



***CLIMATE CHANGE IS A TRADE
UNION ISSUE***



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

General Secretary	2
National President	4
BAME and Young Members	5
The Year of Climate Action	6
Buy Now, Pay Later	8
Food Inflation	9
BFAWU Rep of the Week	9
From Manningham Mill to modern bakeries	10
The Tax Refund Company	10
TUC Congress Report	11
SUMA Pride Week	14
Network Dates	15
Awards	16
Quilter Investment	17
Free Accidental Death Cover	18
Puzzle page	19
Contact Details	20

FOODWORKER is published for BFAWU by:
Sarah Woolley at Stanborough House
Great North Road
Stanborough, Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire AL8 7TA

Tel: 01707 260150/259450

FOODWORKER is designed and produced
for BFAWU by:
Inscape Solutions Limited
The Old Bank
Kilwardby Street
Ashby de la Zouch, LE65 2FR
mail: info@inscape-solutions.co.uk



EDITOR'S NOTES

"Reform and other far-right platforms rely on lies and misdirection. They blame migrants instead of exploitative employers. They point the finger at people on benefits instead of at corporations profiteering in a crisis."

sarah.woolley@bfawu.org

Organising for a future worth fighting for

AS WE APPROACH the end of 2025, our movement stands at a crossroads. Last month, the trade union movement marked the beginning of the *Year of Trade Union Climate Action* – a commitment that will run through the next twelve months and shape the way our movement responds to the defining crisis of our time. We are not reflecting on a completed programme; we are stepping into it. And as we do, we recognise that climate change is not a remote environmental issue it is already transforming our industries, our communities, and the nature of work.

For BFAWU members, the consequences are not *theoretical*. Extreme weather is already disrupting food supply chains, energy costs remain volatile, and global instability is reshaping what and how food is produced.

Our members sit on the frontline of these shifts. That is why the year ahead will be so important: we must ensure that workers have a voice in the transition to a greener economy, and that climate action is never used as an excuse to undermine jobs, rights or living standards.

But climate isn't the only storm we face. Across the UK and beyond, the far right is once again gaining ground. They exploit insecurity economic, political, and cultural to spread division and fear. Workers across our sector feel the impact of the cost-of-living crisis every day. Wages are stretched, food prices continue to rise, and many employers respond to financial pressures with cuts to hours, jobs and conditions. Amid this turmoil, groups like the Reform Party try to present themselves as champions of the working class.

We must be honest: some working people are drawn to those messages. And we must be equally honest about *why*. People turn to these alternatives when they feel ignored, let down, or left behind. It is not our job to judge working-class anger; it is our job to understand it and organise through it.

But *understanding* does not mean *endorsing*. Reform and other far-right platforms rely on lies and misdirection. They blame migrants instead of exploitative employers. They point the finger at people on benefits instead of at corporations profiteering in a crisis. They attack 'woke culture' instead of tackling the real problems – low pay, insecure work, deregulation, and the erosion of public services. They sell themselves as the voice of change, yet their policies would strip away workers' rights, weaken trade unions, and leave people even more vulnerable to the very injustices they claim to oppose.

"We must ensure that workers have a voice in the transition to a greener economy, and that climate action is never used as an excuse to undermine jobs, rights or living standards"

Our duty as trade unionists is to engage with those who feel Reform has the answers not with contempt, but with *clarity*. We offer something real: collective power, solidarity, and a vision rooted in fairness, dignity, and truth. That is how we counter misinformation – not by shouting from a distance, but by organising in the spaces where disillusionment grows.

The scale of the task

At the same time, our own sector is undergoing profound change. Automation and AI are accelerating across food production, packaging, warehousing, distribution, and retail.

These technologies are reshaping job roles, reducing staffing levels and altering the skills needed in our workplaces. Without unions negotiating over how these tools are introduced, the changes will serve *profit*, not *people*.

We're also seeing shifts driven by consumer behaviour some linked to the long-term impacts of weight-loss injections, changing dietary habits, and persistent cost-of-living pressures that reduce the volume of food people buy. For a sector operating on tight margins, this often translates into restructuring, downsizing, and an intensification of work for those who remain.

And yet, despite these massive changes, the majority of the food industry remains unorganised. Millions of workers in factories, bakeries, warehouses, food delivery, hospitality and new food tech platforms still lack the protection and collective strength of a union.

That is not a crisis. ***It is one of the biggest opportunities of our generation.***

As we look ahead to 2026, the question is not *whether* our industry will change... ***it already is.*** The real question is whether workers will shape that change or be subjected to it.

If we do not organise, employers and the far right *will*. If we do not build power now, workers will be left isolated as technology, economics and government policy reshape the world of work.

But if we seize this moment, we can reshape the future of our sector on our own terms.

What must be done

We must prioritise organising unorganised workplaces, especially in parts of the industry built on casual, agency and insecure contracts.

We must reach young workers who have never been invited to join a union.

We must be present in the emerging parts of the food economy – *logistics hubs, automated production sites, dark kitchens and delivery platforms.*

And, as AI enters the workplace, we must bargain over technology, data rights, deskilling, and surveillance issues that will define the next era of workplace struggle.

The start of the Year of Trade Union Climate Action is a reminder that *the future is not fixed.*

It is shaped by those who organise. Climate justice, workers' rights, and economic justice are not separate battles they are the same fight. ***A greener, fairer economy must be a unionised economy.***

As we enter 2026, the BFAWU will continue leading from the front: organising the unorganised, challenging misinformation, defending our members, and fighting for a food system built on dignity and fairness. Our union's history is defined by working people standing together against the odds and winning. The next chapter will be no different.

This is our moment. This is our duty. And together, we will shape a future worth fighting for.

In Solidarity Always

Sarah

Interested in being a BFAWU Rep?



BFAWU Learning Week





NATIONAL PRESIDENT IAN HODSON

“We can let those in power choose our enemies for us or we can choose each other.

The people in dinghies aren't taking our jobs, wages or services.”

Stop looking for scapegoats — start building *Solidarity*

WHEN A 105-YEAR-OLD chocolate factory like *Beech's* in Preston shuts its doors, it tells us something important about the state of our country.

And it's not a story about 'small boats', 'migrants', or whatever today's headline distraction happens to be.

It's a story about an economy in crisis and governments and politicians that would rather point the finger than fix the problem.

While factories close, prices rise and working people struggle, the people who caused this mess want us blaming anyone but them. Refugees. Benefit claimants. Junior doctors. Teachers. Other workers. *Anyone except the powerful interests who created this chaos and profit from it.*

What really happened at Beech's

Beech's didn't close because of immigration. It closed because:

- cocoa prices rose by nearly 300%
- energy costs tripled
- supply chains collapsed
- government support for manufacturing has been missing for years

And while workers in factories like this pay the price, others walk away richer than ever.

