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## UNA LASER June 2022 Newsletter

From our Chair, Trisha Rogers



### Bruce Kent

Bruce Kent, who has just died, was a longstanding and inspirational member of LASER. [The Guardian obituary](#) described him as “a charismatic peace activist”, which he certainly was. But he was more than that: active not only in issues concerning peace; but working indefatigably, with charm and humour, for all forms of justice, including little-known campaigns such as for [prisoners maintaining their innocence](#). Until last year he provided substantial



input into our Policy Conference and he was always supportive of all our work. We send our condolences to his wife, Valerie.

### Executive Committee

LASER's strength is in its well-informed, visionary and hard-working people, such as Bruce Kent. We need continually to recruit new members to keep strong our vision and activity. We are therefore delighted to welcome two new members onto our Executive Committee.

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Gillian Dare is a former diplomat who has worked on issues involving Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, as well as Europe. She is now working with UNA Westminster, as well as UNA Wandsworth. Titilayo Odukale has focussed on legal issues, as well as helping with the LASER UN75 *Building a More Secure World* Festival.

## Branches

Please ensure that your branch details are correct [on our website](#). In consultation with branches, we have published some [ideas for branch organisation and activities](#) which illustrate how varied branches can be, while still being effective. Please [get in touch](#) if your branch details need to be changed or if you would like to discuss other types of support, such as in forming a new branch.

## Newsletters

Many thanks to Suheil Shahryar, for mailing out this Newsletter. The deadline for announcements for the next Newsletter to [reach me](#) is **16th August**. It is helpful if you can send the information for events in the same format as the events below. We are not able to include large amounts of biographical and background detail, but can link to these on other websites, so do include links, but not long announcements.

## Policies and Campaigns

### Policy Conference

We continue to follow up the [resolutions agreed at our Policy Conference](#). Do - as branches and as individual members - forward any (or all) resolutions to your MPs, who can bring them to the more immediate attention of Ministers. Please [let us know](#) if you get any replies of substance.

### Campaign on Nationality and Borders Act

The government has now started to apply *The Nationality and Borders Act* which came into law in April. [On our website](#), Valeria Minisini, our Campaigns Officer, explains the implications of the Act and reminds us that there are still several ways in which we can help protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers wishing to enter the UK. The measures outlined in the Act are gradually being put into force (with the European Court of Human Rights giving a judgement to ensure adequate time for judicial review processes before anyone is removed to Rwanda), but much of the detail remains unclear. Do follow up [the suggestions](#) for writing to our MPs and supporting organisations working with asylum seekers.

### COP26 Follow-Up

According to the Climate Coalition (of which LASER is a member) the impacts of climate change are getting worse and hitting those least responsible the hardest. The UK continues to be President of the COP until the autumn. Do [write to your MP](#) to stress that it is important that we keep up the momentum, following COP26. You might also like to approach some local schools to [sign up](#) to take part in the *Just One Tree* campaign. Just One Tree, a member of The Climate Coalition, is organising a national non-uniform day in schools **on 14 October** to reduce climate anxiety, prevent deforestation and raise awareness of climate action. Each £1 donation to take part in the non-uniform day plants one tree in countries where they will make the biggest difference.

## Forthcoming Events

### LASER Summer Council

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**Climate Change – Impact, Reports & Solutions**

**Summer Council  
July 9, 2022  
10:30 – 17:00  
Salvation Army Hall  
Leyton Green  
Harpenden AL5 2TG**



**Entry: Free**

**Please register:**  
<https://una-laser-climate-change.eventbrite.co.uk>

**United Nations Association London & South East Region (UNA LASER)**



**UNA LONDON & SOUTHEAST REGION**

Scan me with your smartphone

**Session 1: Impact of climate change in the Pacific islands and Bangladesh**  
**Session 2: Reports on climate action for the United Kingdom**  
**Session 3: Sustainable and green growth for the United Kingdom**

We very much hope to see you at our Summer Council - on **Climate Change** - being organised by UNA Harpenden. Attendance is free; lunch (including vegetarian) will be available for £7. The formal meeting starts at 11:00. The programme is [here](#).

We hope that many will take part **in-person**; the venue is close to Harpenden train station, which is an easy ride from St Pancras International (we suggest the 9:36 or 9:51 train). For those of you who can't come in-person, it will be possible to join by **Zoom**. Either way, please register [here](#) or email [here](#), including requesting lunch.

## Harpenden UNA

On **June 25th, at 10:30** Harpenden UNA will hold the last of their series of free public meetings on **Ukraine and Geopolitics**. This meeting will be an in-person discussion group at the Salvation Army Hall in Harpenden. Numbers are limited; for registrations, please use [this link](#).

## Streatham & Clapham UNA



On **June 25th at 14:00**, Streatham & Clapham UNA will host a zoom meeting on **The International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development & the Indigenous People of the Western Ghats**. As well as outlining the purpose of the International Year, we hope to be joined live from South India by a number of those living in the Western Ghats mountain range. We will share & discuss several short video clips about the life, education and economic activities of the local

indigenous people and their role in protecting the mountains and forests. Please register to join [here](#).

## Westminster UNA

On **17 July**, UNA Westminster invites us to **Walk the Mandela Mile** (between the statues of Mandela at the Royal Festival Hall and in Parliament Square) and then to join the **UN Green Party**, at United Nations Green. The party will run from **13:00 - 17:00**. Further details are [here](#).

On **9-16 October** UNA Westminster would like indications of interest in joining a **Study Tour to Vienna** to visit several important UN agencies and programmes as well as the OSCE. This builds on a very successful similar tour they ran a few years ago. Further information and an opportunity to register is [here](#).

## Westminster Climate Solutions Fair

The Climate Coalition (of which LASER is a member) is joining with the National Trust and others to organise the Westminster Climate Solutions Fair, focusing on *Climate, Nature and People*, in Parliament, on **6th July, 17:00-19:00**. For further information, see [here](#) or contact [the organiser](#).

## Report

### The Blue Planet @ Eastbourne: A Brief Report by Rodney Mantle



Which was more packed: the Agenda or the Conference Suite at Eastbourne's Lansdowne Hotel on 21 May 2022?

Keeping strictly to time, the five speakers covered a very wide variety of topics local, national and international, on the theme: "How are we progressing towards healing our Planet?"

Not surprisingly, a predominant topic was sea life. The MP for Eastbourne and Willingdon, Caroline Ansell, opened the proceedings; Jill Shacklock, a local environmental activist, used a quiz to raise awareness of a bottle refill campaign in the area.

Gonzalo Alvarez then introduced a talk on Marine Protected Areas by local marine biologist Alice Tebb (representing the *Marine Conservation Society*).

Local businessman Jake Beale, a veteran of numerous "Beach Cleans," passionately advocated paper-free offices, using his own company as a model.

Some of Jake's points were underlined by a short video *Beach Clean* (by Titan360, the project's media partner); and Alice's account was illustrated by another short video *Underwater Sussex*.

Co-chairman Oliver Sterno, local climate change campaigner and the coordinator of *Plastic Free Eastbourne*, explained the complex topic of 'Biomass Plastics', and Gonzalo Alvarez' talk on the *Carbon Budget* added a frightening international perspective.

Two Question and Answer sessions clearly illustrated the local nature of the audience, which included a member of the Soroptimists.

It was only fitting that the Conference was closed by the Mayor of Eastbourne, Pat Rodahan. Post-conference conversations continued for over an hour. Numerous participants also signed a petition to the MP on ecological matters.