commissions.

The aim of the manifesto is to shift the focus of labour law away from individual rights to collectively bargain standards widely recognised as a more effective way to ensure fairness and to prevent the exploitation of the most vulnerable. The manifesto also addresses the growing problem of insecurity experienced by so many UK workers. It sets out radical dispute resolution solutions based on the view that labour rights should be universal in their application covering all workers and effective in their enforcement by the creation of a labour inspectorate and a labour court. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: The seconder for Composite 12, please. Is there a seconder? (*Formally seconded from the floor*) Thank you. Can I have the mover for Motion 170.

## **BILL OF RIGHTS FOR UK WORKERS MOTION 170**

### **170. BILL OF RIGHTS FOR UK WORKERS**

This Congress calls on the government to introduce a bill of rights for UK workers that included minimum standards of pay and conditions of service and all other benefits of employment.

C28 PETS BRANCH  
Southern Region

(*Carried*)

KEVIN QUINN (London): Congress, I am speaking on Motion 170: Bill of Rights for Workers. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am honoured to stand before you at the Congress of this great union and a great trade union Movement. The trade union Movement delivered the weekend, bank holidays and paid annual leave as well as dignity at work. Through these achievements the British worker gained a decent standard of living in relatively secure employment. Then along came the neo-liberals, the worship of the free market and Maggie Thatcher! Thatcher put a price tag on anything that moved, liberated banking excess and criminalised organised labour. So where are we now 40 years on? The rights that unions had secured have been systematically chipped away by those who worship profit and exploitation, fake self-employment, casualisation, zero-hour contracts and unpaid internships, and on and on. Bad employers have turned the clock back a hundred years, plucking day labourers from a roadside for a few hours work on a building site, summoning youngsters on social media for the odd couple of hours serving food that they can't afford to buy.

Congress, can we turn back the clock on our rights? Can we simply reverse the legislation in some game of *Back to the Future*? Sadly, no. The old problems of post-war Britain no longer apply. The traditional view of what employment even is has become so chipped away that it no longer applies to many workers. The

traditional model of capitalism no longer exists either. It has been replaced by a globalised digital economy dominated by a complex network of transnational corporations and venture capitalists. So what is needed is a new approach, one that does not depend on battles in the courts over whether a taxi driver or a plumber is an employee or an independent contractor. There needs to be a fundamental re-definition of what employment is. There needs to be a clear legal definition of “self-employment” applying only to the genuinely freelance individual. Everyone not self-employed should then be defined as an employee, a dependent worker, and that dependent worker should be covered by a Bill of Rights. That Bill of Rights should cover all existing rights; the right to the statutory minimum wage, paid bank holidays and trade union memberships, but also covering agreed disciplinary procedures, health and safety rights and procedures to deal with harassment and discrimination. None of this is pie-in-the-sky stuff. Many of us already enjoy these rights. What a Workers’ Bill of Rights delivers would be the basics for everyone, with clear definitions and without court battles needed for every basic right. We ask the GMB to work with the rest of the movement and, of course, the Labour Party to draw up a Workers’ Bill of Rights that could be delivered by the next Labour government to restore fully the dignity of employment. Thank you. I move Motion 170. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder for Motion 170?

LEILA KASSAM (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 170. I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Like many other delegates I have paid annual leave, pay when I’m sick and the right not to be dismissed unfairly. These are hard-won rights by our predecessors in the trade union Movement, and until recently taken for granted. But in recent years many would not recognise these basic rights, particularly young workers and migrant workers, but anyone can fall victim. By one trick or another, be it zero-hours contracts, be it self-employed status, they are cheated out of their rights.

The trade union Movement cannot rest on its laurels. It must rise to this challenge. During the week we will hear where the GMB is doing just that, challenging the gig economy and challenging bad employers. But our hands are tied by legislation that is now toothless. We must call for new legislation, a new Bill of Workers’ Rights that delivers for all, that leaves no loophole for unscrupulous employers, like a snake, to slither through, a new Bill of Workers’ Rights that enshrines in law, employment rights for all, holiday pay for all and sick pay for all. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Leila. Thank you. I now call the mover of Motion 200.

## **20 POINT PLAN FOR SECURITY AND EQUALITY AT WORK MOTION 200**

### **200. 20 POINT PLAN FOR SECURITY AND EQUALITY AT WORK**

This Congress will be aware that back in 2012 this Tory Government made several changes to the rights of workers which enabled scrupulous bosses to use workers’ rights for their benefits. The Tory Government claimed that this was to encourage small businesses to employ more staff by reducing hiring costs. As we know this isn’t the case. In the first year alone, bosses pocketed an extra £4.5 million from the variation of the qualifying period.

Unfortunately, for workers businesses have now come accustomed to know that it's relatively safe and easy to sack someone who has not yet been employed for the qualifying period, even if they don't have a fair reason for dismissing them.

We call on this conference to back this motion and to lobby MP's and the future Labour government to prioritise and enact its 20 point plan for security and equality at work, which will bring about a fairer and more job secure future for workers and to stop unscrupulous businesses using watered down workers' rights as a tool for profits.

RIPON & THIRSK BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

NEIL LOCKWOOD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 200. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Cheers and applause)* This Congress will be well aware that back in 2012 this Tory Government made several changes to the rights of workers which enabled unscrupulous bosses to use workers' rights for their benefits. The Tory Government claimed that this was to encourage small businesses to employ more staff by reducing hiring costs. As we all know, this just is not the case. In the first year alone, bosses pocketed £4.5 million from the variation of the qualifying period.

Unfortunately for workers, businesses have now become accustomed to know that it is relatively safe and easy to sack someone who has not yet been employed for the qualifying period, even if they don't have a fair reason for dismissing them.

The GMB Union will continue to campaign nationally against the exploitation of workers through its distasteful use of zero-hour contracts. Time and time again we hear of employers in all sections introducing zero-hour contracts with reduced basic pay rates alongside previously negotiated ones. These changes are leading to the degrading of all trades and positions which is a smack in the face for GMB post holders who have over the years passionately and tirelessly negotiated pay with terms and conditions by bringing them up to an acceptable living wage and work-life balance.

The GMB has rightly exposed conditions at Amazon, Sports Direct, ASOS and also highlighted concerns about the treatment of couriers and drivers at Uber, Hermes and Deliveroo, to name a few. We have all seen growing evidence of agency workers and those working in the gig economy being exposed to poor working conditions. This growing trend raises questions over employment status and lack of workers' rights.

Businesses have now stooped as low as they can and now some High Street chains are hiring those who can afford it on three, six or nine-month long unpaid internships with an unwritten promise that it could lead to a full-time job, thus disadvantaging others who cannot afford it. They get around the minimum-payment legislation by claiming that it's work experience that they are offering. Companies are continuing to explore the current economic situation for their profit-driven interests. If people wanted to get better jobs with secure hours, they wouldn't take these jobs.

A future government must decide whether the hidden costs to the state and the routine casualisation of labour in the United Kingdom are acceptable and question whether some of the extreme employer practices identified are actually legal.

I call on this conference to back this motion and to lobby MPs and the future Labour government to prioritise and enact its 20 point plan for security and equality at work, which will bring about a fairer and more job secure future for workers and to stop unscrupulous businesses using watered down workers' rights as a tool for profit. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

WILLIAM JARVIS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am seconding Motion 200. This Congress knows that decent hardworking employees from all fields of employment are constantly having their terms and conditions along with pay attacked by unscrupulous bosses. By bringing the plan in by the next Labour government, the 20 point plan for security and equality at work will achieve the following. It will eradicate zero-hours contracts used by ever-increasing numbers of companies; it will give workers equal rights from day one, whether they are full, part-time, temporary or permanently employed; it will repeat the Trade Union Act; it will raise the minimum wage to the level of the living wage and there will be an outright ban on unpaid internships. It will abolish tribunal fees to enable workers to have a fighting chance to get justice done and strengthen protections for women against unfair redundancy and to hold a public inquiry into blacklisting to ensure that blacklisting becomes and remains a thing of the past. *(Applause)* These are just some of the main points from the 20 point plan which the Labour Party has promised to implement when next elected to govern our country. Comrades, I urge you to back this motion so present and future workers get a fair deal at work. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to oppose any of those motions? *(No response)* In that case, I will ask Bob Welham, again, to come and speak on behalf of the CEC in response.

ROBERT WELHAM (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Composite 12. On Composite 12 — a Manifesto for Labour Law — the CEC is supporting the composite with a qualification. We welcome the proposals in the composite and that Congress has had an opportunity to hear the ideas contained in the Manifesto for Labour Law produced by the Institute of Labour Law. Complementary motions heard alongside the composite have, hopefully, given delegates perspectives on how we can give more power to workers.

The qualification is that the sectoral bargaining should establish a set of terms and conditions that can be built on at enterprise or employer level, which are legally enforceable. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking for you to support this composite with the qualification I have explained. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bob. Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification on Composite 12? *(Agreed)* Thank you. In that case, I can put all of

those to the vote. All those in favour of Composite 12 with that qualification, please show? All those against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Composite 12 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC is supporting Motion 170. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 170 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC is supporting Motion 200. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 200 was CARRIED.*

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY MANUFACTURING**

THE PRESIDENT: Could the movers and seconders for Industrial & Economic Policy please come to the front, which involves Motions 220, 223, Composite 15, which is for GMB Wales & South West to move, and Northern Region to second, and also we are taking the emergency motion.

### **CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN INDUSTRY MOTION 220**

#### **220. CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN INDUSTRY**

This Congress realise that the manufacturing industry has had rapid decline over the last years of apprenticeships and younger workers. This has caused a lot of problems to the industry.

The industry need to motivate apprentices so that the skills can continue. The Union can help factories find the right way to motivate their employees and apprentices and grow the economy in light of Brexit and the threats that may damage UK industry.

It's important that Congress support this motion – for GMB to campaign for a significant increase in Government funding in the manufacturing industry development sector.

HULL NO. 7 BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region  
*(Carried)*

PETER ELLINGER (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a second-time delegate but a first-time speaker. *(Applause and cheers)* I move Motion 220: Campaign for Government Investment in Industry. As we all know, the manufacturing sector has been in rapid decline for many years. We have gone from the nation which led the world in industry to now a poor relation. As a nation, we have not worked to combat the skill shortage. As a result, workers' skills and knowledge are being taken to the grave. We have not had the foresight to invest in apprenticeships, which is to our detriment as a nation.



Since 2015 there has been, on average, a 30% reduction of young people taking up apprenticeships. The Government target of three million young people starting apprenticeships by April 2020 is nowhere on the horizon. Since the introduction of the apprentice levy the number of apprenticeships have slowly declined. The apprenticeship level, which was brought in to boost industry, is seen by most of the big players as just another tax, with the money they claim back not actually covering the training costs. There is a focused shortfall of 20,000 engineers, 12,000 highways staff and the list goes on and on.

During the first three months of 2019, 25% of manufacturing companies turned down new business due to a lack of skilled workers. The British Chamber of Commerce reported in January 2019 that the manufacturing sector is facing its biggest skill shortage in 30 years. 40% of persons in the manufacturing workplace are now aged 50 plus. While we know these workers in the industrial workplaces have specialist skills, we need to be attractive to the next generation of workers. The GMB needs to keep up the pressure on workplaces to help them recognise the skill gaps. The apprenticeship levy needs to be fit for purpose but, most of all, we have to get manufacturing apprenticeships back in the mind of our government or our industry will collapse. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Secunder?

SHANE ALLINSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 220: Campaign for Government Investment in Industry. Colleagues, as we have just heard, our industry is in massive decline. There has not been investment by the Government and there has not been investment by the companies due to austerity, leaving us at the edge of disaster.

Our manufacturing industry was second to none and, as world leaders, we led in innovation and productivity to our history of skills management and workforce planning. These skills were passed down to generation after generation because we knew we had to sustain the industry. Where did we go wrong?

The apprentice role has been decimated and we are solely reliant on an older, ageing workforce. It is time to buck this worrying trend and get behind the GMB “Making It” campaign, which brings manufacturing back into the heart of Britain. We call on all Governments of the UK to invest in manufacturing and create an environment that encourages manufacturing employers to invest.

“Buy for Britain”! We need a procurement strategy that supports UK industry and supported employment; negotiate trade deals that deliver for workers and industry; avoiding damaging tariffs on British goods; build strong UK-based supply chains to support local communities; support equality and inclusion by tackling barriers to work wherever they exist; invest in skills, research and development and the technologies of tomorrow; pursue a balanced energy policy that provides sustainability and security for the UK and our nations’ industries.

The “Making It” campaign says that we need to tackle the myth that Britain does not make things any more. Well, we did it before and we can do it again. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 223.

