

Amnesty International Stratford-upon-Avon Group
37 Maidenhead Road, Stratford-upon-Avon
Wednesday 12th December 2012 at 19.30

MINUTES

Present: Eileen Alberti, Christine Boylan, Elspeth Baillie, Linda Butland, Christine Barter, Maryann Dobbin, Penny Freedman, Rosie Keep, Sonya Millman, Kathy Stredder, Penny Young.

Apologies: Abeer El-Sayed, Chris Jones, John McDermott, Sarah O'Grady, Jo Pettitt, John Ryder.

Minutes of the Last Meeting: These minutes were accepted.

Monthly Action: The Group agreed to write to our MP asking him to support Amnesty's call to review the current policy of financial support for asylum seekers (awaiting a Home Office decision on their refugee status). Amnesty believes that to avoid destitution this group needs an increase of the equivalent of £2 a day – raising the daily level from £5 to £7. As well as the support of our MP, we are asking him to write to the Home Secretary to raise this issue.

Chair's Report [Eileen Alberti]:

Rosie Keep and Eileen Alberti went to see Nadhim Zahawi MP. He signed a card for the Chinese prisoner, Gao Zhisheng, in our 'Write for Rights' Campaign.

At the memorial service for John Maples there was mention of his work with Amnesty and for human rights.

Alice Reynolds from Kings High School in Warwick, who won the Amnesty International Young Human Rights Reporter of the Year for her work on Gypsy and Traveller Rights, will be at our next meeting.

Campaigns:

Individuals at Risk [Elspeth Baillie]:

128 cards for four prisoners were signed at the stall on Saturday 8th December.

We signed a letter on behalf of an Egyptian woman, Azza Hilal Ahmad Suleiman, who was beaten up in Tahrir Square when she went to the aid of another victim of police violence.

Women's Human Rights Action [Chris Boylan]:

The campaign addresses the problem of women human rights activists/defenders. They are targeted for who they are and what they do. They campaign against torture, against domestic violence, for equal treatment, for land rights and for access to credit. Many work for health and education and for the rights of minority groups.

The UK and other EU countries are obliged to implement the EU Human Rights Defenders Guidelines.

The main areas of concern are in relation to Afghan Women's Human Rights Defenders and to Pakistan and Egyptian Women's Rights.

Members signed a letter to the UK Ambassador to Afghanistan, Sir Richard Stagg, asking him to take account of the issues facing Afghan Women.

Fundraising:

Carol Singing [Jo Pettitt]: Meet at the top of Broad Walk at 7 o'clock on Wednesday 19th December.

Refreshments afterwards at 82 Shottery Road.

Quiz [Sonya Millman]: Sonya has booked the hall at KES for a quiz on the evening of Saturday 16 February 2013. Mick Jennings has agreed to be the quiz-master and, as in previous quizzes, entry will be £10 per person which will include a pizza supper. Teams should be of 4 people. As well as raffle tickets, drinks (wine, beer and juice) will be on sale, with all profits going to the group. Flyers with full details will be emailed to all members after Christmas.

Sonya Millman said that in 2013 we would need an estimated £400 to carry on with our work, but we only expect to raise about £200 from subscriptions. Sonya again invited ideas for fundraising.

Christine Barter offered to look into organising an Amnesty charity stall at the Friday market. Members responded enthusiastically.

Discussion of AIUK [Penny Freedman]:

The group discussed the AIUK Board of Directors' proposed changes to AIUK, and the Special Resolutions which have been submitted by AIUK members and which will be the main business of the Extraordinary General Meeting on January 12th. These Resolutions direct the Board to reverse its proposed changes. Our Group voted to cast its 10 votes in favour of the Resolutions. Members were also encouraged to cast their own individual votes (on the basis of their being a paid up AIUK member).

Dates: [For some of these events please see above for more details.]

Wednesday 19th December 2012

Wednesday 9th January 2013

Tuesday 29th January 2013

Saturday 16th February 2013

Carol Singing

Next Meeting {7.30 at The Friends' Meeting House}

Letter Writing {last Tuesday of the month from 10-12 at The Falcon}

Quiz