

BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

England & Wales · Charity number 285987

Details

Other names	HUMANISTS UK
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	00228781
Registered	1983-01-17
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Humanists UK 3 Waterhouse Square 138-142 Holborn London EC1N 2SW
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Website	www.humanism.org.uk

Activities

Objects: 4.1.1. THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMANISM, NAMELY A NON-RELIGIOUS ETHICAL LIFESTANCE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF WHICH ARE A COMMITMENT TO HUMAN WELLBEING AND A RELIANCE ON REASON, EXPERIENCE AND A NATURALISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD;4.1.2. THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION AND IN PARTICULAR THE STUDY OF AND THE DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HUMANISM AND ABOUT THE ARTS AND SCIENCE AS THEY RELATE TO HUMANISM;4.1.3. THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS DEFINED IN INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS TO WHICH THE UNITED KINGDOM IS PARTY, IN EACH CASE IN PARTICULAR AS RELATES TO RELIGION AND BELIEF;4.1.4. THE PROMOTION OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLE HOLDING RELIGIOUS AND NON-RELIGIOUS BELIEFS SO AS TO ADVANCE HARMONIOUS COOPERATION IN SOCIETY.4.2. TO DO ALL SUCH OTHER LAWFUL THINGS AS ARE CONDUCTIVE OR INCIDENTAL TO FURTHERING OR ADVANCING ANY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED OBJECTS

Activities: The British Humanist Association (Humanists UK) promotes Humanism and supports and represents people who seek to live good lives without religious or superstitious beliefs. Humanists UK

provides educational resources on Humanism and humanist funerals and other ceremonies, and campaigns against religious privilege and discrimination on grounds of religion or belief.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Guernsey
- Isle Of Man
- Jersey
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£3,530,649	£3,666,682	£4,279,741	43
2023-12-31	£3,379,251	£3,180,895	£3,164,306	39
2022-12-31	£2,608,246	£2,692,927	£2,904,388	35
2021-12-31	£2,693,316	£2,319,980	£3,047,273	30
2020-12-31	£3,196,877	£2,206,606	£2,662,151	31

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Amy Walden		2024-06-16
Andrew Russell		2022-06-26
Charley Jarrett		2022-06-26
David Iain Deboys		2020-07-11
Dr John Olusegun Adenitire		2023-06-11
Emma Shepherd		2019-06-23
Ginny Collins		2025-06-15
Kate West		2023-06-11
Kay Jones		2025-06-15
Keiron McCabe		2026-02-11
Nicole Maxine Saunders		2025-06-15
Professor Simon Walker-Samuel		2022-06-26
Roland Arthur Davis		2023-06-11
Satnam Lehal		2025-06-15
Sharda Dean		2025-06-15
Tamar Ghosh		2024-06-16

Accounts

British Humanist Association, operating as:



ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 December 2024

Company Number: 00228781

Charity Number: 285987

Humanists UK

Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2024

The Board (the Directors of the Company and the Trustees of the Charity) presents its annual report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

Legal and Administrative Details

Status	The British Humanist Association (Humanists UK) originated as the Union of Ethical Societies in 1896, was incorporated as the Ethical Union in 1928 and became the British Humanist Association in 1967. Its working name became Humanists UK in 2017. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14 March 1928. Its governing instrument is its Articles of Association, adopted on 23 July 2011.			
	Company number:	00228781	Charity number:	285987
Registered office	39 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8BB			
Honorary officers	Chair		Neil Hawkins	
	Vice Chair		Neil McKain	
	Treasurer		Ann O'Connell	
Other Board members	John Adentitire		Ruth Kaufman	
	Samira Ahmed (to 09 December)		Ewan Main (to 16 June)	
	Clive Coen (from 31 January 2025)		Sophy Robinson (to 23 June)	
	Alex Collis (to 16 June)		Andrew Russell	

	Roland Davis	Emma Shepherd
	Iain Deboys	Amy Walden
	Tamar Ghosh (from 15 June)	Simon Walker-Samuel
	Charley Jarrett	Kate West
President	Dr Adam Rutherford	
Principal staff	Chief Executive	Andrew Copson
	Director of Ceremonies	Deborah Hooper
	Director of Communications & Development	Liam Whitton
	Director of Humanist Care	Clare Elcombe Webber
	Director of IT	Andrew West
	Director of Organisational Operations	Catriona McLellan
	Director of People & Culture	Ann-Michelle Burton
	Director of Public Affairs & Policy	Richy Thompson
	Acting Director of Public Affairs & Policy (to May 2024)	Kathy Riddick
	Director of Understanding Humanism	Luke Donnellan
Auditors	Knox Cropper LLP, Chartered Accountants 65 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3A 2AD	
Bankers	The Co-Operative Bank plc 118-120 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 3BA	
Investment Managers	Barclays Wealth, 23 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP14 1AQ BNY Mellon Fund Managers Ltd, PO Box 336, Darlington, DL1 9RF M & G, M&G Charity Department, PO Box 9038, Chelmsford, CM99 2XF	

Mission

By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and we work with them for a better society.

Charitable objects

Humanists UK's Objects are: 'The advancement of Humanism, namely a non-religious ethical life stance, the essential elements of which are a commitment to human wellbeing and a reliance on reason, experience and a naturalistic view of the world; the advancement of education and in particular the study of and the dissemination of knowledge about Humanism and about the arts and science as they relate to Humanism; the promotion of equality and non-discrimination and the protection of human rights as defined in international instruments to which the United Kingdom is party, in each case in particular as relates to religion and belief; the promotion of understanding between people holding religious and non-religious beliefs so as to advance harmonious cooperation in society.'

Structure, governance and management

The Board meets regularly during the year and at the beginning of each meeting members are requested to declare any conflicts of interest. These are detailed in notes 18 and 23 of the financial statements.

The Board reviews its performance and skills annually and new members are recruited to meet any needs or gaps identified.

The day to day management of the Association is delegated to its key management personnel as detailed in note 8 to the financial statements. Remuneration of the Chief Executive is set by the Board. Remuneration of other key management personnel is delegated to the Chief Executive.

Method used to recruit and appoint new Board members

Board members are recruited by election or by appointment, as set out in the Byelaws. Co-options until the next election can be made to fill vacancies arising among the elected Board members.

Induction and training of new Board members

New Board members are provided with a Trustee Handbook which contains information about their role and responsibilities as recommended by the Charity Commission. This includes: the trustee role description and personal specification relevant to the role, the confidentiality policy and the eligibility requirements for becoming a trustee, and a Code of Conduct. They are also supplied with a copy of the Articles of Association, and other governance documents including past reports. Induction meetings covering the background to current matters take place

with the Vice-Chair, the Chief Executive and key members of the staff team. Training on matters relevant to the role and responsibilities of Board members is encouraged and the Board subscribes to literature pertinent to good governance.

Public benefit

The Board is confident that Humanists UK's work benefits the public in significant ways by promoting human rights and offering comprehensive support and services to humanists and the non-religious. Our activities are rigorously aligned with legal standards and Charity Commission guidelines on public benefit. The main areas where our work makes an impact include:

- We lead in educating the public about humanism, providing a moral framework for those without religious beliefs. Our efforts extend through various channels, including our website, public lectures, and educational materials designed for schools, ensuring that knowledge about humanist values and ethics is accessible to all.
- Our celebrants help meet the growing public demand for non-religious ceremonies—such as baby-namings, weddings, and funerals—that reflect personal beliefs. Our goal is for every individual desiring a humanist ceremony to have access to one, facilitated by our skilled network of highly trained humanist celebrants.
- We provide vital humanist pastoral support in environments traditionally served by religious chaplains, such as prisons and healthcare settings, ensuring that the non-religious receive the same level of suitable emotional support and care in times of need. Our trained specialists also provide expert assistance to vulnerable groups neglected by other services, namely 'apostates' and non-religious asylum seekers
- Our policy unit defends the rights of humanists and the non-religious by promoting compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, particularly against discrimination by public authorities on the grounds of religion or belief. Our advocacy efforts include engaging with government bodies and calling for legal reforms to develop these protections further for the benefit of all.
- We bolster local humanist groups and contribute to building a harmonious, pluralistic society, building bridges between non-religious people and those with other beliefs. Our work supports the positive contributions of humanists in various community settings.

The Board considers that these initiatives not only support humanists and the non-religious but also enrich the wider public, fostering an environment of non-discrimination and enhanced understanding of humanist perspectives.

Report on progress towards our five Outcomes

By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and we work with them for a better society. Below, we report on our activity over the course of the year, against the five Outcomes set by the Board as our strategy. Many of our activities overlap and meet more than one Outcome.

More people knowing what humanism is and more non-religious people with humanist beliefs and values recognising themselves as humanists

We continued to develop our various educational programmes to do with humanism.

Education resources (Understanding Humanism)

Our *Understanding Humanism* programme, which provides resources, school visitors, and support for teachers incorporating humanism into lessons, continued to flourish. The *Understanding Humanism* website saw 146,000 hits (163,000 in 2023) with resources downloaded over 35,000 times (39,000 in 2023) and videos viewed 12,000 times (20,000 in 2023). Our separate *Assemblies for All* website, which collates industry-best resources to assist teachers with putting on inclusive assemblies on a range of subjects, received 163,000 page views (191,000 in 2023). These figures seem lower than in the past but the growing use of ad blockers is probably responsible and spot cross-checking of our view figures with click through makes us think the real figures were probably much higher. Meanwhile, our network of 220 trained and accredited school speakers (205 in 2023) spoke to 75,295 pupils through classroom visits (71,000 in 2023) and trained 492 teachers (615 in 2023).

New resources added to the site included English Literature GCSE resources on humanism, and GCSE-level humanist perspectives on crime and punishment. We also commissioned new Welsh translations of our student handouts and *One Life, Live It Well* animated video (voiced by Professor Alice Roberts). We also developed a number of new animated films on humanism, plus eight short *Humanist Heritage* films about humanists from history, for 2025 release. Our popular Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) about humanism, previously hosted via Futurelearn, were re-tooled to host on our own website. We anticipate re-launching the first interactive course, *Introducing humanism* (presented by our patron Sandi Toksvig), early in 2025.

We continued to support other providers to offer better resources for humanism. We consulted on or assisted with resource creation for local councils, individual schools, humanist groups, commercial providers including Oak Academy, Jigsaw RE (formerly known as Discovery RE), and our sister organisation Humanists Malta. One new difficulty emerges as other resource providers trialled using artificial intelligence to create resources, which sometimes produced inaccurate statements such as 'humanism began in the Renaissance' or resources which otherwise mixed up uses of the word 'humanism' in other contexts. We submitted corrections to those providers.

We also continued to support local authorities to include teaching about humanism in schools by endorsing humanist representatives to be part of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education in England and Standing Advisory Councils on Religion, Values, and Ethics in Wales (known as SACREs in England and SACs in Wales). We ended the year with humanist representatives on 143 councils (138 in 2023), including 134 where a humanist sat as a 'full member' (114 in 2023).

Humanist Heritage

2024 saw the second year of our two-year National Lottery Heritage Fund project 'Doers, Dreamers, Place-makers'. As part of this £160,000 project, we delivered an online interactive tour of Conway Hall Ethical Society (one of only two surviving buildings created by and for humanists) and a series of public engagement events. In 2024, this included a special focus on events celebrating our pioneering LGBT rights section LGBT Humanists. Feedback on the virtual tour was extremely positive, with teachers remarking on its usefulness as a classroom resource.

LGBT Humanists' 45th anniversary was marked by our *Picturing Nonconformity* public exhibition and *Lead Me Into Temptation, Please!* summer fair (both at Conway Hall in July). Both drew on extensive research by our Humanist Heritage team and project volunteers, and showcased findings from the archives, fruits of 17 new oral history interviews with current and former members of LGBT Humanists, and new creative works from public engagement and workshops. The summer fair saw 100+ attendees with a sold out opening night featuring poetry readings, performance art, community stalls, and a mixture of moving, comic, and rousing speeches from current and veteran activists. Meanwhile, *Picturing Nonconformity* sold 225 tickets and received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Performers included David Hoyle, activist Ted Brown, the London Humanist Choir, and *RuPaul's Drag Race UK* star Black Peppa.

Our *Humanist Heritage* website continued to expand on the entire history of non-religious thought in the UK. We added 72 new posts, articles, features, and map markers in all, bringing our total coverage to 370 pages. The timespan covered was vast, with articles on topics such as '*Opposition to Christianity in the ancient Roman world*' and '*Time for Reflection in the Scottish Parliament*' joined by oral histories of 'gay lib' era LGBT humanist campaigners and profiles on wide-ranging figures such as Epictetus, Doris Lessing, John Maynard Keynes, and James Baldwin.

Public engagement included talks for the Being Human Festival, the Bloomsbury Festival, Bloomsbury Radio, the Freethought History Festival, the Cremation and Burial Education Conference, Queer Britain, York Humanists, Bristol Humanists, Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists, Trans Day of Remembrance, and the Central London Humanists podcast. Guided walking tours of Cardiff, Bristol, Belfast, and Bloomsbury continued to be organised by both staff and volunteers. Meanwhile, our animated introductory video '*Humanist history: From radical ideas to common sense*' received an additional 3,000 views (4,300 in 2023 on launch).

Our Humanist Ceremonies Funeral Tribute Archive grew in size to 420 tributes (393 in 2023) and was supported by bespoke training delivered to humanist celebrants and warm coverage from the funeral directors website Poppy's. The archive is of immense value for prospective Humanist Ceremonies clients as well as anthropologists and social historians; it offers an invaluable window into the lives of the non-religious people in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Events programme

Our Annual Lectures and Medals series got off to a strong start with our Darwin Day Lecture in February, commemorating the anniversary of Charles Darwin, where our first medallist Dr Rebecca Wragg Sykes spoke on 'Humanity's superpower' to a combined online-and-in-person audience of 1310 (1098 in 2023), chaired by our Vice President Professor Alice Roberts. For International Women's Day in March, Claudia Hammond gave the Rosalind Franklin Lecture on 'The keys to kindness', attended by 890 (652 in 2023), chaired by Samira Ahmed. Our Voltaire Lecture medallist was philosopher and economist Dr Daniel Chandler, who spoke on ways to make society 'Free and equal', to an audience of 785 (879 in 2023) in August. Professor Sir John Curtice delivered the Holyoake Lecture in Manchester and online in October on 'What should we make of the culture wars?', attended by 728 people (340 in 2023). In November, anthropologist Dr Brenna Hassett explored the evolutionary history of 'Growing up human' for our online Blackham Lecture, attended by 234 (935 in 2023).

Our largest event of the year was the Humanists UK Convention, held in Cardiff over three days in June, and attended by 550 (500 in Liverpool in 2023). We were delighted to have former First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford MS as our keynote speaker, and a top-tier cast of entertainers, performers, campaigners, scientists, philosophers, historians, and authors. These included biologist Dr Adam Rutherford (our President), physicist Professor Jim Al-Khalili (Vice President), psychologist Dr Julia Shaw, former Plaid Cymru leader Leanne Wood (patron), Labour MS Julie Morgan (patron), Liberal Democrat peer Lorely Burt (patron), political scientist Brian Klaas, philosopher Julian Baggini (patron), author Catherine Nixey, sociologist Lucy Potter, and comedians Tadiwa Malunge, Jacob Hawley, and Dani Johns.

Our wider programme of both online and in-person events and lectures on various topics relating to humanism continued throughout the year, as well as our online *In Conversation With...* series featuring thinkers and entertainers on a subject where they have deep insight or expertise. Other highlights included a special live-streamed book launch event in December for the interview essay collection *What I Believe* with editor Andrew Copson and contributors Professor Alice Roberts and Natalie Haynes, hosted at the British Library for 200 people.

Web and social media content

The international social media landscape became fragmented across the year, particularly due to a sharp decline in the UK users of X (formerly Twitter) and the arrival of smaller rival platforms such as Threads (owned by Meta) and Bluesky (formerly a project owned by Twitter), and changes to user experience and content policies across

the many platforms. In all, across our 'Humanists UK' channels, we reached 12m people on our Facebook page (16m in 2023), 120k on Instagram (250k in 2023), and 15m on X (22m in 2023). Meanwhile, our videos on YouTube received 487k views (439k in 2023). Our summer campaign, *#HumanistBecause*, generated one million impressions across various platforms.

We saw positive results from investing time in producing videos for TikTok and Instagram Reels, where so far content supporting our campaigns work has tended to outperform educational content. The new channel recorded 76k views. On the audio side, our popular *What I Believe* podcast interviewing humanists in the public eye took a break in 2024, in large part due to the demands of launching and marketing the *What I Believe* book. A seventh and final series of the podcast is expected to air in 2025.

Books about humanism

We entered into a new publishing deal with Hachette to produce more commercially popular books about humanism, following success with Andrew Copson and Professor Alice Roberts' *Little Book* trilogy (*The Little Book of Humanism*, *Humanist Weddings*, and *Humanist Funerals*), published between 2020 and 2023. These sold 5k additional copies, bringing total sales to date to 60k. All author royalties go to Humanists UK.

In 2024 we announced *What I Believe*, based on our popular interview podcast of the same name, with humanist contributors such as Stephen Fry, Sandi Toksvig, Tim Minchin, Siân Berry, Dan Snow, Joan Bakewell, AC Grayling, and Rebecca Goldstein. We organised a launch event for the book with editor Andrew Copson and contributors Natalie Haynes and Alice Roberts at the British Library in December. We also commissioned a major promotional campaign for the book across London Underground and National Rail sites. Booksellers sold over 5k copies in the run-up to Christmas. All author royalties go to Humanists UK.

Dialogue

We continued to expand understanding of humanism among religious people through our dialogue programme. Our network of trained dialogue volunteers had an extremely productive year, with membership growing to 158 (124 in 2023).

Despite the demise of the national Inter Faith Network, we saw an increase in overall network activity, with 92 discrete sessions reported (83 in 2023). These were incredibly varied, including many local activities with councils, 'interfaith' or 'inter-belief' networks, and hospital trusts, including several Holocaust Memorial Day events. Highlights include a humanist-Buddhist dialogue series in London, International Eisteddfod, and sessions with the University of Central Lancashire, Leicestershire Fire Service, Network Rail, and the John Lewis & Partners internal staff network. Our volunteer Dialogue Officer also wrote a chapter on humanism and 'spirituality' for Professor Richard Norman's follow-up to his book *Religion and Atheism: Beyond the Divide*.

More non-religious people living happier, more confident, and more ethical lives

Our network of trained and accredited humanist celebrants, *Humanist Ceremonies*, remained relatively stable at 559 members (567 in 2023) across England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man. We saw relative stability in the number of recorded ceremonies (9.5k compared with 10.5k in 2023). Our weddings continued to be most popular in Northern Ireland, where they benefit from legal recognition.

Our Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN), whose members provide emotional support in hospitals, hospices, prisons, universities, and the armed forces, ended the year with 157 accredited members (127 in 2023). Within the network, the number of members in professional paid employment within their institutions grew, with 14 in healthcare (13 in 2023), four in prisons (three in 2023), and one each in the politics and higher education sectors. Nationally, around a third of the network continued to report 'inclusivity challenges' of various kinds, which ranged from discriminatory and exclusionary language through to unlawful discrimination on the basis of their being non-religious.

Our apostate support programme Faith to Faithless continued providing a schedule of socials and facilitated peer support sessions, policy research on apostasy issues, and assistance for humanist asylum seekers who meet our criteria for letters of support. In total, we supported 192 service total users (130 in 2023), and delivered 111 peer support and social events (85 in 2023). Our dedicated helpline, which piloted in 2023, received a full media launch early in the year and heard from 597 unique callers (20 in 2023). We received 18 new requests for asylum support (down from 24) from non-religious people in the UK fleeing persecution, including state persecution, assassination threats, and intrafamilial violence. A specialist Faith to Faithless conference in October brought together expert speakers Pragna Patel, Dr Kristin Aune, Dr James Murphy, Alexander Barnes-Ross, Rachel Reign, Zara Kay, and Yehudis Fletcher to discuss systemic religious abuse and experiences of apostasy in different high-control religious contexts, attended by 70 (primarily the policy-makers and stakeholders at whom it was targeted).

We continued to make significant investments in the help we offer local volunteers to coordinate local humanist groups and other activities. We did this by providing training, resources, volunteer management and recruitment support, insurance, and marketing. We ended the year with 12 Humanists UK Local Groups (six in 2023). To support the effectiveness of Local Groups, we developed a library of over 60 volunteer training manuals, how-to guides, and other resources covering everything from taking donations, running events, using Humanists UK web systems, and how to use social media. We saw especially well-attended launch events for new Local Groups in Oxford and Nottingham. We also continued to support another 28 affiliated 'partner groups' including through a revamped national training meeting.

Our special interest networks and sections continued to organise activities for different demographics within our membership. LGBT Humanists saw significantly increased activity on the back of *Humanist Heritage* work in commemoration of its 45th anniversary (detailed above under our first strategic heading) in addition to its usual stable of social events, lectures, summer Pride parades, and Trans Day of Remembrance. Defence Humanists participated in the National Service of Remembrance, and supported humanist groups to join in with local Remembrance ceremonies. Young Humanists enabled youth volunteering across the organisation, mainly within our dialogue, outreach, education, and local group programmes. And the London Humanist Choir continued to book performances around the capital, including its own annual 'One Life' concert.

More people enjoying greater freedom of thought, of expression, and of choice over their own lives

Our year in campaigning on humanist issues is best seen in two halves, separated by the snap election in July. Around the election itself, our policy unit and communications teams shifted focus to promoting our policy agenda – centred around advancing freedom of thought, choice, and expression – to the major parties. We revised our tactics, analysed manifestos, met with party officials, provided guidance for humanist groups on organising local hustings, equipped our members to grill candidates on their doorsteps, and created new systems so that supporters could send questions to the thousands of different candidates standing for election.

The change of government following the election brought significant volumes of new work for our policy team. This included several pieces of legislation on issues where we already had major campaigns, including government bills covering House of Lords reform, school admissions, illegal religious schools, and the national curriculum, and a private member's bill on assisted dying, while for other campaigns we sought to make good on promises made by the government while in opposition. We also continued as secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG), a cross-party group of over 120 MPs and peers who champion humanist issues at Westminster.

Freedom of thought

Freedom of thought is a foundational requirement of a free society. Advocacy of this fundamental right by humanists goes back many centuries in this country and in others. Our public policy platform endorses the concept of the secular state as the best means to achieve freedom, fairness, equal citizenship, and peace in a plural and cohesive society. We maintain that only by maintaining a fair separation between public institutions and institutions of religion or belief (including those of humanism) can the state fully respect and promote freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief for all citizens, up to the limits of the rights and freedoms of others in a fair society.

Political institutions

We continued to campaign for reforms of Parliament to remove institutional advantages given to religious groups and to address discrimination against the non-religious. Relevant to our campaign to remove the 26 Lords Spiritual from the House of Lords, several of the major parties promised democratic reforms of the House of Lords in their election manifestos. The Labour Party promised immediate removal of hereditary peers and subsequent consultation on wider-ranging reform (less specific than its 2022 policy to move to a fully elected upper house). Subsequently, we worked with Sir Gavin Williamson MP and Baroness Harriet Harman on cross-party amendments to the House of Lords (Abolition of Hereditary Peers) Bill to put bishops firmly on the agenda for later wider reforms. A poll in November showed that only one in five Britons support the practice of granting religious representatives automatic seats in the Lords. Meanwhile, on the Isle of Man, MHKs voted in favour of the Constitution Bill, which would abolish Tynwald voting rights for the Bishop of Sodor and Man.

In the House of Commons we worked with the All Party Parliamentary Humanist Group on its campaign to abolish the use of prayer-cards to reserve limited Commons seating, which puts MPs that do not attend morning Anglican prayers at a disadvantage. At its January meeting, the group again endorsed the recommendations of its earlier *Time for Reflection* report examining this issue. We put these concerns to the Modernisation Committee, the remit of which is to make improvements to the House's procedures, standards, and working practices. Additionally, the APPHG called for reform of how chaplaincy and emotional support is provided to MPs (currently the exclusive preserve of an Anglican chaplain). It called for Westminster to adopt a version of the multi-belief chaplaincy model used in the Welsh Parliament, which has provided a humanist pastoral carer alongside Christian and Muslim chaplains since 2023.

We saw significantly more support on issues relating to modernisation of Parliament itself from MPs than ever before – reflecting the younger and less religious makeup of the Commons following the election. We sent out a press release containing an analysis of the religious beliefs of every member of Parliament, combining publicly available data from the parliamentary swearing-in ceremony with our own political intelligence and analysis. This data showed that the UK had elected its most non-religious cohort of MPs in history, with 40% taking a non-religious affirmation instead of a religious oath on entry to Parliament, including Sir Keir Starmer, who by our count was (at least) the seventh non-religious Prime Minister to be open about it during his lifetime – the first being our own 1890s President, Ramsay MacDonald. This attracted widespread UK and international coverage, including from the *Times*, *Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, and *Spectator*.

Religious state schools

Before the general election, the Conservative government pledged to lift the 50% cap that limits on faith-based selection for existing and future free schools. It also proposed to approve the country's first religiously selective special schools. Our media campaigning in opposition to this attracted widespread coverage across local BBC Radio outlets, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5 Live, LBC, the *Evening Standard* (three times), *Independent*, *Guardian* (front page), *Telegraph*, *i*, *Daily Mail*, *Herald Scotland*, *National*, *Schools Week*, and ITV News, along with 177 local media mentions.

Following the change of government, the Department for Education did not announce any decision on the prior government's consultation, but the Labour government's own Schools Bill was then published later in the year, which contained clauses which would effectively lift the cap in general through changes to the rules about which kinds of new schools can open. We believed this may have been inadvertent. We wrote to ministers about it and began preparatory work for it ahead of a major campaign in 2025 to prompt an amendment to address our issues with the Bill.

Across the year, we highlighted ways in which the Church of England and Catholic dioceses were openly using church schools as a means to recruit new converts and grow their congregation numbers, with the Anglican strategy described as a project to '*double the number of active disciples*'. In June, we identified that the Church of England had spent over £7 million on projects to evangelise children through state schools. In July, we drew attention to newly announced C of E plans to additionally target community schools with 'young missionaries' through further multi-million pound funding. We also challenged the Catholic Southwark Diocese Board of Education's 'teacher conversion programme'. This offered a clear example of why the UK should remove exemptions from equality legislation that allow faith schools to discriminate against prospective and current staff on the basis of religion.

Unregistered (illegal) schools

Early in 2024, we continued to urge the Conservative government to legislate to close down illegal schools – unregistered buildings where supposedly 'home educated' pupils were subject to rote religious learning without any substantial secular education at all, leaving children poorly educated. Action on this issue had been promised in the previous King's Speech but unrelated political difficulties with other parts of the draft legislation led to its wholesale abandonment.

As a result, the issue of illegal schools was a major feature in our pre-election lobbying work, asking parties and candidates to commit to tackling the issue through legislation. Following the election, the Labour government's Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill subsequently included long-promised provisions that would enable Ofsted and local authorities to properly investigate and shut down so-called illegal religious schools across England. If passed in 2025 this will fulfil a major campaign aim, for which our team can take substantial credit.

In Wales, we submitted a response in support of the Welsh Government's Children Missing Education Database, which proposes the implementation of a register for children not being educated in a school setting. During this process we engaged with the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales about the issue.

Balanced approaches to religions and worldviews: curriculums

Following the general election, the new UK government launched a Curriculum and Assessment Review, which created the opportunity for us to engage with policy formation about the inclusion of humanism in Religious Education lessons. We made the

case for an inclusive Religions and Worldviews education, reflecting the recommendations of the Commission on Religious Education's large-scale report some years back. Our education policy staff participated in regional 'roadshow' events organised as part of the review.

In Wales, we contributed to the development of a new subject framework from the Religious Education Council for England and Wales. We raised concerns with the WJEC Religious Studies GCSE, prompting improvements. We also shared concerns with the Education Minister concerning politically loaded, socially conservative viewpoints on issues like abortion in the Monmouthshire Agreed Syllabus. We continue to have concerns about the implementation of the new curriculum in Wales.

Balanced approaches to religions and worldviews: 'collective worship'

As part of our submission to the the Curriculum and Assessment Review, we asked for the terms of reference for the review to take into account the content of school assemblies, which currently are dictated by provisions from the 1944 Education Act which mandate 'broadly Christian' 'collective worship' in schools of no religious character. We also worked with parliamentarians on possible amendments to the government's separate Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill which would prompt reform of this outdated provision, which the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has told the UK runs counter to children's human rights.

Earlier in the year, we received widespread media attention following an incident after Michaela School won a court battle over its so-called 'prayer ban', which brought the not-fit-for-purpose nature of collective worship laws into public discourse. Our Chief Executive was interviewed on the Michaela ruling by ITV News, Sky News, and LBC, while our Vice President Polly Toynbee was interviewed on *World at One*. We were also quoted on it in BBC News Online, 11 pieces in the *Daily Mail*, the *Evening Standard*, *The Independent*, *Herald Scotland*, *The National*, and 188 local Press Association outlets.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

In England, the Sunak government launched a review of the government's Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) guidance, and proposed to introduce age limits at which certain topics could be taught, with potentially serious safeguarding implications. Our submission to the review emphasised the need for no faith-based carve outs to the age-appropriate education to keep children happy, healthy, and safe. Following the election, the incoming Labour government's announcement of a wider Curriculum and Assessment Review happily superseded this review.

Public services: Support for those leaving high control religions

In March, we raised objections to Network Rail when an Islamic hadith urging 'sinners' to 'repent' was promoted via the departure boards at King's Cross railway station. We said that this was not an appropriate way to acknowledge Ramadan, as it involved the state (embodied by Network Rail) endorsing conservative religious views that were insulting to non-religious people, apostates, divorcees, unmarried couples, LGBT people, and so on. Network Rail apologised for the breach of its policy, saying 'our main departure board

should be reserved for train information' and that it would investigate why 'general celebratory Ramadan messages weren't used'. Messages on the departure board are distinct from in-station advertising, where religious and humanist advertising are typically subject to the same restrictions as each other.

Right to asylum

We repeatedly urged the Conservative government to abandon its proposed Rwanda deportation scheme for those claiming seeking asylum to the UK, which we said was 'cruel' and pointed out would have particularly severe repercussions for humanist asylum seekers sent there due to Rwanda's blasphemy laws. Our concerns were raised in the House of Lords by APPHG members Baroness Whitaker, Baroness Massey, and Lord Dubs, including through a proposed amendment to the Rwanda Bill. The government's Rwanda Bill sought to dis-apply specific legal human rights and set aside a ruling of the Supreme Court on the safety of Rwanda. We were pleased when the scheme was scrapped by the new Prime Minister shortly after the general election.

Freedom of choice

Freedom of choice is a cross-cutting priority in our policy work, intersecting closely with our work for greater freedom of thought and expression. It frequently underpins our request for equitable treatment for humanism and humanists in law, as with our campaign for legal recognition of humanist marriages. Freedom of choice also underpins our longstanding demands for equality and universal access to justice, and our commitments to human rights as a paramount legal and social endeavour. It is also embodied by the continued presence of racial equality, women's rights, children's rights, and LGBT rights as prominent themes in our public advocacy.

Assisted dying

In the first half of the year, we played our part in stimulating significant political movement, media reporting, and social media activity around the right to die, working with our partners in the Assisted Dying Coalition and with Dignity in Dying, which led to promises from both the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Leader of the Opposition Keir Starmer to allow a free vote on the issue in the event of either of the two major parties winning the election. Starmer additionally promised government time for a private member's bill to pass through Parliament, which he fulfilled following the election when Kim Leadbeater MP came top of the Private Member's Ballot in the House of Commons and chose assisted dying as her topic.

The Bill was restricted in scope to terminally ill adults only – narrower than our longstanding policy of supporting assisted dying for the incurably suffering – but we supported the Bill as a potentially once-in-a-generation opportunity to respect freedom of choice for people who are suffering beyond the reach of medicine and palliative care and so wish to end their lives sooner. Due to the lack of whipping on the Bill and the substantially new intake of MPs, we worked on an unprecedented scale to contact and work with a significant number of MPs in preparation for the Bill's Second Reading, which contributed to an historic first ever vote from the House of Commons in favour of

end of life choice. We continued to work in support of the Bill to the end of the year, ahead of Committee Stage and Third Reading in 2025.

Legal recognition of humanist marriages

Our campaign for legal recognition of humanist marriages (so that humanist celebrants in England and Wales can conduct legally binding ceremonies as they can in Scotland and Northern Ireland) was stalled by the announcement of the general election.

During the election campaign, we expressed disappointment that the Labour manifesto did not take the opportunity to renew Labour's earlier promises to bring about swift legal recognition if elected. We were later very surprised when the new government spokesperson on marriage (who from the Opposition benches had been an outspoken champion of legal recognition, challenging his predecessors over unjustified delay and inaction) declined to provide any clarity on when the government would now look at the issue. As well as meeting privately with officials about the matter, we began preparation for the possibility of once again supporting couples who may wish to judicially review the Ministry of Justice's failure to act.

As part of our ongoing campaign, our patrons Stephen Fry and Sandi Toksvig headed up a letter to Labour leader Keir Starmer inviting him to recognise that lack of legal recognition of humanist marriages was not just discrimination against humanists, but indirectly against LGBT people as well; surveys consistently show the vast majority of LGBT people are non-religious. We also asked the Welsh Government to write to Labour on this issue, as they had previously done to state the Welsh Government position to the Conservative government. Legal recognition of humanist marriages was also our most visible campaign across the Labour, Conservatives, and Liberal Democrat party conferences in the summer.

Abortion rights

In January, we raised concerns after a Home Office consultation on Safe Access Zones to protect women from harassment outside abortion clinics in England and Wales showed the government was still considering implementing wide-ranging religious loopholes that had been explicitly rejected by votes in Parliament the previous year. This would have rendered the law ineffective in practice. In June, the Scottish Parliament voted for Safe Access Zones, which came into effect in September 2024.

We made swift implementation of Safe Access Zones and removal of abortion from criminal to civil law part of our general election campaign, asking prospective parliamentary candidates if they or their party would support such measures if elected. In September, we celebrated with our partners in the 'Back Off' and 'Voice for Choice' coalitions, new Safeguarding Minister Jess Phillips MP laid regulations to bring Safe Access Zones around abortion clinics in England and Wales into effect from 31 October. This meant that from November, Safe Access Zones were in effect in all four nations of the UK.

Elsewhere, we noted an increase in anti-abortion political activity, including some disguised as other things. We briefed APPHG members on the reading of a private member's bill on 'foetal sentience' in the House of Lords. Early in the year, we reported on figures that suggested a major increase in untraceable 'dark money' from the United States being directed towards UK organisations that seek to restrict women's reproductive rights. We continued to work with members of the Voice for Choice coalition to find legislative avenues to strengthen abortion rights by removing the criminal sanctions from abortion law, while leaving existing term limits and medical regulations in place (as is already the case in Northern Ireland, Canada, and much of Europe). We noted with alarm the growing number of UK women prosecuted for 'suspicious miscarriages' or suspected unauthorised abortions in recent years.

LGBT rights

We continued to pursue a full legislative ban on harmful, pseudoscientific conversion practices, such as 'gay cure' ministries. We submitted a response to the Scottish Government's consultation and highlighted the campaign in relation to England as part of pre-election lobbying, alongside partners in the medical and NGO coalition to ban these practices.

We celebrated when a full ban was included in the new government's King's Speech after the election. We received assurances from the equalities team that, after seven years of promises, the UK Government was now preparing legislation in earnest. Our section LGBT Humanists once again took the lead on media work on this issue, and hundreds of its volunteers were visible at Pride events across England in the summer, with signage highlighting this campaign to great public acclaim at every event.

Pastoral care and chaplaincy

We responded to a consultation by the Office for Veterans' Affairs about the support available to non-religious veterans. We highlighted how non-religious veterans are underserved in the provision of pastoral care and overlooked in remembrance ceremonies.

We continued to work with the Ministry of Defence in relation to the endorsement of non-religious pastoral carers in the armed forces, with private discussions to resolve unexplained differences in treatment between prospective non-religious pastoral carers and prospective religious chaplains.

Freedom of expression

Free expression is a frequent cross-cutting theme in our policy work, much of which can also be categorised as issues of freedom of thought and/or freedom of choice. Our policy work and campaigning here is increasingly focused on challenging the existence of both formal and *de facto* bans on blasphemy and 'causing offence' in law, which history shows to have a significantly corrosive effect on both the quality of public discourse and on individuals' and communities' ability to shape their own lives and stake out an equitable role in society. This is true in the UK but also abroad, where we

advocate for greater diplomatic pressure from the UK on states where identifying publicly as a humanist can cost someone their life or their freedom.

Support for humanists at risk worldwide

In March, we analysed the government's new definition of 'extremism', welcoming its underpinning in human rights principles but requesting more clarity on how vague wording would apply in practice. We also raised concerns about whether there was the intention to broaden the application of the definition beyond the operation of government itself, where such vague wording could have serious implications.

We continued to raise the case of Mubarak Bala, the President of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, following his arrest and conviction for 'blasphemy' in 2020, particularly drawing attention to breaches of process and severe irregularities in his case. We were pleased when Mubarak was safely released late in the year, although a public announcement celebrating this decision was deferred to 2025 given ongoing concerns about his safety following release.

Broadcasting

We responded to Ofcom's consultation on protecting adults from illegal harms online to raise concerns that Ofcom's analysis of what causes harm failed to differentiate between causing 'harm' and causing 'insult', citing concerns that broadcasters could censor 'blasphemous' speech they might consequently label as 'harmful'. We also called for guidance on religious hatred to be made fully inclusive of the non-religious.

We also raised a complaint to the BBC concerning an episode of *Thought For The Day* with Canon Angela Tilby, after she attributed the Post Office subpostmasters scandal to the decline of religion in the UK (failing to mention that the Post Office administrator at the heart of the scandal was herself an Anglican vicar...)

Advertising rules

In November, we drew attention to an Advertising Standards Authority ruling banning a poster advertising comedian Fern Brady's tour. A bawdy poster depicting Brady as the Virgin Mary was banned over fears it could offend Christians. In December, we asked again for reform here to end 'inconsistent and arbitrary' Advertising Standards Authority religious 'offence' rulings after other blasphemy-related issues made headlines later in the year.

'Blasphemy'-related issues

Our policy work on freedom of expression around sensitive issues in schools was influential, with some of our recommendations adopted as part of independent government reviews into curbing issues to do with blasphemy-related extremism and violence. In March, we welcomed Dame Sara Khan's review of Threats to Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience and its recommendations to create buffer zones around schools to protect teachers and pupils from harassment; to tackle anti-blasphemy incitement and violence; and for a better understanding of 'apostasy'. In May, the subsequent Walney Review into political violence and disruption recommended that the

Government should issue statutory guidance on managing blasphemy-related incidents in schools, including a commitment to uphold teachers' freedom of expression, not automatically suspend teachers involved in such incidents, and not to publicly reveal their identities. (A former religious studies teacher in Batley still remains in hiding for his life after a previous incident of this nature in 2021.)

In September, we were pleased to see the new government's official position was to reject the APPG for British Muslims' proposed definition of 'Islamophobia' on the basis of it being incompatible with the Equality Act, which mirrors our own view. If taken up as government policy, the working definition would severely curb legitimate free expression on religions and particularly cause harm for the victims of cults and high-control religions, for whom being able to critique their former religion is part of their journey to psychological safety and empowerment. We support a definition that will allow action to address growing prejudice and discrimination against Muslims without these undesirable side effects.

Following a shocking question in the House of Commons in November calling for the Prime Minister to bring back blasphemy laws in line with a call sponsored at the UN by totalitarian states, we received reassurance from Downing Street that the UK Government had no plans to reintroduce any laws criminalising blasphemy, nor to otherwise restrict freedom of expression around religion.

In March, we responded to an Office for Students consultation on proposed regulatory advice and other matters relating to freedom of speech. We were broadly supportive of the draft guidance which we think would suitably protect against some of the censorship issues our Humanist Students societies faced on campuses in the 2010s. It represented a vast improvement on similar guidance previously issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Ethical issues and global challenges

Our policy continues to emphasise a number of areas where humanists, and humanist thinking, can make unique contributions to public debate.

Public health

In November, we welcomed the UK Government's announcement that folic acid will be added to non-wholemeal flour – which would fulfil a longtime policy aim. This is a significant public health benefit which is expected to save lives and lead to fewer cases of serious and fatal foetal abnormalities. Our Chief Executive also served on a government ethical advisory group on water fluoridation.

Environment

We continued to support our Humanist Climate Action (HCA) volunteer-led network. One major focus for the group was developing its communications to its 2,400 members (2,200 in 2023). As well as publishing an analysis of the new government's environmental policy, HCA endorsed environmental campaigns from Rivers Trust,

Surfers Against Sewage, RSPB, and Climate Cymru (among others) and encouraged members to participate in the the Climate Coalition 'Big Green Week', the March for Clean Water, and the March for Global Climate Justice.

Animal welfare

We launched a new social media ad campaign drawing renewed attention to religious loopholes in farming laws, which means that farm animals do not have to be first rendered insensible to pain prior to slaughter in *kosher* or *halal* abattoirs. Our policy remains that the loopholes should be closed. This was effected in Wallonia and Flanders and subsequently upheld by both the European Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights. Until then we also campaign for supermarkets and butchers to label meat by method of slaughtering so that consumers can make informed choices.

International human rights

We were pleased when in July, the new government announced the Human Rights Act would not be amended or repealed and that it was committed to the UK's membership of the European Convention on Human Rights, following attempts from the previous government to replace the Human Rights Act with another (weaker) piece of legislation, as well as suggesting that the UK might pull out of the European Convention. We had previously helped to form a 250-organisation coalition to defend the Human Rights Act. Celebrating the news, we made plans with Amnesty and Liberty to organise a joint event in 2025, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the Human Rights Act coming into force.

We used our position at the UN Human Rights Council to make a number of statements, including on our own domestic policy agenda as part of a review of the United Kingdom's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights. Alongside the Danish Humanist Society, we criticised the 'blasphemy backslide' after Denmark, following threats of religious violence, bowed to extremist pressure by reinstating a version of its former blasphemy law. In a separate intervention, we drew attention to Afghanistan's human rights record in relation to punishments for 'blasphemy'. We encouraged states to adhere to the UN's so-called Rabat Plan of Action in relation to incitement to hatred around religion or belief, which carefully delineates between criticism of religion (protected freedom of expression) and incitement of harm. Elsewhere, we called for greater support for Eritrean humanists facing persecution, spoke out on the specific forms of discrimination faced by non-religious refugees, and raised the case of Nigerian humanist Mubarak Bala.

Humanists UK is respected for our expertise and professionalism and recognised as the leading national voice for the non-religious

Throughout the year, we enjoyed high-level engagement with numerous government departments across the various nations of the UK and across the crown dependencies, which continued to show that we are taken seriously as the voice of a large constituency in the UK. Post-election, we had an extremely busy agenda of meetings with MPs from all parties, new ministers, and special advisers. This reflected well on our

wide-ranging policy expertise and our pre-election networking and lobbying work to put humanist issues onto the political agenda.

We remained the go-to organisation for media inquiries about the non-religious, irreligion, humanism, and key campaigns. A strong year of media coverage saw 243 pieces of coverage in 'major' titles (247 in 2023), particularly to do with the Census results, faith school admissions, assisted dying, and the Michaela School/collective worship case. Our work and our parliamentary briefings were praised in the House of Commons (8 times) and Lords (20 times) in relation to our work on behalf of non-religious people, our education programmes, advocacy of freedom of religion or belief, and our campaigns for assisted dying and humanist marriage. One plaudit came from Catherine West MP, who praised our *'excellent work... to encourage the recognition of people who have no faith'*

Our Chief Executive was invited to the National Service of Remembrance in London on behalf of non-religious veterans and their families. Our President and Chief Executive were invited to pay respects on behalf of humanists and non-religious people at the ceremony for the Holocaust Memorial Day.

We were delighted to be invited by the United States' Ambassador to the UK to co-host a special World Humanist Day reception at the US Embassy in September, where the Faith and Belief Minister Lord Khan spoke of *'this government's support and appreciation for the humanist community in this country'*. The event was attended by a number of UK politicians from across the political spectrum, representatives of major religious groups and charities, and a significant number of our patrons, volunteers, and activists.

We were also delighted by attendance at a celebratory dinner for LGBT Humanists' 45th anniversary (paid for by a generous donor) held at the National Liberal Club, which saw attendance from activists, popular entertainers, journalists, charity leaders, members of the All Party Parliamentary Humanist Group, and government ministers from the Office for Equality and Opportunity, including Lord Collins. Speeches from our patrons Stephen Fry, Peter Tatchell, and Adèle Anderson toasted humanists' ongoing work for equality and social reform.

We were the only organisation in the UK to have two commissioners (Humanists UK patrons Dr Kate Devlin and Dr Susie Alegre) appointed to the UK Faith and Civil Society Commission on AI, engaged in driving forward the UK's conversations on the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence policy debates amid rapid global technological advances.

Specific areas of work also saw commendation. Volunteers from our Faith to Faithless programme had their community work recognised by way of an invitation to the 2024 Buckingham Palace garden party. Later in the year, the national Helplines Partnership awarded one of the service's helpline volunteers Volunteer of the Year. Our Director of Humanist Care was elected Chair of the Network for Pastoral, Spiritual, and Religious

Care in Health, the sector body responsible for promoting best practice in chaplaincy and pastoral support. Our Chief Executive was invited to represent humanists at a Buckingham Palace reception for diplomats.

As detailed in this report in relation to our first aim, we also awarded medals to archaeologist Dr Rebecca Wragg Sykes, author Claudia Hammond, economist and philosopher Dr Daniel Chandler, biological anthropologist Dr Brenna Hassett, and psephologist Professor Sir John Curtice as part of our Annual Lectures and Medals Series, while former First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford MS was the keynote speaker at our Annual Convention. We also appointed three new patrons of Humanists UK in the form of Dr Rebecca Wragg Sykes, peer and LGBT rights campaigner Michael Cashman, and former Ministry of Defence Director International Security Dr Roger Hutton.

Humanists UK is an expanding, financially healthy, and sustainable movement

Merger with Rationalist Association

After two years of negotiations, the Board of Humanists UK and the Board of the Rationalist Association (RA) agreed a merger. The merger saw Humanists UK taking ownership of the 140-year-old quarterly magazine *New Humanist* and the RA's subsidiary company the Rationalist Press Association (founded in 1885 by humanist publisher Charles Watts). The merger and its associated legal and financial due diligence was a significant undertaking for both Boards and for our Director of Organisational Operations and Chief Executive.

As well as retaining all the RA's intellectual property and financial assets, Humanists UK's substantially larger supporter list is expected to increase circulation of the magazine.

Our fundraising

Our fundraising continued to navigate a period of global political uncertainties and economic challenges affecting UK charities. Our member retention rate remained very strong and membership grew continually over the course of the year – which, despite slower periods, also saw some of our strongest membership appeals on record. We were grateful for the extra support provided by some of our most affluent donors (particularly members of our Blackham Society major donor circle), including through 'matched funding' campaigns which helped improve response rates and average gifts on other appeals. This helped mitigate a challenging period in donation fundraising caused by the ongoing cost of living crisis.

2024 was the second year of our two-year National Heritage Lottery Fund Project 'Doers, Dreamers, and Place-makers', for which we received £160,000 over two years from the National Lottery.

People and systems

Our People team continued to develop processes and systems to better support our 44 staff, 53 consultants, and around 1000 currently active volunteers and celebrants across the UK. It also continued to drive forward our agenda to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion within our organisation and wider movement.

Volunteer activities remained exceptionally varied, reflecting the unique breadth of our work, ranging from school visitors and office volunteers supporting administration right through to specialist researchers supporting our policy unit, assisting with asylum casework, or organising dialogue events with religious groups. Major changes in our volunteer force came from our National Lottery Heritage Fund project, which onboarded a large team of volunteer oral history researcher-interviewers, and from the rollout of our new Faith to Faithless specialist support helpline. Training events for volunteers were numerous, with year-round inductions, training sessions, and team days, as well as our 'Humanism in Action' day conference in Cardiff (for all volunteer types, coinciding with our Annual Convention), Education Day (for school speakers and SACRE reps), and the Groups Representatives Annual Meeting (local groups). Elsewhere in our workforce, the Ceremonies Network Manager undertook a 360-review of all aspects of celebrant communication from initial inquiries about training through to how we communicate with long-time celebrants and handle retirements from the network.

Reflecting the growing needs of our wider staff and volunteer team to do more in relation to data analysis, fundraising, case work, ceremonies, helpline support, and expanded training for local organisers, our IT department grew with the addition of a Website and CRM Developer. Other significant projects included improvements to our employee benefits package; logistical, technical, and personnel aspects of the merger with the Rationalist Association; and development of an e-learning platform to support staff, consultants, and volunteers to further develop key skills.

As well as continuing to comply with our Environmental Policy, our senior management team developed and approved an organisational policy on safe, ethical, responsible use of artificial intelligence technologies in the course of furthering our aims.

Financial review

We ended the year with a deficit of just £70k. This was lower than budgeted, which was mainly thanks to higher than budgeted legacy income received during the year, plus higher than normal notifications of legacies (which are showing as debtors in the accounts). We do not usually find out why people have chosen to leave gifts to Humanists UK in their wills but 26 people did so and we would like to express our gratitude to every one of them for the enormous difference made by their gift.

We received grant income in furtherance of our Faith to Faithless programme, as well as the Understanding Humanism (Humanist Heritage) project. Restricted donations

continued to fund our dedicated Assisted Dying Campaign and, to a lesser extent, the Campaign against Faith Schools (where, once again, unrestricted donations filled the funding gap).

Membership and unrestricted donations income both performed in line with budgets, though the staff time devoted to fundraising and membership development remained high in order to achieve this. We did not increase our membership fee (recognising the cost of living crisis), but did benefit from some substantial gifts from our Blackham Society members.

Expenditure on charitable activity increased by 16%, reflecting ongoing inflationary pressures, but also areas of growing investment such as Public Affairs and Education & Public Awareness. The former saw significant work on core campaigns (Assisted Dying most notably) while the latter was partly attributable to ongoing public awareness efforts including publication of *What I Believe*, plus the Lottery-funded Humanist Heritage project.

Finally, our accounts show the merger with the Rationalist Association on 31 December, which added £1.185m to the Balance Sheet.

Reserves

Reserves are unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the charity's purposes. The trustees consider that the target for reserves held by Humanists UK should be equivalent to three months of expenditure.

This target means that, if the worst happens and the charity needs to be closed down, there will be sufficient funds to meet all of its obligations and liabilities as part of a managed closure, including redundancy and other closure costs.

When reserves are 50% or more above the target, we will review them to make sure our future plans make best use of these funds.

Close-down costs are reviewed annually. Should they rise above the reserves target, a reserves review will be conducted. This policy is reviewed at least every three years.

At the end of the year total funds held amounted to £4,279,741 of which £213,850 were held for restricted purposes and £4,513 were represented by the Association's tangible fixed assets which can only be realised on their disposal. The financial assets of the Association were £4,275,228 (unrestricted: £4,061,378), currently more than sufficient to meet the requirements of our reserves policy (three months budgeted expenditure being £940k). For this reason we have adopted a deficit budget for 2025.

Fundraising policy

Our approach to fundraising reflects the fact that supporters are at the heart of what we do, and fundraising materials are designed to ensure that donors and potential donors understand that they can withdraw from fundraising communications, or any

other communications, at any time, simply and without fuss. All of our fundraising and marketing activities adhere strictly to data protection laws and the terms of our organisational privacy policy.

