

## **Liberal International British Group – Chairs Report AGM 2020**

It's been a strange and unprecedented year for all of us, and surviving this pandemic is a priority – so my first message is staying safe, being sensible and looking after each of our families and close friends which is paramount. There have sadly been some stalwart AGM attendees whose deaths we haven't been able to commemorate,, including those of my good friend Derek Honeygold.

We started the year with such enthusiasm with our first Forum on Hong Kong, with the amazing speaker Emily Lau, in February. Then, Covid strikes and our plans for the year seemingly all adrift but thanks to technology we've found a new outlet, with bigger audiences – greater collaboration and in effect a money saving solution.

After the initial three month lull when many of us remained at home, self-isolating, we eventually took back the reins and Zoom meetings have now become the staple diet of pandemic 2020. We've had three excellent forums, on Poland & Hungary LGBT+ rights, China and our most recent on the UN, with the excellent Becky Tinsley and team, upping our technological capabilities to have near 120 people on the call.

It is true to say that when in strife new ways of doing things arrive unexpectedly and though we are sadly not meeting in person, this year we have widened our audience, at less cost and saved money for which from a treasurer's position – all good news. Wendy will give more detail in the her treasurer's report separately.

We will have an open conversation with a brief committee meeting for those elected for the second part of the AGM and look forward to our US Forum on December 7<sup>th</sup>, hosted by George Cunningham by which we will have digested the American election results. We will then plan for 2021 with the array of issues around the world in the news from Nigerian unrest, Armenia/Azerbaijani conflict, Belarus, China and its relationship with Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong, Uighur persecution and coronavirus implications, we will have sufficient to talk about on an international next year without a doubt.

We decided not to have a stall at conference and felt the crowded hours for fringe meetings meant that there were always going to be many clashes and

with the timings and actual benefits from a stall video, we decided not to pursue this year. If Spring Conference is in the same format for a shorter period of time, then our thoughts are probably the same but will review once we know the full details.

I've also made myself available for meetings at the NLC with Liberal International, whereby I've met and talked to Lebanese LGBTQ+ activist, Hadi Damien, and I've recently met with the Indian High Commissioners Office with Rabi Martins.

On a final note, I attended the inaugural virtual Congress of Liberal International alongside Jonathan Fryer, Phil Bennion as Liberal Democrat representatives and Robert Woodthorpe Browne as his role as Vice President and it was extremely well managed by General Secretary William Townsend.

Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett  
Chair of Liberal International British Group