



Aylesbury Amnesty International Group

Monthly Group Meeting, 28th January 2015 7.30pm

Friends Meeting House, 9 Rickfords Hill, Aylesbury, HP20 2RT

Present:

David Barnard
Bob Corn
Katherine Danflous
Carol Tarrant

Henry Mayer-Gross
Annelies Varsey
Sallyann Thilthorpe

Apologies: Bronwen Lee, Gwyn Jenkins, Frances Booth

Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting – especially Sallyann – on this very cold evening!

1.0 Previous Minutes – Agreed.

2.0 Review 2014: Carol reported thus:

- 2.1 Carol noted that she had at last received a reply from Kate Allen, Director of AIUK with a paper - 'Putting members at the heart of Activism' – as attached.
- 2.2 Our Amnesty Tree! Carol noted that our original tree (adjacent to the rear wall of St. Joseph's Catholic Church) is looking very poorly as the folk at Aylesbury Council suggested might happen with the destruction of the old Civic Centre and Multi-Storey Car-Park – although the replacement tree in Vale Park is looking very spry!

3.0 Current Campaigns for 2015 – as attached AIUK Planning Pack extract – Bob is to order the 'Fight for Rights' Pledge Cards. The meeting dwelt briefly on the resource available within the Group – can everyone please consider how we address Campaign Work? We do need to share the obligations in Human Rights Work around the Group, so that we maintain sustainability – relying on a few members to support the several campaigns will result in member 'burnout'. David noted that **recruitment** should be pursued – although who will carry out this task?

4.0 Menu of Options: This extract from the Planning Pack was completed as attached; Bob to send the original to AIUK before end of February 2015.

5.0 Group Year Plan: After discussion, a year plan was agreed – as attached.

6.0 Group Financial Return: This is required by AIUK before end of February 2015 – Bob to liaise with Group Treasurer Jim Edwards. Noted that the Group Subscription needs to be paid before the National Conference and AGM, so that voting could be enabled.

7.0 Book Sale, or other Fundraising: Carol had thought that we could organise a Book Sale to raise funds – and all members should consider what we can do to raise funds. We had arranged two concerts in Ivinghoe during the Armistice Remembrance weekend last November, which raised £256, although around £50 of that has been spent on Activism Letter Postage, and around £200 will be required to pay Hale Leys Shopping Mall for Bronwen's successful Write for Rights stall.

8.0 South Midlands Regional Conference:

- 8.1 Bob noted that this is to be held at Buckingham University on Saturday 31st January 2015 – he, Carol and Katherine will attend.
- 8.2 Carol reported that she had received a link to a Radio Programme on BBC Three Counties Radio which has covered the Conference – Bob will circulate the link.

9.0 NEXT MEETING: 25th February 2015 at 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 9 Rickfords Hill, Aylesbury, HP20 2RT

Putting members at the heart of AIUK

Members at the heart: what do we mean?

This paper sets out why and how we want to change the way we work to put members more firmly at the heart of how AIUK works. We use the term 'members' here to mean all Amnesty supporters: those who are technically members and those who aren't, those who give money, those who give time and those who give both. We mean those members who give huge amounts of time and expertise taking on key volunteer roles, and those members who we may never actually meet but who are part of the Amnesty movement in the UK either through their financial support of the actions that we know they take. We need to change the way we work to really put our members, however visible they are to us, at the heart of how we plan and deliver our work.

Amnesty members have a passion for and huge commitment to justice and human rights. People support Amnesty in the UK - and many have been active for many years - because they share Amnesty's values and believe in what we stand for. By activism we mean any kind of active participation in Amnesty's work including taking part in campaign actions, making financial donations, being part of a group, network or governance structure, raising money, lobbying, speaking, writing, educating, organising, mobilising and performing for Amnesty. And more.

Members want to make a difference through their work for Amnesty. And many of these volunteer members are performing multiple essential (and skilled) tasks. But we don't recognise this well enough - and it even sometimes feels like we (collectively throughout the movement) don't value and respect our members' willingness and desire to give up their time and participate in our campaigns and in the governance of Amnesty - and rather view their participation as a bit of a hindrance and something to be 'serviced'.