We do not sell or licence data to (or buy data from) any external agencies or third parties. We send a weekly e-newsletter to subscribers (from which they can unsubscribe) sharing information about our charitable work and fundraising activities. All new marketing materials are checked to comply with the Fundraising Code of Practice as part of an internal publications sign-off procedure. On occasion we may work with or take advice from external fundraising consultants or contractors who may undertake fundraising activities on our behalf, when this is a cost effective way of increasing our capacity. We host a range of events throughout the year. Fundraising events are explicitly billed as such. Events are closely monitored at internal meetings before and after every event, and detailed profit and loss registers are kept for large events. We will never exert undue pressure on those invited to attend an event or to donate. All income and expenditure related to volunteer-led fundraising is reported to the appropriate line manager within the staff team, and annual statements are approved by both the volunteer and the responsible manager.

We take very seriously our responsibility and make our best efforts not to approach or pressure vulnerable people to support our work. We take a robust approach to complaints about fundraising, whether in person, or online, or by another medium; these are promptly followed up by the responsible officers, their line managers, or by a member of the Board (as appropriate).

Investment policy and objectives

The Board's investment policy is to generate the highest possible returns over the long term, consistent with our risk appetite and appropriate protection for our capital, so as to maximise the resources that can be expended on our charitable objectives. We have short and long-term investment policies that reflect our needs over different timeframes. Monitoring of the investment performance takes place through regular investment reports and investment performance results are reported and discussed at Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings and compared to industry benchmarks where applicable.

We entered the year with funds invested as cash deposits with Flagstone, which we retained through 2024. We also held a portfolio consisting of units held with Barclays (Charity Fund) and with BNY Mellon. This blend reflects the risk appetite necessary given the planned utilisation of funds over the course of our strategic period (to the end of 2025).

Risk management

The Board is satisfied that appropriate systems and procedures have been established to identify and manage the major risks faced by the Association. They have developed a comprehensive risk management policy to ensure that all important risks are evaluated and appropriate mitigating action taken. Governance and management, operational, financial, legal and other risks are reviewed annually by the Board and continually

monitored by the senior management team who take responsibility for implementation of the policies and procedures identified to reduce risks. Corrective actions are based on the likelihood of particular events occurring and how critical the consequences would be.

In 2024 significant potential risks included an uncertain political environment bringing risks and opportunities, the reputational and legal risks associated with front-line service provision, reliance on core specialist staff, and improvements in succession planning. Actions taken to mitigate risks included preparatory work in advance on the General Election, updating our IT staffing situation, improving staff & volunteer inductions and support, ongoing work to draw together our policies & processes to ensure best practice across the charity, and an external review of our governance.

Looking ahead, new key risks now include missing the opportunities AI brings, and an inappropriate organisational structure. An AI strategy is being implemented, and a structure review is planned. Some potential reputational risks are also being reviewed, so as to ensure the focus of our staff team is not unnecessarily diverted. Work is ongoing to mitigate the ongoing risks of reliance on core specialist staff & potential loss of critical roles.

Future plans

We are nearing the end of our five-year plan and will be putting into place changes that will take us through the 2026-2030 period. Our charitable activity is planned to continue in a largely business-as-usual manner through 2025 while we put in place the necessary measures to continue operating in as effective and sustainable a manner as possible.

One new project is the integration of the New Humanist magazine operations, following the merger with the Rationalist Association on 31 December 2024. Business planning for a sustainable future for the magazine is a key goal, for implementation from 2026. Another project relates to property. As we near the end of our office lease (in February 2026) we are looking to purchase an office space, giving the Association an asset rather than continuing to pay landlords for the space we need. We have funds in investments to support the initial costs of such a purchase and would seek a loan so as not to tie up all funds unnecessarily. A final key project is looking at our organisational structure and wider operating systems, including around use of artificial intelligence in a safe, ethical, and responsible way in line with our values. With investment in these key areas we believe we can make greater progress towards our aim of a fairer society for all.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

Humanists UK's Board members are directors of the company for the purposes of company law and are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable company and charity law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure,

of the Association for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the principles of the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue to operate.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Association and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Association and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Association's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Directors confirm that, in the case of each of the persons who are Directors at the date of this report, the following applies:

- so far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the Company's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the Company's auditors are unaware; and
- each Director has taken steps to make herself/himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

In accordance with S485 of the Companies Act 2006, a resolution proposing the reappointment of Knox Cropper LLP as auditors will be put to the General Meeting.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Neil H', followed by a long horizontal line.

On behalf of the Board: Neil Hawkins, Chair, 10 May 2025

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2024

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the British Humanist Association (the 'charitable company', operating as Humanists UK) for the year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties

relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Directors.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- The Charitable Company is required to comply with both company law and charity law and, based on our knowledge of its activities, we identified that the legal requirement to accurately account for restricted funds was of key significance.
- We gained an understanding of how the charitable company complied with its legal and regulatory framework, including the requirement to properly account for restricted funds, through discussions with management and a review of the documented policies, procedures and controls.

- The audit team, which is experienced in the audit of charities, considered the charitable company's susceptibility to material misstatement and how fraud may occur. Our considerations included the risk of management override.
- Our approach was to check that restricted income was properly identified and separately accounted for and to ensure that only valid and appropriate expenditure was charged to restricted funds. This included reviewing journal adjustments and unusual transactions.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken, so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

Richard Billingham (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Knox Cropper LLP, Statutory Auditor
65 Leadenhall Street
London
EC3A 2AD



~~May 2025~~ 5th June 2025

Statement of Financial Activities including the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	£	Restricted	Funds 2024 Unrestricted £	Total 2024 £	Restricted £	Funds 2023 Unrestricted £	Total
INCOME FROM:								
- Legacies and donations	2	490,084		1,496,475	1,986,559	231,516	1,721,690	1,953,205
- Other trading activities	3	-	-	86,915	86,915	-	-	-
- Investments		-	-	86,915	86,915	-	28,013	28,013
- Charitable activities	4	-	-	1,457,175	1,457,175	-	1,398,033	1,398,033
Total		490,084		3,040,565	3,530,649	231,516	3,147,736	3,379,251
EXPENDITURE ON:								
- Raising funds	5	-	-	(240,621)	(240,621)	-	(222,651)	(222,651)
- Charitable activities	6,7	(399,115)	(399,115)	(3,026,946)	(3,426,061)	(249,460)	(2,708,784)	(2,958,244)
Total		(399,115)	(399,115)	(3,267,567)	(3,566,582)	(249,460)	(2,931,435)	(3,180,895)
Net gains/(losses) on investments	11	-	-	66,140	66,140	-	61,561	61,561
Net income/(expenditure)		90,970	(90,970)	(160,862)	(69,893)	(17,944)	277,862	259,917
Exceptional items	9	-	-	1,185,328	1,185,328	-	-	-
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		90,970	90,970	1,024,466	1,115,435	(17,944)	277,861	259,917
Balances brought forward at 1 January		122,880	122,880	3,041,426	3,164,306	140,824	2,763,565	2,904,389
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER		213,850	213,850	4,065,892	4,279,741	122,880	3,041,426	3,164,306

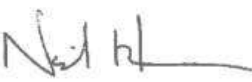
All amounts relate to continuing activities.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024	2023
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Office equipment	10	4,513	6,769
Investments	11	<u>2,239,135</u>	<u>2,101,464</u>
		2,243,648	2,108,233
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	12	1,609,448	231,162
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>612,992</u>	<u>998,179</u>
		2,222,440	1,229,341
LIABILITIES			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(186,347)</u>	<u>(173,268)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>2,036,093</u>	<u>1,056,073</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>4,279,741</u>	<u>3,164,306</u>
Represented by			
FUNDS :			
Unrestricted	14	4,065,891	3,041,426
Restricted	15	<u>213,850</u>	<u>122,880</u>
Total Funds		<u>4,279,741</u>	<u>3,164,306</u>

The accounts are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act relating to small companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard 102.

Approved by the Directors on 10 May 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Neil Hawkins 

Hon. Chair

Ann O'Connell



Hon. Treasurer

Company number: 00228781

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ending 31 December 2024

		2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	24	<u>(399,907)</u>	<u>130,308</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends and interest from investments		86,915	28,013
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(664)	(8,138)
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	-
Purchase of investments		-	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>86,251</u>	<u>19,875</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>(313,656)</u>	<u>150,183</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,336,054	2,185,871
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	25	<u><u>2,022,398</u></u>	<u><u>2,336,054</u></u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

These Financial Statements are presented in pounds sterling and have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (the Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Humanists UK meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. Although turbulence in the financial markets in early 2026 has negatively affected the value of our investments, it is not significant enough to affect our ability to operate as a going concern.

Short term debtors and creditors

Debtors are recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably, and it is probable that the income will be received. Creditors are recognised when the Charity has a present legal or constructive obligation resulting from a past event to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty are detailed in the above accounting policies where applicable.

Prepayments and accruals

Prepayments and accruals less than £100 have not been taken into consideration.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

All tangible assets costing more than £500 were capitalised and all tangible assets are valued at historic cost. Provision is made for depreciation on tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life.

Office Equipment:	20% p.a. straight line
Computer equipment:	33 1/3% p.a. straight line
Office fixtures & fittings:	10% p.a. straight line

Fixed asset investments

Investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. The statement of financial activities includes the net gains and losses arising on the revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Realised gains and losses on investments are arrived at by comparing the net sale proceeds with the market value at the end of the previous financial year. Unrealised gains and losses represent the difference between the market value of investments still held at the end of the financial year with their value at the beginning of the year or with their cost if purchased subsequently.

Value Added Tax

The Charity is registered for VAT and where applicable amounts are included net of VAT.

Funds

Unrestricted funds are those funds which can be used at the trustees' discretion. Restricted Funds are those funds where application is restricted by conditions set by the donor. Designated Funds are those funds, which have been earmarked by the trustees for specific purposes.

Deferrals policy

Income is recognised when all the following criteria are met:

- Control over the rights or other access to the economic benefit exists
- It is more likely than not that the economic benefits will pass to the Association
- The monetary value of the income can be measured reliably.

Grants receivable

Revenue grants are credited to incoming resources on the earlier of the date they are received or the date they are receivable, unless they relate to a specific future period, in which case they are deferred. Capital grants for the purchase of fixed assets are credited to restricted incoming resources when they become receivable. Depreciation on the related fixed assets is charged against the restricted fund.

Donations and legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised as income when the Association becomes unconditionally entitled to receive them, and when the receipt is probable and its value can be predicted with reasonable accuracy.

Charitable activities

Costs of charitable activities include direct expenditure and an apportionment of overhead, governance and support costs as shown in note 7.

Allocation of overhead, governance and support costs

Overhead and support costs are incurred centrally across the range of our activities throughout the year. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the Charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These include costs related to statutory audit. All these costs have been apportioned between charitable activities on the basis of staff time or office space depending on the nature of the cost. The trustees consider this to be a reasonable reflection of the utilisation of resources.

Pensions

The Charity contributes to various defined contribution pension schemes on behalf of employees and, as the charity's liability is limited to paying amounts as they fall due, the pension charge reflected in the accounts represents the amount payable for the year.

2. Legacies, grants, and donations

	2024			2023
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £	Total £
Donations and Gift Aid	242,693	891,047	1,133,740	1,074,732
Grants	147,291	-	147,291	68,450
Legacies	100,100	605,428	705,528	810,024
	<u>490,084</u>	<u>1,496,475</u>	<u>1,986,559</u>	<u>1,953,206</u>

Grant income included £99,791 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of a multi-year Humanist Heritage project. Other grants were in furtherance of our Assisted Dying & Education campaigns, and the Faith to Faithless programme. In the preceding year Donations and Gift Aid included £231,516 restricted income, of which £68,450 were grants. We remain grateful for the generous legacies left by so many members and supporters.

3. Investment income

	2024			2023
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £	Total £
Interest	-	86,915	86,915	28,013
Dividends	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>86,915</u>	<u>86,915</u>	<u>28,013</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	2024			2023
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £	Total £
Subscriptions	-	984,854	984,854	974,964
Celebrants' training	-	195,386	195,386	171,628
Celebrants' accreditation fees	-	112,713	112,713	108,070
Marriage administration fees	-	27,471	27,471	24,833
Events & activities	-	112,875	112,875	91,464
Sales of literature & merchandise	-	19,123	19,123	23,291
Education	-	3,138	3,138	2,814
Humanist Care	-	872	872	-
Sundry income	-	743	743	968
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,457,175</u>	<u>1,457,175</u>	<u>1,398,033</u>

5. Cost of raising funds

	2024			2023
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising costs	-	(225,241)	(225,241)	(216,378)
Investment manager's fees	-	(3,410)	(3,410)	(3,813)
Purchase of merchandise	-	(11,970)	(11,970)	(2,460)
	-	(240,621)	(240,621)	(222,651)

6. Analysis of costs of charitable activities

	2024		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
	£	£	£
Education and Public Awareness	(618,008)	(442,479)	(1,060,486)
Humanist Ceremonies	(412,341)	(154,655)	(566,996)
Humanist Care	(231,126)	(109,116)	(340,242)
Public Affairs & Policy	(726,509)	(387,346)	(1,113,855)
Activities for Members and Partner Groups	(228,203)	(116,278)	(344,482)
	(2,216,187)	(1,209,874)	(3,426,061)

	2023		
	Direct Costs	Support	Total
	£	£	£
Education and Public Awareness	(497,321)	(379,476)	(876,797)
Humanist Ceremonies	(387,769)	(134,874)	(522,644)
Humanist Care	(190,478)	(93,878)	(284,356)
Public Affairs & Policy	(613,932)	(330,326)	(944,258)
Activities for Members and Partner Groups	(227,929)	(102,261)	(330,190)
	(1,917,430)	(1,040,816)	(2,958,244)

7. Analysis of support and governance costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Staff costs	(786,581)	(639,717)
Rent and rates	(97,233)	(133,485)
Repairs, maintenance & utilities	(28,069)	(27,786)
Postage and stationery	(15,520)	(16,291)
ICT	(106,283)	(92,641)
Irrecoverable VAT	(43,456)	(38,575)
Subscriptions	(9,098)	(6,169)
Bank charges & interest	(56,547)	(53,750)
Depreciation	(2,920)	(3,175)
Other costs	(49,920)	(16,445)
Governance	(14,247)	(12,781)
	<u>(1,209,874)</u>	<u>(1,040,814)</u>

Support costs have been apportioned between categories of charitable activity according to whether they are overheads or centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities. Overheads have been apportioned in relation to the office space occupied by each area of activity, and centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities has been apportioned in relation to the staff time employed in each area of activity. The trustees consider this provides a reasonable approximation to the utilisation of resources.

Governance costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Audit fee- current year	(6,523)	(7,000)
- previous year underprovision	-	-
Other professional expenses	(34)	(13)
Trustee meeting expenses	(7,690)	(5,768)
	<u>(14,247)</u>	<u>(12,781)</u>

8. Staff costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,750,673	1,612,609
Social security costs	185,084	171,479
Pension contributions	217,750	131,988
Total payroll costs	2,153,507	1,916,076
Staff recruitment	7,812	19,867
Temporary staff	-	-
	<u>2,161,319</u>	<u>1,935,943</u>
Average number of employees (FTE)	40	36
Average number of employees	43	39

	2024	2023
	£	£
Key Management Personnel remuneration:	768,182	706,408

Pension contributions are notably higher than in 2023 due to the introduction of a salary sacrifice scheme.

Key management personnel (£768,182) (2023: £706,408) includes Chief Executive, Director of Ceremonies, Director of Communications & Development, Director of Humanist Care, Director of IT, Director of Organisational Operations, Director of People & Culture, Director of Public Affairs & Policy and Director of Understanding Humanism.

Seven employees had combined salary and employer National Insurance payments in excess of £60,000 (2023: 8). These payments fell in bands as follows:

Band	2024	2023
£120,000-£130,000	1	1
£70,000-£80,000	4	1
£60,000-£70,000	2	6

We are enormously grateful for the work of 214 (47 FTE) (2023: 177 (39 FTE)) volunteers working across the organisation, embedded with staff teams or leading teams of their own, without whom we would not have achieved our many successes. We are also grateful for the many hundreds of volunteers who form our School Speaker and Non-Religious Pastoral Support networks, often volunteering directly with other institutions but accredited and supported by Humanists UK.

9. Exceptional income

On 31 December 2024, The Rationalist Association net assets were transferred to Humanist UK

The net assets transferred were:

	£
Fixed assets	
Investments	1,100,034
Tangible assets	-
	<u>1,100,034</u>
Current assets	
Stock	2,000
Debtors	29,458
Cash at bank and in hand	82,503
	<u>113,961</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>-47,077</u>
Net current assets	<u>66,884</u>
Net assets as per The Rationalist Association accounts as at 31 December 2024	<u><u>1,166,918</u></u>
Legacy debtor identified post year end	<u>18,410</u>
Net assets transferred	<u><u>1,185,328</u></u>

Transfer of the legal title to the assets is in the process of being finalised.

10. Tangible assets

	2024	2023
	£	£
Office Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment		
Cost at 1 January	118,261	110,123
Additions	664	8,138
Disposals	-	-
As at 31 December	<u>118,925</u>	<u>118,261</u>
Depreciation at 1 January	(111,492)	(108,317)
Charge for the year	(2,920)	(3,175)
Disposals	-	-
Depreciation at 31 December	<u>(114,412)</u>	<u>(111,492)</u>
Net book value at 31 December	<u>4,513</u>	<u>6,769</u>

11. Investments

	2024	2023
	£	£
Market value at 1 January	763,589	702,028
Additions	-	-
Disposal proceeds	-	-
Realised gains/(losses)	-	-
Unrealised gains/(losses)	<u>66,140</u>	<u>61,561</u>
Market value at 31 December	829,729	763,589
Cash with brokers	<u>1,409,406</u>	<u>1,337,875</u>
Total investments at 31 December	<u>2,239,135</u>	<u>2,101,464</u>
Investments at cost 31 December	<u>748,446</u>	<u>748,446</u>

Investments with a market value in excess of 10% of the portfolio were:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Barclays Charity Fund	377,995	353,704
Newton Sustainable Growth & Income Fund for Charities	<u>451,734</u>	<u>409,885</u>
Total	<u>829,729</u>	<u>763,589</u>

We continued to hold investments in *Barclays Charity Fund* and *Newton Sustainable Growth and Income Fund for Charities* and retained cash deposits with Flagstone.

12. Debtors

		2024	2023
		£	£
Prepayments		46,272	31,022
Legacies receivable		226,902	61,500
Gift Aid		99,590	101,416
Other accrued income		51,356	33,754
Other debtors		-	3,469
Rationalist Association net assets	Note 9	1,185,328	-
		<u>1,609,448</u>	<u>231,162</u>

Prepayments are usually primarily event venue costs such as for our Annual Convention, plus rent. Accrued income includes grant payments from Heritage Lottery.

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year:

		2024	2023
		£	£
Accruals		55,818	55,076
Taxes:	Payroll taxes	48,758	47,460
	VAT	10,274	12,474
Deferred income		38,424	39,422
Holiday accrual		<u>33,073</u>	<u>18,836</u>
		<u>186,347</u>	<u>173,268</u>

Deferred income usually relates to event ticket sales. All deferred income is recognised in the following financial year.

14. a) General reserves

	2024		
	Revaluation Reserve	Accumulated Income	Total
	£	£	£
Balance at 1 January 2024	-	3,041,426	3,041,426
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	-	(227,002)	(227,002)
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	-	66,140	66,140
Exceptional item	-	1,185,328	1,185,328
Transfer from designated funds	-	-	-
Balance at 31 December 2024	-	<u>4,065,892</u>	<u>4,065,892</u>

	2023		
	Revaluation Reserve	Accumulated Income	Total
	£	£	£
<i>Balance at 1 January 2023</i>	-	2,763,565	2,763,565
<i>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</i>	-	216,300	216,300
<i>Realised gains/(losses) on investments</i>	-	61,561	61,561
<i>Transfer on realisation</i>	-	-	-
<i>Transfer to designated funds</i>	-	400,000	400,000
<i>Balance at 31 December 2023</i>	-	3,441,426	3,441,426

b) Designated reserves

	Balance at 1 January 2024	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
LGBT Humanists		362	(362)	-	-
Local Groups		566	(566)	-	-
Music (London Humanist Choir)	-	448	(448)	-	-
	-	448	(448)	-	-

	Balance at 1 January 2023	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
<i>Music (the Humanist choirs)</i>	-	96	(96)	-	-
	-	96	(96)	-	-

15. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 January 2024	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Assisted Dying	96,364	107,662	(123,554)	-	80,472
Campaign Against Faith Schools	7,202	75,933	(48,607)	-	34,528
Ceremonies	-	99	(99)	-	-
Defence Humanists	1,090	465	(1,555)	-	-
Education	-	109,823	(109,823)	-	-
Faith to Faithless	-	40,805	(40,805)	-	-
LGBT Humanists	3,877	101,193	(23,625)	-	81,445
Local groups	2,217	2,412	(3,634)	-	994
Music (the Humanist choirs)	12,130	11,104	(6,823)	-	16,410
Northern Ireland development	-	9,405	(9,405)	-	-
Pastoral Support	-	811	(811)	-	-
Public Affairs	-	30,373	(30,373)	-	-
	<u>122,880</u>	<u>490,084</u>	<u>(399,115)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>213,850</u>

	Balance at 1 January 2023	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Assisted Dying	88,432	73,674	(65,742)	-	96,364
Campaign Against Faith Schools	24,365	32,300	(49,463)	-	7,202
Ceremonies	-	236	(236)	-	-
Defence Humanists	791	338	(38)	-	1,090
Education	-	52,965	(52,965)	-	-
Faith to Faithless	-	15,414	(15,414)	-	-
LGBT Humanists	7,926	1,079	(5,129)	-	3,877
Local groups	7,421	1,395	(6,599)	-	2,217
Music (the Humanist choirs)	11,889	10,934	(10,693)	-	12,130
Northern Ireland development	-	8,560	(8,560)	-	-
Pastoral Support	-	17,424	(17,424)	-	-
Public Affairs	-	17,197	(17,197)	-	-
	<u>140,824</u>	<u>231,516</u>	<u>(249,460)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>122,880</u>

The tables above do not represent the entire income and expenditure related to these areas of work. They show only the restricted donations and subsequent expenditure of the restricted donations. Additional expenditure is made from unrestricted funds, especially so in the Campaign Against Faith Schools.

Assisted Dying

This fund was created in 2018 to manage donations to cover the payroll costs of one member of Humanists UK staff to work on the Assisted Dying campaign with the My Death, My Decision coalition. The fund also includes donations towards assisted dying legal cases.

Campaign against faith schools

Campaign against faith schools appeal funds are restricted to Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work relating to 'faith' schools and related education campaigns. Funds raised by appeal in excess of the target sought are restricted to the public affairs fund, and are disclosed as a transfer above.

Ceremonies

This fund results from donations given to Humanists UK specifically for ceremonies work.

Defence Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by the Defence Humanists, which joined as a new section in 2011.

Education

This fund results from legacies and donations given to support Humanists UK's work in promoting the understanding of Humanism in the education sphere. This includes the Humanist Heritage project, which in 2024 was largely funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Faith to Faithless

This fund was created in 2015 to manage income and expenditure in support of our Faith to Faithless programme, which helps people who are leaving religions. This is part of our Humanist Care work.

LGBT Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by GALHA (now LGBT Humanists) which joined Humanists UK as a section in 2012.

Local groups

This fund is for activities relating to the development of local humanist groups, including Partner Groups and Humanists UK Local Groups.

Music

This fund was initiated in 2010 by a donation from Alec Reed to fund a composer for two years and to establish the Humanists UK choirs on a secure footing. Current income derives directly from the activities of the London Humanist Choir.

Northern Ireland development

This fund was created in 2017 to support the development of Humanists UK's work in Northern Ireland.

Pastoral support

This fund was created in 2012 to collect donations supporting our new initiative directed towards providing pastoral support to non-religious people in prison or in hospital. This is part of our Humanist Care work.

Public Affairs

This fund results from donations given to support Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work. In 2024 these included donations in support of attendance at Party Conferences..

16. Operating leases

At 31 December 2024 the Company had the following commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings		Other	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Falling due within one year	97,608	97,608	8,353	9,843
Falling due between one and five years	10,845	108,453	19,551	27,715
Falling due later than five years	-	-	-	189
	<u>108,453</u>	<u>206,061</u>	<u>27,904</u>	<u>37,558</u>

The commitment in respect of land and buildings reflects the lease on the Association's premises which ends on 10 February 2026. We have set a £50k provision for any dilapidation costs associated with the end of this lease.

17. Taxation

Humanists UK is a registered charity and is potentially exempt from tax in respect of income and capital gains received within the categories covered by Part II of the Corporation Taxes Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are exclusively applied to charitable purposes.

18. Board members' remuneration and expenses

Alex Collis, a Celebrant, was paid £197 in fees & expenses as part of the celebrants training programme. Ewan Main, a Celebrant, was paid £156 in fees & expenses as part of the celebrants training programme. Amy Walden was paid £832 in fees & expenses as part of the Humanist Care training programme. Neil McKain was paid £50 in relation to the School Speakers training programme. Aside from these, no remuneration, directly or indirectly, out of the funds of the charity was paid or is payable for the year to any Board member or to any person known to be connected with any of them.

Board members were reimbursed a total of £3,000 (2023: £5,414) for travel expenses to attend meetings in connection with their duties. Expenses not reported in Note 18 normally include travel to various events, including Annual Convention, public lectures and fundraising events.

19. Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at 31 December 2024 (2023: nil).

20. Pension commitments

The charity offers contributions to individual defined contribution pension schemes to all employees and most take them up. The assets of the schemes are held separately from those of the charity in independently administered funds. Total employer's contributions paid in the year were £217,750 (2023: £131,988), the increase being partly due to the introduction of a salary sacrifice scheme.

21. Net assets

	2024		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	2,243,648	1,822,243	4,065,891
Restricted funds	-	213,850	213,850
	<u>2,243,648</u>	<u>2,036,093</u>	<u>4,279,741</u>

22. Reversionary interest

Humanists UK has been bequeathed a reversionary interest in a trust established under the terms of the Will of Christine Cotton, who died on 24 January 2000. The trust assets comprise a property that was occupied by a Life Tenant, investments and bank accounts. The Life Tenant passed away in 2024 and the estate is now in administration. The value of the investments as at 31 May 2021 (last update available) was £44,911 (31 May 2021: £44,911). The trustees have indicated to Humanists UK that the property (bought in 2002 for £85,000) had a value in 2024 of between £230,000.

Because Humanists UK cannot predict when it will become entitled to the receipt of this legacy and does not have a recent valuation of investments, no accrued income has been reflected in the accounts.

23. Related party transactions

Board members are not remunerated but are able to recover out of pocket expenses for attendance at Board meetings, the total amount reimbursed being disclosed in Note 18.

The Chief Executive of Humanists UK is also a Director and Trustee of Humanists International and their President. The Association paid an annual subscription to Humanists International of £28,328 (2023: £28,536) and contributed £3,500 (2023: £9,167) to Humanist International projects.

The Chief Executive of Humanists UK is also a Director and Trustee of ACEVO of which Humanists UK is a member and paid £469 in membership fees (2023: £469).

The Wales Coordinator is a Director and Trustee of the Religious Education Council, of which Humanists UK is a member and paid £900 in membership fees (2023: £900).

24. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024	2023
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period	1,115,435	259,917
Depreciation charges	2,920	3,175
(Gains)/losses on investments	(66,140)	(61,561)
Dividends and interest from investments	(86,915)	(28,013)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(1,378,286)	(112,670)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	13,079	69,459
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operative activities	<u>(399,907)</u>	<u>130,308</u>

25. Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	612,992	998,179
Cash at brokers	<u>1,409,406</u>	<u>1,337,875</u>
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>2,022,398</u>	<u>2,336,054</u>

26. Statutory information

The British Humanist Association, operating as Humanists UK, is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England. The Association's registered number and registered office address can be found on the Legal and Administrative page of this Annual Report.

Accounts

British Humanist Association, operating as:



ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 December 2023

Company Number: 00228781

Charity Number: 285987

Humanists UK

Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Board (the Directors of the Company and the Trustees of the Charity) presents its annual report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

Legal and Administrative Details

Status	The British Humanist Association (Humanists UK) originated as the Union of Ethical Societies in 1896, was incorporated as the Ethical Union in 1928 and became the British Humanist Association in 1967. Its working name became Humanists UK in 2017. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14 March 1928. Its governing instrument is its Articles of Association, adopted on 23 July 2011.			
	Company number:	00228781	Charity number:	285987
Registered office	39 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8BB			
Honorary officers	Chair		Neil Hawkins	
	Vice Chair		Neil McKain	
	Treasurer		Ann O’Connell	
Other Board members	Samira Ahmed (from 16 June)		Ewan Main	
	John Adentitire (from 11 June)		Stephanie Niven (to 25 June)	
	Alex Collis (from 18 November)		Sophy Robinson	
	Roland Davis (from 11 June)		Andrew Russell	
	Iain Deboys		Emma Shepherd	

	Tamar Ghosh (to 11 June)	Simon Walker-Samuel
	Charley Jarrett	Amy Walden (from 18 November)
	Ruth Kaufman	Kate West (from 11 June)
President	Dr Adam Rutherford	
Principal staff	Chief Executive	Andrew Copson
	Director of Ceremonies	Deborah Hooper
	Director of Communications & Development	Liam Whitton
	Director of Humanist Care	Clare Elcombe Webber
	Director of IT	Andrew West
	Director of Organisational Operations	Catriona McLellan
	Director of Public Affairs & Policy	Richy Thompson
	Acting Director of Public Affairs & Policy (from October 2023)	Kathy Riddick
	Director of <i>Understanding Humanism</i>	Luke Donnellan
	Head of People	Ann-Michelle Burton
Auditors	Knox Cropper LLP, Chartered Accountants 65 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3A 2AD	
Bankers	The Co-Operative Bank plc 118-120 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 3BA	
Investment Managers	Barclays Wealth, 23 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP14 1AQ BNY Mellon Fund Managers Ltd, PO Box 336, Darlington, DL1 9RF	

Mission

By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and we work with them for a better society.

Charitable Objects

Humanists UK's Objects are: 'The advancement of Humanism, namely a non-religious ethical life stance, the essential elements of which are a commitment to human wellbeing and a reliance on reason, experience and a naturalistic view of the world; the advancement of education and in particular the study of and the dissemination of knowledge about Humanism and about the arts and science as they relate to Humanism; the promotion of equality and non-discrimination and the protection of human rights as defined in international instruments to which the United Kingdom is party, in each case in particular as relates to religion and belief; the promotion of understanding between people holding religious and non-religious beliefs so as to advance harmonious cooperation in society.'

Structure, Governance and Management

The Board meets regularly during the year and at the beginning of each meeting members are requested to declare any conflicts of interest. These are detailed in notes 17 and 22 of the financial statements.

The Board reviews its performance and skills annually and new members are recruited to meet any needs or gaps identified.

The day to day management of the Association is delegated to its key management personnel as detailed in note 8 to the financial statements. Remuneration of the Chief Executive is set by the Board. Remuneration of other key management personnel is delegated to the Chief Executive.

Method used to recruit and appoint new Board members

Board members are recruited by election or by appointment, as set out in the Byelaws. Co-options until the next election can be made to fill vacancies arising among the elected Board members.

Induction and training of new Board members

New Board members are provided with a Trustee Handbook which contains information about their role and responsibilities as recommended by the Charity Commission. This includes: the trustee role description and personal specification relevant to the role, the confidentiality policy and the eligibility requirements for becoming a trustee, and a Code of Conduct. They are also supplied with a copy of the Articles of Association, and other governance documents including past reports. Induction meetings covering the background to current matters take place with the Vice-Chair, the Chief Executive and key members of the staff team.

Training on matters relevant to the role and responsibilities of Board members is encouraged and the Board subscribes to literature pertinent to good governance.

Public benefit

The Board is confident that Humanists UK's work benefits the public in significant ways by promoting human rights and offering comprehensive support and services to humanists and the non-religious. Our activities are rigorously aligned with legal standards and Charity Commission guidelines on public benefit. The main areas where our work makes an impact include:

- We lead in educating the public about humanism, providing a moral framework for those without religious beliefs. Our efforts extend through various channels, including our website, public lectures, and educational materials designed for schools, ensuring that knowledge about humanist values and ethics is accessible to all.
- Our celebrants meet a growing public demand for non-religious ceremonies—such as baby-namings, weddings, and funerals—that reflect personal beliefs. Our goal is for every individual desiring a humanist ceremony to have access to one, facilitated by our skilled network of highly trained humanist celebrants.
- We provide vital humanist pastoral support in environments traditionally served by religious chaplains, such as prisons and healthcare settings, ensuring that the non-religious receive the same level of suitable emotional support and care in times of need. Our trained specialists also provide expert assistance to vulnerable groups neglected by other services, namely 'apostates' and non-religious asylum seekers
- Our policy unit defends the rights of humanists and the non-religious by promoting compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, particularly against discrimination by public authorities on the grounds of religion or belief. Our advocacy efforts include engaging with government bodies and calling for legal reforms to develop these protections further for the benefit of all.
- We bolster local humanist groups and contribute to building a harmonious, pluralistic society, building bridges between non-religious people and those with other beliefs. Our work supports the positive contributions of humanists in various community settings.

The Board considers that these initiatives not only support humanists and the non-religious but also enrich the wider public, fostering an environment of non-discrimination and enhanced understanding of humanist perspectives.

Report on progress towards our five Outcomes

By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and we work with them for a better society. Below, we report on our activity over the course of the year, against the five Outcomes set by the Board as our strategy. Many of our activities overlap and meet more than one Outcome.

More people knowing what humanism is and more non-religious people with humanist beliefs and values recognising themselves as humanists

We continued to develop our various educational programmes to do with humanism.

Humanist Heritage

Our Humanist Heritage project, aimed at broadening public awareness of the extensive history of humanism in the United Kingdom, saw continued development. This progress was marked by the introduction of fresh web articles, educational materials, guided walks, video content, lectures, events, and social media initiatives. Later in the year, the project received a significant boost with grant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The funding was specifically allocated to the digitization of our archives, the creation of a guided virtual tour of Conway Hall, and the commemoration of the 45th anniversary of our section LGBT Humanists.

The majority of activity was focused on the Humanist Heritage website, which received 93,000 hits (57,000 in 2022), mainly driven by Google search traffic. We uploaded 41 new articles on people, places, landmarks, objects, and historical groups (139 in 2022). In March, we produced a suite of new resources for schools connected with our *Understanding Humanism* website, including 'Stories of Humanist Women', an illustrated resource for International Women's Day. In November, we released a new animated video narrated by our patron Hannah Peel, 'Humanist history: from radical ideas to common sense'. Internally, we reorganised our Humanist Ceremonies Funeral Tribute Archive as a Humanist Heritage project, creating a lasting historical record of the humanist funerals, of interest to cultural historians and anthropologists.

In-person public engagement with the project was ongoing all year, with 'touring' talks about humanist history organised in Kent, Belfast, Bristol, and in Liverpool as part of our annual convention. In February, we supported the unveiling of a new blue plaque for 19th century humanist activist Emma Martin by Bristol Humanists with an event and pop-up exhibition about Humanist Heritage fronted by our Vice President Alice Roberts and the Lord Mayor of Bristol, attracting local media coverage and social media interest. This coincided with a new guided walk of Bristol's humanist heritage released through the Go Jauntly app. Our Rosalind Franklin Lecture in March took a Humanist Heritage

theme, with Sarah Bakewell focusing on portraits of significant humanist women in history (about which more below). In April, we hosted the book launch for *The Humanist Movement in Modern Britain: A History of Ethicists, Rationalists and Humanists* at Conway Hall. It was chaired by Samira Ahmed and attended by dozens of academics in the field. In November, alongside Dr Clare Stainthorp of Queen Mary University, London, we also delivered a workshop as part of the nationwide humanities festival Being Human. Our event, 'Great and Good?', held at Conway Hall, introduced four historical humanists and explored the qualities of a 'hero'.

Events

Events continued to be one of our most important vehicles for communicating with large audiences about aspects of the humanist approach to life, as well as a rich source of high-quality content for our YouTube channel, where videos were viewed 440k times over the year (426k in 2022).

Our most high-profile events remained those in our Annual Lectures and Medal Series. In February, we awarded our annual Darwin Day Lecture Medal to paleobiologist Professor Anjali Goswami as part of a hybrid online-and-in-person event at Conway Hall in London. She lectured on *'The Speed of Life: A Deep Time Perspective'*, chaired by our Vice President Professor Alice Roberts, to a combined audience of over 1,000. In March, we awarded Sarah Bakewell our Franklin Lecture Medal as part of a lecture on *'Humanly Possible: 700 Years of Humanist Freethinking, Enquiry, and Hope'*, emphasising women's stories in her recent book of the same title, chaired by Samira Ahmed and attended by 500 (online and in-person). We awarded Dr Caroline Dodds Pennock our Voltaire Lecture Medal in November for her lecture *'On Savage Shores'*, about early visits to Europe by indigenous Americans, attended by 650 (online and in-person), and chaired by our President Dr Adam Rutherford. We awarded the Holyoake Lecture Medal to environmentalist Zion Lights in November for a provocatively titled lecture *'Could we even just stop oil?'* (200 online). And for the Blackham Lecture in December, we awarded the medal to Dr Roi Cohen-Cadosh for his talk on *'Pay Attention! Neuroscience, ethics, and ADHD'* (600 online).

Our annual convention took place in Liverpool in June and was our biggest event, with a wide array of speakers and entertainers including Dr Adam Rutherford (President), broadcaster Samira Ahmed; comedians Hannah Platt, Lee Peart, and Robin Ince (patron); legal expert Dr Susie Alegre (patron); anthropologist Dr Robin Dunbar (patron); epidemiologists Professors Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson (patrons); historians S I Martin (patron), Dr Callum Brown, and Madeleine Goodall (staff); author Emily Kenway; psychologist Dr Chris French (patron); and a panel of humanist politicians made up of Tommy Sheppard MP (Chair of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group, SNP), Cllr Clare Delderfield (Lib Dem), Neil Garratt AM (Conservative), and Cllr Rachel Taggart-Ryan (Labour). Nearly 500 attended, compared with 300 in Belfast in 2022.

Our wider programme of both online and in-person events and lectures on various topics relating to humanism continued throughout the year, as well as our popular

online series of *In Conversation With...* events with thinkers and entertainers on a subject where they have deep insight or expertise. Other highlights included a special event with our patron Dr Henry Marsh on *Matters of Life and Death* in January; book launches for *The Little Book of Humanist Funerals*, the textbook *Understanding Humanism*, and the history book *The Humanist Movement in Modern Britain*; and a large in-person event with our patron Dr Adam Kay attended by 900 in May, at which we awarded him the Voltaire Lecture Medal we had intended to give him in 2020, prior to the pandemic.

Social media and web content

We continued to reach very large numbers of people through our social media channels, which have become one of the main places to publish new educational content about humanism, alongside news relating to our services and public policy work. Our primary Humanists UK social media channels reached 16.2 million people (a 93% increase on 8.4 million in 2022) on Facebook, 22 million on Twitter (26 million in 2022), and 240,000 on Instagram (430,000 in 2022). Across the platforms, we have had to experiment with content forms and tactics due to constant changes to algorithms, user experience, and new schemes from social media product owners to generate income.

In August, we ran a campaign of graphics and photography content across our social media channels called 'Humanist Bookshelf', which highlighted humanist authors, thinkers, and historical figures with relatable quotations, and sought user interaction. This received 4.5 million hits across various platforms. We received 61,000 hits on our web page on humanism (52,000 in 2022), and had 77,000 users of our 'How humanist are you quiz?' (equal to 2022).

The sixth season of our *What I Believe* podcast was launched in September with Sandi Toksvig as its first guest, late in the year, receiving 67,000 downloads in 2023 through services like Apple Podcasts and Spotify (56,000 in 2022, when we published more seasons).

Education resources (Understanding Humanism)

The *Understanding Humanism* website received 163,000 hits (142,000 in 2022) and our resources were downloaded 39,000 times (40,000 in 2022). Our separate *Assemblies for All* website, which collates industry-best resources to assist teachers with putting on inclusive assemblies on a range of subjects, received 191,000 page views (down from 226,000 in 2022). Meanwhile, our network of over 200 trained and accredited school speakers made over 650 school visits and spoke to a record total of 68,000 pupils (up from 60,000 in 2022).

In February, we launched our new animated video with Professor Alice Roberts, *One Life, Live it Well*, which described the humanist approach to life. This was seen 17,000 times on YouTube and led to 15,000 hits on the *Understanding Humanism* website. A second animation, *Where do we come from?*, again with Alice Roberts, addressed the

scientific origins of the universe and the diversity of life on Earth from a humanist point of view, to improve representation of non-religious and scientific views in RE. Launched in July, this was seen over 7,000 times on YouTube and led to 7,000 website hits. A final video on Humanist Heritage, animated by Hannah Peel, was launched in November; *Humanist history: from radical ideas to common sense* received 4,500 YouTube hits and generated 5,200 hits on the Humanist Heritage website.

Our *Where do we come from?* video proved particularly popular with students at our stall on Schools Day at the *New Scientist Live* exhibition later in the year. As well as speaking to hundred members of the public over the whole of the wider weekend, Understanding Humanism volunteers on Schools Day handed out over 100 copies of our *What is humanism?* leaflets to secondary school students, and donated 50 copies of the *What is humanism?* book by Michael Rosen and Annemarie Young.

Teacher training

We significantly expanded the reach of our teacher training work, training 615 teachers (up from 397 in 2022) as part of initial teacher training, which we did through events at King's College London, University College London, University of East London, Roehampton University, St Mary's University, Canterbury Christ Church University, Winchester University, and Edge Hill university. Separately, we also delivered teacher CPD at teacher training events, including the *Strictly RE* teachers conference, an RE teachers conference in Bristol, a training afternoon for the Paradigm Trust, via Standing Advisory Councils on RE, and our own online webinars series.

SACREs and SACs

We continued to help local authorities to improve teaching about humanism in schools by supporting humanist representatives on Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education in England and Standing Advisory Councils on Religion, Values, and Ethics in Wales (known as SACREs in England and SACs in Wales). We ended the year with humanists representatives on 138 councils (up from 129), including 114 where a humanist sat as a 'full member' (up from 77). This was undoubtedly boosted by the impact of our *Bowen* legal case, which triggered numerous councils to correct their past refusal to admit humanists as full members. Separately, we found and appointed a Channel Islands Humanists representative on Jersey's Religious Education Advisory Council, the island's equivalent of a SACRE.

Throughout the year, we supported our school speakers, SACRE and SAC reps with regular webinars, organised both nationally and regionally, and with termly newsletters. We also organised a special Education Day conference attended by 60 SACRE/SAC reps and humanist school speakers (up from 50 in 2022).

Books about humanism

We continued to promote humanism via the books *The Little Book of Humanism* (released in 2020), *The Little Book of Humanist Weddings* (released in 2021), and The

Little Book of Humanist Funerals (released in 2023). As is expected after three years, sales on the first two books have slowed. But we only narrowly missed out on *Sunday Times* best-seller ranking for the *Funerals* book when it was released later in the year.

Dialogue

We continued to expand understanding of humanism among religious people through our dialogue programme. Our network of trained dialogue volunteers had an extremely productive year, and remained stable at 124 members (123 in 2022). Activity took place in all corners of the UK, and was extremely varied. This included virtual meetings with the Inter Faith Network UK; discussions with the Bible Society/Theos; events with the 'Together' social cohesion group alongside Anglican bishops; supporting refugees with a day trip to Camber Sands alongside Religions for Peace UK; an Age UK-hosted event with the Muslim Council of Britain; and activities organised in partnership with local humanist groups, faith and belief forums, and SACREs in Leeds, Plymouth, Kingston, Sheffield, Bradford, Wimbledon, Bristol, Cheltenham, Lancashire, Canterbury, Leicester, Loughborough, Ipswich, Norfolk; and Wrexham.

We also continued to work with our patron Richard Norman on his academic dialogue series on *Religion and Atheism - Beyond the Divide*, which led to Routledge commissioning a follow-up book with the working title *Religion and Atheism in Dialogue: doing difference differently*.

Separately, our public affairs team collaborated with the UK Baha'i Community on a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council condemning the persecution of religion or belief minorities.

More non-religious people living happier, more confident, and more ethical lives

Our network of trained and accredited humanist celebrants, Humanist Ceremonies, remained stable at 567 members (558 in 2022) across England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man. We saw relative stability in the number of recorded ceremonies (10,500 ceremonies, compared with 10,965 in 2022). Our weddings continued to be most popular in Northern Ireland, where they enjoy legal recognition. Rollout of our client-led Humanist Ceremonies rebrand continued across the year, culminating in the new Humanist Ceremonies website in October, which emphasised the importance of 'stories' to our brand, and allowed for both greater brand ownership in Britain, where we now trade as *Humanist Ceremonies by Humanists UK*, and greater differentiation in Northern Ireland, where we trade as *Humanist Ceremonies Northern Ireland*.

Our Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN), whose members provide emotional support in many hospitals, hospices, and prisons, ended the year with 127 accredited members (220 in 2022). We saw a reduction in network size after deliberately removing inactive members from the network who no longer sought placements.

Investment in ongoing CPD and training within the network was boosted by the appointment of our first dedicated NRPSN Manager, reporting to the Director of Humanist Care. Late in the year, we received official confirmation that NRPSN had been appointed as the endorsing body for non-religious pastoral carers in the British Armed Forces.

Our apostate support programme, Faith to Faithless, continued providing a schedule of socials and facilitated peer support sessions, policy research on apostasy issues, and assistance for humanist asylum seekers who meet our criteria for letters of support. In total, we supported 130 service total users (62 in 2022), and delivered 85 peer support and social events (67 in 2022) attended by over 600 users (280 in 2022). Additionally, we supported 21 new asylum seekers, and provided ongoing case support to 30 pre-existing asylum claimants. We worked throughout the year on building up and launching our dedicated Faith to Faithless helpline service, having trained a suite of volunteers in the summer. The helpline was soft-launched in targeted communications to existing service users and common sources of new service users in October, in preparation for a full media launch in 2024.

Support for local humanist communities was bolstered by the addition of a second staff member responsible for volunteer support of local groups, as well as increased allocated staff time from our administration team. Our priority has been to create local humanist communities that contribute to the overall fulfilment of our charitable aims. We concluded the year with six active Humanists UK local groups (eight in 2022) and 39 partner groups (48 in 2022). Work is ongoing to find the most effective ways of supporting humanism locally.

Our various special interest networks and sections continued to organise activities of interest to different demographics within our membership. LGBT Humanists organised socials, events, participation in summer Pride parades, and a ceremony for Trans Day of Remembrance. Our section Defence Humanists participated in the National Service of Remembrance, and supported humanist groups to join in with local Remembrance ceremonies. Young Humanists maintained a full online and offline events programme. And the London Humanist Choir continued to book performances around the capital, including its own annual 'One Life' concert.

More people enjoying greater freedom of thought, of expression, and of choice over their own lives

Our policy platform details that we want *'everyone to have the fullest possible freedom of choice in the shaping of their own lives, limited only by the rights and freedoms of others in a fair and equitable society and never by the pressures of religion, tradition, or outmoded law. This includes children, who should be actively prepared in schools for a life in society in which they can exercise this freedom and should, while still children, enjoy their human rights with increasing fullness in line with their growing maturity.'* Our strategy spells out that we aspire to *'influence public opinion, public policy, legislation,*

and case law to defend and advance: freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief; freedom of expression; and freedom of choice to the extent compatible with the rights and freedoms of others in a fair and equitable society.'

Campaign resources were mainly concentrated on our campaigns to do with legal recognition of humanist marriage, opposing state-funded religious schools, reforming RE and collective worship, legalising assisted dying, and promoting international freedom of religion or belief (FORB). But as this report details, we also undertook a great deal of reactive policy and campaigning work in line with our broader public policy platform and strategy. The area of work is detailed below, organised by theme.

Freedom of thought

Freedom of thought is a foundational requirement of a free society, and advocacy of this fundamental right by humanists goes back many centuries in this country and in others. Our public policy platform endorses the concept of the secular state as the best means to achieve freedom, fairness, equal citizenship, and peace in a plural and cohesive society. We maintain that only by maintaining a fair separation between public institutions and institutions of religion or belief (including those of humanism) can the state fully respect and promote freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief for all citizens, up to the limits of the rights and freedoms of others in a fair society

Inclusion of the non-religious

As ever, we advocated for a level playing field and equal treatment in law and policy for those of both religious and non-religious convictions.

In February, our patron Sandi Toksvig launched a petition to remove the automatic right for bishops to sit in the House of Lords, which received significant mainstream media attention and lead to her meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury to discuss this and the Church of England's continued opposition to same-sex marriage. From this, the baton was passed to the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG), which organised a debate in July in the House of Commons about the presence of bishops in the House of Lords. Sandi promoted the debate with a comment piece in the *Guardian*, while the debate itself was covered in BBC News Online, *The Independent*, *The Express*, *The National*, *Daily Record*, *Herald Scotland*, and Premier Christian News. Our Vice President Alice Roberts was interviewed on *Sunday Morning Live* about it. Separately, the Commission on Political Power also published a position paper in March stating that the automatic right of bishops to sit in the House of Lords was 'anomalous'. In September, we responded to the UK Parliament's Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's inquiry into membership of the Lords and called for an end to the automatic right for bishops to sit in the Lords. We also welcomed ongoing work in the Isle of Man where parliamentarians were organising to abolish the automatic right of the local bishop to vote in Tynwald.

We also issued a number of press releases and news items following the *Times* poll of Anglican clergy which revealed, amongst a number of key findings, that even Anglican

clergy think Britain is not a 'Christian country'. Clergy also questioned the Church's position on assisted dying and wanted to see changes to the establishment and to bishops in the Lords. Our Chief Executive was quoted in the *Times* challenging the presence of bishops in the Lords. Later in the year, we supported the introduction of a Bill to disestablish the Church of England and met with Lord Scriven, who brought forward the Bill. Notably, it attracted significant levels of hostility at first reading, which indicates how much strong opposition there will be at second reading if and when that comes.

In April, the UK Government published its Independent Faith Engagement Review (*Bloom Review*), about which we reacted positively and negatively to different aspects due to its sheer size and scope. It contained lots of recommendations in line with our policy, including on illegal schools and support for so-called 'apostates', but more troubling were its recommendations calling for greater state entanglement with religions, which has discriminatory consequences by affording religious groups unwarranted special treatment. These recommendations include a 'Faith Partnership Charter' for local authorities; a Government 'Faith Champion' with their own 'well-resourced' office; and more high-level engagement between Government with faith leaders, all constructed in ways that exclude the non-religious. It recommends that the Faith Champion should have an Office 'rebuilt from the current faith team in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities', when in fact that Department has a faith and belief team, not a faith team.

We expressed alarm about a new study published in *The British Journal of Psychology* which found that defendants who don't 'swear by Almighty God' in court are more likely to be found guilty by jurors who do. In response, we briefed the APPHG about the situation and wrote to Mike Freer, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice to raise our concerns and call for reform. We suggested a solution that everyone should make the same affirmation in court, but allow religious people to swear an oath in private in front of court officials who do not have a connection to the judge or jurors (if they wish). Our Chief Executive was interviewed on *Good Morning Britain* about the study.

We submitted a response to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) Statutory Review, providing evidence of discrimination against the non-religious in areas of education, work, living standards, health, justice, participation in public life, and marriage law, as well as highlighting child abuse in illegal schools.

We submitted a response to an Office of National Statistics consultation on the future of population and migration statistics. Our response focused on how the Census fails to accurately capture the non-religious population. This inaccuracy negatively impacts a number of public services including selective faith school admissions, SACRE membership, pastoral care provisions in hospitals, prisons and the armed forces, and discriminatory partnerships with places of worship and community groups. We highlighted that plans to improve data collection on religion or belief are underdeveloped.

