



2026 Issue No. 10, October

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Financial Support for LASER

The Next Edition of *LASER Pulse*

From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

LASER is run entirely by volunteers, as are all our groups. Many thanks to all the volunteers for your expertise, vision and energy! Please help us keep [details of your groups](#) up-to-date!

We have come to the time of year when we prepare for elections for our Executive Committee. The current members are listed [on our website](#). You will see in the details below of our AGM (on 14th November) how you (or someone you'd like to nominate) can stand.

There are other ways, too, in which you can contribute to LASER's activities. For example, we would appreciate help in the preparations for our annual Policy Conference in the spring – excellent

roles particularly for people studying international relations. We also are soon to launch a LASER LinkedIn account (managed by volunteer Cameron McAnsh, who convenes one of our Working Groups); do [get in touch](#) if you would be interested in helping with our social media. As preparation for this, the EC has recently agreed an *Ethics Policy* and a *Data Privacy Policy* which you can see [on our website](#). We look forward to hearing from you – and seeing many of you on 14th November.

LASER Events

LASER AGM and Presidential Address



The LASER AGM will be on **14th November** in **Bermondsey Village Hall** (SE1 3TD, very close to London Bridge station), **12:00-17:30** and on zoom.

Please register for in-person attendance [here](#) and for online attendance [here](#).

We shall email out the papers to those who have registered for the AGM on 6th November. There will not be paper copies available for everyone at the meeting.

Hot drinks and simple snacks will be available, but please bring a packed lunch.

We do not charge for attendance or for LASER membership but, to help cover the expenses, you are encouraged, please, to make a donation when you register. (We also encourage regular donations to LASER by those who can afford it. See end of *Pulse* for details).

Executive Committee

As specified in [our constitution](#), we shall elect up to 10 members of our Executive Committee, as well as our Executive Officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer). The current committee can be seen [on our website](#). The committee meets about every month, by Zoom at 19:30. It also has discussions by email.

Nominations for the committee and Officers should be [sent to LASER](#), please, **by 31st October**. Each nomination should include: a photograph; **up to 100 words** about the person; their branch/group; the names of the nominator and the seconder. Please ensure that the person is happy to be nominated and would expect to attend most meetings. If you think you might like to be an Officer in the future, and would like to dip your toe in the water to get the feel of it, do [contact us](#) about possibly being deputy to one of the Officers.

Presidential Address

The afternoon will include the inaugural Presidential Address for our President, Sir Malcolm Evans, eminent international lawyer and President of Regent's Park College, Oxford. There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion.

The day will include presentations from inspirational branches/groups. [Let us know](#) of inspirational activities being done by UNA Groups that we can share at the AGM, as well as of people standing down from their UNA service who should be considered for a Distinguished Service Award.

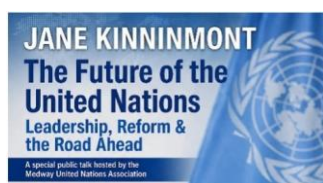
Other UNA Events

UNA Streatham and Clapham

On **3rd October, 14:00**, UNA Streatham and Clapham is holding a hybrid meeting on

Climate Change: Impacts and Action in Ghana and West Africa, with speakers **Awula Serwah** (barrister and Executive Director Eco-Conscious Citizens in Ghana), **Heneba Kadwo Safo** (BuzStopBoys, environmental improvement NGO) and **Mercy Nimako and Sarah Webster** (UNA Streatham & Clapham) at the **Streatham United Reformed Church**, SW16 6HX (next to Tesco's, by Streatham station). Food and chat to follow at 16:00. The zoom link registration is [here](#).

UNA Medway



On **14th October, 19:45, 19:30-21:30** UNA Medway is hosting a public talk on ***The Future of the United Nations: Leadership, Reform and the Road Ahead*** by **Jane Kinninmont** (CEO of UNA-UK) at **The Bohemia**, Chatham, ME4 4EP. The event is for people aged 18 or more and has no wheelchair access (but the event will be videoed and shared on the UNA Medway website). For further information and registration, see [here](#).

UNA Harpenden



On **17th October, 10:30**, UNA Harpenden will host a public lecture on ***The UN Development Goals: How are they actually going?*** by **Mike Person** (UNA Harpenden). The event will be online and also at [Salvation Army](#), Harpenden AL5 2TG. Refreshments will be available. For more information and to register, please go [here](#) and scroll down. Contributions to the costs will be welcome.