## GOVERNMENT FAILURE TO SUPPORT BRITISH STEEL INDUSTRY MOTION 223

### **223. GOVERNMENT FAILURE TO SUPPORT BRITISH STEEL INDUSTRY**

This Congress notes the Daily Mirror report of 24/01/2019, that said only 48% of steel used in government projects was made in Britain. Given that all of the steel required could be produced in the UK, this failure to support the British steel industry by the government is unforgivable. Despite claiming to be both pro-business and the party of workers, this is yet another failure to support British industry and another kick in the teeth to hardworking workers, their families and communities by the Tories. It shows we cannot rely on the Tories to help British businesses and workers and, any calls for a Tory government to support British industry are a waste.

Congress calls for the next Labour government to support the British steel industry by using British steel and, wherever possible, to buy British on government projects.

PARKGATE BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

IAN KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am proud to represent all the steel workers who are members of our union. (*Applause*) I move Motion 223. President and Congress, six months ago the *Daily Mirror* reported that more than half the steel used in Government projects was made abroad, every single last tonne of which could have been made here in the UK. Yet again, the patriotic Union flag-waving Tories have stuck two fingers up at British industry. Yet again, this Government have betrayed British workers and their communities, and for what? To pay more for the steel through punitive exchange rates and all its costs, to jeopardise the jobs of thousands of workers, to lose tax revenues from those working in the steel industry and those supplying the industry, to lose the chance of training more of our young people and giving them a decent job with decent pay.

In support of the steel industry, the GMB alongside local communities and other unions has campaigned in the UK and Europe. We have spoken at rallies, we've spoken at conferences, we've lobbied Parliament, we've talked to MPs and we've talked to Ministers, so this Government should be the most knowledgeable about the steel industry ever, but they have not listened one iota. Despite our British-made steel being the best, despite the strategic importance of the steel industry and despite other EU governments listening to their steel workers, our own Government have ignored us. As a victim of Thatcher's milk snatching, which shows me age a bit, just as I didn't think the Tories could get any lower, barely hours after pledging support to the steel industry, they callously allowed British Steel to go into administration. Their contempt shows that we cannot re-allow the Tory Government to support the UK steel industry.

If you would just indulge me for a few seconds, President, let me say this. On behalf of our members in the steel industry, I would like to thank each and every one of you for supporting us over the years. It is thanks to your support that, although we are a minority union in the steel industry, we are punching well above our weight.

I would like, personally, to thank Tim Roache. In fact, his first engagement after being elected as General Secretary was at a Save Our Steel rally in Sheffield, on which I was proud to share a platform with him. So, Tim, I am proud and honoured to call you “Comrade, brother and friend”. (*Applause*)

Comrades, we need a government prepared to deal with the issues affecting the steel industry, to deal with the high energy prices, to deal with China dumping poor-quality steel and with the issue of perennial American accusations of dumping and, yes, comrade, even of ownership. If we don’t have a government prepared to deal with these issues, it won’t matter whether we get a Brexit, a Lexit, a Norway-plus or a Norway IIR<sup>2</sup>. If we don’t have a steel industry, we won’t have any manufacturing.

Whilst this motion is about the steel industry, it could be easily about anything in manufacturing. So I would like to say to our colleagues in shipbuilding, in the Potteries and, especially, at this time to our colleagues working at Fords in Bridgend, “Solidarity to you and your communities”! Your fight is exactly the same fight as mine. (*Applause*) That’s why we need a Labour Government, comrades, a Labour Government committed to the British steel industry and British manufacturing. We need that commitment, not as a flag-waving gesture and not simply because it is patriotic but because it makes economic sense. Comrades, let’s tell this Government and any future government that steel workers like me, we might have to dress like minions, but don’t ever treat us like one. Save our Steel! (*A standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ian. Secunder?

BRIAN GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am seconding Motion 223. As Ian said, once again the Tory bastards have let the British workers down. British Steel employs 5,000 people and a further 20,000 in the supply chain. That’s why they’re a bunch of..... I won’t say what they are. That’s why we get angry. We all know what they are. France and Germany spend far more than the UK on state aid, despite also signing up to the Single Market rules. So are they really an obstacle? We can support our British industry. For example, in 2015 the UK Government submitted plans to provide a subsidy for Drax Power Station to convert it from using coal to biomass fuel. The Commission ruled in favour of the scheme. I was going to say that the Tories destroyed the coal and coke industries, but lately we have learnt that Tories have been supporting the coke industry. So let say “Support the British steel workers!” (*Cheers and applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. I call the mover of Composite 15.

#### BRITISH SHIPBUILDING

##### COMPOSITE 15

(*Covering Motions 224 and 225*)

224 — The Revival of British Shipbuilding (Wales & South West)

225 — British Shipbuilding (Northern)

#### COMPOSITE 15. BRITISH SHIPBUILDING

This Congress is disgusted that recent announcements by Government of increases in expenditure on auxiliary and support ships, has been accompanied by an increase in contracts being given to companies outside of the UK.

Congress notes the abysmal way earlier in this decade in which the Tory led Coalition Government had aircraft carriers built with no aircraft on. Now a potential a potential expenditure on a series of projects could have provided vital work and secured jobs and much needed prosperity to a number of communities in the UK.

Congress believes that this Whitehall model of giving work abroad can only fuel a feeling of communities that they are being left behind.

This Congress proposes that the GMB do all it can to help revive the crumbling British shipbuilding industry, with the lobbying of the Government to invest/nationalise the industry, not just for the military side of things but also the commercial side. This will put much needed work up and down the country in communities that rely on this highly skilled industry. Most of these communities are in generally low paid areas with high levels of poverty and shipbuilding is the only major industry there, the closure of shipyards up and down the country has devastating effects on the local economy, for instances the closure of Appledore Shipyard is set to cost the local area at least £20 million every year in lost revenue taxes and the local supply chains that supply the yard. That is simply devastating for already one of the poorest areas in the country in regard to pay and cost of living.

The state of British shipbuilding is in a dire situation and unless something is done it could die completely with only two yards controlling the monopoly of MOD builds. At one time British shipbuilding dominated the world. As late as the 1950s, a quarter of all ships sailing the seven seas were built in Britain. Now, sixty years later, that figure is less than 1%.

Congress therefore calls on both Government and the Labour Opposition, to signal that they will urgently readdress procurement guidelines so that favoured status is given to UK employers, provided work is given to a permanent UK workforce.

The time for action is now, we need to put British shipbuilding back on the map again, we are an island nation and shipbuilding through the centuries runs through our veins. Let's get Britannia ruling the waves again!!

*(Carried)*

JAKE McLEAN (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I move Composite 15 — British Shipbuilding. I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause and cheers)* President and Congress, the fight to prevent the closure of Appledore Shipyard was a courageous one, but should not have been necessary. The decision to cease shipbuilding at such an iconic location after 164 years was nothing short of a scandalous betrayal of a loyal and skilled workforce in the communities in which we live.

Congress, Appledore is the latest victim, not of any commercial decision by Babcock but of a Government that did nothing to support and secure the future of shipbuilding when the need arose. There has been a missed opportunity to make shipbuilding a central plank of any post-Brexit industrial strategy and for the construction of vessels paid for by British taxpayers here in this country. Just over 60 years ago British shipbuilding ruled the world with up to a quarter of all ships being built in Britain. Today that figure is less than 1% and it is only at that minimum level due to the policy of building warships in the United Kingdom.

There is, however, a chance to leave the past behind and revive elements of commercial shipbuilding as part of a wider industrial strategy. Yet the Government fell short of this, instead focusing all their attention on the naval sector. There is a significant risk, if commercial shipbuilding is not developed, that the industry will

default to be a purely Ministry of Defence issue. This is not good news for defence and misses out on opportunities that could be had from commercial ventures. It not only keeps work in the yards between MoD contracts but can also export ships to the worldwide market, which keeps the supply chains in work and the skill sets staying where they are and being able to pass on those skills to future generations. This could help with the renaissance of British building.

The need for greater Government intervention in this proud and historic industry has never been more compelling, yet there has not been the necessary drumbeat of work. The infrastructure has been in place, where the need exists, for more adequate investment. The Type 31E frigate build should have been the pivot of the national shipbuilding strategy but suffered badly from a price restriction. Building a fleet of support ships in Britain would also ensure the survival of Appledore. The Government's inertia and its failure to protect our industry led to the loss of 200 jobs at Appledore, thereby taking massive sums of money out of the local economy, and denying income tax and National Insurance receipts to the value of something like £20 million each year. Appledore is the latest in a line of yards that have been starved of the oxygen at work supplied by a Government obsessed with the free-market ethic and putting everything out to international tender.

This propped-up Tory administration simply hides behind the bureaucracy of EU regulations to justify its policy of subjecting key building issues to overseas competition, when those very same potential bidders are able to build logistic ships free of any threat to a process that leads only to a race to the bottom. Congress, working at Appledore was much more than just doing a job. It was a community of interests, a way of life, generation after generation, where skills and knowledge were handed down from father to son. Shipbuilding is in our blood in north Devon, with every single ship leaving the dock having been built with an immense sense of pride and passion.

Colleagues, the Government's strategy is designed to restrict the scope of work produced by UK shipyards, and are deliberately exposing contracts to international competition that could easily be designated as "protected builds". It has the ability to build the fleet support ships in British shipyards but refuses to use the article 346 exemption to exclude the contract from procurement rules on grounds of national security. That is a denial of the needs to support our shipbuilding industry, to retain skills and secure employment. As long as we have to compete on an unfair playing field against foreign yards which are backed by their governments, then the long-term decline in commercial and military orders to British shipyards will continue unabated. The only strategy that operates here is offering work to yards outside the country.

Congress, the national strategy intended to re-energise UK shipbuilding and grow the Royal Navy is clearly not delivering. Time is running out and it is not on the side of our once-great shipbuilding industry. How sad, but how avoidable, too without the necessary political will.

Finally, President, my region accepts the qualification set up by the CEC. It was not the intention to be jingoistic by using the phrase "Britannia rules the waves", but rather to express pride in the days of yore when shipbuilding was an industry to be coveted.

I am moving this composite in a fight to save 40,000 shipbuilding and supply-chain jobs up and down this country and to revive British shipbuilding. Let's get Britain building again and keep Britain afloat! (*A standing ovation*)

CRAIG DAWSON (Northern): Congress, I second Composite 15. Government announcements on auxiliary and support ships prove that the Tories are clueless. Our campaign for turning the tide shows a picture of decline. During the Tory years, we've had aircraft carriers built with no aircraft. The role of the UK Government is, frankly, a disgrace. The British Government are a big customer of manufacturing, yet they refuse to support our own industries. We should support our industrial base, Congress. The Government need to buy British and support British plants and manufacturing. The Government should promote UK shipbuilding. Under existing European law, construction of support, tanker and auxiliary ships can go to UK shipyards. However, this Tory Government will simply not help. We need Government to listen. We need Labour in opposition to signal that they will change procurement guidelines to favour UK employers, provided the work is given to a permanent UK workforce. That could be a key area of Labour's manifesto on manufacturing. Other countries promote their manufacturing industries. They have no problems in ensuring that their own workforce get the chance of an income with a permanent supply of Labour and with the skills and training of their workers to meet the challenge ahead. In Britain we seem to have success governments who feel it is a virtue to outsource work and to give it away, to let shipbuilding in other countries thrive and to let our shipbuilding stagnate.

Congress, it is time for Government to act, and if they don't we expect the Labour Party to say that when they become the next government it is time to turn the tide and put the "British" back into shipbuilding. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have the mover for Emergency Motion 2, please.

#### CLOSURE OF THE FORD BRIDGEND ENGINE PLANE EMERGENCY MOTION 2

This Congress deplores the announcement on Thursday 6 June 2019 of the Ford motor company to close the Bridgend engine plant in September 2020.

This is a devastating blow for Bridgend, the Welsh car industry and the regional economy. More significantly, it's a catastrophic blow to our members, their families and the community. The workforce at the plant have made every contribution possible to increasing productivity, making efficiency savings and ensuring that it is cost-competitive, only to have their commitment and loyalty betrayed by the company.

This is also another example of the lack of support given by Central Government to the manufacturing sector in this country generally and in Wales particularly. The absence of any coherent strategy has caused a repeat of the decimation that we saw in the sector in the 1980s with the deliberate run-down of the coal mining and steel production industries.

Congress therefore calls upon:-

The Company to reconsider the decision to close the Bridgend plant.

Workers at the other four plants to stand alongside their colleagues at Bridgend and provide their full support.