The 50 richest families in the UK now own more wealth than the bottom 70% of the population — *tens of millions of people combined.*

This isn't *migration*.

This is *market failure*.

The real divide isn't worker vs worker

Every time a politician shouts about 'small boats' or tries to whip up a culture war, they're pulling attention away from what's really hurting people.



They'd rather you didn't think about:

- soaring food and energy bills
- record corporate profits
- wages stuck for over a decade
- British industry left to rot.

And here's the starkest fact of all:

- a tiny number of families now hoard more wealth than tens of millions of working people, yet we're told the real problem is the person arriving here seeking safety or the worker who's managed to win a few extra pennies on their low pay.

The truth is simple: *When we're arguing with each other, they get away with robbing us blind.*

The same trick scaring workers about their own rights

And now, the very same politicians and business lobby groups who weakened unions and stripped back protections are claiming that even the watered-down Employment Bill will 'put jobs at risk'.

We've heard this nonsense for decades and it has never been true.

- Paid holidays were “*going to destroy jobs*”.
- The minimum wage was “*going to bankrupt businesses*”.
- Equal rights for agency workers were “*going to collapse the economy*.”

None of it happened.

What did happen was workers got treated a little more fairly and those at the top didn't like it.

So when we hear the same voices warning that basic rights are “*a threat to business*”, we should ask:

A threat to *who, exactly?*

...because weaker rights *never* protect workers. They only protect employers who profit from insecurity and fear.

When we fall for division, We Lose

We've lived through this before. In the 1930s, under Thatcher, after Brexit – every time working people are pushed to turn on one another, the outcome is the same:

- weaker unions
- lower wages
- worse conditions
- more insecurity
- more power for those at the top

Division isn't an accident.

It's a *strategy* and it works only if we let it.

Solidarity is how we win

Solidarity isn't just a word on a banner, *it's how we survive.*

Every improvement working people have ever won came from standing together – *fairer pay, safer conditions, shorter hours, dignity at work.*

And in the food industry, we see it every day. Our members come from every corner of the world, and every loaf, biscuit and chocolate bar relies on that shared effort.

If one group is targeted, all of us are weakened. That's why our movement has always said:

An injury to one is an injury to all.

Weaker rights never protect workers. They only protect employers who profit from insecurity and fear

A choice for our movement

We can let those in power choose our enemies for us or we can choose each other.

The people in dinghies aren't taking our jobs, wages or services.

But the people in private jets are taking our rights, our industries and our futures.

If we allow division to spread, we will repeat the worst mistakes of history.

But if we rebuild solidarity in our workplaces, our unions and our communities we can rebuild this country from the ground up.

Not through *hate*.

Not through *scapegoating*.

But through **unity** – strong enough to change everything.

That's our task as trade unionists today.

#SolidarityNotScapegoats

#WorkersUnite

#BFAWU

I'd like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

lan

CELEBRATING BAME AND YOUNG MEMBERS

Celebrating BAME Members of BFAWU!



Abdussamad Choudhury
Branch 105

I became active in the union after realising the true power that comes from standing together. As an active union member in my workplace, I challenge inequality and work to ensure fair treatment for everyone, regardless of age, race, gender, or sexuality.

The more of us who get involved, the stronger we become in shaping a workplace where every culture is valued, every community is respected, and no one is left behind. Join us, stand with us, and step up, because together...we win!

Join Today!

#BFAWU
#CelebratingBAMEMembers
#BlackHistoryMonth



Celebrating the Young Members of BFAWU!



The BFAWU has a dedicated seat on our National Executive Council to represent Young Members, this is to ensure our young members literally have a seat at the table when discussions are held and decisions are being made!

Join Today!

#BFAWU
#CelebratingYoungMembers



Celebrating BAME Members of BFAWU!



Ayisha branch 110

I became active in the union because I believe everyone deserves a fair voice at work and to feel supported in their workplace. As a Black and Ethnic Minority member, it's important to me that our voices are heard and represented. I encourage others to get involved because together we can challenge inequality, celebrate diversity, and make a real difference for future generations.

Join Today!

#BFAWU
#CelebratingBAMEMembers
#BlackHistoryMonth



Celebrating the Young Members of BFAWU!



Dan Branch 145

I joined BFAWU because collective action is the strongest tool we have as workers. Since joining I've received support at work, education, attended events and met like-minded people. I encourage as many to get involved- our union is diverse, and in it no one fights alone.

Join Today!

#BFAWU
#CelebratingYoungMembers



Celebrating BAME Members of BFAWU!



We have so many amazing BAME members in the BFAWU, if you are a member and want to get more involved get in touch!

Equalities@bfawu.org

Join Today!

#BFAWU
#CelebratingBAMEMembers
#BlackHistoryMonth



Celebrating the Young Members of BFAWU!



Each Year at our Conference, we award an outstanding Young Member with our Olive Molloy Youth Award. This can be for their organising, their activism, or just for going above and beyond to support members or the union.

Named after Olive to remember her dedication and commitment to upholding the rules of the union during her time as Standing Orders Committee chair, but also how she inspired young members like the current OS to get more involved in our union.

We have a hundreds of outstanding young members in our union - look out for the call for nominations for Annual Conference 2026!

Join Today!

#BFAWU
#CelebratingYoungMembers



A series of posters publicising and celebrating the individuals and achievements within our union – demonstrating our commitment to inclusivity and equality. If you want copies for your workplace, contact: Info@bfawu.org.uk

THE YEAR OF CLIMATE ACTION

TRADE UNION YEAR OF CLIMATE ACTION

Climate change is a working class issue

Already, climate breakdown is hitting the poorest around the world. The UK is experiencing more heatwaves, putting workers and communities at risk, and more floods threatening homes and farmers' crops.

Meanwhile the far right are gaining support by claiming the cost of living crisis and job losses are caused by green policies. But all they offer are the policies of hate and division, corporate deregulation, and fossil fuel dependency which would lock us into higher energy bills.

We need to invest in the future, in climate jobs and in public services. But the threat of austerity remains, with military spending prioritised. It's time for the labour movement to come together and demand real action on the climate crisis, with solutions that make life better for workers and communities.

Trade unions have always fought both for workers' rights and for the changes needed to make society better. Now is our time to step up again - this time to protect the very conditions of life, and safety for our communities and the generations to come.

In 2024, the TUC voted to back a Year of Trade Union Climate Action, engaging with community and climate justice groups, to start this autumn. Many national trade unions are already supporting this initiative: a really powerful year of action must also be built from the grassroots up.

Get involved:
cacctu.org.uk/yoa



Building worker power for people and planet

THIS NOVEMBER, AS WORLD LEADERS and corporations gather once again for the global climate talks at COP, the BFAWU is launching our **Year of Climate Action**, part of the wider movement's **Year of Climate Action** led and coordinated by **the Campaign Against Climate Change**, a year-long campaign to put working people at the heart of the fight for a fair and sustainable future.

