

Forum 14/11/17

Minutes of the fourth Women's Campaign forum of Michaelmas term, hosted in the Grad Union lounge at 7:30pm on 14th November 2017 by Lola Olufemi, the Women's Officer.

Committee present: Alex Rowe (Open Portfolio Campaigner), Ellie Byrne (Non-binary rep), Arenike Adebajo (BME rep), Miriam Gauntlett (Secretary), Flic Kersting (LGB Rep), Claire Sosienski Smith (Zine Officer), Emrys Travis (Disabilities Rep), Christie Costello (Open Portfolio Campaigner) and Christine Pungong (Open Portfolio Campaigner)

Agenda points

1. Committee updates/announcements (LGSM Migrants/ Gender Agenda Launch)

Claire: New Beginnings is the Gender Agenda theme for this term, launch is on Thursday from 8-10pm in Downing Bar! Come along to get a zine and hear readings.

Flic: I'm the LGB officer & I'm hosting a club night next term to support LGSMigrants, got lots of readings and bands performing – all women and nb people.

Alex: I'm one of the Campaign Officers and I'm arranging a letter-writing session for the women in Yarl's Wood on Sunday after the protest - place and time to be confirmed!

2. National Demo

LINK TO BUY TICKETS: https://joinagora.com/events/20748/#/tickets?_k=mky97i

Where: Parkside (opposite Mud Lane) CB1 1JE (bus bay 16 is for coach parking)

When: 11:45am Wednesday 15th November

Lola: National Demo for Free Education in London tomorrow – there are still tickets left, so you can still come along if you would like to.

3. Yarl's Wood Statement/ Update

Lola: Central organisation of MFJ undemocratic, abusive things happen in org, organisation shouldn't be trusted. Emergency forum to discuss WC association with MFJ & cut ties until accountability process clearer. Still going to attend protest bc justice for detainees goes far beyond one organisation. No money going to MFJ from the coaches.

Women's Campaign statement regarding Movement for Justice:

The women's campaign stands with the survivors who have come forward with allegations against Movement for Justice. We recognise that MFJ's response to these allegations has not been adequate and that their accountability procedures are not

clear or robust enough. We know the strength it takes for survivors to share their stories and will cutting ties with MFJ in solidarity until the allegations are properly addressed and survivors get the justice they require. We note that MFJ is a broad organisation with regional representatives who do important work supporting asylum seekers and those with precarious immigration status – this independent and crucial work should be recognised as distinct and not erased in this discussion. After much discussion as well as co-ordination with Cambridge MFJ reps, we have decided to go to the Yarl's Wood because we understand that justice for those in detention extends far beyond the failings of a single organisation. We will be leading our own independent delegation and ensuring no funds go to MFJ. We feel it is important to add our collective voices to the movement. When we say SET HER FREE, we mean abolish a system of inhumane detention where women are exposed to abuse sanctioned by the government. We mean bring the voices and experiences of women in detention to the forefront so we are confronted with the ways racist borders impose violence on them, work to silence them, encouraging us to forget they exist. We mean to uplift and support the numerous organisations working towards a free and liberated future for all. We mean to remind the women in detention that we see them, hear them and they will never be forgotten.

4. Feedback Form – Breaking the silence/ POB

Lola: Breaking the Silence has been launched and lots of people have approached me since. New procedure doesn't provide the welfare support that people need so have been interested in a route that gives feedback to the university. WomCam should be body to receive that feedback, was WomCam that pushed university to launch BTS in the first place. Does anybody have thoughts on BTS and the procedure?

- Definitely been very positive, people have started talking about it more.

Lola: Getting feedback ties in with campaign to get university to change from burden of proof to balance of probability.

- Important for different colleges to start process of making their own sexual harassment policies and to make those more easily accessible

Sian: University needs to realise its outsourcing welfare labour to other organisations that are overstretched such as Women's Aid and CRC so should donate money or support them.

- Two things that could be improved: LBGT people and assault, outsourcing of labour etc. A lot of those could only change if we say that it's directly harmful to students. Get women's officers to email around colleges to get opinions from students. Feedback especially from queer students or students trying to report another student in their college etc.

Lola: Full-scale survey instead of just a feedback form might be needed. Long-term goal could be a survey asking for responses to BTS.

5. DV in Cambridge (CN: abuse)

Sophia: Written a blog on my experiences of being in an abusive relationship and taking the perpetrator to trial. I will put up a link on Facebook and Lola's kindly agreed to share it, I would be very grateful if you could share it too. I wanted to help others who are going through something similar, including the early signs of being in an abusive relationship and the emotional abuse that goes on.

Lola: Please spread the word (depending on how able you are). Women's Campaign is a space that you can access and people will help you.

Sophia: Kings is starting a working group to discuss DV in Cambridge so if that happens, would be good to talk about it and start providing for survivors because at the moment there isn't anything to help.

Link to Sophia's blog: <https://victimscanbestrong.com/>