

GMB backs calls on Wandsworth & Merton councils to acquire unsold homes at old Wimbledon football ground at Plough Lane

GMB is calling on its members to attend the launch of the campaign by Battersea & Wandsworth TUC, Merton and Sutton TUC and Wimbledon Labour Party to add unsold private housing developments in South West London to the social housing stock to get people off the housing waiting lists. The campaign will be launched at a public meeting at:

**7.30 P.M. ON
MONDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2009 AT
ROOM No.1
WILLIAM MORRIS HOUSE
267 THE BROADWAY
WIMBLEDON
SW19 1SD**

This follows a decision to launch a campaign at the November meeting of Battersea and Wandsworth TUC (BWTUC) when there were calls from delegates from the local trade union branches for Wandsworth and Merton councils to acquire unsold homes at the housing development at the old Wimbledon football ground in Plough Lane.

Wimbledon Football Club supporters once knew Plough Lane as their home ground, but since the football team relocated to new grounds in Milton Keynes, Plough Lane became the location of Barratt Southern Counties' most recent mixed-use housing development called 'SW19 Sanctuary'. Delegates at BWTUC said that most of the units seem to be empty. See photos taken by GMB this week below.

When it is finished, 'SW19 Sanctuary' aims to provide approximately 600 new homes, of which 40% will be affordable. The mixed-use development will also have 45,000 sq ft of retail, commercial and office space, creating both necessary facilities and employment opportunities for the existing community.

Paul Maloney, GMB National Officer said, **"Barretts are claiming that the Plough Road site is 80% sold. If this is true that leaves 120 unsold units which can be acquired for social housing. If however, the claim is a marketing ploy there are a lot more unsold units than that. A GMB member took photos of the site earlier this week and it looks very empty. (See photo attached).**

GMB would like to see the local councils using the money that the government has already provided to enter into discussion with Barretts and other developers to take over the stock of unsold houses in south west London. This will do two things. It will provide homes for those on the waiting list and will provide a boost for the hard pressed construction sector. GMB is calling on all our members in the area to back the campaign."

Ends

Contact: Nadine Houghton BWTUC 07946 172461/ Geoff Martin Sutton and Merton TUC 07831465103 or Paul Maloney GMB 07801 343 839

Notes to Editors: Plough Lane was the home ground of Wimbledon FC for the 79 years between September 1912 and May 1991, when the club moved to Selhurst Park, a ground it shared with Crystal Palace FC until 2003. Plough Lane's highest ever attendance was 18,080 - most of whom were navy servicemen on leave - for an FA Amateur Cup match between Wimbledon FC and HMS Victory in 1935. Though Plough Lane was used for Wimbledon and Crystal Palace reserve team matches for some time after 1991, the grounds were finally dismantled in 2001.