The Governments at Westminster and the Welsh Assembly to join together with the GMB and other trade unions to save Bridgend and prevent another nail in the coffin of our manufacturing base in Wales.

Branch — Rhondda Cynon Taff R45  
Region — Wales and South West

*(Carried)*

JENNIFER SMITH (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I move the emergency motion regarding the closure of the Bridgend Ford Engine Plant. The announcements that was made on Thursday morning has been a body blow to those who work at the plant, their families, the town of Bridgend, Welsh manufacturing and the whole of the Welsh economy. This decision is alleged to have come out of the blue and Ford management has stated that the reasons for the closure are not related to the uncertainty of Brexit in any way. Instead they argue that the decision is only linked to the reduced demand for the Dragon engine. I'm sorry to say that I do not buy this plain deceit. It is only two years ago since Ford management made it clear that if there was any possibility of a no-deal Brexit where tariffs would be applied to essential components, then this would place the plant's future in jeopardy.

It is, therefore, my view that the referendum decision, the recent EU election result and the possibility of having a Tory leader with a no-deal Brexiteer, will have therefore been contributory factors in this dreadful decision. Even if we fall for Ford's argument that the automotive industry is going through major global challenges or that the demand for petrol and diesel engines is declining, the fact remains that Fords have failed to invest in engines for the future or in the Bridgend Ford Engine Plant, despite all the changes to working practices that the workforce has agreed to be implemented.

If Ford had invested in electric-engine production, then this plant could have become a centre of excellence for the EU and UK, and these redundancies would not have been announced. Ford has abandoned this highly skilled and highly paid workforce, and in a week when Donald Trump had visited the UK and promised a phenomenal deal after Brexit, Ford announced that they would be opening a factory in Mexico, where the wages paid are a pittance. So much for a special relationship!

Congress, the anger and devastation that this decision has caused has involved ripples across the whole of the Welsh economy. It is a fact that not just the 1,700 jobs at the plant are at risk, but at least another 6,000 jobs in the supply chain are also at risk. A number of companies which have already been stung as a result of the industry to close Honda's site in Swindon may well go to the wall.

We, therefore, ask the GMB to bring as much political pressure to bear as possible upon the Westminster Government and the Welsh Government to reverse this decision and/or to ensure that alternative buyers are found to enable work to continue on this site.

President and Congress, we must continue to fight for our members' jobs at the Ford Bridgend Engine Plant. They deserve nothing less. President and Congress, I have

pleasure in moving this emergency motion on behalf of GMB Wales and the South West Region, and call upon you all to support this emergency motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jennifer. Can I have the seconder for the emergency motion?

SHARRON HARRISON (GMB Wales & South West): President and Congress, I second the emergency motion regarding the proposed closure of the Bridgend Ford Engine Plant on behalf of Wales and South West Region.

As the mover of the emergency motion has stated, this announcement has sent shockwaves throughout the whole of Wales. It has always been evident that successive Tory governments pay little regard for Welsh manufacturing, with many communities still not having recovered from the de-industrialisation of the South Wales valleys by Thatcher.

This union of ours has been calling for the Government to introduce an industrial strategy for the UK manufacturing sector for many years, leading the way by the means of the “Making It” campaign. Despite this demand, which is supported by many employer organisations, too, the Tories have seen 500,000 manufacturing jobs disappear in the past decade alone. Congress, 15,000 of those jobs have been lost in Wales alone, which does not sound much but out of a total population of less than three million, 15,000 jobs, on top of the thousands of jobs lost in the coal and steel industries in the ‘80s, decimated communities and left large areas of Wales as some of the poorest in the UK.

President, we must fight to reverse this trend. We must fight to protect the Bridgend Ford Engine Plant jobs and we call upon the GMB to create support for industrial action across all Ford sites in the UK. Congress, now is the time to make a stand and now is the time to call for an industrial strategy that will see the “Making It” campaign the basis of a renaissance of British manufacturing. President, I have the pleasure in seconding this motion on behalf of the region and all our members at Bridgend Ford. I ask for your support, your solidarity and your commitment to fighting against this unjust decision. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anybody wish to speak against any of those motions? (*No response*) Okay. Then I ask Eddie Marnell from the CEC to give their stance.

EDDIE MARNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, I am responding to Composite 15 on behalf of the CEC. Congress, the CEC, wholeheartedly, supports these motions. Our only qualification is on a point of language. The CEC’s preference is that the words “Britannia ruling the waves”, which some may associate with the British Empire, do not enter into the GMB’s policy book.

Congress, there is no dispute between the CEC and the branch or the region on this point. I would like to use this opportunity to set out the support and solidarity of the whole CEC with the Appledore workers, lead by their rep, Jake McLean. They fought to keep the yard open. The yard might have closed but the fight to get work into the yard goes on. Congress, they have been magnificent. Appledore rose from the ashes once before, Congress. We must stand shoulder-to-shoulder and fight to



make that happen again. We must save British shipbuilding. GMB has led that campaign in Appledore, Devonport, Cammell Laird, Rosyth, on the Clyde and anywhere else where jobs are under threat. Please support the composite with the qualification I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Eddie. In that case, can I ask if GMB Wales & South West and Northern Region both accept the qualification on Composite 15. (*Agreed*) Thank you. In that case I will put those motions to the vote. First, Motion 220, which the CEC is supporting, all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 220 was CARRIED*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 223, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 223 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Composite 15 we are supporting with a qualification. All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show? That is carried.

*Composite 15 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Emergency Motion 2, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Those against? That is carried.

*Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED.*

CEC STATEMENT ON BREXIT FOR GMB CONGRESS 2019

### **CEC Statement on Brexit for GMB Congress 2019**

#### **Referendum, 2016**

- 1) GMB campaigned with an 'angry remain' stance in the European Union referendum. We recognised the advantages of staying in the EU while at the same understanding that many people in the UK did not want the status quo to continue.
- 2) GMB accepted the result of the referendum and promised to work with all political parties to secure the best possible Brexit for working people, urging all politicians to acknowledge and the many reasons why people voted to leave the European Union and address some of the causes of this.
- 3) As Brexit had the potential to be a fast moving and every changing situation, we set up a Workers' Brexit Group of the CEC to ensure that any GMB response was rooted in the real lives and needs of GMB members. Over the last two years, this group has meet regularly to oversee the union's ongoing work.

#### **Tory government ignores workers**

- 4) It is with frustration, though not surprise, that the Government chose not to engage with union in a meaningful way. Bound by almost impossible to achieve red lines, even the loss of her parliamentary majority did not see the Prime Minister take a inclusive approach. Instead of engaging with industry, unions, devolved

governments and other parties after the 2017 General Election, the Government turned to the DUP for support.

5) Despite this, GMB has worked extensively on consultations, with MPs, Select Committee and with employers through the Manufacturing Trade Remedies Alliance, taking every opportunity to speak to Ministers and Shadow Ministers to highlight the consequences of the Tory Government's proposals.

6) Finally, in January 2019, the Prime Minister summoned unions to Downing Street which GMB attended in good faith. Far from listening to the genuine concerns of working people, the Prime Minister took the opportunity to once again explain why her bad deal was the best deal.

### **The impact on jobs**

7) GMB was at the forefront of calling for impact assessments of the Government's preferred Brexit outcomes. When they were eventually conducted, industry, unions and the public had to rely on leaked summaries of findings which the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union had refused to publish. The assessments showed widespread damage to a number of industries in which GMB members are employed, not least in manufacturing and retail. Not one region or devolved nation stands to be economically better off from any Brexit scenario under these assessments.

Additional analysis of the Government's own figures illustrates significant shortfalls in public finances in the years ahead which could lead to further cuts.

8) In the meantime, we have all witnessed job losses from a wide range of employers across a range of sectors. Brexit has not always been the main cause but it has often been a contributing factor. Multinational companies have restructured their operations away from the UK, investment levels have been reduced and confidence has fallen. Manufacturing has been particularly hit but there have also been greater higher costs increased insecurity and lower spending in sectors such as retail. A longstanding recruitment and retention crisis in public services has worsened as fewer EU citizens have stayed working in the UK. It is increasingly clear that many logistical issues relating to the UK's ports and borders cannot be overcome without a close relationship with the EU.

9) GMB has undertaken our own impact assessment of different Brexit scenarios using a combination of research, workplace reports and surveys of GMB reps and officers. It is clear that Brexit is a significant added threat to many GMB members' jobs, pay and conditions as well as to future prospects and our public services

### **Giving the public not politicians the final say**

10) The Tory Government's approach to Brexit has been reckless from start to finish. It has been abundantly clear that trade unions, industry organisations, devolved nations and regions have been shut out of the process. In September 2018, GMB's CEC decided that the public should have the final say on any Brexit deal, not the politicians who had failed to find a solution or a consensus. We argued that if the Government was so confident a deal would deliver for working people then they had nothing to fear. As trade unionists whenever we negotiate a deal we take it to members to see if they approve. Similarly, the public should have the final say on any Brexit deal and decide whether this is better than our current deal with the EU.

11) The Tory Government's Brexit deal was published in November 2018. Having analysed it carefully, CEC believed it would have been damaging for GMB members' jobs, meant workers' rights would not keep pace with our EU neighbours and it would result in less money for public services. Parliament also agreed, and in January 2019 the Withdrawal Bill was resoundingly defeated. It went on to be defeated a number of times and at the time of this statement no withdrawal agreement has been passed. At

every stage the Government has repeatedly failed to build consensus in Parliament and this has contributed directly to the economic uncertainty.

### **The perils of No Deal**

12) Leaving with 'No Deal' would be catastrophic for the industries our members work in. It would cause chaos throughout the UK, shattering supply chains and putting jobs at risk in everything from chemicals to food to ceramics.

13) Even planning for a 'No Deal' scenario has impacted on businesses with investment decisions delayed or cancelled, contacts lost to other EU countries and millions spent planning and stockpiling for a scenario that may never happen – we will continue to see the impact of that waste in months to come whether we leave with a deal or not.

14) The UK benefits from over 60 trade deals around the world as a result of membership of the EU Customs Union and these would disappear overnight under a No Deal scenario. Running a major economy only on W.T.O. rules is unprecedented. All the evidence suggest the UK would lose most from this scenario, living standards would rapidly fall and prices increase. By 2033/4

UK public finances would be £1.25 billion a week worse on W.T.O. rules.

15) No Deal would instantly jeopardise the Good Friday Agreement. GMB cannot overstate the importance of no hard border, frictionless trade and close cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Our union will remain steadfast in our defence of this vital peace agreement.

### **Fair movement of labour**

16) There are those on the far-right who continue to use Brexit as an excuse to peddle hatred and division. GMB will never accept or back down on the face of racism and xenophobia, we stand shoulder to shoulder with our migrant worker members who have seen an appalling increase in abuse and uncertainty about their own status.

17) GMB believes the working class could be united behind an agenda for the 'fair movement of labour' with measures which can be implemented now while we are inside the European Union. Fair movement would end the ability of employers to pit worker against worker, wherever that worker is from:

a) Ending the overseas-only advertising of jobs in the UK

b) Preventing migrant workers from working on inferior pay, terms and conditions including by strengthening sectoral bargaining and compliance with the relevant national agreements

c) Create a Migrant Contribution Fund. Migrant workers make a significant contribution to the UK, putting more into the economy than they take out. This fund, administered by Council's would benefit their whole community, showing practically the benefit of migrant workers to all workers. Such a fund would currently be worth £4.7 billion per year.

d) Introduce workers' rights from day one, increase workplace inspections and give new legal rights for unions to access and organise in all workplaces

e) Create a legal 'rate for the job' to end undercutting by employers in key industries

### **Looking forward**

18) Throughout this Brexit process, GMB has highlighted the importance of ensuring that jobs, rights and public services are not eroded as a consequence of the UK leaving the European Union. We know that millions of working people are crying out for change but whether they voted leave or remain in 2016, working people wanted to see their prospects get better not worse. People were promised £350 million a week

more for the NHS after it had been starved of resources from Tory and Lib Dem austerity. They did not want to see public services weakened or their NHS to be 'put on the table' in a future trade deal with the U.S.A.

19) The Tories continue to show they have no real solutions to the problems they have created. Nigel Farage and the so-called 'Brexit Party' would only make matters worse with its ultra-Thatcherite agenda and rampant attacks on equality. GMB welcomes any prospect of a general election to change the failed negotiating approach of the Tories and elect a Labour Government to end austerity and address many of the root causes of Brexit.

20) GMB will continue to oppose any deal that will harm members' jobs, rights and public services just as we would fight any damaging proposal from employers in the workplace. We will actively and vocally campaign against leaving the EU with No Deal, and will challenge those who seek to crudely stereotype or dismiss the interests of working class people.

