**Minutes from Wrexham and Chester Amnesty meeting 20th May 2013**

Present –

Alan, Wendy, Richard, Jackie, Ben, Peter, Alex, John, Val, Laura, Louise, Precious,

Apologies –

Anne,

Mike (who due to other commitments, needs to take a break from Amnesty meetings for a while)

Angharad

Patsy

Hai Ying

Local group AGM

Discussion regarding the constitution – roles voted and agreed:

Alan – Chairman

John – Vice Chairman

Alex – Treasurer

Laura – Secretary

Point 5.3 of constitution proposed to change this from 6 members for a group or extraordinary meeting and 12 members for an AGM to 3 members for a group or extraordinary and 6 members for an AGM – Voted and agreed.

Also agreed to take out the part in the constitution that states either the Chairman, Vice Chairman or Secretary must be present at meetings for decisions to be made, decisions can be made and some decisions may be confirmed after meetings.

Laura will email updated constitution to all members.

Minutes from last meeting and matters arising including latest on events over the next few months

The signed petition from last month for the Roma communities has been sent to Amnesty.

Bag pack has been arranged for 1st September at Morrison’s in Chester, currently 7 volunteers more if available. Alan has Tabards for the bag packers to wear. More details to be arranged and confirmed, times etc.

Guitar concert on 30th June at 2.30pm at Odd fellows in Chester – Alex will email Laura an advert with more information and directions etc for Laura to circulate to the group and members of the group to circulate and promote to friends.

Alex will stand up and say a few words about Amnesty at the event; Laura offered to assist Alex in devising something to say. Laura will also provide Amnesty publicity items before events, such as balloons, flyers etc.

Amnesty UK will send an email out to its members with details for the Wrexham and Chester local groups in a specified post code area with a message written by the group, to hopefully recruit some new members.

Chester World Development Forum will also provide some publicity for the local group by putting details and email address on its newsletter and website.

Community Choir event in Wrexham on 6th June at 7.30pm at Saith Seren.

 Louise will speak about Amnesty using the same words devised by Laura and Alex, if she is able to attend the event.

Hai Ying has requested a raffle and if group members can organise raffle prizes and sell tickets. However following discussion it is decided it may be easier to purchase some wine and give this to the choir.

If anybody has any creative talents the Community Choir have also requested others to perform – Alex’s friend is waiting to hear from Hai Ying regarding this. Others to contact Hai Ying if have anything to share.

Annual Conference

Hai Ying not present to feed back the document she has devised, had offered to call and speak on speaker phone, however it was decided it may be easier and more beneficial if members read her document at home and provide any feedback/questions/comments they have in the next meeting when Hai Ying is present.

North Africa

Due to Wendy having been sent an urgent action from Western Sahara, the thought shower for Azza Suleiman will be postponed for now – the group write a note let to Azza to let her know we are still thinking of her.

Urgent Action

5 or 6 men in Western Sahara have been arrested and tortured following taking part in protests for self autonomy. The group wrote letters to Moroccan officials calling for fair trials and justice for the men.

Zimbabwe

Elections are being considered for the end of June. Precious advises the group that the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) are being picked up and put into jail as are those who are registering to vote for them. Journalist are also reported to have been imprisoned.

The group are unsure if Amnesty UK have picked this up and are doing anything about it.

Laura informs the group she has spoken to Amnesty who can provide the group with a 90 minute workshop about Zimbabwe and the current situation there. The workshop will include information on surrounding countries and their roles in the situation, a talk from the facilitator and participatory discussions, followed by some suggested action to be taken.

Plenty of interest from the group and it is decided to request the workshop for the 15th July meeting in Chester.

Alan reads out the letter he has written to Stephen Mosley Chester MP and the response he received, which stated the Stephen has passed on Alan’s letter to Mark Simmonds (Secretary of the State for Commonwealth) who will advise us as to what action the British Government are taking in relation to the up and coming elections.

Death Penalty

The trend of abolishing the death penalty seems to be continuing and Amnesty are celebrating some success in this area.

Approximately 70% of countries have now abolished the death penalty. Although this is still common in some countries and for some the amount of people executed has increased.

There is a campaign in America called 1 for 10, which highlights how in the last 30 years 10% of people on death row in America have been cleared of the crimes they were sentenced for.

There is a full report on the death penalty, which can be read on the Amnesty website.

Money Matters

There is now just over £500 in the bank account.

Some subs are still due from members, £6 or £12.

World Development Forum

8th June ‘IF’ rally – CAFOD coach from Wrexham available – contact Sue Bownas for more information 01244 677594

16th November 10am – 4.30pm ‘Food Matters’ is a conference to raise awareness and explore issues surrounding food security @ Best Building Chester University Campus.

Peter is to provide information on the Wrexham and Chester Amnesty group to the Chester World Development Forum, including the history of the group, examples of a meeting, the fundraising events the group has put on and highlight some of the groups achievements.

Any Other Business

Chester racecourse exit bucket collection will not be possible this year as already fully booked, however Peter will continue to try and organise this for next year.

Future Meetings

Jennifer James – Regional Amnesty Co-ordinator will be at the next meeting on June17th in Wrexham.

July meeting should keep general matters brief in order to have the Zimbabwe workshop.