

SOLIHULL AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING MONDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES** - NIL
2. **MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM JULY MEETING** -
Phase 2 of the consultation concerning Amnesty International U.K.'s proposed reorganisation, is due very soon. We should receive details by email and we will discuss this at our next meeting and reply to Head Office immediately afterwards.
3. **RECENT EVENTS** - August's **AMNESTEA** was enjoyed by 39 people who raised a total of £399 - thanks to all those who attended or helped to organise this fund-raising event.
4. **FUTURE EVENTS - FUN IN THE PARK (TUDOR GRANGE)** on 21st September - Ruth and Andy have prepared the flyer to be given out from our stall - there will also be other items of Amnesty literature available on the stall - Gazebo to be erected before 10.30 (David) - the stall will be manned by group members from 13.00 to 16.00.
Possible future **SPEAKER AT OUR MONTHLY MEETING** on Zimbabwe - David to organise
5. **SECRETARY'S ITEMS - MONTHLY ACTION** - Torture in Mexico - info sheets distributed to group members. **UNISON MEETING** in Solihull - talk on Columbia and Nicaragua - Civic Suite, Solihull
6. **CAMPAIGN REPORTS** - Johan Teterissa letters : Janet distributed info sheets to members - Laos Campaign : David distributed info for letters re Sombath Somphone who was abducted in 2012 and has not been heard of since then - Laos authorities deny any involvement - David suggested these letter to be sent October/November as we have other letters to send during September re Mexico and Johan Teterissa.
7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS - STREET COLLECTIONS 2015** - will be between 20th February and 3rd April - precise date will be given to us by Solihull authorities soon.
News re **MAURICE** who suffered a stroke earlier this year and is now resident at Royal Star and Garter - Solihull (Monkspath) -visitors welcome - open visiting times (avoid meal-times) **DECEMBER MEETING** at Cathy's home this year. **HUMAN RIGHTS DAY** - Weds. 10th December - we will again have a Greetings Card Stall outside Sainsbury's in Solihull.
8. **NEXT MEETING** - Monday 20th October.

VISITOR'S TALK - The work of the Halesowen Asylum Seekers Welcome Group. Ann and Tony West were joined by 2 members of the Solihull Asylum Seekers Welcome Group. Ann and Tony described how the group began and the great range of the work that they now have to undertake in spite of financial resources being constantly cut back and the number of asylum seekers constantly growing . Their Annual Report for 2014 was circulated to all present. They help over 50 people per week. Referrals come from Social Services and via informal contacts - Local Authority appeared to give inconsistent service.

Organisations like Restore and Assert provide some additional support but overall the support for Asylum Seekers is often patchy - matching needs with appropriate services is often very difficult. The public has a poor understanding about asylum seekers, their needs and an exaggerated perception of the amount of money devoted to their financial support.

We were encouraged to make contact with our Solihull A.S. Welcome Group at 1, Herbert Rd.