

Forum 17/10/2017

Minutes of the second Women's Campaign forum of Michaelmas term, hosted in the Grad Union lounge at 7pm on 17th October 2017 by Lola Olufemi, the Women's Officer.

Committee present: Alex Rowe (Open Portfolio Campaigner), Miriam Gauntlett (Secretary), Claire Sosienski Smith (Zine Officer), Ellie Byrne (Non-binary rep), Anna Pick (Media & Outreach Officer).

Agenda points:

1. Committee Updates

AR: I'm running a campaign raising awareness of challenges faced by women + non-binary asylum seekers + refugees, create change in Cambridge to make it a more hospitable environment. Progress is slow, I'm trying to organise a series of events for next term, organise multiple college wide campaign to arrange scholarship/bursary for women refugee students. Message me if you want to get involved

Ellie: Non-binary rep, I'm going to run discussion groups with LGBT+ officer and also some non-binary only discussion groups. Lack of non-binary specific space to chat.

Lola: Great opportunity to talk about non-binary inclusion. Women's Campaign IS a space for non-binary people, want to get message about the inclusion of non-binary people out, draft a letter informing people.

Anna: On the website you can now find the minutes of every forum, and an events panel too. Instagram is live, has feminist art and events! @cusuwomen

Claire: Booked venue for the launch party for Gender Agenda! Deadline is 10th November and the theme is New Beginnings.

Flic: Working with women's officer on LGBT+ campaign to raise money for LGSM

2. Update on Open Letter for Balance of probability/ Accessibility (non-binary inclusion) Statement

3.

Lola: Waiting until guidance on the procedure comes out, but will start drafting letter after that.

4. Creation of Male Survivors Group - Training this saturday, 9:30-4 Magdelene

Lola: Training this Saturday for anyone who wants to provide support for these groups, 9:30-4pm at Magdalene.

5. Womcam Elections Update

Lola: Our grad rep, trans rep and disabilities rep are still unfilled. Elections will be happening between now & next forum! Email me if you would like to run or want to know more about any of the roles

6. Intersectionality Event, this Thursday

Lola: Event with co-founder of FLY, the Cambridge BME women's + non-binary network to talk about history of FLY, in conversation with Hareem Ghani, NUS women's officer. Talking about activism + intersectionality and why that's important. Thursday, 7-9pm, in Grad Lounge.

7. Survivors Group Updates

Lola: Previous Women's Officer started a Survivors Group, that is still continuing, we just need an accessible venue and a time/date. Info sent out to people via anonymous Google Doc.

8. Trans Admission Working Group

Lola: want to push colleges to open up to transgender students. An article will be written about it, in print on Thursday. Share article, keep momentum up and put pressure on colleges, don't let them forget about it.

9. Breaking the Silence Policy - CUSU Council

Lola: Today I submitted a policy to CUSU council about mandating further sabbatical teams to raise awareness abt sexual violence + misconduct, support bodies that run campaigns around sexual violence + increasing access to resources survivors can use. Event on 26th to demystify the whole procedure.

10. Survivors Exhibition

Lola: One of my manifesto points = exhibition platforming work of survivors in Lent, mark Breaking the Silence from a student perspective. Applied to Churchill for a space to submit the art, waiting to hear back from them. Want to make a committee of people who want to act as curators for the exhibition. Want survivors to be the core of the organisation, I will just facilitate. If you want to be involved please send me an email.

10. Request from Daisy Eyre (CUSU President)

Daisy: Trying to get two people to sit on CUSU bodies. Inquiry into CUSU Finances and CUSU election committees, only men have applied, would love to have women and non-binary people on the committee so please apply.

Discussion points

1. Yarl's Wood - Coaches & banner making

Lola: Yarl's Wood = detention center. Protest is about shutting down Yarl's Wood and shutting down detention centres + ending borders. People detained before they can be removed from the country. A lot of detainees have been sexually assaulted inside the centre + miscarriages of justice happen there. WomCam are against borders + against detention. Need to go out and show solidarity in any way that we can. People who have gone to protests – it really helps the women inside to show solidarity. Demonstration on Saturday 18th November. WomCam buys 20 tickets for people to go, seats have sold out but seats available on the coach, return costs 8.50. Ticket information on the event.

Lola: Banner making – do people want to do it?

Vote: Yes

Lola: Even if you can't make the event, banner making is a good way to take part! People can bring old art supplies, etc.

- I've been to Yarl's Wood before and if anyone has any questions about accessibility of the event, please get in touch.

- I'm concerned that if I take up space on the coach I may take away a place from people who have more personal connections to Yarl's Wood.

Responses:

Lola: We can book another coach if there's enough demand.

Alex: They provide seats specifically for migrant + asylum seekers.

Martha: Can also donate if you can't come which will help cover costs of coaches.

- Concern from someone at a FemSoc meeting that this isn't a good use of time, should write letters to MPs instead.

Responses:

- Connection between women inside detention centre and people outside. Women at windows, very much a part of protest. Protest works alongside them and with them.

- Protest is so important to them, helps the women inside.

- MFJ = organisation organised by and for migrant + refugee women. They know how to best bring about action. Would trust them.

- Govt want people to forget that detention centres exist so we need to fight back against that and not let anybody forget!

2. Making links with other campaigns - working with CDE, Decolonising Curriculum.

Lola: Cambridge Defend Education. First meeting is on Friday at 7pm in the Chetwynd Room at Kings. They are working for the Free Education Demo in Nov, asking for money for a coach to London.

Lola: Decolonising Curriculum working group for the English Faculty. Faculty board took the letter on decolonising curriculum seriously – WG will come up with ideas to present to the faculty. Spread the word to English students.

3. Oh Rama - Decorating Womcam Chill Space – logistics

Lola: Oh Rama = inclusive, queer event. WomCam taking over Chill Space! It's happening on the 21st November and . Need help decorating the Chill Space so please let me know!

- Mystery Box on Monday, raising money for Mermaids (trans charity)

4. Union Panel about Yarl's Wood

Lola: Someone from Channel 4, MFJ, want the Women's Officer to speak on it. In the past WomCam have been very separate from the Union. Panel = free for everyone to attend.

- CUSU LGBT+ has boycotted the Union for them inviting TERFs and Julian Assange in the past. President + current team seem cool, CUSU LGBT+ are going to get involved with a few events this term.
- If we can make positive changes towards the union then we should. Worth boycotting when they do something bad.
- We need to show them that they can host events where attendance is high without inviting horrible controversial speakers. An event with migrant women and ex-detainees is what free speech is *actually* about – platforming people who don't get platformed! Can combine it with an article on that.

Lola: Should I speak on the panel on behalf of the Women's Campaign?

Vote: yes

End of discussion points.