

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CENSORSHIP

NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.45, Friday, 29th November, 2002, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Present: Ted Goodman (Chair), Steve King, Nigel Meek, Basil Stein, Mark Taha, Mary Hayward. Brian Seager as an observer.

1. There were no apologies for absence.
2. The Minutes of the 8th March meeting were signed as correct.
3. Matters arising from the minutes
 - i. A speech by Mr. Goodman and an article by Mrs. Hayward had appeared in the Journal of the Society for Individual Freedom.
 - ii. Mrs. Hayward attended the Liberty AGM. There was nothing of significance for CAC.
4. Balances: HSBC - £472.78p, Girobank - £75.69p
5. Chairman's report

The Chairman and Hon. Secretary apologised for the cancellation of the earlier meeting.

1. Ted Goodman had written and sent CAC's response to the ^{Paper} Consultation on Broadcasting.

ii. CAC as an organisation could not respond to the consultation on subject access under the Data Protection Act, as it applies only to individuals. Agreed members of Council to respond as individuals and Mr. King to monitor the situation.

6. Members' reports

Steve King - had attended a conference on data protection. Proposals on privacy law would need watching.

Nigel Meek - asked for articles for The Individual (see above).

Basil Stein - no report this time.

Mark Taha - no report this time.

7. Secretary's report

1. 12A film certificates are advisory, making parents responsible for whether children see the film - as CAC has always wanted.

Note that changes in the law on sex offences may mean that homosexual scenes involving more than two people may be allowed on film.

PTO

11. Bookshop Libel Fund - FAC had drawn the Campaign's attention to a case involving two small bookshops who had been included in a libel action brought against the magazine Searchlight. There was no decision on what action, if any, CAC should take in this case.

Note that writers, publishers and shops are all liable for defamatory material. People can sue for libel for material published on the internet and the ISP can be obliged to disclose its source. Agreed CAC policy is that booksellers and ISPs should be excluded from the actions if they have taken reasonable care. Beware chill effects.

(See also the Law Commission study on abuses of defamation procedure at www.lawcom.gov.uk).

8. Reform of Sex Offences

Mr. King pointed out that downloading material can be either 'possession' or 'making' images - it seems to depend a bit on who you are. (Equipment is available which can tell whether material has actually been downloaded or not.)

Mrs. Hayward reminded the Council that CAC policy is that mere possession of any material should not be an offence.

Point for further discussion - do chatrooms and 'grooming' fall within CAC's remit?

9. Communications Bill

Mrs. Hayward had scanned through the Bill and picked out the clauses relevant to CAC. She was to follow its progress through Parliament. Film and video are not covered by the Bill.

10. CAC website

The fee goes to a hosting company, 'One and One', and is shared between three websites.

Advice would be needed on anti-hacking security.

E-mail addresses to be registered:

Chair - chair @ dlas.org.uk

Hon. Sec. - sec @ dlas.org.uk

Item to be included in the agenda for next meeting.

11. Any other business

Mr. Goodman lost his Council seat in the local elections.

He had received an award from the Sexual Freedom Coalition for 25 years of fighting censorship.

Brian Seager is a NCROPA member, interested particularly in censorship of sexual material.

12. Date of next meeting - early February (provisional).