



## Humanists you may have heard of

There have been people with humanist beliefs and values for as long as there have been people. Thinkers, writers and social activists from George Eliot to E M Forster, from John Stuart Mill to Bertrand Russell, from Albert Einstein to Richard Dawkins, from Epicurus to Marie Curie, from David Hume to Christopher Hitchens, who have all shared humanists beliefs and values.

Famous modern humanists include philosophers and thinkers Julian Baggini, Peter Cave, Simon Blackburn, A C Grayling, Stephen Law and Nigel Warburton; actors and entertainers Jane Asher, Stephen Fry, Miriam Karlin, Stewart Lee, Tim Minchin, Ed Byrne and Robin Ince; novelists Maureen Duffy, Ian McEwan, Phillip Pullman and Terry Pratchett; artists Anish Kapoor and Grayson Perry; scientists Colin Blakemore, Richard Dawkins, Alice Roberts and Brian Cox; writers and broadcasters Susan Blackmore, Kenan Malik, Jenny Murray, Claire Rayner, Laurie Taylor and Gene Roddenberry; and human rights activists Peter Tatchell and Mariam Namazie.

“Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance that affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. Humanism stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethics based on human and other natural values in a spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. Humanism is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality.” *Minimum Statement on Humanism – International Humanist and Ethical Union*

*Dorset Humanists is a Partner of the British Humanist Association, an associate member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, affiliated to LGBT Humanists, Defence Humanists and the National Secular Society.*

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# What is Humanism?



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## Values

Humanists believe that human welfare and human fulfilment should be the aim of our morality. Humanists make their ethical decisions based on the available evidence and an assessment of the likely outcomes of our actions, not on any sacred texts or unchanging commandments. They think people should consider carefully about what action is likely to be the most beneficial or least harmful for those concerned and that more choices should be based on guiding principles such as honesty and a sensitive regard for the physical and emotional welfare of others, rather than hard and fast rules.

### The religious make up of Bournemouth (2011 Census)



57.1% Christian  
29.7% No religion  
1.8% Muslim  
0.7% Jewish

Religion (full sample)	
No religion	50.4
Church of England	16.2
Roman Catholic	8.7

## The Meaning of Life

Humanists accept that our present life is our only life, not just preparation for a life after death. They believe that, in this one life, we have to make meaning and purpose for ourselves. Humanists are positive, gaining inspiration from our lives, art and culture, and a rich natural world.

Humanists recognise that many people want to mark important transitions in their lives in a way that is meaningful and the British Humanist Association trains and accredits celebrants to provide weddings, baby namings and funerals for those looking for a non-religious alternative to faith services.

The demand for these increases dramatically year on year.

# HUMANIST Ceremonies

## Reality

Humanists are people who believe that the way to understand the world around us is through our senses, through evidence, experience and human reason. Humanists don't believe in some "second layer" to reality where we might find ghosts or demons or gods. Humanists reject the notion of a revealed and personal god that takes an interest in the lives and welfare of human beings because they find no credible evidence for it. They regard religions, and the theology and dogma associated with religions, as human inventions.

## Society

Humanists have always worked for a state where no one enjoys privileges or suffers discrimination because of their religious or non-religious beliefs. People should have the freedom to pursue their own ideas of the good life, as long as they do no harm to others. The British Humanist Association supports the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and similar proclamations affirming the right of all individuals to freedom and dignity. Humanists were involved in the foundation of many international institutions such as the World Health Organisation and UNESCO.

As individuals many humanists do voluntary work with agencies such as Samaritans or Citizens Advice Bureaux, in hospitals, hospices or prisons, with asylum seekers, and in other ways. Collectively, the British Humanist Association supports and is a part of coalitions to end child poverty, address climate change, and advance other causes of interest to all people.