On **Friday 23rd October, 10:15**, **Kirsti Wenn, Mayor of Harpenden**, will celebrate UN Day at the **Harpenden Town Council**, Leyton Road, Harpenden AL5 2LX by ***Raising the Flag***, followed by refreshments. Please register [here](#).



On **Sunday 25 October, 18:30** at **St Nicholas Church**, Church Green, Harpenden AL5 2TP UNA Harpenden will be holding an **Annual Service for UN Day** with an address on ***What is Peace? Reflections from a peacekeeper*** by **Rhett Parkinson** (Armed Forces Christian Union). To attend, please register [here](#).

UNA Bexhill and Hastings



On **24th October, 13:45-17:00**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings is holding a free public seminar at **St Peter's Community Centre**, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2HE on ***What's up with the United Nations?***, led by **Professor Richard Sakwa** (Professor Emeritus, University of Kent). The discussion will focus on how the UN is misused, abused and corrupted by some Member States; this obstructs peaceful sustainable solutions to all global problems from warfare to climate change. For more information and to register, please contact [the Chair](#).

UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden

On **24th October, 10:30-11:00**, UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden will be marking **UN Day** by raising the UN flag on the **steps of the Town Hall, TN1 1RS**, where they will re-affirm trust in international institutions and the international order established by the UN Charter. This was signed in San Francisco on the 26th June 1945. and came into effect on 24th October 1945 when enough signatories had ratified it. All are welcome.

UNA Warwick District

Meeting Postponed! The planned meeting on **10th October** with **Ed Green** (Warwickshire Wildlife Trust) talking about ***Biodiversity: Local and Global***, has been **postponed to later in the year**.



On **7th November, 12:30-13:45**, UNA Warwick is hosting a free hybrid event (online and at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church, CV32 4RN**), on ***Challenges facing the next Secretary-General***, led remotely by **Abiodun Williams** (Professor at Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and former UN Director Strategic Planning), exploring the formidable challenges awaiting the next UN Secretary-General and their implications for the future of the UN. For more information and for the zoom link, please contact [the Chair](#).

UNA Canterbury



On **25th October, 17:30**, in **Canterbury Cathedral**, UNA Canterbury will hold their annual event marking UN Day. The Speaker will be **Professor Kingsley Abbott** (Director of the Commonwealth Institute). There will be a procession of banners representing NGOs working on issues of peace and sustainable development. All are welcome.

UNA Climate and Oceans



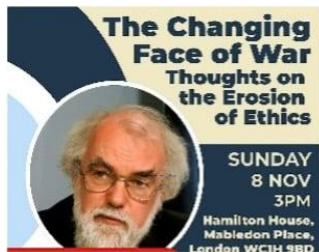
On **14th November, 10:00-16:00** at **St Peter's Community Centre**, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2HE, UNA Climate and Oceans, with Sussex Dolphin Project, Sussex Underwater, Community Supporters, sponsored by Sussex Bay, will be hosting an **Ocean Symposium and Marine Exhibition** inspired by the UN World Oceans Day theme, ***Reimagine: Beyond the World We Know, a new Relationship with our Oceans.*** Policy makers, government agencies, business leaders, non-government organisations, community representatives, scientists, educators, innovators and engaged citizens - all committed to the protection, restoration and sustainable management of our oceans – will share speeches, panel events, discussions, films, exhibitions, networking opportunities. Tickets are £8:30. You can find more information and buy tickets [here](#).

Events by Other Organisations

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

On **October 31st, 10:00-16:00**, women are invited to celebrate **the Work of WILPF With Diaspora Women** (Women Only Event), at **Tindlemann Women's Centre**, 52-54 Featherstone Street, EC1 8RT. For more info and registration, please go [here](#).

Movement for the Abolition of War



On **8th November, 15:00**, MAW is holding its Annual Remembrance Lecture on *The Changing face of War: Thoughts on the Erosion of Ethics*. The speaker will be **Rowan Williams** (Academic Heddwch Chair, former Archbishop of Canterbury) at **Hamilton House, London WC1H 9BD** (close to Euston and St Pancras stations). More information [here](#). The event is free but please book tickets [here](#).

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, 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.

