**Activism Sub Committee Meeting 15th November 2014**

**Draft Minutes**

**Attendees**: Hannah Perry (chair), Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, Sameena Matthiessen, Liesbeth Ten Ham Rachel Statham Rachael Palmer, Susan Mew, Ruth Breddal, Eilidh Douglas, Dave Beynon, Barrie Hay, Ade Couper, Kerry Moscogiuri, Adrian Gans (part), Karen Wagstaff (part)

**Apologies**: Andy Hackman, Hannah Wilson

**1. Review of minutes from the last meeting.**

Hannah reported her disappointment that minutes were not available from the previous meeting. This was echoed by the committee as a whole who are concerned that the work of this committee must be transparent and visible and that minutes are required in a timely way.

Hannah asked for representatives from the ASC to take on the role of liaison with the administrative support for the meeting: making sure that someone is attending, that the administrator is managing all the arrangements, that minutes are taken, checked, sent to ASC and posted on the website. A draft version of the minutes should be posted on the website within 3 weeks of each ASC meeting and then signed off as final at the subsequent meeting, followed by being posted on the website as such.

**Action: KM and HP to follow up urgently and ensure minutes are circulated promptly and that they are posted on the website once agreed by the committee**

**Action: Liesbeth, Ruth and Ade will take on the role of admin liaison.**

ASC members expressed equal concern that they could not locate up to date Board minutes on the website. Hannah will follow up with Board on this,

**Action: Hannah to follow up with the Board to get minutes on the website**

**2. Updates from across AIUK**

**2.1 Youth Action Group (YAG) – update from Rachael Palmer**

YAG have rolled out the ‘Give it up’ fundraiser nationally. It is proving to be successful for the youth movement.

Youth groups have been taking action on the convention on the rights of the child and the write for rights campaign.

Rachel reported that it is very important for the youth movement to be aware of our successes. The new website has improved our ability to do this and also the youth awards were a great success this year.

In terms of challenges: each new academic year presents a challenge as thecomposition of groups change and a new cohort of 11 year-old students arrive. Rachel noted that it can be difficult for 11 year olds to engage with our work and we have to think about finding cases and topics to engage them. The work on Barhrain was a good example and worked well because the Bahrain Government was particularly concerned that UK children were being made aware of them.

The Committee noted the great job that Amber Grant did in being part of the panel discussion at the Children’s Right’s network meeting to mark the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the rights of the child. It was very powerful to have a youth activist involved in this way.

**2.2 Student Groups - update from Rachel Statham**. . Rachel reported that the recent student conference had been a great success. Students managed to get over 2,000 signatures for the EU tools or torture petition at the student conference and that this was a great achievement. The conference also covered Amnesty’s work on abortion in Northern Ireland and lobbying on the General Election campaign. The AGM was successful and reported back on last year’s student AGM decisions resolutions and how they are being implemented.

In addition Rachel updated ASC on the work being done to . promote TU networks as a way of retaining students after they graduate . The London graduate network is a really successful model now. It is proving more challenging in Edinburgh.

Rachel reported that students found the request to feed into the the governance consultation particularly challenging. At the student conference there was a sessionwith ncvo and there were quite a few concerns about how accessible the consultation has been..

Rachel reported that STAN are liaising with other sections to work on a European student committee.

**2.3 Regional Reps - Update from Liesbeth Ten Ham**

Last meeting held 25th Oct

* Successful skillshare 4th October –attended by just under 100. Added all years of Amnesty experience in the room and over 1000+
* Agreed with Country Co-ordinators feedback forms after talks given by CC to groups
* Clarified process of regional conference organisation. Not always clear who informs whom of what/what is whose responsibility etc. Liesbeth clarified that each Regional Conference will have a slot for the Board/SMT. The focus of the Board session to be decided by regional rep and planned jointly with rep and relevant board/smt member.
* Working on guidelines for groups for accessible campaigning
* Also doing some work of setting out how struggling groups should be supported and also about settting up new groups and possibly other shape groups
* Met with the Social Media champions who are forming a volunteer group to help CC’s and groups with (mainly) facebook & twitter
* Briefing on Lobbying Act and Human Rights Act

Survey

* To be repeated annually: benchmarking
* Involvement of YAG, STAN, RR, media staff, lobbying staff
* Will go out to local groups with planning pack mid-Jan
* Against (mainly reg rep concerns): overconsultation, some areas we know need to be improved, don’t want to tell groups, “you’re too small”, “you’re too old” etc.
* For: Helps year on year with knowing where we are

The Committee noted the excellent work being done by regional reps to support struggling groups.

