



2026 Issue No. 6, May

If you have difficulty accessing any of the links in this newsletter, please email contact@unalaser.org.

Table of Contents

From Our Chair

Campaigning

- LASER Policies
- Lebanon
- Environment

LASER Events

- LASER Summer Council, *Climate Change Imperatives*
- LASER AGM and Presidential Address

Groups' and Members' Information and Support

- Group Descriptions and Activities
- Great Big Green Week resources
- Sixth Form Speaker on the History of Israel-Palestine
- UNA Trust's Annual Grants Online meeting
- Educational Package on Food Poverty
- Inspirational Group Activities

UNA Working Groups

Other UNA Events

- UNA Wandsworth
- UNA Harpenden
- UNA Westminster
- UNA Warwick District
- UNA Luton
- UNA-UK
- UNA Trust
- UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden

- UN Article 109 General Conference
- Digital & Emerging Technologies
- Local Implementation of the SDGs
- SDG Guidance and Use Cases
- Achieving Peace in Europe
- Tyranny, Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Imagining a UN Fit for the 21st Century

Other Events

- OxPeace, University of Oxford
- Institute of Commonwealth Studies

Financial Support for LASER

The Next Edition of *LASER Pulse*

From Our Chair



LASER Is run entirely by volunteers; we enormously appreciate their time and expertise in meeting our objectives and commitments. For example, our Environment Officer, Annesha Kar Gupta, each year follows up the Policy Resolution we agreed in 2019 for our branches annually to share their progress in reducing their carbon footprints and adoption of relevant policies. If your branch/group has not already responded to her request, please download, complete

Trisha Rogers

and return [the form](#).

Another volunteer, Ali Hessami recently led our IT Advisory Group in drafting and *Ethics Policy*, at the request of our Executive Committee. The proposed [LASER Ethics Policy](#) has been accepted by the EC.

LASER would welcome further IT support, such as with the tech at our events and with managing our website. This need not be time-consuming, but any expertise and commitment would be much appreciated. Please [get in touch](#) if you might be able to help.

UNA LASER has supported the [Joint Appeal for Nuclear Abolition Day](#), marking the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (which was in September), and presented on 1st May to the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

We continue to urge the UK government to act strongly to discourage Israel from its widespread destruction and killing of non-combatants, as well as its wider breaking of international law (including failure to implement the ICJ rulings on ending the Occupation and allowing the UN and UNWRA to do its work unhindered). This criticism is undermined by some people's conflation of antisemitism with criticism of actions of the Israeli government. LASER strongly criticises and deplores antisemitism, and any form of racism and illegal violence, whether in London, or in Israel/Palestine by Hamas or by Israel. However, criticism of disproportionate response to such actions is not antisemitic. It risks stifling entirely legitimate and well-founded criticism of Israel's actions; it appears to delegitimise Jewish groups and individuals questioning or opposing particular actions by Israel; and it risks directly undermining the struggle against antisemitism by associating Jews collectively with the actions of the

state of Israel in the minds of others. (To help ensure this distinction, we urge our members always to use the [Jerusalem Declaration on Anti-Semitism](#) and not the more confusing [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition](#).)

So, while we still encourage members to keep contacting their MPs about urging the UK government to put appropriate pressure on the Israeli government and wider international community to address illegal action by Israel in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Iran, we have decided that our main campaign this month should focus on a neglected area of this regional suffering (including by those working for the UN in peace-keeping and humanitarian work), Lebanon.

Campaigning

We encourage members to [engage with their MPs](#) when trying to influence UK government policy (which can then influence UN actions). We can, of course, all also write directly to the relevant [ministers](#), but ministers usually read only letters from MPs (while most other letters are dealt with by officials), so we prioritise getting MPs on board and encouraging them to contact the relevant ministers and ask questions in the House. It is important to give your full home address when you write, so your MP knows you are a constituent.

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 are now [on our website](#). 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 responses with you.

Lebanon



As described more fully in [our Campaigns Officer's article](#), attacks by Israel are making Lebanon face a humanitarian catastrophe, including unprecedented numbers of displaced people. Many attacks have hit those tasked with protecting others, including humanitarian workers and UN Peacekeepers. Vulnerable groups – like children and refugees – are bearing the heaviest cost. We urge members to:

- Write to our MPs to demand significant increase in the UK humanitarian support, as well as the UK demanding a ceasefire at the UN Security Council, as well as urging them to reconsider their proposed decision to end UNIFIL
- Advocate widely for the protection of International Humanitarian Law, such as not targeting medical staff nor civilian infrastructure
- Donate to emergency humanitarian responders, such as [British Red Cross Lebanon Emergency Appeal](#) or the [International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)

Environment

Great Big Green Week 2026 will be on **6-14 June**. It is an opportunity, coordinated by the Climate Coalition (of which LASER is a member), to join others around the country in local events to take action for their communities, for nature and for the climate. To find out more – about running events or joining others near you – see <https://www.greatbiggreenweek.com>.

