**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK SECTION**

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| **Meeting Date** | 3rd December 2016 |
| **Paper no** | **B/** |
| **Paper Number and Agenda Item** | **ASC Minutes from November Meeting** |
| **Purpose of the Paper** | To share the ASC minutes from the most recent meeting in November with the Board |
| **Key points** | - |
| **Options and Decisions Required** | For information |
| **Risk considerations** | - |
| **Any next steps or actions** | Approved minutes to go up on website |
| **Author’s name and title** | Kerry Moscogiuri and Eilidh Douglas |

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**Activism Subcommittee**

**Saturday 12th November 2016**

**10am – 4pm**

**Room F1**

**Human Rights Action Centre**

**17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA**

**Present:**

Eilidh Douglas (Chair)

Liesbeth Ten-Ham

Holly Shorey

Katherine Walton

Rose Bennett

Dave Beynon

Bob Baron

Lucy Blake (part)

**Apologies**

Tessa Lamb

Kerry Moscogiuri

Jerry Allen

Ade Couper

Jamie Wheeler-Roberts

**Staff attending:**

Andy Hackman (part)

Jeni Dixon

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| ***Item No. 1 Agenda Topic:* Minutes and Matters Arising** |
| * 1. **Introduction**   Eilidh welcomed Bob and Lucy to the ASC meeting.  Apologies were received from Ade, Jerry, Kerry, Tessa and Jamie.   * 1. **Minutes and matters arising**   Page 1 – Bob to be removed from list of apologies; he was not formally part of ASC at the time of the meeting.  Page 4 – Comment from Katherine. Second date should be 29th instead of 23rd.  Matters arising – Paper for networks and constitution. Received comment from Jerry; if ASC had any further comments, they could feed in verbally during the relevant agenda item.  Rules – short paper included in agenda for this meeting.  Minutes of last meeting approved with the amends noted and will go up on website. |
| ***Item No. 2 Agenda Topic:* Feedback from Constituencies** |
| Eilidh noted that a paper had been received from Holly on behalf of the Youth Advisory Group; it was assumed other ASC members would report to the meeting verbally. Eilidh requested that for future meetings, ASC members should provide a paper in advance of the meeting.  **Action: ASC members to ensure paper of feedback is provided to be circulated with ASC papers for each meeting**  Sample copies of the questionnaire prepared by Holly and used to generate feedback from youth members were passed around the meeting.  **Networks feedback (Katherine)**  Katherine to follow up with Jeni and Holly on ensuring correct processes and training in place for communications to under 18s.  **Action: Jeni to speak to Katherine and Holly about correct process for communications**  Discussion re use of Google group for newer networks, e.g. children’s rights and to help the women’s rights network’s work get underway. Katherine suggested that it would be good to have  Google groups training as many people don’t know how to use. Andy suggested turn this into a “how to connect more effectively” so not exclusively focused on Google groups. Eilidh suggested that effective methods of communication are kept under review and could be most usefully input into discussions on ‘community spaces’ as part of the digital development project.  Jeni congratulated Katherine and Mike on their work at the Networks Conference which was very successful.  **Local groups feedback (Liesbeth)**  Groups have started Write for Rights. 400 – 500 groups. In her network alone, there were 14 groups sending off 200 cards each.  The Against Hate campaign action was taken by lots of groups. 16,000 members took part in the action, approaching a total of 400 councils approached. This resulted in 60 councils passed motion, 22 councils tabled motion. Liesbeth emphasised that this not have happened without local groups.  The Manchester Group are working on the Write for Rights case with the IS re UAE case of Mohammed Al Rokan.  50 local groups had managed to get media coverage for human rights action week. Lots of groups that had managed to achieve press coverage which was very impressive, even groups without regional newspapers etc. She said that lots of work was being done by groups, especially lobbying. The survey to local groups is about to go out. Liesbeth has sent the link to ASC. The Regional Reps are trying to get 90% response. Out of that we hope we can work out things like an activist’s journey and develop regional strategies. With a view to increasing the number of local groups significantly and have a strategy for that.  **Action: Liesbeth to progress local group survey**  Liesbeth reported her concern that the website out of date for youth groups. Jeni commented that this was known but capacity issues. Had to bear in mind child protection issues as well. Jeni said she is working on it, aware out of date but working hard and lots of issues.  **Action: Jeni to progress updates**  Anti-death penalty work – Liesbeth asked what is happening now? Jeni explained that work on this is included in the team plan. Working with One for Ten film group has been postponed but not ditched  **Action: Jeni to provide update**  Weatherproof banners – waiting for new visual identity to be finalised. To be produced in 2017.  **Action: Andy to update ASC on progress once new visual identity finalised**  **Youth Groups Feedback- Holly**  Holly’s explained that we need to develop suitable material for younger secondary school children which means more creative actions not a preference to focus on children’s rights. Andy commented on the importance of balancing this with the need not to patronise young people. Holly explained that many youth groups run a younger group as well, so good to have creative options for them as well – what might be patronising to sixth formers would not necessarily be patronising to the younger secondary schoolers. Bob suggested having a range of options so people can choose and also to inspire them to develop their own creative ideas. Jeni highlighted capacity issues of coming up with specific creative ideas every week for meetings. Holly suggested providing training and resources to help them devise ideas. Andy suggested interaction with HRE.  **Action: Andy and Jeni to take forward with HRE**  There was a discussion about the best form of communications to reach out to young people - young people should advise on best way to communicate. Rose suggested creating a page on Facebook. Holly said there is a page that she started but we need to drive more traffic to that.  **Action: Jeni to follow up with Holly**    **Student Groups Update - Rose**  It was the student conference last weekend. Jeni commented on Rose and Ruth’s brilliant work in putting it on. Very good attendance, including from groups in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Lots of familiar faces from Action for Change so good that they started engaged. Feedback overwhelmingly positive – 100% would recommend to a friend. New STAN elected. For the second year in a row, one was from YAG. Actions included spreading Write for Rights video which reached 10,000 people.  Training programme for students on how AGM processes work and how to debate motions etc. used was successful.  One STAN member wanted to run again for a second year however last year’s committee changed terms of reference such that committee members had to wait three years to run again which, given that most people attend university for just three years, effectively limits them to running once whilst at university. Eilidh recalled this issue from her time on the STAN Committee (2012-13) and explained that the reasoning for this is because it was felt at the time that it would be better to involve new people. However, if STAN wanted to change this again they could put the motion to the AGM. STAN had suggested that a two-year cap would be preferable in line with student union positions. Liesbeth agreed that this would be good for continuity.  There was a question raised about whether the Student AGM could amend the ToRs or if they could only advice/request they were amended as per article 16.1 of the constitution Network’s criteria are established by the Board.  Eilidh suggested that this was mentioned in the handover to STAN.  **Action: Jeni/Rose to discuss with Ruth for handover**  **Action: Eilidh to look into the process for amending Networks ToRs**  There was some frustration about the perceived lack of efficacy of the student conference AGM. Resolutions discussed and motions passed at STAN AGM are not official and still need to be put to AIUK AGM. Eilidh suggested that STAN put issues to the Board via the ASC. STAN had in the past also been mandated by the Student Conference AGM to facilitate bringing something to AGM – which could be effected by individual members of by other groups. Bob felt that was a convoluted process, and a more direct route for Networks to bring something the Board should be looked into. Query whether networks ought to be able to bring resolutions to the AGM. It was noted that Networks had in the past been allowed to bring motions to the AGM but this had been changed at a previous AGM. Eilidh said that she would raise this with the Board,  **Action: Andy/Eilidh**  Suggestion that Katherine attends the STAN handover so more interaction with thematic networks. ASC should consider what other information to include in handover.  **Action: Rose/Katherine**  **Trade Unions Network Update (Bob)**  TUNC meeting had to be postponed and this has been rescheduled for 9 December.  Some current activities, e.g. stalls at national union conferences.  Bob has spoken to Luton Trade Council about possibility of affiliating.  Bob also planning to speak to Shane about possibility of getting full list of affiliated councils, with a view to producing a mail out re TUNC issues.  Considering Trade Councils Conferences to increase affiliations. Conscious that still trying to counter negative backlash from a few years ago. Need to get people to recognise that things have moved on so they re-join and eventually get involved in activities. Bob feels that it needs a strategy to implement. |
| ***Item No. 3* *Agenda Topic:* September Feedback Report** |