UK Action Towards COP31

The 31st UN [Climate Change Conference](#) will take place in Turkey 9-20 November. The recent mudslides and continuing suffering in Nepal remind us how the highest price for climate change are often being paid by those least responsible and least able to bear the burden. In [her article](#), our Campaigns Officer describes some of the effects, the politics, and the necessary actions. Cutting our aid budget is counterproductive increasing not only conflict, insecurity and suffering, but also the climate crisis. We need to:

- Write to our MPs to urge reinstatement of our aid budget, as well as urging leadership at COP31
- Amplify frontline stories to keep the climate emergency in the public eye
- Get involved locally – through UNA groups and other organisations – to raise awareness and mobilise action.

Autonomous Weapons

An urgent deadline is approaching for the UK Government to support the global effort to regulate autonomous weapons systems and military AI (a major campaign of UNA-UK, *Stop Killer Robots*). At the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Review Conference at the UN in November, states have the opportunity to launch negotiations for an autonomous weapons treaty. 130 states back the call for such a Treaty. Concerningly, the UK is yet to support this step. UNA-UK's guidance to writing to our MPs on this issue is [here](#), with the following key asks:

- Support the start of negotiations on a legally binding treaty on autonomous weapon systems;
- Ensure that meaningful human control is kept over every decision to use force.

Update: Israel/Palestine



LASER welcomed the Foreign Secretary's [statement to the House of Commons](#) on 10th September, on its new policy towards the violence and illegal settlements in the West Bank, with the important simultaneous policies from 12 other countries (including France and Canada); they were joining many other countries already taking such action. In our [letter to the Foreign Secretary](#), we also highlighted two additional and urgent actions:

- adopting the [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#) to modify the dangerous [IHRA working definition](#) and prevent conflation of criticism of actions of Israelis (or the Israeli government) with antisemitism;
- urging the release of Palestinian political prisoners (such as popular [Marwan Barghouti](#)) to ensure that Palestinians can choose their own leaders to negotiate progress towards 2 states. Other actions on which we campaign have been described in recent [issues of Pulse](#).

Update: United Against Inhumanity

UAI, of which LASER is a member, has sent this [Open Letter to the Prime Minister of Malaysia](#) (co-signed by LASER Chair), urging the government not to go ahead with its plan to send nearly 1,500 refugees from Myanmar back to this country in the middle of a horrific internal armed conflict. Do share this letter widely and ask others to support it!

Groups' and Members' Information and Support

Group Descriptions and Activities

There is a list of LASER 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.

Peace Letters

Peace Letters is an initiative of the Enfield and the Barnets UNA. It focuses on anecdotes, stories, initiatives and efforts of women and men who tirelessly work to promote tolerance, understanding, mutual respect and peace in their communities and beyond. They inspire us all! They intend to publish the Peace Letters periodically and encourage readers to share their stories at local, community, national and international level, to foster awareness and honour the altruistic work of the unsung heroes for peace. To contribute to Peace Letters, or join the mailing list, please contact [the Chair](#).

Inspirational Group Activities

You can find descriptions of inspirational activities from other groups on [our Groups' page](#). Please [tell us](#) if you know of other 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.

Beyond Sovereignty



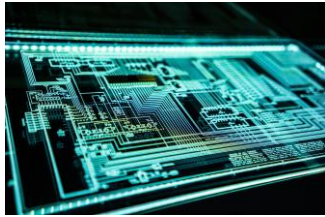
This Working Group has the objective of identifying the drivers and inhibitors of creating a safer world, including a UN that could meet the aspirations of the majority of the peoples of the world living in peace and harmony. An introductory paper entitled **Engineering a Safer World** can be found [here](#). We welcome anyone wishing to discuss and contribute to this subject in a constructive manner. The convenor is Suheil Shahryar. To join the group, please register [here](#).

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 new Working Group, convened by **John Crowe**, 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. For further information and to get involved, please contact this group via A109@Freedomia.net.

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 (such as blockchain, AI, BioTech, IoT) are encouraged to contact us. The group expects 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.

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 Shahryar**. 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](#).

Reimagining and Exploring a UN Fit for the 21st Century

The 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 has adopted a novel research method to creatively 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.

The group met fortnightly, developing and weighing eleven Driver and nine Inhibitor Influences. They then used a dual-rooted architecture based in international law and classical Indian statecraft to develop a detailed framework for citizens to build a fairer and more ethical way for humanity to govern itself. The overview of this process is described in the [Executive Summary](#). More detailed Volume 1 of the Working Group's Report can be seen [here](#). For more information or to join the Working Group,

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 £3.50' in the form of a standing order? Please [let us know](#) of any donations or if you would like help in setting this up.

The Next Edition of LASER *Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **5th November, 2026, midday**. While *Pulse* usually goes out in the first week of each month, 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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