

NORWICH AMNESTY GROUP AGM 23 MARCH 2012

Minutes

Welcome and opening remarks

David Ford welcomed all to the AGM.

US marine Bradley Manning remains detained in poor conditions, UN has taken up his case. Following Irene Kahn's departure from Amnesty International, Dame Anne Owers led an independent review of payments to the former Secretary General and her deputy. She was highly critical of failures of management and governance of AI.

Apologies Gill, Lesley 16 people present

Matters arising from 2011 AGM minutes

Treasurer sent £1,750 to AIUK

Our meetings begin at 7.30 and the meeting is happy with this start time.

Chair did not contact Roger Rowe.

Monthly action

Saudi Arabia – Letter writing and photo action to highlight one aspect of discrimination against women, the banning of women drivers.

Carl will put the action and a sign for the photo action on the website, by Friday.

ACTION Carl

Reports

Chair David Ford

Looking back on this 50th anniversary year I think we can all agree that it has been a great success in bringing our work into sharp focus locally, in raising awareness and also having the spin off for fundraising.

The momentous events in Africa and the Middle East in particular, during the last year and which still continue, highlight the need for Amnesty's work. A recent documentary on BBC 3 about events in Tahrir Square in Cairo and this week a programme on BBC4 about a holiday guide in Yemen during the revolution showed graphically events that remain our concern.

Returning to our group, our meetings have been very well attended usually with between 15-20 people, with two meetings having an audience of about 38. We managed to have a key event almost every month. The highlights were, the garden party, EDP's two page feature in March, the two concerts, the Cinema City film series and the UEA lectures.

The presence in the Cathedral with the candle burning and the vigorous support of Amnesty by Tom Butler at the Evensong in July kept a light throughout the year.

One of the most encouraging things was that people outside of Amnesty were keen to hold events in support of Amnesty. These included the music teacher who held a classical guitar concert, the Theatre Royal, the Moseley sisters who arranged a wonderful Amnestea party in July, raising over £600.

We attended the national AGM in Belfast and two of us are off to Manchester this year. I commend these events to you as a great way of becoming involved in Amnesty. We continue to try and attend the twice yearly regional meetings. Turning to our meetings, I hope we continue with the monthly Actions as a regular feature.

Fundraising this year has been brilliant and we have sent £5,000 to AIUK. We started 2012 with a very successful quiz evening in February. Xmas cards did well at the Assembly House. We need someone to organise this later in the year.

Publicity in the last year has been excellent, as our events have been well attended. I think we can all congratulate ourselves on a very successful year.

Looking to our coming year I hope we do more campaign actions, sort out our website which Carl is so expertly updating for us. We thank Carl for the work he has done and will do.

Finally after five years I am standing down as Chairperson. I would like to thank the committee for their hard work and support and on your behalf to thank Louise and Mary who are standing down, particularly for their work with the garden party. I would like, in particular to thank from all of us, Joanna who has been secretary for at least eight years this time round and thank you from me for the support during the last busy year.

Treasurer's Report – David Huband (Report below)

The financial year now runs from January to December no longer April to March. The transition, combined with a change of treasurer has been difficult. This report is for the period January to December 2011.

£5,000 went to AIUK. The AIUK section report shows us as fourth from the top of fundraisers.

Big Sky concert (David F) – DF has the accounts for the concert and outlined financial arrangements. We will discuss these further at the committee meeting.

Figure of £1706.9 on the report for the garden party is the total amount. Half was given to the Medical Foundation (*Report since updated to take account of this*)

We need to sort out signatories for cheques and move to Co-op bank.

Member suggested more detail on the report would be interesting, particularly a breakdown of donations. Treasurer said it was difficult to strike a balance between too much and too little information to hand out at the meeting. Carl suggested if we wanted more information available it could go on the website as a separate annual report.

Women Campaign – Roz Cadwallader (See below)

Children's Human Rights Network – Joanna Kinnaird

In spite of resolutions passed at the AIUK AGM over the last two years calling for more work to be done on behalf of children and another planned for this year, cases for action are few and far between. There have been three actions in the last year. There is ongoing concern and action on behalf of the Roma in in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. Discrimination against them includes lack of access to education. In June 2011 we acted on behalf of three boys detained and ill treated for taking part in a peaceful demonstration in a camp for internally displace people in Sudan. They were demonstrating against new methods of food distribution. In July 2011 we acted on behalf of child soldiers in Chad.