In Wales, we responded to the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales, urging the Welsh Government to continue its commitment to secular ideals, freedom of religion and belief, and protecting the Human Rights Act. We also asked that the Government address the issues of faith schools, collective worship in all schools, and the lack of non-religious pastoral carers in hospitals, alongside chaplains. We also saw progress after the Faith Communities Forum (which is chaired by the First Minister) was officially instructed to admit Wales Humanists as an associate member group by the Social Justice Minister for Wales. This is a major development – something we have been working to achieve since 2016. Religious groups openly cited their loss of privileged access to the First Minister, and of a safe space in which to address the growth of irreligion in the UK, as reasons for denying equality to humanists on the forum. We restated our position in favour of dialogue and supporting freedom of religion or belief. The First Minister and Social Justice Minister were present at the meeting and we are now waiting for their response to our request for full Forum membership.

And finally, following our successful *Bowen v Kent County Council* case (covered below in relation to Religious Education), we met with our lawyers to discuss what precedents could be used to advance equality for the non-religious in other areas of life.

Balanced approaches to religions and worldviews: curriculums

In May, we supported our member Paul Bowen to challenge a decision by Kent County Council to refuse him membership of his local Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) on the grounds that he is a humanist. This resulted in the landmark judgment *Bowen v Kent County Council*, which established definitively that it is unlawful for SACREs to refuse membership to humanists. We spread the news to key stakeholders in the education world and through media coverage. We were delighted to receive news in writing from the Secretary of State for Education that the UK Government would now provide revised guidance for SACREs to help give effect to this judgment nationally. The consequence of this should be that humanism will be better reflected in Religious Education curriculums across England. Dr Satvinder Juss of the College of Law also provided new legal commentary for SACREs in England and Wales, as a follow-up to the guidance he provided in 2015 following the *Fox v Secretary of State for Education* judgment.

The judgment in England coincided with positive action in other jurisdictions. The Welsh Government commissioned the Welsh Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religion Values and Ethics to review all 22 agreed syllabuses in Wales, which schools must have regard to when designing their curriculums. We were part of the team conducting the review and found that most of the syllabus documents were inclusive of non-religious philosophical convictions and included reference to the need for education to be objective, critical, and pluralistic. We were also happy to see the Jersey government appoint a humanist to its SACRE equivalent, the Religious Education Advisory Committee.

The Government's high-profile *Bloom Review* concluded and recommended that the RE curriculum be reformed to be inclusive of humanism. We wrote to the Government to

highlight this. Meanwhile, the House of Lords passed the second reading of Humanists UK patron and All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG) Vice Chair Baroness Burt's private member's bill Education (non-religious philosophical convictions) Bill. All peers in attendance, other than the Government minister and a bishop, spoke up in support of the Bill. It is a private member's bill so is unlikely to become law. We also met with Labour's Shadow Schools Secretary and made submissions to the Labour Party National Policy Forum about the wording of the Bill, which Labour's shadow education team in the Lords supported.

In Wales, we met with the Director for Education for the Church in Wales to discuss how humanism can be included in classes being taught in Religion Values and Ethics, in faith schools. We also met with Qualifications Wales to raise our concerns about the new Religious Studies GCSE and the need for it to include humanism.

Balanced approaches to religions and worldviews: 'collective worship'

Our policy on repealing collective worship laws in England and Wales was reflected in the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE)'s *Civil society alternative report* to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, on how the UK is implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is significant because it means that civil society as a whole made this call to the UN. In Wales, we responded to a consultation by the Senedd Children, Young People, and Education Committee on the implementation of education reforms, and called for collective worship to be replaced by inclusive assemblies.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Facing pressure from anti-LGBT MPs in the parliamentary Conservative party, the UK Government brought forward a timetabled review of relationships and sex education (RSE) guidance for English schools. We expressed our hopes that the review will be based on human rights, LGBT-inclusive, and look at faith school RSE carve-outs, and signed a joint letter with the End Violence Against Women coalition calling for the review to not be politicised and instead for it to be informed by evidence and focused on the needs of children.

Religious state schools

Without doubt the most serious remaining area of religious privilege in our overwhelmingly secular society is the built-in bias in the law in favour of religious schools. This persists despite the unpopularity of this principle with the public, shown in repeated polls, and their need for specific exemptions from various aspects of equality and human rights law to continue to exist. These privileges are not entirely a matter of outdated laws: many are embodied in relatively recent deals that successive governments have done with the churches, especially the Church of England, which has openly acknowledged the importance of its schools to its future expansion hopes.

Our aspiration is for every state-funded school to be open to pupils and families of every religion or belief, and to teach a broad and balanced curriculum with an inclusive, non-sectarian school ethos. One dimension of this work means challenging the process of green-lighting new faith schools with discriminatory admissions and employment policies. We supported groups of parents and councillors in areas across the UK to oppose the approval of new faith schools.

In April, we launched a new suite of guides for parents reflecting the common themes in our casework supporting parents with issues to do with religion in schools. The four guides cover the law in England, Northern Ireland, plus two guides in Wales for English and Welsh speakers. We launched the guides to coincide with National Offer Day. The Northern Ireland guide achieved particularly strong media attention from Belfast-based national newspapers.

We continued to invest time in research into the direct and indirect discrimination and other social harms that flow from faith-based admissions and faith-based schools. Early in the year, we completed a follow-up study to our *Careless or Uncaring?* report examining how faith schools in Wales deal with care-experienced children in Wales. This showed that faith schools in Wales (particularly Catholic secondary schools) disproportionately fail to prioritise children who are in care or who have been in care. We shared initial findings of the report with the Senedd's Children, Young People, and Education Committee's inquiry. Later in the year, we also publicised new research from Dr Tammy Campbell at the London School of Economics and Political Science highlighting that faith schools admit fewer pupils with special education needs and disabilities than other schools. We also provided information to a faith school research team at Liverpool John Moores University, looking at the impact of faith school admissions policies on parents who do not share the faith of the school. We also commissioned new research into faith schools and their intake of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The Director of the Higher Education Policy Institute also wrote a piece for *Schools Week* titled 'It's time to end the scandal of religious tests for church schools', that was largely based on and linked to our research.

The Church of England published a report in which it said it is planning to utilise its state-funded schools to 'double the number of children and young people who are active Christian disciples by 2030.' In other words, it outlined a strategy to more aggressively evangelise through its schools. We also drew attention to a evangelistic mass worship event attended by 76 Anglican schools in Coventry and Warwickshire. Thousands of children from the schools were bussed into mass evangelising 'worship' concerts in an out-of-town arena, in a series of American-style concert shows.

Our engagement with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) earlier in the year ultimately led to the Committee recommending that governments in the UK adopt some of our key education policies: the Committee said that the law on collective worship, biased Religious Education (RE) curriculums, faith-based discrimination for school admissions, and faith-based carve-outs for relationships and sex education (RSE) all violated the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the

UK ratified in 1991. Its call to end faith-based admissions in England prompted coverage in the *Telegraph*, *Church Times*, and Premier Christian News, and other aspects of the UN report were covered in *Christian Today*.

We also responded to a House of Commons Education Committee Inquiry into teacher recruitment and retention, making the case for the abolition of faith-based discrimination against teachers by faith schools.

Unregistered (illegal) schools

Another facet of our work relates to unregistered (illegal) religious schools, which typically practise corporal punishment, do not comply with teacher training or health and safety requirements, and teach a curriculum composed entirely or almost entirely of rote scripture learning, often without even covering basics like maths or English.

Working alongside journalists, we were happy to generate significant coverage in the *Times* on the experiences of children trapped in Charedi illegal schools in London. It ran two major features on illegal schools, one of which was organised by the Jewish counter-extremism charity Nahamu and was the lead front-page story, and the other of which was a 3,000-word feature interview for the magazine with a former pupil which we facilitated. Our work led the *Guardian*, on its front-page, to say that, 'The issue has come to the fore in recent months'.

After the Government dropped the Schools Bill in December 2022 over unrelated issues, we engaged with the Department for Education on how best to retain the well-drafted and widely supported sections of the Bill which would allow Ofsted and others to take action on illegal schools. We were bitterly disappointed to see no mention of a Bill that might address illegal schools in the following King's Speech. We briefed MPs ahead of a debate in Westminster Hall about home education, and some of the suggested provisions for tackling illegal schools, with many speaking up clearly on the need for the government to bring back its previous proposals in a new Act of Parliament. The Government-commissioned *Bloom Review* into religion and society recommended that the Government bring back the dropped legislation in the Schools Bill that would have tackled illegal schools. We also met with Labour's team to receive assurances that it would take rapid action on this issue if it won the next election.

Public services: Support for those leaving high control religions

In April, the Government's Independent Faith Engagement Adviser Colin Bloom published his wide-ranging review of the ways in which the state should engage with religion or belief communities. Based on his findings having reviewed the work of our Faith to Faithless service, Bloom recommended that the UK Government should provide state funding to a service like ours which offers direct peer support to those affected by shunning, ostracism, spiritual abuse, and other forms of punishment as a direct result of leaving a high-control religion.

Faith to Faithless responded to the UK Government's consultation on the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in August. The consultation follows on from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), with the Government now considering how to implement its recommendations. We warned against religious groups being exempted from the legislation, as the Government considers making failure to report child sex abuse a crime.

Right to asylum

We reacted to the Government's Illegal Migration Bill which would have a negative impact on non-religious asylum seekers in particular and on human rights more broadly. We briefed MPs and peers ahead of each stage of the debate. At its second reading in the Lords we succeeded to influence three peers, All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group treasurer Lord Dubs and members Lord Rooker and Baroness Whitaker to raise the impact of the Bill on the non-religious. We also responded to the Joint Committee on Human Rights' call for evidence on the same subject, and signed the Joint Civil Society Solidarity Statement on the Illegal Migration Bill alongside 180 other civil society organisations.

We raised concerns about the Government's Rwanda Bill which seeks to govern the deportation process of asylum seekers to Rwanda. We highlighted that the expression of fundamental humanist principles related to democracy, freedom, and human rights are significantly curtailed in Rwanda, and that 'blasphemy' is a crime punishable by imprisonment there as well as other human rights concerns about the Bill.

Freedom of choice

Freedom of choice is a cross-cutting priority in our policy work, intersecting closely with our work for greater freedom of thought and expression. It frequently underpins our request for equitable treatment for humanism and humanists in law, as with our campaign for legal recognition of humanist marriages. Freedom of choice also underpins our longstanding demands for equality and universal access to justice, and our commitments to human rights as a paramount legal and social endeavour. It is also embodied by the continued presence of racial equality, women's rights, children's rights, and LGBT rights as prominent themes in our public advocacy.

Legal recognition of humanist marriages

We want couples across the UK to be able to marry in a legally binding ceremony with an accredited Humanists UK celebrant, just as religious couples can with a trained minister of religion, without having to take on the extra expense and barrier of a second ceremony in a register office. Couples can have legally recognised humanist marriages in this way in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, and Guernsey, but not in England, Wales, or the Isle of Man. Our previous work on this issue led to a successful amendment to the 2013 Marriage Act that would enable the UK Government to legally recognise humanist marriages in England and Wales by statutory instrument; instead,

the Government has commissioned a series of reviews into the wider law on the broadest possible terms.

To mark the 10 year anniversary of the Marriage Act, we delivered hundreds of handwritten wedding invitations to the Justice Secretary 'cordially inviting' him 'to afford couples freedom of choice and legally recognise humanist marriages in England and Wales'. The invites had been filled in by Humanists UK members including many who want humanist marriages themselves, all highlighting the personal significance of the campaign to them. The letters were delivered in-person by Peter McGraith and David Cabreza (our members, who had been the first same-sex couple in England and Wales to legally marry), with Peter saying to the media that he and David '*would have chosen a humanist ceremony if that had been available*'.

The Government passed its July deadline to respond to the Law Commission's review of marriage law without taking action. This is despite a court judgment saying that the lack of humanist marriage equality constituted 'discrimination' and that the government 'could not sit on its hands' on this issue. We highlighted the ongoing mistreatment of humanist couples at the UN Human Rights Council. Separately, we engaged the Labour Party National Policy Forum and relevant brief-holders about the issue, and delivered an intervention during the UK's Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council, highlighting the ongoing delays to legal recognition of humanist marriages.

Assisted dying

Freedom of choice also underpins our advocacy of a compassionate assisted dying law. We want those with incurable or terminal conditions to have access to assistance to end their suffering, subject to safeguards requiring a fixed, uncoerced, and genuine wish to do so made in sound mind. We work closely with the Assisted Dying Coalition, which we previously helped to establish, and whose members share our policy. These organisations include My Death, My Decision (with whom we share a staff member), Humanist Society Scotland, Friends at the End (Scotland), Let Me Choose (Isle of Man), End of Life Choices Jersey, and End of Life Ireland.

The majority of our public affairs work on assisted dying naturally involved engaging with the Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry into assisted dying in England and Wales. Separately, Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights held a session on human rights and assisted dying, which it fed into the Health and Social Care Committee. The inquiry completed its evidential sessions in July and promised to report back in 2024.

In January, we acquired via Freedom of Information requests and published plans from the Ministry of Justice from 2019 for a 'call for evidence' on assisted dying which was abandoned amid ministerial shake-ups. This led to the former Justice Secretary David Gauke publishing an opinion piece in the *New Statesman* entitled 'The law against assisted dying is causing avoidable misery'.

In Jersey, we responded to the States Assembly in Jersey's consultation on assisted dying. Jersey's detailed legislative proposals were a considerable, positive move in the right direction and included many sensible safeguards and processes. However, we raised concerns at some of the suggestions, such as allowing family members to appeal assisted dying decisions. We were disappointed to see the timeline for Jersey's assisted dying legislation extended, meaning a law could be delayed until 2025, as parliamentarians opposed to reform contrived novel reasons for further reviews.

In the Isle of Man, we responded to a consultation on assisted dying as part of Dr Alex Allinson MHK's Assisted Dying Bill. This consultation was shorter and less detailed than the consultation for Jersey. We argued strongly for the Bill to also cover people who are incurably, intolerably suffering, not just those with six months to live. The Bill passed its second reading in October and we will continue to argue the point.

In October we gave evidence to the Special Oireachtas committee on assisted dying in the Republic of Ireland. Responding to a callout for international expertise on assisted dying, we offered the committee the humanist case for adopting the most compassionate and dignified assisted dying law possible. It is inconceivable that a change to the law in Ireland would not have implications for Northern Ireland residents too. The Oireachtas reported its findings in 2024, supporting assisted dying for terminally ill people with up to a year of life remaining.

We also noted positive developments in the context of the UK debate on assisted dying. France's decision to move ahead with assisted dying following a Citizens' Assembly, mirroring the process in Jersey, generated ample UK media coverage, in which our Chief Executive and our Assisted Dying Campaigner were often quoted. The Royal College of Surgeons' decision to move from an opposed to a neutral policy on assisted dying further cemented the new status quo that the medical profession has no organised opposition to assisted dying.

There were negative developments in the media landscape on this issue. We produced and published a report on Canada's assisted dying legislation in light of considerable alarmist press in the UK. No news publication or other organisation had fact-checked or analysed any of these claims in detail. We analysed the coverage and the report dispelled many of the myths, but also recommended areas where the law could be improved and safeguards strengthened. The report has been positively received by academics and Canadian humanists but predictably led to backlash from opponents of assisted dying, both in the UK and Canada. We also reacted with bemusement to the establishment of a one-man-band organisation called Humanists Against Assisted Dying and Euthanasia, which received generous media coverage. Our own member surveys and surveys from YouGov both show that over 98% of self-identified humanists support a compassionate right to die law, but we suspect that media outlets opposed to assisted dying will give a platform to the organisation in order to imply a division amongst humanists on this issue that does not meaningfully exist.

LGBT rights

The human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people continued to be a recurring theme for us in policy work and in public advocacy. Much of our education work on Relationships and Sex Education and discrimination against teachers in schools touched on the need for LGBT-inclusive subject content and policies, and we spoke out regularly against homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic hatred and discrimination through our social media channels.

We were one of the earliest organisations in the UK, if not the earliest, to call for an end to so-called 'conversion therapy' (a fraudulent, pseudoscientific practice that amounts to torture of LGBT people on the false premise that it can change their sexuality or gender identity). Our volunteer-led section, LGBT Humanists, has been advocating a ban on the practice since the 1980s. Since 2018, we and LGBT Humanists have been doing what we can to hold successive administrations to the promise made by Theresa May's government that there will be a full legislative ban across medical, non-medical, and religious settings. At Pride events in the summer, LGBT Humanists members turned out in their hundreds holding 'Ban Conversion Therapy' signs which were widely photographed and used in mainstream press stories about the campaign. Feedback from our volunteers noted the crowd's audible appreciation for our refreshingly political and non-commercial message in the parade.

We worked with our fellow members of the Ban Conversion Therapy (BCT) Coalition in respect of our work to ban these abhorrent practices. We continued to urge the Government to bring forward the draft bill it had been promising for months. After no Bill materialised in the King's Speech, Humanists UK patron Baroness Lorely Burt (Lib Dem) and All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group member Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP introduced private members' bills in the Lords and the Commons respectively. We and the BCT Coalition offered support and assistance with the drafting of these bills, to make sure they are airtight and cannot be used to restrict access to talking therapies or other kinds of exploratory therapy. Equalities Minister Kemi Badenoch said that the UK Government still intended to ban conversion practices and that a draft Bill will be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny, but this was met with doubt due to the lack of parliamentary time available.

Abortion rights

Women's freedom of choice, extending to their right to autonomy over their bodies and to make choices about their own sexual and reproductive health, continued as an important ongoing area for reactive campaigning work. We continued to make the case in the media, on social media, and in correspondence with politicians for decriminalisation of abortion by repealing the relevant sections of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and regulating abortion, including current term limits, through civil law instead. To that end, we came on board a new steering group from BPAS (British Pregnancy Advisory Service) to promote this campaign. In June, our members voted unanimously at our AGM to condemn the news of a British woman sentenced to prison for taking abortion pills to end her pregnancy in difficult circumstances.

We also continued to campaign for safe access zones around abortion clinics to combat the rising problem of religious protesters intimidating women to discourage them accessing abortion services. We were delighted that in September, safe access zones became a legal reality outside Northern Ireland centres offering abortion services. Meanwhile in England and Wales, we briefed MPs during the passage of the Public Order Act 2023, where an amendment was successfully passed to require the UK Government to implement safe access zones. We encouraged the Home Secretary to do this swiftly. We were surprised and disappointed to see the issue being put to consultation once again rather than see the law implemented as passed, especially given the debate had seen many of the objections to safe access zones comprehensively defeated and voted down through amendments. Meanwhile in Scotland, our sister charity Humanist Society Scotland supported the introduction of a new Safe Access Zones Bill, which had its call for evidence in December.

At the tail end of the year, following the private members' bill ballot in the House of Lords, we sounded the alarm about three balloted anti-abortion private members bills that all sought to reduce the legal scope for women to access abortion services.

Access to justice

One of our busiest areas of work, in response to UK Government plans to repeal the Human Rights Act and restrict access to judicial review, achieved some measure of closure when UK Government plans for a 'British Bill of Rights' were shelved following the resignation of Dominic Raab MP as Lord Chancellor in April. The plans were officially dropped altogether in June, marking a significant victory for our most resource-intensive reactive campaign. This campaign was made possible due to the coalition we established of over 220 organisations to defend human rights and judicial review from Government attack. It is believed to be the largest human rights coalition in UK history. Those joining include charities, trades unions, human rights bodies, and religion or belief groups.

We did note that many measures of the Bill to disapply the Human Rights Act instead appeared as notwithstanding clauses in new pieces of legislation such as the Illegal Migration Bill and the Victims and Prisoners Bill, which set a worrying precedent for how human rights protections are at risk of backsliding by stripping universal human rights away from certain groups of people. We have raised our concerns in a joint letter to Joanna Cherry KC MP, Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, organised by the British Institute of Human Rights. We remain part of the Save our Human Rights Act steering group.

Pastoral care and chaplaincy

Our policy team worked to bolster the rights of patients, workers, and visitors in hospitals, as well as prisoners, members of the armed forces, and students, lecturers, teachers, and elected officials to receive non-religious pastoral support through public institutions. To this end, we engaged nationally and locally with various National Health

Services, the prison service, the university sector, the armed forces, and parliaments and councils around the UK about endorsing us as providers and rooting out discriminatory practices, both in service provision and recruitment.

We had meetings throughout the year with the Chaplain General of His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service to discuss our provision of non-religious pastoral support in prisons. Regular changes in the government frontbench team have led to continued delays at the ministerial level in our receiving national recognition as a provider.

On the health front, new NHS England chaplaincy guidelines made explicit for the first time that all hospitals should provide equitable and inclusive provision for non-religious pastoral care alongside religious chaplaincy. We hope that this will lead to open recruitment of chaplaincy and pastoral care staff becoming the norm. We were however disappointed that NHS England retained exclusive use of the terms 'chaplain' and 'chaplaincy' throughout, instead of 'pastoral care', despite its connotation of Christian tradition, and the research which shows this acts as a barrier to patient inclusion. The guidelines simply said that the terms were 'intended to be read in an inclusive manner'. Meanwhile, NHS Wales' Spirituality and Wellbeing in Health in NHS and Social Care group, of which we are a founder member, decided to commence reviewing the Welsh chaplaincy guidelines.

We made historic progress with the Ministry of Defence, culminating late in the year with our joint announcement that Humanists UK and our service the NRPSN would be endorsing authorities for pastoral carers in the armed forces, having received sign-off from Number 10 and the Ministry of Justice.

In the university sector, we saw progress as humanist James Croft was appointed as the first head of a university chaplaincy team in the UK, which attracted coverage in the *Times*.

Elsewhere, we saw improvements in the provision of humanist pastoral care in political offices. In the Senedd, a humanist pastoral carer was appointed as part of a new multi-belief team, alongside a Christian and a Muslim, to provide support to Members of the Senedd and Senedd staff. In Wokingham, a humanist celebrant was appointed chaplain to the Mayor, joining a handful of humanists in similar roles conducting local civic functions such as Remembrance Sunday. However, no progress was made with the Speaker of the House of Commons on improving the offering of pastoral care to Members of Parliament, which is currently exclusively provided by a senior Church of England cleric, despite promises early on in post that he would work with us on this as part of a focus on members' welfare.

Freedom of expression

Free expression is a frequent cross-cutting theme in our policy work, much of which can also be thought of or categorised as issues of freedom of thought and/or freedom of choice. Our policy work and campaigning here is increasingly focused on challenging

the existence of both formal and de facto bans on blasphemy and 'causing offence' in law, which history shows to have a significantly corrosive effect on both the quality of public discourse and on individuals' and communities' ability to shape their own lives and stake out an equitable role in society. This is true in the UK but also abroad, where we advocate for greater diplomatic pressure from the UK on states where identifying publicly as a humanist can cost someone their life or their freedom.

Support for humanists at risk worldwide

One of our priorities is to advance freedom of religion or belief for all, and to draw greater attention, in particular from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), to the plight of people persecuted for their humanist beliefs.

Nigeria remained a particular area of interest, in part due to the recent imprisonment of our Nigerian humanist colleague Mubarak Bala. We worked with the FCDO to draw attention to the plight faced by humanists in Nigeria. A Commons debate in April saw the Government confirm it had raised the issue with Kano officials in January, and showed strong support of the plight of humanists in Nigeria from the Shadow Foreign Affairs Minister, and from members of the DUP, SNP, and Conservative Party who are members of the the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief (APPG FoRB). In July, the APPG FoRB published its report *Nigeria: An Unfolding Genocide?*, in which our Nigeria colleague Leo Igwe, a board member of Humanists International, spoke about his friend and colleague Mubarak Bala.

Another area of activity was India. In August, we proposed a motion to the World Humanist Congress in Copenhagen which condemned the withdrawal of police security from the President of the Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations Narendra Nayak, whose life has been threatened on the basis of his humanist beliefs. The motion passed with unanimous support from the global humanist community. We used this as a prompt to raise his case with the India desk at FCDO.

International freedom of religion or belief (FoRB)

Our longstanding commitment to FoRB also extends to campaigning for the rights of religious people to their beliefs, as well as humanists. It was the subject of numerous meetings and a great deal of correspondence with relevant FCDO country desks and ministers and with Labour's Shadow Foreign Affairs team, including specific desks. We were regular participants at meetings of the APPG on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the UK FoRB Forum (where our Chief Executive remains on the steering group). We were consulted by the FCDO FoRB team on its new FoRB Strategy, which included an integrated UK approach to FoRB within a human rights framework, and more explicit condemnation from the UK of states which use apostasy and blasphemy laws. As part of this shift, we agreed to organise training for the FoRB team on the full impact of blasphemy and apostasy laws on freedom of thought, choice, and expression.

We shared concerns with FCDO officials when a public FCDO statement in July concerning a Qu'ran burning in Stockholm did not accurately reflect the UK's policy on

protecting free expression, which properly understands prohibitions on desecration of objects as a form of harmful blasphemy laws, with all the problems those laws entail.

As part of our ongoing participation in APPG FoRB, we chaired a new working group of the APPG concerned with the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. An event marking the occasion was held in December, with Gáspár Békés, founding member of the Hungarian Atheist Association and our Chief Executive presenting alongside APPG FoRB Chair Jim Shannon MP (DUP) and officials from every party. The outcome of the meeting was to put forward recommendations to tackle impunity for FoRB violations. Separately, our Wales Coordinator spoke at an event to mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights organised by the Welsh Centre for International Affairs, attended by Welsh Ministers Jane Hutt MS, Mick Antoniw MS, and Hannah Blythyn MS.

We raised a concern with APPG FoRB that one of its listed stakeholders, a group known as ADF International, was a designated anti-LGBT hate group as identified by the Southern Poverty Law Centre. Other stakeholders had not been consulted or informed about the addition, which raises questions about whether our ongoing stakeholder membership of APPG FoRB remains tenable.

Along with interventions on other topics (detailed under our section on 'International human rights'), we used our platform at the UN Human Rights Council to condemn the use of blasphemy and apostasy laws in the United Arab Emirates; to condemn Pakistan and Palestine's motion calling for the restoration of blasphemy laws in Denmark following a recent Qu'ran incident; and, in a joint statement with the UK Baha'i Community, condemning persecution of belief minorities in Iran and Yemen.

Defending free expression

As in previous years, we highlighted where Advertising Standards Authority rulings curtailed 'religious offence' in ways that Parliament sought to remove from statute. A decision in January to ban adverts from the singer Demi Lovato cited religious offence when the adverts could have been banned more soundly on other grounds. We criticised this *de facto* imposition of blasphemy laws on Sky News and in *NME* magazine, restating our policy that blasphemy or religious offence should not feature in the Code of Advertising Practice, as it is impossible to adjudicate on in a consistent, fair, or transparent way.

In February, we were active in the media and engaging authorities after a school with no religious character in Wakefield suspended four boys over an alleged incident of blasphemy (one of the boys, who is autistic, brought in his own copy of the Quran, which was dropped and lightly scuffed). Clumsy police intervention in the case inflamed community tensions further and brought out humiliating scenes of a mother grovelling for her son's forgiveness and safety. Police recorded the event as a 'non-crime hate incident' (NCHI) on the boy's permanent file. We responded that this was disproportionate; that the school and police were enforcing a repealed law on

blasphemy; and that heavy-handed actions by the authorities seemed to be at the behest of indirect pressure from a vocal religious group and social media bullies. We identified a set of sensible practical reforms which the Government could quickly introduce to prevent such incidents recurring in future, with our petition to the Home Office attracting thousands of signatures. Within a few days, the Home Secretary took action and implemented our precise recommendations, promising refreshed guidance about 'blasphemy' in schools and on non-crime hate incidents for the police. Ultimately, the Department for Education did not produce the promised guidance for schools, but the new Home Office guidance on police use of NCHIs was laid before Parliament. This described situations involving blasphemy like the one in Wakefield, where the expectation would be that no NCHI would be recorded. We also reminded police forces of their duty to challenge threats of violence against those accused of 'blasphemy' (and that blasphemy accusations often lead to violence) rather than enforce religious rules.

Abolishing blasphemy laws (Northern Ireland)

Most of our public affairs goals in Northern Ireland were hampered by the fact that there was no government in place. Late in the year, it became apparent that a return to power-sharing in Northern Ireland could be a realistic prospect early in 2024. We began making arrangements to dust off our work with the NI Executive on repealing Northern Ireland's blasphemy laws, where our Northern Ireland section had achieved cross-community consensus and strong support from the relevant ministers, prior to the collapse of the government.

Ethical issues and global challenges

Our policy continues to emphasise a number of areas where humanists, and humanist thinking, can make unique contributions to public debate. In 2023 this led to the following notable actions.

The environment

Through Humanist Climate Action, our network of volunteers interested in ecological issues, we campaigned on a range of issues to do with the national and international agenda for action on climate change. Early in the year, we responded to a consultation on rewilding from the UK Parliament's Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs Committee. Volunteers from the network also published interviews with Humanists UK patrons Saiful Islam (a chemist working on renewable energy), Zion Lights (environmentalist campaigner), and Siân Berry AM (a senior Green Party politician). In June, our AGM passed a motion encouraging greater support for members organising on environmental issues as part of Humanists UK.

International human rights

Throughout the year we continued to make interventions at the UN Human Rights Council on international topics which touched on our areas of expertise. These included interventions to the newly appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or

Belief, focused on blasphemy; with Humanists Malta on abortion rights in Malta and Poland; condemning the use of blasphemy and apostasy laws in the United Arab Emirates; condemning a resolution from Pakistan and Palestine which called for the reintroduction of blasphemy laws in Europe; condemning ongoing persecution of Bahá'ís; condemning ethnic violence in Sudan and Myanmar; to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, highlighting the dangers of forced marriage and religious coercion; with the Ozanne Foundation, condemning religious harms against minorities, including conversion therapy; and, closer to home, calling on the UK Government to close illegal schools and grant recognition to humanist marriages.

Following the terrorist attacks in Tel Aviv in October, and before the outbreak of war in Gaza, we published a statement condemning the actions of Hamas and expressing our hope for *'a world where all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs, can coexist without fear of violence or oppression.'*

Humanists UK is respected for our expertise and professionalism and recognised as the leading national voice for the non-religious

We continued to be the go-to national organisation for the non-religious and for information about humanism, and were frequently sought out by the media for comment on press stories in this capacity. 2023 was another strong year for media coverage, with our spokespersons quoted in 242 distinct articles in major national or international publications (albeit down from 373 in 2022, when we were widely quoted in relation to the Census).

One example of our growing public recognition as a national charity for the non-religious was the invitation extended to our Chief Executive to attend the coronation of King Charles III. As is now usual, he also attended the national ceremony of remembrance at the cenotaph in November. Similarly, we were pleased that the Faith and Belief Minister, Shadow Women and Equalities Secretary, and SNP Equalities Spokesperson all spoke at our annual reception in Parliament about the importance of humanism and the contributions that humanists make to society.

High-level engagement with numerous government departments in various nations of the UK and across the crown dependencies continued to show that we are taken seriously as the voice of a large constituency in the UK. We have particularly good relations with the FCDO and our strong standing was reflected in our ongoing engagement with FCDO country desks and in the briefings we gave to ministers, detailed in the previous section. We also continued to enjoy warm relations with the Welsh Government, and attended meetings with then First Minister Mark Drakeford MS. One mark of esteem was our appointment to the Faith Communities Forum in Wales by ministerial direction, after some members of the group who were hostile to humanists refused to comply with their legal requirement to admit us.

In our services, our Dialogue Officer and the NRPSN Manager were invited to speak to members of the European Humanist Professionals about religious-humanist dialogue in the UK, and to lead a workshop on personal storytelling and brand-building. Our Director of Understanding Humanism was invited to be part of a European-wide working group on education. The Director of Humanist Care and NRPSN Manager were sought for their support in the formation of a European network of non-religious and humanist pastoral carers. Closer to home, they were sought again by the College of Healthcare Chaplains and UK Board of Healthcare Chaplains to contribute to policy formation for the sector.

A number of our programmes and services received public commendations. At the seventh annual faith and belief community awards in November, our Faith to Faithless leadership team and our pastoral care team at Wormwood Scrubs prison walked away with awards, reflecting 'inspirational projects to celebrate the vital work of London's faith and belief communities'.

We were invited to form part of a new Faith and Civil Society Commission on Artificial Intelligence chaired by Sajid Javid MP, created in the run-up to the Prime Minister's Bletchley Park summit on artificial intelligence. Our Director of Communications and Development and two of our patrons (AI experts Dr Susie Alegre and Dr Kate Devlin) are humanist representatives to the Commission, which looks at the ethical and existential implications of new generative AI technologies and how governments can best regulate their use.

We appointed 10 new patrons to act as ambassadors for us in the media and in their diverse fields. These included paleobiologist Professor Anjali Goswami, historian of religion Dr Simon Sinner, climate scientists Professor Mark Maslin and Professor Sarah Bridle, environmentalist Zion Lights, feminist campaigner Natasha Walter, broadcaster and 'urban birder' David Lindo, barrister Dr Susie Alegre, equality campaigner and Lib Dem peer Lorely Burt, and science communicator Ginny Smith. And as detailed in this report in relation to our first aim, we also awarded medals to Professor Anjali Goswami, author Sarah Bakewell, historian Dr Caroline Dodds Pennock, neuroscientist Professor Roi Cohen Kadosh, and campaigner Zion Lights as part of our Annual Lectures and Medals Series.

Humanists UK is an expanding, financially healthy, and sustainable movement

Our fundraising

Due to the hardworking efforts of our fundraising team, the continued generosity of our members, supporters and other donors, and the additional contributions made by some of our more affluent donors in particular, we were able to secure the funding we budgeted for to maintain our programmes across 2023 and going into 2024 and to allow expansion in an extremely challenging fundraising environment.

The challenges for individual giving fundraising during a cost of living crisis demanded more staff time and investment in order to achieve comparable results to typical monthly averages. We saw an increase in the proportion of departing members reporting via exit surveys that they were cutting back their direct debits due to pressures on household finances from the cost of living crisis. As such, we continued to develop our programmes for retaining ex-members as supporters, connecting with new supporters, and stewarding new donors to better understand their motivations for supporting us and their individual capacities and preferences for donating.

In February, we announced that our Humanist Heritage project was awarded £160,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, for which we have been very grateful, to expand its work with ambitious projects which would have a lasting impact on public appreciation of the history of humanism and humanist activism in the United Kingdom.

People and systems

Our People team continued to develop processes and systems to better support our 40 staff, 52 consultants, and over 900 volunteers and franchisees across the UK as a major strategic priority for us. It also continued to drive forward our agenda to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion within our organisation and wider movement.

We spent a lot of time and resources on reviewing the systems and organisation of the local humanist groups that are part of Humanists UK. We now have a rational platform for their expansion in number and this has been brought under the purview of our Director of Operations. We look forward in future years to being able to report on their growing activities.

Within our IT department, we made significant improvements by moving to a ticketing system to allow us to better budget time for both smaller and larger projects and give our growing staff team a sense of when individual critical projects would be delivered. Reflecting our growing size and the complexity of our work, as well as the technology-driven nature of most plans to improve performance in all of our work areas, we invested significant amounts of management time later in the year to plan the allocation of time for IT projects in 2024, and began recruiting for a second in-house developer role to boost our capacity to deliver a growing number of projects.

Mid-year, we transitioned the Humanists UK website to a new skin and livery, as well as new more modern back-end editor, facilitating a more accessible design and better overall speed and performance. The new website allows staff from different departments to more rapidly put together visually impressive pages and will make the transition to a restructured and overhauled new website much easier (expected 2024). In the final quarter of the year, we built and launched a new Humanist Ceremonies website on top of this site structure. The new site was developed by our Ceremonies team to better signpost relevant user journeys for clients, industry partners, and our own celebrants.

Financial Review

We ended the year with a surplus of £260k. This was mainly thanks to unexpected legacy income received late in the year. Legacy income fluctuates significantly and in 2023 we received £810k, over double that received in 2022. We do not often get to hear why people have chosen to leave gifts to Humanists UK in their wills but 25 people did so and we would like to express our gratitude to every one of them for the enormous difference made by their gift.

We received grant income in furtherance of our Humanist Care programme, as well as our Understanding Humanism (Humanist Heritage) project. Restricted donations continued to fund our dedicated Assisted Dying Campaign and, to a lesser extent, the Campaign against Faith Schools (where, unusually, unrestricted donations filled the funding gap).

Membership and unrestricted donations income both performed in line with budgets, though the staff time devoted to fundraising and membership development remained high in order to achieve this. A (below inflation) increase in our base-membership fee bolstered our income, as did some substantial gifts from some of our supporters. We remain deeply grateful to our Blackham Society members for their ongoing support.

Unfortunately, continued high inflation meant that our income growth did not produce as much buying power for our activities as we would have previously expected. Expenditure on charitable activity increased by 19%, reflecting ongoing inflationary pressures, but also areas of growing investment such as our local groups programme. In our Education & Public Awareness area of work, the events programme returned to pre-pandemic levels of activity, with corresponding increases in expenditure but also income and, thanks to additional grant income, we were able to ramp up the Humanist Heritage project. While expenditure on ceremonies was stable, we reduced the accreditation fee paid by celebrants, in order to support our highly-skilled network of celebrants in this time of sustained economic pressure.

Our five-year strategic plan remains for us to significantly draw down on our funds, leveraging expenditure to make long-lasting change in public policy, in the public's understanding of humanism, and in the ability of non-religious people to live happier, confident, and more ethical lives. Given the ongoing poor economic outlook this is a fortunate position to be in and we are grateful to everyone involved in making it so.

Reserves

Reserves are unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the charity's purposes. The trustees consider that the target for reserves held by Humanists UK should be equivalent to three months of expenditure.

This target means that, if the worst happens and the charity needs to be closed down, there will be sufficient funds to meet all of its obligations and liabilities as part of a managed closure, including redundancy and other closure costs.

When reserves are 50% or more above the target, we will review them to make sure our future plans make best use of these funds.

Close-down costs are reviewed annually. Should they rise above the reserves target, a reserves review will be conducted. This policy is reviewed at least every three years.

At the end of the year total funds held amounted to £3,164,306 of which £122,880 were held for restricted purposes and £6.769 were represented by the Association's tangible fixed assets which can only be realised on their disposal. The financial assets of the Association were £3,157,537 (unrestricted: £3,034,657), currently more than sufficient to meet the requirements of our reserves policy (three months budgeted expenditure being £869k). For this reason we have adopted a deficit budget for 2024-2026.

Fundraising Policy

Our approach to fundraising reflects the fact that supporters are at the heart of what we do, and fundraising materials are designed to ensure that donors and potential donors understand that they can withdraw from fundraising communications, or any other communications, at any time, simply and without fuss. All of our fundraising and marketing activities adhere strictly to data protection laws and the terms of our organisational privacy policy.

We do not sell or licence data to (or buy data from) any external agencies or third parties. We send a weekly e-newsletter to subscribers (from which they can unsubscribe) sharing information about our charitable work and fundraising activities. All new marketing materials are checked to comply with the Fundraising Code of Practice as part of an internal publications sign-off procedure. On occasion we may work with or take advice from external fundraising consultants or contractors who may undertake fundraising activities on our behalf, when this is a cost effective way of increasing our capacity. We host a range of events throughout the year. Fundraising events are explicitly billed as such. Events are closely monitored at internal meetings before and after every event, and detailed profit and loss registers are kept for large events. We will never exert undue pressure on those invited to attend an event or to donate. All income and expenditure related to volunteer-led fundraising is reported to the appropriate line manager within the staff team, and annual statements are approved by both the volunteer and the responsible manager.

We take very seriously our responsibility and make our best efforts not to approach or pressure vulnerable people to support our work. We take a robust approach to complaints about fundraising, whether in person, or online, or by another medium; these are promptly followed up by the responsible officers, their line managers, or by a member of the Board (as appropriate).

Investment policy and objectives

The Board's investment policy is to generate the highest possible returns over the long term, consistent with our risk appetite and appropriate protection for our capital, so as to maximise the resources that can be expended on our charitable objectives. We have short and long-term investment policies that reflect our needs over different timeframes. Monitoring of the investment performance takes place through regular investment reports and investment performance results are reported and discussed at Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings and compared to industry benchmarks where applicable.

We entered the year with funds invested as cash deposits with Flagstone, which we retained through 2023. We also held a portfolio consisting of units held with Barclays (Charity Fund) and with BNY Mellon. This blend reflects the risk appetite necessary given the planned utilisation of funds over the course of our strategic period (to the end of 2025).

In light of the guidance from the Charity Commission, and our desire to better align our investments with our humanist ethics, we moved the Newton funds from the *Newton SRI Fund for Charities* to the *Sustainable Growth and Income Fund for Charities*, demonstrating our preference to not actively exclude abortion research from our investment portfolio.

Risk management

The Board is satisfied that appropriate systems and procedures have been established to identify and manage the major risks faced by the Association. They have developed a comprehensive risk management policy to ensure that all important risks are evaluated and appropriate mitigating action taken. Governance and management, operational, financial, legal and other risks are reviewed annually by the Board and continually monitored by the senior management team who take responsibility for implementation of the policies and procedures identified to reduce risks.

Corrective actions are based on the likelihood of particular events occurring and how critical the consequences would be. Annual risk reviews include considerations of operating plan activities, finance, insurance, trademark, office building, fire, health and safety, and terms and conditions of employment of staff. Significant potential risks identified were the reputational and legal risks associated with front-line service provision, reliance on core specialist staff, compliance risks with regulatory frameworks such as data protection, and operational risks as a result of poor media relations or insufficient income generation. The uncertain political environment also brings risks and opportunities. Actions taken to mitigate risks included a revised fundraising strategy that is able to adapt to the challenging environment we face, improved staff & volunteer inductions and support, ongoing work to draw together our policies & processes to ensure best practice across the charity, and ensuring that our Public Affairs & Policy staff are able to effectively adapt to changes in the political environment.

Future Plans

We are mid-way through our five-year plan and our plan remains to significantly spend down our funds in order to see real progress across a range of areas. Through

2024-2025 we aim (i) to fund investment in our People area in order to support volunteer activities, especially local groups and (ii) to maintain campaigning capacity despite some employees being on parental leave and (iii) to reinvigorate our fundraising. We are preparing for whatever changes in the political environment we might face in 2024 while continuing to pursue legal cases where that is the most effective tool available to us. We continue to support ceremonies, both through marketing activity and through campaigning for humanist marriages to be made legal in England and Wales. Our (grant-funded) Humanist Heritage programme is expanding through 2024, with the creation of a Humanist Heritage Officer post. We are also investing more in IT with the creation of an IT Development Officer post as we recognise that our IT infrastructure is key to supporting the growth in activities undertaken by our volunteers. With investment in these key areas we believe we can make greater progress towards our aim of a fairer society for all.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

Humanists UK's Board members are directors of the company for the purposes of company law and are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable company and charity law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Association for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the principles of the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue to operate.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Association and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Association and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Association's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Directors confirm that, in the case of each of the persons who are Directors at the date of this report, the following applies:

- so far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the Company's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the Company's auditors are unaware; and
- each Director has taken steps to make herself/himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

In accordance with S485 of the Companies Act 2006, a resolution proposing the reappointment of Knox Cropper LLP as auditors will be put to the General Meeting.

On behalf of the Board: Neil Hawkins, Chair, 13 May 2024

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2023

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the British Humanist Association (the 'charitable company', operating as Humanists UK) for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties

relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Directors.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- The Charitable Company is required to comply with both company law and charity law and, based on our knowledge of its activities, we identified that the legal requirement to accurately account for restricted funds was of key significance.
- We gained an understanding of how the charitable company complied with its legal and regulatory framework, including the requirement to properly account for restricted funds, through discussions with management and a review of the documented policies, procedures and controls.

- The audit team, which is experienced in the audit of charities, considered the charitable company's susceptibility to material misstatement and how fraud may occur. Our considerations included the risk of management override.
- Our approach was to check that restricted income was properly identified and separately accounted for and to ensure that only valid and appropriate expenditure was charged to restricted funds. This included reviewing journal adjustments and unusual transactions.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken, so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

Richard Billinghamurst (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Knox Cropper LLP, Statutory Auditor
65 Leadenhall Street
London
EC3A 2AD

May 2024

Statement of Financial Activities including the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2023

		<u>Funds 2023</u>			<u>Funds 2022</u>		
	Notes	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total 2023 £	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £
INCOME FROM:							
- Legacies and donations	2	231,516	1,721,690	1,953,205	182,907	1,115,105	1,298,012
- Other trading activities		-	-	-	-	-	-
- Investments	3	-	28,013	28,013	-	8,432	8,432
- Charitable activities	4	-	1,398,033	1,398,033	-	1,301,802	1,301,802
Total		<u>231,516</u>	<u>3,147,735</u>	<u>3,379,251</u>	<u>182,907</u>	<u>2,425,339</u>	<u>2,608,246</u>
EXPENDITURE ON:							
- Raising funds	5	-	(222,651)	(222,651)	-	(217,066)	(217,066)
- Charitable activities	6,7	(249,460)	(2,708,784)	(2,958,244)	(160,706)	(2,315,155)	(2,475,861)
Total		<u>(249,460)</u>	<u>(2,931,435)</u>	<u>(3,180,895)</u>	<u>(160,706)</u>	<u>(2,532,221)</u>	<u>(2,692,927)</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	10	<u>-</u>	<u>61,561</u>	<u>61,561</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(58,204)</u>	<u>(58,204)</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		(17,944)	277,861	259,917	22,201	(165,086)	(142,885)
Transfers between funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(17,944)	277,861	259,917	22,201	(165,086)	(142,885)
Balances brought forward at 1 January		<u>140,824</u>	<u>2,763,565</u>	<u>2,904,389</u>	<u>118,623</u>	<u>2,928,650</u>	<u>3,047,273</u>
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER		<u>122,880</u>	<u>3,041,426</u>	<u>3,164,306</u>	<u>140,824</u>	<u>2,763,565</u>	<u>2,904,388</u>

All amounts relate to continuing activities.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023

		2023		2022	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Office equipment	9		6,769		1,806
Investments	10		<u>2,101,464</u>		<u>2,016,264</u>
			2,108,233		2,018,070
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	11	231,162		118,492	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>998,179</u>		<u>871,635</u>	
		1,229,341		990,127	
LIABILITIES					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(173,268)</u>		<u>(103,809)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>1,056,073</u>		<u>886,318</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>3,164,306</u>		<u>2,904,388</u>
Represented by					
FUNDS :					
Unrestricted	13		3,041,426		2,763,564
Restricted	14		<u>122,880</u>		<u>140,824</u>
Total Funds			<u>3,164,306</u>		<u>2,904,388</u>

The accounts are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act relating to small companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard 102.

Approved by the Directors on 13 May 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Neil Hawkins _____ Hon. Chair

Ann O'Connell _____ Hon. Treasurer

Company number: 00228781

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ending 31 December 2023

		2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	23	<u>130,308</u>	<u>(7,436)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends and interest from investments		28,013	8,432
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(8,138)	(3,148)
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	-
Purchase of investments		-	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>19,875</u>	<u>5,284</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		150,183	(2,152)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,185,871	2,188,023
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	24	<u><u>2,336,054</u></u>	<u><u>2,185,871</u></u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

1. Accounting policies

Basis of Preparation

These Financial Statements are presented in pounds sterling and have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (the Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Humanists UK meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Association's ability to continue as a going concern.

Short term debtors and creditors

Debtors are recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably, and it is probable that the income will be received. Creditors are recognised when the Charity has a present legal or constructive obligation resulting from a past event to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty are detailed in the above accounting policies where applicable.

Prepayments & Accruals

Prepayments and accruals less than £100 have not been taken into consideration.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible assets costing more than £500 were capitalised and all tangible assets are valued at historic cost. Provision is made for depreciation on tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life.

Office Equipment:	20% p.a. straight line
Computer equipment:	33 1/3% p.a. straight line
Office fixtures & fittings:	10% p.a. straight line

Fixed asset investments

Investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. The statement of financial activities includes the net gains and losses arising on the revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Realised gains and losses on investments are arrived at by comparing the net sale proceeds with the market value at the end of the previous financial year. Unrealised gains and losses represent the difference between the market value of investments still held at the end of the financial year with their value at the beginning of the year or with their cost if purchased subsequently.

Value Added Tax

The Charity is registered for VAT and where applicable amounts are included net of VAT.

Unrestricted funds are those funds which can be used at the trustees' discretion. Restricted Funds are those funds where application is restricted by conditions set by the donor. Designated Funds are those funds, which have been earmarked by the trustees for specific purposes.

Deferrals Policy

Income is recognised when all the following criteria are met:

- Control over the rights or other access to the economic benefit exists
- It is more likely than not that the economic benefits will pass to the Association
- The monetary value of the income can be measured reliably.

Grants Receivable

Revenue grants are credited to incoming resources on the earlier of the date they are received or the date they are receivable, unless they relate to a specific future period, in which case they are deferred. Capital grants for the purchase of fixed assets are credited to restricted incoming resources when they become receivable. Depreciation on the related fixed assets is charged against the restricted fund.

Donations and Legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised as income when the Association becomes unconditionally entitled to receive them, and when the receipt is probable and its value can be predicted with reasonable accuracy.

Charitable Activities

Costs of charitable activities include direct expenditure and an apportionment of overhead, governance and support costs as shown in note 7.

Allocation of Overhead, Governance and Support Costs

Overhead and support costs are incurred centrally across the range of our activities throughout the year. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the Charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These include costs related to statutory audit. All these costs have been apportioned between charitable activities on the basis of staff time or office space depending on the nature of the cost. The trustees consider this to be a reasonable reflection of the utilisation of resources.

Pensions

The Charity contributes to various defined contribution pension schemes on behalf of employees and, as the charity's liability is limited to paying amounts as they fall due, the pension charge reflected in the accounts represents the amount payable for the year.

2. Legacies, grants and donations

	2023			2022
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Donations and Gift Aid	163,066	911,666	1,074,732	995,322
Grants	68,450	-	68,450	-
Legacies	-	810,024	810,024	302,690
	<u>231,516</u>	<u>1,721,690</u>	<u>1,953,206</u>	<u>1,298,012</u>

Grant income was from the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of a multi-year Humanist Heritage project and from AB Charitable Trust for our Humanist Care programme. In the preceding year Donations and Gift Aid included £182,907 restricted income. We remain grateful for the generous legacies left by so many members and supporters.