| Eilidh explained that the reason why ASC looks at quarterly feedback reports is because ASC as part of its terms of reference looks at areas of risk for AIUK and for perceptions of our activism work. Eilidh commented on the need to have this in mind when we consider papers that we receive on quarterly work.  Bob commented on street fundraisers. Felt that universally they have been positive whenever he has run into them. He doesn’t say at the outset that he is already involved with Amnesty so gets a real sense of how they behave. Bob said in this capacity he is yet to come across one who is not polite, professional etc. Jeni confirmed that the Fundraising Team review the feedback on Street fundraisers and take action as required.  Eilidh commented on one key theme running through the feedback on several different subjects (refugees, spit hoods, Edward Snowden, Philippines) is the need to be better on messaging re crimes. Need to understand the other side of the coin – balancing policing, immigration, crime issues. To deal with this risk to our work, we could make campaign messaging more balanced – include caveats or tackle concerns (e.g. immigration) head on.  Discussion re encouraging people to ask difficult questions - those who raise alternative views should be better accommodated. Amnesty should be a safe space for raising questions and balancing concerns.  ASC expressed their gratitude to the team dealing with the calls for dealing with them so calmly and positively.  **Action: Andy to pass on thanks to the Supporter Care Team from the ASC**  Eilidh also emphasised the volume of positive comments (adding that people tend to write in with negative comments more than positive ones so no doubt there would be many other positive thoughts not expressed). Even though there are lessons to be learned from the negative reports and this should be prioritised, also need to be mindful of the positive comments and congratulate staff and activists on fantastic work. |
| ***Item No. 4* *Agenda Topic:* Removal of Forums Provision** |
| Eilidh explained the broad background to paper – the relevant provisions in the AIUK constitution could be removed and could be reflected instead in more flexible instruments like rules. Comments could then be fed back to the board via the ASC. The aim was to tidy the provisions up and make them more future-proof.   * Liesbeth said that the paper did not make reference to the Governance Task Force (“**GTF**”) proposals on this issues. Eilidh said that she took this on board and would flesh out the paper to refer to these proposals as part of the methodology, to make clear the development of thinking on this issue. * Katherine said that the paper reflected the reality of the situation. She personally did not feel that there needed to be another forum meeting given the relevant people met in any event at the ASC. Katherine and Rose both expressed their view that the formality of requiring forum meetings was unnecessary. If such meetings were needed, they could take place more informally. * Liesbeth felt that the forums, and in particular the reference to Regional Reps and Country Co-Ordinators needed to be in the constitution as they were so essential to Amnesty. Jeni and Eilidh suggested that a way forward could be for the Country Co-ordinators, Regional Reps. etc. could be referenced in the constitution but way in which they meet need not be mandated, and this could be covered in more flexible Terms of Reference. * Bob said that the way in which bodies meet is not as important as the rights that they possess. His concern was that by doing away with the provision in the constitution, you risk doing away with the rights. If the structure outlined in the constitution isn’t a viable structure, then consider what a viable structure might be and commute the rights of the old structure to the new one. * Eilidh summed up by saying that the issue appeared to be around ensuring that the activist bodies mentioned maintained the rights to raise issues directly with the Board, rather than it being essential for there to be a ‘Forum’ structure as currently set out. What needs to be fixed is to remove the manner and form provisions and making those provisions more flexible (e.g. what bodies are included) whilst not doing away with the rights of the bodies. Eilidh would redraft paper on this basis. The aim would be for this to be put to the AGM in 2018.   **Action: Eilidh to redraft paper, to include further thinking from previous GTF proposals, and redrafted proposed amendment to the constitution, with a view to a resolution in 2018** |
| ***Item No. 5 and Item No. 6* *Agenda Topic:* Regional Conferences and:Future of the AGM/National Conference** |
| Andy introduced the thinking that he and his team had been doing about the development of the AGM/National Conference. He explained that they would like to move away from thinking about product – e.g. content of the AGM/National Conference as an event, and instead about where the AGM and National Conference elements sit in the context of the Strategic Plan. They want to enhance the governance in Amnesty UK, to increase the impact of the movement, and enable and empower more people to campaign for human rights and have more impact in their community.  With regard to our strategic plan the AGM’s role is Governance and the National Conference sits in context of enhancing the impact of the movement. Andy explained that he wants to look at the National Conference alongside all the other activist events e.g. Student Conference and Skills Shares, and consider how they sit within the strategic objectives and how they relate to each other and to the AGM.  This links to our presence in communities through the UK. How do we use our presence in communities offline and online to welcome more people in? How to we enable more people and how do we link that up with our political analysis? We are seeking to invest more in being visible in communities for instance the Advocacy team have outreach person to help activists reach out to MPs and councillors within communities.  Andy presented a short paper as a starting point for a discussion. He reported that there had been a good conversation with Regional Reps about how to connect regional conferences with AGM.  