SMT believe that AIUK does not yet make the most of the power of people to make change for human rights. We diminish our ability to make an impact for human rights because we have not leveraged the full potential of those members. The result of that is that we too often act as a team of 150 staff rather than as a team of 200,000 plus human rights activists, which is what we are. We need to re-define clear roles for both staff and members – and clarify the relationships between these roles and we need to form a more trusting partnership with members to increase our capacity for human rights work and to really empower and enable their activism.

As staff, our role is that of the civil service to the members of AIUK. It is the members who are responsible for setting strategy, and for deciding how we allocate our resources. They do that through their governance structures. We, as staff, have a key role in advising and supporting them, but ultimately it is the members, through their governance structures, who lead the organisation and who give Amnesty its strength.

Our belief is therefore that the greatest opportunity for AIUK to achieve greater impact for human rights is to more effectively empower and enable Amnesty members to campaign for human rights and to grow Amnesty in the UK.

The vision for change

To do that we will create a much stronger partnership and understanding between staff and members. We will redress the balance between staff and members, so that AIUK values the professional expertise of staff and the potential of the membership in equal measure. We understand the tensions inherent in a membership organisation, and we will tackle them head-on with the honesty and mutual respect which comes from an effective partnership. Tensions such as providing clear strategic direction whilst at the same time responding to the campaign priorities of 200,000 plus members in the UK, how we can focus our collective energies to mobilise around a particular campaigning moment and goal, and how we best understand and value our respective roles, skills and potential.

This is not about de-professionalising AIUK – quite the opposite - it is about being professional about the job of empowering and enabling AIUK members to achieve change for human rights and to grow the Amnesty movement in the UK as a connected and integral part of the global Amnesty movement.

We reaffirm our core belief in activism itself. This doesn't simply mean getting better at communicating with our members and better at thanking them for their ongoing and amazing work, or even simply getting much better at demonstrating the impact of our collective activism (although it is vital that we do these things), it means embedding what we believe ('more people taking more *effective* action will result in more change') in the way we behave - the way we plan and execute our campaigns (including defining a clear role for activism and enabling activists to plan and execute their own campaigns) - and the way we run our organisation.

This vision builds on that of the current Activism Strategy which says

Our vision for this strategy: by 2016 the whole of AIUK and key parts of the international movement will be able to confidently and enthusiastically celebrate the contribution that activists in the UK have made to achieving key human rights goals, developing a positive human rights culture in the UK and raising money to support our ambitious growth targets which will aid the growth of the international movement.

It means that we as staff and activists need to behave differently, valuing and trusting each other and understanding that the role of all staff is to (i) support and enable members to make the most effective impact on human rights, (ii) support and enable more individual members to become more active in the movement and (iii) support and enable more people currently not part of Amnesty to join and play active roles in order to further enhance the positive influence we have in the world.

Connecting people and members at the heart: foundations for AIUK:

Members at the heart and connecting more people are intrinsically linked and supportive of each other and, together, form the foundation for AIUK's plans going forward (2014-15; 2016-2020): placing members at the heart will strengthen the depth and ideally breadth of engagement with AIUK; our ability to reach and engage with people will be strengthened by understanding the nature of our collective voice.

The goal we set ourselves for number of people connected with AIUK by 2020 should be owned by all members of staff and supported by our governance structures. AIUK projects should consider how they can connect more people, whether through reaching audiences with human rights messages or achieving their active engagement in protecting / fighting for human rights through AIUK. The planning triangle points of 'member energy' and 'audience journey' will help us consider and maximise the impact that AIUK projects can have on connecting people and on placing members at the heart.

What does this mean in practice

It will mean many small changes in the way we all think and behave.

We will establish a project group of staff who will help plan and deliver this work. As the work is intrinsically linked to the project to connect more people to Amnesty, , we will work on both projects together as a whole, setting up sub-groups as required. The project group will seek to learn from sections that have carried out similar work / are working towards such goals.

