



'Humanism' is the label we give to a very familiar set of ideas including freedom of thought and enquiry, experimental science, a naturalistic (not super-naturalistic) view of reality, living a good life, acceptance that we have only one life, and human flourishing. Within this minimal framework we're free to think, question, and disagree, guided by the best available evidence and reflection. The framework itself is ancient, going back as far as the ancient Greeks, but humanism remains a living and evolving tradition.

In a nutshell, humanism is a coherent and satisfying philosophy of life. Most people are already trying to live well and flourish. What humanism can offer is a way of making that quest more integrated and reflective, drawing on the wisdom of the past and the knowledge available to us today. It doesn't offer fixed answers or settled dogmas. Instead, it provides the opportunity for discussion, dialogue and learning together. Humanism, practised well, can be a quietly counter-cultural force for good in our divided and polarised world. We don't have to agree, but we can learn to disagree well.

This is the ethos behind all of our events: good thinking and good dialogue as we deepen our understanding of the lifelong challenge of being human. It's our hope that you will find stimulation and friendship by being part of our humanist group, whether as an occasional visitor or a lifelong member.

If you would like to be kept up to date with all of our news simply visit our website and subscribe to our monthly bulletin, or leave your contact details at the welcome desk.

David Warden

Chairman of Dorset Humanists

Editor of Humanistically Speaking magazine

Honorary Member of Humanists UK

Joining is easy and affordable!

Dorset Humanists is recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue (EW10227) and funded entirely by voluntary donations. If you enjoy our events and share our aims and values, please join us for a very affordable £15 pa (students £5). Members get special discounts on selected events and more say in how we develop in the future. To join us, pick up a membership form at one of our meetings, phone 07910 886629, or see our website.

Free Entry

Unless otherwise stated, entry to all events in this programme is free to members and non-members alike, although we do appreciate an optional small donation of around £3.00 towards costs. Courses may attract an initial booking fee.

Parking

Moordown: Free on-site parking, including parking for Disabled Badge Holders. Additional roadside parking available nearby. West Cliff Hotel: Two hotel car parks with charges. There's also quite good roadside parking nearby.

Refreshments

Some refreshments are complimentary. Otherwise, can be purchased in Moordown Community Centre café and the West Cliff Hotel bar.

Mailing List

To receive our free monthly bulletins and regular updates, enter your email details on the website, or leave your email address at the desk.

Ceremonies

Accredited humanist celebrants are available to meet your needs for non-religious weddings, namings and funerals. Please see our website or leaflets on ceremonies.

Lending Library

We have a humanist lending library at Moordown Community Centre. Please browse and borrow books and remember to bring them back the following month.

Information

Please check our monthly bulletin and/or Meetup.com site for any changes to this programme. The views expressed by speakers/facilitators are their own and not necessarily those of Dorset Humanists.

Dogs

Only assistance dogs trained to support a disability are permitted at our speaker events. Dogs are welcome on our walks.

Venue addresses

Moordown Community Centre Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW

Bournemouth West Cliff Hotel 7 Durlay Chine Rd, Bournemouth BH2 5JS

Moon in the Square 4-8 Exeter Rd, Bournemouth BH2 5AQ



January – March 2026



Website: dorset.humanist.org.uk
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Humanist Café The Meaning of Love

Saturday 10th January 2.00pm *Moordown*

Join us for the inaugural meeting of Humanist Café. Coffee and cake on arrival and a relaxed friendly atmosphere.

Love is something every one of us longs for – yet it’s also one of the most misunderstood aspects of being human. The humanistic psychologist Erich Fromm called it an “art” we must learn; religions present it as a divine command; psychologists see it as the cornerstone of emotional development. But what does love look like from a humanist point of view – without gods, dogma or fairy-tale expectations? David Warden and Wendy Goddard will lead the discussion.



