

Amnesty International UK Section
Board Meeting

1 February 2014
Seminar Room
Human Rights Action Centre

Present:

Sarah O'Grady, Chair
Hannah Perry, Vice Chair
Cris Burson-Thomas, Treasurer
Ruth Breddal
Tom Hedley
Harrison Littler
Sarah Ward
Rona Keen
Brian Gilda
Hugh Whitby

Attending:

Kate Allen, Director
Tim Hancock, Director of the Chief Executive's Office
Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications
Tony Farnfield, Director of Corporate Services
Dean Anderson, Head of Major Donors
Ruth Dawson, Staff Representative

Apologies:

Katie McSherry

1. INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Apologies

The Board received apologies from Katie McSherry.

1.2 Welcome & Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Asha Verma, maternity cover for Selma Shirazi, PA to the Director was introduced to the Board

1.3 Board Ballot 2014

The Chair updated the Board on the 2014 Board Ballot. The call for nominations this year stated that there were five places available for election due to the need to fill a vacancy for an unreserved seat not filled last year. In addition, the resignation of Louise Ewington, which came after the election had been called, but just prior to the closure for the receipt of nominations created a further vacancy which was included in this year's election; this raised the number of places available to six (one reserved seat and five unreserved seats).

Six nominations were received for Cris Burson-Thomas, Eilidh Douglas, Brian Gilda, Harrison Littler, Hannah Perry and Tom Sparks thus making a ballot unnecessary. John Pestle, Returning Officer, had therefore declared that the above named were elected unopposed with Tom Sparks being elected to the reserved seat for the student network.

The Returning Officer had highlighted that the mid-term vacancy and the unfilled seat from the previous year were seats that should be filled by occupants with a two-year term rather than the typical three year term for occupants filling seats vacated in the usual cycle. The Board would consider and discuss with the Returning Officer the best mechanism for identifying which newly appointed Board members to the unreserved seats should take either one of the three year term seats or one of the two year term seats.

The Chair thanked Louise Ewington for her contribution to the Board and IISC and wished her great success in her important work in Papua New Guinea.

2. PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Draft Minutes of 30 November 2013; Accuracy

The Board noted paper B/27276 and amended the minutes as follows; Point 8 (Pg. 8) 'CAPP Implementation Update'; it was amended to note that the Chair was not required to respond to the Staff Representatives written feedback. This was to be shared with the Chair only and no response to the Staff Representative was expected.

The draft minutes of 30 November 2013 were APPROVED subject to the above amendment.

2.2 Draft Matters Arising 30 November 2013

The Board discussed the matters arising from November's Board meeting. The Chair requested that previous rolling matters arising be added to the list in time for the next Board meeting.

ACTION: A rolling matters arising to be in the papers for the next Board meeting

3. REPORT FROM SUB-COMMITTEES, NETWORKS, GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE AND INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

The Chair invited Sub-Committee Chairs and other Board members to report back on activists/governance meetings they have attended since the last Board meeting (30.11.2013).

Active Membership Sub-Committee; Hannah Perry, Vice Chair & AMSC Chair reported that the AMSC are working on their objectives for their work for 2014-15, with input from the new departmental teams. Hannah Perry informed the Board that the AMSC met with staff members from the Community Organising, Human Rights Education, Events and Artist Liaison team and representatives from the Country Co-ordinator Steering Committee on 25 January 2014 to discuss ideas and challenges going forward. Hannah Perry highlighted that there was also a discussion on the data needed for the reports to the AMSC. The ideal would be to have one quarterly report capturing data from the media, digital, campaigns and community organising, human rights education, events and artist liaison teams that would be accessible for activists. Kerry Moscogiouri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications thanked Hannah Perry for her time in facilitating the meeting. Hannah Perry thanked those that attended from the staff teams. .

