

Amnesty International UK Section
Board Meeting

15 March 2014
Conference Room
Human Rights Action Centre

Present:

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

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
Ruth Dawson, Staff Representative
Asha Verma, PA to the Director

Apologies:

Sarah Ward

1. INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Apologies

The Board received apologies from Sarah Ward and Dean Anderson.

1.2 Welcome & Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. The Chair introduced Richard Cryer, Treasurer Elect to the meeting. The Chair thanked Dean Anderson for his attendance and support at previous Board meetings.

2. PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Draft Minutes of 01 February 2014; Accuracy

Due to time constraints, it was decided to agree the minutes via email

2.2 Draft Rolling Matters Arising

Due to time constraints, it was decided to update and agree the rolling matters arising via email.

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 (01.02.2014).

International Issues Sub-Committee; Harrison Littler, Board Member & IISC Chair reported back on the most recent meeting and minutes had circulated prior to the Board meeting.

4. AGM/National Conference 2014

4.1 2014 AGM/National Conference Programme & AGM Workshops

The Board noted paper B/2749.

Kerry Moscogiuri, presented the 2014 AGM programme and workshops for Board discussion.

Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications updated the Board on the arrangements for the AGM, and informed the Board that 345 delegates are currently booked in to the AGM.

A Board member queried the number of international guests and what is in place for 'buddying' with them. Kerry Moscogiuri will find out the current status of registered international guests and update the Board via email.

Board members were asked to think about their preferences for attendance at AGM workshops.

It was queried as to why the Treasurer's report and the AMSC report were on the second day of the AGM and not the first day. Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications informed the Board that the decision was made to hold the workshops on the first day in order to facilitate discussion on the Sex Worker policy consultation, prior to debates on the resolutions.

The Board was asked to consider their visibility at the AGM and how they make themselves available to members. It was suggested that Board members do not all sit together in a row at the front but spread themselves out through the auditorium (for those who are not speaking).

It was decided that Board members should have distinctive name badges in order to stand out to members.

ACTION: Board members to email the Chair by Friday 21 March, advising of first and second workshop preferences, copying the rest of the Board into their email.

ACTION: Kerry Moscogiuri, Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications to update the Board on international guests the AGM.

4.2 AGM Resolutions 2014 & Board Background Notes

The Board noted paper B/2750.

4.3. Board preparation for the AGM

Tim Hancock, Director of the Chief Executive's Office took the Board through the AGM resolutions, gave an overview of the process of debate in working parties and the Board went on to consider each resolution.

RESOLUTIONS IN WORKING PARTY A (SEX WORK CONSULTATION)

- Discussion as to whether Resolution A2 (Partial Decriminalisation) is entirely clear or possibly open to different interpretations, and whether this may need amending (or an additional option offered). To be further discussed ahead of AGM.
- The process for how to handle debate, order of resolutions etc, will be discussed at AGM review group on Tuesday (18 March).
- The Board will take no position in this debate.

RESOLUTION B1: HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

- What AIUK supports is the European Convention on Human Rights being enshrined in UK law (whether as the Human Rights Act or in other form).
- Possible caveat that our potential to work on this could be impacted by the Lobbying Act.
- The Board will support this resolution, whilst making the above two points clear

RESOLUTION B2: GARMENT WORKERS IN ASIAN COUNTRIES

- It was noted that in this instance AIUK's new structure could help to deal with this issue by getting members more involved. SMT advised that the Community Organising team are enthusiastic about testing out working in this way with this issue, by elevating work done on relevant Trade Union cases (UAs) through the TU Network.
- The Board will support this resolution, while emphasising what can be done on this.

RESOLUTION B3: GUANTANAMO

- It was noted that a re-examination of AI's work on Guantanamo could only be done by AIUK with regards to UK work, that this would be a significant piece of work, and that it would need to be commissioned (with associated costs).
- It was also noted that there is no indication that the IS will be stepping up work on Guantanamo, and therefore, even if an evaluation of past work were done, the question would remain of what could be done next. Continued work is likely to be reactive, or focussed around particular cases (eg Shaker Aamer).
- In addition, whilst accepting the bigger point that Guantanamo remains open and so in that respect work to date has not achieved the ultimate goal, our work on Guantanamo has been effective in changing public opinion.
- The Board will oppose this resolution.

RESOLUTION B4: GUATEMALA

- It was noted that everything under point 1 of the resolution (regarding conducting research) cannot be done as AIUK – this is the responsibility of the IS. Therefore it should be requested that this resolution be amended to remove this section.
- The Board will take a neutral position on this resolution.

RESOLUTIONS B5 AND B6: SRI LANKA AND HUMAN RIGHTS/ SRI LANKA AND THE UN

- The Board will support these resolutions

RESOLUTIONS IN WORKING PARTY C

- These are all Board resolutions so did not require further discussion, other than to note that as some are resolutions being proposed by the Board on behalf of the GTF, the Board will formally move these but Peter Pack (or another GTF member) will speak to the resolution.

