

ELECTION OF GENERAL SECRETARY & TREASURER 2021

GARY SMITH

Personal Details:

Surname / Given Name:	Smith
Forename(s) / Given Name(s):	Gary Ian
Branch:	Park Gate
Section:	Commercial Services
Current Employer:	GMB
Current Occupation:	Regional Secretary
GMB Rulebook Offices held on 31 January 2021:	Regional Secretary



Personal Statement:

I'm Gary Smith and I'm asking for your support to be GMB General Secretary at this critical time in the life of our union.

The pandemic has hit our members hard and now, more than ever, they need a strong GMB on their side. To deliver this we need to be better. The Monaghan Report identified how our union must change, by taking action to eradicate bad practices and building better cultures. As the report states: 'if the GMB is to change it must want to do so. It will take robust and committed leadership to successfully push this through.'

As I have in GMB Scotland, I will provide robust and committed leadership to deliver the change we need.

For over 130 years, GMB has been a champion for justice and fairness at work. We must get back to what we've always done best – organising and campaigning. We are never better than when we bring workers together to build collective strength and improve livelihoods. That's our historic purpose, and as GMB General Secretary, I will ensure we pursue it for everyone in our union.

As GMB Scotland Secretary, I have led a team of fantastic women and men delivering far-reaching change by campaigning on the issues that matter. We've gained international recognition for our landmark victories on equal pay for women, exposed the scandal of jobs in renewables industries going overseas, won proper recognition and better pay for care staff, and much more besides. As a result, GMB in Scotland has put on thousands of new members.

I have the same ambition for GMB members in all parts of our country - to organise and campaign our way to victory. We will achieve this by rediscovering the best of our union, restoring integrity, professionalism, and honour to all that we do. We have amazing, committed people at every level, and under my leadership I will ensure that this union performs to the highest standards and unlocks this incredible pool of talent to get GMB back to where it belongs.

GMB members are looking for leadership in these tough times. I have a clear vision, a proven record of success, and a commitment to deliver the change we need. I am ready for the challenge of being your GMB General Secretary.

I have three clear priorities for action –

1) Fighting for good jobs and proper pay

Getting a job, working hard, and earning enough to support a family used to be the norm. Yet this is increasingly out of reach for people doing the most vital jobs in our society. Carers, refuse collectors, school teaching assistants, health service workers, retail staff, warehouse employees, delivery drivers; it's unacceptable that keyworkers on the frontline in the battle against Covid-19 find it next to impossible to earn a decent wage to live on.

We have to stop this race to the bottom. It's not enough to simply build back better; we must build back fairer, through a jobs-based recovery that reverses the decline in our nation's manufacturing and delivers quality employment in areas like construction and energy.

2) Delivering pay justice for working women

It's shameful that the most exploitative part of our economy is work done by women. Low pay, unequal pay, discrimination; all are endemic in the UK and I will demand more for women and those working in female dominated sectors. In care, I will lead the fight for £15, not settle for paltry 1% rises. I will establish a ground-breaking GMB Discrimination Unit, building on the success of GMB Scotland's Women's Campaign Unit, to proactively seek out discrimination across the public and private sector and end these injustices.

Our victory in Glasgow, where GMB Scotland led the biggest equal pay strike in history for thousands of women employed by the city council, provides a roadmap for action. This success was in large part due to our young women officers and activists who are the perfect representation of the ambition I have for GMB; women leaders at the forefront of our campaigning, breaking down barriers to equality everywhere, and ending the scandals of poverty pay and discrimination.

3) A union that delivers for members everywhere

Our members deserve a union that is geared to work and win for them. GMB isn't a political party, think tank, campaign group, or charity. We must be about asserting power in the workplace, with all of us working together to raise the living standards of our members.

Our regions are key to achieving success. Being close to where our members work helps develop better understanding of issues and improved relationships with branches, activists, and officers. There is some great work being done by regions and branches and I will spread this best practice across the whole union. That's the path to success, not diktats from national office.

This union's income comes from the contributions of our members, many of whom are low paid workers. I will have a zero-tolerance approach to any misuse of their money and have a clear focus on how we manage our finances. I believe we can achieve much more and make it less expensive to be a member.

Our future together

I joined GMB at 16, on my first day as a gas apprentice. It was the best decision I ever made, and this union has raised me up. I've held so many roles - as a rep and an organiser leading refuse strikes in public services and occupying shipyards in Southern Region; and as a National Secretary representing members in energy and commercial services; and as Regional Secretary in Scotland.

The challenges facing our members are tough, but if we work as one team and rediscover the best of our union, we will succeed. Together, we can change this great union and remain proud of GMB and the good that we do.

Please support me to be your GMB General Secretary.

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