21) Whatever the outcome of Brexit, GMB will continue to work with sister unions across Europe and the globe to fight for the shared interests of working people.

*(Carried)*

THE PRESIDENT: That means we can move on to the CEC Statement on Brexit. Here to move the Statement on behalf of the CEC will be John Phillips, the Regional Secretary for GMB Wales & South West. Dave Clements of the CEC will second. Could regions, please, be ready with your one speaker because I will be calling each region after the Statement has been moved and seconded. That will be in the order of Birmingham, London, Midland, Northern, North West, Scotland, Southern, Wales & South West and Yorkshire. If your speakers are ready to come to the front, that would be helpful.

JOHN PHILLIPS (Regional Secretary, GMB Wales & South West): Thank you, Barbara, and congratulations on an excellent Congress so far. *(Applause)* I am very pleased to be moving this Brexit Statement on behalf of the CEC.

Congress, Brexit is an industrial issue that affects every single member of this union. It affects jobs, pay, contracts, rights at work and the public services that we rely upon. Our aim, as always, is to get the best possible deal for our members. When employers have tried to squeeze pay, make work insecure or declare redundancies, we push back in every way possible. But, colleagues, we all know where the blame for the Brexit chaos really belongs. The Tories started all of this with David Cameron, who arrogantly made no plans at all in the event that people would vote to leave. It has seen off Theresa May, who refused to listen and compromise. Goodness only knows who the Tories will choose next. Whoever it may be, we can be absolutely sure that he or she will pander to the rich and play fast and loose with the lives of ordinary working people. This botched Tory Brexit has affected so many of our members already, whether it is the rising cost from a weaker pound in supermarkets or going on holiday, or the cloud of uncertainty across much of the economy.

For some of our members, very sadly, it has even contributed to the loss of their jobs. Just ask those impacted, as Jenny and Sharron have said so passionately, by the Ford Motor Company's decision to close the Bridgend Engine Plant with the loss of 1,700 jobs and the devastating hit on the car industry in Wales, the town of Bridgend, the

regional economy and, more significantly, the working lives of our members and their families.

Congress, whilst in every case there are a range of factors behind closure and job losses, we are seeing Brexit making things harder, not easier, in so many workplaces, not least, of course, in the manufacturing sector. For some companies, it is literally the straw that is breaking or has broken the camel's back.

The CEC wishes delegates to know that we have tried so hard to work with the Government to get the best possible outcome. This Statement, Congress, reflects that effort and endeavour.

Our General Secretary received a last-minute telephone call when Theresa May's deal was heading for the first of many defeats. After he checked his calendar to ensure it wasn't April 1<sup>st</sup>, he had what I am sure was a very interesting conversation with the Prime Minister, but of course she did not listen. She did not appreciate the priorities and did not show any interest at all in addressing any part of the root causes of Brexit.

Colleagues, unlike the Tory Government, GMB wants to provide real solutions for the problems that working people face. A genuine agenda to take back control means ending austerity, bringing privatised services back into public ownership and redistributing wealth and opportunity. Clearly, we will need Labour in power for that. But we will not let other parties off the hook in the meantime, either. That is why, colleagues, GMB is proposing a fair movement-of-labour agenda in this Statement. There will be understandable anger at cynical employers undercutting the rate for the job. Fair movement of labour means ending the overseas-only advertising of jobs in the UK. It means strengthening the rights of workers and unions to access and organise from day one. It means, Congress, fair work for everyone. (*Applause*) If there is a model to follow and pursue it is the social partnership model that we are lobbying the Welsh Assembly Government to introduce in Wales.

Forget, colleagues, the right-wing press and their rhetoric about migrant workers, because they make a positive and a real contribution to our economy and to wider society. (*Applause*) Of course, many of the financial benefits of the added tax grab go to the Treasury and not to local communities and they are not invested in public services either. We want to reverse all of that. So unlike bad bosses and opportunistic right-wing politicians, GMB stands — let's be very clear about this — to unite the working class and not to divide it. (*Applause*) Do you know what? This fair-movement agenda can all be implemented now, even while we are still in the EU. We want to challenge all political parties to back this campaign immediately. We don't know who the next Tory Prime Minister will be but, Congress, I ask you this: Do you trust the likes of Boris Johnson or Michael Gove to look after the interests of GMB members? Of course you don't. We don't. That's why GMB will continue to make the case for the public and not for politicians to have the final say on any Brexit deal. In our day-to-day union life, we negotiate the best deal possible before putting it to members for them to decide if it is good enough. Of course, that should apply to Brexit, too.

I am proud that GMB has stood up for our members throughout this very uncertain period. Some unions have tried to keep their heads down, but that is not the GMB

way and that never will be the GMB way. None of us know how this uncertainty will end, but what we can be sure of, Congress, is that the GMB will continue to call out bad employers, protect our members' jobs, conditions of employment and, of course, challenge discrimination and inequality whenever and wherever it may exist. Congress, please support this Statement. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. I call Dave Clements, to second, who is a member of the Brexit Working Party.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Dave Clements, to second, a member of the Brexit Working Party.

DAVE CLEMENTS (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, as a lay member part of the National Brexit Working Group, I bring 35 years of experience in shipping, ports, logistics, and international trade, and I am based in Dover. The Dover Strait is a major trade artery with Dover Port handling 120 billion of imports and exports with 10,000 trucks shipping daily. The current system allows frictionless trade which is vital not only to the direct business but all UK businesses around the country where GMB members work.

Brexit Secretary, Dominic Raab admitted he had not realised the importance of the Dover/Calais crossing. Most days when not in Brighton I look across the Channel at France with hundreds of shipping movements. There is a tunnel you cannot see either. Dominic, hello, 10,000 trucks are moving seamlessly every day, moving vital goods such as medicines, and there are some radioactive isotopes and the like.

Moving on to Grayling, a man who blew millions on a company with no ferries and £33million paid out in compensation so far; EuroTunnel suing because they were locked out of the process, and now my lot, P&O, doing the same to get compensation back for unfair treatment. Anyone with shipping knowledge would know the complexities of configuring a ship to a specific route, but Seaborne had no ships. Now, taxpayers fork out for the incompetency of the Tories. What a shambles! Raab, Boris, Gove, whoever, one will be the PM. Frightening, isn't it? Thanks to 100,000 Tories. So much for restoring democracy to the UK. The GMB will not sit back while new Thatcherites threaten our members' jobs. Every model of Brexit shows a hit to the UK economy, even Rees-Mogg admitted it might take 50 years to reap the benefit of Brexit.

The GMB will protect our members' living standards and, Congress, we will not allow Donald to get his hands on our NHS. (*Applause*) There are no chlorinated chicken or genetically modified crops for us either. The Tories always claimed to be acting in the national interests but from start to present it has been about their interests. The GMB supports jobs, communities, and standards, and the Tory nightmare is not our vision for Brexit. Please support this statement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Could I ask the speaker from Birmingham Region to come to the rostrum, please? No speaker? (*Confirmed*) London?

DAVE LEVY (London): President, Congress, first-time delegate, speaking in support of the CEC Statement on Brexit. (*Applause*) Brexit is poisoning politics in this country and it is stopping the union Movement, ourselves, and the Labour Party, from addressing the issues that matter to people. It stops us talking about how our radical manifesto can heal the country from the ravages of both Thatcherites and 21<sup>st</sup> century Tory austerity. It not only delays as promised investment and infrastructure in education, and hope, the answer to low wages, the labour market reforms, stronger minimum wage legislation, and to empower trade unions and regulate management. It is not to blame migrants, nor to extend the hostile environment to another three million citizens who are our neighbours and fellow members, nor is it to continue the Tory voter suppression excluding them from votes to which they are entitled with their citizenship.

It has been clear since June 2016 and the failure to articulate an exit model that there was always going to be a need for a final say referendum. At the time, or shortly after, I argued negotiations should be done by those who believe in it, and that is what has happened. Now we should be asked, all of us, those who voted Leave and those who voted Remain, those too young to vote last time, citizens abroad denied their votes, and those new citizens resident in the UK, we should be asked with humility but we should be asked if that is what is still wanted.

Constructive ambiguity is no longer an attractive position. It loses both the Remain and Leave votes and this is proven to all except the most blinkered by last month's EU Parliamentary results, the worrying subsequent polls, and for those of us who have been out there, personal experience. Labour lost nearly 60% of its votes, mainly to explicit Remain parties. In my home in Lewisham, South London, despite the council's position as strongly supporting a second referendum, if it had been a local authority election the Mayor would now be a LibDem. This is a local authority where there are no opposition councillors to Labour. The inconvenient truth is that certain Remainers leant Labour their votes in 2017. We must also remember that most of Labour's members, and so presumably ours, and our voters, want us to remain.

The CEC paper states that we oppose a no-deal Brexit and that is welcome, that is where we were in 2016, yet now we are in an extension period running out of time to get a satisfactory deal. The commitment to a second referendum is absolutely essential. Imagine the worst case situation next spring should we leave on Tory terms. Brexit will lead to queues on the M20, factory layoffs, or more factory layoffs I should say, food and medicine shortages, and a high inflation after currency collapse. We will be telling people it is terrible and it should be fought but if we facilitate a no-deal Brexit we will not be heard. It just will not wash.

It is time, we need a public vote and Labour should declare to remain. There is no other option. Time is out. I would also urge delegates to look with favour on Motion 283. It is not a London Region motion so obviously we will listen to debate before we make up our minds on which way to vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, the red light. Thank you. (*Applause*) Midlands, do you have a speaker?

PAUL KENNY (Midland & East Coast): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) I am here with bitter experiences of Brexit. I live in the most Brexit town near Whitby called Boston and when we had the referendum nearly 80% of the population voted to leave Europe and there had been a local transfer at the time of a mayor, and it was really disappointing when we have so many people who are from Eastern European countries come to work in our towns and to see the hostility towards those people. That is why today I think the real message is about having a clear message. More recently I stood at the local elections and lost, and yet again Brexit dominated the local debate. What we need are some clear statements and one good thing about this document, it does give us some clear vision: for example, ending overseas advertising of jobs, and also a proper migrant fund that really brings together local communities. The Government more recently have brought a migrant fund together of £1.3m in Boston and it is not delivering to the people it should be delivered to, and it will not. So, we actually need to be very clear about what kind of fund, if we are going to develop a migrant fund, which I fully support, it needs to be targeted properly. For example, one of the speakers we have coming in the next couple of days, Sadiq Khan, he was in charge of the last migrant fund and one of the things that he did was state that it needed to be ring-fenced on certain issues. I would certainly argue that it does need ring-fencing to make sure it does what it should be doing.

I am pleased to be a member of this union that has a clear vision about what we want to do about protecting workers' rights. I can tell you living in Boston I see people exploited every day of the week and that makes me shameful and appalled that we live in a country that allows that to happen. My other concern, when I heard that man who visited us last week and he wants to take our NHS away from us, we need to say very clearly to Donald Trump: "You are not going to have our NHS. It's ours, not yours. It's not here for profit. It's here to protect us." (*Applause*) A clear message to people is, support this because we need to make sure we have a clear message supporting the people we care about. Support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Northern Region, do you have a speaker? No? Okay. North West & Irish, do you have a speaker? Formally. Thank you. Scotland?

JOHN DOLAN (GMB Scotland): GMB Scotland supports the CEC Statement on Brexit. In Scotland we are conscious that Brexit is a divisive issue in the UK. Overwhelmingly the majority of people in Scotland voted to remain in the EU. The latest report to GMB Scotland highlighted the fact that Scotland exports to the EU are worth £14bn per year, and 144,000 jobs in Scotland depend on the EU. Brexit will be a disaster for jobs in Scotland. Brexit, particularly under BoJo, will be a nightmare. He threatens the whole future of the UK. GMB Scotland supports the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Southern.

SHAMIK DAS (Southern): First-time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) I am speaking in support of the Statement. What we have seen over the past three years has been disastrous, as we all know, and being in Brussels and seeing it from the other side, seeing it at EU level, and seeing the kind of reaction of all our colleagues and comrades across Europe makes it even worse, more embarrassing; when you look at how our influence as a country, as a union movement is diminished; the Labour Party



as well. We have seen it the past week as well with the visit of Donald Trump, and we are now in a situation where if we do leave the EU the only hope for the economy would be basically to double up with Donald and do some trade deal with him and risk everything, risk our NHS, risk our food standards, risk our workers' rights, risk our environmental regulations.