For too long, climate discussions have been dominated by politicians and executives who talk about ambition while refusing to challenge the profit-driven system at the root of the crisis. Our Year of Climate Action is about changing that bringing workers' voices and trade union power to the centre of the debate.

Because the same forces driving the climate crisis – corporate greed, exploitation, and inequality – are the same ones our members confront every day in their workplaces. And that means the solutions to both are the same: **collective action, strong unions** and **democracy at work**.

Why Climate Action matters to our Union

Climate change isn't an abstract issue or a distant threat. It's already shaping our lives, our jobs, and our communities.

In our food factories, bakeries, and supply chains, we see the effects first-hand: extreme heat making conditions unsafe, floods disrupting production and transport, rising energy costs putting pressure on wages, and food insecurity spreading across communities.

For BFAWU members, the people who feed the country, this isn't a future problem. It's happening *now*. The climate crisis is a workers' issue, and that makes it a **trade union issue**.

If we don't act, employers and governments will once again make working people pay the price for a crisis we didn't cause. But when workers organise, we don't just defend ourselves we lead the fight for change.

From Awareness to Action

The Year of Climate Action is about building understanding, confidence, and power across our union.

Over the next twelve months, we'll be connecting the dots between climate justice, class justice, and collective bargaining and showing that climate action isn't something separate from trade unionism, but part of its core purpose.

Throughout the year, we'll:

- Raise awareness about how climate change affects our industries, workplaces, and members.
- Train and support new BFAWU Green Reps to take action in their workplaces.
- Get climate on the bargaining table, making sure it's part of pay talks, health and safety discussions, and investment decisions.
- Embed climate justice in every part of our union's work, from equality and education to international solidarity.

Our goal is simple: by the end of this year, every member should understand that climate action is part of union action and that workers are the key to real solutions.

Workers leading the way

We've seen what happens when decisions are left to politicians and CEOs: empty pledges, broken promises, and greenwashing while inequality deepens. Real progress comes when workers take the lead: negotiating for greener workplaces, demanding just transition plans, and standing together to defend jobs and communities.

That's why our Year of Climate Action is rooted in the principles that have always defined our movement – *solidarity, fairness, and democracy*.

It's about giving workers the voice and power to shape the future of their industries, rather than being sidelined by it.

Because the question isn't whether change will happen: *it's who will it serve*.

A year to build a movement to last

Launching alongside COP is no coincidence. While world leaders talk, **we act**.

This year is about turning words into power making sure that climate action starts on the shop floor and runs through every level of our movement.

Each month will focus on a different theme: from workplace health and safety and food justice, to just transition, equality, and international solidarity.

Together, these conversations will build the foundations of a lasting, worker-led climate movement one that fights for both people and the planet.

So, let's make this a year of education, mobilisation, and organisation.

Let's grow our network of Green Reps. Let's put climate on every bargaining agenda. Let's make sure every employer knows that protecting workers and protecting the planet go hand in hand.

Because when workers act together, we don't just adapt to change we **shape** it.

This is our Year of Climate Action.

A year to *organise, educate, and lead.*

A year to *put people and the planet before profit and to show that the future must be built **by** workers, **for** workers.*



Get Involved: be part of the Year of Climate Action

- Talk to your branch about becoming a Green Rep or environmental lead.
- Raise climate issues at your next workplace meeting from heat safety and waste reduction to transport and energy use.
- Share your ideas and experiences tell us how climate change is affecting your workplace and how you're taking action.
- Look out for upcoming training and resources from BFAWU on *green bargaining* and *just transition*.
- Spread the word discuss the Year of Climate Action with colleagues and on social media using [#BFAWUClimateAction](#).

Together, we can make the next 12 months the year we put workers' voices at the heart of the fight for climate justice.

... because the climate crisis is a workers' crisis and the solution is worker power.

**THE CLIMATE
CRISIS IS A
TRADE UNION
ISSUE**

**THE CLIMATE
CRISIS NEEDS
TRADE UNION
ACTION**

**TRADE UNIONS
STAND WITH
CLIMATE
REFUGEES**



PayPlan®

BUY NOW, PAY LATER

Over 8 million people in the UK using Buy Now, Pay Later for everyday items.

MORE THAN 8 MILLION PEOPLE in the UK are now using **Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL)** for purchases under £50 – and, for many, it's becoming more than just a convenient way to pay.

With the cost of living still high and many households under financial pressure, BNPL is often seen as quick fix. But what starts as a short-term solution can sometimes lead to longer-term strain on your budget.

What we're seeing at PayPlan

Since 2022, we've seen a steady rise in the number of people coming to us for help BNPL debts of £50 or less. Although these amounts may seem small, multiple repayments across different providers can quickly become difficult to manage.

What is Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL)?

BNPL is a type of short-term credit that allows you to delay payment – usually by splitting a purchase into smaller instalments over a set period. It's widely offered at online checkouts and often promoted as interest-free.

It's quick, convenient and usually doesn't involve a formal credit check – but that could soon change. **Rachel Duffey**, CEO at PayPlan, says:

“Buy Now, Pay Later can offer short-term breathing space – but it's becoming a long-term burden for many people. We're supporting more clients than ever who are juggling multiple repayments. We know for some people it can offer a helpful way to manage spending, but for others it can lead to overspending, confusion and growing debt. If it's starting to feel unmanageable, please don't wait to ask for help – the right support can make all the difference.”

Regulation is coming – it will affect how BNPL works

The government recently confirmed that from July 2026, BNPL lenders will be regulated by the **Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)**. This means:

- Shoppers will face stricter affordability checks
- Some people may be refused BNPL credit if it's not considered affordable
- Providers will need to give clearer, fairer information about fees, terms and consumer rights
- People will gain access to **Section 75** protection and the **Financial Ombudsman Service**

These rules are designed to protect consumers from taking on too much debt or being caught out by late payment fees – and to slow down that 'one-click' access to potentially unaffordable credit.

The changes are welcome – but they're not in place yet. Until then, BNPL remains unregulated, and many people are unaware of the risks.

Who's using BNPL – and what for?¹

It's especially popular with Gen Z. BNPL is especially popular with younger adults and parents, according to new research from TransUnion:

- 15% of UK adults use BNPL for purchases under £50
- 4% use it for items under £25
- 1 in 5 people aged 18-24 use BNPL for small essentials, including weekly food shops and takeaways.
- Parents are also turning to BNPL for school costs
- 6% of UK adults use BNPL for school supplies
- This rises to 15% for parents aged 25-34
- 19% of those using BNPL for school items describe themselves as financially comfortable – suggesting that BNPL is often used for convenience, not just necessity

Why do people choose BNPL?

Many people turn to BNPL because:

- It helps spread the cost – especially when cashflow is tight
- It's quick and easy – with simple application processes
- It's everywhere – often the most visible option at checkout.

