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## UNA LASER August 2022 Newsletter

### From our Chair, Trisha Rogers



### Rod Fielding

**Rod Fielding**, who has recently died, was not strictly part of LASER (being a pillar of Central Region, in various different roles over the years). Many of us came across him at national UNA events and appreciated his expertise and activism on a range of international issues. We also greatly appreciated the voluntary work he did for UNA-UK, including on the Board, in links with WFUNA, and as treasurer of the UNA Trust. He was a worthy



recipient of the UNA Distinguished Service Award in 2014. We send our condolences to UNA Warwick and to Rod's family and friends.

### How Green is Your Branch?

At our Policy Conference in 2019 we unanimously agreed that we should ask branches to try to reduce their carbon footprints and to have practical policies to mitigate increasing global atmospheric CO2. It was also agreed that branches should report annually on their progress. We are most grateful to our Environment Officer, **Annesha Kar Gupta**, for annually collecting the information from branches and reporting to our AGM. Her reports are in [the AGM Presentations on our website](#); these might inspire you for possible actions. [Here is this year's survey](#); please complete and return it as soon as possible..

### UNA-UK Trustees

UNA-UK is searching for two elected trustees to serve on the UNA-UK Board and support engagement with the grassroots network of members and group/branches.

This role is very important for the partnership between UNA-UK and its members and branches/groups. Do consider if you might stand - or approach anyone else you know who you think would be an effective trustee to represent the members, [There is further information here](#).

## Branches

Please ensure you are happy with [your branch description on our website](#). [Please get in touch](#) if your branch details need to be changed or if you would like to discuss ideas for your branch, such as in linking for joint events with other branches, which several branches are finding an effective structure, especially as some are presenting hybrid events (in-person and webinars).

We are also investigating the cheapest and most convenient banking support for branches and hope to share information soon: [do let us know](#) if you have any recommendations

## Newsletter

This issue is co-edited by **Salem Mezhoud**. Also many thanks to **Suheil Shahryar**, for mailing it out via Mailchimp. The deadline for announcements for the next Newsletter to reach [Salem and me](#) is **26th September**. 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 Follow Up

We have had a useful [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office \(FCDO\) response](#) to [the resolutions agreed at our Policy Conference](#). I hope this will be helpful to branches and individual members in taking the issues forward, either with the FCDO or with local MPs. [Please let us know if you get any replies of substance](#).

### UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The UN is currently selecting a new High Commissioner for Human Rights. UNA-UK [puts a spotlight](#) on the process of this selection: is it adequately open and transparent? Our Campaigns Officer, **Valeria Minisini**, asks us to take action on helping decide the priorities for the UN Human Rights Chief once in post, and on encouraging the UK government to use its influential role on the Human Rights Council. [See our website for details](#).

### Responses to the BBC's *The Whistle Blowers: Inside the UN*

While it is important that we try to influence the future of the UN, we also have to answer sometimes difficult questions on its past. Many of us will have been shocked to see the recent BBC programme about misbehaviour, including sexual harassment of junior staff, in several UN agencies. We share on our website responses to this: [Sexual Misconduct in the UN](#) from **David Wardrop**, Chair of UNA Westminster, and [What is your understanding of the United Nations?](#) from **Sheila Kesby** of UNA Bexhill and Hastings.

### Climate Change

It's now just six weeks to go until [The Great Big Green Week 2022](#), coordinated by the Climate Coalition, of which UNA LASER is a member. If you have not already arranged an event, here is a suggestion.

A new film called [The Ants and the Grasshopper](#) is premiering during Great Big Green Week. The film follows Anita, a Malawian activist and subsistence farmer, who travels around America to talk to people from all walks of life about the impacts of climate change she's already experiencing. Dartmouth Films are making this film available for film screenings as part of Great Big Green Week. All you need to do is [email Wayne at Dartmouth Films](#) with where you would like to organise the screening, and he will arrange it in the closest independent cinema. Attendees will buy tickets directly from the cinema, so there will be no cost to your branch: a great opportunity to engage with supporters and tell them more about our work.

## Forthcoming Events

### Climate and Oceans UNA



To get tickets go [here](#).

## Harpenden UNA



**OPEN SOCIETY  
FOUNDATIONS**

On 10th September, 11:00, UNA Harpenden is hosting a webinar with **Natalie Samarasinghe**, Global Director of Advocacy, Open Society Foundations who will be speaking on [Has Russia's invasion doomed the UNA? Here is the Zoom link.](#)

## Wandsworth UNA with Twickenham and Richmond UNA

On 13<sup>th</sup> September, 19:30, UNA Wandsworth, with UNA Twickenham and Richmond, is hosting an event on **UNHCR and the Nationality and Border Bill**. It will be chaired by **Robert Storey**, with speakers, **Fleur Anderson MP** (assuming no late vote in the Commons), **Jeremy Corbyn MP** (assuming no late vote in the Commons), **James Bulman**, Senior External Relations Associate UNHCR, **Mishka Pillay**, Detention Action. The venue is **The Community Church Hall** (opposite Sainsbury's), Werter Road, Putney SW15 2LL. For more information, call Robert Storey Chair, (07776 356334) or contact [Meena Storey](#), or [Catherine Pluggers](#).

## Canterbury UNA

On 24-25 September, 10:00-16:00, UNA Canterbury will host a display at the **Canterbury Climate Action Festival**, to be held at Canterbury Christchurch University.

On 23 October, 17:30, UNA Canterbury's **Annual Peace Service** will again be incorporated into evensong at **Canterbury Cathedral**. There will be a procession of local organisations focussed on Peace and Sustainable Development, as well as a UNA display.

## Westminster UNA

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](#).

## Bexhill and Hastings UNA

UNA Bexhill and Hastings plans to produce a series of Briefing Papers on the UN. The first, **If the United Nations was founded for World Peace, Why is the World at War?** is being launched on **Saturday, 22nd October from 13:30 at St. Peter's Community Centre**, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2HE. Admission is free; for light refreshments, please bring your own mug. Further information from **Sheila Kesby** (07765 915173).

## UNA Youth Platform

The United Nations Association Youth Platform (UNA-YP) will be launching their first **MUN: Guide for Beginners** at the end of August. Keep an eye out on their social media platforms and their website for more information!

UNA-YP in the UK is a youth-led organisation and a branch of UNA-UK with the goal to further youth engagement with the United Nations in the UK and ensure that their voices are heard and taken into account both at the national and international level. UNA-YP aim to create a UNA Youth Coalition within the UK, bringing together all UK youth-led UNAs.

They have an ambitious programme of activities and initiatives; they invite support from established UNA branches and interested individuals. UNA-YP also hosts events and conferences. Keep a look out for their upcoming MUN virtual school and MUN conference due to take place at the end of this year! You can take a look at what they do and find information on their upcoming events on [their website](#).

## **LASER AGM**

We are planning to hold our AGM on **10th December**, both at [Bermondsey Village Hall](#) (very close to London Bridge Station) and on zoom. There will be more information in future newsletters, but keep the date free!

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