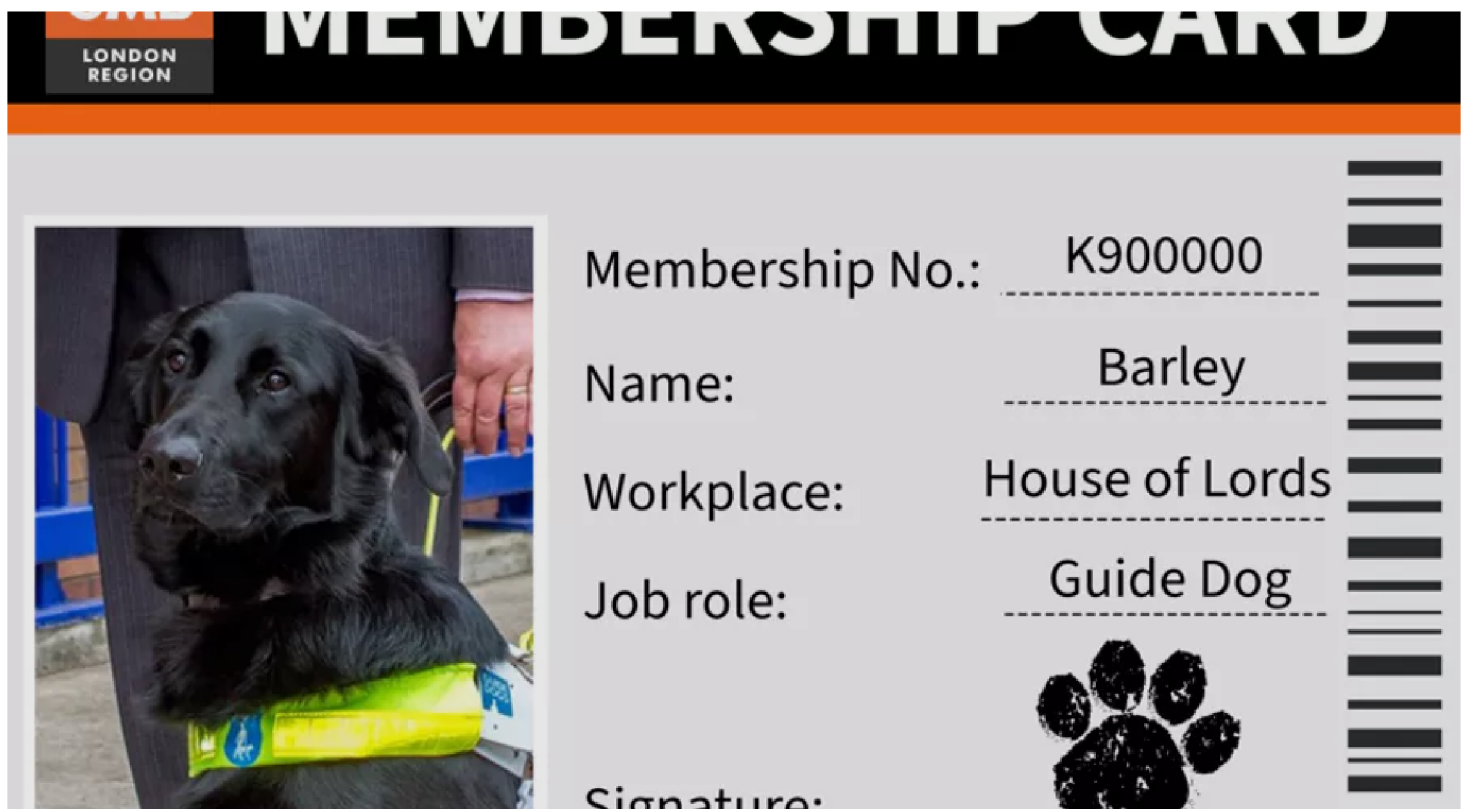


# Lord Blunkett's guide dog, Barley, becomes union's fetching new member



**GMB Union extends honorary membership to Barley in recognition of the important contribution of working animals across the UK**

One of Britain's largest unions, GMB Union, often has a bone to pick with poor employers, but this week granted honorary membership to Lord David Blunkett's guide dog, Barley.



GMB MPs' and Peers' Staff Branch, the largest union branch for political staff in the UK, has welcomed Barley as its latest member in recognition of the important role working animals play for thousands of people across the UK.

Barley has been granted the unique but fetching K90000 membership number, with his union subscriptions donated in full by GMB to the charity, Guide Dogs.

GMB has an established tradition of extending union membership to workplace animal colleagues.

In 1979, the union famously granted membership to Smudge, a cat who worked as a mouser in the People's Palace in Glasgow, following a request from appreciative colleagues.

**Lisa Gillmore, Senior Parliamentary Researcher and President of GMB MPs' and Peers' Staff Branch, said:**

"As the largest union for those working for MPs and Peers, we felt it was important to recognise the crucial role that working animals have for thousands of people in Britain, including several on the Estate and in constituency offices.

"We look forward to welcoming Barley to the branch, and if he ever suffers paw conditions, he knows we are here to help."

**Warren Kenny, GMB London Regional Secretary, said:**

"The union has long recognised working animals.

"While this is a bit of fun, we want to highlight an important point: animals play a vital role in helping many across the UK get on in workplaces."

**Barley added:**

"I'm excited to have my membership card, treats, and to know that a contribution is being made to Guide Dogs from my branch. I don't carry money, bank cards, or have pockets.

"As the first working animal member of the branch, I would like to extend an invitation to Jennie and Nancy, fellow guide dogs for Steve Darling MP and Lord Holmes, to consider joining too.

"Jennie, Nancy, and I could bark at length about helping others with their work."

A spokesperson for GMB, when asked if Larry, the famous No.10 cat, will be allowed to join, added: "That's for Larry to decide, but there is an obvious campaign for a cat flap we could help him with if requested."



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## Member requiring help?

Click to contact your local GMB Region

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