In fact, more than 1 in 4 UK adults now say they prefer BNPL over credit cards for everyday spending. But **there's a catch**, with payments spread across different providers and dates, it can be easy to lose track and the costs can build up fast.

The risks of Buy Now, Pay Later to watch out for

- Overspending without realising
- Breaking purchases into smaller payments can make them feel more manageable – but if you're not keeping track, the total can quickly snowball.
- Hidden fees and charges
- While BNPL is often advertised as interest-free, missing a payment can trigger fees or charges. These aren't always obvious upfront, and they can build up quickly if you fall behind.
- Credit score impact
- Late or missed payments can result in defaults or negative markers on your credit file. This can affect your ability to get a mortgage or loan in the future.

If BNPL repayments are becoming difficult, you're not alone – look at our contact box on the next page to find out how to reach out and get our help.

If you're looking for budgeting support in the meantime, visit **BudgetSmart** which is full of tips and tools to help you stay in control every day.

BUDGETSMART+



FOOD INFLATION

What's driving food inflation and how can you save on your food bill?

FOOD INFLATION WITHIN THE UK has increased again – rising 4.9% year-on-year in July 2025, marking the highest rate since February 2024.

Over the past five years, food prices have climbed by an average of 37%, with some staples seeing even sharper increases. Many households are being stretched already by rising energy prices and other costs which are increasing pressure on household budgets.

What's causing the rise?

- **Global raw material price increases.** For example, chocolate has experienced the most dramatic price increases of any major food category. Prices are up by 16% in the past year alone, with cumulative inflation reaching 43% since 2022. [2]
- **Increases in National Insurance contributions and the minimum wage rise** have impacted what food retailers are charging for food to cover their costs.
- **Increased production and transportation costs.**
- **Currency fluctuations.**

If you're struggling with the rising cost of your food shopping you're not alone

If you are struggling with debts call us on 0800 072 1206. We're open from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am – 3pm on Saturdays.

Alternatively, you can visit www.payplan.com/bfawu to speak to us via live chat or for more information.

How to save money on your food shopping

Whilst inflation is out of your control, there are some practical steps you can take to reduce your food shopping bill:

- Plan your meals for the week and shop with a list to help avoid impulse buys.
- Buy in bulk if there's a particularly good deal on a product you'll use. Check dates as some offers have short shelf lives.
- Use supermarket own brand products – they can often be significantly cheaper.
- Make the most out of loyalty schemes for supermarkets and cashback apps to earn rewards on your weekly shop.
- Try **BudgetSmart**, our free tool to help find savings and improve your financial confidence.
- Reduce food waste to save having to rebuy
- Store your food shopping correctly to extend shelf life.
- Make the most of leftovers – you can create soups, casseroles and stirfries which can be great ways to use up left over bits of food.
- Organise your cupboards by use by date order to avoid wastage.

This is taken from a PayPal Blog October 2025

PayPlan

BFAWU REP OF THE WEEK – NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!



EVERY WEEK ACROSS OUR UNION, BFAWU reps are going above and beyond to support members, grow our union, and make workplaces safer. It's time to celebrate and recognise that outstanding work.

Throughout 2026 we're inviting branches to nominate reps who have made an exceptional contribution — whether through:

- Signing up new members and strengthening our collective voice
- Identifying a safety risk that prevented an accident or protected colleagues
- Supporting a member through a difficult issue with dedication and care
- Or any other example of a rep who has truly gone the extra mile for our union and our members.

If your branch has someone who deserves to be celebrated, we want to hear about them!

Send your nomination via the **QR code**.

Let's shine a light on the everyday heroes across the BFAWU who make our union what it is!

Solidarity!

FROM MANNINGHAM MILL TO MODERN BAKERIES

Lessons from a Strike that
Changed History

IN DECEMBER 1890, THOUSANDS of mainly women textile workers at **Lister's Manningham Mill** in Bradford walked out against a wage cut. They worked long hours in tough conditions, in one of the biggest mills in Britain. The bosses called it *"necessary to stay competitive."* The workers called it what it was, *a pay cut they couldn't afford.*

For nineteen freezing winter weeks, they stood firm. The strike was eventually broken by hunger and blacklisting, but the courage of those workers changed history. Their struggle helped spark the founding of the **Independent Labour Party**, which led to the creation of the Labour Party.

It showed that when working people act together, they can build something much bigger than any one dispute.

The Fight Then – and the Fight Now

Lister's Mill was known for its motto: *"Low wages, good water, and no unions."* It could easily describe some employers in our food industry today. Over a century later, too many workers are still being told to accept low pay, long hours, and dangerous conditions *'for the good of the business.'*

Like the Manningham women, our members know what that means: *profits for the bosses and hardship for the workers.*

At the time, the Manningham strike was led largely by women – the backbone of the textile industry who were treated as cheap, disposable labour. In 2025, women still make up the majority in food manufacturing, catering, and hospitality, often in the lowest-paid and most insecure jobs.

Whether it's in a sandwich factory, a fast-food outlet or a supermarket bakery, the fight for fair pay and respect is the same fight those women took up 135 years ago.

What's Changed — and What Hasn't

Then: Employers cut wages and called in the army to break the strike.

Now: Governments pass laws like the *Minimum Service Levels Act* to make striking harder, and companies use *"fire and rehire"* tactics to force workers onto worse contracts.

Then: Workers had no political voice.

Now: We have laws and rights that trade unionists fought for – but they're under attack from the same forces that backed the mill owners.

Then: Hunger and hardship forced workers back.

Now: The cost-of-living crisis means members are choosing between heating, rent, and food, even when working full-time.

*The tactics have changed,
but the goal hasn't –
employers still want to drive
down wages and weaken
unions*

What We Can Learn

The Manningham strike reminds us that defeats can plant the seeds of victory. The workers lost the battle for their pay, but they built the foundation for an independent workers' voice in politics – something the BFAWU has always stood for.