**2.4 Country Coordinators: Update from Barrie Hay**

The CC’s had an update from the Advocacy Team at their last meeting and are now waiting for confirmation of the General Election strategy and the AI concerns for all Parties for next election

Case Management Group: At the CMG there continues to be a lack of knowledge on what groups are working on and this is causing problems. This is being taken forward. Although groups did respond to the Groups Planning Pack, it is noted that many groups are confused about the difference between IAR casework and regional work which needs to be cleared up

The ASC discussed the various ways in which we report what groups are doing, including to the CC’s and to Regional Reps.

ASC agreed that a discussion is required between Country Coordinators and Regional Reps on how we collect data on what groups are working on and how this can be collected once and shared. KM offered support from the Community Organising Team to try do this.

**Action: BH/L T-H/KM to take forward a piece of work to improve reporting on groups activites via MASCOT**

The moratorium on submitting cases has now been lifted.

Most groups are confused about the difference between regional casework and I@R casework. Jeni Dixon sent a proforma for comment to try to help resolve this.

BH informed the ASC that the CCs will have an event on Valentine’s Day at the HRAC. BH suggested that the ASC might need to consider the fact that the HRAC is rarely available for AIUK activist events as it is often booked booked by outside organisations.

**Action: KM to liaise with the HRAC events team on this issue**

The CC handbook is seriously out of date. The committee suggested that that it could be electronic and so more easily updateable.

BH reported difficulties common to both new and experienced CCs caused by the global transition plan. It appears that CC’s are expected to do far more How are other sections tackling the depletion of staff from London. Also a problem with ccs and regional reps costs time and money

Jeni Dixon is putting together a new written edition of recruitment procedures

CCs are meeting here for the whole of next weekend for the annual CC weekend.

**2.5 Speakers and Trainers: Update from Ade Couper and Susan Mew**

Key events since September

* HRE section on the website has been improved and now has a page on ‘higher and adult education’.
* Training resources have been developed and uploaded to the website: Stop Torture campaign pack, General Introduction to AI presentation, and Refugee training pack.
* A new feedback form is on-line and available for trainers and participants to use.
* Existing trainers have been asked to complete a ‘trainer profile’ so that a trainers’ list, similar to the school speakers list, can be compiled.

Positive items to note

* Further training resources are being prepared: for the MBMR campaign and for a training the trainer event in January on ‘preparing for the general election’.
* School speaker resources are more easily accessible and adult trainers are being encouraged to review these and use them where appropriate.
* A ‘train the trainers’ one day course for new trainers is taking place on 6 December and is fully booked.

Challenging items to note

* It is not clear yet how many of the previous list of trained and experienced adult trainers are willing to continue in the role.
* Adult trainers will no longer be responsible for regular liaison with and continuing support of a specified list of local groups. In future the system will work like the school speakers’ list - local groups will be told to contact the Adult Training team who will proved details of possible trainers from their ‘trainers’ list’. We are not aware of this new system being communicated to groups yet, although it is clearer on the website. And it is too soon to tell how effective this new system will be.
* We don’t know how much training in local groups has actually taken place over the last 12 months.
* School speakers – things are going forward but we need to get reliable data on the number of active school speakers that we have We are pleased with the new developments on the website which make it easier for schools to locate school speakers but anecdotally it seems that most requests for talks are coming from local groups rather than the website. School speakers would like to be able to know which local schools are affiliated to Amnesty.

**Action: The ASC agreed that we must do some work to enable a better connection between relationships at a local level eg so that the Regional Rep knows about school speakers and schools and so that the CC’s can easily find out which groups have signed up to which country or case. L T-H, SM, AC, BH to take this forward.**

Ade and Susan suggested that that the ASC requests an update from the HRE team at one of its future meetings. The committee agreed.

**Action: KM to arrange HRE team update for next ASC meeting**

**2.6 The Board: update from Ruth Breddal**

HP reported that the board are working towards the ICM at the beginning of August. They are also reviewing the recommendations of the CAPP report as well as preparing for the 2015 AGM.

