

Next
meeting:
11 April in
Ipswich

Suffolk Humanist NEWS

Suffolk Humanist Group Newsletter

April 2007

‘The Berlin Declaration is a victory for Secularism in Europe,’ said Roy Brown, coordinator of the Vision for Europe campaign, speaking from London (25 March). ‘The text, intended to pave the way for a new draft of the European constitution, emphasises the centrality of the individual, our “inalienable rights” and the “inviolable dignity” of the individual. The Declaration contains no reference to God, religion, or to Europe’s supposed Christian heritage but clearly reflects the shared values expressed in the Brussels Declaration launched by our campaign last month at the European Parliament.’ *International Humanist & Ethical Union*

Planning for activism, AGM, Wednesday 11 April

If you're one of the many who think that religious organisations have too much influence in public life, come to our AGM and help us plan our strategy for raising the profile of Humanism and secularism in Suffolk and N E Essex over the next year. The British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society campaign at national level. Active groups like ours can challenge the churches and other religious organisations’ attempts to influence government and public institutions at local level and raise public awareness of the dangers. Those who strive to increase religious influence in public life fail to appreciate that a secular society is the only guarantee of religious freedom for all. We’re not anti-religion—we just think it should be a private matter, not a publicly-funded imposition.

There are two projects we need help with. Firstly, an entertainment to educate people about Humanism past, present and future—so far, the group who’re planning this have been thwarted by illness and personal problems, but we’re still keen. Secondly, the provision of user-friendly educational resources for teachers working with the new Suffolk RE syllabus from September this year. If you have more ideas, please come and tell us about them.

The AGM part shouldn't take long, but we need new officers. Our current Chair and Vice-Chair have said that they won't be standing for re-election. If you'd like to know what's involved with becoming a committee member, phone 01473 658828.

We'll be in Room 1 (next to the front door) at Castle Hill Community Centre, Highfield Road, Ipswich, from 7.30pm to 10pm.

AGM agenda & election

The annual reports and accounts will be available at the AGM, and subsequently on the website and in the next newsletter.

The election will be for the following: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and committee members. We aim to share responsibilities as fairly as possible so that no one is over-loaded, but you will be expected to do more than simply attend meetings. Most committee meetings are by telephone conference call, to save travel time and expenses.

www.suffolkhumanists.org.uk



The Happy
Human—
the international
symbol of Humanism

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The Suffolk Humanist group was founded in 1991. We promote Humanism and provide Humanist fellowship for non-believers in Suffolk and North East Essex. We meet in Ipswich and Colchester. Sympathetic non-members are welcome, but by joining us you'll help us to raise awareness of Humanism and challenge the increasing influence of religion in public life, the arts and the media.

The Suffolk Humanist Ceremonies Team has an unblemished record for high standards. We provide non-religious ceremonies for all occasions, including baby-namings, weddings, funerals and civic ceremonies. For more information, see the contact details above.

Humanism—for the good life based on human feelings and thought

Many apologies for the short newsletter. I've been in hospital after breaking an ankle and will be confined to a wheelchair indoors until the plaster comes off in about 5 weeks. I won't be at the AGM but I'm sure you can manage without me!

Margaret



Peter Tatchell at Colchester

There was a good turnout for our meeting in Colchester on 15 March, when guest speaker Peter Tatchell spoke about democracy. Apologies to those who were expecting Peter to talk about his human rights work but we know that he's been under a lot of pressure (100s of emails a day, death threats, etc.) and simply forgot. However, he provided us with plenty of stimulating food for thought.

You can read articles by Peter on the Guardian's Comment is Free website—http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/peter_tatchell/.

A plug for Humanism on BBC Essex—After the Bishop of Chelmsford had tried to put a positive spin on a survey released by Tearfund (a Christian relief and development agency working in partnership with Christian churches) that reported a general lack of interest in the church, BBC Essex sought a comment about Humanism. Deputising for Essex Humanist Brian Whitelaw (who was unwell), I was interviewed by phone at 8am on Tuesday 3 April. MN

Programme — mark the dates in your diary now!

All meetings start at 7.30pm.

Guests welcome.

AGM & Strategy meeting—

Wednesday 11 April, in Room 1 at Castle Hill Community Centre, Ipswich,

Colchester meeting—Thursday 17 May. Activity to be announced.

13 June 2007—guest speaker Andrew Copson, British Humanist Association Education & Public Affairs Officer in Room 6 (upstairs) at

Castle Hill Community Centre, Ipswich.

Ipswich meetings on 12 September and 14 November 2007, and 13 February 2008—activities to be announced.

Colchester meeting on 18 October. Activity to be announced.

No meeting in Castle Hill or Colchester during July, August, December or January but there'll be social events.

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