



## 2026 Issue No. 5, April

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**From Our Chair**



During the decades-long turbulence in what he always referred to as 'The Holy Land' (to avoid politically divisive language), our main source of expertise and advice on this part of the world has been eminent academic and activist, Dr Brian Beeley. We are very sad to announce his recent death, following an intrepid fight of several years against illnesses, during which he continued bravely to engage with the wider world and share his expertise. He will be much missed, not only by LASER and by UNA Tunbridge Wells and the Wealden (which he ran for many years with his wife, Jane), but also by his family, many friends and former students. We gave a [fuller description of his contributions to UNA LASER](#) when he was given LASER's 2024 Distinguished Service Award. His funeral will be on 27th April in Tunbridge Wells. Please [contact us](#) for further details.

## Campaigning

### LASER Policies

Many thanks to the many of you who contributed to proposing, amending and selecting the new LASER policies, culminating in our recent Policy Conference. It was a challenge in our current turbulent world to know where best to focus in this single day; we chose where we hope our lobbying can have most effect. The agreed resolutions will soon be [on our website](#); in the meantime, the Policy Conference agenda giving the draft resolutions is [here](#). Do [lobby your MPs](#) about any or all of them! The LASER Policy Chair will soon be sharing the resolutions with the Foreign Secretary and other relevant leaders; we shall share their response with you.

## Selection of the next UN Secretary-General



UN Secretary-General António Guterres will finish his term of office at the end of this year. Following pressure from civil society – including the [1 for 8 billion campaign](#), supported by UNA-UK – [the process of selection for the new Secretary-General](#) has become much more open. There are currently [four nominations](#): Michelle Bachelet (former Chilean President), Rafael Mariano Grossi (International Atomic Energy Agency Director), Rebeca Grynspan (Secretary-General of UN Trade and Development -UNCTAD), Macky Sall (former Senegalese President).

In the week of April 20-24, the candidates will be called to New York for interactive dialogues convened by General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock. Governments and representatives of civil society organisations have been given the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. It will be possible to watch these dialogues on the [UN Web TV](#).

## LASER Events

### LASER Summer Council

On **Saturday 4th July, 2026**, UNA Eastbourne will host our Summer Council, at Eastbourne's **Victoria Baptist Church, BN21 1UE** (about half an hour's walk or short bus ride from Eastbourne station). The title is ***Climate Change Imperatives***, with global

issues addressed by **Professor Terry Cannon** (University College, London) speaking on *The Ethical Imperative* and **UNA Eastbourne Chair, Ian Elgie** focussing on *The Mitigation Imperative*. A panel of local experts will look at *The Adaptation and Affordability Imperatives*. On **Sunday 5th July**, UNA Eastbourne will organise a walk along the Peace Path to the Peace Memorial at Beachy Head. So keep the whole week-end free to spend in Eastbourne! There will be further details and registration in the next edition of *Pulse*.



## LASER AGM and Presidential Address

The LASER AGM and the inaugural Presidential Address of our new President, **Sir Malcolm Evans**, will be on **14th November** in **Bermondsey Village Hall**. Further information and registration details will be sent in future editions of *Pulse*. Do, now, save the date, consider whether you might like to stand for our Executive Committee and [let us know](#) of inspirational activities being done by UNA Groups and of people standing down from their UNA service who should be considered for a Distinguished Service Award.

## Other UNA Events

### UNA-UK

On **8th April, 13:00**, there will be an online international roundtable hosted at York University on ***The Future of Protection of Civilians Beyond Gaza***, at which a keynote speaker will be **UNA-UK Chief Executive, Jane Killinmont**. For more information and to register, [please go here](#).

On **8th April, 18:00**, UNA-UK will host a hybrid meeting on ***The UN's Role in Supporting Syria's Political Transition***, chaired by **UNA-UK Chair, Ian Martin**, with **Claudio Cordone** (UN Deputy Special Envoy for Syria). For more information and to register, [please go here](#).

### UNA Harpenden



On **11th April, 10:30**, UNA Harpenden is hosting a hybrid public lecture on ***Towards a Post-American Europe: The end of the political West and the new Continentalism*** by **Professor Emeritus Richard Sakwa** (University of Kent) at [Salvation Army](#), Harpenden AL5 2TG. Refreshments will be available. For more information and to register, please go [here](#).



On **16th May, 10:30**, UNA Harpenden is hosting a hybrid public lecture on ***Natural Capital: Bringing ecology and economy together*** by Professor Emeritus **Sir Partha Dasgupta** (Cambridge University) at [Salvation Army](#), Harpenden AL5 2TG. Refreshments will be available. For more information and to register, please go [here](#) and scroll down.

