

Safermedia announces its closure

We are sorry for this late Update but as those of you who are on email will know already, Safermedia is to close. Miranda decided, with some sadness, to step down from her role in Safermedia, and we had to reassess our future. We sent out an email appeal for greater voluntary and/or financial assistance, and we have been very touched by the kind responses and encouragement, especially the offers of help. However, sadly (though understandably) the extra support so generously offered has not been sufficient to enable Safermedia to continue. Pippa does not have the time necessary to run the charity, although she and two of our trustees hope to be able to remain active in media campaigning in some other capacity on this important issue of protecting our children and young people from media harm.

For these reasons, at a meeting of the Trustees in December 2014, we reluctantly made the decision to begin the procedure to close the Charity as of the end of 2014 and anticipate this will be finalised by the middle of March. Any funds remaining after all expenses are covered, will be passed on to CARE to follow up the under 30s Conference we initiated last April (see p.2-3) or Baroness Howe's online safety work.

Our website will become static, with the Home page explaining Safermedia's status and providing links to other relevant organisations. The website will still be available for people to use for reference, especially if directed by an online search. We also plan to archive our documents in due course.

Fond farewells and new beginnings

In this last Update we want to remember the key events and highlights of Safermedia and its predecessor mediamarch, and also pay tribute to the host of individuals (mostly volunteers) and organisations who have played a vital part. You are all greatly appreciated – we are not able to mention everyone, but you know who you are. We hope these highlights will give you a taste of the heady days of our grass-roots campaigning and you will be inspired to take your own stand against the giants of society that threaten the well-being of our children and families.

I Samuel 17:47: '... for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you (*Goliath*) into our hands.'

We hope many of you can join us, with trustees Tushar, Leigh and Catherine, for Safermedia's Farewell Lunch on 16 March – please see the back page of this Update for more information.

Miranda and Pippa

Brief History of mediamarch and Safermedia



*We would like to pay tribute to Mary Whitehouse,
a great inspiration to both of us*

During 15 years of campaigning we have led 9 marches of peaceful protest, held 3 parliamentary conferences, met with Ministers, MPs, Ofcom, BBC and BBFC and given many talks and presentations. We have briefed Synod on violent media, initiated and co-produced the 'Children and the Media' booklet with mediawatch-uk, made numerous submissions to Government consultations, and had several postcard campaigns including to Ofcom, BBC, the Prime Minister and Government departments, including one for a ban on 15 and 18 films and videogames in young offender establishments. More recently, we worked with Claire Perry MP on the Block Porn Campaign and supported Baroness Howe's Online Safety Bill. An international dimension has grown and involved us networking with organisations in the US.

1998 - Miranda was on mediawatch-uk's Executive Committee and running its Bromley branch. Pippa was heading up FIRMA (Families Involved in Raising Media Awareness). Ever younger children were being exposed to harmful material via the media, and parents were struggling to control their viewing. Pre-Ofcom regulators, the Independent Television Commission and the Broadcasting Standards Commission (who had a 60% increase in complaints in 1999), the broadcasters and the Government took no decisive action.

1999 - Miranda and Pippa met for the first time via mediawatch-uk, heard of Channel 4 (C4) TV's proposed documentary on bestiality and, sharing the same vision, decided to take to the streets in peaceful protest.

Marches of peaceful protest

The first Protest was at C4TV, London, followed shortly after by a second Protest at C5TV, London. Altogether, between 2000 and 2006, mediamarch held nine peaceful marches and rallies, mostly in London with rallies in Trafalgar Square, but also including one in Liverpool and one in Manchester.

April 2005 - a mediamarch petition of over 121,000 signatures was handed in at 10 Downing Street, seeking stronger obscenity laws and stricter regulation of the media, with a delegation from mediamarch, CARE, mediawatch-uk, UK Asian Christian Fellowship, the Muslim Council of Britain and the World Harvest Christian Centre.



Parliamentary Conferences and Campaigns

2008 - First mediamarch Parliamentary Conference on Strengthening Regulation of Violent Films & Video Games at which The Rt Hon Keith Vaz took part and Prof Kevin Browne was the main speaker.