RB advised the ASC that the board election is coming up and there will be 5 seats one, of which is just for one year. The Board election pack is going out now with a closing date of 9th Jan . RB reported that the Chair of the Nomination Committee has had to stand down for personal reasons and advised the ASC that nominations committee could co-opt new members in this instance. RB encouraged ASC members to:

a. encourage any members in their networks with recruitment expertise to consider serving on the nominations committee this year.

b. to consider standing for the Board and encouraging others in their networks with experience and expertise to do so. The Board are concerned that there should be enough candidates to require an election in 2015.

**Action: ASC members to seek to identity any potential nominations committee members and to consider standing for the Board and encourage others to do so**

**2.7 HRAC staff: update from Hannah Perry**

HP updated the ASC on the fact that Hannah Shaw (who is recently married and now Hannah Wilson) is going on sabbatical for a year from mid November . We have appointed cover for her role, Gemma xx who will take up her post in December.

**3. The Year ahead - Hannah Perry**

HP reported that the ASC was well represented at the governance day

HP talked through the new composition of the ASC as now agreed by the Board. She advised the ASC that we are now in the intervening period before we now take on our composition for 2105. The ASC noted that the Board had made some changes to the composition proposed by the ASC.

ASC members were concerned that there must be a transparent process for signing off terms of reference for sub-committees and other bodies and that this needs to be in line with the work being carried out by the GTF..

HP clarified that the Board have to sign off the TORS of its subcommittees. She also clarified that there is a governance review taking place in parallel. The board have asked for ASC input on some GTF recommendations which would be dealt with specifically later in the agenda..

HP said that ASC can go back to the board if there are issues with the amendments made to the new composition and terms of reference that we are we are unhappy with The ASC did not think that this was necessary and adopted the new composition and terms of reference with the proviso that the documentation is amended to clarify that it is one vote per seat.

**Action: HP to amend the documentation to reflect one vote per seat**

There was discussion around the fact that there are 3 board members currently on the ASC which has both advantages and disadvantages. There was also discussion about voting rights within the Committee. The ASC decided to take this (and any other work related to the composition and terms of reference) forward through a sub-group reporting back to the ASC.

**Action: Continuous improvement sub-group created consisting of HP, L T-H, RB**

Whilst acknowledging that the GTF are in the process of reviewing the terms of reference of Board Sub-Committees, the ASC decided that it should now freeze its terms of reference as agreed by the Board until it has actually worked with the new composition and only review again then.

It was suggested that the ASC should undertake a skills audit to help define the expertise required for the individual roles.

**Action: This will be taken forward through the continuous improvement group**

**5. Members at the heart strategy - update from Kerry Moscogiuri**

KM updated the ASC on the progress of the members at the heart strategy. A successful staff meeting had been held and the first staff project group had taken place. Work was underway in various areas eg the brief for the AGM, the brief for the digital roadmap, the work SM is doing to raise the profile of activists at the HRAC and the fact that there was a campaign action at the end of the Media Awards ceremony.

KM talked about work being done to map out the data we have on our membership and to bring together the insight we have from the various questionnaires and surveys that have been and are being undertaken.

HP informed the ASC that 4,000 people have taken part in the NCVO survey on governance, and that within that number there were a lot of people who have never been to an AGM. Very few students took part.

L T-H outlined the activist health questionnaire which will give very useful data to the ASC. BH advised ASC that the CC’s are also preparing a questionnaire for groups asking them what they are working on. ASC felt that we should seek to combine these kinds of research and that we need to devise a clear process so that data is gathered once but can be used by all.

There was discussion around making sure that data on individuals (eg feedback on CC’s and regional reps) is collected and managed sensitively and at the same time that CC’s and regional reps have access to the substantive survey findings. As part of this L T-H reported that she is having difficulty getting information from staff on the status of groups’ subs payments. ASC noted that we need to bring all of this information together.

DB offered to help with the digital aspects of the survey

KM sought advice from ASC on how they could work directly on specific areas of the members at the heart strategy. ASC decided the following:

**Impact of activism project - L T-H, M DS and RS will be involved,**

**Data mapping –BH will liaise with KM on this**

**Overall liaison and progress assessor: SM**

**6. CAPP evaluation report**

HP and KM introduced the background to the CAPP review and the review process. The ASC discussed the report and its recommendations.