3. Investment income

	2023			2022
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Interest	-	28,013	28,013	8,432
Dividends	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>28,013</u>	<u>28,013</u>	<u>8,432</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	2023			2022
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions	-	974,964	974,964	887,605
Celebrants' training	-	171,628	171,628	169,282
Celebrants' accreditation fees	-	108,070	108,070	150,325
Marriage administration fees	-	24,833	24,833	26,800
Events & activities	-	91,464	91,464	47,059
Sales of literature & merchandise	-	23,291	23,291	8,481
Education	-	2,814	2,814	4,625
Pastoral support	-	-	-	746
Sundry income	-	968	968	6,879
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,398,033</u>	<u>1,398,032</u>	<u>1,301,802</u>

5. Cost of raising funds

	2023			2022
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £	Total £
Fundraising costs	-	(216,378)	(216,378)	(205,036)
Investment manager's fees	-	(3,813)	(3,813)	(3,891)
Purchase of merchandise	-	(2,460)	(2,460)	(8,139)
	-	(222,651)	(222,651)	(217,066)

6. Analysis of costs of charitable activities

	2023		
	Direct Costs £	Support Costs £	Total £
Education and Public Awareness	(497,321)	(379,476)	(876,797)
Humanist Ceremonies	(387,769)	(134,874)	(522,644)
Humanist Care	(190,478)	(93,878)	(284,356)
Public Affairs & Policy	(613,932)	(330,326)	(944,258)
Activities for Members and Partner Groups	(227,929)	(102,261)	(330,190)
	(1,917,430)	(1,040,816)	(2,958,244)

	2022		
	Direct Costs £	Support Costs £	Total £
Education and Public Awareness	(389,765)	(336,336)	(726,102)
Humanist Ceremonies	(396,266)	(118,623)	(514,889)
Humanist Care	(138,413)	(82,674)	(221,087)
Public Affairs & Policy	(500,559)	(291,151)	(791,710)
Activities for Members and Partner Groups	(132,205)	(89,869)	(222,074)
	(1,557,208)	(918,653)	(2,475,861)

7. Analysis of support and governance costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Staff costs	(639,717)	(566,092)
Rent and rates	(133,485)	(109,751)
Repairs, maintenance & utilities	(27,786)	(21,964)
Postage and stationery	(16,291)	(16,494)
ICT	(92,641)	(71,740)
Irrecoverable VAT	(38,575)	(29,957)
Subscriptions	(6,169)	(4,489)
Bank charges & interest	(53,750)	(53,890)
Depreciation	(3,175)	(10,245)
Other costs	(16,445)	(20,705)
Governance	<u>(12,781)</u>	<u>(13,326)</u>
	<u>(1,040,816)</u>	<u>(918,653)</u>

Support costs have been apportioned between categories of charitable activity according to whether they are overheads or centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities. Overheads have been apportioned in relation to the office space occupied by each area of activity, and centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities has been apportioned in relation to the staff time employed in each area of activity. The trustees consider this provides a reasonable approximation to the utilisation of resources.

Governance costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Audit fee- current year	(7,000)	(6,757)
- previous year underprovision	-	-
Other professional expenses	(13)	(13)
Trustee meeting expenses	<u>(5,768)</u>	<u>(6,556)</u>
	<u>(12,781)</u>	<u>(13,326)</u>

8. Staff costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,612,609	1,376,463
Social security costs	171,479	153,027
Pension contributions	<u>131,988</u>	<u>98,630</u>
Total payroll costs	1,916,076	1,628,120
Staff recruitment	19,867	17,579
Temporary staff	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>1,935,943</u>	<u>1,645,699</u>
Average number of employees (FTE)	36	33
Average number of employees	39	35

Key management personnel (£706,408) (2022: £641,491) includes Chief Executive, Director of Communications & Development, Director of IT, Director of Operations, Director of Public Affairs & Policy, Director of Understanding Humanism, Director of Ceremonies, Director of Humanist Care and Head of People.

Eight employees had combined salary & employer National Insurance payments in excess of £60,000. These payments fell in bands as follows:

Band	2023	2022
£100,000-£110,000	1	1
£70,000-£80,000	1	-
£60,000-£70,000	6	6

We are enormously grateful for the work of 177 (39 FTE) volunteers working across the organisation, embedded with staff teams or leading teams of their own, without whom we would not have achieved our many successes. We are also grateful for the many hundreds of volunteers who form our School Speaker and Non-Religious Pastoral Support networks, often volunteering directly with other institutions but accredited and supported by Humanists UK.

9. Tangible assets

	2023	2022
	£	£
Office Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment		
Cost at 1 January	110,123	106,975
Additions	8,138	3,148
Disposals	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
As at 31 December	<u>118,261</u>	<u>110,123</u>
Depreciation at 1 January	(108,317)	(98,072)
Charge for the year	(3,175)	(10,245)
Disposals	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Depreciation at 31 December	<u>(111,492)</u>	<u>(108,317)</u>
Net book value at 31 December	<u>6,769</u>	<u>1,806</u>

10. Investments

	2023	2022
	£	£
Market value at 1 January	702,028	760,232
Additions	-	-
Disposal proceeds	-	-
Realised gains/(losses)	-	-
Unrealised gains/(losses)	<u>61,561</u>	<u>(58,204)</u>
Market value at 31 December	763,589	702,028
Cash with brokers	<u>1,337,875</u>	<u>1,314,236</u>
Total investments at 31 December	<u>2,101,464</u>	<u>2,016,264</u>
Investments at cost 31 December	<u>748,446</u>	<u>748,446</u>

Investments with a market value in excess of 10% of the portfolio were:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Barclays Property Income Trust for Charities	353,704	324,485
Newton SRI Fund for Charities	<u>409,885</u>	<u>377,543</u>
Total	<u>763,589</u>	<u>702,028</u>

We continued to hold investments in Barclays Charity Fund and Newton SRI Fund for Charities and retained cash deposits with Flagstone. We moved funds from the *Newton SRI Fund for Charities* to the *Newton Sustainable Growth and Income Fund for Charities*.

11. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Prepayments	31,022	24,069
Legacies receivable	61,500	17,600
Gift Aid	101,416	76,703
Other accrued income	33,754	-
Other debtors	<u>3,469</u>	<u>120</u>
	<u>231,162</u>	<u>118,492</u>

Prepayments are usually primarily event venue costs such as for our Annual Convention, plus rent. Accrued income includes grant payments.

12. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accruals	55,076	16,670
Taxes: Payroll taxes	47,460	45,342
VAT	12,474	7,933
Deferred income	39,422	18,792
Holiday accrual	<u>18,836</u>	<u>15,072</u>
	<u>173,268</u>	<u>103,809</u>

Deferred income usually relates to event ticket sales. All deferred income is recognised in the following financial year.

13. a) General reserves

	Revaluation Reserve £	Accumulated Income £	Total £
Balance at 1 January 2023	-	2,763,565	2,763,565
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	-	216,300	216,300
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	-	61,561	61,561
Transfer on realisation	-	-	-
Transfer from designated funds	-	-	-
Balance at 31 December 2023	-	<u>3,041,426</u>	<u>3,041,426</u>

	2022		
	Revaluation Reserve £	Accumulated Income £	Total £
Balance at 1 January 2022	-	2,528,650	2,528,650
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	-	(106,881)	(106,881)
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	-	(58,204)	(58,204)
Transfer on realisation	-	-	-
Transfer to designated funds	-	<u>400,000</u>	<u>400,000</u>
Balance at 31 December 2022	-	<u>2,763,565</u>	<u>2,763,565</u>

b) Designated Reserves

	Balance at 1 January 2023 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfer £	Balance at 31 December 2023 £
Music (the Humanist choirs)	<u>-</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>(96)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>(96)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

14. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 January 2023	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Assisted Dying	88,432	73,674	(65,742)	-	96,364
Campaign Against Faith Schools	24,365	32,300	(49,463)	-	7,202
Ceremonies	-	236	(236)	-	-
Defence Humanists	791	338	(38)	-	1,090
Education	-	52,965	(52,965)	-	-
Faith to Faithless	-	15,414	(15,414)	-	-
LGBT Humanists	7,926	1,079	(5,129)	-	3,877
Local groups	7,421	1,395	(6,599)	-	2,217
Music (the Humanist choirs)	11,889	10,934	(10,693)	-	12,130
Northern Ireland development	-	8,560	(8,560)	-	-
Pastoral Support	-	17,424	(17,424)	-	-
Public Affairs	-	17,197	(17,197)	-	-
	<u>140,824</u>	<u>231,516</u>	<u>(249,460)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>122,880</u>

	Balance at 1 January 2022	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Accord	-	3,466	(3,466)	-	-
Assisted Dying	49,667	81,797	(43,032)	-	88,432
Campaign Against Faith Schools	39,505	48,651	(63,791)	-	24,365
Ceremonies	-	487	(487)	-	-
Defence Humanists	544	252	(5)	-	791
Education	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Faith to Faithless	-	10,937	(10,937)	-	-
LGBT Humanists	8,369	782	(1,225)	-	7,926
Local groups	6,716	3,263	(2,558)	-	7,421
Music (the Humanist choirs)	13,822	7,578	(9,511)	-	11,889
Northern Ireland development	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-
Pastoral Support	-	15,154	(15,154)	-	-
Public Affairs	-	2,540	(2,540)	-	-
	<u>118,623</u>	<u>182,907</u>	<u>(160,705)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>140,824</u>

The tables above do not represent the entire income and expenditure related to these areas of work. They show only the restricted donations and subsequent expenditure of the restricted donations.

Assisted Dying

This fund was created in 2018 to manage donations to cover the payroll costs of one member of Humanists UK staff to work on the Assisted Dying campaign with the My Death, My Decision coalition. The fund also includes donations towards assisted dying legal cases.

Campaign Against Faith Schools

Campaign against faith schools appeal funds are restricted to Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work relating to 'faith' schools and related education campaigns. Funds raised by appeal in excess of the target sought are restricted to the public affairs fund, and are disclosed as a transfer above.

Ceremonies

This fund results from donations given to Humanists UK specifically for ceremonies work.

Defence Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by the Defence Humanists, which joined as a new section in 2011.

Education

This fund results from legacies and donations given to support Humanists UK's work in promoting the understanding of Humanism in the education sphere. This includes the Humanist Heritage project, which in 2023 was largely funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Faith to Faithless

This fund was created in 2015 to manage income and expenditure in support of our Faith to Faithless programme, which helps people who are leaving religions. This is part of our Humanist Care work.

LGBT Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by GALHA (now LGBT Humanists) which joined Humanists UK as a section in 2012.

Local groups

This fund is for activities relating to the development of local humanist groups, including Partner Groups and Humanists UK Local Groups.

Music

This fund was initiated in 2010 by a donation from Alec Reed to fund a composer for two years and to establish the Humanists UK choirs on a secure footing. Current income derives directly from the activities of the London Humanist Choir.

Northern Ireland Development

This fund was created in 2017 to support the development of Humanists UK's work in Northern Ireland.

Pastoral Support

This fund was created in 2012 to collect donations supporting our new initiative directed towards providing pastoral support to non-religious people in prison or in hospital. This is part of our Humanist Care work.

Public Affairs

This fund results from donations given to support Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work. In 2023 these included donations in support of our stakeholder engagement work and legal cases.

15. Operating leases

At 31 December 2023 the Company had the following commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings		Other	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Falling due within one year	97,608	10,845	9,843	8,955
Falling due between one and five years	108,453	-	27,715	3,413
Falling due later than five years	-	-	189	-
	<u>206,061</u>	<u>10,845</u>	<u>37,558</u>	<u>12,368</u>

The commitment in respect of land and buildings reflects the lease on the Association's premises which ends on 10 February 2026. We have not yet set a provision for any dilapidation costs associated with the end of this lease.

16. Taxation

Humanists UK is a registered charity and is potentially exempt from tax in respect of income and capital gains received within the categories covered by Part II of the Corporation Taxes Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are exclusively applied to charitable purposes.

17. Board members' remuneration and expenses

Alex Collis, a Celebrant, was paid £171 in fees & expenses as part of the celebrants training programme. Ewan Main, a Celebrant, was paid £448 in fees & expenses as part of the celebrants training programme. Amy Walden was paid £850 in fees & expenses as part of the Humanist Care training programme. Aside from these, no remuneration, directly or indirectly, out of the funds of the charity was paid or is payable for the year to any Board member or to any person known to be connected with any of them.

Board members were reimbursed a total of £5,414 (2022: £5145) for travel expenses to attend meetings in connection with their duties. Expenses not reported in Note 17 normally include travel to various events, including public lectures and fundraising events.

18. Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at 31 December 2023 (2022: nil).

19. Pension commitments

The charity offers contributions to individual defined contribution pension schemes to all employees and most take them up. The assets of the schemes are held separately from those of the charity in independently administered funds. Total employer's contributions paid in the year were £131,988 (2022: £98,630), the increase being partly due to a change of policy during 2022 that increased the employer contribution rate.

20. Net assets

	2023		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	2,108,233	933,193	3,041,426
Restricted funds	-	122,880	122,880
	<u>2,108,233</u>	<u>1,056,073</u>	<u>3,164,306</u>

	2022		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	2,018,070	745,494	2,763,564
Restricted funds	-	140,824	140,824
	<u>2,018,070</u>	<u>886,318</u>	<u>2,904,388</u>

21. Reversionary interest

Humanists UK has been bequeathed a reversionary interest in a trust established under the terms of the Will of Christine Cotton, who died on 24 January 2000. The trust assets comprise a property occupied by the Life Tenant, investments and bank accounts. The value of the investments as at 31 May 2021 (last update available) was £44,911 (31 May 2021: £44,911). The trustees have indicated to Humanists UK that the property (bought in 2002 for £85,000) had a value in 2020 of between £145,000 and £158,000 by comparison with similar properties in the locality.

Because Humanists UK cannot predict when it will become entitled to the receipt of this legacy, no accrued income has been reflected in the accounts.

22. Related party transactions

Board members are not remunerated but are able to recover out of pocket expenses for attendance at Board meetings, the total amount reimbursed being disclosed in Note 17.

The Chief Executive of Humanists UK is also a Director and Trustee of Humanists International and their President. The Association paid an annual subscription to Humanists International of £28,536 (2022: £29,162) and contributed £9,167 (2022: £0) to Humanist International projects.

The Chief Executive of Humanists UK is also a Director and Trustee of ACEVO of which Humanists UK is a member and paid £469 in membership fees (2022: £469).

The Wales Coordinator is a Director and Trustee of the Religious Education Council, of which Humanists UK is a member and paid £900 in membership fees (2022: £900).

23. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023	2022
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period	259,917	(142,885)
Depreciation charges	3,175	10,245
(Gains)/losses on investments	(61,561)	58,204
Dividends and interest from investments	(28,013)	(8,432)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(112,670)	55,372
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	<u>69,459</u>	<u>20,060</u>
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operative activities	<u>130,308</u>	<u>(7,436)</u>

24. Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	998,179	871,635
Cash at brokers	<u>1,337,875</u>	<u>1,314,236</u>
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>2,336,054</u>	<u>2,185,871</u>

25. Statutory information

The British Humanist Association, operating as Humanists UK, is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England. The Association's registered number and registered office address can be found on the Legal and Administrative page of this Annual Report.

Accounts

British Humanist Association, operating as:



ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 December 2022

Company Number: 00228781

Charity Number: 285987

Humanists UK

Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2022

The Board (who are the Directors of the Company and the Trustees of the Charity) presents its annual report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

Legal and Administrative Details

Status	The British Humanist Association (Humanists UK) originated as the Union of Ethical Societies in 1896, was incorporated as the Ethical Union in 1928 and became the British Humanist Association in 1967. Its working name became Humanists UK in 2017. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14 March 1928. Its governing instrument is its Articles of Association, adopted on 23 July 2011.			
	Company number:	00228781	Charity number:	285987
Registered office	39 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8BB			
Honorary officers	Chair:	Neil Hawkins (from 27 June) Tamar Ghosh (to 26 June)		
	Vice Chair:	Neil McKain (from 27 June) Ann O’Connell (to 26 June)		
	Treasurer:	Ann O’Connell (from 27 June) John Adams (to 26 June)		
Other Board members	Iain Deboys	Sophy Robinson		
	Tamar Ghosh	Jeremy Rodell (to 26 June)		
	Charley Jarrett (from 26 June)	Andrew Russell (from 26 June)		

	Ruth Kaufman	Imtiaz Shams (to 26 June)
	Ewan Main	Emma Shepherd
	Neil McKain	Simon Walker-Samuel (from 26 June)
	Stephanie Niven	Hamza bin Walayat (to 22 June)
President	Professor Alice Roberts (to 31 May 2022) Dr Adam Rutherford (from 1 June 2022)	
Principal staff	Chief Executive:	Andrew Copson
	Director of Ceremonies:	Deborah Hooper
	Director of Communications & Development:	Liam Whitton
	Director of IT:	Andrew West
	Director of Operations:	Catriona McLellan
	Director of Public Affairs & Policy:	Richy Thompson
	Director of Understanding Humanism:	Luke Donnellan
	Head of Humanist Care:	Clare Elcombe Webber
	Head of People:	Vicky Jones (to 28 October 2022) Ann-Michelle Burton (from 1 November 2022)
Auditors	Knox Cropper LLP, Chartered Accountants 65 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3A 2AD	
Bankers	The Co-Operative Bank plc 118-120 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 3BA	
Investment Managers	Barclays Wealth 23 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP14 1AQ	

	BNY Mellon Fund Managers Ltd, PO Box 336, Darlington, DL1 9RF
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Mission

By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and we work with them for a better society.

Charitable Objects

Humanists UK's Objects are: 'The advancement of Humanism, namely a non-religious ethical life stance, the essential elements of which are a commitment to human wellbeing and a reliance on reason, experience and a naturalistic view of the world; the advancement of education and in particular the study of and the dissemination of knowledge about Humanism and about the arts and science as they relate to Humanism; the promotion of equality and non-discrimination and the protection of human rights as defined in international instruments to which the United Kingdom is party, in each case in particular as relates to religion and belief; the promotion of understanding between people holding religious and non-religious beliefs so as to advance harmonious cooperation in society.'

Structure, Governance and Management

Organisational structure

The Board meets regularly during the year and at the beginning of each meeting members are requested to declare any conflicts of interest. These are detailed in notes 17 and 22 of the financial statements.

The Board reviews its performance and skills annually and new members are recruited to meet any needs or gaps identified.

The day to day management of the Association is delegated to its key management personnel as detailed in note 8 to the financial statements. Remuneration of the Chief Executive is set by the Board. Remuneration of other key management personnel is delegated to the Chief Executive.

Method used to recruit and appoint new Board members

Board members are recruited by election or by appointment, as set out in the Byelaws. Co-options until the next election can be made to fill vacancies arising among the elected Board members.

Induction and training of new Board members

New Board members are provided with a Trustee Handbook which contains information about their role and responsibilities as recommended by the Charity

Commission. This includes: the trustee role description and personal specification relevant to the role, the Association's confidentiality policy and the eligibility requirements for becoming a trustee, and a Code of Conduct. They are also supplied with a copy of the Articles of Association. Induction meetings covering the background to current matters take place with the Vice-Chair, the Chief Executive and key members of the staff team. Training on matters relevant to the role and responsibilities of Board members is encouraged and the Board subscribes to literature pertinent to good governance.

Public benefit

The Board has satisfied itself that Humanists UK's activities are compliant with law and guidance for charities on public benefit. The trustees confirm that when deciding on the activities of the charity they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

The five principal areas of work (which overlap and reinforce each other) are:

- Education of the public about Humanism, providing a moral framework for the non-religious. We seek to ensure that everyone has access to information about humanist approaches to ethical issues and about the humanist tradition. We deliver this education through our website, public lectures, and teaching materials for use in schools, and in many other ways;
- The provision of non-religious or humanist celebrants, so helping to meet a growing demand from the public for baby-naming, marriage and (especially) funeral ceremonies that accord with their own beliefs. Our aim is that all those who want a humanist ceremony should have access to one;
- The provision of humanist pastoral care to the non-religious in settings where religious people have the support of chaplains, for example in prisons and healthcare;
- Seeking to protect the human rights of humanists and other non-religious people and to combat the discrimination and disadvantages they encounter. We do this by working for compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, especially insofar as it forbids discrimination by public authorities on grounds of religion or belief, and by making representations to Government and others, including sometimes addressing the need for changes in the law, and by promoting a secular state;
- Supporting local humanist groups and the positive contribution of humanists to building a harmonious, plural society.

While the principal beneficiaries of the Association's work are humanists and other people who have non-religious beliefs, the Board considers that the whole public benefits from our promotion of human rights and non-discrimination and from the wide range of information and educational material we offer. Our website is available to all and so are our lectures, subject on occasion to an admission fee.

Report on progress towards our five Outcomes

By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and we work with them for a better society.

Below, we report on our activity over the course of the year, against the five Outcomes set by the Board as our strategy.

1. More people knowing what humanism is and more non-religious people with humanist beliefs and values recognising themselves as humanists

We continued to develop our various educational programmes to do with humanism.

Humanist Heritage

Our Humanist Heritage programme, created to increase public appreciation of the significant history of humanism in the UK, enjoyed another successful year. We continued to expand our *Humanist Heritage* website, unearthing the history of humanist activism in the UK and Ireland. We added over a dozen articles covering individuals, organisations, events, and special subjects like Darwin Day or the contributions of Jewish humanists to the humanist movement. In the summer, we also showcased the website to our social media audiences with a 'Humanism in 100 Objects' feature that told the story of our movement through a series of historical objects. The website continued to see increasing page traffic over the course of the year, mainly via organic discovery from search engines. The website saw 58,000 unique page visits (up from 40,000 in 2021).

In terms of wider outreach and engagement, our Humanist Heritage Coordinator organised an international conference on humanist history in September with researchers from Queen Mary University, the University of Gothenburg, and the International Society for Historians of Atheism, Secularism, and Humanism, which was attended by 40 historians and saw the debut of 30 new academic papers about aspects of humanist history in Europe. Our Humanist Heritage Coordinator also published articles for History Workshop Online and the American Humanist Association and spoke at an online conference organised by the University of Chichester. We organised heritage-themed lectures with Nan Sloane (on 'Uncontrollable Women') and S.I. Martin (on 'The Beliefs of Black Georgians'), supported Bristol Humanists to inaugurate its own Emma Martin Lecture (named for a 19th century local humanist activist), and coordinated a *Humanist Heritage* Wikipedia edit-a-thon with LGBT Humanists. We also further developed our guided series of Humanist Walks in partnership with Go Jauntly by launching a self-guided walk of Belfast's humanist history in time for our 2022 Convention in Belfast in June. And we were in contact with the authors of the upcoming

Bloomsbury release *The History of the Humanist Movement in Britain*, whose development we supported with access to our archives and research support.

The project has also been a fruitful source of new resources for our schools resources website, *Understanding Humanism*. We commissioned an animator to produce an animated video for school covering some of the project's findings, and we worked with an illustrator and a children's writer to produce a new children's resource focusing on the lives of four humanist women (George Eliot, Lady Florence Dixie, Rosalind Franklin, and Lorraine Hansberry).

At the tail end of the year, we learned that our joint application with Conway Hall for a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant had been successful, meaning that the project would continue for several more years.

Events

Events continued to be one of our most important vehicles for communicating with large audiences about aspects of the humanist approach to life, as well as a rich source of high-quality content for our YouTube channel, whose videos were viewed 426,000 times over the year (607,00 in 2021). Our return to in-person events wasn't completely smooth; we started the year in continued pandemic conditions, with restrictions and face coverings. Caution inevitably meant that in-person tickets sold more slowly than in the past, especially in the cold months. And later in the year, industrial action from London Underground and National Rail workers led to other issues (such as postponed events). In spite of these challenges, we had a full and busy programme, and concluded 2022 confident in our balance of online and in-person events going into 2023.

Our most high-profile events remain those in our Annual Lectures and Medal Series. In February, we awarded our annual Darwin Day Lecture Medal to infectious disease expert Professor Dame Anne Johnson as part of a hybrid online-and-in-person event at Conway Hall in London. She lectured on '*People and Pathogens: the evolution of infections*', chaired by our Vice President Professor Alice Roberts, to a combined audience of over 1,000. In March, we awarded Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock our Franklin Lecture Medal as part of an online lecture on '*Reaching for the stars*' chaired by Samira Ahmed in the week of International Women's Day. We awarded Kenan Malik the Holyoake Lecture Medal in November, which he received following a lecture in Manchester on the topic of '*Towards a humanist politics*,' exploring the political history of racism and antiracism. We awarded Professor Sir Simon Baron-Cohen the Blackham Lecture Medal (the Blackham Lecture being focused on education and in partnership with Birmingham Humanists) at an online lecture on autism acceptance entitled '*The Pattern Seekers*'. And finally that month, we awarded the Voltaire Lecture Medal to historian Dr Sarah Chaney following her lecture on '*Am I Normal?*' on the strange history of that ubiquitous question. It was chaired by our President, Dr Adam Rutherford. 1,969 people bought tickets to events in this series in 2022.

Our Annual Convention in Belfast in June was our largest-scale event of the year and attracted a wide range of speakers, including comedians Angela Barnes (our patron), Tim McGarry (our patron), Colin Murphy, and Eleanor Tiernan; scientists Dr Kate Devlin (our patron), Dr Adam Rutherford (President), Professor Richard Wiseman (our patron), Dr Meg Schwamb, and Professor Stephen Smartt (our patron); historians Professor Francesca Stavrakopoulou (our patron) and Dr Charlie Lynch; plus many more brilliant

speakers with expertise in human rights, education, philosophy, sports, the arts, technology, broadcasting, politics, and more. 300 attended, with roughly half coming from Northern Ireland. We were pleased to extend our impact amongst the public in Northern Ireland, who typically find it harder to attend our events in Britain.

Our wider programme of both online and in-person events and lectures on various topics relating to humanism continued throughout the year, as well as our popular online series of *In Conversation With...* events with thinkers and entertainers on a subject where they have deep insight or expertise. Other highlights included a special online book launch for *The Little Book of Humanist Weddings* (featuring Alice Roberts, Andrew Copson, and celebrants Zena Birch and Audrey Simmons); our Vice President Professor AC Grayling's event in Leeds to launch our Leeds Humanist branch; a special discussion of the nature of morality with Professor Nichola Raihani (2021 Voltaire Lecturer and patron), Dr Oliver Scott-Curry (2021 Darwin Day Lecturer), and Professor Richard Norman (our patron); and historians Nan Sloane and S.I. Martin, who lectured on humanist women and Black British freethinkers respectively, in connection with *Humanist Heritage*. These events attracted 2,044 participants.

Social media and website

We continued to reach very large numbers of people through our social media channels, which have become one of the main places to publish new educational content about humanism, alongside news relating to our services and public policy work. Our primary Humanists UK social media channels reached 8.4 million people on Facebook (7.7 million in 2021), 26 million on Twitter (compared with 57 million in 2021, largely due to our high-profile Census campaign), and 430,000 on Instagram (489,000 in 2021).

In the summer, we ran a short social media campaign called 'Humanist Voices' across all our digital channels, putting the spotlight on well-known humanists (such as Humanists UK patrons) plus others, including some of our members, to explore humanist perspectives on creating meaning and purpose, thinking ethically, acting morally, death, freedom, human rights, humanity's place in the universe, and more. The campaign reached 1.3 million people on digital channels and accounted for a third of our overall social media reach in August. It also appeared to be responsible for a sharp uptick in sales for *The Little Book of Humanism* that month.

Throughout the year, we continued to produce new original graphical and written content explaining humanism in different ways and pitched at different audiences, including interviews with Humanists UK volunteers and patrons, and graphics about aspects of humanism or featuring quotations from famous humanists. Our original graphics, produced in-house, are often some of our best-performing content on social media. In October we also launched a brand new animated film narrated by our patron Stephen Fry, explaining humanism and relating it to his choice to support Humanists UK. In March, we released a direct-to-camera piece from Dr Adam Rutherford, announcing his appointment as President of Humanists UK, and his reasons for supporting us. At Christmas, we released a more festive video along similar lines from our Chief Executive.

In August, our podcast *What I Believe* released its fifth series, adding musician Frank Turner, comedians Angela Barnes and Tim McGarry, model and humanist activist Laura Lacole, historian S.I. Martin, psychologist Dr Sue Blackmore, and All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group Vice Chair Clive Lewis MP to its roster of interviews exploring the varied

ideas, convictions, and opinions of humanists in the public eye. The podcast received over 73,000 downloads and attracted glowing reviews from listeners on podcast platforms.

We contracted a professional designer to assist us with finishing touches to the next iteration of the Humanists UK website, with extensive new pages on our advice and support services, our campaigns and what we stand for, and the humanist approach to life.

Education resources (Understanding Humanism)

In January, we relaunched our *Understanding Humanism* website for teachers and parents. The overhaul reorganised over 100 new resources into five core areas of knowledge about humanism (human beings, understanding the world, the one life, humanist ethics, and society) and added more Welsh translations and more pages specifying how to use the site in relation to the new Welsh curriculum. The new website features a 'How to use' guide, a 'Core knowledge' guide to assist with the creation of units of study on humanism, guidance on what is and isn't a non-religious worldview, dos and don'ts when teaching about the non-religious, and the case for including humanism in religious education. We also introduced brand new resources, including on how to access our school speakers, on atheism and agnosticism, global humanism, the history of humanism, data about the non-religious, humanist ceremonies, and humanist perspectives on many contemporary ethical debates.

The *Understanding Humanism* website received 142,000 hits (152,000 in 2021) and our resources were downloaded 40,000 times (35,000 in 2021). Our separate *Assemblies for All* website, which collates industry-best resources to assist teachers with putting on inclusive assemblies on a range of subjects, received 230,000 page views (up from 150,000 in 2021). Meanwhile, our network of over 200 trained and accredited school speakers made over 500 school visits and spoke to a record total of 55,000 pupils (up from 21,000 in 2021, and 47,000 in 2019, pre-pandemic).

Our team was consulted by the BBC on new Key Stage 1 resources about humanism. We were also approached by education publisher Hodder in relation to their Key Stage 3 textbook on Religion, Values, and Ethics for the new Curriculum for Wales. Many of our suggestions for edits to the humanism content were accepted, although we were disappointed that the final publication did not produce equivalent content on humanism as it did for world religions. Our Director of Understanding Humanism also wrote several articles for *RE Today* for publication in 2023.

Teacher training

We delivered teacher training sessions to 397 teachers (330 in 2021), and our series of continuing professional development (CPD) webinars proved to be an effective model for reaching large numbers of people, as in 2021. We noticed that our courses were more popular with primary school teachers than with secondary school teachers, and so will place an increased emphasis on promoting the course to secondaries in 2023. We also advertised the service through an appearance on *The RE Podcast*.

We returned to delivering teacher training on subject knowledge and practical ideas for the classroom via our online twilight webinars as well as at conferences and special

in-person events. We delivered CPD to teachers from Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, Thomas James Primary School in London, via the North Lincolnshire RE group, St Helens RE hub, and Barnet RE Network, as well as to teachers at the Hampshire RE conference and the Salisbury *CREative REinspiring* RE Conference. We supported initial teacher training for students at Queen's University Belfast, Stranmillis University, Sheffield Hallam University, Leeds Trinity University, and the University of Lincoln. CPD webinars were also attended by teachers in British schools overseas, including in Bahrain, Thailand, and Cyprus.

Courses

Our popular online courses 'Introducing humanism' and 'Humanist Lives' continued to attract new learners through the FutureLearn education platform owned by the Open University, with 548 active learners (2,000 in 2021). The platform's popularity dwindled in comparison to previous years due to FutureLearn's switch from free participation to a pay-to-use model. Late in the year, we concluded our contract with FutureLearn and will be exploring ways to deliver the courses, which we own, directly to learners in 2023. In their five years at FutureLearn, a total of 40,000 people signed up to take them.

Separately, we made further improvements to our 'One Life' course, which is run by our local branches and partner groups around the UK, based on feedback from groups who wanted the flexibility of having locally run courses that can also take place online.

SACREs and SACs

We continued to help local authorities to improve teaching about humanism in schools by supporting humanist representatives on Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education in England and Standing Advisory Councils on Religion, Values, and Ethics in Wales (known as SACREs in England and SACs in Wales). We ended the year with representatives on 129 councils (up from 125), including 77 where a humanist sat as a 'full member' (up from 64). Achieving equality for humanists to sit as full members alongside religious representatives on SACREs/SACs remains a priority of our public affairs team, and for our goal of seeing humanism taught about in every school.

Throughout the year, we supported our SACRE reps with regular webinars, organised both nationally and regionally, and with termly newsletters. We also organised a special Education Day conference attended by 50 SACRE reps and humanist school speakers.

Books about humanism

We promoted humanism through promoting *The Little Book of Humanism* (released in 2020) and *The Little Book of Humanist Weddings* (released in 2021), both co-authored by our Chief Executive Andrew Copson and Vice President Alice Roberts. We supported the latter book with a special online launch event early in the year, and promoted both using social media. Together both books sold 3,650 copies (8,850 in 2021). All author royalties were donated to Humanists UK. Work continued on the forthcoming 2023 release *The Little Book of Humanist Funerals*.

Andrew Copson, our patron the philosopher Professor Richard Norman, and our Director of Understanding Humanism Luke Donnellan were co-authors of a new undergraduate textbook *Understanding Humanism*, published by Routledge in September 2022.

We also continued our partnership with Books at Press, which published *Belonging and Believing: My Humanist Family* by Gill Vaisey, providing a positive introduction to the humanist approach to life for early years and Key Stage 1 pupils.

In Jersey, our Channel Islands Humanists section delivered copies of *What is humanism?* by Michael Rosen and Annemarie Young to all schools across Jersey as part of the Umbrella Book Collection initiative organised by Jersey Community Relations. In the summer, we also distributed copies of *The Little Book of Humanism* to all prisons in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland so that non-religious prisoners would have access to reading material they might find inspiring or reflect upon.

Dialogue

We continued to expand understanding of humanism among religious people through our dialogue programme. Our network of trained dialogue volunteers had an extremely productive year, and grew in size to 123 members (70 in 2021). Major events included a 'Dialogue in Belfast' event with Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Bahá'í, and humanist members of the NI Interfaith Forum, and friendly and well-attended meetings with the Sheffield, Ashford, Lincoln, Cheltenham, West Chester, and Richmond Interfaith groups. Various activities for Interfaith Week in November also took place in Chester, Huddersfield, East Kent, Newbury, Leeds, Alresford, Cheltenham, Sheffield, Southampton, Richmond, Upminster, Ipswich, and Preston.

Outside of this, our 18-35s section Young Humanists hosted an online panel discussion on 'How do different beliefs approach death?' with Bahá'í, Muslim, Catholic, and humanist speakers, and attended the Faith & Belief Forum's 'Interfaith Fun Run', supporting runners raising money for Humanists UK in London. We also participated in a seminar on 'Humanists and Dialogue' at Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture; contributed to a 'World Religion Day' Bahá'í-organised event in Chester; spoke on 'Inclusion' from a humanist point of view at a panel discussion hosted by Huddersfield Parish Church; represented humanists on the West Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum Voluntary and Faith Subcommittee; spoke about 'Forgiveness' on the panel of a 'Belief in Dialogue' online event; attended both the 'Belong' conference and the annual Liberal Jewish Synagogue 'interfaith chanukah'; and our Chief Executive was invited by the Board of Deputies for British Jews to present on humanism and Humanists UK to members of their staff team and Board.

2. More non-religious people living happier, more confident, and more ethical lives

After a two-year period of disruption due to the pandemic, most of our direct services returned to relative normalcy over the course of 2022.

Our network of trained and accredited humanist celebrants, Humanist Ceremonies, saw a small drop in size to 556 members (573 in 2021) across England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man. We saw a larger number of celebrants taking early retirement (some citing the cost of living crisis) combined with a small reduction in the number of new celebrants trained. It was, however, a record-breaking year in terms of the number of ceremonies taken. Our celebrants performed 10,965 humanist ceremonies (7,576 in 2021), which was a 20% increase on the previous

pre-pandemic record in 2019. These included 2,519 humanist weddings (1,554 in 2021), 7,914 humanist funerals (7,522 in 2021), and 532 baby-naming ceremonies (310 in 2021). Our weddings continued to be most popular in Northern Ireland, where they enjoy legal recognition. But with well over 1,000 in England and Wales, and nearly 1,300 in Northern Ireland, it was a record-breaking year for our weddings in both jurisdictions!

Our Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN), whose members continued to struggle to resume their placements providing emotional support in many hospitals, hospices, and prisons, ended the year with 208 accredited members (240 in 2021). For the first time this including graduates of the MA programme for humanist pastoral care endorsed by us. NRPSN members had voluntary placements at 63 hospitals, 13 prisons, and eight universities and paid placements at nine hospitals and one prison. It remains a priority for our Humanist Care and campaigns teams to overcome unlawful barriers being put in the way of non-religious pastoral carers volunteering or taking up paid roles in institutions. In terms of significant developments and engagements, we contributed to the Ministry of Defence's internal review of its chaplaincy and pastoral care arrangements; we were given confirmation by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service that it would add a humanist representative to its chaplaincy council; and the Senedd appointed its first ever humanist pastoral carer.

Our apostate support programme, Faith to Faithless, developed over the course of the year, and with generous donor funding we recruited a larger Faith to Faithless staff team (1.6 FTE total), comprising a Service Manager, a Development Officer, and a Policy Officer. As well as providing a schedule of socials and facilitated peer support sessions, we brought on board five academic PhD researchers into a research associates group looking at the experiences of apostates. Separately, we commissioned a new research project looking at lived experiences and service outcomes for former Jehovah's Witnesses specifically, which is expected to conclude in mid-2023 and be published in 2024. Our humanist asylum support service, which had previously been managed by a member of our campaigns team, was also integrated into Faith to Faithless. We received requests for support from 16 asylum claimants, 10 of whom were eligible for and signed up for our support. Of those 10, two were successfully granted asylum, and eight cases were ongoing at year's end.

Support for local humanist communities was bolstered by the addition of a staff member responsible for the development of our ongoing pilot project, whose purpose is to explore if we can better support our members locally to advance Humanists UK aims locally through Humanists UK branches. We concluded the year with eight Humanists UK local branches (five in 2021) and 48 partner groups (47 in 2021).

Our various special interest networks and sections continued to organise activities of interest to different demographics within our membership. LGBT Humanists organised socials, events, participation in summer Pride parades, and a ceremony for Trans Day of Remembrance. Defence Humanists organised its annual humanist Remembrance Day event, participated in the National Service of Remembrance, and supported humanist groups to join in with local Remembrance ceremonies. Young Humanists maintained a full online and offline events programme. The London Humanist Choir continued to book performances around the capital, including its own annual 'One Life' concert. Humanist Climate Action contributed to a number of consultations on climate-related matters and was, jointly with Humanists in Business, our fastest-growing network.

3. More people enjoying greater freedom of thought, of expression, and of choice over their own lives

Our policy platform details that we want *‘everyone to have the fullest possible freedom of choice in the shaping of their own lives, limited only by the rights and freedoms of others in a fair and equitable society and never by the pressures of religion, tradition, or outmoded law. This includes children, who should be actively prepared in schools for a life in society in which they can exercise this freedom and should, while still children, enjoy their human rights with increasing fullness in line with their growing maturity.’* Our strategy spells out that we aspire to *‘influence public opinion, public policy, legislation, and case law to defend and advance: freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief; freedom of expression; and freedom of choice to the extent compatible with the rights and freedoms of others in a fair and equitable society.’*

Campaign resources were mainly concentrated on our campaigns to do with legal recognition of humanist marriage, opposing state-funded religious schools, reforming RE and collective worship, legalising assisted dying, and promoting international freedom of religion or belief (FORB). But as this report details, we also undertook a great deal of reactive policy and campaigning work in line with our broader public policy platform and strategy. The area of work is detailed below, organised by theme.

Freedom of thought

Freedom of thought is a foundational requirement of a free society, and advocacy of this fundamental right by humanists goes back many centuries in this country and in others. Our public policy platform endorses the concept of the secular state as the best means to achieve freedom, fairness, equal citizenship, and peace in a plural and cohesive society. We maintain that only by maintaining a fair separation between public institutions and institutions of religion or belief (including those of humanism) can the state fully respect and promote freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief for all citizens, up to the limits of the rights and freedoms of others in a fair society

Inclusion of the non-religious

As ever, we advocated for a level playing field and equal treatment in law and policy for those of both religious and non-religious convictions. We engaged with the Welsh Government on the matter of admitting us to what is currently their “Faith Communities Forum”, receiving assurances that the committee will be reformed. The process has been drawn out due to resistance from religious groups. We also met with Colin Bloom to discuss the forthcoming report from his Independent Faith Engagement Review for the UK government, and with Dame Sara Khan to discuss the UK Government’s independent review on social cohesion and resilience. We responded to the Commission on Political Power’s consultation on House of Lords reform, and pointed to the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group’s *Time for Reflection* report, which described various discriminatory aspects of the Lords, including the presence of 26 appointed Anglican bishops, their speaking and consultation privileges over other peers, and certain Code of Conduct exemptions. We also highlighted discriminatory outcomes from archaic processes in Parliament, including how attendance at parliamentary prayers is required to reserve seats ahead of important debates.

We continued to engage with local and national governments to argue for equal participation and inclusion of the non-religious, including in official civic events. Events surrounding the death of the Queen showed how far we still must go to embed inclusive practice. Humanists were sadly excluded from various commemoration and accession events taking place in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh, and Belfast, which we believe may have been an unfortunate oversight. We and members of the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group wrote to the relevant ministers, the Duke of Norfolk, and the Royal Household to discuss future inclusive practice ahead of the coronation, to which our Chief Executive was in due course invited. Separately, we also met with London City Hall to discuss our suggestions for reform of the 2021 Remembrance service, which had been held in Southwark Cathedral and which, by excluding the non-religious, did not properly reflect the diversity of London or the UK armed forces.

Balanced approaches to religions and worldviews: curriculums

One of the key planks for our campaigning for balanced approaches to religion and worldviews is our work promoting the inclusion of humanism in school curriculums. In Northern Ireland, we had a major victory when the High Court ruled in July in a case brought by a humanist parent that Northern Ireland's regimes of 'exclusively' Christian RE and collective worship were unlawful. We used this judgement to argue for similar interpretations of the law in England and Wales, and prepared briefings for MLAs for the eventuality of power-sharing and devolved government resuming in Northern Ireland.

In Wales, we continued to engage with the Welsh Government and support the development of humanism-specific materials for Religion, Values, and Ethics under the new Curriculum for Wales. We also worked with the Welsh Government and the Welsh Association of SACREs to produce GCSE content and teaching training modules. The curriculum launched in September.

In England, we supported Baroness Meacher's amendment to the (subsequently withdrawn) Schools Bill that sought to replace 'Religious Education' with a more explicitly inclusive 'Religion and Worldviews' scheme, of the sort recommended by the independent Commission on Religious Education a few years ago. A similar legal change was suggested in the 'Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill', introduced to the Lords by Baroness Burt. It is not expected to have time to become law due to lack of parliamentary time.

We supported litigation efforts by a non-religious parent in Worcester which led to major reforms of the curriculum in local schools, including that the Key Stage 4 curriculum would become fully inclusive of humanism. The local academy has agreed to meet the parent's request by providing, in addition to the GCSE course, two other units of RE, one for Year 10 and one for Year 11, focusing on non-religious worldviews and taught from a critical and objective perspective. This meets the requirement to accord equal respect for non-religious worldviews in RE established in 2015 by the case *Fox v Secretary of State for Education*.

Balanced approaches to religions and worldviews: 'collective worship'

Another dimension of our campaign for a balanced approach to religions and worldviews in schools relates to the legal requirement for daily acts of 'broadly Christian' collective worship in schools, which we seek to end. This law is unpopular (many schools

flout it) and the only alternative explicitly allowed for in law provides only for a daily act of worship of a religious character that is not exclusively Christian, such as worship of another religion, or 'multi-faith' worship. In the absence of inclusive assemblies, children from non-Christian families risk stigmatisation, and in any case are typically left with no educationally worthwhile or meaningful alternative activities, should their parents or guardians opt them out of religious assemblies.

On this front, we supported the progress of All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group Vice Chair Baroness Burt's Education (Assemblies) Bill, which would have abolished the requirement for Christian collective worship in non-denominational schools. In spite of broad support, this Bill is certain to fail as the Government will not allow it time for further readings.

We supported local parents, school governors, and teachers in relation to issues involving the local bodies that determine RE curriculums. In February, we supported one governor with an appeal to his local SACRE for his school to provide inclusive assemblies in place of Christian collective worship, as per our policy; this matter was still ongoing at year's end but may progress to the courts. We also assisted local humanists in Redbridge, Walsall, and Kent with different stages of their applications for full membership of their local SACREs. While successful in Redbridge, we began preparing legal action to challenge Kent's decision to refuse a humanist.

In June, the UK Government told the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that the UK, Northern Ireland, and Welsh Governments had no plans to reform collective worship laws in line with the UN's recommendations. We are hopeful that the Scottish Government however may yet seek reform.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

We want all children to receive a full, factual, and age-appropriate education about sex and relationships to keep them happy, healthy, and safe.

After months of baseless protests the High Court rejected a legal challenge to the Welsh Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum in December. Anti-RSE protesters had attempted to have the decision to remove the right to withdraw from the subject judicially reviewed on the basis that it violated their freedom of religion or belief. Drawing in part from case law in *Fox v Secretary of State for Education* (where humanists in England successfully challenged the RE GCSE syllabus), the Court ruled that the curriculum will be delivered in an objective, critical, and pluralistic manner and thus could not constitute indoctrination. We were widely quoted in a number of major news outlets, including the *Daily Mail*.

In May, our Education Policy Researcher gave a talk on why faith-based carve-outs to relationships and sex education (RSE) should be prohibited to the Westminster Education Forum.

Religious state schools

Without doubt the most serious remaining area of religious privilege in our overwhelmingly secular society is the built-in bias in the law in favour of religious schools. This persists despite their unpopularity with the public, shown in repeated

polls, and their need for specific exemptions from various aspects of equality and human rights law to continue to exist. These privileges are not entirely a matter of outdated laws: many are embodied in relatively recent deals that successive governments have done with the churches, especially the Church of England which has openly acknowledged the importance of its schools to its future hopes.

Our aspiration is for every state-funded school to be open to pupils and families of every religion or belief, and to teach a broad and balanced curriculum with an inclusive, non-sectarian school ethos. One dimension of this work means challenging the process of green-lighting new faith schools with discriminatory admissions policies. We supported groups of parents and councillors in areas across the UK to oppose the approval of new faith schools.

In March we appeared on a *BBC Politics North West* television segment about the effects of faith-based discrimination on school admissions in Liverpool. With our Liverpool Humanists branch, we had previously run a social media campaign drawing attention to the very high proportion of religiously selective school places in Liverpool.

Also in March, we wrote to the Government about plans announced in its *Opportunity for All* white paper to financially assist more religious groups to open yet more religious schools in England. The announced consultation on admissions reform, delayed to 2023, will be an opportunity to campaign vocally on religious selection in schools.

We also highlighted the discriminatory impact of religiously selective school admissions policies in the Children's Rights Alliance for England's consultation on children's rights.

In terms of high-profile cases, we offered our support to a gay author who was banned by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark from speaking at Catholic schools in south London. We engaged with Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE) about the case. Ofsted conducted a snap inspection of the school which was critical of the Archdiocese's decision but praised the school's otherwise inclusive ethos. Teachers at the school went on strike in protest in opposition to the decision made by the Archdiocese.

Unregistered (illegal) schools

Another facet of our work relates to unregistered (illegal) religious schools, which typically practise corporal punishment, do not comply with teacher training or health and safety requirements, and teach a curriculum composed entirely or almost entirely of rote scripture learning, often without even covering basics like maths or English.

In May, we welcomed confirmation in the Queen's Speech that the UK Government would seek to close legal loopholes that allow illegal schools to operate in England. The draft legislation reflected the recommendations we made to its *Regulating independent educational institutions* consultation. We worked with other stakeholders to come up with amendments, which were accepted by the Government, to tighten up the definition of a school. Sadly the Schools Bill as a whole was withdrawn due to concerns about other sections of the Bill, and we continued to push the DfE to bring back the illegal schools measures with a narrower Bill. Separately, we also had discussions about illegal schools in June with the Shadow Secretary of State for Education.

Public services: Support for those leaving high control religions

Our Faith to Faithless and policy teams co-produced our response to a consultation by the UK Government's Independent Review of Social Cohesion and Resilience, chaired by Dame Sara Khan. We used the platform to highlight the lack of appropriate support available to apostates, how restrictive faith school admissions are counterproductive to social cohesion, and the need for non-religious pastoral carers. We subsequently met with Dame Sara to discuss our recommendations further.

We also continued to provide ongoing policy guidance and operational support to the Faith to Faithless asylum support service.

Right to asylum

We continued to support humanist asylum seekers, particularly from 13 countries where humanists face the death penalty and others where persecution of humanists is an acute problem, and we reflected this experience in continued engagement with the Home Office in relation to proposed immigration and asylum reforms.

At our AGM in June, our members passed a motion condemning the Government's new policy of deporting asylum claimants to Rwanda, which would send people to a jurisdiction with a poor record in freedom of belief.

Freedom of choice

Freedom of choice is a cross-cutting priority in our policy work, intersecting closely with our work for greater freedom of thought and expression. It frequently underpins our request for equitable treatment for humanism and humanists in law, as with our campaign for legal recognition of humanist marriages. Freedom of choice also underpins our longstanding demands for equality and universal access to justice, and our commitments to human rights as a paramount legal and social endeavour. It is also embodied by the continued presence of racial equality, women's rights, children's rights, and LGBT rights as prominent themes in our public advocacy.

Legal recognition of humanist marriages

We want couples across the UK to be able to marry in a legally binding ceremony with an accredited Humanists UK celebrant, just as religious couples can with a trained minister of religion, without having to take on the extra expense and barrier of a second ceremony in a register office. Couples can have legally recognised humanist marriages in this way in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, and Guernsey, but not in England, Wales, or the Isle of Man.

Humanist marriage was a significant area of interest for the All Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG), whose members laid down numerous parliamentary questions to ascertain the Government's view on the matter and inquire about the Law Commission review of marriage law in England and Wales, which was released in July.

In January, we responded to the UK Government's consultation on outdoor civil and religious marriages to raise the issue of humanist marriages in England and Wales. The Government decided to make outdoor civil and religious marriages permanent. The

reforms did not include humanist marriages, despite the consultation receiving a large number of responses in favour of legal recognition. This decision undermined the Government's stated position that it must wait until the outcome of the Law Commission's review before introducing any 'piecemeal' reforms of marriage law.

Later in the year, we organised a joint letter signed by 53 cross-party MPs and peers from across the religion and belief spectrum, calling on the Government to grant immediate legal recognition to humanist marriages. This led to a Westminster Hall debate sponsored by APPHG then-Chair Crispin Blunt MP supported by 26 cross-party MPs. The minister for marriage, Tom Pursglove MP, responded by recognising the debate's quality and the strength of feeling on humanist marriages. But he repeated the Government line that the matter must wait for the outcome of the Law Commission's review of marriage law. Separately, the Second Church Estates Commissioner confirmed in Parliament that the Church of England 'has no principled objection to humanist marriage'. At a later debate in the Lords in the summer, many peers from all parties spoke in favour of humanist marriages, with one of the strongest interventions in support coming from the former Communities Secretary, Lord Pickles.

The Westminster Hall debate later led to a meeting with Pursglove on the subject. One of our celebrants also met the Prime Minister at his constituency surgery to discuss the issue, as did another with then-Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Secretary Dominic Raab. We met with the Law Commission, the Local Government Association, the National Panel for Registration, and the Director of Faith and Public Life at the Church of England to discuss our views about the proposed Law Commission reforms.

The Law Commission published the outcome of its weddings law project on 19 July, marking what could be the end of nine years of reviews on humanist marriages. We renewed our calls for the Government to end the long delay faced by humanist couples by using the order-making powers of the 2013 Marriage Act, at least as an interim measure, as the Law Commission proposals could take years to become law (if they ever do). We briefed the relevant teams at the Ministry of Justice, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, and the Church of England on our views. Our response to the report was covered extensively on mainstream television, newspapers, and radio, including *BBC News*, *BBC Breakfast*, *BBC News Online*, *The Times*, *The Mirror*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Independent* twice, *The Evening Standard*, *Wales Online*, and over 150 Press Association articles.

Humanist marriage was the topic of two APPHG meetings. In the first, parliamentarians heard from a claimant in the 2020 humanist marriage case, Kate Harrison; our celebrant Zena Birch; the barrister in both the England and Wales and Northern Ireland cases Steve McQuitty; and our Chief Executive. The second, in October, saw the launch of the APPHG's second report on humanist marriage, *No Lawful Impediment*. Baroness Bakewell DBE introduced the report at the event which took place in Parliament. Other speakers included our Chief Executive, humanist celebrant Hannah McKerchar, and claimants in the 2020 High Court case Victoria Hosegood and Charli Janeway. The report led to a debate and another series of questions in the Lords, in which the Bishop of St Albans joined calls for the Government to simply resolve the matter by laying an Order for humanist marriages.

