



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Bromley & Orpington Group

November 2019 Newsletter



COME TO OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 12 November
Tuesday 10 December

Campaign Meeting
Human Rights Day – 2019 Greetings Card Campaign

Our thanks to Roger Knight of Bexleyheath for sponsoring this month's Newsletter

The Future of the Group

As we indicated in the last Newsletter, members of the Group came together at the October meeting to discuss options for the future of the Group. Over time, although we remain active and solvent, numbers attending regular meetings have fallen, and changes in the way Amnesty campaigns, by SMS text and e-petitions, has made putting together a meaningful Agenda more challenging. We also acknowledged in discussion, that Amnesty's support for Groups has lessened as new ways have been found to campaign and promote human rights. Members also expressed concern that Amnesty had widened its mandate to such an extent by including such things as climate change, that defining what Amnesty stands for is now much more difficult.

In discussion, however there was very strong optimism and positivity about the achievements of the Group over its 57 years, the social dimension of coming together in one place to campaign and remember the victims of human rights abuses, and the vital necessity of Amnesty's work in a world full of problems and human rights violations. There was strong support to continue to meet each month and to do the best we can. We are therefore delighted to announce that as a result of our review:

- We will continue to meet in Orpington at our usual venue 11 times a year on the second Tuesday;
- Our Secretary will continue to find actions for us to complete together as a Group
- Patrick has volunteered to take on a new Prisoner Action File (see below) which provides new focus
- We will aim for two fundraising events in 2020; Amnesty Jazz and a Bromley Little Theatre preview
- We expect to move to quarterly Newsletters from March 2020 post AGM
- The Group will consider options for a new Chair in the run up to the AGM in March
- We will suspend the speaker programme pending a pick-up in numbers attending meetings

We continue to thank all our long-standing supporters and members. The closure of many local Groups has made us focus more strongly on continuing to be a force for human rights in Bromley, and we hope to go on doing that for many years to come.

Neville, David and Vivien
Chair – Treasurer - Secretary

Group Finance

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Balance brought forward | £508.91 |
| Income | £20.00 |
| Expenditure | £15.68 |
| Balance at 8th October | £513.23 |
| CHANGE | £4.32 |

***** SAVE THE DATE *****

Amnesty Jazz Returns!

With the Nic Beston Quartet & Guest Singer, Sue Rivers

Friday 21st February 2020 at 7.30pm

Prisoner Action File

We have decided to take on a new Prisoner Action File, which Patrick has kindly agreed to lead for us. **Jorge González Nieva** has been held in pre-trial detention in Argentina for 12 years, having been held in prison since 2007 pending a final outcome of his case. In 2010 after a trial notable for its irregularities and unfairness, Jorge was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment. As the conviction was appealed, his case continues to be held up in the court system, with a ruling by the Supreme Court pending since 2015.

Jorge, a 54 year old taxi driver, was accused of assault leading to death, a claim he has always denied. The public defence argues the evidence submitted was full of irregularities, and that new evidence that would exonerate Jorge has never been presented. The case is complicated by two other co-accused, one of whom has said on record Jorge was not involved. A witness that claimed Jorge had taken part in the assault later stated the police had applied pressure on the witness in order to convict him. In a further twist, the police officers who led the case were later convicted of organising a cover up, giving false testimony and attempted extortion. The prosecutor was also suspended for extorting money from defendants. Amnesty views Jorge to be a prisoner of conscience given the failures to carry out a rigorous case review, and the Court's refusal to end his pre-trial detention. There will be opportunities to sign petitions, of writing to the Argentine authorities, lobbying the Embassy and to express solidarity with Jorge's family. We look forward to working on this case.

*** STOP PRESS ***

We have been invited by **Bromley Little Theatre** to ballot for a charity preview in 2020 – which if successful would be our 22nd theatre evening. We have put in our top three choices in the 2020 season – so watch this space!

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Facebook

Don't forget to find us on Facebook; if you use and enjoy social media why not join us for news updates and campaign information. You can also find us online (details below).

Present on 8th October: Neville White; Vivien Glanz; David Howkins; Wendy Simmons; Waltraut Gilchrist; Patrick and Carolyn Nield; Rindi Bakker; Ted Burke; Vivienne Andrews; Peter Martin.

Apologies: Margaret Coppard; Rene Eastwood; Chris Purnell.

Meetings are held in the Wesley Room, Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington commencing at 7.30pm. **E-mail** amnestybromley@gmail.com **Website:** www.amnesty.org.uk/bromley

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