

Dalit Solidarity Network (UK)

Annual General Meeting of Trustees and Network Members

15th July 2008 , Committee Room 11, House of Commons

Notes to Meeting.

Present:

Jeremy Corbyn	JC	Rekha Rajkumar	RR	Rekha Rajkumar	RR
Nikhil Roy	NR	Rajkumar Bidla	RB	Ravin Royer	RR
Liz Pepler	LP	Sam Corley	SC	Rekha Larsen	RL
Meena Varma	MV	John Griffin	JG	Bishop of Chennai	BC
David Haslam	DH	David Griffiths	DG	Natsuki Ikeda	NI
Bethan Cobley	BC	Alastair Hanton	AH	Subash Shah	SS
Singh Bahal	SB	Pravin Bodwade	PB	Molly Cook	MC
Gagan Dulai	GD	Jeremy Hope	JH	chris cutter	cc (minutes)
Jane Young	JY	Sushila Zeitlyn	SZ		
David Haslam	DH	Rosemary Morris	RM		
Nikhil Roy	NR	Ken Nicholls	KN		
Rob Marris	RM	John Pritchard	JP		

Apologies ; Trustees

Jean Lambert, John Gladwin, Mary Grey, Rodney Bickerstaffe

Papers tabled :-

Agenda to AGM

Minutes / last AGM

Annual Review

Statement of Financial Accounts

Governance Document Paper

Strategy Paper

Item	Action points / Comments	Led by
1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u> JC welcomed all to the meeting and proposed a thank you to all of those who had worked in the DSN during the year as well as noting a special thank you to Meena Varma for her work as Co – ordinator and latterly Director of the DSN – UK	JC

<p>2.</p>	<p><u>Minutes of the last AGM and Matters Arising</u></p> <p>The minutes of the previous AGM 3rd July.07 were agreed and there were no matters arising.</p>	<p>JC</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Presentation of Reports</u></p> <p>MV stated that copies of both the Annual Review and the Statement of Accounts, tabled in hard copy, had been emailed prior to the meeting. MV stated that it had been a challenging year due to difficulties over funding, but achievements had still been significant.</p>	<p>MV/ LP</p>
	<p><u>Annual Review</u></p> <p>This shows the work of the DSN throughout the year and covers five main areas:</p> <p>1) Raising Awareness There had been some significant publicity opportunities created throughout the year and these had been covered in the following ways. Channel 4 documentary New Statesman – Article Economist – Article UNITE trade union – Event at the TUC and subsequent engagement opportunities, including article in their magazine to 1.3 million members. Working with other Organisations, including ASI and Asian colleagues Last years Event with Key Speakers, in partnership with CSW</p> <p>2) UK Parliamentary Lobby Raised questions in Parliament through the Conservative Party Human Rights commission Tabled an EDM on Violence and Impunity Attended several events with Dfid on Social exclusion (co-hosted) in June 08</p> <p>3) Lobby Private Sector Selecting and reviewing organisations that are currently investing or already have presence within the Indian Economy. Commencing some organisational research – report launched April 08.</p>	<p>MV</p>

	<p>4) International Work With IDSN, EU + UN lobbying in Brussels and Geneva. More recently at EU in June – Exhibition as well as a hearing on caste, hosted by M.E.P.’s Jean Lambert, Margaret Autken, Maria Martens and Claude Moraes</p> <p>5) Creating an effective network Much has gone in to growing this as well as maintaining momentum and managing engagement. MV expressed the view that she was heartened by the increased level of engagement at network meetings but would welcome this being extended to all activities going forward</p> <p>MV then proposed a vote of appreciation to Jane Young for her assistance throughout the previous year.</p> <p><u>Q+A</u> JC asked for questions from the floor</p> <p>GD asked had we approached Nelson Mandela on his recent visit to the UK – and – how involved were we with other networks elsewhere. SB felt that the ANC would not be an appropriate organisation for DSN to approach. He felt that India would see this as too aggressive. RB then asked if we had approached the UN Human Rights Council. MV responded that DSN did have contact with their colleagues in Geneva and the work was done through colleagues at IDSN. JC confirmed that he had addressed the Human Rights council on the Manual Scavenging issue .</p> <p><u>Statement of Financial Accounts</u></p> <p>LP re iterated that the last year had been challenging but that the reports echoed a situation of success over adversity. Particularly with reference to the balance sheet contained within the report (page 6) . Two of the main funders withdrew this year reflecting a deficit of £15000. However, new funding will no longer be reliant on faith based donations; it was considered that non religious funding was preferable. There have been significant savings in certain budget lines and it appears that we have sufficient funding to see the organisation through until end of December 08.</p>	<p>JC</p> <p>LP</p>
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	<p>However, we need to start attracting a sufficient level of funding now in order to give us a 'start off' in January. In the meantime, the productivity has been enormous and the will and dedication are there.</p> <p>Therefore, ' how is raising money going to go forward ?'</p> <p>1) So far, most of the funding consists of 'one off' donations so that, at the moment, we are fighting long term goals with short term funding.</p> <p>2) LP urged everyone to become subscribing members, since even £5.00 per month can make a difference.</p> <p>3) As an organisation we could strengthen our offerings for the long term by initiating a training programme for 2009 / 2010, thus, providing independent income.</p> <p>4) We need to start building a safety net / reserve. To carry us forward</p> <p>To conclude: - "DSN-UK has a duty to everybody in this room" LP proposed thanks to JC, MV, JY and CC (latterly) for all the work that they had put in for the previous 12 months.</p> <p><u>Q+A</u> JC then asked for questions from the floor</p> <p>What figure had been arrived at for the suggested reserve. LP answered that it was felt that £25,000 would be an appropriate reserve.</p> <p>With regard to fundraising activities in the future it was asked if DSN had considered approaching the private sector. RM suggested that DSN approach UK based organisations with Indian operations and, conversely, approach Indian based organisations operating within the UK. JC suggested hosting a 'Corporate' funding event in the HofC</p>	<p>JC</p>
	<p>Action : JC+RM to investigate this possibility and report back</p>	<p>Action 1</p>
	<p>Action : JC+RM to approach Karan Billamoria to set up Meeting</p>	<p>Action 2</p>
	<p>JC suggested that we commence a series of funding applications, however LP suggested that DSN have a capacity problem with regard to handling large amounts or tranches of funding. Funding on a specific campaign, such as manual scavenging could be a better way of approaching this issue.</p> <p>It was suggested, as an example, that for MS in the 'year of sanitation' we approach the manufacturers of lavatories such as Armitage Shanks and Twyfords.</p>	