As for our work on humanist marriage in jurisdictions where it is already recognised, the Northern Ireland government published its response to its marriage law consultation in

July, confirming that humanist marriages will be placed on an equal statutory footing to religious marriages. The NI government will not bring forward legislation on commercial celebrants, citing a lack of human rights grounds or popular consensus. We also met with the President of Guernsey's Policy and Resources Committee (formerly known as Chief Minister) to address outstanding inequalities in Guernsey's marriage law, which result in humanists still paying extra charges and jumping through additional hoops to get married in Guernsey.

Assisted dying

Freedom of choice also underpins our advocacy of a compassionate assisted dying law. We want those with incurable or terminal conditions to have access to assistance to end their suffering, subject to safeguards requiring a fixed, uncoerced, and genuine wish to do so made in sound mind. We work closely with the Assisted Dying Coalition, which we previously helped to establish, and whose members share our policy. These organisations include My Death, My Decision (with whom we share a staff member), Humanist Society Scotland, Friends at the End (Scotland), Let Me Choose (Isle of Man), End of Life Choices Jersey, and End of Life Ireland.

We briefed MPs and Lords at several points across the year, including in relation to an amendment to the Health and Care Bill, a Westminster Hall debate, and Baroness Meacher's Assisted Dying Bill. The latter was not given enough time to be debated at full length and so failed automatically.

In March we learned that one of our celebrants had been arrested on suspicion of assisting or encouraging suicide following the death of incurably suffering assisted dying campaigner Sharon Johnston in Switzerland, as featured in a 2021 BBC documentary, *When Would You Want to Die?* She was later exonerated following a gruelling police investigation. Along with My Death, My Decision, we highlighted through her case how our inhumane law treats people who have done nothing wrong, even in open-and-shut cases surrounding the settled will of an ardent assisted dying campaigner. We also supported proposals from the Crown Prosecution Service to reform its treatment of mercy killings, but regretted that neither this nor its assisted dying guidance provided an adequate substitute for humane legislation.

In May, the APPHG made assisted dying the subject of its AGM in parliament, where speakers included Dr Henry Marsh, our patron and a renowned neurosurgeon living with prostate cancer; Louise Doublet, States of Jersey Deputy; Lauren Nicklinson, daughter of the late assisted dying campaigner Tony Nicklinson; and our Chief Executive. We also worked again with Lauren in August to mark the 10th anniversary of her father Tony Nicklinson's death, which attracted media coverage across regional BBC TV and radio stations.

Along with My Death, My Decision, we participated in research from the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) to produce a 'POSTnote' on assisted dying. Published in July, the POSTnote aimed to provide a summary of the ethical debate, research, and public opinion on assisted dying and related UK legislation.

In December, the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee launched an inquiry into assisted dying in England and Wales. We contacted the Committee with offers to give evidence; the inquiry is expected to start in early 2023. We also

encouraged our members to fill in the committee's survey. We were concerned that seven out of 11 members of the Committee have previously stated that they do not support assisted dying in letters to constituents. Earlier in the year, the composition of the Committee would have been much more favourable.

In Jersey, the government launched a public engagement process on assisted dying. We were concerned that this was a consultation that could be an opportunity for assisted dying opponents to reverse 'in principle' previously taken on the island. However, we were reassured by the States Assembly that this was not the case. Our colleagues at End of Life Choices Jersey attended much of the engagement process and were similarly reassured that it was merely an example of healthy democratic engagement. We were told to expect legislation in 2023.

In Scotland, the Scottish Parliament published its report on its public consultation on assisted dying, which showed strong support. We and our sister charity Humanist Society Scotland are vocally in support of the Bill. Meanwhile in the Isle of Man, we backed the introduction of an assisted dying Private Member's Bill by Dr Alex Allinson MHK. This was also supported by our member Vicky Christian, who is chair of Assisted Dying Coalition member Let Me Choose. The Manx government launched a consultation on the Bill in December. In France, the President announced a citizens' assembly on assisted dying, as was done in Jersey.

LGBT rights

The rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) people continued to be a recurring theme for us, in policy work and in public advocacy. Much of our education work on Relationships and Sex Education and discrimination against teachers in schools touched on the need for LGBT-inclusive subject content and policies, and we spoke out regularly against homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic hatred and discrimination through our social media channels.

We were one of the earliest organisations in the UK, if not the earliest, to call for an end to so-called 'conversion therapy' (a fraudulent, pseudoscientific practice that amounts to torture of LGBT people on the false premise that it can change their sexuality or gender identity). Our volunteer-led section, LGBT Humanists, has been advocating a ban on the practice since the 1990s. Since 2018, we and LGBT Humanists have been doing what we can to hold successive administrations to the promise made by Theresa May's government that there will be a full legislative ban across medical, non-medical, and religious settings.

We worked with our fellow members of the Ban Conversion Therapy Coalition in respect of our work to ban that abhorrent practice. We responded to the Equalities Office's consultation on conversion therapy in January to insist that any ban must cover religious settings (where the majority of attempted 'conversions' take place) and that a distinction between coercion and consent in this context was impossible; this came after briefings to Government by pro-conversion therapy religious groups.

In March, it was announced the UK Government had abandoned its promised legislation on the issue altogether. We joined public and private calls against this, which led to the legislation being promised anew within 24 hours, albeit in a restricted form that did not apply to trans people. We urged the Government to produce a draft Bill for parliamentary

scrutiny and civil society input; its failure to do so had led to much unhelpful speculation about what a non-existent Bill supposedly would or would not do. Later in the year, we shared our platform at the UN Human Rights Council with the Ozanne Foundation to make a statement on the UK's slow progress on banning conversion therapy.

Abortion rights

Women's freedom of choice, extending to their right to autonomy over their bodies and to make choices about their own sexual and reproductive health, continued as an important ongoing area for reactive campaigning work. In February, the UK Government announced that telemedical (at-home) abortion in England would end on 29 August with the sunset clause for pandemic-era regulations. We joined public and private calls for the provisions to remain in force. We were pleased to see the Welsh Government announced the following day that the provisions would become permanent in Wales. Later that month, we were involved in briefing Lords in favour of an amendment to the Health and Care Bill that would overrule the UK Government on this issue. We again briefed MPs on the issue when it eventually returned to the Commons, where the amendment was overwhelmingly passed. This meant that telemedical abortion became a permanent fixture in both England and Wales.

In July, we spotted that the UK Government had unilaterally removed references to 'sexual and reproductive health and rights' and 'bodily autonomy' from a statement on women's rights published at its international conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief (losing many countries' signatures in the process). We publicised the matter with an open letter from over 20 human rights, pro-choice, and international aid groups, asking for the statement to be changed back. Our actions prompted the Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee, Caroline Nokes MP, to speak out against the change. It also led to protests from Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, who first sought an explanation, then similarly asked for the statement to be changed back, and then finally tabled their own statement. This led to four articles in the *Guardian*, three in the *i*, a front-page story in one of Denmark's daily papers, and coverage on the *Sunday* programme and in the *National*. Most of these were exclusive coverage we arranged. APPHG member Baroness Whitaker tabled three written parliamentary questions on the matter. APPHG co-chairs Tommy Sheppard MP and Baroness Bakewell wrote a joint letter to the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office to raise their concerns on behalf of the APPHG, while Baroness Hayter also submitted a separate letter. Although the change was not satisfactorily explained, the UK Government told us it would take the earliest opportunity to reassert its support for abortion rights and bodily autonomy in the UK and internationally. It later did this as part of the UK Government's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Conference 2022.

In October, MPs voted in favour of provisions to introduce safe abortion access zones around abortion clinics. We briefed MPs in the APPHG ahead of the debate, with member Steve McCabe MP speaking in favour. The vote was a significant victory for a longstanding policy aim.

Access to justice

One of our busiest areas of work came in response to UK Government plans to repeal the Human Rights Act and restrict access to judicial review, whereby ordinary people

can go to court to secure their rights. We continued to lead a 250-strong coalition of organisations concerned that the Government's Bill of Rights Bill (or 'Rights Removal Bill') would leave citizens fundamentally unable to enforce the basic human rights enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights. We continued to brief the coalition we founded around each of the Rights Removal Bill's various milestones, such as the Queen's Speech.

We also remained concerned about how the Bill would specifically hurt humanists and the non-religious, and developed a public information campaign about this. Where at present the Human Rights Act means public bodies and the courts are able to read additional words into laws and policies where this is required in order to uphold human rights, the Bill of Rights would allow for no such flexibility. This would erase the legal basis for humanists' equality in the school curriculum, in marriage law, and wherever else old laws just say 'religion' but really ought to say 'religion or belief' or 'religions and humanism'. In March, we told the Ministry of Justice that its proposals to reform the Human Rights Act 1998 'would be counterproductive and seriously risk undermining human rights protections for non-religious people'. We also expressed these concerns to the Joint Committee on Human Rights' call for evidence. Several MPs raised questions in the Commons about our concerns.

In September, with the change of Prime Minister, it was reported that the Bill of Rights Bill had been shelved, but that the Government would look to achieve some of its aims by other means. However, with yet another change of Prime Minister a few weeks later, the Bill was slated to return.

Public services: Pastoral care and chaplaincy

Our policy team also worked to bolster the rights of patients, workers, and visitors in hospitals, as well as prisoners, members of the armed forces, and students, lecturers, and teachers, to non-religious pastoral support through public institutions. We engaged over the course of the year with a sustained review within the Ministry of Defence looking at, among other things, whether the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network should be endorsed to provide care within the armed forces.

Separately, we briefed members of the APPHG about pastoral care in the armed forces. Members of the group put 15 questions about the matter to the Ministry of Defence over the course of sessions in the House of Commons and House of Lords.

Freedom of expression

Free expression is a frequent cross-cutting theme in our policy work, much of which can also be thought of or categorised as issues of freedom of thought and/or freedom of choice. Our policy work and campaigning here is increasingly focused on challenging the existence of both formal and de facto bans on blasphemy and 'causing offence' in law, which history shows to have a significantly corrosive effect on both the quality of public discourse and on individuals' and communities' ability to shape their own lives and stake out an equitable role in society. This is true in the UK but also abroad, where we advocate for greater diplomatic pressure from the UK on states where identifying publicly as a humanist can cost someone their life or their freedom.

Support for humanists at risk worldwide

One of our priorities is to advance freedom of religion or belief for all, and to draw greater attention, in particular from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), to the plight of people persecuted for their humanist beliefs.

A major case for us was that of Mubarak Bala, the President of the Nigerian Humanist Association, who was arrested and detained and subjected to numerous severe procedural irregularities on accusations of making blasphemous posts on Facebook in 2020. Following further irregularities and allegations of threats made against his family, he was sentenced to 24 years in prison for alleged blasphemous posts on Facebook. Following this, we organised a large protest outside the Nigerian High Commission, marking two years since his arrest. Our Chief Executive, our patron Eddie Marsan, and Clive Aruede of the Association of Black Humanists all spoke at the protest, and we circulated flyers encouraging members, supporters, and the general public to write to their MP about his case. At least seven parliamentarians have tabled questions on his case, and several members of the APPHG wrote to the Government about him, including Co-Chairs Crispin Blunt MP and Baroness Bakewell; Vice Chair Jeff Smith MP; and member/Shadow Foreign Minister Lord Collins. Bala's case was also raised at a debate on FoRB in Parliament on 28 June, ahead of the Ministerial. We also met the FCDO's FoRB and Nigeria teams, staff from the British Deputy High Commission in Lagos, and the staff from the Nigerian High Commission in London.

Also on Mubarak's case, we organised a joint letter from civil society actors to the UK Government, urging them to take various actions on his case, including issuing a public statement. Its signatories included the Chairs of the UK FoRB Forum and All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on International FoRB; the Bishop of Truro; the Chief Executive of Humanists International; the Head of Advocacy of Christian Solidarity Worldwide; the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London; the President of the Buddhist Society; Hindu Matters Britain, the All Faiths Network, Bellwether International, Mosaic Middle East, and the Religious Freedom Institute. Disappointingly the UK Government did not do this, outside of responses to the parliamentary questions.

International freedom of religion or belief (FoRB)

Our longstanding commitment to FoRB also extends to campaigning for the rights of religious people to their beliefs, as well as humanists. It was the subject of numerous meetings and a great deal of correspondence with the FCDO and with Labour's Shadow Foreign Affairs team. We also were regular participants at meetings of the APPG on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the UK FoRB Forum (where our Chief Executive remains on the steering group). Our Director of Public Affairs and Policy also attended an all-day conference on Digital Persecution organised by the Christian FoRB charity Open Doors.

Our Chief Executive was invited to join the FCDO steering group for the Ministerial on Freedom of Religion or Belief being hosted in July. At the event itself, we organised a stand and three separate fringe events in the main venue, which is two more than any other organisation. We also co-organised five fringe events in Parliament, and secured humanist participation in several events in the main programme. Our Chief Executive (in his capacity as President of Humanists International) spoke at the opening ceremony,

alongside the Prince of Wales (now King), Foreign Secretary (now ex-Prime Minister), and major global religious leaders, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and Chief Rabbi.

We continued to speak out about the harms perpetuated by blasphemy laws around the world. Ahead of a Commons debate on FoRB and the Commonwealth, we published research showing that Commonwealth countries, and countries formerly part of the British Empire, are much more likely to have blasphemy laws than all others. APPG on FoRB Chair Jim Shannon MP (DUP) quoted the statistics in his opening speech.

In December, Humanists International published the *2022 Freedom of Thought Report*, highlighting persecution of the non-religious around the globe. We briefed parliamentarians and the media about its release, which covers the devastating impact that theocratic or anti-democratic laws, discriminatory social mores, and restrictions on freedom of thought and expression can have on the lives of non-religious people.

We used our regular platform at the UN Human Rights Council to highlight FoRB issues, including the case of Mubarak Bala and the need to protect non-religious Afghans. We also continued to enjoy good relations with the United States Embassy, with whom we share common policy on FoRB.

Defending free expression

After our patron Sir Salman Rushdie was stabbed at an event in New York in August, we issued an immediate statement in support of him. Our Chief Executive was interviewed by *Channel 4 News*, *Sky News* twice, the *Mail Online* (video interview via Reuters), *Times Radio*, LBC twice, BBC 5 Live, and the BBC World Service. He was also quoted by *The Times*, *National*, *Daily Record*, *Irish Examiner*, *Irish Mirror*, *The Australian*, and over 150 Press Association articles, and was a guest on the Daily Mail's *Sarah Vine's Femail Half Hour*. Our Director of Public Affairs and Policy was interviewed by CTV in Canada.

In October, we co-organised 'An Evening for Salman Rushdie' live-streamed event with writers' advocacy groups English PEN and PEN International, the British Library, Index on Censorship, ARTICLE 19, Penguin UK, and friends of Rushdie. Speakers included Nigella Lawson and Alan Yentob.

Abolishing blasphemy laws (Northern Ireland)

We stayed active throughout the year in relation to our stalled campaign in Northern Ireland to abolish the blasphemy law. At last count, we had won both support from the relevant ministers to bring forward a Bill and sufficient support from MLAs to pass it. However, the Northern Ireland Assembly was not operational due to Brexit-related disagreements.

We remained vigilant about *de facto* prohibitions on blasphemy in parts of the UK where it was no longer proscribed in law. We responded to the Independent Monitor for the Press (IMPRESS) public consultation on proposed changes to its Standards Code and guidance for newspapers and magazines. We highlighted that examples in the guidance described a total prohibition on blasphemy, well below what was intended by the wording of 'not encourag[ing] hatred or abuse against any group based on their protected characteristics'. The examples instead prohibited all religious 'offence'. We also explained that the guidance incorrectly identified the protected characteristic in the

Equality Act 2010 as ‘religion’ when in fact it is properly ‘religion or belief’ (which includes the non-religious).

Ethical issues and global challenges

Our policy continues to emphasise a number of areas where humanists, and humanist thinking, can make unique contributions to public debate. Notably in 2022 this led to the following actions.

The environment

Humanist Climate Action (HCA), our network of volunteers who campaign on ecological issues, called for the UK Government action to tackle plastic pollution by responding to two consultations launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which proposed to ban bio-based, compostable, and biodegradable single-use plastic items. It also responded to a UK Government consultation on new Biodiversity Net Gain regulations and its 2030 Strategic Framework for International Climate and Nature Action, in both cases calling for the plans to be strengthened.

HCA further responded to a Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) consultation to say the UK must strengthen its proposed environmental targets to protect against the further degeneration of our biodiversity, woodland cover, and air quality.

Animal welfare

The humanist commitment to improved treatment of sentient animals is featured more prominently in our new strategy, which endorses the World Organisation for Animal Health’s Five Freedoms for Animals under human control as a basis for policy engagement with officials. As a religion or belief-specialised human rights charity, we take further interest in the intersection of animal welfare policy with religion or belief, and advocate strongly alongside animal welfare charities for the closure of loopholes to animal welfare legislation relating to religious slaughter. We were pleased to see that a DEFRA consultation we had responded to found 97% of respondents supported introducing labelling for non-stunned meat. We hope this will lead to proposals for reform in 2023.

International human rights

We were one of the first British organisations to raise alarm bells about unfolding events in Iran following the state’s murder of a young girl, Mahsa Amini, for ‘improper hijab’. We released a statement from our Vice President, Shaparak Khorsandi (who is from Iran), which was quoted in the *Huffington Post* in support of the Woman, Life, Freedom protests. We regularly covered the unfolding events, voicing support for the brave protesters and condemning the actions of the Iranian regime.

In addition to our many UN Human Rights Council interventions on FoRB detailed above, we urged the UN to keep the pressure on Iran to abolish the use of the death penalty for blasphemy and apostasy and to end its persecution of religious and non-religious minorities, highlighting the case of Swedish-Iranian researcher Dr Ahmadsheza Djalali who was arrested and sentenced to death on false charges of espionage.

4. Humanists UK is respected for our expertise and professionalism and recognised as the leading national voice for the non-religious

We continued to be the go-to national organisation for the non-religious and for information about humanism, and were frequently sought out by the media for comment on press stories in this capacity. In fact, 2022 was our best ever year for media coverage, with our quotations featuring in 373 distinct articles in major national or international publications. Our biggest story of the year related to the publication of the 2022 Census results for England and Wales in October. The headline figures were that those ticking 'No religion' jumped from 25% to 37%, while the number of people ticking 'Christian' in England and Wales has fallen from 59% to 46%. In Wales, 'No religion' jumped from 32% to 47%, while those ticking 'Christian' fell from 58% to 44%. The results were pleasing, given our campaign to encourage non-religious people to tick 'No religion' instead of the religion they might associate with their culture, upbringing, or schooling. We received blanket coverage on this.

Our Director of Understanding Humanism was invited to speak to members of the European Humanist Professionals about religious education in the UK and successful approaches to teaching about humanism.

Our high-level engagement with government departments in various nations of the UK and across the crown dependencies continued to show that we are taken seriously as the voice of a large community in the UK. We have good relations with the FCDO in particular and our strong standing was reflected in our very significant presence at the UK Ministerial on Freedom of Religion or Belief, including sharing a stage at the opening ceremony with the Foreign Secretary (later Prime Minister) and Prince of Wales (now King). We also continued to enjoy warm relations with the Welsh Government, and attended meetings chaired by First Minister Mark Drakeford MS on matters relating to the cost of living crisis across Wales and how all communities could contribute.

5. Humanists UK is an expanding, financially healthy, and sustainable movement

Our fundraising

Having outperformed expectations of our fundraising in the two years of the pandemic, we ran into difficulty early in 2022 as the impact of a cost of living crisis began to hit home. Our analysis was that donors were on average giving less than they did previously, and less frequently, than prior to March 2022, and that donors who made smaller donations were the most likely to withhold donations altogether due to concerns about the impact of inflation and energy bills on their household finances. We convened a group of dozens of fundraising professionals from across the voluntary sector to discuss the macroeconomic picture, confirming that similar trends were being noticed across charities. We also observed an uptick of membership cancellations, which generally coincided with announcements relating to the energy price cap. Hard work by our fundraising team to increase retention and recruitment led to a big turnaround: we ended 2022 with our retention rate at its highest level in our history, and

well above sector averages. As a result, we put in place numerous plans to mitigate the impact of the economic downturn on our programmes and our work.

As ever we remained extremely grateful to all our members and donors for giving whatever they could, when they could. We were also especially grateful to those donors who responded by increasing their regular gifts later in the year in response to our appeal citing these trends. We also notified members of an increase in the basic membership fee at the tail of the year, having resisted implementing inflation-linked rises since 2018. These measures, combined with an unexpectedly successful September membership appeal (in fact, our best ever such appeal), meant we were able to go into 2023 without cutting any programmes of work. This was a success in spite of adversity.

People and systems

Our new People department grew to better support our 35 staff, 52 consultants, and over 549 volunteers across the UK as a major strategic priority for us. It also continued to drive forward our agenda to improve Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within our organisation and our movement.

Our IT department had another extremely busy year. This included supporting remote working and ICT needs across the full workforce, as well as working on several major projects. Major developments included a server move, developing a new 'celebrant availability checker' to assist clients with booking celebrants in Northern Ireland, major behind-the-scenes changes to our systems to support our branches pilot; a new and faster system for collecting petition signatures; new membership and income dashboards and toolsets to support in-depth fundraising analysis; new processes and systems supporting the work of Faith to Faithless; and significant amounts of work relating to our membership scheme and price changes. As well as this, work with the communications team on the next Humanists UK website continued through the year.

Financial Review

We ended the year with a deficit of £142,855. This was due to the combination of a deficit of unrestricted funds of £165,085 plus a £22,201 surplus of restricted funds. Legacy income was nearly half that of the previous year at £302k. Though our legacy income fluctuates significantly, we assume we will continue to benefit from a modest number of legacies throughout the course of our five-year strategy and are happy to report that the 2022 legacy income fell within the range anticipated.

Grant income in furtherance of pastoral support resumed in 2022, following a pause in 2021 during which resources were devoted to post-covid recovery. Restricted donations continued to fund our dedicated Assisted Dying Campaign and our Campaign against Faith Schools.

Membership and unrestricted donations income both performed in line with budgets, though the staff time devoted to fundraising and membership development increased in order to achieve our overall 3% growth in income. We had to spend more time fundraising in order to achieve this and high inflation meant that our rate of growth did not produce more buying power for our activities.

Expenditure continued to be closely monitored to make savings where possible in the face of inflation. Expenditure on charitable activity increased by 16%, reflecting both inflationary pressures plus new areas of investment, which included additional campaigning staff, coordination of non-religious pastoral care, the recruitment and development of volunteers, and in the area of HR.

Our five-year strategy is now well underway and we plan to significantly draw down on our funds, leveraging expenditure to make long-lasting change in public policy, in the public's understanding of humanism, and in the ability of non-religious people to live happier, confident and more ethical lives. Given the uncertain wider economic outlook, this is a fortunate position to be in and we are grateful to everyone involved in making it so.

Reserves

Our reserves are unrestricted free funds held long term for precautionary purposes. The Board considers that the reserves held by Humanists UK should be sufficient to:

- allow us to continue our work in the event of a temporary downturn in income streams. Such concerns might include: an absence of any legacy income for a few years (which, while we deliberately do not budget for legacy income, might restrict a number of activities from being undertaken), a decline in voluntary income, or a failure to increase income at the budgeted rate, and other risks identified annually in the risk register;
- take advantage of an unforeseen opportunity: an item of news, for example, which could trigger a publicity campaign, or an opportunity to change policy through campaigning;
- meet an unforeseen need: a legal challenge, for example, or a sudden need for a significant IT systems change.

Humanists UK will therefore hold an upper limit of four months' annual expenditure and a lower limit of three months' expenditure in reserves to cover these emergencies. All other liquid and near liquid assets are available to fund those activities identified in Humanists UK's Strategic Plan.

We de-designated the building fund (£400,000) given the challenging wider economic environment and decision to renew the lease on the current office for three years.

At the end of the year total funds held amounted to £2,904,388 of which £140,824 were held for restricted purposes and £1,806 were represented by the Association's tangible fixed assets which can only be realised on their disposal. The financial assets of the Association were £2,902,582, currently more than sufficient to meet the requirements of our reserves policy (three months budgeted expenditure being £745k). For this reason we have decided to maintain our deficit budget for 2023-2025.

Fundraising Policy

Our approach to fundraising reflects that supporters are at the heart of what we do, and fundraising materials are designed to ensure that donors and potential donors

understand that they can withdraw from fundraising communications, or any other communications, at any time, simply and without fuss. We do not use fundraising services, consultants, or external professional fundraisers to undertake fundraising activities on our behalf, and we do not sell or licence data to (or buy data from) any external agencies or third parties. We send a weekly e-newsletter to subscribers (which they can unsubscribe from) sharing information about our charitable work and fundraising activities. All new marketing materials are checked to comply with the Fundraising Code of Practice as part of an internal publications sign-off procedure.

We host a range of events throughout the year. Fundraising events are explicitly billed as such. Events are closely monitored at internal meetings before and after every event, and detailed profit and loss registers are kept for large events. We will never exert undue pressure on those invited to attend an event or to donate. All income and expenditure related to volunteer-led fundraising is reported to the appropriate line manager within the staff team, and annual statements are approved by both the volunteer and the responsible manager.

We take very seriously our responsibility and make our best efforts not to approach or pressure vulnerable people to support our work. We take a robust approach to complaints about fundraising, whether in person, or online, or by another medium; these are promptly followed up by the responsible officers, their line managers, or by a member of the Board (as appropriate).

Investment policy and objectives

The Board's investment policy is to generate the highest possible returns over the long term, consistent with our risk appetite and appropriate protection for our capital, so as to maximise the resources that can be expended on our charitable objectives. We have short and long-term investment policies that reflect our needs over different timeframes. Monitoring of the investment performance takes place through regular investment reports and investment performance results are reported and discussed at Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings and compared to industry benchmarks where applicable.

We entered the year with funds invested as cash deposits with Flagstone, which we retained through 2022. We also held a portfolio consisting of units held with Barclays (Charity Fund) and with BNY Mellon (Newton SRI Fund for Charities). This blend reflects the risk appetite necessary given the planned utilisation of funds over the course of our new strategic period (to 2025).

Risk management

The Board is satisfied that appropriate systems and procedures have been established to identify and manage the major risks faced by the Association. They have developed a comprehensive risk management policy to ensure that all important risks are evaluated and appropriate mitigating action taken. Governance and management, operational, financial, legal and other risks are reviewed annually by the Board and continually monitored by the senior management team who take responsibility for implementation of the policies and procedures identified to reduce risks.

Corrective actions are based on the likelihood of particular events occurring and how critical the consequences would be. Annual risk reviews include considerations of

operating plan activities, finance, insurance, trademark, office building, fire, health and safety, and terms and conditions of employment of staff. Significant potential risks identified were the reputational and legal risks associated with front-line service provision, reliance on core specialist staff, compliance risks with regulatory frameworks such as data protection, and operational risks as a result of poor media relations or insufficient income generation. Actions taken to mitigate risks included a revised fundraising strategy that is able to adapt to the challenging environment we face, the creation of a Head of People role in 2022 to ensure better in-house practice, improved staff & volunteer inductions and support, plus ongoing work to draw together our policies & processes to ensure best practice across the charity.

Future Plans

We are mid-way through our five-year plan and plan to significantly spend down our funds in order to see real progress across a range of areas. We will devote more resources to our apostate support programme, *Faith to Faithless*, including the launch of a helpline as well as increased asylum support and peer support activities. We are investing more in supporting our network of celebrants (and will continue to campaign for legal recognition of Humanist weddings in England & Wales). Other campaigns include Assisted Dying and the Campaign against Faith Schools, where we utilise various tools, including legal cases, to pursue our aim of a fairer society for all. The Branches Pilot Project will continue to build our network of volunteers, whose energy and expertise we are grateful to draw on across all of our work.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

Humanists UK's Board are directors of the company for the purposes of company law and are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable company and charity law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Association for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the principles of the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue to operate.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Association and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Association and hence

taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Association's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Directors confirm that, in the case of each of the persons who are Directors at the date of this report, the following applies:

- so far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the Company's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the Company's auditors are unaware; and
- each Director has taken steps to make herself/himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

In accordance with S485 of the Companies Act 2006, a resolution proposing the reappointment of Knox Cropper LLP as auditors will be put to the General Meeting.

On behalf of the Board: Neil Hawkins, Chair, 13 May 2023

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2022

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the British Humanist Association (the 'charitable company', operating as Humanists UK) for the year ended 31 December 2022 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2022 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2022 (cont.)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2022 (cont.)

small companies' exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Directors.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- The Charitable Company is required to comply with both company law and charity law and, based on our knowledge of its activities, we identified that the legal requirement to accurately account for restricted funds was of key significance.
- We gained an understanding of how the charitable company complied with its legal and regulatory framework, including the requirement to properly account for restricted funds, through discussions with management and a review of the documented policies, procedures and controls.
- The audit team, which is experienced in the audit of charities, considered the charitable company's susceptibility to material misstatement and how fraud may occur. Our considerations included the risk of management override.
- Our approach was to check that restricted income was properly identified and separately accounted for and to ensure that only valid and appropriate

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2022 (cont.)

expenditure was charged to restricted funds. This included reviewing journal adjustments and unusual transactions.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken, so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

Richard Billingham (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Knox Cropper LLP, Statutory Auditor
65 Leadenhall Street
London
EC3A 2AD

13 May 2023

Statement of Financial Activities including the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2022

		Funds 2022			Funds 2021		
	Notes	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total 2022 £	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £
INCOME FROM:							
- Legacies and donations	2	182,907	1,115,105	1,298,012	156,469	1,231,063	1,387,532
- Other trading activities		-	-	-	-	-	-
- Investments	3	-	8,432	8,432	-	8,536	8,536
- Charitable activities	4	-	1,301,802	1,301,802	-	1,297,248	1,297,248
Total		<u>182,907</u>	<u>2,425,339</u>	<u>2,608,246</u>	<u>156,469</u>	<u>2,536,847</u>	<u>2,693,316</u>
EXPENDITURE ON:							
- Raising funds	5	-	(217,066)	(217,066)	-	(183,015)	(183,015)
- Charitable activities	6,7	(160,706)	(2,315,155)	(2,475,861)	(166,921)	(1,970,044)	(2,136,965)
Total		<u>(160,706)</u>	<u>(2,532,221)</u>	<u>(2,692,927)</u>	<u>(166,921)</u>	<u>(2,153,059)</u>	<u>(2,319,980)</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	10	<u>-</u>	<u>(58,204)</u>	<u>(58,204)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11,786</u>	<u>11,786</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		22,201	(165,085)	(142,885)	(10,452)	395,574	385,122
Transfers between funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		22,201	(165,085)	(142,885)	(10,452)	395,574	385,122
Balances brought forward at 1 January		<u>118,623</u>	<u>2,928,650</u>	<u>3,047,273</u>	<u>129,075</u>	<u>2,533,076</u>	<u>2,662,151</u>
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER		<u>140,824</u>	<u>2,763,565</u>	<u>2,904,388</u>	<u>118,623</u>	<u>2,928,650</u>	<u>3,047,273</u>

All amounts relate to continuing activities.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2022

	Notes	2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Office equipment	9		1,806		8,903
Investments	10		<u>2,016,264</u>		<u>2,071,489</u>
			2,018,070		2,080,392
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	11	118,492		173,864	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>871,635</u>		<u>876,766</u>	
		990,127		1,050,630	
LIABILITIES					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(103,809)</u>		<u>(83,749)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>886,318</u>		<u>966,881</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>2,904,388</u>		<u>3,047,273</u>
Represented by					
FUNDS :					
Unrestricted	13		2,763,564		2,928,650
Restricted	14		<u>140,824</u>		<u>118,623</u>
Total Funds			<u>2,904,388</u>		<u>3,047,273</u>

The accounts are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act relating to small companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard 102.

Approved by the Directors on 13 May 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Neil Hawkins _____ Hon. Chair

Ann O'Connell _____ Hon. Treasurer

Company number: 00228781

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ending 31 December 2022

Statement of Cash Flows

		2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	24	<u>(7,436)</u>	<u>288,816</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends and interest from investments		8,432	8,536
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(3,148)	-
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	-
Purchase of investments		-	(748,446)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>5,284</u>	<u>(739,910)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(2,152)	(451,094)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,188,023	2,639,117
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	25	<u><u>2,185,871</u></u>	<u><u>2,188,023</u></u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022

1. Accounting policies

Basis of Preparation

These Financial Statements are presented in pounds sterling and have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (the Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Humanists UK meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. The UK continues to face economic uncertainty but, because of our prudent reserves policy, we are in a better relative position than some other charities, but financial uncertainty does remain. Being almost completely reliant on individual donors and members for our income, we keep a concerned eye on the increasing burden on households' cost of living in the UK.

Short term debtors and creditors

Debtors are recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably, and it is probable that the income will be received. Creditors are recognised when the Charity has a present legal or constructive obligation resulting from a past event to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty are detailed in the above accounting policies where applicable.

Prepayments & Accruals

Prepayments and accruals less than £100 have not been taken into consideration.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible assets costing more than £500 were capitalised and all tangible assets are valued at historic cost. Provision is made for depreciation on tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life.

Office Equipment: 20% p.a. straight line

Computer equipment:	33 1/3% p.a. straight line
Office fixtures & fittings:	10% p.a. straight line

Fixed asset investments

Investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. The statement of financial activities includes the net gains and losses arising on the revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Realised gains and losses on investments are arrived at by comparing the net sale proceeds with the market value at the end of the previous financial year. Unrealised gains and losses represent the difference between the market value of investments still held at the end of the financial year with their value at the beginning of the year or with their cost if purchased subsequently.

Value Added Tax

The Charity is registered for VAT and where applicable amounts are included net of VAT.

Funds

Unrestricted funds are those funds which can be used at the trustees' discretion. Restricted Funds are those funds where application is restricted by conditions set by the donor. Designated Funds are those funds, which have been earmarked by the trustees for specific purposes.

Deferrals Policy

Income is recognised when all the following criteria are met:

- Control over the rights or other access to the economic benefit exists
- It is more likely than not that the economic benefits will pass to the Association
- The monetary value of the income can be measured reliably.

Grants Receivable

Revenue grants are credited to incoming resources on the earlier of the date they are received or the date they are receivable, unless they relate to a specific future period, in which case they are deferred. Capital grants for the purchase of fixed assets are credited to restricted incoming resources when they become receivable. Depreciation on the related fixed assets is charged against the restricted fund.

Donations and Legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised as income when the Association becomes unconditionally entitled to receive them, and when the receipt is probable and its value can be predicted with reasonable accuracy.

Charitable Activities

Costs of charitable activities include direct expenditure and an apportionment of overhead, governance and support costs as shown in note 7.

Allocation of Overhead, Governance and Support Costs

Overhead and support costs are incurred centrally across the range of our activities throughout the year. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the Charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These include costs related to statutory audit. All these costs have been apportioned between charitable activities on the basis of staff time or office space depending on the nature of the cost. The trustees consider this to be a reasonable reflection of the utilisation of resources.

Pensions

The Charity contributes to various defined contribution pension schemes on behalf of employees and, as the charity's liability is limited to paying amounts as they fall due, the pension charge reflected in the accounts represents the amount payable for the year.

2. Legacies, grants and donations

	2022			2021
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Donations and Gift Aid	182,907	812,415	995,322	830,221
Grants	-	-	-	14,320
Legacies	-	302,690	302,690	542,991
	<u>182,907</u>	<u>1,115,105</u>	<u>1,298,012</u>	<u>1,387,532</u>

In the preceding year Donations and Gift Aid included £142,149 restricted income plus £14,320 restricted grants from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

3. Investment income

	2022			2021
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Interest	-	8,432	8,432	8,536
Dividends	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>8,432</u>	<u>8,432</u>	<u>8,536</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	2022			2021
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions	-	887,605	887,605	879,373
Celebrants' training	-	169,282	169,282	201,534
Celebrants' accreditation fees	-	150,325	150,325	126,414
Marriage administration fees	-	26,800	26,800	16,700
Events & activities	-	47,059	47,059	36,797
Sales of literature & merchandise	-	8,481	8,481	15,746
Education	-	4,625	4,625	12,097
Pastoral support	-	746	746	188
Sundry income	-	6,879	6,879	8,400
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,301,802</u>	<u>1,301,802</u>	<u>1,297,248</u>

5. Cost of raising funds

	2022			2021
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising costs	-	(205,036)	(205,036)	(177,313)
Investment manager's fees	-	(3,891)	(3,891)	(3,270)
Purchase of merchandise	-	(8,139)	(8,139)	(2,432)
	-	(217,066)	(217,066)	(183,015)

6. Analysis of costs of charitable activities

	2022		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
Education and Public Awareness	(389,765)	(336,336)	(726,102)
Humanist Ceremonies	(396,266)	(118,623)	(514,889)
Humanist Care	(138,413)	(82,674)	(221,087)
Public Affairs & Policy	(500,559)	(291,151)	(791,710)
Activities for Members and Partner Groups	(132,205)	(89,869)	(222,074)
	(1,557,208)	(918,653)	(2,475,861)

	2021		
	Direct Costs	Support	Total
Education and Public Awareness	(385,840)	(261,470)	(647,310)
Humanist Ceremonies	(273,875)	(139,922)	(413,797)
Humanist Care	(101,969)	(83,847)	(185,816)
Public Affairs & Policy	(418,347)	(277,699)	(696,046)
Activities for Members and Partner Groups	(134,952)	(59,044)	(193,996)
	(1,314,983)	(821,982)	(2,136,965)

7. Analysis of support and governance costs

	2022	2021
	£	£
Staff costs	(566,092)	(435,723)
Rent and rates	(109,751)	(120,882)
Repairs, maintenance & utilities	(21,964)	(11,209)
Postage and stationery	(16,494)	(8,102)
ICT	(71,740)	(64,537)
Irrecoverable VAT	(29,957)	(64,207)
Subscriptions	(4,489)	(4,940)
Bank charges & interest	(53,890)	(69,105)
Depreciation	(10,245)	(10,663)
Other costs	(20,705)	(22,347)
Governance	<u>(13,326)</u>	<u>(10,267)</u>
	<u>(918,653)</u>	<u>(821,982)</u>

Support costs have been apportioned between categories of charitable activity according to whether they are overheads or centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities. Overheads have been apportioned in relation to the office space occupied by each area of activity, and centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities has been apportioned in relation to the staff time employed in each area of activity. The trustees consider this provides a reasonable approximation to the utilisation of resources.

Increased staff costs partly reflects the creation of a new senior management role supervising our volunteer support, ceremonies and humanist care networks, created in late-2021.

Governance costs

	2022	2021
	£	£
Audit fee- current year	(6,757)	(5,250)
- previous year underprovision	-	-
Other professional expenses	(13)	(13)
Trustee meeting expenses	<u>(6,556)</u>	<u>(5,004)</u>
	<u>(13,326)</u>	<u>(10,267)</u>

8. Staff costs

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,376,463	1,131,362
Social security costs	153,027	118,065
Pension contributions	<u>98,630</u>	<u>61,996</u>
Total payroll costs	1,628,120	1,311,423
Staff recruitment	17,579	20,818
Temporary staff	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>1,645,698</u>	<u>1,332,241</u>
Average number of employees (FTE)	33	29
Average number of employees	35	30

New staff posts in 2022 were introduced to do more work on our pilot of a new branch structure, coordination of non-religious pastoral care, the recruitment and development of volunteers, and in the area of HR.

Key management personnel (£531,117) (2021: £479,046) includes Chief Executive, Director of Communications & Development, Director of IT, Director of Operations, Director of Public Affairs & Policy, Director of Understanding Humanism, Director of Ceremonies, Head of Humanist Care (recruited mid-2021) and Head of People (recruited mid-2021).

One employee earned in excess of £60,000 and that salary fell in band £90,000 to £100,000. 2021: one employee (£80,000-£90,000 band).

9. Tangible assets

	2022	2021
	£	£
Office Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment		
Cost at 1 January	106,975	106,975
Additions	3,148	-
Disposals	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
As at 31 December	<u>110,123</u>	<u>106,975</u>
Depreciation at 1 January	(98,072)	(87,409)
Charge for the year	(10,245)	(10,663)
Disposals	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Depreciation at 31 December	<u>(108,317)</u>	<u>(98,072)</u>
Net book value at 31 December	<u>1,806</u>	<u>8,903</u>

10. Investments

	2022	2021
	£	£
Market value at 1 January	760,232	-
Additions	-	748,446
Disposal proceeds	-	-
Realised gains/(losses)	-	-
Unrealised gains/(losses)	<u>(58,204)</u>	<u>11,786</u>
Market value at 31 December	702,028	760,232
Cash with brokers	<u>1,314,236</u>	<u>1,311,257</u>
Total investments at 31 December	<u>2,016,264</u>	<u>2,071,489</u>
Investments at cost 31 December	<u>748,446</u>	<u>748,446</u>

Investments with a market value in excess of 10% of the portfolio were:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Barclays Property Income Trust for Charities	324,485	352,044
Newton SRI Fund for Charities	<u>377,543</u>	<u>408,188</u>
Total	<u>702,028</u>	<u>760,232</u>

We continued to hold investments in Barclays Charity Fund and Newton SRI Fund for Charities and retained cash deposits with Flagstone.

11. Debtors

	2022	2021
	£	£
Prepayments	24,069	42,533
Legacies receivable	17,600	7,000
Gift Aid	76,703	123,733
Other accrued income	-	-
Other debtors	<u>120</u>	<u>598</u>
	<u>118,492</u>	<u>173,864</u>

Prepayments are usually primarily event venue costs such as for our Annual Convention, plus rent.

12. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Accruals	16,670	14,408
Taxes: Payroll taxes	45,342	31,974
VAT	7,933	20,088
Deferred income	18,792	7,956
Holiday accrual	<u>15,072</u>	<u>9,323</u>
	<u>103,809</u>	<u>83,749</u>

Deferred income usually relates to event ticket sales. All deferred income is recognised in the following financial year.

13. a) General reserves

	2022		
	Revaluation Reserve	Accumulated Income	Total
	£	£	£
Balance at 1 January 2022	-	2,528,650	2,528,650
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	-	(106,881)	(106,881)
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	-	(58,204)	(58,204)
Transfer on realisation	-	-	-
Transfer from designated funds	-	<u>400,000</u>	<u>400,000</u>
Balance at 31 December 2022	-	<u>2,763,565</u>	<u>2,763,565</u>

	2021		
	Revaluation Reserve	Accumulated Income	Total
	£	£	£
Balance at 1 January 2021	-	2,138,130	2,138,130
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	-	388,734	388,734
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	-	11,786	11,786
Transfer on realisation	-	-	-
Transfer to designated funds	-	<u>(10,000)</u>	<u>(10,000)</u>
Balance at 31 December 2021	-	<u>2,528,650</u>	<u>2,528,650</u>

b) Designated Reserves

	Balance at 1 January 2022	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Building fund	400,000			(400,000)	-
Music (the Humanist choirs)	-	785	(785)	-	-
	<u>400,000</u>	<u>785</u>	<u>(785)</u>	<u>(400,000)</u>	<u>-</u>

	Balance at 1 January 2021	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Building fund	390,000	-	-	10,000	400,000
Music (the Humanist choirs)	4,946	-	(4,946)	-	-
	<u>394,946</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(4,946)</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>400,000</u>

14. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 January 2022	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Accord	-	3,466	(3,466)	-	-
Assisted Dying	49,667	81,797	(43,032)	-	88,432
Campaign Against Faith Schools	39,505	48,651	(63,791)	-	24,365
Ceremonies	-	487	(487)	-	-
Defence Humanists	544	252	(5)	-	791
Education	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Faith to Faithless	-	10,937	(10,937)	-	-
LGBT Humanists	8,369	782	(1,225)	-	7,926
Local groups	6,716	3,263	(2,558)	-	7,421
Music (the Humanist choirs)	13,822	7,578	(9,511)	-	11,889
Northern Ireland development	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-
Pastoral Support	-	15,154	(15,154)	-	-
Public Affairs	-	2,540	(2,540)	-	-
	<u>118,623</u>	<u>182,907</u>	<u>(160,706)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>140,824</u>

	Balance at 1 January 2021	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
<i>Accord</i>	-	21,751	(21,751)	-	-
<i>Assisted Dying</i>	53,811	34,159	(38,303)	-	49,667
<i>Campaign Against Faith Schools</i>	35,489	65,612	(43,984)	(17,612)	39,505
<i>Ceremonies</i>	-	468	(468)	-	-
<i>Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme</i>	-	14,320	(14,320)	-	-
<i>Defence Humanists</i>	482	84	(22)	-	544
<i>Education</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Faith to Faithless</i>	3,690	1,475	(5,165)	-	-
<i>LGBT Humanists</i>	8,381	991	(1,003)	-	8,369
<i>Local groups</i>	6,898	801	(983)	-	6,716
<i>Music (the Humanist choirs)</i>	6,307	7,946	(431)	-	13,822
<i>Northern Ireland development</i>	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-
<i>Pastoral Support</i>	14,017	140	(14,157)	-	-
<i>Public Affairs</i>	-	2,722	(20,334)	17,612	-
	<u>129,074</u>	<u>156,469</u>	<u>(166,920)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>118,623</u>

To better reflect the costs of staff posts funded by restricted donations, we have included overheads in the expenditure from 2022 (Assisted Dying & Campaign Against Faith Schools rows). Expenditure on the Campaign Against Faith Schools has also increased due to more staff working in this area.

Accord

Donations to cover the payroll costs of one member of Humanists UK staff to work for the Accord Coalition. This fund closed during 2022.

Assisted Dying

This fund was created in 2018 to manage donations to cover the payroll costs of one member of Humanists UK staff to work on the Assisted Dying campaign with the My Death, My Decision coalition. The fund also includes donations towards assisted dying legal cases.

Campaign Against Faith Schools

Campaign against faith schools appeal funds are restricted to Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work relating to 'faith' schools and related education campaigns. Funds raised by appeal in excess of the target sought are restricted to the public affairs fund, and are disclosed as a transfer above.

Ceremonies

This fund results from donations given to Humanists UK specifically for ceremonies work.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

This fund was created in 2020 to reflect grant income relating to staff who were on furlough during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Defence Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by the Defence Humanists, which joined as a new section in 2011.

Education

This fund results from legacies and donations given to support Humanists UK's work in promoting the understanding of Humanism in the education sphere. This includes efforts to place a free copy of the *What is Humanism? How Do You Live Without a God? And Other Big Questions for Kids* in every primary school in Britain.

Faith to Faithless

This fund was created in 2015 to manage income and expenditure in support of our Faith to Faithless programme, which helps people who are leaving religions. This is part of our Humanist Care work.

LGBT Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by GALHA (now LGBT Humanists) which joined Humanists UK as a section in 2012.

Local groups

This fund is for activities relating to the development of local humanist groups, including branches.

Music

This fund was initiated in 2010 by a donation from Alec Reed to fund a composer for two years and to establish the Humanists UK choirs on a secure footing. Current income derives directly from the activities of the choirs.

Northern Ireland Development

This fund was created in 2017 to support the development of Humanists UK's work in Northern Ireland.

Pastoral Support

This fund was created in 2012 to collect donations supporting our new initiative directed towards providing pastoral support to non-religious people in prison or in hospital. This is part of our Humanist Care work.

Public Affairs

This fund results from legacies and donations given to support Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work.

15. Operating leases

At 31 December 2022 the Company had the following commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings		Other	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Falling due within one year	10,845	97,608	8,955	8,955
Falling due between one and five years	-	10,845	3,413	12,368
Falling due later than five years	-	-	-	-
	<u>10,845</u>	<u>108,453</u>	<u>12,368</u>	<u>21,323</u>

The commitment in respect of land and buildings reflects the lease on the Association's premises which ends on 10 February 2023. We have not set a provision for any dilapidation costs associated with the end of this lease as we intend to renew the lease. Since the year end a new three-year lease has been agreed on a similar basis to previously, with rent being £92,000 per annum.

16. Taxation

Humanists UK is a registered charity and is potentially exempt from tax in respect of income and capital gains received within the categories covered by Part II of the Corporation Taxes Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are exclusively applied to charitable purposes.

17. Board members' remuneration and expenses

Ewan Main, a Celebrant was paid £203 in fees & expenses as part of the celebrants training programme. Aside from Ewan Main, no remuneration, directly or indirectly, out of the funds of the charity was paid or is payable for the year to any Board member or to any person known to be connected with any of them.

Board members were reimbursed a total of £5,145 (2021: £229) for travel expenses to attend meetings in connection with their duties. Expenses not reported in Note 18 normally include travel to various events, including public lectures and fundraising events. 2022 was unusually high due to a return to in-person meetings, plus travel costs associated with the AGM which was held in Belfast.

18. Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at 31 December 2022 (2021: nil).

19. Pension commitments

The charity contributed to individual defined contribution pension schemes for several employees. The assets of the schemes are held separately from those of the charity in independently administered funds. Total employer's contributions paid in the year were £92,839 (2021: £61,996), the increase being partly due to a change of policy that increased the employer contribution rate.

20. Net assets

	2022		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	2,018,070	745,494	2,763,564
Restricted funds	-	140,824	140,824
	<u>2,018,070</u>	<u>886,318</u>	<u>2,904,388</u>

	2021		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	2,080,392	848,258	2,928,650
Restricted funds	-	118,623	118,623
	<u>2,080,392</u>	<u>966,881</u>	<u>3,047,273</u>

21. Reversionary interest

Humanists UK has been bequeathed a reversionary interest in a trust established under the terms of the Will of Christine Cotton, who died on 24 January 2000. The trust assets comprise a property occupied by the Life Tenant, investments and bank accounts. The value of the investments as at 31 May 2021 (last update available) was £44,911 (5 April 2020: £44,369). The trustees have indicated to Humanists UK that the property (bought in 2002 for £85,000) had a value in 2020 of between £145,000 and £158,000 by comparison with similar properties in the locality.

Because Humanists UK cannot predict when it will become entitled to the receipt of this legacy, no accrued income has been reflected in the accounts.

22. Related party transactions

Board members are not remunerated but are able to recover out of pocket expenses for attendance at Board meetings, the total amount reimbursed being disclosed in Note 17.

The Chief Executive of Humanists UK is also a Director and Trustee of Humanists International and their President. The Association paid an annual subscription to Humanists International of £29,162 (2021: £25,275).

The Education Campaigns Manager of Humanists UK (Robert Cann) is a member of the Executive of the Accord Coalition. The Accord Coalition used desk space and office facilities at Humanists UK's premises for no charge until February 2022.

The Wales Coordinator is a Director and Trustee of the Religious Education Council, of which Humanists UK is a member and paid £900 in membership fees (2021: £900).

23. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2022	2021
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period	(142,885)	385,122
Depreciation charges	10,245	10,663
(Gains)/losses on investments	58,204	(11,786)
Dividends and interest from investments	(8,432)	(8,536)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	55,372	(65,768)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	<u>20,060</u>	<u>(20,879)</u>
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operative activities	<u>(7,436)</u>	<u>288,816</u>

24. Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	871,635	876,766
Cash at brokers	<u>1,314,236</u>	<u>1,311,257</u>
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>2,185,871</u>	<u>2,188,023</u>

25. Statutory information

The British Humanist Association, operating as Humanists UK, is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England. The Association's registered number and registered office address can be found on the Legal and Administrative page of this Annual Report.