Other Campaigns – David Yates

We had an information stall at the Norwich Pride event at the Forum.

In December we held a 'Write for Rights' event at Norwich Playhouse. 80 cards and letters were sent and we received support from local members and actress Mathilda Zeigler.

David Y, Gill and Tom visited local MPs Simon Wright and Chloe Smith in their surgeries. Both were receptive and with Chloe Smith it was to make initial contact and open dialogue.

Chair directed us to an online petition at epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/29410 in support of Shaker Amer. If the petition reaches 100,000 it allows the case to be debated in the House of Commons.

Resolutions

1 Chair – Group constitution

Remove ‘*and district*’ from ‘*Norwich and district*’ to read ‘*The name of the group shall be the Norwich Local Group*’

Under **Membership**

It now reads ‘*Members are those who have agreed to have their names and contact details held on the group’s membership database.*’

Under **Meetings**

It now reads *A general meeting may be called at any time by the committee and must be called on receipt of a written request from no fewer than one third of the committee or no fewer than ten group members.*

Only group members shall have the right to vote at meetings. Regular meetings will take place each month.

Under **Dissolution**

It now reads *If group members decide at a general meeting to dissolve the group, all relevant debts shall be paid and the remaining funds forwarded to AIUK.*

Under **Changes to the Constitution**

The constitution may be amended by a two thirds majority of group members present at a general meeting. This constitution was amended and approved by the group at its AGM on Wednesday 21st March 2012

2 Resolution- Member

Add to constitution

Details of resolutions will be available to members before the AGM on the group website or on request.

Both resolutions passed.

Election of Officers

Details of specific roles will be discussed at the committee meeting

- **Chairperson.** Nomination David Huband
Proposer Joanna Kinnaird Seconder Roz Cadwallader
- **Secretary.** Nomination None
- **Treasurer.** Nomination David Ford
Proposer Debbie Campbell Seconder Jim Massy

Other members. Nominations

Gill Albert *Proposer RC Seconder JC*
Roz Cadwallader *Proposer DY Seconder DH*
Debbie Campbell *Proposer RC Seconder CG*
Jono Cox *Proposer DC Seconder TR*

Joanna Kinnaird *Proposer JC Seconder JM*
Tom Read *Proposer DY Seconder DH*
David Yates *Proposer DF Seconder JK*
Sue Mills *Proposer JK Seconder CG*
Carl Grint *Proposer DY Seconder DH*

Open Forum

- Meeting agreed that 7.30 start for the open meeting worked well.

When we have a speaker we deal with the AIUK monthly action then go straight to the speaker and deal with business later.

- How do we get younger people involved in the group?

Carl suggested we can link in with younger people through the website and utilize social media to rally support for events and campaigns. Attendance at the monthly meeting does not necessarily have to be the focus of activity. Numbers at open meetings is not a measure of success. Numbers at events is also significant.

David H suggests organising some sort of competition between schools.

Our links with NEAD (Norfolk Education & Action for Development) might fit well with this.

We can discuss these ideas at our planning meeting in April.

Are we happy with open meetings at Charing Cross Centre?
Investigate Cube and Bank Plain

ACTION David F

Announcements

26 March Vicar of Baghdad Hostry Anglican Cathedral

27 March 7.30 Committee meeting

28 March Talk to North Walsham Probus group David Ford

13 April AIUK AGM Manchester

16 April 6pm Imran Kahn Hostry Anglican Cathedral

AOB

The meeting gave huge thanks to David Ford for all his hard work as Chair of the group.

