Truro and District Amnesty International Group

Minutes of on-line meeting held on 9th Dec 2020

1. Present: Hetty Tye, Margaret George, Melissa Ward, Karen Cooper, Chris Ramsey.
2. Apologies: Georgie Wong, Wailim Wong.
3. Matters arising from previous minutes: Chris explained that he had not been able to send Garry Ettle’s powerpoint out, as the file was too big. We have a lot of Write for Rights booklets; Chris will check if they can be placed in the cathedral.
4. Correspondence: any available regional campaign information and the monthly Groups Actions had been sent out by email ahead of the meeting. The Groups Action included a letter to be sent to the local press calling for a public inquiry into the Care Homes Scandal (following the publication of the AIUK document ‘As if expendable’) Margaret agreed to personalise this and distribute it to local newspapers and online news platforms, consulting with Walim if possible. (copy of letter sent is added at the end of these Minutes)
5. Treasurer’s report: Karen reported that the books have been satisfactorily audited. We have £859.42, out of which we are due to pay expenses to Chris (£32 approx) The AIUK affiliation fee of £80, and the donation to AIUK of £250 agreed at a previous meeting.
6. Campaigns 1. North Africa – Hetty reported that there was good news in that 3 men we had campaigned for have been released, but Patrick Zika remains in detention. 2. Chris reported on the Occupied Territories and played a film of a young woman conscientious objector, Hallel Rabin, who gave very moving testimony as to why she will not serve in the Israeli armed forces. This and other IOPT news are included in the newsletter which Chris will send to be circulated.
7. Plans for 2021: it was agreed to look into getting different speakers. Karen suggested contacting ‘Penryn and Falmouth welcome refugee families’, and Chris will look into contacting other possible speakers, asking other regional reps for ideas and also contacting Farshid’s replacement at AIUK (Bilal Hussain). It was also suggested that we should have a short briefing on using social media, so that those who wish to can use twitter, etc. It was agreed that we should devote 15 mins of the next meeting to it, led by Karen.
8. Next meeting: the next online meeting will be on Wed 13th Jan at 6.30. It will include a 15 minute briefing on using social media, and also (possibly) a speaker.

Copy of a letter sent to local news organisations

Dear Editor,

Since the pandemic started, the Government has made a series of shockingly irresponsible decisions which has put tens of thousands of older people’s lives at risk - and led to multiple violations of care home residents’ human rights.

The human rights organisation Amnesty International has carried out an investigation and released a report ‘*As if expendable’* which details what happened in care homes and calls for a public enquiry into this scandal.

Discharged without being tested, thousands of older people in England were sent to care homes – putting themselves, other residents and the staff that care for them at great risk. As readers will be aware, this happened here in Cornwall, with terrible consequences for the residents and their families and the staff who worked so hard to care for them.

 The appalling death toll may have been avoidable - it is a scandal of monumental proportions. Now in the midst of a second wave of coronavirus, we are seeing many of the same mistakes being repeated.

A full independent public inquiry into the care home scandal is desperately needed, so that lessons can be learned, and lives protected, before any more lives are lost. Join Amnesty International in calling for an inquiry as a matter of urgency. This website will take you to the report and gives you the opportunity to sign a petition calling for a full investigation: amnesty.org.uk/carehomes.

The Truro and District Amnesty International Group would like to offer our sympathy to all those who have been affected as residents or staff and their families.