Accounts

British Humanist Association, operating as:



ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 December 2021

Company Number: 00228781

Charity Number: 285987

Humanists UK

Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2021

The Directors present their annual report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2021 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

Legal and Administrative Details

Status	The British Humanist Association (Humanists UK) originated as the Union of Ethical Societies in 1896, was incorporated as the Ethical Union in 1928 and became the British Humanist Association in 1967. Its working name became Humanists UK in 2017. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14 March 1928. Its governing instrument is its Articles of Association, adopted on 23 July 2011.			
	Company number:	00228781	Charity number:	285987
Registered office	39 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8BB			
Honorary officers	Chair:		Tamar Ghosh	
	Vice Chair:		Ann O’Connell	
	Treasurer:		John Adams	
Other Directors	Tom Copley (to 13 July 2021)		David Pollock (to 10 November 2021)	
	Blaise Egan (to 24 June 2021)		Sophy Robinson (from 27 June 2021)	
	Iain Deboys		Jeremy Rodell	

	Ruth Kaufman	Imtiaz Shams
	Ewan Main	Emma Shepherd
	Neil McKain	Hamza bin Walayat
	Stephanie Niven	Amy Walden (to 24 June 2021)
President	Professor Alice Roberts	
Principal staff	Chief Executive:	Andrew Copson
	Director of Public Affairs & Policy:	Richy Thompson
	Director of Communications & Development:	Liam Whitton
	Director of Community Services:	Edward Prout (to 31 August 2021)
	Director of IT:	Andrew West
	Director of Operations:	Catriona McLellan
	Director of Understanding Humanism:	Luke Donnellan
	Director of Ceremonies:	Deborah Hooper (from 25 January 2021)
	Head of Humanist Care:	Clare Elcombe Webber (from 12 April 2021)
		Jessica Grace (to 16 February 2021)
Head of People	Vicky Jones (from 6 September 2021)	
Auditors	Knox Cropper LLP, Chartered Accountants 65 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3A 2AD	
Bankers	The Co-operative Bank plc 118-120 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 3BA	
Investment Managers	Barclays Wealth 23 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP14 1AQ	

	Flagstone Investment Management, 1st Floor, Clareville House, 26-27 Oxendon Street, London, SW1Y 4EL BNY Mellon Fund Managers Ltd, PO Box 336, Darlington, DL1 9RF
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Mission

By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and we work with them for a better society.

Charitable Objects

Humanist UK's Objects are: 'The advancement of Humanism, namely a non-religious ethical life stance, the essential elements of which are a commitment to human wellbeing and a reliance on reason, experience and a naturalistic view of the world; the advancement of education and in particular the study of and the dissemination of knowledge about Humanism and about the arts and science as they relate to Humanism; the promotion of equality and non-discrimination and the protection of human rights as defined in international instruments to which the United Kingdom is party, in each case in particular as relates to religion and belief; the promotion of understanding between people holding religious and non-religious beliefs so as to advance harmonious cooperation in society.'

Structure, Governance and Management

Organisational structure

The Trustees meet regularly during the year and at the beginning of each meeting they are requested to declare any conflicts of interest. These are detailed in notes 18 and 23 of the financial statements.

The Trustees review their performance and skills annually and new trustees are recruited to meet any needs or gaps identified.

The day to day management of the Association is delegated to its key management personnel as detailed in note 9 to the financial statements. Remuneration of the Chief Executive is set by the Trustees. Remuneration of other key management personnel is delegated to the Chief Executive.

Method used to recruit and appoint new Trustees

Trustees are recruited by election or by appointment, as set out in the Byelaws. Co-options until the next election can be made to fill vacancies arising among the elected trustees.

Induction and training of new trustees

New trustees are provided with a Trustee Handbook which contains information about their role and responsibilities as recommended by the Charity Commission. This includes: the trustee role description and personal specification relevant to the role, the Association's confidentiality policy and the eligibility requirements for becoming a trustee, and a Code of Conduct. They are also supplied with a copy of the Articles of Association. Induction meetings covering the background to current matters take place with the Vice-Chair, the Chief Executive and key members of the staff team. Training on matters relevant to the role and responsibilities of trustees is encouraged and the Board subscribes to literature pertinent to good governance.

Public benefit

The trustees have satisfied themselves that Humanist UK's activities are compliant with law and guidance for charities on public benefit. The trustees (who are also Directors of the company for the purpose of company law) confirm that when deciding on the activities of the charity they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

The five principal areas of work (which overlap and reinforce each other) are:

- Education of the public about Humanism, providing a moral framework for those who do not accept any religion. We seek to ensure that everyone has access to information about humanist approaches to ethical issues and about the humanist tradition. We deliver this education through our website, public lectures, and teaching materials for use in schools, and in many other ways;
- The provision of non-religious or humanist celebrants, so helping to meet a growing demand from a larger section of the public than we can currently assist for baby-naming, marriage and (especially) funeral ceremonies that accord with their own beliefs. Our aim is that all those who want a humanist ceremony should have access to one. The activity (like the other four principal areas of work) represents a net cost to the Association but we are hopeful that it will in due course cover its costs;
- The provision of humanist pastoral care to the non-religious in settings where religious people have the support of chaplains, for example in prisons and healthcare;
- Seeking to protect the human rights of humanists and other non-religious people and to combat the discrimination and disadvantages they encounter. We do this by working for compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, especially insofar as it forbids discrimination by public authorities on grounds of religion or belief, and by making representations to Government and others, including sometimes addressing the need for changes in the law, and by promoting a secular state.

- Supporting local humanist groups and the positive contribution of humanists to building a peaceful, plural society.

While the principal beneficiaries of the Association's work are humanists and other people who have non-religious beliefs, the trustees consider that the whole public benefits from our promotion of human rights and non-discrimination and from the wide range of information and educational material we offer. Our website is available to all and (sometimes subject to a small admission fee) so are our lectures.

Report on progress towards our Five Outcomes

2021 saw the Board of Trustees agree a new Humanists UK strategy, drawn from a deep analysis of our external environment, strengths and weaknesses, polling data, and a mapping exercise of all the varied work we are already doing on many fronts to create a better society. Our new strategy has reconceptualised the ways in which we promote awareness of humanism; the ways we support people to lead happier lives; and has helped us to create a framework which has helped us focus resources on campaigns based on an appraisal of their social importance and their potential for success.

We report on our work across the year below under the aims of our new strategy, whose overall mission statement reads,

‘By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and we work with them for a better society’.

1. More people knowing what humanism is and more non-religious people with humanist beliefs and values recognising themselves as humanists

Our work to promote people knowing what humanism is continued across formal educational settings, public events, books, and online content. As it was the year of our 125th anniversary, one of the major goals of our education work was also to research the rich history of humanism in the UK through our project, Humanist Heritage. We published the results on our own websites and in online encyclopaedias and publicised it using social media.

Humanist Heritage

We debuted our new *Humanist Heritage* website ahead of a special 125th Humanists UK anniversary event on 30 April, compiling dozens of biographies and articles covering the people, places, movements, objects, and stories of the humanist movement in Britain. The event featured video messages of support from the leaders of Labour, the Lib Dems, the SNP, and the Green Party of England and Wales, as well as a letter from a minister from the Department for Housing, Communities, and Local Government, all congratulating us on our proud history of social action and campaigning achievement. The online event itself, viewed live by 650 people, was entitled *Conscience in action: how humanist activists shaped society*, acted as an introduction to the new *Humanist Heritage* resource, and featured contributions on our history from project coordinator Madeleine Goodall, Chief Executive Andrew Copson, longtime activist David Pollock, and abortion law reform campaigner Diane Munday. We held a companion event at the tail end of the year, on *Education not indoctrination: 125 years advancing children's rights*, focusing on our longstanding work for balanced teaching about religion and belief in schools.

Our Humanist Heritage Coordinator went on the road, at least virtually, to promote engagement with *Humanist Heritage* through a series of specialist talks around the UK. Audiences included our own branches and partner groups (in Colchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Chester, Chichester, Brighton, the Isle of Wight, South West London, North Yorkshire, Reading, and Farnham), Humanists UK sections such as LGBT Humanists, our

training-oriented Humanists Professionals Conference, as well as the Vernon Lee Society, the National Association of Teachers of RE, National Secular Society, the Ministry of Justice, the London Knowledge Quarter, and others. These were all deeply fertile meetings which often produced new findings, including obscure records from local collections, such as those of the 'Ipswich Heretics'. Our extensive research on Northern Ireland was unveiled at our *Five Years of Northern Ireland Humanists* anniversary event, which featured humanist activity starting in Belfast in 1896.. Our annual Holyoake Lecture, which featured Dr Laura Schwartz lecturing on Victorian 'Infidel feminism,' also tied in with our heritage theme. A promotional article on the 'forgotten founders' of the humanist movement was published in the *New Humanist*. We also placed a display advertisement in the *Guardian*.

We also developed a series of detailed walking tours with the app GoJauntly. The first of these explored the deep humanist histories in Bloomsbury and Manchester. We also encouraged supporters and affiliated humanist groups to use the interactive map on the *Humanist Heritage* website to design their own tours. The fledgling and increasingly international Humanists of Wikipedia group brought together digital historians for edit-a-thon sessions covering the history of the birth control movement, and saw sustained engagement with both Wikimedia UK and the British Library.

The *Humanist Heritage* website itself saw significant use (40,000 page hits from 14,000 users), with the majority of its traffic coming directly from Google search queries. As well as profiling important known figures from humanist history, its content also shines a light on figures whose humanism is less widely reported (such as our former President, later Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald; the scientist Albert Einstein; and codebreaker Alan Turing). It also features biographies of groups and figures, mainly women, whose significant achievements have gone unreported, such as our first President, suffragist Elizabeth Swann; war correspondent Florence Dixie; educationist Julia Huxley; and our inaugural Secretary, the feminist writer Zona Vallance. The work has fallen not only to staff but also to a core group of writing, research, and proofreading volunteers. The website has already proven itself popular with academic historians, with several volunteering as contributors to the site. It has also brought about deeper links with the University of Gothenburg and Queen Mary University, London, with whom we agreed to co-organise an international conference on humanist heritage in 2022. The website also serves as the basis for a new suite of resources for schools on humanist history.

Events and videos

One of the ways we continued to advance understanding of humanism was through our public events, with recorded lectures and other videos on YouTube drawing 617,000 views (736,000 in 2020).

Our best-attended events continued to be our annual lecture and medals series. Our Darwin Day Lecture saw 3,100 people hear from medallist Dr Oliver Scott Curry on 'Morality explained: the new science of right and wrong', chaired by our President, Professor Alice Roberts. Our Rosalind Franklin Medallist was Oxford/Astrazeneca vaccine developer Professor Sarah Gilbert, who spoke to an audience of 1,800 on 'Racing against the virus', chaired by Samira Ahmed. Our Voltaire Medallist was Professor Nichola Raihani, who drew 1,350 people to her lecture on 'The social instinct', chaired by Alice Roberts. And our Holyoake Lecture, which is normally given in

Manchester on political thought, saw 500 people tune in to medallist Dr Laura Schwartz discuss 'Infidel feminism', chaired by our Chief Executive. For the first time, we also organised our Annual Convention as an online event, which saw 620 households buy tickets for talks from author Sathnam Sanghera; astrophysicists Dr Stephen Smartt and Liv Boeree; our President, Professor Alice Roberts; our Vice President, Professor Jim Al-Khalili; and historians of the humanist movement Professor Callum Brown, Professor David Nash, and Dr Charlie Lynch.

The shift in focus from physical events to online events, necessitated by public health guidelines, presented the opportunity to invest in a greater number of accessible online events outside our named annual lectures. These included events on freedom of religion or belief, with a panel of experts; on the science behind vaccines; on the nature of war, with Professor AC Grayling; on mental health and humanism, from our Young Humanists section; on our 125th anniversary and Humanist Heritage (see above); and on humanist attitudes to the climate crisis, among other topics. We also developed a new format of *In Conversation With...* online events, featuring our Chief Executive in unscripted conversations with activists, authors, and experts on varied topics of interest to them.

Social media and website

We continued to enjoy a substantial social media presence, which we used to promote our news and activities and as a channel for advancing awareness of humanism to a (mainly) non-religious audience. We saw consistent growth across social media channels. Our two largest channels were our Facebook page, which ended the year with 235,000 followers (231,000 in 2020), and our Twitter account, where we grew to 109,000 followers (101,000 in 2020). Our tweets made over 55.5 million impressions (33.7 million in 2020) and our primary Facebook page saw 9.7 million engage with our content (5.4 million in 2020).

We continued to make greater use of video content across the year, including through our October social media campaign, 'That's Humanism!', a reprise of our 2014 social media campaign of the same name. The campaign featured newly animated videos narrated by our patron Stephen Fry on humanist approaches to topics such as 'What should we think of death?', 'What makes something right or wrong?' and 'How should I be happy?' The new campaign videos were viewed a quarter of a million times over the fortnight, and the campaign brought 25,000 direct hits to the campaign landing page, which directed onward traffic to our 'How humanist are you?' educational quiz. Our social media channels were also the main vehicles for a variety of short information campaigns promoting humanist views and priorities. These included a campaign around filling in the census (reaching 12 million people online) and messaging around humanist attitudes to vaccinations, encouraging vaccine uptake.

18,500 people took the 'How humanist are you?' quiz on the Humanists UK website (same as 2020), which we've found to be one of our simplest and most effective tools for introducing people to humanism as the name given to a set of attitudes towards existential and moral questions. Over 9,400 people visited the page on our website on humanism (8,900 in 2020). As part of our new strategy, we will be developing a range of additional pages to further understanding of humanism for a substantially rewritten and revamped Humanists UK website launching in 2022.

For Dying Matters Awareness Week, we produced a new area of the website covering humanist attitudes towards death, entitled 'My mortality'. It featured 50 blogs from humanist celebrants, pastoral carers, and school speakers reflecting on dying. These received 1,400 views.

Podcast

Our *What I Believe* podcast series continued to interview famous humanists about their personal beliefs, values, and convictions, accruing 105,000 downloads from 100 countries (58,000 downloads in 2020). It aired a third and fourth series, featuring guests such as Jim Al-Khalili, Polly Toynbee and Richard Dawkins. As in 2020, the podcast continued to list in the top 1% of podcasts globally.

Understanding Humanism

School closures owing to the coronavirus pandemic continued into 2021, affecting the number of school visits our accredited school speakers were able to make. However, these visits rose gradually over the year as schools reopened in different parts of the UK. In total we spoke to 19,381 pupils (up from 18,800 in 2020, but down from 42,000 pre-pandemic in 2019), including 'remote visits' using teleconferencing. Teachers gave our school speakers an average overall rating of 4.9 out of 5 (4.8/5 in 2020).

High demand for our *Understanding Humanism* website was maintained, with 153,000 page views (150,000 in 2020), nearly 36,000 resource downloads (34,219 in 2020), and 12,100 video views (12,300 in 2020). Behind the scenes, work continued towards the launch of a redesigned *Understanding Humanism* website in 2022, and we recruited an Education Development Manager to assist us with the creation of even more resources for schools.

We also saw 150,250 page views (57,000 in 2020) on *Assemblies for All*, our site compiling assembly resources from leading charities and resource providers to support teachers to put on high-quality, inclusive assemblies on universal themes as an alternative to collective worship. The uptick in usage reflects the widespread return of in-person school assemblies, and represents nearly tenfold growth compared with 2019. Growth was organic, with 90% of traffic coming from Google (up from 70% in 2020).

We were also consulted on a number of new BBC Bitesize education resources about humanist ethics and community for publication in 2022, and on a new book for younger primary school children on living in a humanist family.

Teacher training

Buoyed by the success of our online teacher training in 2020, we expanded our offer of continued professional development (CPD) for teachers. We trained 330 teachers (274 in 2020) through our paid-for training model, which is helping us to improve the reach of the programme as a whole. We received an average rating from teachers over the year of 4.7 out of 5 (4.7/5 in 2020).

Training sessions were organised with National Association of Teachers of RE's *Strictly RE* conference, the University of Winchester, the Cumbria Standing Advisory Council on RE, Edge Hill University, the University of Reading, Leeds Trinity University, Sheffield

Hallam University, St Albans RE Teachers Together, Queen's University Belfast, Stranmillis University, Coleraine College, and the Council for Integrated Education Northern Ireland.

Courses

We also continued to offer our free online courses, *Introducing Humanism* and *Humanist Lives*, through the Open University FutureLearn platform, through an on-demand model which allows course-takers to go through the weekly course at their own pace at any time of year. The more philosophical and introductory *Introducing Humanism* course, presented by our patron Sandi Toksvig, was taken by 1,130, while the more practical and people-oriented *Humanist Lives* course, fronted by Professor Alice Roberts, was taken by 570. On average, users rated these courses 4.5/5 and 4.6/5, respectively.

SACREs and SACs

We continued to help local authorities to improve teaching about humanism in schools by supporting humanist representatives on Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education in England and Standing Advisory Councils on Religion, Values, and Ethics in Wales (known as SACREs in England and SACs in Wales). We ended the year with 126 appointed humanist representatives (94 in 2020) leaving 48 SACREs/SACs without a humanist representative.

We had particular success with improving humanist representation on SACs in Wales as a result of the introduction of its new Religion, Values, and Ethics curriculum, with representatives on 17 out of 22 Welsh SACs (up dramatically from 7 in 2019). Elsewhere, we supported reps in the South and East of England to form local support networks, and commissioned research into how inclusive locally agreed syllabuses were of humanism and non-religious worldviews. The review found significant progress had been made towards including humanism, but few curriculums acknowledged that teaching about humanism was a legal requirement (as shown by the *Fox* case in England in 2015, and explicitly stated by the Welsh Curriculum and Assessment Act 2021).

Books about humanism

Another way we promoted humanism was through promoting sales of two books: *The Little Book of Humanism* and, from September, *The Little Book of Humanist Weddings*, both co-authored by our Chief Executive Andrew Copson and President Alice Roberts. *The Little Book of Humanist Weddings* debuted in September as a follow-up to 2020's *Sunday Times*-bestselling *Little Book of Humanism*. It was written with help from Zena Birch and our network of accredited humanist celebrants to create the ultimate collection of humanist reflections on love, romance, relationships, difficulties, and getting married. *The Little Book of Humanism* saw 7,500 sales (17,600 in 2020) while *Humanist Weddings* sold 1,150 copies, with both books being common display items across major booksellers. All author royalties were donated to Humanists UK.

Separately, we published a book on humanist responses to emotional issues encountered by our volunteers delivering care in the community. In support of our pastoral care work, Jo Mutlow's book *Being There: Humanist responses in pastoral care* was sent to lead chaplains of 969 hospitals, 122 prisons, and 224 hospices, and sold over 300 additional copies through the Humanists UK website. We also partnered with

education publisher Routledge on a new undergraduate textbook on humanism, with significant contributions being made by humanist philosopher Richard Norman, our Chief Executive, and our Director of Understanding Humanism. We were also consulted on the Key Stage 1 resource *Belonging and Believing: My Humanist Family* by Gill Vaisey, part of a series of textbooks exploring different worldviews.

Dialogue

We continued to expand understanding of humanism among religious people through our dialogue programme. Our network of trained dialogue volunteers grew to 109 representatives (70 in 2020). Dialogue activities took many shapes and forms. These included a formal dialogue session between our section Young Humanists and Urban Muslimz; through a series of events around the theme of the book *Religion and Atheism: Beyond the Divide*, bringing together humanist philosophers and Anglican theologians; through a series of Catholic/humanist dialogue sessions; with the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum; by speaking at a Religions For Peace event on human rights; as part of the 'interfaith service' for London Climate Action Week; through the 'Lifting the Lid' online conference on funerals; at the Faith & Belief Forum 'Interfaith Fun Run'; in various forms around Inter Faith Week; with the Durham Interfaith Group; at St. Mary's University; as part of a Religion Media Centre panel discussion in Plymouth; through further panel discussions in Sheffield, Kirklees, and Canterbury; and by making numerous appearances on Voice of Islam radio, where our Dialogue Officer spoke on the humanist commitment to challenging anti-Muslim prejudice and hate.

2. More non-religious people living happier, more confident, and more ethical lives

The pandemic continued to have a marked impact on our numbers of ceremonies, pastoral support visits, and the peer support we offer for 'apostates' through our Faith to Faithless programme.

Our network of trained and accredited humanist celebrants, Humanist Ceremonies, has yet to see a full return to pre-pandemic levels of activity in England and Wales, owing to changed plans around lockdowns and continuing pressures on the funeral industry. In all we conducted 7,522 funerals (8,029 in 2020), 1,554 weddings (345 in 2020), and 310 namings (93 in 2020). Numbers were up significantly in Northern Ireland however, where our celebrants provide legal marriages. Northern Ireland celebrants conducted 575 weddings (up from 171 in 2020), 255 funerals (up from 131) and 30 namings (up from 2). Our network grew to 563 celebrants (519 in 2020), partly owing to larger growth in Northern Ireland. We continued to promote our ceremonies to non-religious people through paid print and online advertising. We also put increased emphasis on vow renewal ceremonies and pre-planned funeral ceremonies, with social media campaigns promoting conversations around these topics.

Things were also not yet back to normal for our Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN), whose members continued to struggle to resume their placements providing emotional support in many hospitals, hospices, and prisons. Their services were particularly affected in that they are more likely to be volunteers in comparison with religious chaplains, who are usually paid. With funding from the AB Charitable Trust, we employed a prison project coordinator to address the relatively greater barriers we have faced providing support in the prison sector. Outside of these areas, we also fed into a

Ministry of Defence scoping project around NRPSN supporting members of the Armed Forces. The network remained stable at 240 trained and accredited members.

Our apostate support programme, Faith to Faithless, delivered three safeguarding training webinars for 29 professionals whose roles all involved contact with apostates, including officials from the Ministry of Justice, British Transport Police, and a Local Authority Children's Social Care team. It also organised seven socials attended by over 60 apostate service users. In addition a new online service, peer support groups facilitated by specially trained pastoral carers, launched in June. These groups met virtually 13 times with 24 apostates attending regularly. In August, we organised the Apostasy Conference 2021, a major conference bringing together 16 expert speakers and an audience of 112 apostates, policymakers, and service providers, exploring in particular how systems and institutions shape the experiences of apostates. The programme also produced content for its YouTube channel, such as talking heads videos featuring apostates. We increased our investment in this programme of work with the recruitment of a full-time Apostate Support Service Manager. This has also seen us reorganise as a service provided by Faith to Faithless the asylum support to humanists at risk previously provided by our policy team. As part of this work, we gave online evidence at first tribunal hearings on asylum cases and supported over 33 ongoing cases from countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

Local organisers in Humanists UK partner groups and branches largely resumed in-person meetings and activities over the course of the year, usually alongside a programme of online gatherings and events. By year's end, we had five fully integrated Humanists UK branches (as in 2020), and were supporting another 47 affiliated partner groups (50 in 2020).

We also continued to support a number of special interest sections and networks. Humanist Climate Action's online launch event in May was attended by over 500 people and saw our President, Alice Roberts, joined by environmental campaigners Dr Anjana Khatwa, Professor Ben Garrod, Professor Sarah Bridle, and Mark Lynas for a discussion of the humanist aspects of climate change activism, creating a platform for humanist climate activists. It organised several events, including rallies at COP26 in Glasgow and London. Defence Humanists once again organised a film to mark Remembrance Day on 11 November. LGBT Humanists organised a number of well-attended events, including a Trans Day of Remembrance, and an event on the history of LGBT Humanists (coinciding with the 125th anniversary of Humanists UK), and supported the premiere of the biofilm *Hating Peter Tatchell*, about our patron. Young Humanists had a significant regular events programme, with events on vaccines, fake news, and dialogue with Muslims as part of its varied programme. The London Humanist Choir continued to meet, online and in-person, to record and perform music.

3. More people enjoying greater freedom of thought, of expression, and of choice over their own lives

Our campaigning aims

One of the biggest changes under our new 2025 strategy relates to our outward-facing campaigning and public policy work. What had been two aims under the old strategy became just one, outlining a broad mandate to improve human rights and equality for everyone, not just humanists, particularly in relation to the key humanist priorities of freedom of thought, expression, and choice.

What we seek as an organisation is for 'everyone to have the fullest possible freedom of choice in the shaping of their own lives, limited only by the rights and freedoms of others in a fair and equitable society and never by the pressures of religion, tradition, or outmoded law. This includes children, who should be actively prepared in schools for a life in society in which they can exercise this freedom and should, while still children, enjoy their human rights with increasing fullness in line with their growing maturity.' Our full strategy spells out our aspiration to 'influence public opinion, public policy, legislation, and case law to defend and advance: freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief; freedom of expression; and freedom of choice to the extent compatible with the rights and freedoms of others in a fair and equitable society.'

This refined basis for our policy work was accompanied by a much more targeted approach to how we expend our resources on active campaigns. As well as entailing a review of our policies, it also introduced a system for choosing which issues from our broad policy platform to prioritise over the strategic period. We have chosen six: legal recognition of humanist marriage across the UK and crown dependencies; to reduce the proportion of religious schools in the UK and of children subject to religious selection for school places; broad and balanced approaches to religion and worldviews in schools; legal assisted dying across the UK; abolition of the blasphemy law in Northern Ireland; and increased UK Government support for persecuted humanists abroad. These campaigns enjoy the benefit of a greater share of our resources and staff time as they are areas where the humanist voice has the biggest contribution to make and where our campaigning will have the biggest impact on socially important issues.

An adjunct to these six campaigns is our new concept of the 'watching brief'. This means maintaining our current status as policy experts across the full range of our selected policy issues which materially affect the lives of the non-religious, or the public at large, about which humanists for various reasons are especially concerned, and being ready to leap into action when needed in support of our goals. This reactive campaigning is a very busy plank of our public affairs and policy work. We remain alive to the knowledge that we may need to reorganise our campaigns in line with changing circumstances, such as fulfilling a campaign's aims, or a shift in the external environment.

This new approach became our working practice later in the year, with most work in 2021 conducted under our old approach. Below, we set out the breadth of that work, both proactive and reactive, organised by theme.

Freedom of thought

Freedom of thought is a foundational requirement of a free society, and advocacy of this fundamental right by humanists goes back many centuries in this country and in others. Our public policy platform endorses the idea of the secular state as the best means to achieve freedom, fairness, equal citizenship, and peace in a plural and cohesive society. We maintain that only by maintaining a fair separation between public institutions and institutions of religion or belief (including those of humanism) can the state fully respect and promote freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief for all citizens, up to the limits of the rights and freedoms of others in a fair society.

Accurate representation of the non-religious: Census Campaign

In March we launched a campaign in the run-up to the decennial census urging non-religious people to tick 'no religion' (England and Wales) or 'none' (Northern Ireland) in the national census, rather than a religious box that reflects their ethnic background, educational history, or other cultural affiliation. This is because the Census in England and Wales uses a leading question, 'What is your religion?', and in Northern Ireland, 'What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?' rather than the neutral question such as 'Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion? If so, which?' preferred by most pollsters. This leads to a significant undercounting of the non-religious in our national statistics. Over-inflated religious affiliation figures are often used to justify wholly disproportionate levels of public funding of religious groups in education settings and in healthcare, and generally to sideline the non-religious from consideration on questions of public policy.

Our campaign included a web portal, extensive social media advertising, video content, online events, press work, blogs covering various angles on why the census religion question matters, publicity from our patrons, local group mobilisation, and YouGov polling. We saw wide coverage across local and national TV, radio, and print. We estimate that between 8 and 12 million people viewed our online materials. In contrast to our 2011 campaign, which used extensive leafleting and billboard advertising, 2021's was digitally focused in light of the ongoing lockdown and changed media trends. A digital analysis showed that our tweets had wider reach than other census campaigns on the environment and sex/gender.

Balanced approaches to religions and worldviews: curriculums

One of the key planks for our campaigning for balanced approaches to religion and worldviews is our work promoting the inclusion of humanism in Religious Education curriculums. In England, we responded to Department for Education (DfE) guidance on RE lessons during the pandemic recovery period, which did not make clear that humanism should be taught on an equal footing with religious perspectives. We said we were minded to bring a judicial review against the guidance on the basis it was not 'objective, critical, and pluralistic', prompting them to make revisions. Separately, we met Ofsted officials following their research review in May of religious education, which concluded that high-quality RE must include teaching about a 'range of religious and non-religious ways of living'. Officials clarified that a curriculum that excludes humanism would not be 'cumulatively sufficient' in Ofsted's view.

In Wales, we worked to support the passage of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act, which replaced RE with 'Religion, Values, and Ethics' (RVE) lessons that are fully inclusive of humanism, with humanists explicitly permitted to join Standing Advisory Councils (SACs) and Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs), the council bodies that advise on local RE and set the syllabus. After the law was passed, we engaged extensively with the Welsh Government over the wording of guidance.

As reported under our first aim, the Welsh reform led to big improvements in our representation on SACs, with representatives placed on 17 out of 22 Welsh SACs (up dramatically from 7 in 2019). Where our representatives were refused placement on SACREs in England, we pursued legal remedies, underpinned by clear case law on the teaching of humanism in RE lessons. Local humanists we worked with sent pre-action

letters to Southampton Council, West Sussex Council, and Kent Council. This was covered in the *i* newspaper and on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme.

Balanced approaches to religions and worldviews: 'collective worship'

Another dimension of our campaign for a balanced approach to religions and worldviews in schools relates to the legal requirement for daily acts of 'broadly Christian' collective worship in schools, which we seek to end. This law is unpopular (many schools flout it) and the alternative allowed for in law provides only for a daily act of worship of a religious character that is not exclusively Christian, such as worship of another religion or 'multi-faith' worship. In the absence of inclusive assemblies, children from non-Christian families risk stigmatisation, and in any case are typically left with no educationally worthwhile or meaningful alternative activities, should their parents or guardians opt them out of religious assemblies.

In England, we pursued change through a backbench bill brought by All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG) Vice Chair Lorely Burt, the Education (Assemblies) Bill, which we worked with her to table and supported by lobbying. The Bill seeks to provide a meaningful alternative to worship for children who have been withdrawn: inclusive assemblies. The Bill received widespread media coverage, some of which was very misleading, but despite some pushback from the minister, it passed its third reading in the Lords uncontested. It had its first reading in the Commons, introduced by APPHG Co-Chair Crispin Blunt MP, in December.

In Wales, we initially pursued a possible amendment to the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill with help from supportive Members of the Senedd, but later decided against this strategy as the Welsh Government was whipping its MSs to vote down all backbench amendments. We met the Office of the Children's Commissioner on the matter, emphasising the clear recommendation from the United Nations that Wales repeal 'collective worship' laws. We shifted to building support in the Senedd for renewed action following the Welsh elections, and raised the issue again in evidence to the Senedd's Children, Young People, and Education Committee, which was consulting on its priorities for the new Senedd term. We also met the new Welsh Minister for Education, Jeremy Miles.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

We want all children to receive a full, factual, and age-appropriate education on sex and relationships to keep them happy, healthy, and safe. In Wales, where the subject is called Relationships and Sexuality Education, we supported the passage of new law for this with the Curriculum and Assessments (Wales) Act, and participated in the Welsh Government's RSE working group, helping draw up the RSE Code and statutory guidance for the new curriculum.

We raised concerns about the draft code's unanticipated, and rather large, faith-based carve-outs, which could have led to faith-based indoctrination of pupils, as well as radically undermining the intentions of the new Act. The statutory code had other glaring problems, too, such as making zero mention of LGBT people. We wrote to the Welsh Education Minister and lobbied Welsh Government officials on these matters and, as a result, the version of the code and guidance published in January 2022 explicitly says the subject must be taught in 'a neutral, factual way' and the code refers to 'including LGBTQ+ lives'.

We also worked with parents and journalists to bring public scrutiny to inappropriate RE and RSE resources around the country, so as to stimulate reforms. One, an inappropriate video resource called *The Good Samaritan*, was being used as a resource to teach RE to seven year olds despite violent and sexist imagery. Another saga involved a highly misogynistic Catholic RSE resource called *A Fertile Heart*, which was featured as an exclusive in the *i* in January and subsequently received wide media attention nationally, including from the BBC and a range of national newspapers. We also worked with local councillors, as well as MPs Jess Phillips and Stella Creasy, on the issue, with Phillips tabling parliamentary questions. Although they were initially unwilling to respond to our concerns, we lodged an official complaint with the DfE, Welsh Government, and Ofsted, because the resource was being used by all the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cardiff which oversees schools both in Wales and in the English border regions. Our complaints led to Herefordshire Council issuing a statement condemning it. The Archdiocese however doubled down, saying it 'authentically reflects Catholic teaching'. The episode informed the passage of the Curriculum Bill in Wales, where MSs defeated an amendment that would have permitted such resources to remain in use. A snap Ofsted inspection led to one high school agreeing to 'change the language' used in the resource because of 'concerns about how the roles and responsibilities of men and women within relationships were described.' In June, after five months of campaigning by us, the English Minister for Schools Nick Gibb MP changed tack and said that the Government had 'serious concerns' about *A Fertile Heart*, that it was likely not be compliant with statutory guidance, and that he would communicate this directly to the Archdiocese of Cardiff.

Religious state schools

Without doubt the most serious remaining area of religious privilege in our overwhelmingly secular society is the built-in bias in the law in favour of religious schools. This persists despite their unpopularity with the public, shown in repeated polls, and their need for specific exemptions from various aspects of equality and human rights law. Nor are these privileges entirely a matter of outdated laws: many are embodied in relatively recent deals that successive governments have done with the churches, especially the Church of England which has openly acknowledged the importance of its schools to its future fortunes.

Our aspiration is for every state-funded school to be open to pupils and families of every religion or belief, and to teach a broad and balanced curriculum with an inclusive, non-sectarian school ethos. One dimension of this work means challenging the process of green-lighting new faith schools, which all have a discriminatory ethos and the majority of which have discriminatory admissions policies. We supported groups of parents and councillors in areas across the UK on decisions to approve new faith schools where there was little local demand for them.

This was the case in Kingston upon Thames, where a statutory consultation was missed, and an erroneous decision was made to allow the Southwark Diocesan School Board to run its own consultation and report back to the council. Despite a strong local campaign, council leaders made a frank statement that due to funding rules which favour the creation of new faith schools, local people faced the choice between a new faith school or no new school, leading many councillors to vote reluctantly to approve the school. We also supported residents in a new residential area which had a religiously selective Catholic school approved despite clear local opposition at consultation stage;

Peterborough Council said that the decision could not be overturned, and the local Catholic Church described the residents as 'anti-Catholic'. This statement was retracted after the residents complained and the row was covered in Catholic news outlet, the *Tablet*. We also supported the launch of a grassroots campaign for inclusive schools in the North West called Fair Schools for Oldham. A final proposal for a Hindu school in Redbridge was rejected.

We had coverage in the education press in May following the release of an updated School Admissions Code, which retained provisions allowing faith schools to prioritise children from faith backgrounds over children who are or were in care but do not share the faith. In August we published our hard-hitting report *Careless or Uncaring? How faith schools turn away pupils who are or were in care*, the first research to look at this issue in depth. Through analysis of admissions policies, we found that 76% of Catholic secondaries and 100% of Jewish secondaries discriminate against children who were previously in care, compared with 1% of Church of England schools and 0% of other Christian, Hindu, or Sikh schools. Separately, several faith schools were found in breach of the School Admissions Code by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator following our complaints about unlawful admissions policies.

We provided a witness statement in a non-religious family's efforts to judicially review Somerset County Council's decision to move from a three-tiered education system (i.e. one that includes primary, middle, and secondary schools) to a two-tiered system (one that includes just primary and secondary schools) which involved amalgamating a middle school of no religious character into a Church of England primary school. This meant the proportion of faith-based places in the area would move from 75% to 100%, infringing their freedom of religion or belief. However, despite acknowledging that the change will disadvantage non-religious families, the Court upheld the decision. This overriding presumption in favour of faith schools remains extremely common, despite the wording of Government guidance having changed in recent years to make it clear that provision should meet the needs of the local community and denominational provision should be balanced accordingly.

We were disappointed when, in November, the States of Guernsey rejected a proposal to outlaw discrimination against teachers by religion in religious schools following a threat by the Catholic Church to close the schools it runs in the Bailiwick if made to comply with the law. (It previously made threats to pull out of legal marriages over same-sex marriage, but in the end never did so, and of course, many Catholic schools across Europe are already subject to similar laws.)

Unregistered (illegal) schools

Another facet of our work relates to unregistered (illegal) religious schools, which typically practise corporal punishment, do not comply with teacher training or health and safety requirements, and teach a curriculum composed entirely or almost entirely of rote scripture learning, often without even covering basics like maths or English. We met the DfE's unregistered schools team, Ofsted's team, and the Hackney Council safeguarding lead (since the highest concentration of such schools is in Hackney) to discuss advancing new legislation to shut them down. This was an issue we brought to public attention originally several years ago, with slow but steady progress since.

As well as working directly with government and public officials, we worked with MPs, peers, and parliamentary bodies on the issue. We briefed peers at several points in the year in relation to parliamentary debates on loopholes to home education laws which make it difficult to identify or shut down illegal schools (they allege they are merely providing supplementary education for home-educated pupils). We also fed into the Education Select Committee's inquiry on the matter. We supported peers who put pressure on the Government to commit to a register of home education in order to root out illegal schools. Similar calls were then made by the final report on child protection in religious organisations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, which recommended the Government 'change the definition of full-time education, and to bring any setting that is the pupil's primary place of education within the scope of the definition of a registered educational setting' and equip Ofsted with further powers to take action on illegal schools. Both of these recommendations are in line with our policy.

We also worked with whistleblowers and the media to make sure that politicians did not lose sight of the real human consequences of delay or deliberate inaction. In February, we revealed that illegal Charedi Jewish schools (yeshivas) in Hackney had been continuing to operate at capacity during the lockdown, using a loophole in the coronavirus legislation allowing children to attend school and out of school settings on the basis of being 'vulnerable'. This was supposedly because they were unable to use IT equipment at home and so, it was argued, could not be educated there. Since the Charedi community doesn't permit the use of IT equipment, all the pupils attending unregistered yeshivas fit the definition, even if the fact they couldn't be taught at home also demonstrates the claim that they are home-educated the rest of the time is patently false. In a separate investigative story, *Schools Week* highlighted in May how government inaction led to issues we flagged to the Charity Commission more than five years ago had not been acted on, namely that eight settings that the DfE suspects of operating illegally are also still operating as charities.

Public services: Broadcasting reform

Our policy calls for the BBC to give equal treatment to broadcasting about, by, and for humanists, on par with the funding, airtime, and due consideration it gives to religious groups. We responded to Ofcom's Public Service Media consultation in March to share our concerns about the BBC's failure to represent the non-religious throughout its programming despite its legal and charter obligations to do so. In April, we met Ofcom to discuss this further, and then separately met the BBC Commissioning Editor, whom we supplied with a list of humanist programme ideas and content.

We continued to advocate for the BBC to drop its longstanding ban on humanists and other non-religious people participating in its Radio 2 programme *Pause for Thought* and Radio 4's *Thought for the Day*, covering moral reflections, which are still reserved for religious people only. However, in Northern Ireland, BBC Radio Ulster invited our celebrants Sheena Bradley and Janni Knox to be regular humanist contributors to its *Thought for the Day*, marking a major advance. Humanists continued to feature as part of regional *Thought for the Day* slots across England, too, notably in Bristol, where our partner group is a regular contributor.

Public services: Support for 'apostates'

Our work in support of so-called 'apostates' leaving controlling religions brought to light

issues that engaged our public affairs team. We publicised a pioneering global study of the worldwide experiences of apostates, which found that they are more likely to experience assaults than any other group of non-religious people, that ex-Muslim apostates are significantly more likely to be physically and psychologically victimised than ex-Christian apostates, and that the perpetrators are almost exclusively close family members, which means that victims are unlikely to report the abuse to the police. The research was carried out by Young Humanists International committee member and our former Humanist Students President, Hari Parekh. Hari was also one of the speakers at our 2021 Apostasy Conference, which brought together a range of experts to discuss apostates' lived experiences and the barriers they face accessing support.

We welcomed new draft statutory guidance following the passing of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 on recognising and preventing domestic abuse. This guidance included a section specifically on spiritual abuse and honour-based violence which we had previously called for. We were disappointed not to see apostates named as a group that is particularly vulnerable to abuse, alongside others, despite the clear beneficial impact of doing so.

Right to asylum

We continued to support humanist asylum seekers, particularly from 13 countries where humanists face the death penalty and others where persecution of humanists is an acute problem, and we reflected this experience in continued engagement with the Home Office in relation to proposed immigration and asylum reforms.

We criticised the Home Office's proposed New Plan for Immigration as imposing unfair and undue barriers upon those seeking asylum in the UK after fleeing persecution in their countries of origin, including humanists who face the death penalty under blasphemy and apostasy laws, and for other changes which will disproportionately negatively affect non-religious asylum claimants who are systematically missing from consideration in international refugee regimes and from the UK's country-based guidance on persecution. We later expressed concerns about the Nationality and Borders Bill in response to an inquiry by the Joint Committee on Human Rights. The Bill's proposal to introduce a temporary protection order runs counter to the UK's obligations under the Refugee Convention 1951 and undermines the principle of non-refoulement, which will make the asylum process harder for the cohort of non-religious refugees that we have supported. We also responded to a call for evidence from the Women and Equalities Select Committee into equality and the UK asylum process, highlighting structural inequalities in the way that the Home Office interviews, assesses, and determines non-religious cases.

Freedom of choice

Freedom of choice is a cross-cutting priority in our policy work, intersecting closely with our work for greater freedom of thought and expression. It frequently underpins our request for equitable treatment for humanism and humanists in law, as with our campaign for legal recognition of humanist marriages. Freedom of choice also underpins our longstanding demands for equality and universal access to justice, and our commitments to human rights as a paramount legal and social endeavour. It is also embodied by the continued presence of racial justice, women's rights, children's rights, and LGBT rights as prominent themes in our public advocacy.

Legal recognition of humanist marriages

We want humanist couples across the UK to be able to marry in a legally binding ceremony with an accredited Humanists UK celebrant, just as religious couples can with a trained minister of religion, without having to take on the extra expense and barrier of a second ceremony in a register office. Couples can have legally recognised humanist marriages in this way in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, and Guernsey, but not in England, Wales, or the Isle of Man. The law in Guernsey, which we campaigned for, came into force mid-year, with the first humanist marriage happening in the summer.

As relates to England and Wales, we explored the possibility of advancing a technical appeal against the 2020 High Court judgement on humanist marriages (which agreed with all our arguments and none of the Government's, except that it stopped short of issuing a formal declaration of incompatibility, which the judge felt was unjustified given the Government's preference for avoiding 'piecemeal' reforms). The Government nevertheless embarked on a number of such piecemeal reforms this year, including new regulations to allow civil and religious marriages to take place outdoors, which attracted several urgent and written questions in both houses of Parliament on the way this undermines the objection to humanist marriages. We also engaged with the Law Commission's review on marriage law. Later in 2021, we employed a full-time Humanist Marriage Campaigner, reflecting increased resourcing for this campaign under our 2025 strategy.

We saw significant engagement from MPs and peers in every party on this issue, including from dozens of politicians at both the Conservative and Labour party conferences. Our members and particularly our celebrants wrote numerous times throughout the year to their MPs about the issue, many of whom asked parliamentary questions on their behalf. We supported the launch of a new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Weddings, chaired by Siobhan Baillie MP, with whom we worked on plans for a joint event with the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (to which we act as secretariat). The Shadow Justice Secretary and Shadow Marriage Minister reaffirmed to us Labour's firm support for humanist marriages. The Welsh Government also voiced its strong support for our desired reforms and wrote to the UK Government to ask them to bring about immediate legal recognition of humanist marriages (as marriage law is not devolved in Wales).

Elsewhere on this front, our Director of Public Affairs and Policy spoke at an event of the freedom of religion or belief-focused group Freedom Declared about the discriminatory treatment of humanist weddings under pandemic restrictions. We also addressed ongoing issues in Wales and Northern Ireland around private venue limitations, getting the problems resolved with officials in both cases.

Assisted dying

Another area where freedom of choice is lacking inspires our campaign for a compassionate assisted dying law. We want those with incurable or terminal conditions to have access to assistance to end their suffering subject to safeguards requiring a fixed, uncoerced, and genuine wish to do so made in sound mind. We frequently work closely with the Assisted Dying Coalition, which we previously helped to establish, and whose members share our policy. These organisations include My Death, My Decision (with whom we share a staff member), Humanist Society Scotland, Friends at the End (Scotland), End of Life Choices Jersey, and End of Life Ireland.

In February, our patron, the paralysed assisted dying campaigner Paul Lamb, wrote in the *British Medical Journal* criticising the Court of Appeal's ruling in his case, and to implore the Justice Secretary to launch an inquiry into assisted dying. In April, we released news that our patron, the acclaimed neurosurgeon Dr Henry Marsh, had terminal cancer and was making a plea for a public inquiry on the issue. This attracted blanket media coverage in the papers, radio, and television, as well as some American magazines such as the *Atlantic*, and was syndicated by the Press Association in 177 papers. Subsequently, the then-Health Secretary Matt Hancock MP confirmed he had written to the Office of National Statistics to ask for the data on people with terminal illnesses who had ended their lives.

In June, we were saddened by the deaths of two members who had prominently campaigned for the right to die through the courts: Noel Conway and Paul Lamb. We handled the media around Paul's death, and expressed our sadness over the circumstances of his death and his aspirations for a better law across TV, radio, and print media, including across 251 syndicated stories via the Press Association.

In July, the British Medical Association voted 149 to 145 to end its 15-year opposition to the right to die, endorsing a definition of assisted dying aligned with our policy position. Our Chief Executive and our patron Henry Marsh were both quoted extensively in the media in relation to the news. That same month, we published research outlining the global picture on assisted dying, showing an increasing global consensus in developed democracies in favour of allowing it.

Later in the year, Baroness Meacher won a second reading of her Assisted Dying Bill in the House of Lords, and we joined Dignity in Dying (whose policy is narrower than ours) and our fellow members of the Assisted Dying Coalition to rally in support of the Bill outside Parliament, where Henry Marsh and our Chief Executive gave speeches to the crowd on the humanist commitment to freedom of choice and the right to die. 14 humanist peers spoke in the debate, and the Bill ultimately passed its second reading.

In Jersey, we submitted evidence as part of the Citizens' Jury on Assisted Dying. We were delighted to see our evidence reflected in the Jury's recommendations to the States Assembly, in line with our policy, after 78% of jurors voted to support the proposal. After a majority of Jersey representatives in the States Assembly voted to approve the proposal by 36 to 10, the island will now progress to consulting on legislation, potentially lining up Jersey to become the first British territory to legalise the right to die. Jersey Deputy Louise Doublet publicly thanked Humanists UK and Channel Islands Humanists in the chamber for our work on the issue.

Children's rights

Also in March, we celebrated the news that the Scottish Parliament had passed a Bill to fully incorporate the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law. However, the constitutionality of the Act was successfully challenged by the UK Government on the basis that it exceeded limits on Scotland's devolved powers.

During the passage of the Welsh Curriculum Act in March, the Senedd voted in favour of an amendment placing a duty on schools to promote knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, further

strengthening the rights-based approach to education in Wales. Later that month, we responded to a consultation on the new Children's Rights Scheme – guidance designed to enable ministers and officials to pay due regard to children's rights in their policy-making. Although we very much agree with the rationale for the guidance, our response highlighted the fact that it does not require ministers and officials to pay due regard to the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which would, amongst other things, mean that they would have to take steps to remove the requirement for schools to conduct collective worship and to fully incorporate the UNCRC into law.

In February, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child issued its List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR), a document designed to press the governments of the UK on the progress they have made towards compliance with the UNCRC. The list included a request for each government to 'describe the measures taken to repeal legal provisions for compulsory attendance at collective worship in publicly funded schools and ensure that children can independently exercise the right to withdraw from religious observance at school.' This follows on from our getting the same matter raised in the English, Welsh, and Northern Ireland civil society reports. This suggests that the lack of action in this area from all the governments in the UK will feature in the next set of Concluding Observations.

LGBT rights

The rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) people continued to be a recurring theme for us, in policy work and in public advocacy. Much of our education work on Relationships and Sex Education and discrimination against teachers in schools touched on the need for LGBT-inclusive subject content and policies, and we spoke out regularly against homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic hatred and discrimination through our social media channels.

We were one of the earliest organisations in the UK, if not the earliest, to call for an end to so-called 'conversion therapy' (a fraudulent, pseudoscientific 'therapy' that amounts to torture of LGBT people according to the false premise that it can change their sexuality or gender identity). Our volunteer-led section, LGBT Humanists, has been advocating a ban on the practice since at least the 1990s. Since 2018, we and LGBT Humanists have been doing what we can to hold successive administrations to the promise made by Theresa May's Government that there will be a full legislative ban across medical, non-medical, and religious settings.

In May, the UK Government announced that it would bring forward legislation to ban the practice in England within the year following a public consultation. APPHG members Angela Eagle and Crispin Blunt condemned comments made by the Prime Minister that the ban would contain a loophole allowing these practices to still occur when it could be said to be 'appropriate pastoral support (including prayer) in churches and other religious settings in the exploration of [an adult's] sexual orientation or gender identity.' We strongly spoke out about this on our social channels and in the media. In June, the Welsh Government committed to bringing forward legislation to ban conversion therapy.

In October, the Government launched its consultation on restricting conversion therapy, but its proposals fell far short of the full ban needed to prevent harm. In its proposed form, the ban would not adequately protect against conversion therapy in religious

settings, where the majority of such practices occur. We sent out a guide to respond to the consultation to LGBT Humanists members, as well as a large number of Humanists UK members and supporters, to help them contribute to the public consultation as individuals.

We also spoke out about conversion therapy using our platform at the 47th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, where at our invitation we made a joint statement with the (religious) Ozanne Foundation to assembled states.

Abortion rights

Women's freedom of choice, extending to their right to autonomy over their bodies and to make choices about their own sexual and reproductive health, continued as an important ongoing area for reactive campaigning work. In February, we called on both the UK and Welsh Governments to make permanent the pandemic-related regulations that allowed women to take at home the first as well as the second of the two pills needed to bring about early medical terminations of pregnancy, in line with evidence that showed this had dramatically improved abortion access for vulnerable women.

Our Channel Islands Humanists section, working with Jersey Deputy Louise Doublet, lobbied in support of ultimately successful legislation to abolish the requirement for a seven-day wait between medical consultation and access to abortion services. In Gibraltar, where we and the Gibraltar Secular Humanists supported the 'Yes' proposal in a referendum on abortion, Gibraltarians voted by 62% to approve decriminalisation. This referendum came about as a result of the UK Supreme Court ruling in 2018 regarding Northern Ireland, where we acted as First Interveners, and which established incompatibility between Northern Ireland's ban on abortion (and therefore Gibraltar's too) and the European Convention on Human Rights.

Access to justice

One of our busiest areas of reactive work came in response to UK Government plans, developed and widely leaked and speculated about over the course of the year, to reform the 1998 Human Rights Act and access to judicial review. We continued building a coalition of charities, trade unions, human rights bodies, and religion or belief groups, who signed up to our joint statement supporting the existing Human Rights Act as a proportionate and effective guarantor of individual freedoms and access to justice. This coalition grew to over 230 members, making it the largest ever coalition of its kind in the UK.

In March, the Independent Review of Administrative Law (IRAL) published its recommendations cautioning against radical reform of the judicial review process. In response, the Government dismissed the IRAL recommendations and chose to consult a second time on the reforms the Independent Review had rejected. These proposals include making some Government decisions immune from judicial oversight and scrutiny altogether. In response, we criticised proposals that would severely curtail judicial review and carve out important areas of decision-making from judicial scrutiny, which we said had 'alarming implications for the rule of law' and risked irrevocable damage to access to justice. The Government has nevertheless ignored widespread criticisms and pressed ahead with its subsequent Judicial Review and Courts Bill.