The Challenge of Forgiveness

Simon Whipple
Thursday 22nd January 7.30pm *West Cliff*

In our first evening meeting of the New Year, we continue our exploration of humanist themes with a discussion about forgiveness. It’s usually thought admirable to forgive someone who has caused harm – but what does it actually mean to forgive, and is it always important? Why forgive rather than hold a grudge? And how does apologising fit into the picture? Simon Whipple will guide a reflective conversation on the many issues surrounding forgiveness.



Third Sunday walks

Full details on Meetup.com

Sunday 18th Jan 11am. Hurn Forest + Avon Causeway pub. John Hubbard is our walk leader. This is an easy flat walk of about 4 miles but we may encounter some puddles. Wellies, good walking shoes, and walking poles may be helpful. Full details on Meetup. If you are an experienced walk leader and would like to suggest an accessible and tested walk of around 6 miles in the Bournemouth/Purbeck/New Forest areas please get in touch with David on 07910 886629.



Darwin Day Lunch and a talk on Evolutionary Psychology

Daniel Dancey
Saturday 14th February 1.15pm *Moordown*

Join us for our delicious Darwin Day Lunch, celebrating the life and legacy of Charles Darwin, the pioneer of evolutionary theory. We celebrate his ground-breaking contributions to science and his embodiment of humanist values such as curiosity, reason, and the pursuit of knowledge. This year, our treasurer Daniel will present a talk on evolutionary psychology, exploring how human behaviour, emotions, and social instincts developed to solve ancestral challenges. He’ll show how these deep evolutionary patterns continue to influence our relationships, decisions, fears, and everyday motivations today.



What are Rights and What’s the Fuss? *Barry Newman*

Thursday 19th February 7.30pm *West Cliff*

A core topic for humanists, and one Barry is keen for us to examine together. If we’re so attached to rights, we’d better have a proper chat about what we actually mean by them. As Aristotle reminds us, rights are unavoidably linked to duties – a connection that may have been lost in our hyper-liberal society. Barry won’t be presenting a fixed view or arguing a case; instead, he’ll guide a gently ‘Socratic’ conversation by asking thoughtful questions. We’ll sit around tables for open, respectful discussion about which rights matter most and why.



First Thursday pub socials

Details on Meetup.com

Our pub social is on the first Thursday of the month at Moon in the Square. Hosted by Dean Robertson or Lyn Glass. We usually find a table on the ground floor on the right-hand side as you enter. No set agenda. Just turn up and chat! Food is available and drinks are reasonably priced. From 7.30pm until whenever you like. Thursday 5th February, Thursday 5th March. Please check on Meetup. Not January.



Annual Members’ Meeting

With complimentary buffet lunch
Saturday 14th March 1.30pm *Moordown*

Another chance to grab a free lunch! This one precedes our annual meeting which is always a very lively affair. Our treasurer will give an account of our income and expenditure and our chairman will give his report of the year. He will also announce Dorset Humanists’ Humanist of the Year. Members will elect the committee and Chair for the next year and discuss and vote on any proposals. Please submit any proposals you would like to be discussed no later than the end of January to chairman@dorset.humanist.org.uk. Nominations for the committee must also be received no later than the end of February.



Pecking Orders: Pros and Cons

Simon Whipple
Thursday 26th March 7.30pm *West Cliff*

We know that chickens have pecking orders – formally known as dominance hierarchies – but do similar structures exist among humans? Before opening the discussion, Simon will outline the many subtle clues that suggest people instinctively defer to those they perceive as being higher in the hierarchy. He will also explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of living in a hierarchical society. After this short introduction, we’ll consider together how hierarchy shapes our behaviour, relationships, and sense of fairness.



Third Friday hotel socials

Details on Meetup.com

If you’re less keen on venturing into the town centre, why not come along to the West Cliff Hotel on a Friday evening to enjoy friendly conversation and drinks in the hotel bar? These socials are hosted by committee members Sandra Lucie-Smith or Lyn Glass. Please note that bar prices are a bit higher than Wetherspoons. Friday 16th January 7.30pm, Friday 20th February 7.30pm, Friday 20th March 7.30pm.

Details correct at the time of printing. Please check the latest bulletin and especially Meetup.com for any changes to this programme.