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## UNA Warwick District

On **18th April, 12:30**, UNA Warwick District is hosting a hybrid event on ***The Emerging US Influence Threat to British Democracy***, with speaker **Sharon Booth** (Solution Not Sides). She will consider the threat to democracy posed by polarisation and the policies and rhetoric of the Trump administration, as well as the rise of Reform UK. It will be held at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church**, Chandos Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 4RN and [on zoom](#). For further information, please contact [Gian Clare](#).

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## UNA Westminster

On **20th April, 18:30**, at **SOAS Gallery**, Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ, UNA Westminster – with SOAS at the University of London, and the Bar Council of England and Wales – is hosting the ***23rd Ruth Steinkraus-Cohn International Law Lecture***. **Professor Philippa Webb** (University of Oxford Blavatnik School of Government) will be speaking on ***Toppling Heads: Regime Change and Immunity in International Law***. This free, in-person lecture will be followed by a reception. Please register [here](#).

On **21st May, 13:00**, at the cenotaph in Whitehall, UNA Westminster will be coordinating, with UNA UK, the annual Peacekeepers Day, marking the ***International Day of United Nations Peacekeeping***, honouring those who have died in the cause of peace and recognising those from 120 countries who have served as UN Peacekeepers. More information will be shared on the [UNA Westminster website](#) and in future editions of *Pulse*.

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## UNA Luton

On **21st April, 14:00**, UNA Luton – with Rupa’s Vision for Exceptional Lives – is hosting a webinar on ***Dealing with the challenges of raising children with disabilities - Changes needed in society***, focussing on the issue in the UK and in Bangladesh. Speakers will include: **Dir Nazia Khanum** (UNA Luton Chair), **Mehedy Kabir** (Rupa’s Vision), **Mahima Kabir**, as well as some mothers of autistic children in Bangladesh. The [zoom link](#) has Meeting ID: 859 5071 8282 and Passcode: 316824.

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## UNA Blackheath and Greenwich



On **30th April, 19:00**, at [Mycenae House, 90, Mycenae Road, Blackheath, SE3 7SE](#), UNA Blackheath and Greenwich, with the Westcombe Society, is hosting ***It’s Local Election Time: Election Hustings***, election hustings where you can meet the candidates for the local elections on 7th May. Please arrive early to submit your questions for consideration by the candidates. The event is free and open to all. You can register for your free tickets [here](#) or simply turn up on the night.

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## UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden

On **3rd May, 10:00-17:00**, UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden will be participating in the ***Tunbridge Wells Climate and Nature Fair*** at **Calverley Ground**, Tunbridge Wells.

On **6th June, 14:30**, UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden will be holding their AGM (to share updates and discuss plans), followed by hosting ***A Conversation with Sanam Naraghi Anderlini*** (Civil Society Action Network) at **King Charles the Martyr**, 3 Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells TN2 5TA. For further information and to register, please go [here](#).

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## UNA Wandsworth

On **5th May, 19:30** UNA Wandsworth is hosting a public meeting on ***Misogyny and the AI Revolution***, with speaker **Dr Aislinn O'Connell** (Royal Holloway, University of London) and chair **Catherine Pluygers**. The presentation will be followed by discussion. There is no need to register. For further information, please contact [Catherine Pluygers](#) or [Robert Storey](#).

## Other Events

**United Against Inhumanity**

On **16th April, 17:30-20:00**, United Against Inhumanity, with the University of East London (UEL), is holding a hybrid event on ***Promoting the Psychosocial Wellbeing of Refugees***, to launch their manifesto, *To Stop the Inhumanity at Europe's Borders*, and to consider the causes, consequences and effective interventions for the distress experienced by many refugees. Speakers will include **Lul Seyoum** (International Centre for Eritrean Refugees), **Dr Claire Marshall** (UEL), **Rev Johannes Marten** (Good Shepherd, London), **Professor Emeritus Dinesh Bhugra** (King's College, London), **Yodit Mussie** (Refugee Council), **Dr. Nooralhaq Nasimi** (Afghanistan and Central Asian Association). The event will be at **UEL: University Square Stratford, 1 Salway Road, London E15 1NF**, and on **Microsoft Teams**. For further information and to register, please go [here](#).

## Peace Child International

On **17th April, 19:30**, Peace Child – with Buntingford Action on Climate Change and Sustainability – is holding a free screening at **Benson Hall**, Station Road, SG9 9HT of ***People's Emergency Briefing on the Climate and Nature Crisis***, exploring issues like: extreme weather; food security, health and the cost of living. It will be followed by a discussion on action. For further information and to register, please go to <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/buntingfordactiononclima...>

## Groups' and Members' Information and Support

### Group Descriptions and Activities

There is a list of LASER UNA Groups [on our website](#). Please check your **entries** and [let us know](#) of any changes you would like.