We defended the Human Rights Act in our response to the Government's consultation on their Independent Human Rights Act Review, praising the Act's contribution to a 'general culture of respect and support for rights among public authorities' and dealing with a multitude of technical points. We also responded to a call for evidence on the subject from the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR), highlighting the importance of the Act as a signature piece of legislation that enables ordinary citizens to hold the Government to account and the ways in which the Act supports the rights of humanists specifically, as it did when remedying the exclusion of humanism from the school curriculum (in 2015) and on humanist marriage (in Scotland in 2015 and Northern Ireland in 2017). We stated that without the Act, fundamental freedoms could be placed in jeopardy and UK citizens could become less able to enforce their rights. The JCHR's report to the Review reflected many of our points.

In June we coordinated a joint letter to the Prime Minister calling for the protection of the Human Rights Act, with Amnesty International UK, Rene Cassin – the Jewish voice for human rights, and Quakers in Britain. It was also signed by Humanist Society Scotland, the Bishop of Manchester, British Muslims for Secular Democracy, the Network of Sikh Organisations, Soka Gakkai International, the Movement for Reform Judaism, Liberal Judaism, the Quakers in Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Bishop of St Davids, and many more.

In December, the Government finally confirmed its proposed changes to the operation of the Human Rights Act, and we reacted by writing to our coalition members and our members about the far-reaching consequences these would have for humanists, who depend upon the courts having the power to interpret legislation in line with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) to establish equality of treatment with religious groups across a range of legislation including access to healthcare, marriage, and education. We also briefed members of the APPHG and voiced our concerns directly to the Justice Secretary, and to his Labour and Liberal Democrat counterparts.

Equality and non-discrimination laws

Channel Islands Humanists engaged with the legislative process of a new Discrimination Ordinance in Guernsey, which in line with our recommendations was updated to provide equal protection for the non-religious in law – a breakthrough. We were however disappointed that a proposal to end discrimination against teachers on grounds of religion was dropped after protests by the Catholic Church.

Public services: Pastoral care and chaplaincy

Finally under this heading, our policy team also worked to bolster the right of patients, workers, and visitors in hospitals, as well as prisoners, members of the armed forces, and students, lecturers, and teachers, to non-religious pastoral support through public institutions. One aspect of this work was routine monitoring of all adverts for pastoral support and chaplaincy positions in the NHS and prison service to guard against all-too-common, unlawful, religious discrimination practices. We also worked with the NHS on the drafting of new chaplaincy and pastoral care guidelines, and fed into a new Ministry of Defence review of its pastoral support provision for the non-religious. We celebrated a first in the hospital sector when our Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN) chair Lindsay van Dijk became head of the chaplaincy and pastoral care team at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which is the most senior paid role held by a humanist pastoral carer in the NHS to date.

Freedom of expression

Free expression is a frequent cross-cutting theme in our policy work, much of which can also be thought of or categorised as issues of freedom of thought and/or freedom of choice. Our policy work and campaigning here is increasingly focused on challenging both formal and *de facto* proscriptions on blasphemy and 'causing offence' in law, which history shows to have a significantly corrosive effect on both the quality of public discourse and on individuals' and communities' ability to shape their own lives and stake out an equitable role in society. This is true in the UK but also abroad, where we advocate for greater diplomatic pressure from the UK on states where identifying publicly as a humanist can cost someone their life or their freedom.

Support for humanists at risk worldwide

Under our new strategy, we have prioritised our commitment to advancing freedom of religion or belief for all, and to draw greater attention, in particular from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), to the plight of people persecuted for their humanist beliefs. These case studies are sadly all too numerous and too tragic, but receive far less attention in national media or the words of public officials as compared to cases involving persecution of people for their religious beliefs.

A key case of concern in this context remained that of our colleague Mubarak Bala, the President of the Nigerian Humanist Association, who was arrested in April 2020 for being 'annoying to Muslims on Facebook'. Mubarak was held without charge for 16 months, before being charged with blasphemy in August 2021. Irregularities have plagued his case. In Kano state, where he was moved to upon arrest, the crime of blasphemy can attract a death sentence under sharia law; under Nigeria's parallel civil legal system, it can land a lengthy custodial sentence. We continue to call for Mubarak's immediate and unconditional release, and through our meetings with the FCDO have promoted several meetings between UK and Nigerian officials about his case. We also continued to raise Mubarak's case through our interventions at the UN Human Rights Council.

In support of Humanists International's campaign to secure his safety and freedom, we, many of our patrons, and members of the APPHG signed an open letter calling for his immediate and unconditional release. Signatories among many others included our President Alice Roberts; Vice Presidents Jim Al-Khalili, Polly Toynbee, and AC Grayling; patrons Stephen Fry, Wole Soyinka, and Richard Dawkins; and APPHG members Crispin Blunt MP, Joan Bakewell, and Alf Dubs.

We organised a special meeting of the APPHG where Members of Parliament and peers could hear first-hand testimonies from victims of non-religious persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria, as well as from the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief on the extent of the problem more generally, and the UK Government on what it is doing to tackle it. On behalf of the Government, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister for Human Rights at FCDO, made a speech in support of the non-religious. Speakers included Gulalai Ismail, humanist and internationally recognised human rights activist; Leo Igwe, founder of the Humanist Association of Nigeria; and Asif Mohiuddin, Bangladeshi humanist blogger and assassination survivor; and Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur. The meeting was attended by staff from the office

of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief and by the Shadow Africa Minister, and prompted several parliamentary questions in the following weeks.

Humanists International published its 2021 *Freedom of Thought Report* in December, to which we contributed research on the UK, Barbados, and relevant case work internationally, which was collated alongside contributions from other Humanists International members. It is the authoritative global review of the treatment of the non-religious around the world. We alerted FCDO to its publication.

International freedom of religion or belief (FoRB)

Our longstanding commitment to FoRB also extends to campaigning for the rights of religious people to their beliefs, as well as humanists. It was the subject of numerous meetings and a great deal of correspondence with the FCDO and with Labour's Shadow Foreign Affairs team.

In the UK Parliament, we briefed MPs about the persecution of the non-religious in India, ahead of a debate in the House of Commons on freedom of religion or belief there, and our briefing was reflected in speeches by Naz Shah MP and Stephen Timms MP. We contributed to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief (APPG for FoRB)'s report, *Commentary on the Current State of International Freedom of Religion or Belief (2020)*. We regularly attended meetings of the APPG and the UK FoRB Forum. Our Chief Executive is on the Steering Group of the latter.

We attended the 46th, 47th and 48th sessions of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, remotely, making interventions in relation to ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar; the mass internment of Muslims in China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region; Pakistan's persecution of Ahmadi Muslims using blasphemy laws; Iran's poor treatment of FoRB issues and seeking the release of prisoners of conscience Liza Tebyanian and Professor Ahmadreza Djalali; the impact of Covid-19 on FoRB; Nigeria's imprisonment of our colleague Mubarak Bala; the Maldivian Government's criminal sanctions for blasphemy and apostasy; the harms of so-called 'conversion therapy' (made jointly with the Ozanne Foundation); widespread failures to guarantee reproductive and sexual health rights during the pandemic (made jointly with the British Pregnancy Advisory Service); genocide (made jointly with René Cassin, the Jewish voice for human rights); apostasy and blasphemy laws in Somalia; and the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

We organised over 20 MPs and peers to write to the Prime Minister, expressing concern about the appointment of Fiona Bruce MP as his Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, given her strong track record as anti-LGBT rights, anti-abortion, and anti-humanist campaigner. We received reassurances from the Human Rights Minister of the UK Government's commitment to the human rights of humanists, women, and LGBT people. This intervention attracted wide media coverage. We subsequently met her and established a working relationship.

Following the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in August, we have been urging the UK Government to do what it can to support the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people, acting in conjunction with Humanists International. We mobilised our members to those ends and called on the UK Government to use international levers to uphold Afghans'

rights and safety and to do more to support human rights defenders and refugees. We signed a joint letter organised by the International Religious Freedom Roundtable (IRFR) to US President Joe Biden calling for the evacuation of Afghan religious and non-religious minorities.

We signed a letter with IRFR to Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, regarding the Algerian authorities' arbitrary detention and sentencing of Hamid Soudad, a 42-year-old Christian in Oran, Algeria.

Abolishing blasphemy laws (Scotland and Northern Ireland)

Domestically, we continued to campaign against blasphemy laws in statute as these are often cited by human rights-abusing countries like Pakistan in justification of their barbaric treatment of non-religious people, religious minorities, and political dissidents. In Scotland, where we supported Humanist Society Scotland in campaigning for the abolition of the Scots blasphemy law, the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act received royal assent. It benefited from significant revisions to protect freedom of speech and the rights of the non-religious as a result of our and Humanist Society Scotland's contributions.

In Northern Ireland, we met MLAs numerous times about a possible Executive or private member's bill on repealing blasphemy. Our campaign received wholehearted support from the Northern Ireland Minister for Justice, who went on record as supporting it and who attempted to secure provision for repeal in an upcoming justice bill. However, it fell out of the Bill following negotiations with the Executive, and the Bill was narrowed to focus only upon sexual offences and stalking. We began work anticipating a new Bill following the Northern Ireland elections, and started work on scoping a coalition of Northern Ireland charities and groups who support our proposed reforms.

Sensitive subjects in school lessons

In March, we expressed our alarm at the case of the RE teacher who was suspended from his job for reportedly showing pupils images of the Prophet Mohammed. We were deeply concerned by the tenor of the media coverage, which seemingly supported a prohibition on blasphemy in schools generally, and made no allowances for a sensitive, well-balanced lesson on attitudes to religion, criticisms of religion, or blasphemy, which in the end is what it turns out was being being taught in the school in question. Our Chief Executive discussed the issue on BBC Radio 4's *Sunday* programme and our quote was featured in a number of national newspaper stories on the subject. We also wrote to the then Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, and Conservative MP, Sajid Javid, to express our support for their statements condemning the harassment of the teacher at the heart of the case, who went into hiding after his name and address were leaked and he received credible death threats.

Medical-ethical issues and global challenges

Our policy continues to emphasise a number of areas where humanists, and humanist thinking, can make unique contributions to public debate. Notably in 2021 this led to the following actions.

Public health

As part of our ongoing contributions to the national effort against coronavirus, and our longstanding commitment to public understanding of science, we embarked on a programme of communications and activity to support the National Health Service's rollout of Covid-19 vaccines. As well as wider social media messaging, this included maintaining an information page about the vaccine programme on our website, hosting a panel discussion on the science of vaccines, and hosting Oxford Professor of Vaccinology Sarah Gilbert, of Oxford/Astrazeneca vaccine fame, as our appointed Rosalind Franklin lecturer. We also released results of a survey of our members which showed 95% intended to take the vaccine immediately when offered, reflecting the evidence-led and socially conscious attitudes of humanists on medical-ethical issues.

Separately, the APPHG met in March online to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on the non-religious, including on our pastoral carers working in hospitals and prisons and humanist funeral and wedding celebrants, and the impact across the globe. The meeting was chaired by Joan Bakewell and heard from the Chief Executive of Humanists International Gary McLelland; Lindsay van Dijk, Lead Chaplain, Buckinghamshire NHS Trust, and Chair of the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network; Hannah McKerchar, a humanist celebrant and the Network Coordinator for Yorkshire and the Humber; and our Chief Executive.

Organ donation

Following on from the successful introduction of opt-out organ donation registers in Great Britain, we lobbied Members of the Legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland in favour of similar legislation in July. The Executive subsequently introduced a bill to do just that, which became law early in 2022.

'Complementary and alternative medicine'

We publicised the decision of the Professional Standards Authority, an independent but statutory safeguarding organisation that regulates and registers professionals working in the fields of health and social care, to suspend accreditation of the Society of Homeopaths, after repeated concerns were raised about the practices of some of its members. This suspension was brought about by complaints made by the Good Thinking Society and our patron Simon Singh.

The environment

In March, we announced the launch of Humanist Climate Action (HCA), a new volunteer-led network that will ensure that the non-religious have a voice in the major environmental debates of our time, under the tagline 'for the one planet we have'. Following its launch event in May, it directed its members to various opportunities to contribute to campaigns around the climate crisis. It organised its own Earth Day publicity campaign around planting trees and participated in protests in London and Glasgow (alongside Humanist Society Scotland) around the COP26 global summit on climate change. In June, it called on the UK Government to rethink its approach to environmental policy in response to a consultation by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Animal welfare

The humanist commitment to improved treatment of sentient animals is featured more prominently in our new strategy, which explicitly endorses the World Organisation for Animal Health's Five Freedoms for Animals under human control as a basis for policy engagement with officials.

As a religion or belief-specialised human rights charity, we take further interest in the intersection of animal welfare policy with religion or belief, and advocate strongly alongside animal welfare charities for the closure of loopholes to animal welfare legislation relating to religious slaughter. We responded to a consultation on the labelling of meat products from the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs and supported labelling to indicate if an animal was stunned prior to slaughter, in line with animal welfare laws. This measure would ensure that consumers are informed and empowered to make choices about their food in accordance with their beliefs and preferences, and prevent non-stunned meat from religious slaughterhouses unlawfully entering the general market. We also voiced our support for an amendment from West Dorset MP Chris Loder to the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill which would have reduced the number of animals slaughtered without pre-stunning to render them insensitive to pain.

4. Humanists UK is respected for our expertise and professionalism and recognised as the leading national voice for the non-religious

We continued to be the go-to national organisation for the non-religious and for information about humanism, and were frequently sought out by the media for comment on press stories in this capacity. We were delighted to see this status reflected in the generous comments made by Sir Keir Starmer, Lord Greenhalgh, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, Sian Berry, and Sir Ed Davey on the occasion of our 125th anniversary.

As well as this, the leaders of every Northern Ireland party gave fulsome quotes praising the work of Northern Ireland Humanists for the foreword to our *Five Years of Northern Ireland Humanists* report (except that the DUP's supportive quote came from their deputy leader due to an ongoing leadership election). The report highlighted just how much progress has been made in Northern Ireland since we founded Northern Ireland Humanists in 2016, including legal recognition of humanist marriages, legal abortion, legal same-sex marriages, a rapidly growing humanist movement, and various other knock-on effects for humanist equality and civil rights more widely.

As detailed in relation to our first aim, one of the major focuses of our year was celebrating our 125th anniversary and using the opportunity to shine more light on the history of humanist thinking in the UK. This has been a helpful opportunity to reflect publicly on the great many national heroes who were humanists (and part of this organisation) but whose humanism is under-recognised, as well as unsung heroes of UK civil rights campaigning who were humanists (disproportionately women). This work has inspired further academic and public interest. We were delighted when the Vernon Lee Society invited our Humanist Heritage Coordinator to give its annual lecture on relevant findings from the project, among her other speaking engagements.

In July, our Chief Executive was invited to lead the national memorial ceremony at Olympic Park in London to remember and celebrate the lives of NHS England workers who died during the pandemic. This coincided with NHS anniversary celebrations, and reflected humanist involvement in the founding of the NHS and our own role as the national institution representing the non-religious.

Other appointments showed high esteem for our personnel and our work. Our Chief Executive served on the steering group of the UK Freedom of Religion or Belief Forum. Our Wales Coordinator was elected to the RE Council's Board, while our Director of Understanding Humanism served on its Education Committee – both contributing to discussions on the advantages of a worldviews curriculum over a world religions curriculum. Our Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network chair, Lindsey van Dijk, was appointed as Head of Chaplaincy at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, making her one of the most senior pastoral carers in the UK, and promoting greater public recognition of non-religious pastoral support. And our Dialogue Officer was invited to consult on resources about inter-belief dialogue for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

We were delighted to appoint journalist Felicity Hannah, co-founder of WordPress Mike Little, comedian Angela Barnes, biologist Professor Nichola Raihani, science broadcaster and former professional poker champion Liv Boeree, author Jane Fallon, and journalist Matthew d'Ancona as our newest patrons.

5. Humanists UK is an expanding, financially healthy, and sustainable movement

Our fundraising

Membership and unrestricted donation income performed in line with pandemic-adjusted budgets, with modest growth seen in our membership income. However, high inflation means that our rate of growth is not producing significantly more buying power for our activities. Thankfully, membership sign-ups were less volatile than in 2020, when we saw dips around the announcement of the first lockdown and surges around later coronavirus-themed appeals. We made two large postal appeals to members, addressing rising religious nationalism and discrimination against the non-religious. In October, we organised another successful crowdfunder for our Education Campaigns Manager's salary. Reflecting increased sensitivities around death, we also continued to pause planned activity asking for gifts in wills. Similarly, our Blackham Society events targeted at major donors continued to take place online, reflecting public health guidelines. Our budgeting work for our 2025 strategy set healthy goals for realistic levels of further growth.

People and systems

In September 2021, we hired our first Head of People, whose role is to develop our first ever people strategy, reflecting the enormous growth our voluntary workforce has seen in recent years, now amounting to 425 volunteers, 32 consultants, and 563 celebrants, alongside a team of 33 staff. The new people strategy will help us to develop our employer and volunteering brand, future-proof our organisation, professionalise our HR approach, enhance engagement across all personnel, and improve workforce

development, unlocking new efficiencies and greater utilisation of people's time and talents. The Head of People is also responsible for moving forward our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) agenda. An EDI Action group consisting of staff, volunteers, celebrants, and members of the Association of Black Humanists met several times to discuss and work towards recommendations about making our staff and volunteer recruitment, public activity, and working practices maximally inclusive of humanists from all backgrounds.

Most staff continued to work from home, with the office available to any staff members or volunteers who had need of it. We communicated with staff at various intervals about a scheduled full return to normal office working patterns, alongside hybrid home/office working.

Our IT department had one of its busiest ever years, supporting remote working and ICT needs across the full workforce, as well as working on several major projects. Various public-facing and behind-the-scenes systems underwent significant changes. One major new development was the launch of our Humanists UK People platform, consolidating various training, induction, and intranet platforms previously developed for staff, volunteers, and celebrants to use, and emphasising the goals of our developing people strategy. Among other things, the website also allows us to better track learning, development, and training data across the workforce. We also moved our website URL from humanism.org.uk to humanists.uk; made significant developments with our new website, which went into alpha testing; changed all our payment processing systems; built a website for the new Coalition for Inclusive Education in Northern Ireland, which we are helping to get on its feet; and developed a new *Understanding Humanism* website to launch in January 2022.

Financial Review

We ended the year with a surplus on unrestricted funds of £395,574. Legacy income remained high (£543k), though significantly down when compared to 2020. Though our legacy income fluctuates significantly, we have taken the decision to assume we will continue to benefit from a modest number of legacies throughout the course of our 5-year strategy.

Grant income in furtherance of pastoral support was postponed to 2022 pending the resumption of related activities. We also continued to receive Job Retention Scheme (furlough) grants from the Government.

Membership and unrestricted donations income performed in line with pandemic-adjusted budgets, with modest growth seen in our membership income (4%). However, high inflation meant that our rate of growth did not not produce significantly more buying power for our activities.

Expenditure on charitable activity increased by 5%, reflecting the gradual lifting of restrictions on face-to face activities that were in place during the pandemic. Expenditure was closely monitored to make savings where possible in the face of inflation.

Events and training courses remained largely online, though greater in number than in 2020. While some activities remained curtailed due to the pandemic, we were able to

invest in exciting areas of work, for example the creation of an Apostasy Support Services Manager role which will strengthen our Faith to Faithless work. Support costs increased partly due to the creation of a new senior management role supervising our volunteer support, ceremonies and humanist care networks.

As a result of the legacy income, the remarkable support of our members plus the ongoing restrictions on expenditure, our financial position is healthier than at the start of 2021. We have invested in charity-specialist fund portfolios to protect the value of our assets in this turbulent period. Our 5-year strategy is now underway where we plan to significantly draw down on our funds, leveraging expenditure to make long-lasting change in public policy, in the public's understanding of humanism, and in the ability of non-religious people to live happier, confident and more ethical lives. Given the uncertain wider economic outlook, this is a fortunate position to be in and we are grateful to everyone involved in making it so.

Reserves

Our reserves are defined as those unrestricted funds held long term for precautionary purposes. The trustees consider that the reserves held by Humanists UK should be sufficient to:

- allow us to continue our work in the event of a temporary downturn in income streams. Such concerns might include: an absence of any legacy income for a few years (which, while we deliberately do not budget for legacy income, might restrict a number of activities from being undertaken), a decline in voluntary income, or a failure to increase income at the budgeted rate, and other risks identified annually in the risk register;
- take advantage of an unforeseen opportunity: an item of news, for example, which could trigger a publicity campaign, or an opportunity to change policy through campaigning;
- meet an unforeseen need: a legal challenge, for example, or a sudden need for a significant IT systems change.

Humanists UK will therefore hold an upper limit of four months' annual expenditure and a lower limit of three months' expenditure in reserves to cover these emergencies. All other liquid and near liquid assets are available to fund those activities identified in Humanists UK's Strategic Plan.

At the end of the year total funds held amounted to £3,047,273 of which £118,623 are held for restricted purposes, £400,000 are for designated purposes (a building fund) and £8,903 are represented by the Association's tangible fixed assets and can only be realised on their disposal. The remaining financial assets of the Association were £2,519,747, of which all but £88,000 is budgeted to be spent between now and 2025. Fund levels are more than sufficient to meet the requirements of our reserves policy (three months budgeted expenditure being £766k). For this reason we have agreed a deficit budget for 2022-2025.

Fundraising Policy

Our approach to fundraising reflects that supporters are at the heart of what we do, and fundraising materials are designed to ensure that donors and potential donors understand that they can withdraw from fundraising communications, or any other

communications, at any time, simply and without fuss. We do not use fundraising services, consultants, or external professional fundraisers to undertake fundraising activities on our behalf, and we do not sell or licence data to (or buy data from) any external agencies or third parties. We send a weekly e-newsletter to subscribers (which they can unsubscribe from) sharing information about our charitable work and fundraising activities. All new marketing materials are checked to comply with the Fundraising Code of Practice as part of an internal publications sign-off procedure.

We host a range of events throughout the year. Fundraising events are explicitly billed as such. Events are closely monitored at internal meetings before and after every event, and detailed profit and loss registers are kept for large events. We will never exert undue pressure on those invited to attend an event or to donate. All income and expenditure related to volunteer-led fundraising is reported to the appropriate line manager within the staff team, and annual statements are approved by both the volunteer and the responsible manager.

We take very seriously our responsibility and make our best efforts not to approach or pressure vulnerable people to support our work. We take a robust approach to complaints about fundraising, whether in person, or online, or by another medium; these are promptly followed up by the responsible officers, their line managers, or by a member of the Board (as appropriate).

Investment policy and objectives

The Trustees' investment policy is to generate the highest possible returns over the long term, consistent with our risk appetite and appropriate protection for our capital, so as to maximise the resources that can be expended on our charitable objectives. We have short and long-term investment policies that reflect our needs over different timeframes. Monitoring of the investment performance takes place through regular investment reports and investment performance results are reported and discussed at Trustee meetings and compared to industry benchmarks where applicable.

We entered the year with funds invested as cash deposits with Flagstone, which we retained through 2021. We reinvested in a portfolio consisting of units held in Barclays Charity Fund and also created a portfolio of investments with BNY Mellon. This blend reflects the low-risk appetite necessary given the planned utilisation of funds over the course of our new strategic period (to 2025).

Risk management

The Trustees are satisfied that appropriate systems and procedures have been established to identify and manage the major risks faced by the Association. They have developed a comprehensive risk management policy to ensure that all important risks are evaluated and appropriate mitigating action taken. Governance and management, operational, financial, legal and other risks are reviewed annually by the Trustees and continually monitored by the senior management team who take responsibility for implementation of the policies and procedures identified to reduce risks. Corrective actions are based on the likelihood of particular events occurring and how critical the consequences would be. Annual risk reviews include considerations of operating plan activities, finance, insurance, trademark, office building, fire, health and safety, and terms and conditions of employment of staff. Significant potential risks identified were reputational and legal risks associated with front-line service provision, reliance on core

specialist staff, compliance risks with regulatory frameworks such as data protection, and operational risks as a result of poor media relations or insufficient income generation. Actions taken to mitigate risks included the creation of a Head of People role to ensure better in-house good practice, improved staff & volunteer inductions, a policies review, and greater attempts to diversify income streams.

Future Plans

Having deferred development of our new strategic plan during the pandemic, in 2021 we launched this new phase of our work. Humanists UK's key objectives for 2022 are to fully implement this new strategy, in particular promoting a wider understanding of humanism, enabling humanists to express their beliefs and values and enabling more people to enjoy greater freedom of thought, of expression, and of choice over their own lives.

The key planned activities to achieve these objectives are partly a continuation of those outlined in this report – public affairs work on a range of policy issues, greater provision of education materials, growth of our networks of celebrants, school volunteers, humanist care volunteers and services for people leaving high-control religions volunteers. There are also new activities such as a greater emphasis on creating a range of humanism-focussed resources for the public. We also plan to return to a greater range of in-person activities (both training programmes and public events), these activities having largely been on hold due to covid.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

Humanists UK's trustees are directors of the company for the purposes of company law and are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable company and charity law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Association for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the principles of the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue to operate.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Association and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Association and

hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Association's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Directors confirm that, in the case of each of the persons who are Directors at the date of this report, the following applies:

- so far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the Company's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the Company's auditors are unaware; and
- each Director has taken steps to make herself/himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

In accordance with S485 of the Companies Act 2006, a resolution proposing the reappointment of Knox Cropper LLP as auditors will be put to the General Meeting.

On behalf of the Board: Tamar Ghosh, Chair, 7 May 2022

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2021

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the British Humanist Association (the 'charitable company', operating as Humanists UK) for the year ended 31 December 2021 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2021 (cont.)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2021 (cont.)

small companies' exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Directors.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- The Charitable Company is required to comply with both company law and charity law and, based on our knowledge of its activities, we identified that the legal requirement to accurately account for restricted funds was of key significance.
- We gained an understanding of how the charitable company complied with its legal and regulatory framework, including the requirement to properly account for restricted funds, through discussions with management and a review of the documented policies, procedures and controls.
- The audit team, which is experienced in the audit of charities, considered the charitable company's susceptibility to material misstatement and how fraud may occur. Our considerations included the risk of management override.
- Our approach was to check that restricted income was properly identified and separately accounted for and to ensure that only valid and appropriate

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2021 (cont.)

expenditure was charged to restricted funds. This included reviewing journal adjustments and unusual transactions.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken, so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

Richard Billinghamurst (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Knox Cropper LLP, Statutory Auditor
65 Leadenhall Street
London
EC3A 2AD

7 May 2022

Statement of Financial Activities including the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2021

		Funds 2021			Funds 2020		
		Restricted	Unrestricted	Total 2021	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	Notes	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM:							
- Legacies and donations	2	156,469	1,231,063	1,387,532	289,741	1,695,384	1,985,125
- Other trading activities	3	-	-	-	-	240	240
- Investments	4	-	8,536	8,536	-	2,408	2,408
- Charitable activities	5	-	1,297,248	1,297,248	-	1,209,104	1,209,104
Total		<u>156,469</u>	<u>2,536,847</u>	<u>2,693,316</u>	<u>289,741</u>	<u>2,907,136</u>	<u>3,196,877</u>
EXPENDITURE ON:							
- Raising funds	6	-	(183,015)	(183,015)	-	(173,558)	(173,558)
- Charitable activities	7,8	(166,921)	(1,970,044)	(2,136,965)	(270,270)	(1,762,778)	(2,033,048)
Total		<u>(166,921)</u>	<u>(2,153,059)</u>	<u>(2,319,980)</u>	<u>(270,270)</u>	<u>(1,936,336)</u>	<u>(2,206,606)</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	11	-	11,786	11,786	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)		(10,452)	395,574	385,122	19,471	970,800	990,271
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(10,452)	395,574	385,122	19,471	970,800	990,271
Balances brought forward at 1 January		<u>129,075</u>	<u>2,533,076</u>	<u>2,662,151</u>	<u>109,604</u>	<u>1,562,276</u>	<u>1,671,880</u>
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER		<u>118,623</u>	<u>2,928,650</u>	<u>3,047,273</u>	<u>129,075</u>	<u>2,533,076</u>	<u>2,662,151</u>

All amounts relate to continuing activities.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2021

		2021		2020	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Office equipment	10		8,903		19,566
Investments	11		<u>2,071,489</u>		<u>1,649,371</u>
			2,080,392		1,668,937
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	173,864		108,096	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>876,766</u>		<u>989,746</u>	
		1,050,630		1,097,842	
LIABILITIES					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(83,749)</u>		<u>(104,628)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>966,881</u>		<u>993,214</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>3,047,273</u>		<u>2,662,151</u>
Represented by					
FUNDS :					
Unrestricted	14		2,928,650		2,533,076
Restricted	15		<u>118,623</u>		<u>129,075</u>
Total Funds			<u>3,047,273</u>		<u>2,662,151</u>

The accounts are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act relating to small companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard 102.

Approved by the Directors on 7 May 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Tamar Ghosh _____ Hon. Chair

John Adams _____ Hon. Treasurer

Company number: 00228781

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ending 31 December 2021

		2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	24	<u>288,816</u>	<u>1,117,121</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends and interest from investments		8,536	2,408
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		-	-
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	-
Purchase of investments		(748,446)	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>(739,910)</u>	<u>2,408</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(451,094)	1,119,529
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,639,117	1,519,588
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	25	<u><u>2,188,023</u></u>	<u><u>2,639,117</u></u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021

1. Accounting policies

Basis of Preparation

These Financial Statements are presented in pounds sterling and have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (the Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Humanists UK meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. The world continues to face economic uncertainty in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of our prudent reserves policy we are in a better relative position than some other charities, but financial uncertainty does remain. Being almost completely reliant on individual donors and members for our income, we keep a concerned eye on the increasing burden on households' cost of living in the UK.

Short term debtors and creditors

Debtors are recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably, and it is probable that the income will be received. Creditors are recognised when the Charity has a present legal or constructive obligation resulting from a past event to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty are detailed in the above accounting policies where applicable.

Prepayments & Accruals

Prepayments and accruals less than £100 have not been taken into consideration.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible assets costing more than £500 were capitalised and all tangible assets are valued at historic cost. Provision is made for depreciation on tangible fixed assets, at

rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life.

Office Equipment:	20% p.a. straight line
Computer equipment:	33 1/3% p.a. straight line
Office fixtures & fittings:	10% p.a. straight line

Fixed asset investments

Investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. The statement of financial activities includes the net gains and losses arising on the revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Realised gains and losses on investments are arrived at by comparing the net sale proceeds with the market value at the end of the previous financial year. Unrealised gains and losses represent the difference between the market value of investments still held at the end of the financial year with their value at the beginning of the year or with their cost if purchased subsequently.

Value Added Tax

The Charity is registered for VAT and where applicable amounts are included net of VAT.

Funds

Unrestricted funds are those funds which can be used at the trustees' discretion. Restricted Funds are those funds where application is restricted by conditions set by the donor. Designated Funds are those funds, which have been earmarked by the trustees for specific purposes.

Deferrals Policy

Income is recognised when all the following criteria are met:

- Control over the rights or other access to the economic benefit exists
- It is more likely than not that the economic benefits will pass to the Association
- The monetary value of the income can be measured reliably.

Grants Receivable

Revenue grants are credited to incoming resources on the earlier of the date they are received or the date they are receivable, unless they relate to a specific future period, in which case they are deferred. Capital grants for the purchase of fixed assets are credited to restricted incoming resources when they become receivable. Depreciation on the related fixed assets is charged against the restricted fund.

Donations and Legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised as income when the Association becomes unconditionally entitled to receive them, and when the receipt is probable and its value can be predicted with reasonable accuracy.

Charitable Activities

Costs of charitable activities include direct expenditure and an apportionment of overhead, governance and support costs as shown in note 7.

Allocation of Overhead, Governance and Support Costs

Overhead and support costs are incurred centrally across the range of our activities throughout the year. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the Charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These include costs related to statutory audit. All these costs have been apportioned between charitable activities on the basis of staff time or office space depending on the nature of the cost. The Directors consider this to be a reasonable reflection of the utilisation of resources.

Pensions

The Charity contributes to various defined contribution pension schemes on behalf of employees and, as the charity's liability is limited to paying amounts as they fall due, the pension charge reflected in the accounts represents the amount payable for the year.

2. Legacies, grants and donations

	2021			2020
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £	Total £
Donations and Gift Aid	142,149	688,072	830,221	970,995
Grants	14,320	-	14,320	120,177
Legacies	-	542,991	542,991	893,953
	<u>156,469</u>	<u>1,231,063</u>	<u>1,387,532</u>	<u>1,985,125</u>

In the preceding year Donations and Gift Aid included £169,564 restricted income and £120,177 restricted grants. Grants income in the current year includes £14,320 receivable from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

3. Income from other trading activities

	2021			2020
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £	Total £
Rent & charges to tenants	-	-	-	240
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>240</u>

4. Investment income

	2021			2020
	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £	Total £
Interest	-	8,536	8,536	2,223
Dividends	-	-	-	185
	<u>-</u>	<u>8,536</u>	<u>8,536</u>	<u>2,408</u>

5. Income from charitable activities

	2021			2020
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions	-	879,163	879,163	844,159
Group fees	-	210	210	2,860
Celebrants' training	-	201,534	201,534	171,730
Celebrants' accreditation fees	-	126,414	126,414	117,445
Marriage administration fees	-	16,700	16,700	7,033
Events & activities	-	36,797	36,797	49,378
Sales of literature & merchandise	-	15,746	15,746	8,462
Education	-	12,097	12,097	3,895
Pastoral support	-	188	188	-
Sundry income	-	8,400	8,400	4,142
	-	<u>1,297,248</u>	<u>1,297,248</u>	<u>1,209,104</u>

6. Cost of raising funds

	2021			2020
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising costs	-	177,313	177,313	169,439
Investment manager's fees	-	3,270	3,270	2,243
Purchase of merchandise	-	<u>2,432</u>	<u>2,432</u>	<u>1,876</u>
	-	<u>183,015</u>	<u>183,015</u>	<u>173,558</u>

7. Analysis of costs of charitable activities

	2021		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
Education and Public Awareness	(385,840)	(261,470)	(647,310)
Humanist Ceremonies	(273,875)	(139,922)	(413,797)
Humanist Care	(101,969)	(83,847)	(185,816)
Public Affairs & Policy	(418,347)	(277,699)	(696,046)
Activities for Members and Partner Groups	<u>(134,952)</u>	<u>(59,044)</u>	<u>(193,996)</u>
	<u>(1,314,983)</u>	<u>(821,982)</u>	<u>(2,136,965)</u>

	2020		
	Direct Costs	Support	Total
<i>Education and Promotion of Humanism</i>	(456,157)	(163,253)	(619,410)
<i>Ceremonies</i>	(250,564)	(106,766)	(357,330)
<i>Pastoral Support</i>	(103,230)	(77,835)	(181,065)
<i>Public Affairs & Policy</i>	(402,483)	(262,778)	(665,261)
<i>Activities for Members and Partner Groups</i>	<u>(100,345)</u>	<u>(109,637)</u>	<u>(209,982)</u>
	<u>(1,312,779)</u>	<u>(720,269)</u>	<u>(2,033,048)</u>

8. Analysis of support and governance costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Staff costs	435,723	370,096
Rent and rates	120,882	103,339
Repairs, maintenance & utilities	11,209	15,150
Postage and stationery	8,102	23,312
ICT	64,537	81,536
Irrecoverable VAT	64,207	30,076
Subscriptions	4,940	5,712
Bank charges & interest	69,105	55,518
Depreciation	10,663	11,653
Other costs	22,347	12,745
Governance	<u>10,267</u>	<u>11,132</u>
	<u>821,982</u>	<u>720,269</u>

Support costs have been apportioned between categories of charitable activity according to whether they are overheads or centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities. Overheads have been apportioned in relation to the office space occupied by each area of activity, and centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities has been apportioned in relation to the staff time employed in each area of activity. The Directors consider this provides a reasonable approximation to the utilisation of resources. Increased staff costs partly reflects the creation of a new senior management role supervising our volunteer support, ceremonies and humanist care networks.

Governance costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Audit fee- current year	5,250	5,597
- previous year underprovision	-	-
Other professional expenses	13	13
Trustee meeting expenses	<u>5,004</u>	<u>5,522</u>
	<u>10,267</u>	<u>11,132</u>

9. Staff costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,131,362	1,127,065
Social security costs	118,065	120,078
Pension contributions	<u>61,996</u>	<u>51,052</u>
Total payroll costs	1,311,423	1,298,195
Staff recruitment	20,818	3,759
Temporary staff	<u>-</u>	<u>612</u>
	<u>1,332,241</u>	<u>1,302,566</u>

Average number of employees (FTE)	29	30
Average number of employees	30	31

One employee earned in excess of £80,000 (2020: one) and that salary fell in band £80,000 to £90,000 (2020: £80,000-£90,000).

Key management personnel (£479,046) (2020: £440,663) includes Chief Executive, Director of Public Affairs & Policy, Director of Community Services (until August 2021), Director of Communications & Development, Director of Operations, Director of IT, Director of Understanding Humanism, Head of Humanist Care, Director of Ceremonies, Head of People.

Recruitment has been a significant challenge in the current environment, necessitating a notable increase in costs.

10. Tangible assets

	2021	2020
	£	£
Office Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment		
Cost at 1 January	106,975	106,975
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
As at 31 December	<u>106,975</u>	<u>106,975</u>
Depreciation at 1 January	(87,409)	(75,756)
Charge for the year	(10,663)	(11,653)
Disposals	-	-
Depreciation at 31 December	<u>(98,072)</u>	<u>(87,409)</u>
Net book value at 31 December	<u>8,903</u>	<u>19,566</u>

11. Investments

	2021	2020
	£	£
Market value at 1 January	-	-
Additions	748,446	-
Disposal proceeds	-	-
Realised gains/(losses)	-	-
Unrealised gains/(losses)	<u>11,786</u>	-
Market value at 31 December	760,232	-
Cash with brokers	<u>1,311,257</u>	<u>1,649,371</u>
Total investments at 31 December	<u>2,071,489</u>	<u>1,649,371</u>
Investments at cost 31 December	<u>748,446</u>	-

Investments with a market value in excess of 10% of the portfolio were:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Barclays Property Income Trust for Charities	352,044	-
Newton SRI Fund for Charities	408,188	-
Total	<u>760,232</u>	-

In the preceding year, investments funds were partly held with Barclays Wealth on deposit and partly with Flagstone as cash deposits. Our new strategic plan necessitated an updated Investments Policy with the aims of preserving capital value, ensuring high liquidity, and seeing a return on investment over the course of these five years. We

therefore reinvested in Barclays Charity Fund and invested in the Newton SRI Fund for Charities. We retained cash deposits with Flagstone.

12. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Prepayments	42,533	4,990
Legacies receivable	7,000	-
Gift Aid	123,733	99,391
Other accrued income	-	3,715
Other debtors	598	-
	<u>173,864</u>	<u>108,096</u>

Prepayments are usually primarily event venue costs such as for our Annual Convention, plus rent.

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accruals	14,408	36,244
Taxes: Payroll taxes	31,974	39,897
VAT	20,088	16,880
Deferred income	7,956	-
Holiday accrual	<u>9,323</u>	<u>11,607</u>
	<u>83,749</u>	<u>104,628</u>

Deferred income usually relates to event ticket sales, such as for our Annual Convention, though due to the pandemic such income remained significantly curtailed. All deferred income is recognised in the following financial year.

14. a) General reserves

	2021		
	Revaluation Reserve	Accumulated Income	Total
	£	£	£
Balance at 1 January 2021	-	2,138,130	2,138,130
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	-	388,734	388,734
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	-	11,786	11,786
Transfer on realisation	-	-	-
Transfer to designated funds	-	(10,000)	(10,000)
Balance at 31 December 2021	-	<u>2,528,650</u>	<u>2,528,650</u>

	2020		
	Revaluation Reserve	Accumulated Income	Total
	£	£	£
Balance at 1 January 2020	-	1,557,330	1,557,330
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	-	970,800	970,800
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	-	-	-
Transfer on realisation	-	-	-
Transfer to designated funds	-	(390,000)	(390,000)
Balance at 31 December 2020	-	<u>2,138,130</u>	<u>2,138,130</u>

b) Designated Reserves

	Balance at 1 January 2021	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Building fund	390,000			10,000	400,000
Music (the Humanist choirs)	<u>4,946</u>	-	(4,946)	-	-
	<u>394,946</u>	-	(4,946)	<u>10,000</u>	<u>400,000</u>

15. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 January 2021	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Education	-	-	-	-	-
Public Affairs	-	2,722	(20,334)	17,612	-
Ceremonies	-	468	(468)	-	-
Local groups	6,898	801	(983)	-	6,716
Music (the Humanist choirs)	6,307	7,946	(431)	-	13,822
Campaign Against Faith Schools	35,489	65,612	(43,984)	(17,612)	39,505
Faith to Faithless	3,690	1,475	(5,165)	-	-
Accord	-	21,751	(21,751)	-	-
Assisted Dying	53,811	34,159	(38,303)	-	49,667
Defence Humanists	482	84	(22)	-	544
LGBT Humanists	8,381	991	(1,003)	-	8,369
Pastoral Support	14,017	140	(14,157)	-	-
Northern Ireland development	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	-	14,320	(14,320)	-	-
	<u>129,075</u>	<u>156,469</u>	<u>(166,921)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>118,623</u>

	Balance at 1 January 2020	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
Education	-	155	(155)	-	-
Public Affairs	-	2,216	(4,471)	2,255	-
Ceremonies	-	975	(975)	-	-
Local groups	7,151	2,161	(2,414)	-	6,898
Music (the Humanist choirs)	2,380	11,635	(7,708)	-	6,307
Campaign Against Faith Schools	27,594	56,417	(46,267)	(2,255)	35,489
Faith to Faithless	15,355	4,146	(15,811)	-	3,690
Accord	-	40,163	(40,163)	-	-
Assisted Dying	49,327	43,388	(38,904)	-	53,811
Defence Humanists	114	368	-	-	482
LGBT Humanists	7,684	1,789	(1,092)	-	8,381
Pastoral Support	-	25,210	(11,193)	-	14,017
Northern Ireland development	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	-	95,118	(95,118)	-	-
	<u>109,604</u>	<u>289,741</u>	<u>(270,270)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>129,075</u>

Accord

Donations to cover the payroll costs of one member of Humanists UK staff to work for the Accord Coalition.

Assisted Dying

This fund was created in 2018 to manage donations to cover the payroll costs of one member of Humanists UK staff to work on the Assisted Dying campaign with the My Death, My Decision coalition. The fund also includes donations towards assisted dying legal cases.

Campaign Against Faith Schools

Campaign against faith schools appeal funds are restricted to Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work relating to 'faith' schools and related education campaigns. Funds raised by appeal in excess of the target sought are restricted to the public affairs fund, and are disclosed as a transfer above.

Ceremonies

This fund results from donations given to Humanists UK specifically for ceremonies work.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

This fund was created in 2020 to reflect grant income relating to staff who were on furlough during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Defence Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by the Defence Humanists, which joined as a new section in 2011.

Education

This fund results from legacies and donations given to support Humanists UK's work in promoting the understanding of Humanism in the education sphere. This includes efforts to place a free copy of the *What is Humanism? How Do You Live Without a God? And Other Big Questions for Kids* in every primary school in Britain.

Faith to Faithless

This fund was created in 2015 to manage income and expenditure in support of our Faith to Faithless programme, which helps people who are leaving religions.

LGBT Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by GALHA (now LGBT Humanists) which joined Humanists UK as a section in 2012.

Local Groups

This fund is for activities relating to the development of local humanist groups, including branches. It was formerly called Community Service Projects.

Music

This fund was initiated in 2010 by a donation from Alec Reed to fund a composer for two years and to establish the Humanists UK choirs on a secure footing. Current income derives directly from the activities of the choirs.

Northern Ireland Development

This fund was created in 2017 to support the development of Humanist UK's work in Northern Ireland.

Pastoral Support

This fund was created in 2012 to collect donations supporting our new initiative directed towards providing pastoral support to non-religious people in prison or in hospital. This fund was previously known as 'Community Services excluding Ceremonies'.

Public Affairs

This fund results from legacies and donations given to support Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work.

16. Operating leases

At 31 December 2021 the Company had the following commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings		Other	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
Falling due within one year	97,608	97,608	8,955	8,955
Falling due between one and five years	10,845	108,453	12,368	21,324
Falling due later than five years	-	-	-	-
	<u>108,453</u>	<u>206,061</u>	<u>21,323</u>	<u>30,279</u>

The commitment in respect of land and buildings reflects the lease on the Association's premises which ends in February 2023. We have not set a provision for any dilapidation costs associated with the end of this lease.

17. Taxation

Humanists UK is a registered charity and is potentially exempt from tax in respect of income and capital gains received within the categories covered by Part II of the Corporation Taxes Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are exclusively applied to charitable purposes.

18. Directors' remuneration and expenses

Ewan Main, a Celebrant was paid £300 in fees & expenses as part of the celebrants training programme. Aside from Ewan Main, no remuneration, directly or indirectly, out

of the funds of the charity was paid or is payable for the year to any director or to any person known to be connected with any of them.

Directors were reimbursed a total of £229 (2020: £1,443) for travel expenses to attend meetings in connection with their duties. Expenses not reported in Note 18 normally include travel to various events, including public lectures and fundraising events.

19. Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at 31 December 2021 (2020: nil).

20. Pension commitments

The charity contributed to individual defined contribution pension schemes for several employees. The assets of the schemes are held separately from those of the charity in independently administered funds. Total employer's contributions paid in the year were £61,996 (2020: £51,052).

21. Net assets

	2021		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	2,080,392	848,258	2,928,650
Restricted funds	-	118,623	118,623
	<u>2,080,392</u>	<u>966,881</u>	<u>3,047,273</u>

	2020		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	1,668,937	864,141	2,533,077
Restricted funds	-	129,075	129,075
	<u>1,668,937</u>	<u>993,215</u>	<u>2,662,151</u>

22. Reversionary interest

Humanists UK has been bequeathed a reversionary interest in a trust established under the terms of the Will of Christine Cotton, who died on 24 January 2000. The trust assets comprise a property occupied by the Life Tenant, investments and bank accounts. The value of the investments as at 31 May 2021 was £44,911 (5 April 2020: £44,369). The trustees have indicated to Humanists UK that the property (bought in 2002 for

£85,000) had a value in 2020 of between £145,000 and £158,000 by comparison with similar properties in the locality.

Because Humanists UK cannot predict when it will become entitled to the receipt of this legacy, no accrued income has been reflected in the accounts.

23. Related party transactions

Directors are not remunerated but are able to recover out of pocket expenses for attendance at Board meetings, the total amount reimbursed being disclosed in Note 18.

The Chief Executive of Humanists UK is also a Director of Humanists International and their President. The Association paid an annual subscription to Humanists International of £25,275 (2020: £21,852).

The Education Campaigns Manager of Humanists UK (Ruth Wareham then Robert Cann) is a member of the Executive of the Accord Coalition. The Accord Coalition uses desk space and office facilities at Humanists UK's premises for no charge.

The Wales Coordinator is a Director of the Religious Education Council, of which Humanists UK is a member and paid £900 in membership fees (2020: £900).

24. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2021	2020
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period	385,122	990,271
Depreciation charges	10,663	11,653
(Gains)/losses on investments	(11,786)	-
Dividends and interest from investments	(8,536)	(2,408)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(65,768)	191,298
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	<u>(20,879)</u>	<u>(73,693)</u>
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operative activities	<u>288,816</u>	<u>1,117,121</u>

25. Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	876,766	989,746
Cash at brokers	<u>1,311,257</u>	<u>1,649,371</u>
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>2,188,023</u>	<u>2,639,117</u>

26. Statutory information

The British Humanist Association, operating as Humanists UK, is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England. The Association's registered number and registered office address can be found on the Legal and Administrative page of this Annual Report.

Accounts

British Humanist Association, operating as:



ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 December 2020

Company Number: 00228781

Charity Number: 285987

Humanists UK

Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2020

The Directors present their annual report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2020 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

Legal and Administrative Details

Status	The British Humanist Association (Humanists UK) originated as the Union of Ethical Societies in 1896, was incorporated as the Ethical Union in 1928 and became the British Humanist Association in 1967. Its working name became Humanists UK in 2017. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14 March 1928. Its governing instrument is its Articles of Association, adopted on 23 July 2011.			
	Company number:	00228781	Charity number:	285987
Registered office	39 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8BB			
Honorary officers	Chair:		Tamar Ghosh	
	Vice Chair:		Ann O’Connell	
	Treasurer:		John Adams	
Other Directors	Gregory Atkins (Jun-Oct 2020)		Stephanie Niven (from Jun 2020)	
	Jenny Bartle (until Jun 2020)		David Pollock	
	Tom Copley		Jeremy Rodell	

	Iain Deboys	Imtiaz Shams
	Blaise Egan	Emma Shepherd
	Ruth Kaufman	Hamza Walayat
	Ewan Main	Amy Walden
	Neil McKain (from Jul 2020)	Alexander Williams (until Jun 2020)
President	Professor Alice Roberts	
Principal staff	Chief Executive:	Andrew Copson
	Director of Public Affairs & Policy:	Richy Thompson
	Director of Communications & Development:	Liam Whitton
	Director of Community Services:	Edward Prout
	Director of IT:	Andrew West
	Director of Operations:	Catriona McLellan
	Head of Ceremonies:	Isabel Russo (until May 2020)
	Director of Understanding Humanism:	Luke Donnellan
	Director of Humanist Care:	Simon O'Donoghue (until Feb 2020)
	Head of Humanist Care:	Jessica Grace (from Feb 2020)
Auditors	Knox Cropper LLP, Chartered Accountants 65 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3A 2AD	
Bankers	The Co-operative Bank plc 118-120 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 3BA	
Investment Managers	Barclays Wealth 23 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP14 1AQ Flagstone Investment Management, 1st Floor, Clareville House, 26-27 Oxendon Street, London, SW1Y 4EL	

Mission

We want a world where everyone lives cooperatively on the basis of shared human values, respect for human rights, and concern for future generations.

We want non-religious people to be confident in living ethical and fulfilling lives on the basis of reason and humanity.

Charitable Objects

Humanist UK's Objects are: 'The advancement of Humanism, namely a non-religious ethical life stance, the essential elements of which are a commitment to human wellbeing and a reliance on reason, experience and a naturalistic view of the world; the advancement of education and in particular the study of and the dissemination of knowledge about Humanism and about the arts and science as they relate to Humanism; the promotion of equality and non-discrimination and the protection of human rights as defined in international instruments to which the United Kingdom is party, in each case in particular as relates to religion and belief; the promotion of understanding between people holding religious and non-religious beliefs so as to advance harmonious cooperation in society.'

Structure, Governance and Management

Organisational structure

The Trustees meet regularly during the year and at the beginning of each meeting they are requested to declare any conflicts of interest. These are detailed in notes 18 and 23 of the financial statements.

The Trustees review their performance and skills annually and new trustees are recruited to meet any needs or gaps identified.

The day to day management of the Association is delegated to its key management personnel as detailed in note 9 to the financial statements. Remuneration of the Chief Executive is set by the Trustees. Remuneration of other key management personnel is delegated to the Chief Executive.

Method used to recruit and appoint new Trustees

Trustees are recruited by election or by appointment, as set out in the Byelaws. Co-options until the next election can be made to fill vacancies arising among the elected trustees.

Induction and training of new trustees

New trustees are provided with a Trustee Handbook which contains information about their role and responsibilities as recommended by the Charity Commission.

This includes: the trustee role description and personal specification relevant to the role, the Association's confidentiality policy and the eligibility requirements for becoming a trustee, and a Code of Conduct. They are also supplied with a copy of the Articles of Association. Induction meetings covering the background to current matters take place with the Vice-Chair, the Chief Executive and key members of the staff team. Training on matters relevant to the role and responsibilities of trustees is encouraged and the Board subscribes to literature pertinent to good governance.

