



UNA LASER Newsletter
January 2021

From our Chair, Trisha Rogers



Festival Follow-up as UN75 comes to an end

Marking the end of the UN75 anniversaries, we have given the UN Secretary-General the Action Plan, [Urgent Actions for a More Secure World](#), that many of you helped to create at our UN75 Festival in October. We had planned physically to hand this to him in London on Sunday (10th January 2021) to mark the 75th anniversary of the first meetings of the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council, which had been in London.

Due to the pandemic, his visit has had to be cancelled, but, thanks to the wonders of digital technology, we have been able to get the plan to him in New York.

Do go to the pages on the Festival website showing the actions for [individuals](#), [communities](#), [nations](#) and [the UN](#), and share ideas and challenges on these actions for building a more secure world. We shall, of course, continue to follow up the Actions and are delighted that UNA Westminster are acting on the need for pandemic preparedness with a webinar in April (date not yet fixed). Please [get in touch](#) if you have special interest in this subject and would like to help with this action.

We are also preparing some assemblies for schools based on material from the Festival; please [contact me](#) if you would like to engage with this. We would welcome support in creating the assemblies, as well as links with schools who would like to try out one or two and help us improve them.

I'm sure any of you who missed it (and even some who saw it live) will [value seeing](#) the service broadcast from Methodist Central Hall on the morning of 10th January. Much of the service commemorates the first meeting of the UN General Assembly in that hall 75 years ago, with contributions from Sir Peter Marshall, Dame Barbara Woodward, the UK contingent of the UN Peacekeeping troops in Mali, Secretary-General António Guterres, Fabrizio Hochschild-Drummond, as well as our own David Wardrop. The service also includes the announcement that, thanks mainly to the vision and perseverance of UNA Westminster, led by David Wardrop, the area outside Methodist Central Hall and the QE II Conference Centre is being renamed United Nations Green.

Forthcoming Events

Our Policy Conference will be held by zoom on 27th February at 10:30am; registration is required in advance [here](#). Please [send in](#) draft policy resolutions to our Policy Committee Chair by 1st February. You might want to propose updates to [some of our current resolutions](#); these will also remind you of the format we use. Resolutions need to be on an international topic; calling for action by the UK government or the UN; and less that

150 words in length.

We shall hold our virtual Spring Council on 17th April at 4pm. Echoing our plans of a year ago – but now with zoom to save us from cancellation – it will be *Back from the Brink? Preparing for the UN Climate Change Conference, Cop26*. More details will come out at the end of February, but do book this in your calendars now!

UNA Westminster are running a virtual event, entitled *A review of Britain's role in the creation of the United Nations*, on Tuesday 12th January, 5pm. The event will be moderated by Rita Payne; the speakers are Sir Peter Marshall, John Burley, Dan Plesch. For further information and to register, go [here](#).

Branch Support

These zooming times provide a good opportunity for branches to work together – as well as with other organisations that share common goals – on events and campaigning. We can also work together to share expertise and ideas. Most branches run public events on UN issues, but others focus on book groups, campaigning coffee mornings, activities with local schools, ensuring UN Day is marked locally, ... [Let me know](#) what you have tried or would like to try. We can share ideas and experience in future Newsletters. I – and several other members of our committee – would be happy to discuss ideas and support branches through any challenges. [Get in touch by email](#), giving a telephone number and convenient times to ring you.

Publicising Events

You may have noticed that, thanks to Annesha Kar Gupta, our website is much improved. If you would like to use it to help publicise your UNA events, [this page](#) tells you where to send the details and we will put them in our calendar. Especially in these zooming times, people from far afield might like to join you!

Branch news and events

Eastbourne UNA

2021 – Our New Year Solution: Mitigating Climate Change – Are We Doing Enough?

There are TWO vital actions we must take:

1. CHANGE OUR CONSUMPTION PATTERNS: REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT by AVOIDING, RECYCLING AND REDUCING our consumption of resources which create carbon emissions. We must urgently aim to become NET CARBON NEUTRAL as soon as possible.

BUT this alone is not enough.

2. REDUCE THE GLOBAL ATMOSPHERIC CO₂ (NEGATIVE EMISSIONS). This requires natural and technological solutions to remove CO₂ out of the atmosphere from the current dangerous levels now exceeding 410 ppm and rising.



How should our actions be guided?

The UNA EASTBOURNE Mvule Project for Carbon Capture by tree plantations is guided by **the science** and is a negative emission project.

Our project is simple, inexpensive, trustworthy and highly effective as recognised by leading scientists in the field of arboreal carbon sequestration.

Our project is backed by numerous scientific studies which are referenced under the 'Scientific Evidence' [from our website](#).