As we saw with the GMB report out today on the perils of WTO, we will see weekly shopping bills increasing, where families will spend £800 extra a year for their chicken, and other foods, something we absolutely need to stand against. We see it also in the figures in this report. In 15 years' time we will still be £1.5bn a year worse off because of Brexit under these deals. You see it in the parade of Tory leadership candidates, each trying to outdo each other, which in a way makes it even more essential that we bring this back to the public, that we ensure we campaign absolutely for Remain and that we do ultimately remain in the EU. It is only by being in the EU that we can achieve a lot of the aims. If you look through a lot of the motions that are appearing in the course of this week, for example one of them on carers' leave for work/life balance, just in the past few months at EU level the work/life balance directive that is going through would achieve many of these aims that we would never get under a Tory government and will struggle to get even under a Labour government outside the EU.

On everything, steel as well, we have seen the EU taking retaliatory action against China and against the US rather than just cave in to them, and a lot of the problems that have been identified are not EU issues, not the fault of the EU but the fault of the Tory government. It is only by remaining in the EU we can mitigate what a Tory government does, or even better if we can come in as a Labour government and transform the EU from within, and do all the good things we want, everything in the document that we have this week, and let's remain and let's deliver and transform a worker's vision of Europe. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shamik. Wales & South West? Formally seconding. Thank you. Yorkshire.

SARAH YOUNG (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Supporting the speech on Brexit. Do we even know when it is yet? It is supposed to be about leaving the EU but what it has proved to be is a blooming awful mess, what no one can agree on, it has divided the country, and it has taken out two prime ministers. That is not such a bad thing. Tim will look well good outside Number 10. Go and fetch keys, son! Whatever it is and wherever we are now, it is not what anyone voted for be it the Brexiteer or Remainer. There are scare stories of what will happen if we stay or if we go and there is a song that goes with that. I am not going to sing it but it is something like, *Should I stay or should I go now? If I go there will be trouble. If I stay it will be double. So come on and let me know, should I stay or should I go.* That is where Parliament, I think, is anyway. Seriously, whatever we do has to be right for our country and no one can tell us what that is. The Leave campaign quickly backtracked on £350m on the side of the bus for the NHS. Toxic Theresa almost the prima dictator with Brexit means Brexit and negotiations which were her negotiations and only hers, no cross-party talks to get what is right for everyone, which led to a deal on the table that made it worse. A democratic vote took place three years ago and an outcome has not been delivered. That delivery has created anger, frustration, and confusion, and now

another delay until Halloween. Let's not let them play *Trick or Treat* with it either. The whole country needs an honest and trusted exit that will protect every individual, rich, poor, in health the NHS must not be on the table in any trade deals whatsoever. Law and legal rights, human rights, must be protected. Trade in and out of the country must not be met with over-priced tariffs, workers' rights and employment law, terms and conditions, trade union labour and relations, and wages, must be protected. All of the above must be protected by legislation. During the referendum there is one thing that stuck in my head from one of the news channels, by leaving the EU no one will be worse off. They will just have a little less than before. That is not acceptable. Any sort of Brexit has to be one that does not favour the elite although with the Tory government it will. If Brexit is just to suit Farage then it is wrong. If the Tories cannot do this right then call a general election and give someone else a go instead of making a mockery of the UK and everyone who lives here. (*Applause*) Currently, we are a laughing stock. If no one can get his right, then it must be put back to the country in an honest and strong debate. The questions asked were Yes or No. Maybe they should have asked Noel Edmonds too, Deal or No Deal. However or whatever we do in the coming months it has to be the right thing. The democratic vote should be delivered but only when it is right for all and in a manner that will bring the country together not breed hate, division, greed for the rich, less for the working classes, and damage employment. We need to leave in a way that will leave us stronger, in a good economy, and give us for all, not just the elite capitalists. I support this report. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. Can I now move to the vote on the CEC Statement on Brexit. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*The CEC Statement on Brexit was ADOPTED.*

POLITICAL: BREXIT

THE PRESIDENT: Could the movers and seconders for Political: Brexit motions come to the front, that is Motion 283, Motion 284, and Motion 287. Does the mover of 283 want to come up?

GMB AND BREXIT  
MOTION 283

**283. GMB AND BREXIT**

This Congress overwhelmingly supports the general secretary and the CEC in consulting the GMB membership on Brexit. It is clear that the GMB membership along with the membership of other major trade unionists do not support a no deal exit from the European Union. This is in line with over 75% of Labour Party members.

This congress believes that the GMB should join with other trade unions and campaign for people's vote that contains the ability to remain in the European Union and use its influence to ensure the labour party supports a people's vote.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

AVA PAYNE (Southern): This Congress overwhelmingly supports the General Secretary and the CEC in consulting the GMB membership on Brexit. It is clear that the GMB membership along with the membership of other major trade unions do not support a no-deal exit from the European Union. This is in line with over 75% of Labour Party members. To give it my personal spin, I and many others in the BAME community now loathe the B-word. It is now akin to a swear word and has the effect of making people glaze over. So, when the question was originally put I challenged anyone to explain to me what it was all about. Anyway, we fast forward to the present and we are not any the wiser. I will leave that with you but it really needs to be sorted out.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Simon Woolley last week from Operation Black Vote and he has just accepted a knighthood from the Queen's Birthday Honours List and he has been writing on this for some time and he says that we were duped into believing that Britain would open its doors to black Commonwealth countries while other shamelessly thought, "I'm okay, let's stop the rest coming in." In reality, the BAME communities, mainly 75 to 85%, voted to reject Brexit, not least because we knew once the xenophobic genie is out of the bottle we would be the first to catch hellfire.

So what now? Maybe it is time we were more vocal about what we expect from our elected representatives and what is crystal clear is that what is being played out now is going to affect us for generations to come. So, I use my Satnav whether I know where I am going or not. We can never tell what is going to happen en route so I am grateful for the new information and guidance when I am forced to take a diversion, or it just gets me back on track; if I make a wrong turn the Satnav will get me back on track. It is time to make a decision on the information available to us now and not be fooled into driving blindly down a dead end when a U-turn will get us where we actually want to go.

This Congress believes that the GMB should join with other trade unions and campaign for the people's vote that contains the ability to remain in the European Union and use its influence to ensure the Labour Party supports the people's vote so Brexit might be Remain. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ava. Well done. A seconder?

ALAN DURRANT (Southern): Congress, I am proud to second this motion asking Congress to give its full support to the General Secretary and to the CEC in consulting the GMB members on Brexit. The GMB, amongst all other unions, do not want the UK to leave the EU without a deal. We believe it is also the view of 75% of Labour Party members. Comrades, this Congress believes that the GMB should campaign for a people's vote in a new referendum where staying in the EU would be an option on the ballot paper. Congress also believes that the GMB should use its influence to encourage the Labour Party to support a people's vote but if we get a people's vote then we could have a campaign actually to win that this time. You can guarantee that Boris will get his bus out again and there will be a huge lobby actually to go out of Brexit and we will not be able to pull it back out of the fire then. So, colleagues, I ask you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. The mover of Motion 284?

LABOUR'S STANCE ON BREXIT AND IMPACT FOR OUR MEMBERS AND  
TUC AS A WHOLE  
MOTION 284

**284. LABOUR'S STANCE ON BREXIT AND IMPACT FOR OUR MEMBERS & TUC AS  
A WHOLE**

This Congress asks the CEC to support the branch in that we believe that all the uncertainty within Government, the threat of a no deal and the Labour Party not being fully committed to Brexit, threatens our members' futures and possible working conditions, and we ask that the Labour Party keeps the communication lines open.

WCM1 BRANCH  
North West & Irish Region

*(Carried)*

LINDA WALL (North & West & Irish): I also support the CEC Statement on Brexit. President, Congress, it has been a few months since this motion was submitted and in that time the fear and uncertainty has only doubled. We have seen a complete unravelling of Theresa May's strategy on Brexit. It was not just this union that she failed to listen to. It seems that she failed to listen to or consult anybody very much outside of the ERG and the DUP. As a result, quite deservedly, Theresa May's deal has collapsed. It did not have the support of working people. It was a bad deal that did not provide any answers.

We have also seen the fall of Theresa May herself, which we will certainly be cheering this week. We also recognise that the fear and uncertainty is all the greater now than it was a few months ago, and the fear of what will happen under a new Tory Prime Minister. I do not trust any of the motley crew who are standing to listen or consult any more than Theresa May did. They are only interested in keeping the Tory Party together and keeping the Tory members happy. Johnson, and anyone like him, would quite happily negotiate away our rights and protections and they would open the door to American corporations to take over parts of the NHS, as Donald Trump wants. At least some of them would lead us into a no-deal Brexit.

The Labour Party, as we know, has been torn apart on Brexit as well and the motivation for this motion was saying that there needs to be a strong lead from Labour to support our people. Talking to the branch that put this in, many of their members work in the chemical industry where they have to deal with employers from all over Europe and there is incredible fear as to what a no-deal will mean. They do not know if they will still have their job depending on the outcome of Brexit. That is part of the reality that a no-deal will mean. There is incredible uncertainty and a threat to jobs.

It is up to Labour now to stand up to a no-deal Brexit. I think we should strongly support the CEC motion, opposition to a no-deal Brexit is absolutely key, it should be the centre point of what the GMB is campaigning for and arguing for, and I think the CEC Statement on Brexit provides a clear direction there in terms of saying what a no-deal would actually mean. Labour should listen to the trade unions and the GMB,

who speak for members across all industry. People who voted Leave and who voted Remain, it is important to take account of all those voices and hear from people what the reality of a no-deal would mean. By campaigning over that, by fighting to stop a no-deal, that is the way in which the Labour Party can bring the country together. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Linda. Is there a seconder to 284 or is it formally seconded? Formally. Thank you. The mover for Motion 287?

## RACE EQUALITY & BREXIT MOTION 287

### **287. RACE EQUALITY & BREXIT**

This Congress notes that in 2000, following the rise of the far right not only on our streets but also at the ballot box and in the seats of power, Trade Unions, Race Equality organisations and the then Commission for Race Equality worked collectively and campaigned for the Race Directive.

This piece of EU law strengthened protection against race discrimination in all EU countries. The burden of proof was on the employer to show that they had not discriminated. There is no cap on the award for discrimination cases at Employment Tribunals.

The definition for discrimination was much broader and a new definition for harassment was introduced. The Race Directive made it possible to challenge a wider range of policies, practice and behaviour that disadvantage BAME people and fuel racial hatred.

As the UK have voted to leave the EU on the 29.03.19 it is imperative that the added protection afforded by the Race Directive into UK Race discrimination is protected.

We therefore call on Congress to ensure that, as a minimum, the current race discrimination legislation remains as it currently stands.

CWU STAFF BRANCH  
London Region

(*Carried*)

FEVZI HUSSEIN (London): Afternoon, Congress, President, comrades. I think the sister from the Southern Region hit the nail on the head. We had a really good debate on what Brexit means in an economic context but for the reality of a lot of BAME people we are walking around with a target on our foreheads and a target on our backs. When I came to Congress I said to myself I would not have anything to do with that B-word. Well, here I am so I offer my sincere apologies. Actually, as someone said before, it is not all bad because it has helped us to see the back of that awful Prime Minister, Theresa May – (*Applause*) – one dangerous idiot who is going to be replaced by another one.

Our political leader, Jeremy, has quite rightly said that a no-deal Brexit can see the demise of our hard-won employment rights. We know the rules are not perfect. We know racism in the workplace exists. We know that the race pay gap is even wider than the gender pay gap, but I shudder to think what work would be like if we did not have the EU directive protections in place. I could be called a Turkish bastard or a terrorist. I could be spat at. I guess these could happen now but it is unlikely as most people know that discrimination legislation would see strong penalties in response. Congress, there is an irony here. Since the EU referendum Brexit has actually underlined the need for us to keep the race discrimination law as an absolute minimum. Attacks against migrant workers, people of different faiths, the LGBT

community, disabled people, have all increased since the referendum and the politics of fear and scape-goating of these people have gone into overdrive.

Congress, Brexit has also seen a new weapon of mass destruction come into play, the “weaponisation” of the milkshake. This brought a smile to many of our faces, with Stephen Yaxley-Lennon being repeatedly targeted in the North West. Well played to those people. “Milkshaking” really took off after Yaxley-Lennon was targeted. A milkshake attack on Nigel Farage prompted him to tweet, sadly Remainers have become radicalised. UKIP candidate Carl Benjamin, a misogynist, who disgustingly talked about raping the Labour MP, Jess Phillips, has been “milkshaked” at least four times. I am not quite sure how he is still walking the streets after those comments.