2009 - Following the Conference, mediamarch made a submission, including a DVD of violent and sexually violent but legal film and videogame clips, to the Home Affairs Committee on Knife Crime. Prof Kevin Browne gave oral evidence (their subsequent Report accepted a link between violent media and violent behaviour).

2010 - Parliamentary Conference 'The Harm that Pornography Does' where online pornography was confirmed as the greatest threat, and SAFERMEDIA was launched as a registered charity. There we met Claire Perry MP who attended - a momentous meeting as we then began working with her till 2013 on the Block Porn Campaign for default 'off', opt-in filters to block porn at Internet Service Provider (ISP) level.

2012-2013 - Safetynet Campaign with Premier Christian Media. With Premier, Claire Perry MP and five other MPs we presented a 120,000 signature petition to Downing Street.

2013 - Outcome: David Cameron's announcement in July at the NSPCC that the four main ISPs had agreed to offer free family friendly filters to all customers, both existing and new, by the end of 2014.

Update for 2014

January: Young people's contribution to Culture, Media and Sport Committee Online Safety Inquiry

Under this Safermedia initiative and working with four other charities, we arranged for a group of young people to meet the Culture, Media and Sport Committee to give their first hand experiences of how the online world impacts them, e.g. via bullying, social media, pornography. In the Inquiry Report published in March, MPs said that pornography websites, which do not prevent children accessing them, should be prosecuted. Publishing adult material online which is 'readily available to children' could be against the law, the report warned, and said there is 'scope for greater enforcement in this area.'

April: Parliamentary Conference 'The Pornification of a Generation: The under-30s' Perspective'

Safermedia initiated the Conference and chaired the steering committee of several other charities under the auspices of the Lords and Commons Family and Child Protection Group (LCFCPG).

The quality and spirituality of the 7 young speakers, their honesty and humility were an inspiration to all. Some gave their own very personal testimonies and some spoke as professionals working with vulnerable young people. We were fortunate to have excellent chairmen and an audience of over 90 people, including many Parliamentarians. The programme also included three MPs speaking and a film clip from the film InRealLife by Baroness Kidron. The unequivocal message was that pornography is doing great harm to our young people, and the Government and society must do far more to protect them and the generations to come. A letter signed by the speakers appeared in The Times on the same day.

Under-30s' Conference Steering Committee



Speakers & chairs have fun with 2 circles conference logo!



At the Conference, David Burrowes MP said: *"The Safermedia watch have been consistently involved in the impact of easy access to pornography, and particularly explicit and damaging content, that is accessible online. The conference in 2010 was the platform for Parliament to take seriously the issue and for the Government to take action in order to protect children from accessing harmful pornographic images."*

Latest news on online safety

Internet Matters: a new joint internet safety campaign and website funded by the major ISPs (BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin), aims to help parents keep their children safe online by providing them with simple and practical advice, so that our young people can use the internet more safely - just what concerned individuals and organisations have been asking for. This is an encouraging continuation of the process that began in July 2013 when the Prime Minister announced implementation of family friendly filters.

'Friendly' Wifi rolled out In July 2014: Britain is leading the world with this national scheme to tell you if the Wifi in a café, train, shop, etc. has filters installed to block access to porn sites and web addresses known to contain child abuse images. Look out for this logo:



Sky's new automatic filter 'Broadband Shield' announced by Rt Hon Ed Vaizey MP in January 2015: Sky is emailing its 5 million existing customers about the new default filter which will automatically block pornography and other websites harmful to children. If households ignore the email and a subsequent reminder, their computer will automatically block this content and they will have to opt in to receive it. This is the nearest an ISP has come to our original call for default off, opt-in filters. We hope the other ISPs will follow Sky's lead. There remains much to be done still, but we are delighted that the Government is continuing to work to encourage the ISPs to improve their child protection measures.

Baroness Howe's Online Safety Bill in 2014

January - Baroness Howe tabled an online safety amendment to a separate Bill on Children and Families, in the form of a New Clause.

