

EAT WEMBLEY NEWSLETTER

April 2017

Dear GMB Members,

We are conscious that it has been a while since we did an update, so we are putting pen to paper to let you know where we are in relation to our pursuit of a voluntary recognition with your Employer, EAT.

As you will probably know, we had a marathon meeting with the company at the ACAS offices in Euston on February the 27th, at which much progress was eventually made, and during which the company asked ACAS to oversee a membership check, to see if we had the numbers which we claimed to have. Hiten and the Reps made themselves very busy in the following week to ensure that we could meet the objective of the checks; namely, that we could demonstrate that we have at least 50% membership in the proposed Bargaining Units. The Bargaining Unit is simply the group of workers who, it is agreed that the Union will represent in any negotiations. You know that the company deliberately targeted the Team Leaders, in order to have them removed from our preferred Bargaining Unit, by offering them "management contracts" with a salary, rather than the original hourly-paid contracts they had been on for years. Clearly, the intention was to weaken the GMB by removing a large number of our members, (of whom by then, two were still Reps).

Despite our best advice, most of the Team Leaders gave in to the pressure, and the bribery, and agreed to go over to the new contract, which made our task that much more difficult, as the Company could now argue that they were part of the management structure.

We agreed to let ACAS do the membership checks, and these were completed by the 6th of March; To the great surprise of EAT, we passed both tests. When the Team Leaders were included in the checks, out of 203 Employees in the Bargaining Unit, we had 106 members. Even without the Team Leaders, we still had 91 members out of a total of 179 in the Bargaining Unit.

This result was hugely encouraging to us, and it helped to finally convince the Company that we were serious about coming in to your workplace, and, crucially, that you were serious about wanting us there, yourselves.

The most important point about this is;

EAT has agreed, in Principle to recognise your Union, the GMB.

We have negotiated hard to ensure that we have an agreement that gives you a strong voice in the workplace, and with the exception of having to concede the exclusion of the Team Leaders, (because the majority of them opted out of their old contracts), we have been able to agree the terms of the Recognition Agreement.

The Company will sign the agreement, provided that we can demonstrate to them that we can prove, via a ballot, that the majority of the workers in the agreed Bargaining Unit favour recognition. (We have always argued that since we already have a majority who are already members, we will pass this check without any problems).

We agreed to this, and the ballot will be conducted by ACAS During the week commencing the 2nd of May. Part of the arrangement is that the Union, (and its officers) will be given free access to all of the workers affected, so we will be coming in to speak to all of you, members, as well as non-members. As part of this ballot, we will need to demonstrate that, however many people in the bargaining unit, (179 workers at present), actually take part, we need at least 40% of them to support the recognition of the GMB. That means that we **MUST** have the "yes" vote of at least 72 people.

This should not be an obstacle, provided that **every member** ensures that they vote. Non-members within the bargaining unit will also be allowed to vote, so we need to try to get them on board too. The company may still be clinging to the hope that they can persuade you that Recognition is not in the interests of the business and its Employees, and may be tempted to be less than truthful about our motives. That is where your contribution to this last push is SO very important.

You are our eyes and ears on the ground, and we want you to tell us, (or ACAS) if you hear or see anything which you consider to be “unfair practice” - by that, we mean, any threats, or inducements, (bribes) to get you to vote “no” in the ballot, or indeed any attempt by the company to prevent you exercising your fundamental legal right to belong to, and, therefore, to be represented by your Union.

We also need you to talk to your fellow workers, especially those who have not yet joined the Union, to explain to them, that we are not seeking to damage the business in any way, but we ARE committed to letting everyone get a fair share of any future rewards from an improvement in performance, and to protect the workforce from any form of unfair treatment, and to help the business work WITH their Employees to improve the way the business is run. It is not in anyone’s interest for us to damage the company.

We have been working hard to get this far, and, with all of us pulling together, we can finally achieve our long-term aim; a good recognition agreement that empowers you to have some protection at work, and a voice at the table, if and when the company wants to make major changes to the way you work.

We need you to make your colleagues understand the achievements which have already come about because of your Union’s involvement; Without GMB’s direct influence, the following would simply have never even been considered;

1. **The loyalty bonus which was taken away from you, has now been reinstated.**
2. **You will now be paid Holiday pay on an average of the last 12 weeks’ pay, including bonuses and overtime, rather than just basic pay.**
3. **Your payslips now contain more information than before, so that you have a clearer idea of how your pay has been calculated, and you can now challenge your pay more effectively if you are underpaid for any reason.**
4. **Most importantly, It is our understanding that the contracted hours which were stolen from you, have now been restored.**

These are ALL major achievements, which are directly due to the pressure applied to the company by YOU, through being part of the GMB, which is your Union.

Please, all of you, help us to get past this final hurdle, encourage each other to stay strong, be vigilant, and to embolden your colleagues to join with you, to make sure that never again, will you just have to put up with being treated like just cogs in a machine, that you can speak with a strong voice, without fear.

We want to thank each and every one of you, for remaining patient, for trusting us to our best for you, and for looking out for each other.

We will both see you very soon, **INSIDE** the Kitchen in Wembley.

Yours in comradeship,

Richard Owen, and Hiten Vaidya,
GMB Regional Officers

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