	<p>DH suggested joint funding initiatives and re approaching Christian Aid and MRDF It was also suggested that DSN engage with UNISON with regard to Sanitation workers. JC asked that if any one had any further fundraising ideas – please present them to MV – even if it was for “auctioning a Sari”</p> <p><u>Annual Report and Accounts</u> The Accounts for 2007/8 were approved by members present at the A.G.M and authorised for signature by the Chair and Vice Chair (JC and NR, respectively)</p>	
	<p>Action : All attendees consider future fundraising opportunities and address these to MV</p>	<p>Action 3</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Governance Structure</u></p> <p>NR addressed the meeting with a proposed Governance structure for DSN-UK. Currently DSN-UK is run by a ‘Board of Trustees’ chaired by David Haslam and a separate Managing Trustees Group chaired by JC. It is understood that it would be unrealistic to expect every Trustee to be able to meet regularly with a small number of people running the organisation.</p> <p>There is currently not enough support for MV and DSN is now a registered Charity which brings with it certain operating criteria and obligations in direct correlation with the level of scrutiny. The immediate proposal would be that Trustee’s in the past who have been unable to attend the meetings regularly, now become patrons and, thus, obviate the responsibility of legal and financial management whilst continuing with their valuable support and profile .</p> <p>Thus, the current structure / activity would be, as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A number of current Trustees to be re-designated as Patrons 2) The management team to become The Board of Trustee’s and to create a larger board of 9 persons. 3) Two individuals to join as new Trustees – 2 nominations – but we still need more Trustees and it would be helpful if they were possessed of particular skills such as media or fundraising 4) Review our network and make it more effective (Paper to be tabled at next network meeting) 	<p>NR</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Comments/Questions from members</u></p> <p>JC asked the meeting if these proposals were acceptable All agreed that the foregoing proposals were acceptable.</p>	<p>JC</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Election of trustees and officers</u></p> <p>There are 11 Trustees currently : The following have agreed to become Patrons :- Rob Marris John Gladwin Professor Mary Grey Rodney Bickerstaffe Jean Lambert</p> <p>Trustees proposed Jeremy Corbyn Nikhil Roy David Haslam Liz Pepler Bethan Cobley Singh Bahal – can be taken forward, later</p> <p>} all confirmed</p> <p>Trustees agreed 5 Patrons agreed 5 – SB to decide later</p> <p>Election of Trustees.</p> <p>Sushila Zeitlyn - proposed and agreed (unanimously) Rekha Rajkumar – proposed and agreed (unanimously) Singh Bahal – proposed as a continuing Trustee – agreed</p> <p>Any suggestions arising regarding the recruitment of two more Trustees, should be referred to MV</p>	<p>NR</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Updates from Members</u></p> <p>RM informed the meeting that MV had prepared a briefing note for a Bill to be introduced in Dec 08/ Jan 09 and urged all meeting delegates to review this and contact their M.P.s SB suggested writing letters to request people to become members .</p>	
	<p>Action: SB to follow up on a letter writing campaign</p>	<p>Action 4</p>
	<p>Action : JC to get something out on this for recognition in UK Law</p>	<p>Action 5</p>

	Action : MV to form steering group for MS Campaign	Action 6
	Action : MV to send Equalities Bill briefing to network	Action 7
	Action : Network to send to their local MP's	Action 8
	As a final note JC said that he felt that DSN were starting to create an impact	