

## What is Humanism?

Humanism is an ethical life stance centred on people.

Humanists:

- Think for themselves about what is right and wrong, based on reason and respect for others.
- Find **meaning, beauty and joy in the one life we have**, without the need to believe in the afterlife.
- Look to **evidence and science instead of religion** as the best way to discover and understand the world.
- Believe people can use empathy and compassion to **make the world a better place for everyone**.

## Where does Humanism come from?

The roots of Humanism go back to 500BC and earlier. They have been nurtured by thinkers such as Erasmus, Voltaire, Gibbon, Hume, Shelley, Darwin, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Julian Huxley, Bertrand Russell and Jonathan Miller.

## What is the British Humanist Association?

The BHA grew from 19th century secular societies. It campaigns on a number of social/moral issues relating to the creation of a more open, equal society and greater international co-operation. It has many distinguished supporters including: Jim Al-Kahlili, Stephen Fry, Philip Pullman, Grayson Perry, Richard Dawkins, Polly Toynbee, Brian Cox, Ian McEwan. There are over fifty local groups across the U.K. The BHA is a member of the International Humanist & Ethical Union.

You can visit the BHA website at [www.humanism.org.uk](http://www.humanism.org.uk)

You might like to do the quiz and find out if you are a Humanist!

<https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/are-you-a-humanist/>

## What do Farnham Humanists do?

- Meet and enjoy socialising with like-minded people.
- Learn, exchange ideas, and debate issues.
- Volunteer and engage in the community, helping others and charitable work.
- Promote and celebrate evidence based rational thinking.
- Encourage knowledge about humanism as an ethical life-stance.
- Represent non-religious views to provide an important balance in society and education.

**Founded in June 2004**, we now have about 35 members. We meet in Farnham for our monthly Sunday evening talks and discussions on topics from 'The Meaning of life' or 'Climate Change' to views from various faiths. We also meet informally on the first Wednesday of each month for a friendly drink - an inspiring discussion is inevitable! Group activities include our annual dinner, country walk, visit to a place of humanist interest and a festive evening. Our yearly debates have attracted prominent national speakers on topics including 'Assisted dying' and 'Nuclear power' and charity collections support local and developing world charities.

**As well as our members volunteering as individuals** for many organisations, some of our group give time to the following:

- **Community work:** visiting, but only on request, those in need of someone to talk about life generally, possibly in hospitals, hospices and prisons.
- **Education:** we receive invitations from Surrey schools to partake in assemblies, religious education and debates, where we can offer a secular view as a balance to religion within the Agreed Syllabus.
- **Ceremonies:** Many people know of the very personal and dignified non-religious funerals that humanists have conducted for many decades. Less well-known are our ceremonies to celebrate a marriage, civil partnership or to welcome a new baby into the world. These memorable occasions are led by individual members of the group who have been trained, accredited and monitored as celebrants by the BHA.