

To: All members and supporters of Amnesty International - New Forest Group

I'm following up my letter of early December, when I invited you to express, through the ballot I had attached, your view on the future of Amnesty International's New Forest Group.

You will recall that I offered three options on the ballot:

1. Continuation of the current model
2. Suspension of the Group's activities for twelve months, until 31st December, 2020
3. Complete closure of the Group with effect from 1st January 2020.

Of those replying, 62.5% voted for option 2, a clear majority. 31.3% voted for option 3 and only 6.2% for option 1. The supporters of option 1 did not feel able to offer their own services to manage the Group going forward, a key issue since the existing officers had already announced their intention to stand down once the ballot result had been put into effect.

The majority view was in line with that of the majority of the Planning Group.

Since the ballot was launched, as you may have read, Amnesty announced that the (relatively) new Secretary General (effectively the Chief Executive), Kumi Naidoo, was standing down due to ill health. His deputy has assumed control of the organisation, pending recruitment of Kumi's successor. News from Amnesty suggests that the heavy losses have been stemmed but not eliminated. More than 70 members of staff have been declared redundant, some (though by no means all) voluntarily. The costs of this redundancy programme have not yet been published, but will be very considerable.

This has reinforced the Planning Group's view that it is simply not appropriate that we should continue to collect money from the public on AI's behalf and send it to Head Office with no real idea as to the use to which it will be put.

We therefore now plan to implement the decision of the recent ballot and suspend the local Group (at least) until the end of next year.

I must ask you therefore please to cancel your standing orders through which you pay your local subscriptions. If you forget to do so, we shall do our best to return them.

We shall keep our bank account open (but not active) for most of next year, until our Treasurer decides that it is no longer necessary.

At the point of closure of this account, we shall distribute any remaining funds equally between our sister Amnesty Groups in Bournemouth, Southampton and Salisbury.

I am advising Amnesty's Head Office of our decision and actions, through Kerry Moscogiuri, who you will remember kindly came and spoke to us in the autumn.

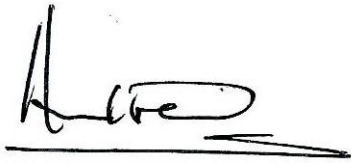
The Planning Group will give some collective thought to the practicalities and desirability of establishing a successor group linked to a different human rights organisation. Freedom from Torture, who have been advised of these developments, have responded very positively to these early discussions.

We shall keep your details on our files in case we need to speak with you on future activities. If you would rather we didn't do this, please simply e-mail me or Julie to that effect and we shall remove you from our records.

These developments should have no effect on any personal relationship or membership that you have directly with AI on an individual basis, which are of course a matter entirely for you. There is no doubt that the sad state of the world creates an ongoing need and demand for an organisation such as Amnesty. Most unfortunately, we have reluctantly and sadly come to the view that the current structure and performance of AI simply does not adequately meet this need.

Thank you most sincerely for your help, support and friendship in recent years, when it has been a great privilege to act as the New Forest Group's Chairman.

With every best wish for 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew R Parrish', with a horizontal line underneath.

Andrew R Parrish