Brexit divides opinion. Whilst we can sit and have a bit of a giggle about the milkshakes, the reality for many people who are not white British is far from funny. The United Nations recently reported that a Brexit-related trend that threatens race law equality in the UK has been the growth in unacceptable explicit racial ethnic and religious intolerance. In three years since Brexit incidents have gone up from about 20,000 a year to now over 80,000 a year and almost all of these, Congress, are racially motivated.

Congress, this is a very important motion, very close to our hearts. We need to protect all our workers as much as we can and this includes maintaining current protections around race equality. On this basis, I commend this motion to you and seek your support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Fevzi. Secunder?

SARAH HURLEY (London): President, Congress, since the UK voted to leave the EU we saw on TV and social media an immediate rise in hate crimes and the Far Right all over the UK. It was as if someone had given a green light or flicked a switch to give the go-ahead to hate someone just based on their race or origin. Congress, what followed was just as ugly with the Tories being very busy backstabbing their leader, resigning all over the place and slating Labour, showing everyone that they were far from strong and stable and not able to get on with the job or bringing our country back together from the mess that was left by David Cameron, sitting back watching the disaster he had caused with his trotters up.

Congress, with the results of the MEP elections it tells us that what lies ahead will be just as worse so we must fight to keep the race directive and all the current discrimination legislation which covers the abyss in the UK. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? No? Sorry, there is. Okay. London, are you coming up?

GORDON CULLUM (London): President, Congress, comrades, first-time delegate, third-time speaker now. (*Applause*) I am speaking against Motion 283 with respect to my previous speakers who share the same values and I agree on a lot of what has been said but every speech on Brexit has been based on fear. We are proud trade unionists. It used to be the default position of Labour and the left trade unionists who were Euro sceptic, they were against the EU. As we see it, if Labour are seen to force

a second referendum, because that is what a people's vote is, huge swathes of the country, especially in the old industrial heartlands who suffered 40 years of neo-liberalism started by Thatcher and now promoted by the EU through liberalisation of tariffs, those old Labour heartlands so needed for a Labour majority and Corbyn government will not trust Labour in a general election after we say their first vote does not matter. (*Applause*)

People are well aware of other countries' recent history of being forced to vote twice on this and if this is the case I have little doubt that another Leave vote will return but with another even worse toxic atmosphere. The only winners of this delay are the privateers and venture capitalists from the Brexit Party and the nationalists from the toxic UKIP. Let's push to get this sorted, move on, and give full weight to Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Does anybody else wish to come in on this debate? No? Then does Southern Region want to exercise their right of reply? Yes? Southern Region, does the mover want to exercise their right of reply? No? Okay, in that case can I ask Andy Newman to respond on behalf of the CEC.

ANDY NEWMAN (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, outlining our stance on Motions 283 and 284.

Starting with Motion 283, GMB and Brexit, the CEC stance is to support with some qualification. Since 2016, our union has sought to engage constructively with the Government to ensure the interests of our members are safeguarded during their Brexit preparations, protecting the economy, jobs, and employment rights. Frankly, we have been disappointed and frustrated at every step. Theresa May's proposed deal would be damaging to our members' industrial interest and now we are leaving Tories flirting with the idea of no deal, which might be a paradise for financial speculators, parasites, and commodity brokers like Nigel Farage used to be, but will be a disaster for real jobs, particularly in manufacturing and agriculture.

Comrades, we do not trust this parliament dominated by the Conservative Party and the DUP to protect our members' interests through Brexit. That is why we support the motion. Our qualification is that in September 2018 the CEC already decided that any final deal should be put back to the electorate for a public vote. It may be that the only way to get such a public vote through parliament will be to include the option on the ballot paper and maintaining our current relationship with the EU. If that happens, it would be consistent with GMB policy, the Brexit Statement that you just voted for, for Congress 2019.

Our second qualification is that this motion refers to a people's vote. The CEC Brexit Working Group prefers to avoid this term as it can be confused with the cross-party campaign to remain in the EU, a campaign which often seems to spend more time criticising Jeremy Corbyn than Theresa May and the Tories. I take the points that Gordon Cullum has made, many of our members voted Leave, many of our members voted Remain. We respect the views of both sets of members. Views are very strong on this issue. (*Applause*) Because of that, the Brexit Working Group of the GMB prefers not to use the term "people's vote" and be confused with the active Remain

campaigners, we prefer the expression “a public vote on the deal”. With that qualification, we would like you to support Motion 283.

On Motion 284, fantastic speech from Linda Wall, by the way, I think it moved all of us, our qualification is that the CEC does not believe that the chaos over Brexit uncertainty lies with the Labour Party. The blame for that lies absolutely squarely with Theresa May, with the Conservatives, and the failed approach of the Government.

On that basis, please, comrades, support both motions with the qualifications I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 283? Yes? Thank you. Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification on Motion 284? Yes? Thank you. I shall move to the vote on Motion 283. All those in favour with the qualification, please show. All those against. That is carried.

*Motion 283 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 284, all those in favour to support with the qualification please show. All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 284 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 287, all those in support. The CEC is supporting this motion. All those in favour please show. All those against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 287 was CARRIED.*

POLITICAL: GENERAL

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask the movers and seconders of Motions 273, 276, 278, 279, 280, and 282 to come down to the front. Thank you.

GOOD WORK – GREAT OPPORTUNITIES  
MOTION 273

**273. GOOD WORK - GREAT OPPORTUNITIES**

This Congress should be aware of the general lack of awareness of the value and work of trade unions. We need to be seen to be relevant in the world of work and so need to reach out to communities and the other non-traditional workplaces.

We welcome the current project being undertaken in London on the “Good Work Standard” which develops and promotes a standard of best employment practices and recognises “good” employers. GMB and other trade unions have been working on this initiative which reaches out to the smaller organisations who may not normally have exposure to trade union. We call on Congress to ensure that this initiative is rolled out to other metropolitan Mayors across the country.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH

London Region

(*Carried*)



MARY GOODSON (London): Congress, I know I am speaking to the converted but we need to make everyone aware of the value of trade unions and the value of working with trade unions. As trade unionists we should be relevant in all workplaces and we should also be reaching out to new communities and embracing new non-traditional workplaces. We believe that unions are best placed to be one of the stakeholders working with the Mayor's office on ensuring that workers are treated fairly and developing a model of what constitutes good work.

As a trade union we aim to end exploitation, discrimination, and injustice, and highlight pure working practices. Our representatives and activists are at the heart of our work to help employers to negotiate fair and beneficial agreements to help to achieve our purpose. Our motion aims to make Congress aware of current Mayor of London's good work standard which is seeking to improve working conditions across employers in the London area, promote economic fairness, and aims to make London the best place in the world to work. The good work standard has both businesses and workers in focus making sure all workers have the opportunity to discover and develop their talents and enjoy work that is fulfilling and rewarding.

The good work standard is like investors in people, or the living wage accreditation. However, to qualify for this initiative and stamp of approval the organisations will apply for accreditation and be judged on a set criterion so they will be recognised as leading employers in London. The standard aims to benefit both businesses and workers and make a change to communities and society as the standard goes beyond the workplace. As we come to Congress the good work standard is about to be launched and we are hoping that the GMB practises what we preach and become accredited to the standard, hopefully reaching the excellence level. As a union we can use this initiative to help to get us into smaller workplaces which we may not traditionally organise in. This will be a great opportunity for us to grow and shine. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder from London Region?

VANESSA SIBBALD (London): I am here again, Congress. I am seconding Motion 273 and just to add that London and Southern Region of GMB, and other unions, have been involved from the start working with the Mayor's office to make sure that union organisations and representation are embedded in these standards, which are open to companies of all sizes and sectors. We made sure that the good work standard has a firm foundation with clear and fair practices as a benchmark for all companies to aspire based on four pillars: fair pay in contracts, workplace wellbeing, skills and development, diversity and recruitment. Organisations will apply for accreditation and be judged on certain criteria so they can be recognised as leading employers in London. The standard aims to benefit both businesses and workers and to make changes to communities and society as the standard goes beyond the workplace. As we come to Congress the good work standard is about to be launched and we are hoping that GMB practises what we preach and becomes accredited to the standard, hopefully reaching excellence level. As a union we can use this initiative to help us get into smaller workplaces that we may not traditionally organise in, so this will be a great opportunity for us to grow and shine. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: The mover of 276. It would help if I turned my light on!

TRADE AGREEMENTS  
MOTION 276

**276. TRADE AGREEMENTS**

GMB calls on the government consult with trades unions prior to entering into any trade agreements with any other countries. Of particular concern will be the threats that any such agreements pose to workers' rights, jobs, public services and democracy.

C28 PETS BRANCH  
Southern Region  
(Carried)

DAVID TUCKWELL (Southern): President, Congress, trade is the lifeblood of the country. Trade agreements govern how it benefits us. You have probably heard of the chlorine-washed chicken, hormone-treated beef, genetically modified food, and Trump's comments on the NHS and its potential dismantling. We want to be protected from these. The bad trade agreements can be used as a lever to break open what we hold dear. Rich politicians, Boris Johnson, Jacob Rees-Mogg, Nigel Farage, they look forward to negotiating trade agreements that will enrich them and impoverish our lives. Businesses and governments often construct trade agreements to include dispute resolution in closed courts. These prevent scrutiny and hinder our ability to protect our public services and also restrict access to democracy and justice. There is always the risk that trade agreements build in threats to our health and to workers' rights and protections, sometimes by stealth. We need balanced negotiations for the good of all not just involving politicians and business. Trade unions ought to be part of that process too and to represent us. Please support. Thank you.  
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. A seconder for Motion 276?

JEFF HECTOR (Southern): First-time speaker. (Applause) President, Congress, it is quite simple, we need to protect workers' rights and jobs, and protect the standards in industry and defend the NHS. GMB must not be allowed to be swept aside. Members do not want lower living standards and price increases. Trade unions, and the GMB, want a say in any future Brexit trade agreements. Support this motion.  
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeff. A mover for Motion 278?

TRUST WOMEN IN NORTHERN IRELAND  
MOTION 278

**278. TRUST WOMEN IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

This Congress notes that last year 1.4 million people in Ireland voted by a majority decision in a historic referendum to liberalise their laws on abortion and repeal the eighth amendment. We welcome the news that in December 2018, Irish President Michael D Higgins signed the Bill that legalises abortion in the Republic of Ireland through the "Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy Bill".  
Despite this, it is now time for Northern Ireland to change its harsh abortion laws which continue to, not only discriminate against women but place them at high risk of death. We must trust women and not the state.

The current laws in Northern Ireland on abortion were enacted during Queen Victoria's time. The Abortion Act 1967 which allows legal abortion in England, Scotland and Wales, was not extended to Northern Ireland.

This Government is allowing Northern Ireland to be forgotten and this injustice forces women to remain pregnant when they do not want to and criminalises them.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) state that the current abortion laws in Northern Ireland amount to grave and systematic violations of women's rights, tantamount to torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Stormont has the power to change Northern Irish law on abortion. Westminster has a duty to Northern Irish women to act now and trust women. We welcome Stella Creasy's emergency debate last June but nothing has changed and we also note that there have been problems with the Irish Abortion services which started providing services from 1 January 2019.

We call upon Congress to:-

1. Continue to work with other organisations on the campaign to liberalise abortion laws in Northern Ireland.
2. Lobby and ensure all GMB supported MPs vote for this change for example by tabling a motion as a matter of urgency/raise a question in Parliament.
3. Continue to offer support to abortion rights groups campaigning for Northern Ireland to liberalise its laws on abortion.
4. Ensure that this is in the Labour Party manifesto.

EALING GMB BRANCH  
London Region

*(Carried)*

MARY GOODSON (London): We come to 2019 and although we celebrate the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act and the repeal of the Eighth Amendment in the Republic of Ireland, women in the UK are not equal. The anti-women legislation of Northern Ireland still insists that women are not to be trusted with their own bodies. The 1861 Offences against the Person Act applies in Northern Ireland making it illegal to seek an abortion and to bring on an abortion. Our hard-won 1967 Act giving us some rights is not applied in Northern Ireland and these are sisters without support. We are not trusted to define what we want to do with our bodies and apparently invoke the wrath of the gods to shame, demean, vilify, and damn women and their clinicians.

Lobby your local MP, join the organisation and campaign to bring equal status to our sisters in Northern Ireland, tell your story, be a woman who can speak and be proud to be a daughter, mother, or sister of the criminals who were and are spearheading the fight to control our own bodies. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. A seconder?