LASER Events

LASER Summer Council, Climate Change Imperatives

On **Saturday 4th July, 2026, 10:45-17:00**, UNA Eastbourne will host our hybrid Summer Council, at Eastbourne's **Victoria Baptist Church**, Eldon Road, Eastbourne, **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*, **Professor Steve Sorrell** on *The Energy Imperative*, and **UNA Eastbourne Chair, Ian Elgie** on *The Mitigation Imperative*. In the afternoon a panel of local experts will look at *The Adaptation and Affordability Imperatives*. The conference is free, but we encourage donations (both through Eventbrite and directly by [contacting us](#) for those joining on zoom) to help cover the cost.

In-person attendees will also have the option to pay £1 (cash) to support the planting of a climate-mitigation tree in Uganda. Please bring your own lunch (though there will also be some lunch snacks on sale for cash). Further information and in-person registration are available [here](#). Zoom registration is [here](#).

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 for the walk 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 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](#).

UNA Harpenden



On **16th May, 10:30**, UNA Harpenden is hosting a hybrid public lecture on ***Artificial Intelligence: Should we be worried?*** by **Suheil Shahryar**, Chair, UNA Harpenden. (Please note the previously publicised lecture by Sir Partha Dasgupta on ***Natural Capital: Bringing ecology and economy together*** has been postponed.) The event will be online and at [Salvation Army](#), Harpenden AL5 2TG. Refreshments will be available. For more information and to register, please go [here](#) and scroll down.

UNA Westminster

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. All are welcome in Whitehall. Information is on the [UNA Westminster website](#)

UNA Warwick District

On **23rd May, 12:30**, UNA Warwick District is hosting a hybrid event on ***What will it take to achieve Peace in Sudan?***, with speaker **Mohamed Osman** (LSE, International Relations). Nearly three years into Sudan's war, violence and famine are looming in many parts of the country and civilians remain trapped in shifting lines. Various UN Agencies are urging stronger international resolve against the ongoing civil war. The event will be held at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church**, Chandos Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 4RN, where light refreshments will be served, and [on zoom](#).

For further information, please contact [Gian Clare](#).

UNA Luton

On **24th May, 13:00 – 16:00**, as it does annually, UNA Luton will join the **UNA Luton Women's Carnival Peace Parade**, with the UNA Luton Women's Peace Banner, as the Luton International Carnival celebrates its Golden Jubilee with lively music. You are warmly invited to join UNA Luton at this event, which will be at Wardown Park, in the heart of Luton, within walking distance of Luton Town train station. No registration is needed, but please contact [UNA Luton Chair](#) a week beforehand for up-to-date information.

UNA-UK

On **28th May, 18:00-21:00**, UNA-UK is hosting in central London a free **Public Hustings for UN Secretary-General Candidates**. All [nominated candidates](#) have been invited; so far, Mr Rafael Grossi (from Argentina) and Ms Rebeca Grynspan (from Costa Rica) have confirmed their attendance. **The appointment of the UN Secretary-General is one of the most consequential decisions taken by member states.** The role has a unique mandate to mobilise action to address global challenges, to decide on other senior appointments, and to ensure the organisation serves the world's eight billion people. For further details see the [UNA-UK website announcement](#).

UNA Trust

On **3rd June, 19:30**, the UNA London Trust will hold an online meeting for those

wanting to learn more about receiving grants from the Trust. The Trust is particularly interested in supporting:

- Events to create new branches and/or outreach activities to attract new members
- Events/groups looking at a future UN
- Events/groups aiming to strengthen UK's Role in UN
- Events/ groups looking at grassroots/ global citizenship
- Encouragement of the use of social media platforms.

Applications to the Trust should be on the form available [on their website](#). Further information is available from their [Chair](#) and [Treasurer](#). Please register for the zoom meeting [here](#).

UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden

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](#).

Other Events

OxPeace, University of Oxford

On **9th May, 09:00-17:30**, OxPeace is hosting a conference on **The Design of Peace** at **St John's College, Oxford**. Speakers will include **Jane Kinninmont** (CEO UNA-UK), **Professor Sir Malcolm Evans** (incoming President of UNA LASER), **Emeritus Professor Paul Rogers** (University of Bradford) and **Dr Rowan Williams** (former Archbishop of Canterbury). The cost is £10 for general entry, £5 for

students (with possible further concessions). For further information and to register, please see [here](#).

