

ELECTION OF GENERAL SECRETARY & TREASURER 2021

GIOVANNA HOLT

Personal Details:

Surname / Given Name:	Holt
Forename(s) / Given Name(s):	Giovanna
Branch:	R19
Section:	Commercial Services
Current Employer:	GMB
Current Occupation:	Senior Organiser
GMB Rulebook Offices held on 31 January 2021:	Senior Organiser



Personal Statement:

My name is Giovanna Holt, and I am currently a Senior Organiser in North West & Irish Region.

I joined GMB on my first day working in an Asda Store in 1988, and a couple of years later was elected as a Shop Steward in the Store after organising a mass meeting of members because I believed we were being let down by our official. It should not have come as any surprise as my Grandfather, Parents and Sister have all been Shop Stewards, it is ingrained in me.

I built the membership in store to over 90%, the highest density of any store at that time, I also organised the only strike ever held in a store over a Health & Safety issue which was settled in a single day.

In 1995 I was elected to the CEC and was awarded the Gold Badge when I stepped down after being appointed as an Organiser in the Lancashire Region in 1997. During my time as an Organiser, I worked across 8 of the then 9 sections, I was the Race and Equality Officer, 2 separate positions at the time, and had high recruitment figures.

I was appointed to the position of Senior Organiser in 2004 and when Lancashire Region closed, became part of the newly formed North West & Irish Region.

As a Senior Organiser, I have conducted negotiations and represented members and the Union itself at every level, I was honoured to be asked to represent GMB at the AFL-CIO Congress in Chicago, to speak on Unionization in the retail sector and was also put forward for the TUC Leading Change Course that gave me the opportunity to study different types of Unionism at Harvard.

As a working mother and Grandmother, I know only too well the impact of austerity on young families, the elderly, and the disabled I know what it is like to live hand to mouth, to get paid on Thursday but still be waiting for your family allowance on Tuesday to get by. Poor wages never made for easy living and that is something I never forget. As part of the sandwich generation working full time, juggling time between looking after elderly and disabled relatives or helping the children out with childcare I am acutely aware of how privileged any of us are to be working for this organisation because it gives us the ability to help others. Many people do not have that infrastructure of support and those are the people Unions are meant to protect, to make their lives better, and to improve their opportunities. Those are the reasons I became a Shop Steward because they are the reasons, I believe in.

I have always fought against injustice, often at a significant personal cost, but how can we expect to improve the lives of our members if we cannot stand up for ourselves in our own workplaces.

We have had some truly difficult times and we are facing significant challenges going forward. It will take a strong individual with vision and integrity who is not afraid to make difficult decisions when necessary, but also recognises the wealth of skill and talent this organisation has and can harness that to create an inclusive culture rather

than a blame culture, where people can learn from mistakes rather than be frightened of making them.

These are difficult times for certain, but they are also a time of opportunity.

All the Candidates will have taken time to put their case forward to ask for your vote. I simply ask that you take the time to read them all before making your decision, and when you choose, choose wisely.

Thankyou

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