The current Activism Strategy has given some very useful thought to what we need to do differently to implement the activism strategy. Some of these have already been addressed via the formation of the new structure, and we should now implement the remaining elements of the strategy with immediate effect. These are:

- a. *The implementation and review of the activism strategy will be overseen by a cross-organisational steering group. Its membership should include Digital, and Nations and Regions, Governance as well as Community Organising and SRD. It should report to the SMT and AMSC on a quarterly basis. It should ensure regular input from members and from external thinkers and should now reflect the broader work of putting members at the heart of the organisation as well as the delivery of the activism strategy.)*
- b. *This strategy encompasses offline and online activists, and individual and group activists of all ages. The relationships between staff and activists is crucial, and in the past although there is most often a positive relationship between staff and activists, there have been times when*

individual relationships have been strained. It is the responsibility of both staff and activists to address this. Staff need to embrace, respect and value activists. We also expect activists to treat staff and fellow activists with respect which includes understanding that sometimes staff cannot always meet the needs of activists. We expect both staff and activists to work within the policies that we have to ensure that Amnesty is a welcoming organisation which values diversity.

- c. We will establish a cross organisational **impact of activism** group which is properly resourced and with clear Terms of Reference to monitor the impact of activism, and monitor the piloting of new approaches.*
- d. Organisationally we will involve activists in devising actions for campaigns strategies where appropriate.*
- e. In order to develop more inspiring fundraising actions for activists, we will need to look at the **financial infrastructure** to help us develop a model whereby activists can fundraise for particular international projects.*

This work goes beyond the existing activism strategy, and it is important that we consider all members as part of this work, and how it affects all staff. It will be a key foundation for AIUK's work, alongside and connected to the strategy to connect more people to human rights.

In addition to this, we should now also action the following:

We have already begun work on raising the effectiveness, authority and profile of the AMSC and this should continue.

We will include leading members in planning and delivering **all** key pieces of work and will facilitate activists developing their own campaigns.

We will invite members to take part in regular staff and volunteer meetings

Regional conferences will have at least two staff members there all day as participants.

Tony and HR to advise how to most effectively embed the aim to increase interaction between all staff and members through job descriptions and objectives and inductions

New and updated staff job descriptions will reflect the requirement for staff to meet and support members.

We will log and report on all feedback from members on a monthly basis and report on how we act on it.

We will actively seek the views of members when developing strategy and policy. We will seek feedback from all type of members, from the very active to those who are less visible to us.

We will undertake a regular member survey and act on its results.

We will monitor and report on performance against agreed supporter care standards and take action to improve our speed and quality of response where needed.

We will ensure that we tell members about the work we do as staff and the impact of that work, as well as the impact of the activism that they are directly involved in.

We will be rigorous in ensuring that our campaigns portfolio does adequately reflect the issues that members are most concerned about by applying the 'member energy' test.

We will understand the issues members have with the new web site and prioritise their resolution as part of the web development programme.

Staff will pass on opportunities for profile raising and campaigning to groups and networks as they arise, either as joint pieces of work or solely to be carried out by activists.

All our communications will reflect that we are a movement of ordinary people and that is how we achieve change. We will support this in the way that we implement the international brand at AIUK.

We will address specific and long-standing issues which members raise with us:

- Access to individual cases for campaigning
- Support for key areas of campaigning work and the impact on individual members of taking on this work eg West Papua
- Take forward the work of the networks review and empower and support networks to campaign
- Support the growth in activism as outlined in the activism strategy and the future plans of the Community Organising Team.

What will success look like?

More members doing more campaigning. Benchmarks to be created in conjunction with the work to connect more people to human rights.

Understanding and protocols in place that allow members to be empowered to create their own campaigning, within an agreed framework.

Ability to understand and feedback the impact of activism

Performance against supporter care standards regularly met

More sophisticated and targeted actions for members – with members involved at all stages.

Therefore more impact for human rights

Implementation of the activism strategy and the future plans of Community Organising Team, as well as the 'Connecting People' to human rights strategy and the Fundraising Strategy.

Demonstrable change in the way in which staff understand and value the role of members and vice versa.

Members regularly in the building working alongside staff and staff regularly out of the building working alongside activists.

More members, more activism and more income because members are more fully engaged in AIUK's work.

MENU OF OPTIONS

Please fill in this Menu of Options and return it to the Community Organising Team in the enclosed Freepost envelope by **28 February 2015**.