Institute of Commonwealth Studies

On **2nd June, 18:00-20:30**, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, with support from the University of London Sustainability Team, is running a special community screening of ***The People's Emergency Briefing***, followed by a panel discussion, chaired by **Professor Damien Short**. They will consider what it means for our community and what we can do locally on: Food Security, Health, the Cost of Living, National Security, Economics and Nature. The free event is at **Senate House**, Malet Street, London **WC1E 7HU**, where tickets are free but limited; so please register [here](#).

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.

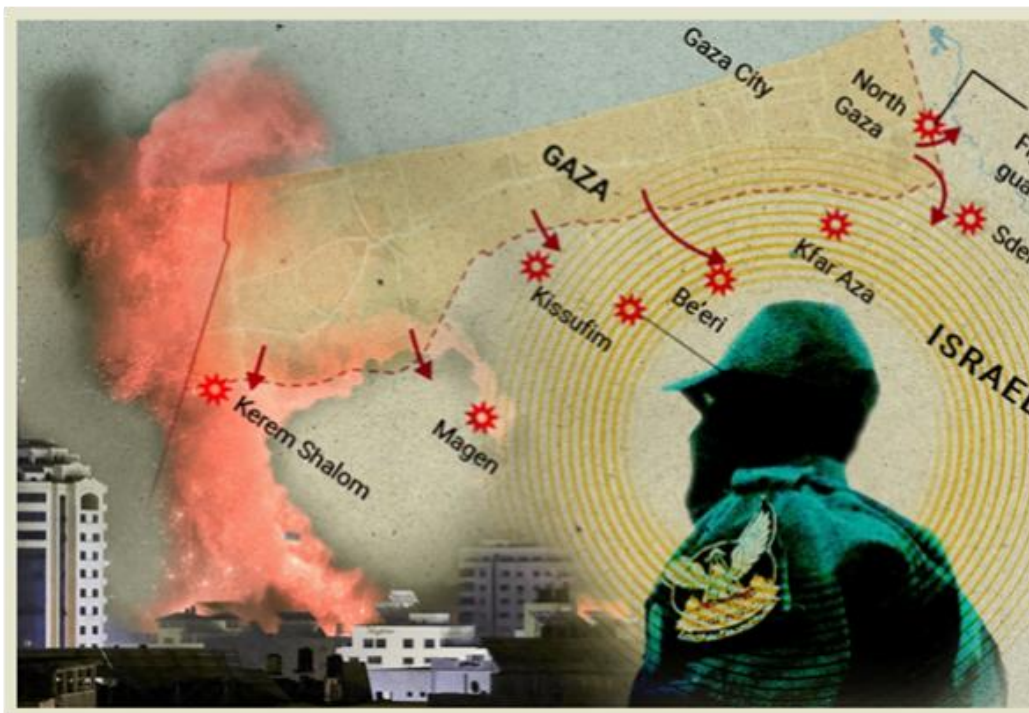
As well as publicising activities of our LASER Groups in *Pulse*, we also sometimes publicise other activities in our region that are relevant to our work, as well as activities outside our region that are accessible online or easily reached by people in our region. Please see the end of this newsletter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

Great Big Green Week Resources

Resources are now available for both primary and secondary schools. Whether schools are planning a whole-school celebration, an assembly, a lesson or an eco-club session during **6th - 14th June**, they can find support and ideas at <https://www.greatbiggreenweek.com/schools>.

Sixth Form Speaker on the History of Israel-Palestine

The British Palestine Project Trustee, Mike Scott-Baumann is available to give sixth form talks on the history of Israel-Palestine within 100 miles of Bristol or London. He is an experienced history teacher and public speaker, has visited the Holy Land several times and his book *Israelis: A Short History of Conflict*, has been translated into seven foreign languages. Interested schools should please contact [the Britain Palestine Project](#).



UNA Trust's Annual Grants Online meeting

To apply for a UNA London Trust Grant, please use the form on [their website](#). Their annual advisory online meeting will be on 3rd June 19:00. For details see above in *UNA Events*.

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](#).

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.

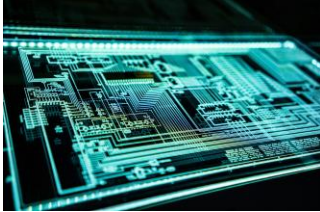
If there is a topic you would like to research and take forward in consultation with other interested members, do [contact us](#) about starting a new UNA Working Group.

Digital & Emerging Technologies

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](#).

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.

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, [Marguerita 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'.

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.

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 Sharyar**. People interested in joining this group should please contact [Suheil Shahryar](#).

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](#)?

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 9 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 **4th June, 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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