As well as publicising activities of our LASER Groups in *Pulse*, we also sometimes publicise other activities in our region that are relevant to our work, as well as activities outside our region that are accessible online or easily reached by people in our region. Please see the end of this newsletter for how to submit material.

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## Educational Package on Food Poverty

Enfield and the Barnets UNA (EBUNA) has engaged in a review of food poverty in the borough of Enfield. The project consisted of desk research, case studies and participation in the Enfield Food Partnership, leading to a report being issued in June 2025. The group has now created a spin-off package of educational activities based on their research. The activities are based on small group role play and larger group discussion in a similar format to the UN Security Council simulations. The educational package is designed to underpin activities led by adult teachers, youth leaders or other volunteers, so the three activity booklets in this pack can be adapted to suit various audiences and locations; the prime target audience is young people aged 14 to 20. If your group would like a PDF copy of the *Food Poverty Educational Pack*, or for further information, please contact [Ali Hessami](#).

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## The Hart Prize for Human Rights

**The Hart Prize for Human Rights** is a competition for 11-25 year-olds to submit clear and thoughtful art work or essays about a forgotten conflict or human rights issue that

does not have mainstream attention. Might your local schools and colleges be interested? [Find out more here.](#)

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## Great Big Green Week

**Great Big Green Week** resources for schools are now available for both primary and secondary schools. Whether schools are planning a whole-school celebrating, an assembly, a lesson or an eco-club session, they can find support and ideas here.

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## People's Emergency Briefings on the Climate and Nature Crisis

**People's Emergency Briefings on the Climate and Nature Crisis** can be held by UNA groups and individuals. (One of the first of these is being co-hosted by Peace Child International on 17th April - see Events above.) These are an opportunity for discussion following a screening of the 50-minute film summarising November's [Natural Emergency Briefing](#) in central London. This involved MPs, Peers, environmental experts, academics and journalists. It is hoped that a similar range of stakeholders would attend all subsequent screening events.

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## Inspirational Group Activities

You can find descriptions of inspirational activities from other groups on [our Groups' page](#). Please [tell us](#) if you know of another inspirational activity by a UNA group that we could share.

## UNA Working Groups

These Working Groups (which are also listed on the [LASER website](#)) bring together groups and individual members to work together on key areas. There are no set structures or required outcomes. They mostly meet online and might want to develop campaigns, awareness-raising materials, presentations, resolutions or reports. The groups can lead to further research, campaigning or other action.

If there is a topic you would like to research and take forward in consultation with other interested members, do [contact us](#) about starting a new UNA Working Group.

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## UN Article 109 General Conference

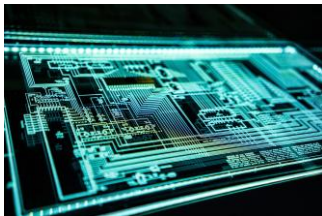
Many consider that the *UN Charter* of 1945 (little changed over 80 years, during which our world has changed in many ways) needs revision. *UN Charter Article A109-1* is the provision for a General Conference of UN Members, if approved by 2/3rds of the General Assembly Members and 9 of the Security Council Members. In the UN's 80+ years history such a General Conference has never been held. The [A109 Coalition](#), within the auspice of the [Global Governance Forum \(GGF\)](#), aims to mobilise UN Member States to call this General Conference at which the GGF draft Second Charter would be tabled.

This Working Group will explore how UK civil society, particularly UNA members, could

promote – and respond to – the tabling of such an A109 motion. It is open to all and will have an initial 1 hour Zoom exploratory session. For further information and to get involved, please – **after 6th April**, when the A109 email address will become live – contact the [Co-ordinator, John Crowe](#).

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## Digital & Emerging Technologies



In December, the UN created the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, to support the newly adopted [Global Digital Compact](#) (GDC). The GDC is a framework that supports an open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for everyone. The GDC will seek to address governance, inclusion, and access across technology and AI. This new Working Group will investigate and decide in which areas of the GDC we can lend support, and develop plans and actions to advance its objectives. All are all welcome to join. People with experience in governance, community-led technology groups, open source software and experience in emerging technologies (eg blockchain, AI, BioTech, IoT) are encouraged to contact us. We expect to meet remotely every other month, with planned in-person gatherings occasionally. As we focus on particular topics, meetings may occur more regularly. Please contact [Cameron McAnsh](#) for more information and to join the group.