Overall ASC felt it was a useful report but that there should be clearer recommendations and actions around the area of stakeholder engagement and risk management. ASC felt that there should be significantly more in the report on how AIUK should engage with members so that future change projects are able to minimise the toxic atmosphere that was generated in CAPP. ASC felt that this should be expanded upon in the management response and reference the work being done on the Members at the Heart strategy.

ASC questioned the conclusion drawn in the report that the EGM was a result of staff being able to vote. ASC members made the point that given the way in which some staff and members work so closely together there will always be a very difficult tension when staff jobs are at risk and how difficult this actually is for members to deal with. ASC felt that this issue needs to be explored in more depth in the management response and that simply changing staff voting rights would not make a material difference to this issue.

The ASC noted that the issue of staff voting and numbers required to call an EGM were part of the work being carried out by the GTF on the constitution review. The ASC also noted some concern that NCVO were benchmarking AIUK again the NGO sector as a whole but this also needed to be done very specifically against membership organisations.

The ASC also felt that the action plan that comes as a result of this should be shared with all members

**Action: HP to feed the ASC’s views on the CAPP report to the Board meeting on 29th November**

**7. Digital Roadmap**

Adrian Gans who worked on the redesign of the new website is now working directly with AIUK as a consultant on planning the digital roadmap. Adrian presented the proposed the process for designing and prioritising the roadmap and presented the roadmap itself.

The ASC thanked Adrian for the approach being taken which was felt to be visible and transparent. The ASC also welcomed key elements of the roadmap notably the planned work to improve events listings and the planned work to develop community capability.

Adrian is very keen to get members’ input directly into the roadmap. He is keen to set up a representative panel of members that the team can consult on the roadmap and on specific projects.

ASC felt it would be useful to be able to see what happens to feedback given by members and supporters requesting small changes to the website, or bug fixes.

**Actions: KM to:**

1. **Advise on when and how to set up the panel**
2. **Share with ASC the process we use to respond to web site feedback and regularly share the list of requested fixes with progress against them. In so doing to investigate helpdesk software suggested by DB.**
3. **KM to work with the Digital Team to think about any other ways in which members could feed into this work**

**8. Members’ Area of the Website**

KM updated the ASC on the progress being made to implement a members’ area of the website. The board had requested that this be delivered in order to share international papers marked ‘members only’ by the IS and to share work in progress and other papers relevant only to members. KM advised the ASC that the intention is still to share information publically wherever possible. KM also advised that the view that members will have will be the same as the ‘resources’ area of the existing website.

The ASC were asked to advise the Board on the definition of membership to use to access this area.

After much discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the possible options the ASC decided to advise the board to restrict access to this area to the following people:

Current Amnesty members ie those with voting rights and Trust donors whose annual donations in the last year equal the membership fee or above

If however, Tony advises that there are any likely adverse financial or legal implications of this approach the ASC are happy to use the definition that is least problematic in those terms.

The ASC also noted the continuing problem of the democratic deficit caused by Trust donors not being able to vote and asked HP to raise this again as an issue that needs urgent attention by the board.

**Action: HP to feed the ASC advice above into the Board at its meeting on 29th November**

**9. GTF Recommendations**

M D-S reminded ASC of the composition , role and progress of the GTF and that GTF papers are available on the website. The ASC were asked by the Board to advise on specific recommendations made by the GTF. The ASC recommendations are noted below:

ASC advice to the board on GTF recommendations

*Recommendation 3*: will now include networks in addition to the others - ASC recommend that the Board agrees this.

*Recommendation 4* - change first two words to ‘consistent procedures’ so that we highlight that the procedures don’t need to be the same for each group . With that clarification ASC recommends that the Board agree this.

*Recommendation 5* ASC advises that further consultation with the specific networks is required before we take a view on this one, therefore recommend that the Board does not agree this at this stage.

*Recommendation 7* - ASC advises that the language is refined to make it clear what is meant by this and with that clarification ASC recommends that the Board agrees this.

*Recommendation 8*: ASC advises clarifying the meaning of ‘report’ here so that its clear its about raising issues rather than reporting back on activity. With that amendment ASC recommends that the Board agree it.s

*Recommendation 10* - Agreed

*Recommendation 11* Agreed (and L T-H will put into the regional conference planning that the regional rep will check for potential clashes with board meetings when planning dates).

