



# PRESS RELEASE

## TRADE DISPUTE LOOMING AT FLIMBY TIMBER COMPANY

Industrial action is potentially just around the corner in a major timber company in Flimby, Cumbria.

Cumbria's biggest general trade union, the GMB, has been in wage negotiations with Thomas Armstrong since early January with the pay award anniversary date due on 1 January 2012. The company offered 2.5% which was rejected by GMB members in the workplace by 73%.

At a meeting on Friday 3 February 2012, a negotiated settlement could not be found and as such an industrial action ballot started on the 6 February and closes on Friday 18 February.

GMB Regional Organiser Kevin Young said:

"GMB members in the company fully appreciate that these are very difficult times for everyone and they realise that it is a very challenging trading environment. However Thomas Armstrong are a notoriously scrooge-like employer who, for instance, were one of only a handful of employers in the area who did not honour the goodwill of allowing its employees the Royal Wedding Public Holiday last year".

"GMB members employed within the Timber Dept. which makes pallets, roof trusses and drawer wraps/fronts are on wages marginally above the minimum wage and have not enjoyed a decent wage increase for a while".

The GMB say that in negotiations they asked Thos. Armstrong (Timber Dept) to repay the loyalty shown by its members, some of whom have many years service with the company and to have consideration for the rise in domestic fuel and food bills etc.

Mr Young said:

"An investment Thos. Armstrong need to undertake is in it's employees, our members, and the employer chose to ignore this request. Quite rightly so our members have had enough and to the extent where they are willing to take the extreme measure of taking strike action to improve their terms and conditions. This is something they do not do lightly but their hand has been forced. Year in and year out in negotiations it has only been the threat of industrial action that has brought some wage increase for our members, It would make a refreshing change if Thomas Armstrong stopped playing brinkmanship and offered it's employees, our members, a wage increase that gave them somewhere on the road to a living wage".

**-ENDS-**