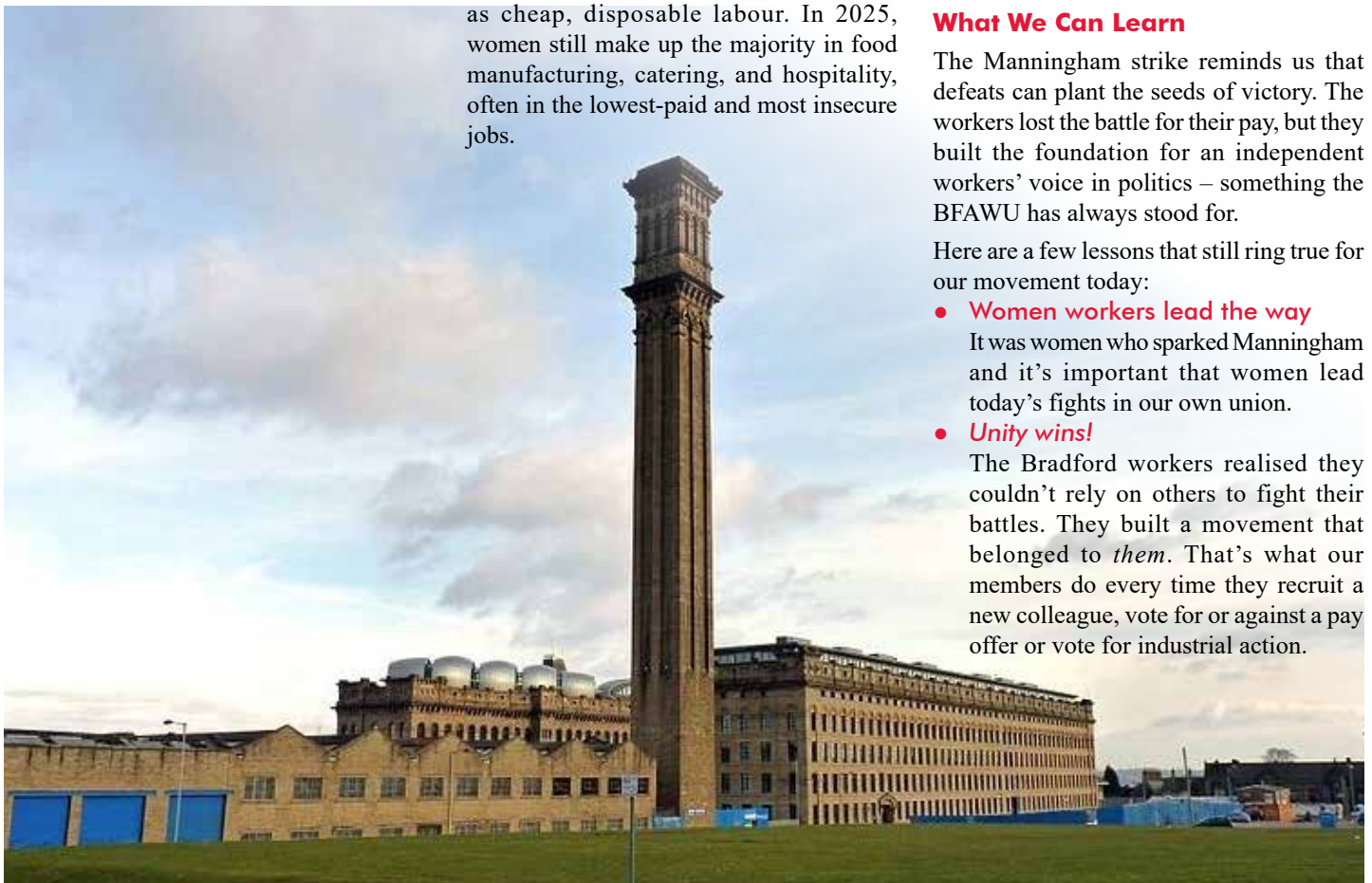
Here are a few lessons that still ring true for our movement today:

- **Women workers lead the way**

It was women who sparked Manningham and it's important that women lead today's fights in our own union.

- **Unity wins!**

The Bradford workers realised they couldn't rely on others to fight their battles. They built a movement that belonged to *them*. That's what our members do every time they recruit a new colleague, vote for or against a pay offer or vote for industrial action.



• We need strength on the job and in politics

Manningham workers turned their strike into a political movement because they saw how the law was stacked against them. Today we face anti-union laws, corporate lobbying and politicians who talk about “working people” while backing exploitative employers. That’s why the BFAWU continues to campaign for a New Deal for Working People, a real living wage, and the right to strike without fear.

• Solidarity is our safety net.

During the strike, Bradford families survived through soup kitchens and community support. That same spirit drives our strike funds, hardship appeals, and solidarity visits today. When one group of workers takes a stand, it lifts us all. We have a rule in our rule book about branches affiliating to their local trade union council for a reason, so that solidarity is put into action locally, not just spoken about.

From Bradford to the Breadline

The Manningham Mill was just a few miles from where some of our members now work. The struggles of those textile workers are part of our movement’s DNA northern, working-class, proud, and determined to stand up to exploitation.

They faced the same sneers our members hear today: “*You should be grateful for your job.*” “*You’re asking too much.*” “*The company can’t afford it.*” Yet they had the courage to say enough is enough and that’s exactly what our union continues to say in every workplace we organise.

Carrying the Flame Forward

As the cost-of-living crisis bites and insecure work spreads, we’re once again seeing how much power employers hold when workers are divided and how quickly that balance shifts when we come together. The Manningham strike was proof that solidarity and organisation can turn despair into hope.

Every recognition agreement, every pay rise, every successful campaign our union wins is part of that same story written by the hands that grow, bake, pack, cook, deliver and serve the nation’s food.

So, the next time someone says strikes don’t work or unions are a thing of the past:

Remember Manningham.

Those workers didn’t just fight for themselves;

They helped shape a movement that’s still fighting for us today.



Nearly **1 in 2 employees** are **paying more tax than they should** because they think their employer takes care of it.

But here’s the truth: **It’s your job to check your tax is right**, not your employers. That’s the rules according to HMRC!

Not sure how to check your tax? No problem — the **BFAWU** has got your back.

Let the Tax Experts at **CheckMyTax** do the hard work for you and you can **get back the money that’s rightfully yours**.

Don’t let your money stay in HMRC’s pocket.

www.checkmytax.co.uk/bfawu

or scan the QR code below



CHECKMYTAX

THE TAX REFUND COMPANY

Good Afternoon Sarah

You asked me how we were doing on the 'CheckMyTax' initiative we operate for you.

Here are your latest results since 2023:

• Members Requesting a Review	928
• Members Completing a Review	560
• Total Claims Paid or awaiting payment	159
• Average Refund Value	£82.64
• Largest Refund is still	£1,725.47