International Issues Sub-Committee; Harrison Littler, Board Member & IISC Chair reported back on the I.S policy on sex workers and the approach to the consultation on this proposed I.S policy. A consultation meeting with representatives from the Country Coordinators Steering group, AMSC members and the Student Action Network (STAN) had already occurred. There are plans for a group mailing on Tuesday 4 February which will open consultation with members until 21 March followed by an AGM debate.

The Board were advised that the proposed I.S sex workers policy has now become public following an article in the Daily Mail. Kate Allen, Director, has been invited to take part in a web chat Q & A on the Mumsnet forum on 4 February 2014.

The Board also noted the related controversy concerning the 2009 AGM resolution tabled by the Newcastle group. The individual who proposed the resolution on the group's behalf had been reported as having a significant role in the sex industry. He has also been claiming to have influenced the I.S policy. In fact, the AGM rejected his policy proposal (of decriminalisation) and he left AIUK some years ago.

One Board Member asked how groups would be supported during the consultation regarding the I.S sex workers policy. Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications, advised that she had circulated the Social Media guidelines to groups and also ensured that her telephone number was available to groups for any queries. Further discussion then followed on whether support had also been made available to Student and Youth groups/all groups in relation to the debate about the consultation online.

ACTION: The Board sent their thanks to all staff working on this consultation and the surrounding coverage for their good work.

Tim Hancock informed the Board about a separate matter that had become conflated with the proposed I.S policy proposal in the media. Tim Hancock informed the Board that Grainne Teggart, Campaigner, and Catherine Murphy, IS Researcher, gave evidence to the Justice Committee in Northern Ireland on the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Bill. Amnesty International's position is that the clause should be deleted, as a single clause in a Bill on Trafficking is not the way to address the issue of prostitution.

Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications, mentioned that following queries, an online statement is now available on the Amnesty UK website regarding the evidence given to the Justice Committee in Northern Ireland.

Regional Conferences; Ruth Breddal fed back on the South Midlands conference in Oxford that she attended alongside Kate Allen, Hannah Perry, and Kerry Moscogiuri to feedback on the ICM. It was well attended with good debates.

Tom Hedley fed back on the Belfast conference he attended with Tim Hancock and Patrick Corrigan. Again, a good debate and well attended.

Country Co-ordinators; Rona Keen, Board Member and Country Coordinator for Central Africa, provided an update. Recruitment of new Country Coordinators is progressing well and existing Country Coordinators are looking forward to contributing to 2014 Campaigns. Rona Keen shared the news that Country Coordinator Jeni Dixon has recently been recruited to the role of Community Organiser (Country Coordinators and Networks) in the Community Organising, HRE and Events team. The annual report of Coordinator activity will be going to the AMSC at the end of February.

Working in Partnership; Kate Allen, Director, fed back on a recent Working in Partnership meeting. The meeting was an opportunity to review the working relationship between management and the Union. Mary Dale (from the HRSC) had been a very welcome facilitator. Tom Hedley attended the meeting to provide a Board point of view. The meeting was productive and positive and was a good start to re-building trust.

Sarah Ward, Board Member and HRSC Chair, queried the difference between JNC/JCC/WIP meetings and whether the purpose of these meetings need to be reviewed going forward. It was agreed that this could be useful.

The Board asked for their thanks to be passed on to Mary Dale for her help in facilitating this meeting.

ACTION: Tony Farnfield, Director Corporate Services to circulate the meeting minutes to the Board when these are ready

ACTION: Tony Farnfield, Director Corporate Services to review purpose of the three meetings (JNC/JCC/WIP)

Governance Task Force

The Board noted papers B/2728 and B/2729

The Board discussed the Interim Report and the Reports from the four Sub-Groups. The three recommendations put forward by the Governance Task Force were:

Nominations Committee

- The GTF submitted two draft AGM resolutions to the Board to update the terms of reference and to allow the committee to co-opt an additional member, should it wish to do so.

Relations with the International Movement

- The GTF have made a recommendation on activity in the Chairs' Forum aimed at improving early consultation on International issues.

