UNA LONDON & SOUTHEAST REGION

Minutes of the UNA LASER AGM held on Saturday, 25th October 2025, in the UNA-UK Headquarters, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL, and by Zoom

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1 Apologies
David Cheesman and Nazia Khanum.

2 Minutes of the last AGM
The minutes were accepted nem com.

3 Chair's Report
The Chair, Trisha Rogers, presented her report. It was voted on and accepted both by those attending in person and those attending by Zoom.
Here is a link to the full text of the Chair's Report

4 Treasurer's Report
The Treasurer, Peter Webster, presented this year's accounts. He thanked Alan Palmer, chartered accountant, for examining and approving them. They were voted on and accepted both by those attending in person and those attending by Zoom.
Here is a link to the 2025 Accounts

The largest item of expenditure was the IP expenses incurred for publishing a Reuters photograph without first seeking permission. We must ensure that in future we closely monitor photographs considered for publication and seek permission wherever necessary. Most meetings have not been expensive. However this one, the AGM, has been. UNA-UK kindly agreed to accommodate us at their Headquarters at short notice after it became necessary to change the original planned location for the AGM. Bank charges should not be incurred in future once the transfer to online banking with Virgin Money has been fully implemented. As regards income, £462.05 represents the regrettable closure of Twickenham and Richmond branch. It has been agreed that half of the UNICEF money collected will pass to UNICEF and half will be retained by UNA LASER. It is encouraging to note that people have been responding to requests for donations, e.g. when they attend Regional meetings.

Peter took questions following his report. He was asked if the London Fund was included in these accounts. Peter explained that it isn't, because unlike UNA LASER the Fund is a charity, formed separately for a specific purpose. It has to maintain its independence. He was asked if the IP expenses were for just one breach. He responded that they were for two breaches. A contingency fund was proposed. He will raise this suggestion with the Executive Committee.

5 Report of the Chair of the Policy Committee
Peter Webster reported that, following the LASER annual policy conference in March, he had sent all agreed resolutions to the Foreign Office. The response didn't cover all points raised, and this provided us with an opportunity to raise those missed again later. When seeking to

maximise the impact of the agreed resolutions, he said there are three aims:

i) To share the resolutions with all MPs in London and the south-east and monitor their response

ii)To review the select committees and the APPGs, to see if there are relevant ones to contact. UNA-UK may also wish to do this. It is important to coordinate our approach, to avoid clashes.

iii)To seek out and contact the appropriate 'desk person' at the Foreign Office, regarding, for example, government strategy on the Middle East.

He hopes very soon to share key dates regarding the lead up to the next conference in Spring 2026. More volunteers are needed on the Policy Committee. He invited those present to put their names forward. As regards the above point ii), Jane Kinninmont thanked Peter for his suggestion. The UNA-UK office is already in regular contact with the APPGs, but not the select committees. She is happy to follow this up.

6 Environment Officer's Report

Here is a link to the Environment Officer's Report

This report is based on a survey of branches in accordance with the Carbon Footprint Reduction Resolution agreed at the 2020 Policy Conference. Of those approached, four branches (Bexhill and Hastings, Eastbourne, Enfield and Barnet and Harpenden,) together with LASER, had responded to Annesha Kargupta, the Environment Officer.

Trisha thanked Annesha for her report. She pointed out that Annesha's job is to collect the information on the work of branches, not to take forward the campaign. That's up to all of us! Trisha was pleased to note that there are now several special interest groups focusing on the environment. She wished to add to her own report the news that UNA Eastbourne will host next year's Summer Council on Saturday 11 July. It is hoped that attendees will take advantage of the summer sunshine to spend that weekend by the sea in Eastbourne, as a walk may take place on the Sunday.

7 Awarding of the Steven's Trophy

Andrew Boakes gave the following citation:

"There can be few UNA Branches nationwide - as deserving of this prized Trophy as The Harpenden Branch, so expertly lead by Suheil who as well as managing secretary of the branch finds time to serve on the Laser executive committee and must also spend half his life producing excellent almost weekly emailed information to all members.

To list all the branch activities in this year alone would take over an hour but they include - Producing the most professional looking monthly newsletter which not only lists their own branch activity but provides all the latest UN News so that we are all up to date with the current information and facilitates members in their support the various Pledges and Petitions. *There is A monthly Public Lecture and discussion series with subjects as* diverse as UN Peacekeeping, Israel and Palestine, The Purple Transition to phase out fossil fuels and is "Democracy failing us" - to name but a few. A very clever and popular innovation is that after the meeting -they invite the speaker to meet with members and carry on the discussions informally over lunch.

"And they still find time to hold an AGM and discussion group and to top it all off - this year they are running a schools competition!

" There is of course an annual UN Flag Raising ceremony that was yesterday, Friday 24 October.

"And inevitably there is an Annual UN Commemorative Service, that's tomorrow Sunday 26

October

"In addition to all of this they still find time for social events including a summer garden party and the famous Burns Night Supper, a date for your diary 24 January 2026.

"In recognition for their outstanding contribution to UNA - It is with the greatest of pleasure that UNA London and South-East Region present the Stevens Trophy to this year's recipients, **The Harpenden Branch**."

8 Distinguished Service Award

David Wardrop welcomed the opportunity to draw attention to the many years of unstinting service undertaken by his old friend Andrew Boakes, a hitherto unsung hero. For a long period of time Andrew had played a key role in the running and organisation of the UNA, and his range of experience led to him often being called upon for advice. He worked hard on the Finance & General Purpose Committee which reported to the Executive Committee and was frequently tasked with finding the best ways to gather funds in times when money was tight. He was a Trustee of LASER. However, the role in which he particularly excelled for many years was as chair of the Annual Conference, which took place over the course of a weekend and was located in a different part of the country each year. He organised the behind-the-scenes structure, oversaw debates and kept the momentum going with skilful, understated management. We value Andrew's loyal service and positive contribution and are delighted to award him the 2025 Distinguished Service Award.

9 Elections

Trisha suggested that the thirteen officers and EC members should be voted for en bloc. Those members present in person and online voted unanimously to elect the following:

Chair: Trisha Rogers Treasurer: Peter Webster Secretary: Antony Valyon
Committee members: Jane Beeley, David Cheesman, Gillian Dare, Jessica Giles, Ali Hessami, Salem Mezhoud, Valeria Minisini, Catherine Pluygers, Suheil Shahryar and Sarah Winterbottom.

10 Resolution to revise the UNA LASER Constitution

Part 1 of the Resolution to be revised simply stated current practice and did not trigger debate.

Part 2 sought to simplify a complicated process that, in effect, had not been followed for a number of years. It was more of a hassle to organise, especially as we don't have a list of branch officers. The proposal is for a practical and more sustainable way of nominating candidates for election to the Executive Committee.

A vote was taken. With just two against in the room, and none against online, the revisions were passed.

11 Any Other Business

Jessica thanked Trisha for doing a great job and everyone applauded.

The AGM was followed in the afternoon by presentations from branches:

UNA Westminster (David Wardrop) – UN Peacekeeper rose

UNA Streatham (Sarah Webster) – COP-related correspondence

UNA Canterbury (Valeria Minisini) – Working with one's local council on the SDGs

UNA Luton (David Cheesman) – Memorial Bench

Presentation from the LASER President – HE Dr Fatou Bensouda
Here is a link to her presentation