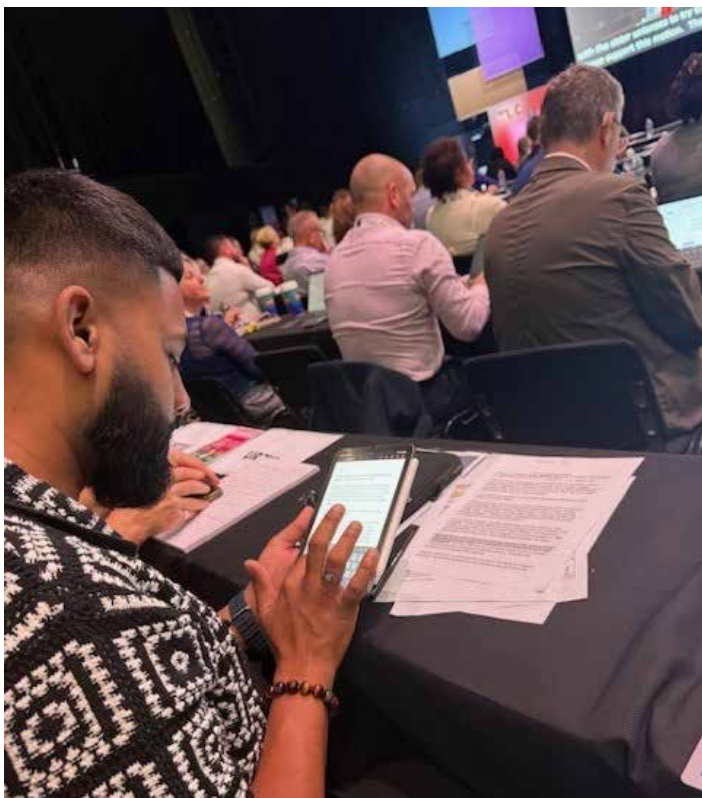
Best Regards

Jayne Morgans

The Tax Refund Company

www.checkmytax.co.uk/BFAWU

TUC CONGRESS 6–10 SEPTEMBER 2025



I ARRIVED IN BRIGHTON ahead of this year's TUC Congress and checked into the hotel. First impressions were good: it was clean, spacious, and comfortable, which was needed for the busy days ahead.

The place was a lot busier than I expected, mainly because of the England vs Australia women's rugby match, (even though the game wasn't being played here in Brighton). I guess it's because it was the first weekend after school had started and families were holding on to the summer mood, which meant plenty of fans chose to travel and stay in Brighton, which made the hotel feel lively and a bit crowded. Still, it was easy enough to settle in, and the atmosphere was upbeat. It felt like a solid base for the days of Congress to come.

Day 1 [7 September]

Fringe events

The day began with the **Workers Planet fringe**. Speakers stressed how climate change is a working-class issue, hitting us hardest and first. There was a clear link made between fair pay, community solidarity, and tackling the far right's narratives. Later, the **Latin America fringe** highlighted international solidarity, from the fight against sanctions in Venezuela and Cuba, to lessons from Nicaragua and Colombia. The message was clear: unity across borders is vital.

Congress floor highlights

Outside the venue, activists made their voices heard, standing against the far right and voicing frustrations with Labour's current leadership. It was noisy, passionate, but united. Inside, the Congress hall was grand, with stalls from across the movement. I spoke with representatives from the GMB, Unite, Morrish Solicitors and others.

The cultural touch came with Sai Ma performing Indian music as delegates took their seats, a calm moment before debate began. International delegates were also present, adding to the sense of solidarity.

- **Motion 51 (National Renewal & Education)**: opened with solidarity for Palestine, an emotional moment linking struggles together.
- **Motion 33 (Standards in Government)**: strong calls for law, not just guidelines, to tackle corruption.
- **Motion 45 (Health Inequalities)**: Sarah Woolley (BFAWU) spoke powerfully on nutrition and prevention as key to reducing health gaps.



Post-Congress fringe

The evening ended with the Institute of Employment Rights. Speakers challenged the gaps in the proposed **Employment Rights Bill** especially around enforcement and zero-hour contracts. The discussion cut through far-right scapegoating, making clear that exploitation comes from bosses and corporate lobbyists, *not* migrants.

Later in the evening I joined the GFTU social, where fish and chips were served overlooking the pier, courtesy of the GFTU, a warm and welcome way to round off the first day.

Closing reflection

Today showed me just how connected our struggles are, from climate justice to workers' rights at home and solidarity abroad. The energy inside and outside Congress reminded me that our movement is strongest when united, and when we keep the focus on the real causes of inequality.

Day 2 [8 September]

Fringe events

The morning started with *the International Breakfast*, overlooking the sea. We were welcomed by the TUC's assistant director, with pastries, tea, coffee, and juice on offer. Delegates from Spain, Italy, Bangladesh, and Germany each shared how their unions were confronting the far right at home.

Later, at the Trade Union Coordinating Group fringe, Sarah Woolley (BFAWU) raised the growing issue of AI in the workplace. She made it clear that technology should be used *with* workers, not *against* them, a message that resonated strongly.

Congress floor highlights

Congress resumed with a series of motions, many centred around railway workers and freight trains. The atmosphere was calmer compared to the first day, with debate steady but determined. After a short lunch break, proceedings continued at 14:15.

All the afternoon motions were carried unanimously, underscoring a strong sense of unity. The message repeated from the floor was that there is more in common than divides us.

Closing reflection

Today felt less heated than yesterday but no less important. From the international voices at breakfast to the unanimous votes in the hall, the theme running through the day was unity across borders, sectors, and struggles.

Day 3 [9 September]

Congress floor highlights

The day began with a **Standing Up To Racism** photoshoot outside the venue, before we headed into Congress to the sound of live music by Lina Sounds.

At 10:30, I had the privilege of going on stage to speak on **Motion 5 – Recruitment and Retention of Young Members**.

As a first-time delegate and first-time speaker, it was a big moment for me.



This was followed by an awards ceremony, recognising individuals for their achievements within the trade union movement.

Fringe events

13:00 – *Arise fringe*, chaired by Sarah Woolley (BFAWU). Speakers such as **Gawain Little** and **Rebecca Long-Bailey** spoke with energy about building a stronger left and resisting the far right.

It was a lively, well-attended session that set a hopeful tone for the battles ahead.

After lunch, Congress resumed at 14:30, running through the afternoon before closing at 17:00.

Closing reflection

Today was a milestone for me, standing at the podium for the first time and speaking in front of Congress.

Alongside the solidarity of SUTR, it felt like a day of both personal and collective strength.

Day 4 [10 September]

Congress floor highlights

The final day of Congress began with **Motion 71 – The Crisis in Palestine**. Trade unions spoke powerfully about the genocide being committed against the Palestinian people and Britain's complicity through government and parliament.

At 10:00, Congress heard from guest speaker Shaheer Saed of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions. In a moving moment, the entire hall held up posters reading 'FREE PALESTINE' in a united show of solidarity.

Later, **Motion 76 – Reform of the TUC** brought a strong debate on the re-election of the TUC General Secretary. Arguments for and against were put forward, but ultimately the motion did not pass.

The Congress then drew to a close with an emotional speech from the TUC President, who announced his retirement and was honoured with a Congress Bell award.



Closing reflection

The final day of Congress underlined the importance of solidarity both at home and internationally. From the unity shown with Palestine to the debates about our own movement's future, it was a fitting end to a powerful few days.

Abs J Choudhury
Branch Secretary Branch 105
(Warburtons, Enfield)



SUMA PRIDE WEEK

AS HAS BEEN A TRADITION for almost 20 years, **Branch 547** along with Suma's **LGBTQIA+ Worker Network** has organized a week of events to celebrate *Diversity and Inclusion* in the workplace.