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## Local Implementation of the SDGs

Several LASER UNA groups, working with their local Councils on [local implementation](#) of the [Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs](#), have created a Local SDG Working Group to support and learn from each other. Some UNA Groups have several years' experience and have established effective local SDG committees; others are just starting. Do contact Co-Chair of UNA Tunbridge Wells and the Weald, [Marquerita Morton](#), if you would like to join this Working Group. The UN SDG Working Group has focussed on SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, and 13 Climate Change.

The SDG Forum works with the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the Business Improvement District. It has participated in the Tunbridge Wells Climate Fair and this year will help to establish a Climate Hub. The UNA TWW is cooperating closely on a joint venture to ban the use of single use plastics in order to establish a 'Plastic Free Tunbridge Wells'.

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## SDG Guidance and Use Cases



Since September 2024 this Working Group has been meeting every 8 weeks to exchange experience and collaborate to promote the adoption and implementation of the SDGs by UNA groups. One of the group's members is a UK representative at the ISO/UNDP PAS 53002:2024, *Guidelines for contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. The ISO/UNDP guidelines address: setting SDG impact objectives and targets; engaging with stakeholders; collecting data on impacts; generating options; making

risk-based decisions; and understanding trade-offs to increase positive impact. We intend to generate an overview resource from this standard for the benefit of other UNA groups. We shall also discuss specific SDG adoption, research and use cases by various groups, including SDG initiatives on SDG2 (hunger) and SDG 13 (climate impact) in UNA Enfield and the Barnets. Please contact [Ali Hessami](#) for further information.

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## Achieving Peace in Europe

The group aims to develop a resolution on *Defending Europe Responsibly* for submission to a UNA LASER Policy Conference, to be accepted by LASER and then presented to the UK Foreign Secretary and other European leaders. The background information to the formation of the working group can be found [here](#), with further information [here](#) in the paper *How does Europe defend itself responsibly?* by **Suheil Shahryar**. People interested in joining this group should please contact [Suheil Shahryar](#).

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## Tyranny, Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction - Interrogating the Draft Second United Nations Charter

The Group aims to assess how well this [Second UN Charter](#) (written by an international team of experts on UN reform) will strengthen International Law through a series of discussions each starting with an attempt to 'diagnose' the root causes of our unpeaceful

world, which in its present course, is predicted to make itself extinct. It will then try to find, in each case, a 'cure' for this 'disease', working from our own experiences and our findings in the 'Second Charter'. Finally, in each case, and later in summary, it will attempt to expedite these 'cures' through the 'force of law' – as expressed in all the various forms of International Law. The group will be chaired by LASER Head of Policy, Peter Webster, and will convene by zoom. For more information and to join the group, please contact [Greta Vipond](#). Even if you do not want to join the group, [Greta Vipond](#) would be very interested to receive your responses to the following 3 questions, as this would contribute to the thinking of the group:

- What are the basic requirements now for effective, and dynamic World Governance?
- What are the core principles you would like to see as the basis of a Second UN Charter?
- Which core principles should we retain that are embedded in the present [UN Charter](#)?

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## Imagining a UN Fit for the 21st Century

The classical and inflexible governance of the UN, built around classical institutional models of post war era, renders it unfit for a dynamic and new multipolar world order. The UN governance can and should be re-engineered for the brave new world. This Working Group is adopting a novel research method creatively to explore the drivers and opportunities for a reformed structure and governance, leading to a UN that will be agile, inclusive, representative, transparent, accountable and fair to the needs, rights and values of the international community in this century of exponential change and shifting power dynamics. It is intended to produce a consensus-based, ideal structure/governance/regulatory model and associated brief narrative for the UN in the

21st century, starting from a blank sheet, not reviewing the *Charter* and the existing formalisms about the UN. **The group has** held 10 sessions at fortnightly intervals so far. The group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 17:00. To join the session **on 9th April, 17:00**, [here is the zoom link](#). For more information, please contact [Ali Hessami](#).

## Financial Support for LASER

LASER does not ask for subscriptions from its members or groups, nor does it charge for attendance at its events in order not to exclude anyone for financial reasons. We therefore welcome donations to our new Virgin Money UNA London and South East Region account. Please [let us know](#) if you want to make a donation.

How about a monthly 'cup-of-coffee £3.00' in the form of a standing order? Please [let us know](#) of any donation.

## The Next Edition of LASER *Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **2nd May, 2026**. We suggest that events are initially publicised over a month ahead, as the *Pulse* mailing date may have to be varied to fit in with other constraints. Please keep announcements short and, for forthcoming events, include all the information requested in [the Pulse template](#). We welcome pictures, but **please ensure that any pictures you send are not copyright-protected**, because we add each edition of *Pulse* to our website for public access and would be liable for copyright fees. Please note, too, that, since previous editions of *Pulse* are available on our website, **any announcements should include only information (such as contact details) that you are happy to have publicly accessible on the internet**.



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