

Bulletin 6 March 2009

SDV News and events

SDV Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 21 April, 6pm

The next AGM will be held on the above date at the Boiler House at the Hidden Gardens. It's important that all SDV members attend.

A new committee will be elected at the AGM so think about putting yourself forward as a committee member.

After 3 years, Michelle will be standing down as Treasurer at the next AGM. This means this role will need to be filled. The person does not need to have massive financial expertise. He or she would simply need to be numerate and Michelle would provide a handover to go through the procedures. If anyone is interested in this role, or knows anyone who might be, please contact Kate or a member of the committee.

Free funds

Check out easyfundraising for lots of new ways to raise funds for SDV for free. If we all did this, we could raise quite a bit of money. Find out more about easyfundraising for SDV using the link below:

<http://www.sdv.org.uk/id15.htm>

Immigration, asylum and detention news

Online petition supporting lesbian and gay asylum seekers

A petition to Gordon Brown supporting lesbian and gay asylum seekers is in its final week. The deadline is 7 March.

"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to stop deporting gays and lesbians to countries where they may be imprisoned, tortured or executed because of their sexuality" To sign, go to:

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Stopdeportinggay/>

Asylum system hampered by lack of detention spaces

An "urgent" shortage of detention centre places is holding up the removal of failed asylum seekers, a senior government official warned yesterday.

Sir David Normington, Permanent Secretary at the Home Office, said efforts to remove failed asylum seekers are being hampered because Britain is short of 1,400 detention spaces.

He also disclosed that asylum case workers still rely on an outdated "creaking system" of paperwork due to the failed introduction of a computerised system several years ago.

Figures produced by the National Audit Office suggest that one in four failed asylum seekers held in detention were successfully removed from Britain, compared to just one in ten of those who were not detained.

The government currently has just 2,600 detention spaces available, but needs 4,000 to properly manage the number of failed asylum seekers.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/politics/4940446/Asylum-system-hampered-by-lack-of-detention-spaces.html>

Briefing on the Borders Immigration and Citizenship Bill

Migrant Rights Network have produced a briefing on the above bill, currently making its way through Parliament. The bill proposes the introduction of a new naturalisation process for foreign nationals to become British citizens.

http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/files/briefingpaper/briefingpaper_on_citizenship.pdf

Observations on detention

While President Obama has announced his intention to close Guantanamo Bay, another, more low-key battle is being fought in the UK for the rights of detained foreign nationals. Detained Lives, a controversial report by the London Detainee Support Group (LDSG), outlines how failed asylum-seekers in the UK are routinely being detained for prolonged or unlimited periods of time.

Some of the report's findings are astounding: 188 of the roughly 1,400 detainees supported by the charity since April 2007 had been detained at Colnbrook, Dover or Harmondsworth for at least a year, 46 for more than two years and some for longer than three.

Full article at the link below and go to the Detained Lives website via the Links page on the SDV website.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2009/03/immigration-detained-report>

Other news and events

Charity Bike Rides and Walks for the Charity of Your Choice (that would be SDV!)

Just bike and Just Walk are events organised by Across the Divide who specialise in charity challenges. Find more details at:

<http://www.just-bike.co.uk/charity-bike-ride/>

Anti-Deportation Workshop Saturday 14 March 2009 - 1:30-3:00 pm

Facilitator: Pol Yates: polyates@phonecoop.coop

Hosted by: Umoja Inc Women's Group

Venue: YWCA Glasgow,

3 Newton Terrace,

Sauchiehall Street,

Charing Cross,

Glasgow G3 7PJ

The aims of the workshop are to discuss:

1. Reasons to set up an anti-deportation campaign
2. How to set up an anti-deportation campaign (basics)
3. Empowering of asylum seekers

Enquiries/further information: Pol Yates: polyates@phonecoop.coop

DEC Gaza appeal

After an 18 month blockade of Gaza and three weeks of heavy shelling the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is now completely overwhelming.

Thousands of people are struggling to survive with many having lost their homes and most down to their last supplies of food and only limited amounts of fresh drinking water.

Click on the link below to donate:

www.dec.org.uk/item/200