Monthly emails are sent to all group contacts at the end of each month, except for January and August. These emails always contain a monthly action and sometimes a Campaign Action Bulletin on a priority campaign. If there are additional members of your group who would like to receive these emails, please write their names below. If you want to change your group's main contact, or add more names of group members to the mailing list, please contact us on 020 7033 1675 or at activism@amnesty.org.uk

Please note that the monthly mailing will only be sent by post if your group has opted for a postal mailing.

MONTHLY EMAILS

If there are additional members of your group who would like to receive these emails, please add them below.

Group name AYLESBURY

Contact name CAROL TARRANT

Email thecorns@talk21.com

Contact name DAVID BARNARD

Email davidbarnard@waitrose.com

Contact name

Email

REGIONAL AND COUNTRY CAMPAIGNING

Our Amnesty World is split into 13 regions: **North America and Caribbean, Central America, South America, Europe, Former Soviet Union, Middle East And Gulf, North Africa, West And Central Africa, Horn And East Africa, Southern Africa, South Asia, China and East Asia and South East Asia** (see details on map opposite). Please note that if your interest is in a specific country, we will opt you into the region containing that country. You will receive updates and actions on all countries in that region. You can opt into more than one region if you wish.

Region name ① FORMER SOVIET UNION ② INDOCHINA & SOUTHEAST ASIA ③ WEST CENTRAL AFRICA

Group name AYLESBURY ④ SOUTH AMERICA

Contact name ① KATHERINE DANFLOS ② CAROL TARRANT ③ FRANCES BOOTH ④ ANNE ELSA VASEY

Address

Postcode Tel

Email ① kdanflos@hotmail.com ② thecorns@talk21.com ③ clasy_power@hotmail.com

④ valseylah@virginmedia.com

INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS AT RISK

STEP 1: Signing up to Individuals at Risk casework

Our group:

- would like to continue with an existing long-term case which is JOHAN TETERISSA
has no long-term case file and would like an **assigned** case file
would like to **replace** our existing long-term case file
would like to **add** one more case file to our current long-term case file

Options (please choose option 1 or option 2):

- (1) We would like **any case** available
(2) We would prefer a case from country/region

Group name AYLESBURY

Case file holder ROBERT CORN

Contact name ROBERT CORN

Address WELLBOFT COTTAGE, WELLBOFT, LIVINGHOE,

LEIGHTON BUZZARD Postcode LU7 9EF

Tel No 01296-662267 Email bb_corn@yahoo.co.uk

Please note: If your group signs up to work on a long-term case file, you will be automatically opted into the mailing list for the relevant world region (eg North Africa, South America, Europe etc). You will receive regular newsletters from the volunteer Country Co-ordinator team for that region by email.

URGENT ACTION

Our group wishes to **sign up** to the **Urgent Action Network** to receive UAs by email
(NB: Groups will automatically receive UAs for the regions they are opted into. Ticking this box means you are additionally signing up for a wider variety of UAs, which you can also use for your letter writing sessions.)

Group name AYLESBURY Urgent Action Co-ordinator ROBERT CORN

Email bb_corn@yahoo.co.uk

STEP 2: Opting out of individuals at risk casework

Our group wishes to **stop** work on our long-term case file

Case file name

Our group wishes to **unsubscribe** from all Urgent Actions
(please confirm below the details of the UA contact person for your group)

Group name

UA contact name

Email

Amnesty Aylesbury 2015 Campaigning Year Plan:

- January** Year Planning Meeting – tree hanging actions?
Write for Rights letter writing week ends
Individuals at Risk
- February** General Election ‘Fight for Rights’ Campaign
- March** AIUK National AGM Resolution Discussion
25th March Slave Trade Awareness Anniversary
- April** AIUK AGM Feedback
Group AGM
- May** General Election
Refugee Week Preparation
28th May – Amnesty’s 54th Birthday!
- June** Refugee Focus
Stop Torture Campaign
15th June – 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta
- July** Summer Social
30th July – World Day against Trafficking in Persons
- August** No Group Meeting
30th August – Day of the Disappeared
- September** Focus on ‘Stop Torture’ Campaign
- October** Focus on ‘My Body My Rights’ Campaign
10th October – World Day against the Death Penalty
- November** Write for Rights letter writing begins
Individuals at Risk
25th November – Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- December** Wendover Awareness Stall – 5th December?
10th December – Human Rights Day
Social Gathering