Next Meeting Wednesday 18 April 7.30

TREASURER'S REPORT for 2011

(Please note that this report is for the calendar year 2011, not, as previously, for the twelve months March 31st. – April 1st. This is to bring it in line with the account required by AIUK.)
Previous year's figures in brackets

| | Credit | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Opening balance at 1.1.11 | £1225.84 | | |
| Cash in hand | £159.78 | | |
| Collections | £1305.83 | (£412.14, £585.62) | |
| Donations | £1496.50 | (£758.50, £486.50) | |
| Garden Party | £853.46 | | |
| Concerts | £489.24 | | |
| Other events (Talks, Coffee morning) | £281.40 | | |
| Christmas Cards | £207.27 | | |
| Quiz & Chips | £550.28 | (£620.28, £486.40) | |
| Credit Total | <u>£6569.61</u> | | |
| | | | Debit |
| Campaigns | | £22.70 | (£71.85, £78.19) |
| Postage etc. | | £54.49 | |
| Donation (Bridge plus) | £50 | | |
| Concert expenses (Big Sky) | | £60 | |
| Charing Cross Centre | | £241.20 | (£280.20, £275.20) |
| Debit Total | | <u>£428.39</u> | |
| Bank Balance at 31.12.11 | | <u>£5939.92</u> | |

2012

In January 2012 we donated £5000 to AIUK

The Quiz and Dips evening raised £725.18

The Bank Balance at Feb. 21st. was £2,437.21

Women's Campaign Report

AFGHANISTAN. Last autumn there was a major campaign to safeguard the rights of women in Afghanistan. This co-incided with the 10th anniversary of the American led international intervention against the Taliban. Since then there have been significant advances in women's rights and gender equality, including the creation of a Ministry for women's affairs, an increase in girls' access to education, the representation of women in Parliament and a constitution that grants equal status to men and women.

However Afghanistan is still considered to be the worse place in the world to be a woman. Afghan women and girls continue to face endemic violence and discrimination at home and in the public sphere.

- In March, 18-year-old Bibi Aysha had her nose and ears cut off by her husband in Uruzgan province, southern Afghanistan, apparently on the order of a Taleban commander acting as "judge" for the crime of running away from her abusive in-laws.
- On 9 August, the Taleban shot dead a woman, after forcing her to abort her foetus, in Badghis province on accusations of adultery.
- On 16 August, the Taleban stoned to death a couple for alleged adultery and elopement in Imam Sahib district, Kunduz province.

In areas under their control, the Taliban continue to severely curtail women's Human Rights, with attacks on girls' education and the murder of prominent women in public life, including parliamentary candidates. Women have been marginalised in the peace negotiations, adding to the fear that their rights may be traded in for the 'greater good' of an uncertain peace. Representations were made to William Hague in this regard, before the Bonn Conference in December, but action to raise the profile and priority of women's rights within political parties and in Parliament continues.

WOMEN IN EGYPT. Women played a key role during the 18 days of protest that led to former president Hosni Mubarak's downfall. However, when discussions on change and reform in Egypt began, they were undermined and excluded from the new processes of transition, and were even at risk of losing some of the advances they had made in past decades – leaving them facing a life of systematic inequality and discrimination, like other women in the region. One year on, and the SCAF (Supreme Council of Armed Forces), the interim government, has been responsible for a catalogue of abuses including the violent suppression of protests, and the continued use of torture. Women protestors in particular have faced brutal treatment at the hands of security forces, including beatings, threats of sexual abuse and enforced 'virginity testing'. (The acquittal of an Egyptian military doctor accused of carrying out forced "virginity tests" on women protesters is yet further proof that military courts are incapable of dealing with cases involving human rights abuses).

Amnesty has produced a Human Rights Charter for the different political parties to sign up to, with ten different manifesto points, including one guaranteeing women's rights.

Protect women's rights

Women must be full partners in the process of political and human rights reform. Women and men must be accorded equal rights in law to marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance. Women must have legal protection from domestic violence, including marital rape, and sexual harassment. Penal Code articles 260-263 must be amended to allow abortion for women and girl survivors of rape and incest - or when a pregnancy poses a grave risk to health. Law No.126 of 2008 must be amended to prohibit female genital mutilation in all cases.