Workers at Suma dedicated the last week of August to the celebration of LGBTQIA+ pride, commemorating the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer culture and community.

Every year during Pride Week Suma workers fundraise for a local LGBTQIA+ charity and this year we baked cakes and collected donations for **HIVE Café** in Huddersfield.

Aligned with Suma's values of Cooperativism, HIVE Café just converted to a *non-profit workers cooperative*. HIVE is a vegetarian and vegan community and queer space, home to several community groups and support networks. The café has been a much-loved community space since 2021, set up to help people navigate services and create a safe space for people feeling isolated or needing support for a variety of reasons. Its founder and dedicated team of directors, staff and volunteers have created an accessible warm and welcoming space for social groups, well-being groups, LGBTQ+ youth groups and space for developing skills through volunteering.

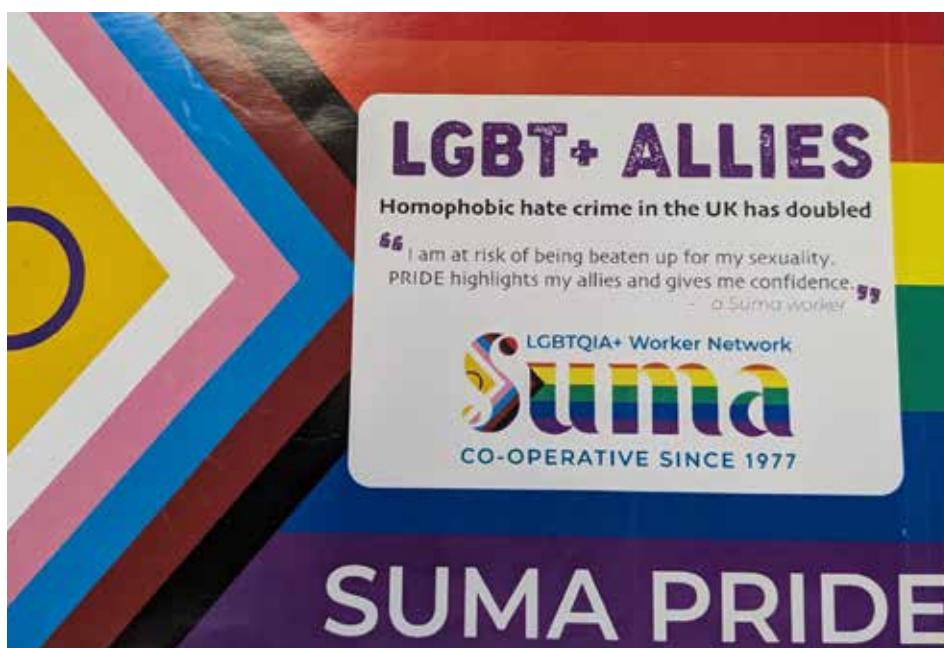
HIVE café in Huddersfield

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/hivecoop>

At Suma Branch we are also aware that Pride is an opportunity to mark Pride as a *protest* and to support the members of the LGBTQIA+ who continue to suffer discrimination as a result of their sexuality or gender.

Suma workers signed urgent actions in support of victims of abuses and demanded justice for individuals and communities in Saudi Arabia, Dubai (Emirates), Morocco and Turkey. We also demanded **Meta** stop normalizing harmful speech against LGBTQIA+ people on Facebook and Instagram.

Fredy Velez (He/Him)
Co-operative Member
SUMA Wholefoods



NETWORK DATES 2026



Branch Secretary

12th January

13th April

13th July

12th October

6.00pm



LGBTQ+ Network

14th January

15th April

15th July

14th October

6.00pm



Women Members

14th January

15th April

15th July

14th October

7.00pm



Disabled Members

15th January

16th April

16th July

15th October

6.00pm



Young Members

15th January

16th April

16th July

15th October

7.00pm



Morning Star Reading Group

16th January

17th April

17th July

16th October

7.00pm



ULR Network

16th January

17th April

17th July

16th October

6.00pm



Foodworkers and Allied Trades for Unity against Division

Every month on the
3rd Monday at
7.00pm



Retired Members

16th January

17th April

17th July

16th October

5.00pm



Foodworkers and Allied Trades Support PALESTINE

Every month on the
2nd Monday at
7.00pm



Green Reps

13th January

14th April

14th July

13th October

7.00pm



Foodworkers and Allied Trades Support TRANS RIGHTS

19th January

20th April

20th July

19th October

6.00pm



BAME Network

13th January

14th April

14th July

13th October

6.00pm



Meeting Notes from Previous Network meetings can be found in the relevant section of the BFAWU website – www.BFAWU.org

AWARDS



40 Years

AT OUR RECENT REGIONAL COUNCIL, the national president and I had the pleasure of presenting **Brother Alan Milne** with his *40 year badge*.

Alan has carried out many roles within our union, culminating in him becoming Regional Officer, a role which he carried out until his retirement.

I'm sure you will all agree Alan looks better now that he ever did, which is testimony to Alan enjoying his retirement to the full. He still makes the effort to go to the gym most days and is kept busier than ever with his grandchildren.

Continue to live life to the fullest Alan and feel free to come along the Regional Council meeting whenever your diary allows.

All the best from everyone in Region 5!

Mark McHugh
Regional Officer
Region 5

Congratulations Saqib Mehmood!

We're proud to share that **Sarah Woolley**, BFAWU General Secretary, presented **Saqib Mehmood** with the *Greencore Organising Award* for his outstanding recruitment and dedication within BFAWU Branch 357 – Greencore Northampton.

Saqib's hard work, commitment, and passion for supporting his fellow workers have made a real difference in strengthening our branch and building a stronger voice across Greencore.

A huge well done, Saqib — and thank you for everything you do for our members!

George Atwall
Regional Officer
Region 3



Grow your money With Quilter Invest



Learn. Save. Invest

As a Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union member, you worked hard for your money. Now it's time to make it work for you and your family.

Sign up now and enjoy 2% cashback on all deposits or transfers made until December 31st, 2025

Subject to terms, see Quilter Invest site for details.
Capital at risk.



Scan to find out more

Quilter Invest

An innovative new app designed to empower you to learn, save, and invest with confidence. As a part of Quilter, a long standing FTSE 250 company, you can rest assured we're a company you can trust.



BFAWU Membership Entitlement

Don't miss out on your FREE £5,000 Accidental Death Cover

12 months free cover.
Annually renewable.

Always FREE.

Cover is for UK residents aged 18-69.



Scan the QR code or visit the
link below to sign up today

BFAWUProtect.com/JE



Terms & Conditions apply. BFAWU is an introducer appointed representative of Union Insurance Services, a trading name of Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd (UIB) who arrange this insurance. The insurance is underwritten by Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd.

