

GMB ASHFORD PUBLIC MEETING

GMB

GMB@WORK

**7.30pm
Tuesday 20th
January 2015**

**ASHFORD INTERNATIONAL
SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB
181 BEAVER ROAD
ASHFORD
KENT TN23 7SG**

THE IMPACT ON ASHFORD OF THE PLANNED NEW AMAZON WAREHOUSE



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YOUR TRADE UNION LAW FIRM
0300 333 0303
www.unionline.co.uk

GMB, the union for Amazon workers, is holding a public meeting in Ashford. The public meeting will be held from 7.30 pm on Tuesday 20th January 2015 at Ashford International Sports & Social Club, 181 Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 7SG. All are invited.



GMB is calling on Amazon to come clean about the impact on the Ashford area of opening their new Amazon warehouse, north east of Highfield Lane, in Sevington near the M20 in Kent.

GMB is also calling on Amazon to agree to meet the full cost of between £66m and £90m for constructing a new M20 junction 10A in Ashford. The projected new junction is 700 metres south east of junction 10 and will allow access to a new Amazon warehouse.

Speakers invited are Brendan Chilton, Prospective Labour Party Candidate for Ashford, Martin Smith, GMB National Organiser, and others with experience of how Amazon operate in other locations in the UK.

In 2013 it was reported that developers AXA Real Estate Investment Management and DMI Properties had submitted initial plans for the warehouse in Sevington. GMB has since seen evidence that this warehouse will be occupied by Amazon.



Amazon has operations in Croydon, Doncaster, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Gourock, Hemel Hempstead, Milton Keynes, Peterborough, Rugeley, Swansea, Slough, Holborn in London, Dublin and Cork.

Amazon told MPs in May 2014 that it employs more than 7,000 permanent employees across the UK and a further 15,000 casual and seasonal staff throughout the year. The new Ashford warehouse is part of Amazon plans to double the number of warehouses it operates in Britain in the next few years.

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If you cannot make the meeting and have a question contact martin.smith@gmb.org.uk or phone him on 07974 2517

GMB will tell the Ashford public that the high tech way Amazon processes orders and tracks inventory disguises that it is also a traditional labour intensive mail order retail business.

Amazon relies on a road network funded by taxpayers for the business to business delivery of products to warehouses and for the business to customer delivery to private homes.

It relies on large numbers of staff to receive the goods, to pick and pack them to meet customer orders.

Where it differs from other retailers is its refusal to pay proper taxes or to treat its workers properly. This gives Amazon an unfair competitive advantage and is part of the reason why so many established high street names are going to the wall.

It is time to strip away the high tech image and expose the exploitation involved in their business model.

The starting rate for Amazon staff is £7.65 per hour. GMB is calling on Amazon to work with its trade union and local communities to offer decent permanent jobs to as many local residents as possible on wages that they can live on without claiming benefits.

Staff complain about a culture of bullying and harassment endemic in the total surveillance that comes from staff being required to wear digital arm mounted terminals (AMTs) with no agreed protocols re breaks, speeds etc. Requiring employees to wear AMTs and subjecting them to "dataveillance", while denying them union rights, takes away the consent essential for the positive use of digital arm-band devices.

GMB members say it is human automation – they are kind of robots with no say. Working at excessive speeds and the routine performance of repetitive tasks without safeguards can lead to long term injuries.

GMB union activity in the Amazon UK has to be kept underground for fear of reprisals. So hostile is Amazon that the GMB underground organisation has had to adopt the tactics of the French resistance or human rights campaigns in totalitarian regimes.

Government and HMRC need to change the rules to ensure that Amazon pays proper taxes. In 2006 Amazon transferred its UK business to Luxembourg and reclassified its UK operation as simply "order fulfilment" business to qualify for lower taxes. The Luxembourg office employs 380 people. This abuse has to stop.

Contact Martin Smith at

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GMB is calling on Amazon to come clean about the impact of opening a new warehouse in Sevington near the M20 in Kent.

This GMB Ashford campaign is part of an EU wide push to ensure that Amazon improves security of employment, treats workers fairly, pays them a wage they can live on, and pays its taxes.

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