

Amnesty International Stratford-upon-Avon Group
37 Maidenhead Road, Stratford-upon-Avon
Wednesday 13th February 2013 at 19.30

MINUTES

Present: Eileen Alberti, Elspeth Baillie, Christine Barter, Christine Boylan, Linda Butland, Mary Ann Dobbin, Abeer El-Sayed, Penny Freedman, Chris Jones, Rosie Keep, Sonya Millman, Philip Morris, Sarah O'Grady, Kathy Stredder, Penny Young.

Apologies: Jo Pettitt, Meryl Rice, John Ryder.

Minutes of the Last Meeting: These minutes were accepted.

Chair's Report [Eileen Alberti]:

At the Stratford AI AGM on Wednesday 13th March the following Officers will be elected: Chair, Secretary, Press Officer, Website manager, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, and Minutes Secretary. Kathy Stredder undertook to email role descriptions. Please submit nominations for these positions.

Penny Freedman will send out information about subscriptions.

We are very sorry that John McDermott has resigned as he was a valued member and an excellent Press Officer.

At the AGM, Kerry Smith, Director of Development for the Avadu Project and convenor of the Regional Anti-Trafficking Network, will speak on 'Human Trafficking in the West Midlands'.

Sarah O'Grady's nomination for Board Membership has been approved by our group.

Monthly Action [Kathy Stredder]:

The Group agreed to send letters to the leaders of Angola, Tanzania, and South Africa asking them to intervene to ensure the 2013 Zimbabwean elections are free from violence and fear.

Secretary's Report (Kathy Stredder)

We have received a reply from Nadhim Zahawi MP in response to our December letter asking for his support for an increase in the level of support to asylum seekers. He has replied that the existing level of support to meet essential living costs at approximately £5/day is adequate and that provision for additional needs is the responsibility of other authorities eg the local authority.

The Group asked Eileen to be our representative at the AIUK AGM at Warwick University in April.

Cruel Britannia: A Secret History of Torture – Ian Cobain: A Public Meeting – *Friday 8th March 2013 at 7.30 p.m.* Organised by the Malvern AI Group at *The Chase School, Geraldine Road, Malvern WR14 3NZ.* Admission £5. Enquiries 01684 573722

The film, *Five Broken Cameras* (2011), directed by Palestinian Emad Burnat and Israeli Guy Davidi, which documents non-violent resistance in a West Bank village threatened by Israeli settlements, will be screened at the May monthly meeting.

Campaigns:

Women's Rights in Afghanistan [Christine Boylan]:

There is an information and skill share day on 9th March - Campaign for women's rights in Afghanistan. It is being held at AIUK, Human Rights Action Centre, New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA - further details from Farshid Talaghani farshid.talaghani@amnesty.org.uk

We have just received a notification that at the end of February we will receive a mailing on Women's Rights in Afghanistan that suggests actions and activities for International Women's Day and beyond. It will include a creative petition and MP action. Afghanistan is at a critical point to ensure that the fragile gains made in Afghan women's rights are not lost.

Arms Trade Treaty [Penny Freedman]:

The UK's motion on the Arms Trade Treaty is due to be re-presented to the UN General Assembly in March 2013. We sent petitions to our MP.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers [Kathy Stredder]:

Will Roberts, West Midlands Region Representative, will lead a session on asylum seekers at a meeting in Birmingham on Saturday 23rd February. Please let Kathy Stredder know if you would like to attend with her.

Fundraising:

Sonya Millman 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.

Christine Barter is organising a charity stall in Rother Street – probably on Friday 19th July from 8.30 to 15.00. Help would be appreciated with the setting up. Please volunteer for two hour shifts. Please donate bric-a-brac, clothing, books, etc.

Talk and Discussion [Sarah O'Grady]:

Sarah thanked the Group for supporting her nomination to continue as a Board member, and went on to report on the background to the EGM, and the resolutions dealing with AIUK's MCtTG (Moving Closer to the Ground) proposals. As a result of the strength of feeling at the EGM, aspects of the structural changes are to be discussed at AIUK's AGM in April. Sarah explained that the 75% majority threshold which applied to the EGM voting was in accordance with company law. She reassured members that MCtTG would not have negative effects on the IaR programme. She suggested members could give feedback to the organisation through herself (as a Board member) or through the established procedures. Sarah answered members' questions, and members expressed views and concerns about the Board's and Management's process for enacting MCtTG as it has unfolded over the last 9 months. Sarah spoke of the Board's awareness that the process had not been altogether satisfactory but reassured members of the Board's best intentions. We thanked Sarah for her hard work as a Board member and for her willingness to give an overview of the state of play within AIUK at the moment.

AOB:

There is to be an evening titled "China Entertains Again!" on Saturday 2nd March at 7.30 at the Wesley Hall, Stratford Methodist Church. Tickets £10; 01789 296726 or 01789 268191.

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

Saturday 16th February

Quiz at KES

Saturday 23rd February

Tuesday 27th February

Friday 8th March

Saturday 9th March

Wednesday 13th March

Saturday 13th – Sunday 14th April

Friday 19th July (provisional date)

Birmingham meeting on Asylum Seekers

Letter writing at the Falcon from 10.00 - 12.00

Malvern meeting on A Secret History of Torture

London meeting on Women's Rights in Afghanistan

Stratford AI Annual General Meeting

AIUK Annual General Meeting

Charity stall in Rother Street