**SOLIHULL AMNESTY GROUP**

**Minutes of meeting Monday 18 Jauary 2016**

Present: Celia, Janet, David, Heather, Pauline, Bernard, Ruth.

Apologies: Cathy

Recent Events:

* Maurice Simpson. Sad news Maurice passed away just before Christmas, a very important, long standing member of the group. He was a good organiser, running the street collection for about 20 years, meticulous, and did many other charitable activities outside of amnesty. He will be greatly missed.
* Big Thank you to Cathy and Lynne for hosting the Christmas social, it was a lovely end to our year.
* Write for rights card signing. Although it was harder to get signatures this year the stall is a good way to show public face of the group. Some disappointment with the selection booklet, Bernard will write to AI re this.
* Amy got 32 tutor groups to sign cards at her school, it was agreed this was a great achievement in the last week of term before Christmas.

Follow up to November Minutes:

* AI replied re letters to European Parliament with tips such as, all seven MP’s can be lobbied at once and personal letters or emails are more successful.

Future Events

* The National Conference, 9-10 April, appears to be free this year. It is at Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham and if anyone wishes to stay overnight university accommodation is available. Free meals.
* Street Collection 27 February. We will have a room available again this year (The Vestry) with tea/coffee for collectors, but assess how much it is used. As it is a joint collection we will ask Wythall group if they would like to provide someone to help man the room, and what time or how many collectors they might send.

Secretary’s Items

* Celia will ask Anna for a statement to assess at next meeting.
* We have been donated a Gazebo which will come in very useful for our yearly fundraising/awareness events.

Monthly Action

* Follow up from write for rights campaign, Israa Al-Taweel, has been released on health grounds but is now under house arrest. Appeals to be sent.
* Ruth will adapt template letter from AI and send to local press re war in Yemen.

Campaign Reports

* Johan Teterissa. Current rota till end of April. If anyone emails the ambassador and it doesn’t get through it is important you contact AI. Urgent action because of medical issues, discussed “upping the ante”, Janet to contact country coordinator re liaising with other groups for greater impact.
* Laos – Continue with rota. Also postcards to be signed and sent re other Laos issue.

Ideas for future meetings

* Yemen, Pauline to research for February meeting.
* South America, Janet.
* Tibet, Heather.
* The regional rep would like to visit and chat with us in the next few months.
* Possible talk about pension contributions being invested in unethical overseas companies.

AOB

* Fairtrade Cake Off, February 20th, Solihull Arts Centre. 3 categories, Sugar Craft, Tea Time Treats, Children. At least 2 Fairtrade ingredients must be used.
* If David’s upcoming talk to sixth formers goes well he will contact other colleges.

Date of next meeting: Monday 15 February 2016