The Board agreed to formally accept the three recommendations put forward by the Governance Task Force.

There was discussion on the role of the Governance Task Force and it was clarified that the GTF offer recommendations for the Board to consider.

There was a comment that the GTF scope statements had improved greatly, although there is an outstanding query about scope items that do not arise from AGM decisions. These items should be explained and justified so members can see why they have been added.

It was felt that the Governance Task Force was not approaching the Board with queries that could be easily answered. It was suggested that this was not the case and there is a general expectation from the Governance Task Force that the information surrounding Governance should be easily accessible on the website, negating the need to contact the Board for answers. The Board confirmed they are happy to help and support the GTF wherever possible.

One Board Member raised the concern that that the Governance Task Force could be extended year on year following on from the Board resolution requesting the 12 month extension of the Governance Task Force. There was further discussion and clarification on the current work plan of the Task Force and whether the work would be completed by June 2015. It was agreed that a constitutional review needs to be completed during Sept-October 2014.

ACTION: GTF to provide details of the group membership at the top of each sub-group report

ACTION: GTF scope items not arising from AGM decisions to be circulated to Hannah Perry, GTF Board representative, to enable her to discuss and query them with the respective subgroups on the GTF.

The Chair thanked the Sub-Committee Chairs and the Senior Management Team for their feedback

4. AGM/National Conference 2014

4.1 2014 Draft AGM/National Conference Programme & AGM Workshops

The Board noted paper B/2733.

The Board discussed the draft 2014 AGM Programme and scheduled workshops.

Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications, presented the draft AGM programme and proposed workshops. The Board noted this and asked that attention be paid to the way in which the sex worker consultation debate takes place with our younger members present.

ACTION: Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications, to look into this matter and speak to the Child Protection Officer

4.2 AGM Decisions Implementation Report 2013

The Board noted paper B/2730.

The Board discussed the content of the AGM Decisions Implementation Report 2013. It was suggested that further clarification is needed on the status 'This resolution has been implemented and work is ongoing'. It was felt that this wording could suggest that implementation is continuing. It was agreed that unless content is due to change dramatically, updates can be given to proposers now so they have sight of this report prior to the 2014 AGM.

ACTION: Final approval on the report is needed within the week. Any comments to go to Tim Hancock, Director of Chief Executive's Office, by Wednesday 5 February 2014

ACTION: Ruth Breddal, Board Member, to re-circulate the list of Resolution ownership to the Board.

4.3. Board Resolutions 2014

The Board noted paper B/2731.

The Board discussed the draft Board resolutions to the 2014 AGM and suggestions were made to amend wording. The Board added an additional resolution concerning a governance training budget.

Tim Hancock, Director of Chief Executive's Office, advised the Board that he would like to send the draft Board AGM resolutions to the Standing Orders Committee prior to the resolutions deadline for them to review.

- Extend GTF Lifetime
- Nominations Committee
 - NC Special Resolution
 - NC Ordinary Resolution

The Board agreed to submit the three resolution submitted by the Governance Task Force

In addition, the Board agreed the following resolutions:

- I.S policy on decriminalisation of sex work

It was agreed to prepare the resolution on the sex worker consultation so that the Board did not infer a specific position regarding the I.S policy proposal and instead that three differing options are offered.

Ruth Dawson, Staff Representative, fed back that the staff consultation on the sex worker consultation has not yet begun, but wanted the Board to note that there are strong views and relevant expertise (including gained in work experience outside of Amnesty) that staff wish to contribute on this topic. Kate Allen, Director, advised that staff would have the opportunity to contribute to the debate.

- Strategic Goals Consultations

The resolution setting out a membership consultation was agreed.

- Location of future AIUK Annual General Meetings

It was agreed to amend the AGM resolution to have a fixed location for 3 years and to ensure that the rotation changes to another location for one year every fourth year, to ensure that we have presence in the Nations. The resolution is put forward to enable a financial benefit to the organisation.

