

Suffolk Humanists and Secularists

Newsletter August 2017

"Annual General Meeting and Barbecue"

Tuesday 8th August "AGM and Bring a Plate barbecue".

This year Sue Hewlett has generously offered to host our annual AGM and barbecue at her home in Stutton.

Details are:

AGM from 7:00 pm - 7.30 p.m.(hopefully) followed by a barbecue .

Place:

Ty Y Tarw
Manningtree Road
Stutton
IPSWICH
IP9 2SW

This is on the opposite side of the road just past the King's Head Pub in Stutton as you head towards Manningtree.

Please BRING A PLATE of food to share and any drinks but the usual barbecue fare of burgers (both meat and veggie) will be provided.

To allow us to get the numbers right PLEASE LET ME KNOW by Saturday 5th August if you will be coming. Friends/partners are of course welcome.

My email is denisjohnston@btinternet.com or telephone 01394387462.

Sue can be contacted on 01473 328541.

(See pages 2 and 3 for annual reports)

Summary of our July Meeting: "Stem Cell Revolutions"

Our July meeting nearly didn't happen for when we arrived at Arlington's we discovered that it was closed for the evening. Fortunately Ian Hawker who lived not too far away offered to hold the meeting at his house.

Dr John Day introduced the topic and then showed the documentary film "Stem Cell Revolutions" which not only covered the science behind astonishing power of stem cells to restore organs but also raised many ethical issues. What amazed me was that so much of the progress was being made in India where thousands are being cured blindness to the extent that India has become the centre of excellence attracting patients from all over the world.

A trailer for the film is available at <http://www.stemcellrevolutions.com/watch>.

A New Place to meet?

The East of England Faiths Agency which provides educational resources, training and speakers in the field of RE (including Humanism) has been offered the use of several rooms, including a largish meeting room in Central Ipswich. This is on the upper floor of the now unused Co-op FuneralCare building in St Helens St.

EEFA has asked if we, along with other groups would be interested in using/sharing the room(s) and discussions are underway.

Chair's Annual Report

We have had regular monthly meetings, mainly at Arlington's and managed to attract a reasonable number on most occasions. Our pub lunch meetings have been scheduled on a monthly basis.

The committee has met regularly but unfortunately both Richard Layton and Peter Davidson left the committee for health reasons during the year.

We established a MeetUp website early in the year as many other groups had said that this was very successful in attracting members. Although we now have a large number of contacts it has not really increased active membership.

We remain affiliated to the BHA and National Secular Society. I attended the BHA Group Representatives annual meeting and the SACRE representatives meeting.

The Suffolk Interfaith Resource (SIFRE) closed during the year but has been replaced with the Ipswich Faith and Community Forum (IFCF) where I was elected secretary.

Essentially IFCF is trying to get community cohesion by organising events that bring different people together despite their beliefs rather than because of them

Our main formal links with education are via SACRE (Standing Advisory Committee on RE) and via EEFA (East of England Faiths Agency). The role of SACREs remains uncertain as schools opt out of LEA control and the increase in faith schools remains a concern. EEFA provides a useful way of getting opportunities to visit schools and other educational establishments.

Membership continues around the 65-70 number but as ever it is clear that many members are quite elderly and often infirm. I have managed to produce a monthly Newsletter throughout the year primarily to keep these members informed. The downward trend in the number of Newsletters to be posted each year has continued with only 26 members still requesting a paper version. All others are distributed by email.

As ever we are indebted to the work of ex-officio members: Margaret for arranging occasional daytime meetings, Nathan for

running the website and John for liaising with the BHA to keep them informed about meetings etc.

Yet again I'd like to appeal to anyone who feels they have something to offer the group as a committee member, speaker or whatever to offer their services. Additionally we need to (and must) find a way to attract younger members who can take an active part and future proof humanism in Suffolk..

27th July 2017

Denis Johnston

Secretary's Annual Report

Our programme for the year 2017 was made as usual in early January and it was decided that it would be mainly discussions again until we had more members when we could think about suitable speakers again. The discussions we have had and are going to have are listed below:-

10th January: "10 minute topics"

15th February: Darwin Day Dinner

14th March: Lewis Connelly
"Unitarianism"

11th April: George Bethell "Voltaire"

9th May: Denis Johnston: "History of pseudo science"

13th June: All "Read any good books lately?"

11th July: John Day: "Stem cell revolutions"

8th August: Humanist Party and AGM

12th September: John Mellis "Bertrand Russell Man against God"

10th October: Denis Johnston "The ice ages and how they affected evolution"

14th November: Liz Thompson "Religion and Superstition"

12th December. No meeting (UN event)

So far the meetings have been varied and interesting and people who have attended have enjoyed the occasion and the venue. The meetings are still not well attended but we have had 14 people on several occasions. We have constructed a pleasing formula for the meetings touching on a wide range of topics. We would like to attract more speakers but that is difficult to do if attendance is low. The three speakers we had this year so far were all excellent and produced lively and informed discussions.

We decided to try and have a meal on the last Saturday of every of month at the Duke of York as we found it difficult to remember the correct Saturday when it was alternative months. The dates are as follows-

28th January, 25 th February, 27 th March ,
25 th May, 28 th June, 29 th. July, 30 th
September, 28 th October, 25 th. November

We have succeeded in holding meetings every month with the sterling support of Denis Johnston who steps into the breach when necessary. Membership is increasing and we could do with a few additional members on the committee from new membership to have more ideas for meetings and to cover when other members are not available and to generate new ideas. The Chair is still actively trying to attract new members through Meet up which has had some limited success. The venue at Arlington's is still suitable because the atmosphere is very congenial, food and drinks are readily available and the room is

the right size considering the low turn out of members - although there was slight problem in July . Parking has not been a problem unless there is a football match.
Elisabeth Thompson 31 st. July

AGENDA for AGM

1. Apologies
- .
2. Approval of Minutes of 2016 AGM.
3. Matters arising.
4. Reports:
 - Chairperson.
 - Secretary.
 - Treasurer/membership secretary.
5. Nomination and election of committee:
 - Chairperson.
 - Vice-Chairperson.
 - Secretary.
 - Treasurer.
 - Two committee members.
6. Motions
7. AOB.

Suffolk Humanists & Secularists

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