Most of the biggest Egyptian political parties have committed to delivering ambitious human rights reform in the country's transition, but have either given mixed signals or have flatly refused to sign up to ending discrimination, protecting women's rights and to abolishing the death penalty. Amnesty's campaign for the protection of women's human rights across the whole North African and Middle East regions, continues as a priority, into 2012. Amnesty is currently in talks with Egyptian women's groups to ensure the best ways of supporting their work, as mishandled campaigning could threaten an already fragile situation. Two Egyptian women's activists are coming to the UK in March to guide campaigning and lobbying.

NICARAGUA. Another focus of Amnesty's Campaigning has been to do with **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**. Although these are some of the most basic of Human Rights, many women still have no control over their own bodies or their sexual and reproductive rights, specifically in the fields of contraception, abortion and maternal health. This leaves them vulnerable to greater risk of death, injury, continued poverty and inequality. Amnesty has focused on the issue of **reproductive rights in Nicaragua**, where the country's total ban on abortion since 2008, applies even to those whose health and lives are in danger, whose pregnancies are the result of rape or incest, or who are still children themselves (one test case supported by Amnesty, concerned a nine year old girl). Although two-thirds of reported rapes in Nicaragua are against girls and young women under the age of 17, there is little hope of justice through the legal system, and the stigma associated with the crime blames the victim rather than the perpetrator. There is little or no help from the government, which has failed to prevent sexual abuse, to provide care to survivors or to guarantee they receive justice and reparation. Young rape survivors need psychological, medical and legal support and help to rebuild their lives.

In an Amnesty action, more than 50,000 butterflies were made worldwide with 17,000 people from the UK taking part. These were sent to Nicaragua, where they formed part of a huge solidarity action last September, on the Day for the Decriminalisation of Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean. These showed solidarity and hopefully added to the movement for change – receiving positive responses from prospective presidential candidates.

ZIMBABWE and WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arise) – Campaigning involved an action in support of Human Rights defenders. WOZA is a Zimbabwean activist group that speaks out about social and economic inequalities and human rights conditions in the country. WOZA members have been demonstrating peacefully against social injustice for ten years. During that time there have been countless incidents in which the group's members have been arrested, harassed and severely beaten by police after exercising their right to peaceful protest. They have been charged with everything from 'kidnapping and theft' to 'criminal nuisance'.

On 7 February 2012, WOZA celebrated its tenth anniversary with a peaceful demonstration in Bulawayo. At the demonstration, WOZA leader Jenni Williams and 13 others were arrested (9 WOZA members, 4 bystanders). According to WOZA, riot police also assaulted demonstrators and members of the public.

The detainees were released the following day on free bail. Jenni Williams and nine other WOZA members will face trial on the charge of 'criminal nuisance' on 23 March.

Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu also appeared in court on 12 and 15 March for their ongoing trial for charges of 'kidnapping and theft'. Despite having previously been granted bail, Jenni Williams was not allowed to leave the court on 12 March and was held overnight in a prison cell. The case is due to resume on 22 March. An appeal by WOZA's lawyers to have the case dismissed will be heard at the High Court on 19 March.

Current Action on website in their support.

IN THE UK, although the **SVAW Campaign** is no longer running, Amnesty continues to be part of a coalition of Groups campaigning to promote and defend women's rights. **End Violence**

Against Women is a powerful UK-wide coalition calling for urgent action to end all forms of violence against women and girls. Here in the UK there is still a long way to go...

2 women a week are killed by a partner or former partner in England and Wales There were over 1500 calls to the Forced Marriage Unit in 2011 1 in 3 girls say they experience unwanted sexual contact in school in the UK Sexist and sexualised images of women are widespread in daily newspapers, music videos, ads and the internet, creating a culture in which harassment and abuse flourishes.

A recent Mumsnet survey of over 1600 women, also backed these findings, showing that : 1 in 10 had been raped, over one-third had been sexually assaulted, and almost one-quarter reported being raped or sexually assaulted four or more times.

In addition, evidence of female subordination in current gang culture, the incidence of trafficking for sex or domestic exploitation, details of press tactics that have emerged during the Leveson Inquiry and a series of rape and abuse 'joke' pages on Facebook, demonstrate clearly that Amnesty's role in the campaign for a world free from abuse and exploitation of women and girls, is as vital as ever.

Roz Cadwallader March 2012