
The Stonewall Group

18 August 1989

STONEWALL APPOINTS FIRST DIRECTOR

The Stonewall Group, Britain's new Lesbian and Gay lobby organisation has appointed its first Executive Director. **Tim Barnett**, 31, was chosen this week as the successful candidate for the job, which had been widely advertised in the lesbian and gay press and national media.

Tim, who is currently the coordinator of another national lobby organisation, the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux, will be starting work for Stonewall next month.

"There were many outstanding candidates whom we saw - but Tim's extensive experience in all the vital areas of our future work made him our top choice", said Michael Cashman, the actor and former *Eastenders* star who chairs Stonewall. "We're extremely pleased that he will be working for us."

Tim Barnett helped found the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux four years ago as the national lobby for almost 400 information bureaux and volunteer help and advice centres nationwide. As a borough councillor in Lewisham and Greenwich, Tim chaired council committees on Community Affairs, Race, and Grants. Most recently, he chaired Lewisham Council's Police Committee. In 1986, with a woman councillor colleague, he set up and for two years ran Lewisham's extensive borough programme on lesbian and gay issues.

Tim, who now lives in Wood Green, London, has had many years experience in volunteer work, which he began while a student. He then worked in Northern Ireland and Barbados. In working for Stonewall, Tim will be drawing on his extensive experience of and strong commitment to working with people facing every type of socially-imposed disadvantage.

The Stonewall Group was founded this year on the initiative of Ian McKellen and a group of lesbians and gay men who wanted to retain and build on the lesbian and gay movement's new experiences of and skills in high level political lobbying in the wake of the fight against Section 28. The highly-successful special tenth anniversary benefit performance of Martins Sherman's play, *Bent*, during Gay Pride week in June, raised substantial funds with which the group can begin operations. This work will begin in earnest in mid September, when Tim will be starting work at Stonewall's new office in Islington.

The Stonewall Group will be funding and commissioning research on lesbian and gay issues, within a wider context of social disadvantage on the grounds of difference. A key target is the briefing of MPs and the preparation and promotion of legislation to remedy the problems the Group identifies. Fund raising, research, and political lobbying will be the important targets for Tim's first year as the Executive Director of The Stonewall Group. "In the long term", he said, "the goal is to change minds".

Stonewall can be contacted at : **The Stonewall Group, 5 Rector Street, London N1 7DG.** This address can be published. Telephone lines for Stonewall will be announced when installed at the end of August.

Press information : Lisa Power 01 515 8703 01 533 0297
 Duncan Campbell 01 254 6084 01 739 3211

Embargo : Friday 18 August.