

# Humanist values

Humanists find a sense of purpose with which to face life's challenges and tragedies from the experiences of living, from the support of others and from the history of our civilisation. Humanists believe that humans have evolved from simpler organisms during the billions of years of our planet's history. Humanists base their beliefs on rational argument founded on evidence.

## What about a moral code?

Humanists believe that moral codes are not divine laws but are practical ways of living compatibly within a community. There were moral codes long before the advent of any of the current major world religions. As A. J. Ayer said in *The Humanist Outlook* (1968) "The only possible basis for a sound morality is mutual tolerance and respect; tolerance of one another's customs and opinions; respect for one another's rights and feelings; awareness of one another's needs."

Moral rules are not absolute, but evolve as we become aware of their consequences. Rules may need to change with scientific and technological advances and with changing populations.

## The future

Humanists believe that the good life they aspire to should be available to all including future generations. We should press for human rights to be recognised throughout the world. We should do our best to protect the rich natural environment we have inherited.

# Secularism

Humanists believe in the establishment of a secular state. A secular state is neither atheistic nor theistic but is religiously neutral.

A secular state protects the rights of all its citizens to hold beliefs, religious or non-religious, and protects the right to practise a religion.

In a secular state no religion or belief would have any special preference. For example the presence of 26 bishops in our Upper House would no longer be tenable and the Church of England would become disestablished. State funded education would be secular with religion and beliefs taught in an open and critical way.

Secular laws would have precedence over religious laws. Freedom of expression would be protected.

# Ceremonies

Today, many people prefer non-religious ceremonies.

Through a network of British Humanist Association trained celebrants, dignified, caring, non-religious weddings, baby-namings and funerals can be arranged throughout the country.

The **South West Regional Organiser** is **Kevin Murphy** who will give more information and details of a local celebrant (tel 01271 343160, email celebrants@devonhumanists.org.uk).



# Devon Humanists

www.devonhumanists.org.uk  
email: info@devonhumanists.org.uk

# What is Humanism?

**Humanism** is a positive way of life based on reason and experience. Humanists believe in the natural not the supernatural.

**Humanists** believe that morality springs from respect for each other and in recognising the need to live together in harmony and cooperation.

**Humanists** say that individual beliefs should not be imposed on others nor should privileges be gained through particular beliefs.

**Humanists** seek solely rational ways of solving human problems.

# Devon Humanists

**Support and represent** Humanists in Devon. Provide opportunities to discuss Humanist topics and to meet socially;

**Promote Humanism** by publicising Humanist philosophy and supporting our schools in teaching about Humanism;

**Advocate secularism** in education and in civil affairs;

**Provide information** about Humanist ceremonies for those who prefer a non-religious celebration of life's rites of passage.

## Membership

Members are widely spread across Devon, with active groups in North Devon, South Devon, East Devon and Exeter. These groups meet for talks and discussions and arrange social events.

A regular meeting point is the Phoenix Arts Centre in Exeter on every third Thursday of the month for lunch/drink/chat/discussion.

## Humanist Forum and Newsletter

Our printed magazine, Humanist Forum, issued several times a year includes articles by members, book reviews, etc. More frequently, a newsletter is sent to members by e-mail or post and gives details of current events.

## Website

The website ([www.devonhumanists.org.uk](http://www.devonhumanists.org.uk)) includes an on-line forum in which members and non-members comment and debate current issues. A calendar of events keeps members up to date with our activities and there are many links to other Humanist websites.

# Why belong?

Surveys show that the majority of people in this country support the general aims of Humanism, but there are still many areas of religious prejudice dominating civil affairs. As an individual you have little influence on this state of affairs, but an organised group can have significant political impact.

Local groups are the grass-roots of Humanism. Although affiliated to the national groups, local groups are autonomous and respond to the wishes of their members. Local groups are able to influence local government and education in their areas whilst also supporting national campaigns through their affiliations.

If you are sympathetic to our aims, we would be delighted to see you at our events in your area. By making a further commitment and becoming a member, your subscription will allow us to expand our campaigns and you will be kept in touch with all our activities. An organisation with a sound membership carries more weight than one without.

We are affiliated to the British Humanist Association (BHA charity no: 285987), the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and the National Secular Society (NSS).

## Charities

Devon Humanists support a number of charities including Aquaboxes for disaster relief (organised by Rotary International) and Tools for Self Reliance or Workaid (refurbished tools are distributed to underdeveloped countries).

# Devon Humanists – membership application form

I agree with the principles of **Devon Humanists** and would like to join.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Two at the same address £12 Full time student £2

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the completed form to: \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum annual membership fee: £8

Individual £8

Two at the same address £12

Full time student £2

membership@devonhumanists.org.uk

I enclose a cheque payable to Devon Humanists  
OR I would like to pay by standing order