- AIUK Banking

The wording was agreed subject to Tim Hancock, Director Chief Executive's Office, checking the wording of AIUK's previous resolutions.

- Governance Training

Wording would be drawn up by Hannah Perry and sign off would be agreed by Board members.

The timeline for AGM resolutions discussed:

- The resolutions deadline is 5pm on Monday 10 February
- Resolutions will be collated and circulated on the morning on Tuesday 11 February
- The Board Background notes will be drafted during 11-14 February and sent to the Board on 14 February for their review.

ACTION: Final amendments of the Board resolutions to be submitted to Tim Hancock by 5pm on Friday 7 February.

ACTION: Ruth Breddal, Board Member, to inform the Paisley group of the Board resolution on the sex worker consultation.

ACTION: Hannah Perry and Cris Burson-Thomas to draft the Board training resolution and circulate on Monday 3 February

ACTION: Board to review Board Background Notes between 14-16 February. Hannah Perry to support Tim Hancock in finalizing these on 17-19 February ready for the print deadline.

4.4. Charitable Trust Update

The Board noted paper B/2732

It was agreed that there could be better communication between the Charitable Trust and members of the Board and that a more formal report from the Trust could be shared with the Board regularly in the future, in particular at year end.

ACTION: Cris-Burson Thomas, Treasurer and Tony Farnfield, Corporate Services Director to discuss this with David Norgove, Charitable Trust Chair.

5 2013 ICM Decisions Implementation

The Board noted papers B/2734, B/2735, B/27356

The Board discussed the 2013 ICM Decision on Strategic Goals. The Staff Representative fed back from two staff members their concerns over what is meant by only having 4 or 5 human rights goals, and their confusion as to why the intention is for a maximum of half of our strategic goals to be about human rights. Tim Hancock, Director of the Chief Executive's Office, noted that the current ISP has four very broad human rights goals and more than four internal goals. There appears to be an intention to introduce more focus. The question is, how much more?

The Staff Representative commented that she was pleased to see that the paper indicates that staff will be consulted, and recommended that this debate is opened with staff as soon as possible, giving an opportunity to explore and understand the issues and implications at movement and Section level. Tim Hancock, Director of the Chief Executive's Office, advised the Board and the Staff Representative that we were still waiting to hear from the International Movement on the arrangements for consultation and it was expected that we would hear within the next month.

The Board discussed the Assessment Review Group update. The Board noted the report which would also be discussed at the FSC.

The Board discussed the Restricted Giving Review Group update. The Board noted the report. The

resolution at the ICM had called for a pilot scheme to be established. This had not yet taken place and the assistance of the Treasurer might need to be sought to ensure progress

ACTION: Tony Farnfield, Corporate Service Director to report back to the next Board meeting on progress on pilot scheme.

6. Panorama Update Report

The Board noted paper B/2737

The Board thanked the Director and key staff for their hard work on this matter. There was an effect on membership as a result of the Panorama programme but it was felt that the communications work in the lead up to the programme airing and after had mitigated the effect.

The Staff Representative fed back that that knowledge of the Panorama was kept to those involved in preparing crisis communications around this, and that it was not until relatively soon before the programme aired that this was shared with the wider staff group. One member of staff felt like that represented an ongoing mistrust by management of staff around difficult issues

Kate Allen, Director, said that the Panorama programme had first contacted AIUK in early September. The crisis communications group led by Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communication, had managed our communications. The three months of interaction with the programme had been very time consuming and other staff were not being kept informed of each step of this as there was other important work to be continued. It remained unclear until the night of transition exactly what ground would be covered so it was difficult to have any certainty.

The Staff Representative fed back that the response provided within the programme felt like retrospectively trying to justify the decision to go ahead with the Secret Policeman's Ball.