ASC discussed the opportunities and threats involved in making changes to the way that we do things now:  Liesbeth reported that local group members that she had spoken to are not in favour of a one day AGM and one day National Conference and are unhappy with the move we have made already from 3 days to 2. Splitting the AGM and National Conference would involve two lots of travel and so could cost more for local groups. The combined AGM and National Conference enables people to see the links between governance and campaigning.  It was explained that the proposal was not just about splitting the current AGM/National Conference into two different days for two single events, but starting with a blank sheet of paper and considering how best to achieve our Strategic Plan by way of events. The ASC should consider what we want to achieve, and then what sort of thing might enable us to deliver this.  Bob suggested the idea of separating into a 3-day event – governance, skillshare and experiential.  If we carry on evolving the digital access to governance it will involve more people. There was a suggestion that if there was a standalone AGM event with more time, we will be able to focus better in full day on governance in a more engaging way. For example, plenary sessions could be re-worked, more informed, and have bigger debates. People debating in greater detail and substance. Invite in experts, take down jargon, make it participatory and informed event.  Ideas discussed included: hosting an ‘Amnesty festival’; And Bi-annual AGMs with enhanced regional conferences in the intervening years; partnering with other organisations for combined conferences.  ASC members can see big opportunities in regional conferences if they are provided with enhanced support.  **Action: Andy to review what is possible within capacity**  **ASC discussed how to take work forward on this.**  It was suggested that the team need to be given permission to do further work on this, as buy-in from members and activists was crucial to delivering any successful change.  There was a discussion on how best to structure any change: provide enhanced support to raise the level of regional conferences first, and then seek to change the AGM and National Conference; or lead with change to the AGM and National Conference.  Liesbeth expressed concern that if we make the AGM changes first, we may never actually also make the positive changes to the regional conferences.  **Specific options/proposals at this stage: -**   1. Two-year staggered plan, staff to invest in regional conferences – building capacity for regional conferences to a certain standard to a view to then trialling new AGM/NC in 2019 2. One year process – give staff approval to do something different in 2018/19 3. No change – leave it at it is 4. Try bi-annual AGM 5. Run consultation workshop at 2017 AGM for opinions/ask at introduction to AGM what people want to get out of the weekend – what do you expect/what do you want get out if it/did you achieve it?   ASC decided (by a vote of 5 to 1) to ask the Board to take a resolution to the 2017 AGM asking for permission of the AGM to explore options for future AGM/Regional/National Conferences with a view to taking a resolution to the 2018 AGM for any changes to be made from 2019 and beyond.  **Action: Eilidh/ Jeni** |
| ***Item No. 7* *Agenda Topic:* Global Group on Activism Report** |
| The Global Group on Activism (GGA) want to review a number from different sections to review the different models across the Amnesty movement.  Big focus going forward are activism and activism strategies and Goal 5 – how to we deepen and embed activism with more and new people  Following on from the model of HRE globally – they have created four work streams globally, one of these is how do we understand the impact we’re having and the growth targets.  The GGA have developed an Activism Manifesto with 12 points. It was suggested that it would be good for AIUK to decide which 4 or 5 are the most relevant to us.  Jeni reported that she and Andy are leading on improving the communications from GGA to global movement as it’s not that well known about at the moment and would like to do a session at the next ASC on the Activism Manifesto and what it means for us.  What’s new? There is a movement away from a service model to and an organising and mobilising combined model – on how we empower, enable and skill up people to lead on campaigning. Effectively saying people are more that vehicles to get petitions signed to solving and owning problems to genuinely and collectively solve the problem.  **Action: AH to lead interactive session at next ASC on activism manifesto**  **Action: AH to send the Activism Manifesto to ASC members** |
| ***Item No. 8 Agenda Topic:* Rules Update** |
| A paper providing an update on the Rules Consultation was noted by the ASC. It was noted that the Board would consider the outcome of the Consultation and how best to take forward the detailed feedback from that Consultation, and the ASC would be updated on this work in 2017. |
| ***Item No. 9* Agenda Topic: Proposed ASC Dates 2017** |
| The ASC noted the next meeting as 21st January 2017.  The ASC would also meet in March, June, September, and November 2017, precise dates TBC subject to ASC member availability.  **Action: Jeni to circulate potential dates for ASC meetings. ASC members to note their availability on those dates.** |
| ***Item No. 10 Agenda Topic:* Wrap up and close** |
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