WORK YOUR BRAIN

WORDSEARCH

How many words can you find?

E	L	B	A	N	I	A	T	S	U	S
N	L	T	E	G	D	U	B	P	J	I
O	L	E	R	B	M	Z	F	A	U	S
M	I	V	E	K	A	Q	B	I	S	I
I	M	I	W	G	R	E	E	N	T	R
N	D	H	O	N	K	K	E	E	I	C
A	B	N	P	L	E	M	A	B	C	G
T	A	Y	O	U	T	H	H	F	E	U
E	H	V	C	H	E	C	K	O	U	T
D	N	U	F	E	R	W	R	O	E	T
E	R	U	L	I	A	F	P	D	X	O

WORDS CAN GO IN ANY DIRECTION (inc diagonally)!
Clue: you will find all of the words in this Foodworker... if you look closely enough!

SUDOKU

Fill the 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contains all of the digits between 1 and 9

7		4						
	1						5	
8		5			7			3
			2					
4			5		9			
	3							6
3				9	5		4	2
1	2						6	
			1				3	8

difficulty: medium

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

CROSSWORD

1	2		3		4		5		6		7	
	8											
9									10			
11	12								13	14		
					15		16					
17			18		19						20	
	21											
22								23				

- Across
- Down
- 1 Brandy distilled from cherries (6)

2 Point in question (5)

3 Highest women's singing voice (7)

4 Set (6)

5 Defeated (6)

6 Capital of Japan (5)

7 Indigestion remedy (7)

12 Stopper to keep out noise (7)

14 Jailer (7)

15 Entertains (6)

16 Greek goddess of wisdom (6)

18 Dried plum (5)

20 Seductively beautiful woman (5)
- 5 Reveal unintentionally (6)

8 Large self-service store (11)

9 Like many Sherpas (8)

10 Pained expression (4)

11 On a lower storey (5)

13 Investigate closely (5)

17 Harvest (4)

19 Bed (8)

21 Audio system output device (11)

22 Concurs (6)

23 An unspecified person (6)

Solutions to last issue's puzzles: Post Conference 2025

SUDOKU: very easy

5	9	7	2	6	4	1	8	3
6	3	8	7	9	1	5	2	4
4	2	1	5	3	8	7	6	9
7	4	3	8	1	9	2	5	6
9	5	2	4	7	6	8	3	1
1	8	6	3	5	2	4	9	7
2	1	5	9	4	3	6	7	8
3	7	4	6	8	5	9	1	2
8	6	9	1	2	7	3	4	5

CROSSWORD

F	G	P	C	I	D						
E	P	I	T	A	P	H	C	R	A	B	
M	Z	N	A	E	M						
S	A	L	A	M	I	N	E	C	T	A	R
L	E	M	P	E	S	T					
H	O	A	R								
E	Y										
B	R	E	M	E	N						
O	A										
L	I	S	T								
N	E										

WORDSEARCH

1 CONFERENCE

8. NETWORK

15. CASTE

2. SOLIDARITY

9. QR

16. TRUTH

3. ATTACK

10. AWARDS

17. CREDIT

4. MOTIONS

11. VOICE

18. LIONS

5. WORKPLACE

12. RESOLUTIONS

19. FUND

6. REMIT

13. RULE

20. POLITE

7. YOUTH

14. PLAN

BFAWU OFFICERS AND REGIONAL ADDRESSES

Head Office

email: info@bfawu.org

Stanborough House
Great North Road,
Stanborough,
Welwyn Garden City,
Hertfordshire
AL8 7TA

Tel: 01707 260150/259450

Ms Sarah Woolley— General Secretary
email: sarah.woolley@bfawu.org

Mr I Hodson— National President
email: ian.hodson@bfawu.org

Also Credit Union

Tel: 01707 259455

email: admin@bfawucreditunion.co.uk

No 1 Region

email: region1@bfawu.org

c/o Head Office

Stanborough House, Great North Road,
Stanborough, Welwyn Garden City,
Hertfordshire AL8 7TA

Tel: 0208 801 0980

Mr F Loveday— Organising Regional Secretary
Mobile: 07739 326002
email: frank.loveday@bfawu.org

No 2 Region

email: region2@bfawu.org

Cardiff House
Cardiff Road
Barry
CF63 2AW

Tel: 02920 481518

Mr G Johnston— Organising Regional Secretary
Mobile: 07739 326005
email: gary.johnston@bfawu.org

Mr J James— Organising Regional Secretary
Mobile: 07739 326004
email: john.james@bfawu.org

No 3 Region

email: region3@bfawu.org

Suite 1C3, Park Business Centre
Wood Lane,
Erdington
Birmingham
B24 9QR

Tel: 0121 237 3720

Mr G Atwall— Regional Officer
Mobile: 07739 326009
email: george.atwall@bfawu.org

Mr H Rashid— Organising Regional Secretary
Mobile: 07726 902807
email: haroon.rashid@bfawu.org

Mr L Bemka— Organising Regional Secretary
Mobile: 07912 760261
email: lukasz.bemka@bfawu.org

No 4 Region

email: region4@bfawu.org

348 Chester Road
Cornbrook,
Manchester, M16 9EZ

Tel: 0161 872 6621

Zane Wells— Organising Regional Secretary
Mobile: 07739 326006
email: zane.wells@bfawu.org

Mr G Atkinson— Organising Regional Secretary
Mobile: 07834 930002
email: geoff.atkinson@bfawu.org

Ms L Graham
Mobile: 07739 326020
email: laura.graham@bfawu.org

No 5 Region

email: region5@bfawu.org

10 Greenside, Pudsey,
West Yorkshire LS28 8PU

Tel: 01132 565925

Mr M McHugh— Regional Officer

Mobile: 07727 907218
email: mark.mchugh@bfawu.org

Ms L Dinning— Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07739 326016
email: lizzie.dinning@bfawu.org

Mr J Singh— Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07739 326012
email: jit.singh@bfawu.org

No 7 Region

email: region7@bfawu.org

Suite 105, City East Business Centre
68–72 Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 1GW

Tel: 028 9094 1693

Ms L Graham— Regional Officer
Mobile: 07739 326020
email: laura.graham@bfawu.org

Branch 600

email: swu/branch600@bfawu.org

Branch 601

email: saltbranch601@bfawu.org

JOIN US!

BAKERS
FOOD
AND ALLIED
WORKERS
UNION



If you or any of your work colleagues are interested in what the BFAWU can offer, scan the QR code to find out more and **Join this Great Union!**



If you're already a member: IMPORTANT!

It is important that you keep us updated with any changes to your name, address or contact details.

We send out regular all member emails via mailchimp, if you aren't receiving them, it is probably because we don't have an email address for you, or that we are using an old one!

If you think something has changed in the last 12 months or so, please do take a few minutes to update your details with us.

You can either do it using this QR code, or via your Branch Secretary