Not all trees are equal in terms of their carbon sequestration efficiency; not all locations are best for planting trees and, not all schemes are equally conducive to community support – these and other important issues have been considered in depth by [our scheme](#).

The key to the unique status of our Carbon Offset scheme is that it focuses on the scientifically identified exceptional capacity of the *Milicia excelsa* (Mvule) tree in capturing CO2 in a long-term carbon sink, supported by essential 'companion species'.

For a minimum of **50p per month** you can support our scheme and be assured of making your contribution to reducing atmospheric CO2 to sustainable levels, plus numerous other benefits such as reducing deforestation, improving soil fertility for food security and enhancing community prosperity through more sustainable livelihoods. For further details see [here](#) or contact [Ian Elgie](#), Chair UNA Eastbourne, Tel: 07704 178011.

UNA Climate & Oceans



UNA Climate and Oceans - A trumpet from the Deep A New Year - A New You!

New Year's resolutions are easily abandoned as the year progresses.

We challenge you this year to change your NY resolutions: change your beliefs, your mindset, your narrative of what it is to be human.

What has Covid told us in 2020 about what humans are like? We care, we care for our fellow humans, key workers, we share our food, our resources, we interact, we cooperate. Our primal human nature underscores our lockdown experience and provides evidence that we are the most hyper-social primate to live on this earth.

In the New Year, challenge yourself and each other to a 'Decade of Action' to help resolve the systemic crises facing the world. It starts with a new value system and envisaging a new story for all of humankind. This new narrative reflects the UN ambitions through its Sustainable Development Goals. Book up your tickets now for the next 3 thought-provoking UNA Climate & Ocean webinars. We host a discussion programme by the *Your Better Nature* group of four Sussex environmentalists. The webinars will have a live audience and **will be hosted by former BBC presenter Jane Mote**.



With these webinars we will start supporting the Implementation of UN COP26 at grass root level, among different communities in the year ahead, raising awareness and promoting engagement. For further details about the webinars, please visit the Eventbrite page using [this link](#), where you can also book your ticket and join a live International Audience!

UNA Canterbury Branch News December 2020

One more of our planned aspirations was achieved in 2020, despite the covid constraints!

On United Nations Day 2020, (24th October) we were delighted that His Worship the Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr. Pat Todd, took time out of his planned family reunion, to raise the UN flag in Canterbury for the first time. It flew for five days in Dane John Gardens and will now be raised annually.

As previously mentioned Dr Chandramohan led our first SDG-17 North-South partnership exploratory meeting between participants from both Canterbury and Entebbe. Bala was aided by the municipality's Community Development & SDG Officer, Mr Paul Kimuli, who had previously provided an extensive list of actions and initiatives which are being addressed within Entebbe.

Councillor Vincent De Paul Kayanja, the Worshipful Mayor of Entebbe, welcomed this exploratory opportunity. He then participated in the meeting with five other officers and four business/civil society group representatives. We found a number of issues in common which may form the basis for mutual exploration and support within smaller themed groups. Likely areas of further activity are: the interface and co-operation between business, municipality and civil society, based on the UK's Business Improvement District (BID) concept; climate change impacts and environmentally sensitive tourism; support for young people's development; a school-to-school link. Subsequently we have joined with Entebbe in a bid for a British Council COP26 based grant.

Further to our September meeting, exploring the need for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), we were delighted that the Treaty had gained its 50th ratification, meaning that this ground-breaking Treaty comprehensively prohibiting nuclear weapons and related activity will become legally binding in international law on 22 January 2021. Many members are looking forward to attending the [Model Citizens' Assembly](#) to discuss "Should the UK Join the UN's Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)?" on the 10th January.

We held a virtual Annual General Meeting on the 5th December 2020 with nine members present. In the absence

of any volunteers to take on executive roles, all of the officers will continue in post for the present. However, it is unfortunate that our Chair, Treasurer/ Environmental Officer have now moved to France and will only be available for the Planning meeting on the 23rd January.

We are exploring whether we can find members willing to take on these key roles for Canterbury. Alternatively we are exploring whether some form of association might be formed with UNA Deal branch, who are equally limited in the number of people willing to help organise the branch, thus forming an East Kent alliance or stand-alone branch.

Despite a hitch with the technology, five guests joined us for an insightful exploration of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by Linda Melvern, a distinguished journalist. She juxtaposed these 1948 principles with the realities and difficulties experienced in effecting safe UN intervention within the current system. Her presentation was based especially on her concerns for the Rwanda genocide of 1974 which, like many other areas, has still not been adequately resolved within these and surrounding countries.

Warm New Year greetings to all members of LaSER from
UNA Canterbury Branch, Michael Vince, Secretary Mob. 07511583446



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