Kate Allen, Director, said that she had done a 40 minute interview with Panorama and this had been used selectively in the programme. While setting out and being proud of what the Secret Policeman's Ball had achieved, the Director had also been clear in the interview about where we had wanted to do better. The Director said that the Secret Policeman's Ball management response would come to the next Board meeting. Kate Allen, Director, also informed the Board that she was keen to ensure that AIUK learnt from the Ball and that we remained ambitious for AIUK's work.

ACTION: Hannah Perry to circulate to the Board the letter from Liesbeth Ten Ham that she sent to the BBC and the response received from them.

ACTION: Secret Policeman's Ball management response to go to the next Board meeting and to the relevant sub-committees for consideration.

7. Treasurer's Report

The Board noted paper B/2738

The Treasurer noted his concern on our ability to accurately forecast on expenditure while recognising that it had been a difficult year. It was agreed that there should be clear objectives in the SMT work plans relating to accurate budget forecasting each year.

8. Q4 Report against the Plan

The Board noted paper B/2739

The Board noted the report. It was suggested that clarification is needed with tenses in the document to make it an easier read. Tim Hancock, Director of Chief Executive's Office, informed the Board that he would change the format of the report for future annual plans.

9. Global Campaigns

This item was deferred to allow for more time at the next meeting.

10. AIUK Constitution

The Board noted paper B/2740

It was agreed that a substantive discussion on this paper would take place at the next Board meeting. Board members were asked to consider these papers and their views in time for the discussion at the March Board meeting.

ACTION: Board members to submit any comments to Asha Verma, PA to the Director by Friday 7 March 2014. [Update: this date was changed to 5 March following the Board meeting]

11. Chair's Report

The Chair informed the Board that she would be meeting with Kate Allen, Director and Tim Hancock, Director of the Chief Executive's Office to discuss the Governance agenda more broadly. The Chair also informed the Board she met informally with the Chair of the International Board

The Chair informed the Board that she would be on Annual Leave from 14 February until 1 March 2014 and that Hannah Perry, Vice-Chair, would be acting as Chair whilst she was away.

12. Director's Report

The board noted paper B/2743

The Director fed back on her recent trip to Moscow where she joined the Head of Amnesty's Moscow office, Sergei Nikitin, and fellow Section Directors from six other countries to hand Amnesty's global petition demanding freedom of expression in Russia to President Putin's office. The Director informed the Board she met with Ekaterina Samutsevitch from Pussy Riot who served 6 months in detention charged with 'Hooliganism' before being released. Since her release she continues to campaign for freedom of expression. The Director also met former Bolotnaya detainee Vladimir Akimenkov and relatives of those still detained: Ksenia Kosenko, the sister of Mikhail Kosenko and Stella Anton, the mother of Denis Lutskevich.

Kate Allen, Director, reported that the small Moscow office was working hard with other activists and was determined to make a difference in a tough political climate.

13. International Movement

The Board noted papers B/2744/B2745

The Staff Representative fed back on behalf of four members of staff with regards to the agreement on AI Australia's assessment payments and queried that had AIUK been able to put forward and have agreed a similar proposal, it was possible that we may not have had to lose staff or spend as much money on redundancy payments. The Treasurer informed the Staff Representative that he and Tony Farnfield, Corporates Services Director, have followed this matter up and they were advised that the decision taken regarding AI Australia's assessment payments was a top line strategic decision for promoting growth. AI Australia is able to grow income significantly and the decision was one which would allow additional investment in a market which was growing substantially. The Treasurer also informed the Staff Representative that he would be writing to the International Treasurer on this matter, and that this would be discussed at the next Board Meeting

The Staff Representative informed the Board that she had received very little input from staff to bring

to this meeting. Her personal opinion was that most staff have chosen to focus on inputting in to the Staff Survey instead.

The Chair thanked the Board and Senior Management Team, Dean Anderson, Head of Major Donor Development and Ruth Dawson, Staff Representative for attending the meeting and Asha Verma, PA to the Director for taking the Minutes.