LESLEY STANSFIELD (London): First-time delegate but second-time speaker this time. *(Applause)* President, Congress, I am the daughter of a criminal who was never caught but I stand by her decision to commit an act so heinous in the eyes of the law that my mother could have been sentenced to life imprisonment. My Mum had an abortion in the early 1960s and she bled in agony, shamed and embarrassed. My Mum endured torture. My Mum is a hero. *(Applause)* Women in Northern Ireland who choose to terminate a pregnancy do not want to be heroes. They do not want or

cannot do arduous lonely journeys to get a safe medically supervised abortion. They do not want the threat of imprisonment. Recent Alabama legislation may shock us but Northern Ireland law goes further and criminalises women who have abortions. Women just want access to local, safe, legal abortions should they choose. How dare Northern Ireland politicians force unwanted pregnancies on women. How dare they dictate what women do with their bodies. Now let us dare to change things and to trust women. Stand by our sisters in Northern Ireland who demand equal status with the rest of the UK, support a change in the law where Northern Ireland politicians are dragged screaming and kicking into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Congress, support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done, Lesley. The mover of Motion 279?

## RATIFY THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION MOTION 279

### **279. RATIFY THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION**

This Congress welcomes the UK Government's decision in 2012 to sign the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (known as the Istanbul convention) but we are disappointed that the Convention is still not ratified years later.

This Convention is the most comprehensive legal framework that exists to tackle violence against women and girls, covering domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, female genital mutilation (FGM), so-called honour-based violence, and forced marriage.

Conference notes that the Istanbul Convention, once ratified, requires all signatories to commit to funding and resourcing a number of measures, including:

- ensuring that victims have access to services facilitating their recovery from violence;
- ensuring that victims have access to health care and social services and that services are adequately resourced and professionals are trained to assist victims and refer them to the appropriate services.

Congress notes that the UK Government has yet to ratify the Istanbul Convention. Conference commends the 'I C Change' campaign which brings third sector organisations and individual women together to press for the full adoption of the Istanbul Convention.

Congress agrees to:

- Support the demands of I C Change
- Pressure the Labour Party to place this issue high up on the agenda for campaigning, including in any future General Election Manifesto, and commits to immediate ratification when in government.
- Provide information and support for workplace reps on how to recognise the signs of domestic violence, and signpost women towards support.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH  
London Region

(*Carried*)

RICKY JONES (London): A newly elected Labour councillor, first-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) President, Congress, I am pleased to be moving Motion 279. Women and girls across the world face violence and the threat of violence every day. The Istanbul Convention is a European agreement from 2014 where countries sign up and put in place legal steps to prevent violence against women and girls, make sure there are resources in place to help victims of violence and protect them from those who carry out the violence. Rates of violence against women and girls are horrific. Even in the UK, one in five women has experienced

sexual violence since the age of 16. Domestic violence will affect one in four women. Two women each week are killed by their partners or ex-partners, in England and Wales. This is not a problem we can ignore. It affects our friends, our colleagues, our families.

Seven years ago the Government signed the Istanbul Convention but the next step is ratification. Ratification means all the measures in the convention will become law. While most of the European countries have now ratified the convention our Tory government is still stalling. The motion calls on our union to make sure we are playing our part and our reps have information and support to be able to recognise signs of domestic violence and to be able to signpost vulnerable women to a place that can help.

The motion also asks the union to support the demands of the IC challenge campaign, which is putting pressure on the Government to ratify the Convention and to put pressure on the Labour Party to do the same. Let's not forget people like Sally Cullen, another woman who from the age of 15 suffered abuse from her husband. She was released in February when her conviction was reduced to manslaughter. Many women should be having the same situation going on. Also, let's not forget women who suffer rape and female genital mutilation. Please support the motion to help vulnerable women and girls get the support and legal protection they need. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder?

MARIA JENNINGS (London): President, Congress, it is time enough for the UK government to ratify the Istanbul Convention. The UK currently discriminates against women experiencing domestic violence and that is simply shameful. The Probation Service that we have in this country specifically discriminates against women by making sure that a perpetrator of domestic violence is dealt with by a far more junior probation officer than if there was not a victim of domestic violence. That means a junior probation officer can deal with an offence such as actual bodily harm whereas if actual bodily harm is caused to a stranger then a senior probation officer deals with that offence. That makes women much more at risk of serious violence and harm and this has to stop and stop now. It is time to adopt the Istanbul Convention. Thank you. *(Applause)*

JUNE MINNERY: The mover of Motion 280, please?

#### WHY AND HOW ARE CHILDREN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING BEING "LOST" IN OUR CARE SYSTEM MOTION 280

#### **280. WHY AND HOW ARE CHILDREN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING BEING 'LOST' IN OUR CARE SYSTEM**

This Congress notes that a quarter of trafficked children who were in the care of Local Authorities in the UK last year have gone missing from the system. We call upon the GMB to campaign in our Local Authorities, and demand that our MPs take note and action this worrying concern.

HULL PAINT & ENGINEERING BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

*(Carried)*

TONI YEL (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, the United Kingdom is the most prominent country of origin for trafficked children. Thousands are identified as victims of trafficking in the UK with numbers rising each year. This is our problem. This is happening here and we need to call on the Government to recognise this growing issue needs action. Child trafficking is child abuse. It is defined as recruiting children, receiving and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation. Traffickers use grooming techniques to gain the trust of a child, family, or community, where they may trick, force, or persuade children to leave their homes. It can even be organised by the children's own families and sometimes families will be asked for payment towards the service a trafficker is providing.

Children are trafficked for sexual exploitation, criminal activity, including moving drugs, forced marriage, forced labour, and children who are trafficked are usually trafficked in more than just one way. Being trafficked is an abuse in itself but these children have extremely complex needs and will experience other forms of abuse and neglect that impacts on their physical health, their mental health, social and emotional development. By working together, having commitment and putting resources in place professionals can help protect and support these vulnerable children. Children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking if they come from an area where there is poverty, or where there is war. We know this is happening more frequently due to austerity and world conflict. Children are also being trafficked from one part of the UK to another and a quarter of all trafficked children go missing from local authority care and are being failed by our care system. Across the country 38 local authorities reported having at least one child who has not been found and the numbers range from one up to 38 children in one area.

Last October, 120,000 supporters called for specialist support for trafficked children, a message to the Government that the public demanded a guaranteed specialist support service. Children need to be protected and for professionals to work together to support them with the adequate funding in place for the services. Children services have been cut year on year but this problem is getting worse and worse. All of these children need an independent trusted individual to support them yet we do not have a comprehensive guardianship service available to them. We call upon the GMB to campaign in our local authorities and demand that our MPs take note and action this worrying concern. Congress, please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Toni. Secunder?

SARA THORPE (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* In 2017 to 2018 there were 75,420 children being looked after by local authorities. This was a rise by 4% in 2016 to 2017. As funding is being cut the need for these services increases. Local authority beds are being reduced and private sector beds are being increased. This means our most vulnerable children's lives are a business model with their needs being assessed on cost and profit, not on what they need. There is a shortage on foster carers and an even bigger shortage of foster carers who work with asylum seekers. Training is based on business service needs so workers get training after the fact instead of being prepared. Workers struggle to act

on training due to staff shortages, even safeguard training, which is statutory. Facility time is under attack which is affecting our workers directly and our vulnerable children indirectly. The Victoria Climbié case review in 2001 and many after all identified the failings of communities within services and sharing information between different services. This still is a major issue within services and then the GDPR has made information sharing even harder.

Most of our vulnerable children are business models sitting on waiting lists for six months, workers with inadequate training and knowledge, thresholds for services too high, and residential homes running on less than statutory requirements. This is just some of the many reasons how services are failing our vulnerable children from being targeted and groomed for the sole purpose of their worth to the traffickers, whether it be child sexual exploitation, modern day slavery, or transporting drugs around the country. Congress, please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sara. The mover of Motion 282?

## STOP THE DECLINE OF HIGH STREET SHOPS MOTION 282

### **282. STOP THE DECLINE OF HIGH STREET SHOPS**

This Congress calls upon the Government to invest in the High Streets. Once upon a time we had the butchers, the bakers and the candlestick makers. Now we have very few banks, very few post offices and very few pubs, fewer shops. Police are non-existent. There needs to be investment in our High Streets to protect workers' jobs.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH  
London Region

(*Carried*)

DOUGLAS RIGBY (London): Congress, once upon a time we had like in the nursery rhymes, the butchers, the bakers, the candlestick makers. Please excuse me for using bad language. Margaret Thatcher once said the British are a bunch of shopkeepers. No longer, it seems. Now we have very little in the high streets except charity shops. Cities, towns, villages, no longer have butchers, bakers, post offices, police stations, bobbies on the beat, chemists, clothes shops, shoe shops, banks, pubs, just to name but a few. Whilst no one is averse to large shops in out-of-town places, however, if you live in a village or a town, or a small community, all of the above are nearly non-existent. If a person needs anything from the shops or utilities mentioned, you will need a car as public service transport is non-existent, unless you live in a large city or a town. The Government must invest in villages and towns. We do not want to see boarded-up shops or charity shops one after another. Just recently a member of the public was helping out the police by being publicly minded. He took it upon himself to collect knives. However, when he went to find a police station to hand them in he could not find one that was open. We need investment in shops in the high streets to be able to sustain towns and villages, otherwise the heart of the towns and villages will be ripped out of them. Back to basics, butchers, bakers, police, post office. Congress, I ask you to move this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doug. Secunder?

ALLAN THOMPSON (London): The crisis on our high streets started slowly. The challenge from large out-of-town supermarkets and retail parks caused many small typically family-owned businesses to close. In recent years, however, even large employers, such as House of Fraser, and Poundworld, have gone into administration which shows that no one is safe from the threat. Since 2013 town centres have lost on average 8% of their shops. It is a number of jobs lost to this crisis that is often the tragedy felt at home. Over 160,000 retail jobs are predicted to disappear from our high streets by the end of this year. One reason why shops on the high street continue to struggle is simply because weekly wages have stagnated. Shoppers have suffered with these stagnant wages and relatively high levels of inflation forcing cash-strapped families to make difficult spending decisions in order to cut costs. Another major factor is internet sales, now making up over 20% of all retail sales led by online only giants, such as Amazon; Amazon, who have paid just £61m in corporation tax in 20 years operating in the UK. To give some context to that figure, that is less than Marks & Spencer paid in the last year alone.

We can change this by keeping pressure on governments to create a more equal playing field ensuring large multinationals pay their fair share of tax, by continuing to campaign for a fair wage for all, and by shopping locally where we can and supporting small and independent businesses. Help save our high streets. Support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? No? Okay, in that case the CEC is supporting all of the motions, and I can go straight to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 273, please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 273 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 276 please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 276 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 278 please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 278 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 279 please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 279 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 280 please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 280 was CARRIED.*



THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 282 please show. Anyone against?  
That is carried.

*Motion 282 was CARRIED.*

POLITICAL: LABOUR PARTY

THE PRESIDENT: We are down to our last four motions of the day. Okay, can I now ask for the movers of Motions 288, 289, 290 and 292 to come to the front, please.

IMPROVING LABOUR PARTY COMMUNICATION AND DEMOCRACY  
MOTION 288

**288. IMPROVING LABOUR PARTY COMMUNICATION AND DEMOCRACY**

This Congress calls upon Labour Party supported MPs to sign up to a Charter to communicate their decisions and activities to the GMB Branches that sponsor them.

This would enable a Branch agenda political item to be a topic of discussion locally at Branch, using up-to-date information from the supported MP. Further, it would encourage political activity by GMB members and Labour Party membership.

Congress calls therefore for a Charter to be created and promoted to our GMB supported Members of Parliament.

SCUNTHORPE DISTRICT & APEX BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

MILES SHORT (Midland and East Coast): This Congress calls upon the Labour Party supported MPs to sign up to a charter to communicate their decisions and activities to branches, to ask the MPs (which we as a union support and back financially) to tell us what they have been doing for the last three months, four months, three years. I am not asking them to come to a meeting or to talk to us, to have a meeting especially just to talk about that. What I am asking for is an email which will not take a minute, a telephone call to the secretary of the branch, or just a letter if you cannot do an email, cannot do a phone call, a letter saying, "This is what I have done for the last three months," and maybe we would support that, maybe. Maybe other parties might take it on but I cannot see that happening. I cannot see Boris Johnson or any of them doing that. I know it is not going to happen but I know our Labour MPs might do it. Our Labour MP, Nic Dakin, keeps in touch with us regularly and if he can do it, so can the rest. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Miles. Secunder?

PAUL KENNY (Midland & East Coast): First Congress, second speech. (*Applause*) I am pleased to support this motion. On the issue of Brexit, we need to make sure that we have clear communications. If we are going to have a progressive government that delivers a manifesto like we did in 1945 we need to make sure that we have progressive communications. I cannot tell you too often that if you are a member of the Labour Party you often feel that we need to do better. I just think the GMB needs to be leading the campaign. You only have to look at what happened last week in Peterborough where the union did support and we actually got a good thing out of that. It just seems to me that if we talk the right kind of language we can make sure

that we get the right kind of objectives. If we need a Labour government, we need to make sure that we have communications open. I would say support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. The mover of Motion 289?

## CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR REFORM

### MOTION 289

#### **289. CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR LAW REFORM**

This Congress notes Labour's 2017 Manifesto Chapter "A fair deal at work".

Congress welcomes the commitments for a new Ministry of Labour/Department of Employment.

Congress calls:

1. For Labour's Manifesto to contain explicit proposals to implement laws to "ensure Britain abides by the global Labour standards of the ILO conventions".
2. For Labour's Manifesto to contain explicit proposals to implement laws about Trade Union Rights to organise meeting the GMB's stated policy aims including solidarity action; this will require the repeal of Thatcher's and later Tory Trade Union "Reform" laws.
3. For the next Labour Government to repeal the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014.

Congress instructs the CEC to campaign for these goals and to co-operate with the TUC and other civic society organisations with similar goals.

## LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH

London Region

(*Carried*)

DAVE LEVY (London): Still a first-time delegate and moving Motion 289. We all know that wages have fallen as a proportion of the national income over the last 40 years, that the unions have created the five-day working week, Health and Safety at Work Act, a minimum working wage, the Wages Act, and many other reforms all with the aim of leading to justice in the workplace. We all know that bosses, management, and the Tory Party, have fought the unions and the justice that we bring every step of the way. Our predecessors knew that for justice in the workplace not only did we need organisation in those workplaces but we needed laws to help us organise and to enforce management to behave with decency to workers and their neighbours so we created the Labour Party.

On another strand, after the Second World War in the glow of the foundation of the United Nations the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was made and the International Labour Organisation was founded. In 1979, the election of the Thatcher government started a backlash against the achievements that we had made both in terms of justice and in terms of our rights to organise. Thatcher's seemingly annual changes in the law slowly introduced mandatory postal ballots, prohibited secondary picketing, constrained the use of political funds, restricted closed shops, restricted solidarity actions, and constrained disputes to workplace issues. Later in the administration they increased the expense of individual balloting requiring balloting on the political fund, and then postal ballots on strike decisions. They prohibited

disciplinary action on members, the scabs, restricted facility time, criminalised unofficial action and mandated a seven-day working period. Sadly, the Blair and Brown governments failed to repeal a single one of these so-called reforms. In 2016, the Tory government also increased strike ballot thresholds, mandated a turnout threshold, which of course does not exist in election to their own positions so we are still waiting for that. We have also lost the right to undertake political strikes, for instance on the NHS funding, and solidarity strikes, which led to dreadful circumstances where ASLEF were involved in disputes on Southern and where the UCU pickets cannot ask for solidarity from their co-workers but can from their students.

The GMB has good if not great policy in opposing and reversing all these constraints on our right effectively to organise, being the effective right to strike, which includes effective picketing, the re-establishment of workplace ballots as opposed to postal ballots because the act of voting, the decision to strike, is a collective one and not individual. We should have the right to act speedily, especially in cases of victimisation but also in pay disputes.

Labour's 2017 manifesto looks good, with repeal of recent trade union laws and the commitment that a Labour government would ensure Britain abides by the global labour standards, the ALO Conventions. It is more radical than it seems since it was one of Thatcher's boasts that the UK had the Western world's most restrictive trade union regulations, our laws break a lot of those standards. Effective right to organise is the workers' defence against discrimination and exploitation and today's law has a chilling effect on that right to organise to take effective action. Labour's next manifesto needs to restore the effective right to organise. The movement needs a better goal than merely the repeal of the 2016 Act. Just to remind ourselves how far the UK has fallen below standards of decency, I will quote part of Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The whole thing is worth reading, though. It states: "Everyone has the right to form and join a trade union for the protection of his or her interests." Let's get more of our union's policy into that next manifesto and let's restore the right to organise, the only way to achieve justice in the workplace. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder?

DAVID REID (London): The video that opened Congress is an important statement as to why we need to pass this motion. The reason the Tories have rolled back our rights at work and our right to organise is because of the victories they achieved. The Tory governments of Thatcher and Major passed seven Acts, all of them restricting the rights of the trade unions. The video showed how a GMB member was the first Minister of Labour and we welcome Labour's commitment to recreate the position. Labour's manifesto promises to repeal the 2016 law, which introduced turnout levels for strike ballots, something we are still waiting for parliament to introduce for themselves. We need an effective right to organise, an effective right to strike, and on this issue Labour can do no better than repeal the 2016 Act. Let's make sure it does. As a union we should put pressure on Labour to have in its manifesto to make the union stronger and help the working people of this country. Please support this motion. I thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. The mover of Motion 290?

## SCOTTISH POLITICS

### MOTION 290

#### **290. SCOTTISH POLITICS**

"This Congress recognises the long and valued relationship between the GMB and the Labour Party.

"However, in the years which have passed since devolution, the plurality of Scottish politics has established a political landscape which is unique to Scotland.

"In the interests of our members in Scotland, Congress agrees to examine our relationship with elected members in Scotland to determine how best to utilise political relationships to achieve a fair and just society for both GMB members and the Scottish people, and to involve Scottish Branches in this exercise."

GLASGOW GENERAL APEX BRANCH

GMB Scotland

*(Carried)*

THOMAS CARR-POLLOCK (GMB Scotland): Congress, we believe the relationship GMB have with the Labour Party is and continues to be the best vehicle to promote the political agenda of GMB and the wider trades union Movement, and to defend the essential public services on which our members, their families, and the most vulnerable members of our society all depend. Congress, when Labour is strong we march forward together. When Labour is in power we win together. However, politics in Scotland since devolution is unique and is rarely adequately reflected by the UK media. Without going into the differences of public opinion on the major issues of the day, such as Brexit, the European Parliamentary elections provided a salutary if not shocking snapshot of how support for the main political parties now varies throughout the UK.

However, it is not only major constitutional issues being debated in Scotland. It is necessary for GMB Scotland to have a voice heard in Scottish politics regardless of the fortunes of Scottish Labour. As a union we have recognised the need for the union in Scotland to respond distinctively to the political environment we find ourselves in and we cannot shy away from the implications if Scottish Labour fail to do the same. A formal relationship with the Scottish Labour Party is protected in our rule book but the current electoral position and the prospect of Scottish Labour are extremely concerning, some believe are non-existent. In reality GMB Scotland should work closer with the Scottish government than they have with Scottish Labour to protect workers' rights in Scotland, in workplaces such as Dempsey's shipyard and Kavanaugh. In the interest of promoting our objectives effectively in Scotland, GMB Scotland will examine how best to utilise political relationships in Scotland and as the motion makes clear it will involve general branches in developing a renewed strategy, a goal to maximise the political influence of GMB Scotland, not politics for its own sake but more for the no-nonsense trade unionism that we have been rebuilding in Scotland, challenging power, winning in the workplace, and stepping up the authentic voice of working class Scotland. The overall strategy cannot be about defending a political party but it is about defending the interests of our members and make no mistake, Congress, it will mean becoming more active not less, and in pushing our

priorities to the fore of Scottish politics. Please support us to make politics of Scotland work for the working people again. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tom.

CHARLIE ROBERTSON (GMB Scotland): Congress, since this motion was submitted the situation in Scotland has continued to develop. In 2010, right after this Congress after the 2010 election, there was actually more polar bears in Scotland than there was Tory MPs but, sadly, if a general election happened tomorrow the Labour Party would be left without a single seat in Scotland. There are many reasons for this, not least the party's recent positioning on Brexit, but that is what the polling evidence suggests. Labour and the Tories would be wiped out, the LibDems would take those seats and the SNP would retain or sweep the rest. The fact of the matter is that Scottish politics has changed and will continue to change and we need to be able to tackle what our priority is, the defence of our members, interests in the face of these challenges, and we need the capacity to campaign politically as this demands. That is why we are asking you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charlie. The mover of Motion 292.

#### DEFENCE DIVERSIFICATION MOTION 292

##### **292. DEFENCE DIVERSIFICATION**

Congress is alarmed at the statements of some MPs regarding the suggestion that defence workers may be retrained to work in other sectors. Congress notes for instance that Labour Party policy on matters such as the nuclear submarine programme has been settled and indeed the Government has already commissioned new submarine building which will lead to up to 40 years' worth of work in some areas.

Congress believes that it is just not credible in the eyes of skilled manufacturing workers, and for the families and communities of vital workers, for MPs, who themselves enjoy very good terms and conditions of employment, to promote what could well be in effect cuts in the terms and conditions of GMB members working in this vital sector.

Z46 – STOCKTON 3 ENGINEERING BRANCH  
Northern Region

(*Carried*)

BARRY MILLAR (Northern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, our region has built submarines that have been commissioned and built at the Barrow shipyard. The yard is recognised as one of the best anywhere in the world. The workers at Barrow, in fact the GMB members at the Barrow yard have some of the highest skill levels anywhere for building submarines. Congress, we know our region and it takes about 10 years to build and ensure safe delivery of a submarine. We know there is a potential in Barrow where we have 40 years' worth of work at stake. Congress, that is work for GMB members, their families, the community of South Cumbria, and the surrounding areas. We also know that the supply chain across the UK is vast. In the GMB report on *Turn the Tide* we set out how the shipbuilding industry and indeed the wider manufacturing in the UK has declined.

We cannot let any government dilute our skills and outsource manufacturing of key areas of the economy. Congress, we expect terms of defence to put our members' jobs and terms and conditions at the heart of our work in these workplaces. We also reserve the right to campaign for an ethical approach to exports. Congress, the levels of skills our members have are second to none. In Barrow we have a good scheme for apprentices, that means our younger members, and their families, will have jobs, security of employment, and income for decades to come. Local communities will have a good mix of work and income. The simple fact is you cannot turn off the tap for defence skills and overnight turn them into civilian use. We have had this before across another region and that is why former shipyards have no work. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barry. Is there a seconder for Motion 292 or is it formally seconded? Formally. Thank you, Northern Region. In that case, does anybody wish to oppose any of those motions? No? In that case can I ask Dean Gilligan to respond on behalf of the CEC.

DEAN GILLIGAN (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 288 and 289.

On Motion 288, Improving Labour Party Communication and Democracy, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. We support the principles of the motion, which encourages GMB MPs and all Labour MPs to report to GMB branches affiliated to the CLPs. The qualification is that in line with our political fund branches are unable to sponsor MPs. GMB branches affiliate to constituency Labour parties with payments made by the political fund held in regions.

On Motion 292, Defence Diversification, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. We are proud of our long history of representing workers in the defence manufacturing industry and we will continue to campaign to reserve the high skilled, well paid, and the communities they sustain. Defence manufacturing jobs often have no local equivalent, which means that workers who do lose their jobs can find it difficult to relocate and there is no guarantee that funding for alternative employment will be sustained over the long term. This argument was put forward in the GMB report *Turning the Tide* which called on the Labour Party and government ministers to safeguard defence manufacturing skills and jobs in the shipbuilding sector. We have long been sceptical of the proposals for the diversification of defence manufacturing, which have been underdeveloped and would put jobs at risk.

Our qualification is that Congress has previously expressed concern over arms sales to Saudi Arabia that may have been used in the conflict in the Yemen and while the defence of our members' jobs and terms and conditions will always be at the heart of what we do, the union must have the freedom to develop its own policies in support of an ethical exports strategy.

Congress, we are asking you to support both Motion 288 and 292, with the qualifications I have laid out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dean. Does Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification on Motion 288? Yes? Thank you. Does Northern Region accept the qualification on Motion 292? Yes. Thank you. In that case I will put them to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 288 with the qualification please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 288 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 289, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 289 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 290, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 290 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 292, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. All those in favour with the qualification. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 292 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, thank you. We have got through the day's business with 10 minutes to spare. Thank you for your cooperation. You have been really respectful, you have kept to your time limits, and I appreciate the speeches with no argument over the red light; that is really kind. We will be reconvening at 9.30 tomorrow morning.

I know you are all going to rush off to get to the football with Scotland and England winning the games. We look forward to seeing you at President's Night tonight, at the Metropole, for our 130<sup>th</sup> birthday party. I am looking forward to it. I hope you can make it. The doors open at 8 p.m. There is a band. Can I say a big thank you to Pattinson Brewer, solicitors, who are sponsoring this event tonight.

A note from the security staff at the venue, please do not leave any bags in the hall overnight.

I will see you all tomorrow morning at 9.30, or tonight at the President's Night. Thank you.

*Congress adjourned.*