June - Baroness Howe introduced her 4th Online Safety Bill with extra provisions that deal specifically with 18 and R18 video on demand material in the UK and abroad. It backs up ATVOD's call for such content to be placed behind a strict age verification process.

December - Baroness Howe tabled an Amendment to the Consumer Rights Bill based on her Online Safety Bill, to address significant problems with self-regulation under the 4 major ISPs' voluntary agreement: over 10% of the market is still not covered, leaving 1000s of children unprotected; the age-verification system favoured by the ISPs is deeply flawed; the ISPs have different definitions of adult content so there is no consistency; the Mobile Phone Operators code has been flouted by Blackberry and Tesco mobile, and 3 do not claim to be compliant.

Along with other charities, Safermedia has supported Baroness Howe on each occasion by contacting a large number of peers, with your help. However, sadly, despite a great deal of support among peers, her Bill and its Amendments have yet to be successful. Only legislation covering 100% of the ISPs will give children the protection they need, so, following the example of Wilberforce et al when they were working to abolish the slave trade, the work must go on.

Commenting/Complaining on the media: please can we encourage you to continue your comments to the regulators. It is vitally important that they hear your views.

Continuing to campaign: If you would like to support others campaigning on media issues, we do urge you to get in touch with mediawatch-uk, the Christian Broadcasting Council and/or CARE. You are probably well aware of mediawatch-uk (www.mediawatchuk.org; T: 01233 633936), and we have worked with them several times, but you may not know so much about CARE and the Christian Broadcasting Council so we have enclosed information from them in this mailing.

£ Funding is needed to help us cover our final costs TOTAL: £2,000

Expenses for this mailing: £700 ... Outstanding expenses, e.g. travel, telephone, stationery: £400
Archiving documents from the last 15 years: £400 ... Long-term hosting of website: £500

NB: Any donations should arrive by the middle of March at the latest, before our account is closed.

Please use the response slip below. Our thanks, as always.

**Farewell Lunch for Safermedia: 12.30 – 2.30pm on Monday 16 March at: The Café,
Methodist Central Hall Westminster (Storeys Gate, London SW1H 9NH. T: 020 7222 8010)**

Please drop by whenever suits you. There will be a short presentation to Pippa and Miranda at 1.30pm, and you can buy a snack or drink if you wish. An RSVP (see below) would be helpful, but not essential.

Message from Catherine Thurgood, Safermedia trustee:

Miranda and Pippa founded mediamarch, which later became Safermedia, 15 years ago. Since then they have worked tirelessly to protect children and young people from negative influences in the media. They have achieved so much in their time together: from being instrumental in seeing ISP filters being switched on by default, to raising awareness of the harm caused by playing violent video games, and also being available to comment on current issues as they arise in the press. They have spent their time working closely with MPs and other agencies and have engaged in extensive research to back up their campaigns.

Many of you have expressed a depth of gratitude for two such marvellous individuals, who, throughout this entire time, have worked as volunteers and never taken a salary. I would like to invite you to join me in making a donation towards a gift for them, to be presented at the Farewell Lunch on Monday 16 March.

Please forward gift donations marked 'FAO Catherine Thurgood' to Safermedia, PO Box 1046, Bromley, BR1 9PF - **by Monday 9th March in good time for the 16th.** We suggest you enclose your donation in a separate sealed envelope. Response slips are below.

Response Slip for General Costs

1. I hope to attend the Farewell on 16 March 2015

2. I enclose a donation £

For general costs (made out to SAFERMEDIA)

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....Postcode:

Email address:.....

**Response Slip for Pippa and Miranda's gift
FAO Catherine Thurgood**

1. I hope to attend the Farewell on 16 March 2015

2. I enclose a donation £

For Pippa and Miranda (made out to SAFERMEDIA)

Name:

Address:.....

.....Postcode:.....

Email address... ..

Please fill out and return slip/s to: Safermedia, PO Box 1046, Bromley BR1 9PF