RESOLUTION D1: SECRET POLICEMAN'S BALL

- It was agreed that a Board member would speak to the proposers about this resolution, proposing that it be made more forward-looking, to be supportive in spirit (e.g. for members to be involved in any future plans), but not to re-evaluate the Ball in 2012 as this has already been done (and paid for).
- The evaluation of the 2012 SPB, and the management response to this, should be made available at the working party for all delegates.
- The Board will seek to amend this resolution.

RESOLUTION D2: SECRETARY GENERAL'S GLOBAL COUNCIL

- Noted that the Global Council is not AIUK's, and therefore we can only advocate to the International Board, not make a decision
- The Board will seek to amend this resolution to clarify that "The AGM instructs the Board to ask the International Board to..."

RESOLUTION D3: LINKING MEMBERS WITH LOCAL GROUPS

- Clear that there is potential to be able to fulfil point 1 of this resolution, but not point 2.
- The Board are keen to support connections between individual members and local groups, but must be legally compliant regarding data protection.
- SMT assured the Board that they are looking at the role of data protection officer, post-restructure.
- Further thinking to be done on this ahead of AGM.

RESOLUTION D4: SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

- The Board noted the highly politicised environment in Scotland and the potential for this resolution to be misinterpreted as AIUK taking a position on Scottish independence. The AGM workshop was also discussed in this context.
- It was decided that a working group of the Board will be set up following the meeting to discuss this further before deciding on the Board's position on this resolution ahead of the AGM. The working group made up of Brian Gilda, Katie McSherry, Tom Hedley, , Tim Hancock.

RESOLUTION D5: STRATEGIC GOALS

- Board resolution – no further discussion or decision necessary

RESOLUTION D6: GLOBAL TRANSITION PROGRAM

- Noted that most bodies mentioned in the resolution are not actually part of the GTP.
- The Board understood the spirit of the resolution and will report quarterly on GTP, and report on other forms of presence, but recognise that they are different and that reporting takes place differently.

The Board discussed and agreed their allocations to Working Parties:

Working Party A – Harrison Littler and Ruth Breddal

Working Party B – Rona Keen and Hugh Whitby

Working Party C – Hannah Perry and Sarah O'Grady

Working Party D – Cris Burson-Thomas and Tom Hedley

It was noted that apologies from Brian Gilda, Katie McSherry and Sarah Ward were received as they are unable to attend the AGM, due to prior commitments.

ACTION: Tim Hancock to provide Brian Gilda information on the Scotland referendum workshop participants.

ACTION: Brian Gilda to provide a suggested amendment to D4 that the Board would be willing to accept.

ACTION: Ruth Breddal to discuss amendments to A2, with SOC, at the AGM Review Group meeting on 18 March 2014.

4.4. AGM Standing Orders & Board Background Notes

The Board noted paper B/2751

It was decided to refer the issue of Board positions being made clear in background notes to the constitution review, outside of the Board meeting.

5 Risk and Reserves

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed.

6. Draft Secret Policeman's Ball Management Response

The Board noted paper B/2754

The Board were asked for their comments on the draft SPB Management Response. A Board member

advised that at her place of employment, that any independent agencies undertaking evaluation present to the Board to get their feedback and queried why this was not done at AIUK. Kerry Moscogiuri, noted this and it would be done in future evaluations.

It was also suggested that future evaluations should include a more holistic view of benefits, such as the impact on recruitment of members and donations from high-value supporters.

It was decided that the management response could be clearer on the ownership of actions, and the actions themselves could be more precise.

The Staff Representative had received feedback on the draft management response from three members of staff. Due to time constraints, feedback would be sent to the Board via email. However the Staff Representative summarised the feedback for the Board. Two member of staff commented on the difficult culture within AIUK, which made it hard for the staff delivering the Ball to do their best work. This had affected the staff concerned individually and resulted in follow up from the Ball not being as effective as it could have been. One member of staff pointed out that stress levels for staff were high because of CAPP. Board members regretted the impact on staff and asked that the issue be addressed in the way which approached culture change at AIUK.

ACTION: The Management response to reflect the above points and to be signed off by the Chair of the Board.

7.1 Treasurer's Report

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed.

7.2 Staffing Establishment

This item was discussed in the closed session.

7.3 HRAC Events Assistant

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed.

8. Draft Annual Accounts

Tony Farnfield, Corporate Services Director informed the Board that the Annual Accounts would be signed off by the end of next week.

9. AIUK Constitution

This item was discussed as part of the closed session and would come on to the open session of the next Board meeting.

10. Strategic Goals

The Board noted paper B/2757, B/2758, B/2759

Tim Hancock, Director of the Chief Executive's office updated the Board on the strategic goals consultation, and advised that it would be finalised this week to go to groups in April mailings.

ACTION: Board members to send their thoughts on process to Kerry Moscogiuri/Tim Hancock.

11. AIUK Campaigns Calendar

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed.

12. Chair's Report

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed.

13. Director's Report

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed.

The Chair thanked the Board and Senior Management Team, Richard Cryer, Treasurer Elect and Ruth Dawson, Staff Representative for attending the meeting and Asha Verma, PA to the Director for taking the Minutes.