**Action: HP to feed ASC’s recommendations into the Board discussion on GTF recommendations at its meeting on 29th November**

**Role of AIUK**

HP outlined the process undertaken to undertake further consultation on the role definition proposed as part of CAPP. 45 people responded to GTF’s role consultation and their responses were inconclusive.

HP advised the ASC that The Board are now asking ASC if, in the opinion of the ASC based on the consultation results, the role summary statement can continue to be used internally?

The ASC’s advice to the Board is that AIUK does not need a specific role summary statement and that the CAPP role statement is not required and should not be used especially given the controversy around it. Instead, the ASC ask the Board ‘do we really need a summary statement about our specific role in the movement? If so, can the development of that be part of the work we do to create out next AIUK strategic plan’?

**Action: HP to feedback ASC’s advice on the role statement to the board at its meeting on 29th November**

**10. Strategic Goals Consultation**

Karen Wagstaff joined the ASC for this item . Karen outlined the consultation process that had taken place on stage 2 of the consultation. We had over 1,000 responses from the UK. Karen outlined the key points that AIUK made in its submission to this phase of the consultation. See link to the website.

The online survey had a very good response from under 25s. 30% from 25 or under.

Karen reported that the IISC had just discussed the strategic goals consultation at their meeting of 15.11.14... The IISC have decided to have a workshop at the AGM to bring out the international discussions happening around the strategic goals.. AIUK will get a revised draft of the strategic goals from the IS at the end of January 2015 along with an ICM resolution.

The ASC advised that members did not need to be consulted in the period between the release of the revised strategic goals and the deadline for AGM resolutions and that that time period should be used to make the information for members in the AGM pack and accompanying communications accessible and effective. The background notes need to be very clear and explain AIUK’s specific role at the ICM and the decision-making process at the ICM.

The ASC suggested that we create a structure for how groups can run the discussions on the strategic goals resolutions at their group meetings and that we try role that out through the trainers. **Action: KM to ask Shoomi to do this**

**Action: KM to talk to the IS to reinforce the need for communications on the strategic plan to be in plain English**

**11. Networks TORs**

HP outlined the process for developing the new terms of reference for the LGBTI and childrens’ rights networks. HP asked for comments by email by Friday 21st November so that they can go to the Board for approval. ASC noted that each committee had voted unanimously to adopt the new terms of reference.

**Action: ASC members to feed back to HP by 21.11.14**

**Action: HP to ask Shane to bring the TUNC terms of reference to the next ASC meeting**

12. AGM 2015

**Action: RB and AC will circulate plans by email. Ade will set up a doodle poll. ASC members to feedback thoughts to RB and AC**

13. Lobbying Act

Eilidh gave ASC a comprehensive briefing on the implications of the lobbying act for AIUK. She confirmed that we now in the regulated period. LT-H confirmed that the guidance for groups would be sent via the Regional Reps in week commencing the 17/11/14. The ASC noted that public campaigning on the Human Rights Act would be regulated activity and that there is a staff group who are meeting regularly to consider other campaign areas and will advise if there are other topics which would fall under the regulations of this act.

Specific actions arising are:

**Action: We need to clarify the process for the imprint. KM to confirm if we can we have a standard imprint or if they need to be personalised.**

**Action: KM to ensure that activists receive specific guidance for hustings.**

**Action: ED requested that the ASC let her know if there are any specific additional things that would help activists comply with this act**

**AC confirmed that the training dept will do a training of trainers session in January on this.**

**14. AOB**

RB reiterated her request for anyone who knows anyone with expertise in recruitment to get in touch

Sameena – requested comments on her paper on activist visibility with staff and requested that ASC members let her know availability for forthcoming meetings

HP recapped on the following:

Request for L T-H, AC and BH to bring back the issue of collaboration on data and the interface with groups from other activist constituencies to the next meeting

Request for BH to give us more information on how workload is increasing for CCs and what could be done to resolve it

KM to capture and to feed back onthe numbers on our active trainers and schools speakers -

HP also advised the ASC that the Board is having a workshop on diversity and unconscious bias and that to prepare that workshop they are asking for feedback on them as leaders in the area of diversity. . The questionnaire is being sent to all subcommittee members , SMT and gender champions HP encourage ASC members to take part by Friday 21st November.

**THE END!**