

Manufacturing update 18: Victory at Barnoldswick, the vaccine rollout and a green jobs revolution to win!



As we entered the New Year our shop stewards and officers were in too many cases in the fight of their lives to protect jobs, pay and other conditions facing an onslaught from employers seeking to use the crisis as an opportunity to roll back on generations of victories from collective bargaining. From British Airways and Heathrow Airport to major bus companies and British Gas, these fights are being fought to prevent permanent changes on the back of a serious, but temporary crisis.

Across manufacturing we've faced a series of challenges from companies in serious and mostly genuine difficulties, from Rolls Royce to Airbus, JLR to Tata Steel, in fact not one of our manufacturing sectors has escaped any impact from the perfect storm that has been Covid-19, post Brexit trade and the climate emergency.

⇒ *I want to put on record my thanks to each and every one of you, working as a team to find solutions to really difficult challenges; from the shorter working time agreement at Airbus, Broughton to the saving of over a thousand jobs at Rolls Royce. Every one of you, from our car and aerospace plants to our paper mills, printers and engineering companies, steel giants and supply chain partners should be very proud of your achievements.*

VICTORY AT BARNOLDSWICK: Following a solid nine-week dispute with Rolls Royce an agreement has finally been reached that protects the plant, its workforce and future manufacturing on-site. This could not have been achieved without confidence and determination of our members or the fantastic demonstration of solidarity from their community and our wider movement. Victories like that in the *#BattleForBarnoldswick* inspire us all in the fight for jobs and a secure future.

The agreement can be found [here](#) but the headlines include:

- ⇒ *A ten-year guarantee for on-site manufacturing*
- ⇒ *New green tech workshare and manufacturing product*
- ⇒ *A two-year no compulsory redundancy guarantee*
- ⇒ *A minimum headcount guarantee of 350 jobs*
- ⇒ *The creation of a centre of excellence training school for green tech, synthetic fuels and new nuclear SMR developments*

LEADING THE WAY ON VACCINE MANUFACTURE AND DISTRIBUTION: Unite members at AstraZeneca are part of a global team working on the development and manufacture of vaccines to rid the world of a virus that's caused so much heartache, death and widespread damage to our economies. Rolling that out in its millions, the only corporation doing so at cost price, protecting the most vulnerable from the risk of death and freeing up our NHS to treat the many other patients waiting on ever longer lists with equally life-threatening illnesses, has been a challenge we have risen too, from manufacture and storage to distribution and application.

⇒ *Figures released by the European Union revealed just how much global corporations were willing to exploit from a virus killing millions across our planet. Shamefully, while AstraZeneca have rightly committed to cost price distribution, others have sought to maximise their profits, with leaked EU figures highlighting their costs; AstraZeneca: €1.78, GSK: €7.56, Pfizer: €12 and Moderna: €18.*

⇒ *Just as we will never let the Tories get away with the handing of £billions to their corporate mates for failing contracts over the pandemic, neither must we forget the way these companies have sought to profit from it.*

A GREEN JOBS REVOLUTION: Building on our Manufacturing Matters Industrial Strategy and SOS4Jobs campaign we have been working with our friends at Acuity Analysis to develop our **'Magnificent Seven'** shovel ready projects to both save and create jobs and meet our climate obligations. The briefing, being sent in advance of the Chancellor's budget to government, MPs, industry federations, devolved nations and others with influence in this discussion, identifies seven concrete actions that the government can and must invest in now to support a manufacturing and economic transition. The briefing can be downloaded [here](#)

The **'Magnificent Seven'** requires government intervention, investment and action now to implement and will help to rebuild the trust and confidence lost in the governments support for manufacturing, putting substance to the rhetoric of levelling up, addressing the skills crisis, protecting and creating millions of green jobs and rebalancing the economy to address an over reliance on the service sector and financial services in particular.

OUR 'MAGNIFICENT SEVEN' SHOVEL READY PROJECTS

- 1. Retrofit our homes to address energy inefficiencies, manufacture the products we need to do it here and end the housing crisis with a council home building programme.**
- 2. Invest now in Carbon Capture Use and Storage (CCUS)**
- 3. Intervene to support our automotive and green shipping transition from fossil fuels to synthetic, battery and hydrogen power**
- 4. Take direct action now to support investment in the building and operation of the seven battery 'gigafactories' we need – alongside an integrated supply chain for cathodes/anodes, cells and other high value UK components – to support the cleaning and greening of our towns and cities from private vehicles to public and commercial transport**
- 5. Introduce an 'aircraft replacement scheme' to remove older planes from our skies; reducing emissions, noise and cleaning our skies while kickstarting our aerospace recovery manufacturing the engines, wings, seating and other components here in the UK**
- 6. Expand our work on renewable energy with a massive expansion of off-shore wind, hydro, solar, hydrogen, bio-mass and nuclear (SMR), all central to a balanced energy policy. In all cases manufacturing the products required to support it here in the UK, from turbines and blades to steel and reactors. Putting workers and our communities at the heart of a workers transition.**
- 7. Investing now in the roll out of high-speed fibre Broadband to every home in the UK, creating jobs in construction, installation and the manufacture of cabling.**

WHERE NEXT FOR FURLOUGH AND BUSINESS SUPPORT? Following our victory in October in forcing the Chancellor to extend the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) to the 31st March 2021, I am continuing, on behalf of us all, to work hard with the TUC to get that further extension for as long as it takes to get people back to work across our economy. In addition, we continue to argue the case for an automatic right to furlough for working people, additional protections for those shielding and minimum furlough rates for those forced to take time off of work due to track and trace, the display of symptoms or Covid-19 related sickness.

Further, and as we've always argued, for some sectors and businesses this will mean additional and further support as serious challenges will remain beyond the reopening of the economy.

⇒ *With some 3.8 million workers still on furlough (at 31st December 2020) - over 270,000 in manufacturing – the level of fear and anxiety over delays in extending the scheme is growing and adding to pressure on both workers and the families as well as businesses, even whole communities. This must end with the Chancellor making an early announcement to extend the scheme once again.*

I have jointly written to the Prime Minister directly on the urgency of action on furlough and a number of industry specific measures we want to see introduced in the forthcoming budget, with the very welcome support of industry federations; ADS, SMMT and CIA. **We will never give up the struggle to secure wage support and protection for millions of working people impacted by a crisis not of their making.**

THANK YOU

As always - it's you; our shop stewards, officers and staff, our health and safety representatives and activists who have played the major role in workplaces across our economy in the fight for jobs, ensuring our workplaces are safe, our pay and conditions protected and our businesses survive the pandemic.

Thank you, every single one of you.

⇒ *Clearly there is more to do on so many fronts to protect working people and our communities from the devastating impact of lockdown, looming recession, growing unemployment and the challenges that remain following the post Brexit trade deal with the European Union.*

We also have tremendous opportunities to recover and rebuild with confidence, to meet the challenges of the climate emergency by releasing the talents of our scientists, engineers, designers and the next generation of apprentices that will not only solve the challenges of today, but find solutions to the many problems we've still to encounter. **To lead the way in advanced manufacturing, win the fight for the shorter working week and shared work with a fair distribution of the common wealth we create.** Putting our skills, talents and resources to use rebuilding a vibrant, diverse, fair economy we can be proud of.

That's our challenge and I know we're up for it. We'll win and lose some battles on our journey but we'll never give up the fight industrially or politically to defend and advance the interests of our members, their families or our communities. That's what makes us who we are!

In solidarity



Steve Turner

Assistant General Secretary