Public benefit

The trustees have satisfied themselves that Humanist UK's activities are compliant with law and guidance for charities on public benefit. The trustees (who are also Directors of the company for the purpose of company law) confirm that when deciding on the activities of the charity they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

The five principal areas of work (which overlap and reinforce each other) are:

- Education of the public about Humanism, providing a moral framework for those who do not accept any religion. We seek to ensure that everyone has access to information about humanist approaches to ethical issues and about the humanist tradition. We deliver this education through our website, public lectures, and teaching materials for use in schools, and in many other ways;
- The provision of non-religious or humanist celebrants, so helping to meet a growing demand from a larger section of the public than we can currently assist for baby-naming, marriage and (especially) funeral ceremonies that accord with their own beliefs. Our aim is that all those who want a humanist ceremony should have access to one. The activity (like the other four principal areas of work) represents a net cost to the Association but we are hopeful that it will in due course cover its costs;
- The provision of humanist pastoral care to the non-religious in settings where religious people have the support of chaplains, for example in prisons and healthcare;
- Seeking to protect the human rights of humanists and other non-religious people and to combat the discrimination and disadvantages they encounter. We do this by working for compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, especially insofar as it forbids discrimination by public authorities on grounds of religion or belief, and by making representations to Government and others, including sometimes addressing the need for changes in the law, and by promoting a secular state.
- Supporting local humanist groups and the positive contribution of humanists to building a peaceful, plural society.

While the principal beneficiaries of the Association's work are humanists and other people who have non-religious beliefs, the trustees consider that the whole public benefits from our promotion of human rights and non-discrimination and from the wide

range of information and educational material we offer. Our website is available to all and (sometimes subject to a small admission fee) so are our lectures.

Report on progress towards our Aims

Covid-19 and our emergency operation

Covid-19 and the national lockdown greatly affected the delivery of our services. Our weddings and namings came to a halt; we ceased hospital, school, and prison visits; and greater challenges were placed on our funeral celebrants. The pandemic also had significant impacts on a number of our campaigns, educational initiatives, and fundraising efforts.

In spite of this, our structures and ways of working proved robust and adaptable to change. At the height of the crisis, we entered a period we called our 'emergency operation,' switching to home-working for all staff ahead of the national lockdown, and later furloughing a third of employees and re-prioritising our work. The trustees were kept fully apprised of operations through regular reporting, monthly expenditure and income forecasts, and new agreed metrics for monitoring performance. Early in the crisis period, when new memberships and donations stumbled, we looked to our existing members and donors for much-needed emergency funds. It was undoubtedly their generosity that carried us safely through a very challenging period.

We developed two new strands of communication, branded *Humanism At Home* and *Humanists UK Community Response*, to frame our new work in response to the crisis. *Humanism At Home* attempted to bring together diverse content on humanism using the #HumanismAtHome hashtag on social media, including lots of fresh video and audio content produced by our patrons and other friendly faces. We also re-organised our teaching resources for effective use in home-schooling. *Humanists UK Community Response* became our hub for humanist volunteering in relation to the crisis, and directed members and supporters towards volunteering opportunities. A survey showed one third of our members were volunteering in some way in the March-May period.

We continued to progress against all of our aims and successfully delivered most planned activities and initiatives, including many initially delayed by the crisis. In the total analysis, reported on below in depth, setbacks notwithstanding, it was in many ways a year of growth and fruitful experimentation.

Our year's activities are reported here, as they relate to our six Aims.

1. We aim to achieve a situation where Humanism is understood as an ethical and fulfilling non-religious approach to life involving a naturalistic view of the universe.

We diversified and expanded our communications about humanism and reached record numbers of people in the process of doing so, in spite of the disruptions posed to our events by Covid-19. As well as moving some of our events programme online, new activities in our awareness-raising programme included a popular humanist podcast, successfully marketing a new book on humanism into the *Sunday Times* best-sellers list, and a shift to video content, tapping into latent demand for humanist content from audiences at home during the national lockdown.

Events

We held two large in-person events in London prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. The first was our annual Darwin Day Lecture on 12 February, in which naturalist and broadcaster Chris Packham lectured on 'Evolution or extinction?' to an audience of 1700. He was awarded the Darwin Day Lecture Medal by Professor Alice Roberts. On 5 March, our Rosalind Franklin Lecture for International Women's Day was given by Professor Francesca Stavrakopoulou, presenting to an audience of 400 on the sexist legacy of the Bible. Series chair Samira Ahmed presented her with the Rosalind Franklin Medal. Later that month, all upcoming events in our events programme, including our summer Voltaire Lecture featuring Dr Adam Kay and our Annual Convention, were indefinitely postponed or cancelled.

In November, we began a new regular programme of ticketed online events on humanist topics. The first of these was *The Awakening: Humanism and the Age of Reason*, featuring historian and author Charles Freeman in discussion with Samira Ahmed, attended by over 700 households. This was followed in December by *The Little Book of Humanism's Little Book Launch* in December, featuring Professor Alice Roberts and Andrew Copson in conversation about humanism past, present, and future, attended by over 500 households and viewed 2,800 times on YouTube. Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive. We also continued to support local groups, branches, and special-interest sections to host dozens of online events on a diverse range of topics and issues connected with humanism.

Social media

We continued to enjoy a substantial social media presence, which we used to promote our news and activities and as a channel for advancing awareness of humanism to a (mainly) non-religious audience. We saw consistent growth across social media channels. Our two largest channels were our Facebook page, which ended the year with 231,000 followers (227,000 in 2019), and our Twitter account, where we grew to 101,000 followers (94,500 in 2019). Our tweets made over 36.2 million impressions (40 million in 2019) and our Facebook posts were seen by 16 million (18 million in 2019). We attribute a slight reduction in our organic reach to increased 'competition' for social media users' attention from other organisations moving services online and producing online content for audiences stuck at home. When the national lockdown was first implemented, we produced a range of *Humanism At Home* graphics, news stories, interviews, SoundCloud audios, and YouTube videos featuring our patrons.

One highlight release was the video of Alice Robert's keynote speech from our 2019 Convention on YouTube, which received well over 100,000 views. We also saw 20,000 live views for the live broadcast of our National Ceremony for the victims of coronavirus in June on YouTube and Facebook Live (discussed under heading 3). Across the year, we made greater use of video content as a means of promoting humanism, including archive footage of humanists James Baldwin, Bertrand Russell, Carl Sagan, Jacob Bronowski, Claire Rayner, Maureen Duffy, James Randi, Karl Popper, and Christopher Hitchens. Our two most popular pieces of content on Instagram were videos we produced with our patrons. In the first, we partnered with our patron Jamie Theakston and NHS Blood and Transplant to promote new organ donor rules in England. In the second, our President, Alice Roberts, spoke movingly on the subject of Remembrance, to coincide with Remembrance Day.

Later in the year, we launched a dedicated social media campaign #HumanistBecause, which showcased specially made graphics and a landing page, inviting humanists to say why they used the label humanist to describe their beliefs, values, and convictions while also pointing others in the direction of our 'How humanist are you?' educational quiz. In total, we attracted over 500 unique user-generated posts on the hashtag #HumanistBecause. These were overwhelmingly positive in content, including many posts from high-profile people, including authors, MPs, and actors. The campaign also drew in a significant number of new members and supporters.

Podcast

We expanded our offering of humanist content in June with the launch of *What I Believe*, a new podcast series hosted by our Chief Executive, Andrew Copson, released through all major podcast providers. In the series, which takes its name from humanist essays by Bertrand Russell and EM Forster, Andrew interviews famous humanists such as Tim Minchin, David Baddiel, Janet Ellis, and Joan Bakewell about their lives and the principles, values, and convictions that they live by.

The podcast enjoyed 64,000 downloads across two seasons. Although intended purely as an educational platform, many new members reported being moved to join after subscribing to the podcast. It also attracted an international audience, with downloads coming from 110 countries, including many where humanists face severe oppression. Most listeners were from the UK, US, Australia, Canada, and India.

Little Book of Humanism

In August, a collaborative work by our Chief Executive and President, *The Little Book of Humanism*, was published by Piatkus, an imprint of Little, Brown. We saw the book as an opportunity both to raise awareness of humanism to a much larger audience and to raise funds, as all author royalties would be reserved for Humanists UK. An easy-to-read, illustrated introduction to humanism, the book shares over two thousand years of humanist wisdom through an uplifting collection of illustrations, stories, quotes, and meditations on how to live an ethical and fulfilling life, grounded in reason and humanity. The book quotes everyone from ancient philosophers like Epicurus and Mencius, through to contemporary humanist sources of inspiration such as *Frozen* and *The Good Place* actor Kristen Bell, the novelists Zadie Smith and Margaret Atwood, and the playwright and poet Wole Soyinka.

We promoted the book extensively in the media, through print advertising, social media content marketing, targeted social media ads, and emails to our 100,000 members and supporters. By publication day, the book was already on its third print run, and debuted on *The Sunday Times Bestsellers List*, the oldest and most influential book sales chart in the UK. As well as selling out on Amazon, Waterstones, and Hive, the book topped the Amazon bestseller charts and consistently featured in its top 30 list. It was the number one bestseller on Amazon in both the 'Ethics and Morality' and 'Religion and Science' charts, as well as #14 in the 'Self Help' chart. It received warm coverage in *The Scotsman*, *The Guardian*, and BBC Radio 4's *Sunday* programme, as well as excellent reviews. We embarked on a second wave of publicity for it in the run-up to Christmas.

Understanding Humanism

Prior to the decision to suspend our school speakers programme on 17 March, we had received already requests for school visits covering almost 20,000 pupils in 170 schools (more requests in ten weeks than in the whole of 2016), of which we met more than half. Our school speaker programme resumed later in the year with 'remote visits', making a total of 202 visits to 19,000 learners over 2020. Teachers gave our school speakers an average overall rating of 4.8 out of 5.

Demand for our *Understanding Humanism* resources was up compared with 2019, seeing 150,000 pageviews (130,000 in 2019) and 35,000 downloads (33,000 in 2019). This is partly explained by the closure of schools and our decision to create new pages for parents on the website, along with a guide to how our resources can support them with homeschooling. We also translated more of our resources into Welsh, including our two *What is humanism?* assemblies for primary and secondary schools, which we promoted to the Welsh Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (WASACRE) and its members. We also produced new resources for the website *RE Online*.

We had over 55,700 pageviews (18,577 in 2019) on Assemblies for All, our site compiling high-quality assembly resources from leading charities and resource providers to support teachers to put on high-quality, inclusive assemblies on universal themes as an alternative to collective worship. We marketed the website through a number of platforms, including *The School Run* website, *RE Today*, and through the Assemblies for All Twitter account. As expected, we saw a marked decline in visits during the national lockdown as a result of school closures.

We were pleased when the BBC began its own homeschooling provision for Religious Education with a lesson on humanism we helped to produce. This featured the short film *Five key facts about non-religious beliefs*, for which we helped find the contributor and wrote the script. The fact that a series of RE lessons provided by the BBC began with humanism illustrates how much things have moved in the RE world and the increasing recognition that an understanding of non-religious approaches to life is an essential part of RE. Following our suggested edits, the BBC also made changes to the web pages that accompanied their new films on humanism. The same short film was made available via BBC Bitesize, aimed at students in Key Stage 3, alongside a second film starring the same young humanist, called *Me and my community: non-religious wedding ceremonies*.

We had a more mixed experience with homeschooling resources provided by the Government-funded Oak National Academy. It launched education materials on humanism to support students learning from home during the pandemic, which were created in a very short space of time. The Academy consulted us on the content of its Key Stage 2 resources and used material from *Understanding Humanism*. While not perfect, the resources are of reasonable quality and will support learning about humanism. However, we found the Key Stage 3 resources to be very flawed and were not consulted on these lessons. Teachers offered a 13-lesson unit on non-religious worldviews with only a single lesson on humanism. The lesson on humanism focused on the question of how we define 'religion' and promoted misconceptions about humanism.

SACREs

We developed how we support humanist representatives on Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACRE) in England and Wales, the bodies which advise on local RE issues. Early in the year, we established a voluntary coordinator role for SACRE reps and developed our processes for recruiting and training SACRE reps. Our representatives are now full or co-opted members on 94 SACREs out of 174, and we have a number of observers attached to other councils.

We held our annual Education Day online for the first time, attended by 80 school speakers and SACRE reps. Sessions from expert speakers covered topics such as race and identity in the classroom and 'Why RE's radical reform could still fail', delivered by RE advisor Mark Chater (author of *Reforming RE*). The conference also facilitated extensive networking between SACRE reps, school speakers, and local volunteers. We also continued to provide CPD courses and training for both school speakers and SACRE reps outside of this provision.

Teacher training

We moved our teacher training and CPD on humanism online promptly at the start of the pandemic, earning largely positive feedback from attendees (with an average would-recommend rating of 4.9/5). We also delivered information and training on humanism and on using our Understanding Humanism resources at the *Strictly RE* teachers' conference, and for a wide variety of university PGCE courses, for officials at the Department for Education, and at the HMPPS prison chaplains' training day. These all took place using web-conferencing. We wanted to promote our resources also to support teachers on non-religious worldviews at the Teachers of Catholic Religious Education conference, but were barred from participation due to strongly anti-humanist views on the part of organisers. We also opened up a new strand of webinar training, providing paid-for CPD for individual teachers (as opposed to via universities). In total we trained 300 teachers.

Humanist Heritage

Work continued on the run-up to our 125th anniversary in 2021, with the ongoing development and construction of our new Humanist Heritage website resource, including historical research and the writing and designing of profile pages, maps, articles, and timelines. Research uncovered significant hidden gems from our past, including many historically significant figures who were humanists and key players in our organisation, and many incredible activists, mainly women, who were effectively written out of various popular histories of social change in Britain.

With support from the Wikimedia Foundation, we organised 'wikithons' for Banned Books Week and on the subject of Humanist Women, to improve Wikipedia's coverage of under-represented topics. In the process, we established a new network of historians and editors who would help to improve Wikipedia coverage of humanism. We also partnered with the walking app, Go Jauntly, to promote the first of a series of self-guided walking tours. The first tour focused on 'Humanist Bloomsbury', highlighting many landmarks of humanist history nestled in central London. It received excellent reviews from users. We teased many of the findings from the Humanist Heritage project

through published articles and features on social media in the second half of the year, trailing the launch of the full website and year of celebrations in 2021.

Courses

Our online courses *Introducing Humanism* and *Humanist Lives*, delivered using the popular FutureLearn platform, ran at various points across the year. We saw 500-800 learners actively taking in each run (down on 2019, but to be expected). Learner reviews of both courses remain positive, with an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. We intend to continue promoting the courses on an ongoing basis in 2021, switching from a seasonal model of time-limited runs to year-round on-demand access.

Our 'One Life' course, which was designed as an in-person complement to our range of online courses, moved online in response to the pandemic. We continued to deliver it on a local basis, supporting the course facilitated by Central London Humanists, South West London Humanists, Chester Humanists, and our Northern Ireland Humanists volunteer team in Belfast. However, many local groups did not have the capacity or experience to run this kind of intensive course remotely. We intend to roll the course out to more regions in 2021.

Dialogue

We also continued to expand understanding of humanism among religious people through our dialogue programme. We held a training day for new dialogue volunteers in London in January, before switching to online training in the summer in light of social distancing restrictions. This saw our network of trained dialogue volunteers grow from just one to 70 across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We took part in dialogue events such as the 'division-healing' Unity Initiative, the New Horizons British Islam Conference, Interfaith Week, the British Academy/Faith and Belief Forum 'Cohesive Societies' conference, the church-led 'Building Back Better' conference, the Liberal Jewish Synagogue Multi-Faith Chanukah, and get-to-know-you sessions with contacts from the Board of Deputies for British Jews and the Catholic Bishops Conference for England and Wales. Some dialogues were centred around published works, including the essay collection *Religion and Atheism: Beyond the Divide*; Raymond Tallis' *Seeing Ourselves*, and Christian physicist Andrew Steane's paper titled 'A Reflection on Divine Action'.

2. We aim to achieve a situation where people with humanist beliefs and values are supported in identifying themselves as humanists and in expressing those beliefs and values in their lives.

One of the most significant moments of our year was our National Ceremony for the victims of the coronavirus pandemic, a 30-minute film which aired live on 23 June on YouTube and Facebook to mark three months from the start of the lockdown. An initiative of Humanist Ceremonies (our arm providing non-religious funerals, memorials, weddings, and namings), the ceremony was an attempt to reflect on what many were going through, pay tribute to 60,000+ lives (at that time) lost, offer hope, and reckon with our collective grief, mourning, and anxiety. The ceremony was presented by well-known faces like Joan Bakewell, Mark Gatiss, Alice Roberts, and Jim Al-Khalili, and included readings from frontline humanist community service workers, including funeral celebrants, pastoral carers from NHS chaplaincy teams, and community volunteers from

across the UK. It featured music and a performance by the London Humanist Choir, and was welcomed by Communities Minister Lord Greenhalgh. Although principally directed at non-religious people, it was entirely inclusive and we intended it to also be of comfort to people of different beliefs. It was watched by 20,000 on YouTube and Facebook at the time of its first airing, and remains available on our YouTube channel.

The pandemic's impact on our ceremonies was severe, although we adapted rapidly to a changing environment to ensure continuity of service for our clients. We rapidly deployed new training, guidance, and support for celebrants conducting 'online memorials' over Zoom, 'digital pre-weddings' and family visits, socially distanced ceremonies and more, and worked to promote the availability of these services to the public. Our promotion of ceremonies continued to target a range of key titles for younger (weddings) and older (funerals) non-religious people. We also accelerated our focus on ceremonies-related blogs as a way to speak directly to potential customers with Google queries relating to planning weddings, funerals, and namings, as well as how the pandemic might affect them.

All ceremony types were affected by the national lockdown, including (despite increased deaths) funerals. This is in part due to the nature of restrictions on funerals, variable local measures, including many crematoriums being closed to the public and a significant move towards direct cremations and deferred memorials. Our weddings in particular suffered from inequalities in the coronavirus regulations which affected non-religious ceremonies specifically. In all we conducted 8,029 funerals (7,963 in 2019), 344 weddings (1,283 in 2019), and 91 namings (604 in 2019). Our celebrant network grew to 519 celebrants (438 in 2019), with additional recruitment focused to parts of the country where our network was less established. Our annual celebrant conference in October took place over five days on Zoom, for 168 delegates (155 in 2019) and consisted of 18 workshops and a closing plenary. Workshops were led by external speakers, celebrants, and staff.

Also suffering major disruption was the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network, our accredited network providing like-minded care to people in hospitals, hospices, prisons, and the armed forces. Employed religious chaplains and humanist pastoral carers were permitted to return to work in these settings, but the majority of our carers are volunteers, exacerbating existing inequities in pastoral support, particularly in prisons where we have no paid pastoral carers. To compensate for the lack of prison visits, we partnered with National Prison Radio to produce a new weekly slot, as part of their mission to bring comfort to prisoners and reduce reoffending using the power of radio. Many of our patrons and prominent spokespeople took part in the slot, which went from a 10-week trial to a permanent weekly feature across 80,000 prison cells in England and Wales. We gained wider media coverage when the *Guardian* reported on Lord (Alf) Dubs' broadcast and we received praise for our efforts from the founder of Prison Radio in a letter to the *New Statesman*. Separately, work continued on a new book for pastoral carers, to be distributed in bookshops and used both to assist the practice of non-religious pastoral care and improve understanding of it among chaplains.

Our local work had to adapt also. Diverse activities on the ground were replaced, in many cases, with online events programmes run by each of our branches and local groups, with much of the social dimension of being in a local group reduced to communication over social media. Some local groups experienced rejuvenation by finding a new focus on producing talks for larger online audiences, while more found the

change a source of stagnation. We were also indirectly impacted by the toll of the virus on the NHS, as many of our local organisers were employed by the NHS and found they lacked the capacity to volunteer at previous levels. We ended the year with five fully integrated Humanists UK branches (four in 2019), alongside 51 more loosely affiliated partner groups (52 in 2019).

Our apostate support programme, Faith to Faithless, ran eight physical public events and two safeguarding training courses before the pandemic hit. It moved to providing a regular programme of online apostate socials advertised to its existing beneficiaries for the remainder of the year. It also organised a number of online apostate safeguarding training courses, conducted as webinars.

Our special interest sections continued to find ways to meet and pursue their respective aims. Our section LGBT Humanists moved seamlessly from in-person to online events hosted by activists across the UK, and participated in the national UK Pride event. London Humanist Choir moved to a digital choir platform, and created beautiful pieces of music in lockdown, some of which featured in our National Ceremony. Defence Humanists continued to be a forum of support for armed forces people and their families, and produced an excellent webfilm for Remembrance Day featuring our patron, Dan Snow; our Vice President, Jim Al-Khalili; and our President, Alice Roberts. Young Humanists maintained a full online events schedule, delving into many topical issues animating humanists, including the climate crisis and Black Lives Matter. Our longstanding but largely dormant Humanists for a Better World activism network planned a revival as Humanist Climate Action, with a committee of volunteers working to an action plan set to launch in 2021. Local groups, branches, and sections met to share best practice in a specially organised Humanism in Action conference in October, attended by 80 activists.

3. We aim to achieve a situation where public debate and policy are shaped by humanist perspectives *and*

4. We aim to achieve a situation where the UK is a secular state guaranteeing human rights, with no privilege or discrimination on grounds of religion or belief.

Like most charities, we experienced greater difficulty in 2020 achieving coverage for our campaigns and stories than in past years due to the prominence of coronavirus-related stories all year. That said, we still achieved extensive media coverage for our campaigns and made sure that humanist perspectives were heard in public debate, both in Parliament and in the wider news. We featured frequently in UK national papers, radio, and network TV throughout the year, and had significant coverage in local, Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Ireland media. We also received mainstream coverage for some of our community work in response to and around the pandemic.

Impartial and inclusive state institutions (secularism)

Our work for a secular state guaranteeing equality continued throughout the year, although many of our activities relating directly to constitutional reform were arrested by the pandemic including both disruptions to parliamentary procedures and pressures

on parliamentary time. At the start of the year, for example, we called on the UK Parliament to replace the prayer card system for reserving seats and replace parliamentary prayers with inclusive time for reflection, as in Scotland and British Columbia. 10,000 signed our petition to the chairs of the Commons and Lords procedure committees, and Crispin Blunt MP, in his capacity as chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group, raised the issue in the Commons to the Speaker. On a separate front, we worked to ensure non-religious MPs had equal access to pastoral and emotional support and met the Speaker and his chaplain to discuss the introduction of a humanist pastoral carer.

A Wales Humanists event in the Senedd to celebrate 100 years of Welsh secularism (the anniversary of the Welsh Church Act's enactment) was postponed from March to December. An accompanying report, *100 Years of Disestablishment: Civic pluralism in Wales, past and future* was released in both English and Welsh, and recommended aspects of Wales' secular and inclusive political culture and systems as home-grown models of excellence for the rest of the UK to learn from. The online event was attended by 300 households and featured contributions from Andrew Copson, Julie Morgan MS, Wales Humanists patron Iolo ap Gwynn, and Wales Humanists Coordinator Kathy Riddick.

The UK Government initiated a number of reviews of religion in public life. We responded to the first of these calls for evidence, from Danny Kruger MP on the Prime Minister's behalf, by calling for secular service provision and pointing to the problems arising from exemptions from the Equality Act and Human Rights Act that apply even when religious groups are contracted to provide public services. However, the eventual report made strongly opposing calls, alleging ignorance about religion and 'faith phobia' as societal ills, and made a number of offensive observations about non-religious people, including that 'they don't always recognise their own religiosity' and complained, inaccurately, that 'orthodoxies of technocratic secular liberalism have total sway.' Almost all of its concerns were baseless and we expressed concern about the report to officials at the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government.

The second such investigation, which had not reported by year end, was the Independent Faith Engagement Review, led by Independent Faith Engagement Advisor Colin Bloom, which examined how best the Government should engage with faith groups in England. Our wide-ranging response touched on a broad range of policy areas including pastoral support in the armed forces, prisons, and hospitals, faith schools, collective worship, humanism in the curriculum, and marriage laws, and called for an end to religious discrimination and set out a number of recommendations to uphold FoRB in the UK. It ran to over 50 pages and over 20,000 words. We and several hundred of our members, who also responded, raised concerns regarding the questions' leading language, aims, and intentions.

Later in the year, we responded to a call for evidence by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee into the Government's plan to establish a Constitution, Democracy, and Rights Commission. As well as speaking in defence of the present human rights settlement, we called for secularism and suggested the Commission should examine the role of religion in our constitution, including the establishment of the Church of England, bishops in the House of Lords, and the democratic impact of parliamentary prayers.

Equal treatment of the non-religious

One unfortunate phenomenon of the coronavirus regulations has been the unequal and unfair way in which they, at different times, treated humanist ceremonies in all jurisdictions of the UK apart from Scotland. In most cases this flowed unintentionally from a lack of full consultation and the fact that our weddings lack legal recognition (although in Northern Ireland, where they are recognised, it also owed to inadequate consideration around which venues to allow to open for legally recognised marriages). We made numerous interventions to mitigate these problems as detailed below. We also worked successfully to ensure that our pastoral carers and funeral celebrants were accorded key worker status so that their work could continue during lockdowns.

In Wales, officials in June made rules allowing legally recognised marriages and civil partnerships to take place in registry offices and places of worship, but making no allowance for the resumption of weddings that aren't legally recognised, or for other locations. This was highly discriminatory and was recognised by the Welsh Government as an oversight, reflecting that it normally does not work on marriage policy. We experienced similar issues again in August, but were able to work with the Welsh Government to resolve them. Problems with weddings in England, initially averted, later arose in September when coronavirus regulations limited attendance at humanist weddings to six, while allowing up to 15 at legally recognised marriages. We raised the issue before rules came into force, and spoke to many MPs and peers, 18 of whom who raised the matter through letters, debates, and parliamentary questions: these included, the recently departed PM's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Rehman Chishti, and the two relevant Labour shadow ministers, Janet Daby and Alex Cunningham. We also sought media coverage, generating two articles in the *i* and one in the *Telegraph*, and supported a couple in sending a letter before challenge to the Government. The matter was resolved to our satisfaction by the end of September. New regulations were then published in October specifically allowing for humanist weddings, through provisions for 'an alternative wedding ceremony', defined as 'a ceremony based on a person's faith or belief'. Since then, equal treatment between humanist and legally recognised weddings has been maintained. The Welsh Government later adopted this wording for maximum clarity in December.

Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland, in the summer outdoors marriages were allowed to resume, but a difficulty arose in that for civil (and hence humanist) marriages, Northern Ireland requires financially burdensome registrations of outdoor settings, which gave rise to discrimination against non-religious couples, as religious ceremonies held outdoors do not require this. The Northern Ireland Finance Minister recognised the issue and agreed to accelerate plans to put humanist weddings on equal footing. Later, the second coronavirus lockdown in late November caused havoc for many couples having humanist weddings as they banned weddings in all places that serve food and drink, or have a liquor licence – while allowing register offices and places of worship to remain open for marriages. Some 90% of our weddings were affected by this. We raised the issue with MLAs and officials once again, and the third lockdown on 26 December saw an exception to venue closures made 'to host a wedding or civil partnership ceremony'.

Outside of Covid-related work, we met officials from the Law Commission in the process of reviewing hate crime legislation in England and Wales. We explained that non-religious worldviews are covered by hate crime legislation as the UK is a party to the European Convention on Human Rights, so references to religion must be read as

including non-religious beliefs, in accordance with article 9 (the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief). We argued that this should be made explicit in legislation, and that the current religion-only wording discourages apostates from reporting crimes against them.

Equal access to emotional and counselling support for non-religious people in state institutions, such as hospitals and prisons, continued to be a priority area of work. We continued to monitor prison and NHS chaplaincy job vacancies for unlawful discrimination against qualified non-religious candidates. We were successful in removing religious restrictions from chaplaincy posts in the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. We also met officials from the Northern Ireland Department of Health to discuss the need for non-religious pastoral carers in Northern Ireland hospitals. We held a number of meetings with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS) Chaplain General and their officials and were pleased to learn their largely discriminatory 'Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners' guidance will be reviewed later in 2021. We subsequently worked with the Chaplain General's Policy Adviser on changes to the way religion and belief is recorded for prisoners, so as to more accurately reflect their current worldview. Concerning armed forces settings, we and members of our Defence Humanists section responded to a consultation on reforming defence strategy, calling for non-religious pastoral care to become a part of the armed forces. We also launched a 'write to your MP' function to allow members of Defence Humanists to ask their MPs to support this campaign and to write to the Defence Secretary. Subsequently, Virginia Crosbie MP asked a parliamentary question on the issue. We later met with MOD officials, who promised swift action.

We continued to act as watchdogs for non-religious parents' interests. We ran a short social media and publicity campaign in December reminding parents that the annual Operation Christmas Child shoebox scheme run by US evangelical charity Samaritan's Purse uses Christmas gift-giving as an opportunity to evangelise vulnerable children. We encouraged the public to donate to alternative charities that don't do this.

Freedom of expression

Our work to advance and protect freedom of thought and expression was busier than ever, with crucial success in influencing outcomes in Scotland and Northern Ireland in particular. We worked with our colleagues at Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) to support the repeal of Scotland's blasphemy laws, which the Scottish Government brought about through its Hate Crime Bill. We also worked with HSS to develop pragmatic reforms of the Bill to remove its own inadvertent chilling effect on speech that is critical of religion. We put in a joint submission to the consultation on the Bill, drawing on our experience with the equivalent 2006 law in England, and jointly coordinated a letter from high-profile artists and campaigners on the dangers to free expression, including Rowan Atkinson, which attracted widespread attention and front page coverage across Scottish newspapers, as well as being the top trending topic on Twitter. As a result of this campaign the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice Hamza Yousef publicly thanked us for our constructive criticism, and confirmed in a tweet that the campaign had been the leading factor in his decision to amend the law. We welcomed the Government amendment, announced in November, which emphatically protects 'antipathy, dislike, ridicule and insult' of religious beliefs, as part of people's legitimate right to freedom of expression. These were the precise changes we asked for.

Our work on repealing Northern Ireland's blasphemy law was just as intensive. We met a number of MLAs from all parties on the issue, including one DUP MLA, who agreed to support repeal. Currently her party is the only one opposed to repeal, as revealed by our previous campaigning, but she also agreed to raise the issue within the party's caucus. We met Justice Minister Naomi Long to discuss the issue; she previously expressed her support for repealing Northern Ireland's blasphemy laws. Based on our extensive meetings on the ground with MLAs, we are now confident that if a Bill were to be presented before the Assembly, it would have sufficient support from both communities in Northern Ireland for it to pass. In October, we met with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission about repealing the blasphemy laws; the Commission is supportive and will be advising MLAs to repeal if any bills or amendments are brought to the Legislative Assembly.

Legal recognition of humanist marriages (England and Wales)

Our campaign for legal recognition of humanist marriages in England and Wales continued across legal and parliamentary fronts, as well as in the media and through engagement with the latest of several official reviews.

We supported a legal case with six humanist couples heard in the High Court in July, challenging the lack of recognition of humanist marriages. We secured witness statements from Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, on the international picture – he says that the lack of legal recognition in England and Wales is unlawful; Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain; Tina Beattie, Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Roehampton; Michael Booth, the Church/Government adviser at the recording clerk's office of the Quakers in Britain; Distinguished Professor of Religion and Society Linda Woodhead, on Christian beliefs about marriage; Dr Lois Lee on religion, non-religious beliefs, intrinsicity, orthodoxy, and orthopraxy; Jeaneane Fowler, author of *Humanism: Beliefs and Practices*, on the intrinsic nature of humanist ceremonies to humanism; Paul Pugh, former Registrar General for England and Wales and humanist celebrant, on the Government's approach to legal recognition of humanist marriage; Humanist Society Scotland Chief Executive Fraser Sutherland on humanist marriages in Scotland; our then-Ceremonies Board Chair Zena Birch on the nature of humanist marriages; our Director of Community Services on practical difficulties in extending legal recognition to humanist marriages as a form of civil marriage; and our Chief Executive on a variety of matters, including humanist marriages being intrinsic to humanism, freedom, recognition, and responsibility, and current political movements.

This case received widespread media attention, with 165 distinct local and national news stories, including from BBC News Online, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *i*, *The Evening Standard*, *The Belfast Telegraph*, Radio 4's news bulletins, and lots of local radio, TV, and newspaper articles. BBC Breakfast, BBC News South East Today, ITV Meridian News, and BBC Look North (East Yorks and Lincolnshire) broadcast segments around the time of the hearing, and one of our couples appeared on a dozen local BBC radio stations in a row on a Sunday morning. The outcome of the case received further coverage in the *i*, *Telegraph*, RTE, and the *Law Gazette*, as well as some local papers. The Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Green Party, the Conservative MP Crispin Blunt, and Ahmed Shaheed all endorsed our case for our media release. In the media, we publicised new statistics by the National Records of Scotland which we analysed to show that for the first time there were more humanist than Christian marriages in Scotland in 2019.

This was reported in the *Times*, *i*, *Herald Scotland*, and trade press. We also received significant coverage in lots of local papers around new marriage figures in England and Wales, including the dearth of religious same-sex marriages.

The legal case's outcome was that the judge agreed with us that lack of legal recognition of humanist marriages is 'discrimination', but, frustratingly, declined to make a declaration of incompatibility due to the ongoing marriage law review by the Law Commission. She failed to consider whether the Government could provide legal recognition of humanist marriages now as an interim measure, even if the law then changes again as a result of the wholesale review, which is our preferred position. We began exploratory work on an appeal. Nevertheless, it was a victory on all matters of principle and represents significant progress. In law, if the Government does not provide for legally recognised humanist marriages after the Law Commission review, it will be in clear breach of human rights.

Our work in the courts was matched by work in Parliament. Humanist peer Baroness Meacher introduced a Humanist Marriage Bill in the Lords, whose second reading was pushed back by the pandemic. In parallel, the former Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief Rehman Chishti MP made a high-profile show of support by introducing a cross-party backed Humanist Marriage Bill in the Commons. A large number of MPs and peers wrote to ministers and tabled parliamentary questions in support of legal recognition, following the outcome of the case, including Labour Shadow Belief minister Janet Daby MP. We also had meetings with the new Shadow Marriage Minister, Alex Cunningham MP, who wrote to the Marriage Minister Alex Chalk in light of the ruling, asking him to acknowledge the implications of the Court decision, to amend the terms of reference of the Law Commission review, and to bring about legal recognition of humanist marriages in the interim. We also met Myles Stacey, the Conservatives' Head of Outreach, and discussed legal recognition of humanist marriages.

We met the Law Commission to discuss its proposals for a reform of marriage law, which include a scheme for legal recognition of humanist marriages, but also what we consider to be excessive relaxation of requirements – for instance allowing commercial celebrants to perform legally recognised marriages without many of the checks and balances which apply to humanist or religious officiants. We responded to its consultation on weddings law and encouraged our celebrants and their couples to respond, producing guidance to assist them in doing so. We also attended a wide range of stakeholder events related to the reforms, and consulted the Humanist Society Scotland, the Welsh Government, the Church of England, the Quakers, and lawyer Russell Sandberg. The Welsh Government's response explicitly endorsed legal recognition of humanist marriages, with the Church of England also endorsing the 'proportionate' approach of the Rehman Chishti Bill.

Legally recognised humanist marriages (crown dependencies)

In Guernsey, where a process to legally recognise humanist marriage began shortly after Jersey's law was reformed, the Assembly passed new legislation extending legal recognition to humanist marriages. Officials had provided us with assurances that the new scheme will be introduced in a way that would stop discrimination in how humanist couples/celebrants are treated, when compared to religious couples/officiants. However

many details of the scheme will not be clear until regulations are passed. The legislation awaits UK Privy Council and royal assent in 2021.

Humanist marriages law (Northern Ireland)

In Northern Ireland, our marriages already enjoy legal recognition following a Court of Appeal ruling. After the Northern Ireland Assembly resumed its business following the Covid-19 outbreak, we met Finance Minister Conor Murphy MLA to discuss teething issues and improvements to the regulatory regime, including how classification as a kind of 'civil' marriage gives rise to unintended discrimination, as opposed to the 'belief' categorisation in Scotland. Conor agreed to take the issue up; Government work on the matter is ongoing. The Registrar General's 2019 report showed 2.4% of all Northern Ireland marriages were humanist.

Finally, the law was also changed to allow those in civil partnerships to convert to being married. The first such humanist marriage/conversion ceremony occurred in December.

Reform of Religious Education (England)

We continued to champion pluralistic Religious Education lessons in schools, with humanism taught about on a par with religions. In March, we met the Department for Education's RE lead to discuss the inclusion of humanism in the curriculum, humanist representation on Standing Advisory Councils on RE (SACREs), and our resources for teachers and schools. He advised that the Government had 'little appetite' for changes to the RE curriculum, but that the DfE routinely advised councils upon enquiry that many SACRE's do indeed have such representatives as full voting members. In June, we met the Education Secretary's Special Adviser to discuss the same matters.

We also participated in a number of sector events and high-level meetings on the future of RE in England. These included a panel led by Chair of the Religious Education Council, Professor Trevor Cooling, on 'What in the Worldview is going on in RE?'; a meeting with Ofsted's lead for religious education; a presentation on our successful 2015 *Fox* legal case on humanism in RE, for Nottingham Trent University's 'Flashpoints: Human Rights, Law, and Religion' conference; and a meeting with Labour's Shadow Education Secretary Kate Green MP.

In November, our appointed representative to Southampton SACRE had her application to be a full voting member refused on the basis that she does not represent a religion, which is unlawful discrimination. We supported her in sending a pre-action legal letter asking the Council to reverse its decision, as we did previously and successfully in Greenwich and Glamorgan. In January we agreed with the Council for them to retake the decision next November, so as to avoid legal action during the pandemic.

Reform of Religious Education (Wales)

We had a successful year in advancing humanism on the curriculum in Wales, as part of the Welsh Government's Curriculum and Assessment Bill is putting humanism on a par with religions in the new 'Religion, Values, and Ethics' curriculum and explicitly provides for humanist membership of SACREs. We initially had serious worries when the Welsh Government decided to scrap parents' rights to withdraw their children from RE not only in non-religious schools (which we support) but also in faith schools, which could cause

discrimination with non- and other-religious pupils being taught in a confessional manner. In February, we published top Law Professor Sir Malcolm Evans' legal opinion stating that the move to take away this safeguard threatens the freedom of religion or belief of children and their families, and could potentially be unlawful. The story was covered by BBC News Online and our Wales Co-ordinator was quoted on the human rights issues that arise when schools teach RE from a particular religious perspective. We also met the Head of Curriculum at the Welsh Government to discuss the issue. In May, we were delighted that it announced that, to comply with human rights law as demonstrated by Sir Malcolm, parents whose children attend faith schools would be entitled to demand inclusive lessons in-line with their locally agreed syllabus, in place of faith-based RE. We wrote to Welsh Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams to express our support for the proposals, which, if made law, will constitute one of the biggest educational reforms in this area for 75 years. We also gave vocal support for the Bill when we gave oral evidence to the Senedd's Children, Young People, and Education Committee and endorsed it in our *100 Years of Disestablishment* report on the successes of Welsh political culture. The Bill subsequently passed the Senedd in 2021.

We responded to unfounded claims by the Catholic Education Service and the head teachers of all its schools in Wales that the inclusion of non-religious beliefs will 'dilute' the subject and 'threatens social cohesion and tolerance of religions'. We were quoted responding to this in the *i*. We were also quoted supporting the announcement of the reforms in the *Church of England Newspaper*. We responded to the Welsh Government's consultation on the legal framework for RVE, where we expressed concerns that older pupils attending faith schools could not opt *themselves* into agreed syllabus RVE and, owing to the attitude of some religious groups to the teaching of the subject in a more inclusive way (particularly the Catholic Church), as well as the fact faith schools are permitted to employ teachers on the basis of their faith, there is a significant risk that these lessons may not be sufficiently objective, critical, or pluralistic as legally required, and will threaten the rights of children and their families. We set out a range of further reforms we would like to see around young people's rights to determine their own RVE, staffing arrangements, and inspections. We also encouraged members and supporters to submit responses.

We are part of the Welsh Government working group producing guidance on the new curriculum. In separate but related work, we met the Welsh Government to discuss how we might support teachers to include humanism in lessons using our resources.

Reform of Religious Education (Northern Ireland)

We discussed placing humanism in Northern Ireland schools in meetings with Green Party MLA Rachel Woods, Alliance Party MLA Chris Lyttle (also Chair of the Assembly Education Committee), and Sinn Féin MLAs Karen Mullan and Catherine Kelly (also on the Education Committee). All were very receptive to our position and we will look to work closely with them in future, particularly given that the Executive is preparing to undertake a large-scale independent review of the education system as part of the New Decade, New Approach deal struck when it was restored last January.

'Collective worship' and inclusive assemblies

Connected to our work on RE is our campaign to see collective worship replaced with inclusive assemblies, taking account of children's rights. This approach is endorsed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which has called for the same in the UK.

Concerning England, in January, All Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG) member Baroness Barker (on behalf of Baroness Burt) introduced a private member's bill on collective worship for its first reading in the House of Lords. We helped prepare the Bill. Due to a low placing in the ballot, it did not receive a second reading. We also met the Department for Education to discuss the implications of the *Harris* case from 2019 on collective worship. The DfE could only commit at this time to promoting our Assemblies for All resources on social media.

In Wales, we continually raised the lack of attention to outdated collective worship laws in the Welsh Government's Curriculum and Assessment Bill. In January, Welsh Education Minister Kirsty Williams told the Senedd's Petitions Committee it would not take any action on collective worship during the current Assembly term. In February, we met Leanne Wood MS, who was keen to take a proposed members' bill forward to reform the law on collective worship in Wales as soon as possible. Unfortunately, coronavirus time pressures made this impossible in the Assembly term.

In December, all the children's rights bodies in the four nations of the UK published reports to inform the UN Committee's next set of Concluding Observations. We submitted evidence, including on collective worship, for these reports in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. As a result, every report noted the failure to repeal collective worship laws and said the Committee should put the issue to the governments of the UK in its List of Issues Prior to Reporting. In addition, we submitted our own report directly to the Committee, highlighting collective worship as well as other issues including humanism in RE, illegal schools, and LGBT-inclusive RSE. The Senedd's Children, Young People, and Education Committee called on the Welsh Government to implement a plan of action on the UN recommendations, and the Scottish Government committed to enacting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in law (about which – more below).

Relationships and Sex Education

We were pleased to learn in January that the Welsh Government would remove the parental right to withdraw from RSE (short for Relationships and Sexuality Education in Wales, and for Relationships and Sex Education in England) on the basis that this would not be legally necessary if it were taught from a fact-based, objective perspective. We were appointed to sit on the newly formed Welsh Government advisory group on RSE from July.

In England, we expressed alarm at a Policy Exchange report which argued that Ofsted should allow faith primary schools to omit teaching about LGBT people on religious grounds and that the inspectorate was behaving heavy-handedly by enforcing the law in faith schools. In June, disappointingly, the UK Government said schools could have flexibility in discharging their legal duties regarding RSE as a result of the pandemic. Nevertheless in September, we celebrated the introduction of statutory RSE in England, the culmination of decades of campaigning. Later that month, Ofsted issued new

guidance saying that schools that fail to teach an LGBT-inclusive curriculum risk being downgraded at inspection. However, owing to faith-based carve-outs that allow religious schools to teach in line with their beliefs, there is still a possibility of such schools side-stepping these duties.

In December we celebrated a High Court decision to throw out a potential legal challenge to new RSE guidance in England on grounds that there had been 'undue delay' in bringing the case and the claims – including that parents should be able to remove their children from lessons where they might face exposure to ideas that do not fit with their family's 'religious and philosophical convictions' – were 'not sufficiently arguable... to justify outweighing the clear detriment to good administration of extending time.' The Court also outright rejected a claim that the UK Government had failed to consider the impact of LGBT-inclusive teaching on religious people. It ruled that the Government's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) involved 'a careful balancing of the competing rights and interests and demonstrated that "due regard" had been had to the relevant public sector equality considerations'.

Religious state schools (England and Wales)

We invested significant time and effort in work for an inclusive, universal education system with no discrimination on the basis of religion or belief. In January, we learned that the first new state-funded Catholic school legally permitted to select 100% of its pupils on religious grounds to open in over a decade was set to get the green light in Peterborough, which was challenged by local councillors, families, and members of Peterborough Humanists. We provided a briefing to local campaigners and officials. Unfortunately challenges were rejected and the proposal looks set to go ahead despite fierce local opposition. In early March, our Chief Executive appeared on Sky News to voice our opposition to the plans. The piece included the voices of local campaigners who want new schools in their area to be inclusive and open to all. Later that same month we found out that Peterborough Council will be paying the 10% of capital funding that is usually paid by the faith group, so this selective school will be funded entirely from the public purse, directly contradicting the rationale for the introduction of the scheme in the first place.

In February, a further 19 religious schools were proposed via the latest wave of the Government's free schools programme. Of the 89 schools proposed, 12 will have a designated religious character and a further 7 will have a 'faith ethos'. If approved, 14 of these schools will be Christian, 3 Muslim, and 2 Sikh.

We publicised research by the Sutton Trust which found that 80% of parents think that schools should have a mix of pupils from different backgrounds. The poll also found strong support for reducing segregation and improving social mixing among senior school leaders and teachers, with around 70% of each saying this would have a positive effect in schools. Teachers in the most socially selective schools – including faith schools – were most likely to say segregation is not a problem where they work. The poll found just 11% of faith school leaders say they take the issue of social selection very strongly into account when drawing up admissions policies, as opposed to 21% of those who lead local authority schools without a religious character. We raised the issue of discriminatory faith-based admissions in the Trust's consultation on admissions in May. Religious selection was also criticised by a group of more than thirty leading Anglicans, including the former Bishop of Bolton, who wrote an open letter to the Church of

England decrying the practice as unfair and saying that it fuels the view that the purpose of Church schools is to provide 'pew fodder or to evangelise, rather than for education for its own sake'. The letter was organised by the Accord Coalition, of which Humanists UK is a founding member.

We responded to a consultation on a proposal to amalgamate two infant schools – a community school and a Church of England school – into a single, C of E faith school. Despite the fact that the community ethos school is larger with a higher number of pupils, in March the decision was taken to give the new school a faith character and give the land to the Diocese of Guildford. We are working with local councillors to challenge the decision. Meanwhile, in June, we publicly supported the decision to strip a Sikh multi-academy trust responsible for running a failing Sikh academy of Government funding and seeking to place it with a new sponsor.

In April, we wrote to the Chair of the Education Select Committee to express our concern after he defended the actions of a state-funded Charedi Jewish school found by Ofsted to be censoring history and science textbooks and abuse helpline information. In an online session of the Committee, Robert Halfon accused the Chief Inspector of Schools, Amanda Spielman, of going into religious schools 'with a very heavy hand' and asked Ofsted to look again at this well-documented case. We have yet to receive a response from Mr Halfon. However, our public comments on the case were picked up in the media, including the *i*. We were also mentioned in the *Jewish Chronicle* in an article about the wider issues of Ofsted inspections of faith schools.

In August we wrote to Liverpool Council about the ways in which faith-based admissions policies disadvantage the non-religious, as well as those from poor and minority ethnic/religious backgrounds, after learning that it will be establishing a scrutiny panel to look at the impact of admissions on the Muslim community. Through conducting some original research, we found that non-religious families in some areas of the city are effectively locked out of all of the good schools in their local area. This research helped to inform an article by Polly Toynbee in the *Guardian*. At present, the Council is unwilling to broaden the scope of the scrutiny panel. However, a broader investigation is set to be carried out regarding equalities in the City as part of a 'Mayoral Taskforce on Equality' and we will actively look to be involved in this.

The need to address discriminatory faith-based admissions policies was shown to be more pressing than ever in September after the Local Government Association published a report showing that a third of the country is set to run out of secondary school places by 2025/26. A new report by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change also found that young people who do not mix with those who hold beliefs that differ from their own are more likely to hold extremist views.

Also in September, a new report published by the University of Ulster highlighted the fact that religious bias and segregation in the way schools in Northern Ireland are governed helps to bolster existing community divisions. This was an issue we picked up in our response to the Children's Legal Centre call for evidence on the state of children's rights in Northern Ireland, as was the broader impact of religiously segregated schools on pupils' right to freedom of religion or belief. Given that the introduction of integrated education in Northern Ireland was a key recommendation of the UN Committee in the last set of Concluding Observations, this issue is very likely to feature in their next report and we will continue to lobby for a single system of education in the country,

both through our own work and via that of a coalition of stakeholders with a commitment to inclusive education that we are in the process of setting up.

In October we responded to a Government consultation on changes to the School Admissions Code that were purportedly designed to make the system fairer for vulnerable children. We pointed out that, by continuing to allow faith schools to discriminate not only against all children who don't share the faith, but specifically against looked after and previously looked after children who don't share the faith, the changes failed to adequately achieve the goal of fair access for the vulnerable and should be amended accordingly.

In October, we published new analysis of the Church of England's Statistics for Mission showing that the number of children in Anglican schools is now higher than the entire worshipping community, meaning that the power the Church exerts over the school system is vastly disproportionate to the influence it has in wider society, providing further reason why faith schools are entirely inappropriate in modern Britain.

In November we expressed alarm at a UK Government decision to press ahead with a proposal for a mixed Anglican/Catholic free school in Soham, in spite of strong local opposition, including from councillors and other local schools. We are working with local activists, councillors, and the local humanist group to campaign against the decision.

In November we highlighted that many faith schools have made changes to their faith-based admissions criteria to recognise the impact of the pandemic on the ability of families to meet requirements for religious attendance. We argued that, because these criteria are already unfair – particularly to vulnerable groups – they should be removed altogether. We welcomed news that the Office of the Schools Adjudicator found that a faith school admissions policy requiring weekly church attendance was unreasonable.

In November, we welcomed findings of the annual British Sikh Report that 89% of Sikhs think that faith ethos is not an important factor in choosing a school and less than half would send their child to a Sikh school, suggesting little support for faith-based education in the community.

In the same month, the Accord Coalition submitted evidence to the Church of England's anti-racism task force showing that religiously selective admissions are racially discriminatory. The submission was partially based on joint research conducted by Accord and Humanists UK in 2015.

Towards the end of the year, and coinciding with the launch of our fundraiser for our work on faith schools, we published a seven-point Manifesto for Inclusive Schools, setting out our vision for an educational future without faith schools or religious privilege.

Religious state schools (Northern Ireland)

In Northern Ireland, we met a number of MLAs to discuss our view that there should be a single system of education in the country. This view was echoed in statements made by DUP MLA Maurice Bradley in an Assembly meeting on integrated schools in November. In December, we welcomed an announcement by the First Minister that the forthcoming

Northern Ireland education review would consider what a single education system would mean for the country and how it might be implemented.

At the same time, we welcomed two reports from the University of Ulster illustrating the various ways in which the education system is segregated along religious lines. The first of these, published in November, showed that segregation is rife in pre-schools (which are not commonly thought to be segregated as they are theoretically open to all). A second, published in December, illustrated that teacher training courses are similarly segregated. We will continue to work on this issue in 2021, including through the potential development of a coalition of religious, educational, and humanist groups interested in reform in Northern Ireland.

Religious private schools

In November, we welcomed the news that the UK Government was considering the closure of a fundamentalist Accelerated Christian Education school. However, we are concerned that a number of these schools are still operating across the UK and there has been very little Government appetite to close them. Also in November, we welcomed the news that the UK Government would be taking steps to close a private Muslim school that had been found segregating both children and teachers by sex, for persistently failing to meet the independent school standards.

Figures published by Ofsted showed that 40% of independent religious schools failed to meet inspection standards at their last inspection. Steiner schools were failing badly, with just 5 of the 22 independent Steiner schools inspected by Ofsted since the body took over responsibility for inspecting these schools (from the now defunct School Inspection Service) receiving a good rating. We expressed particular alarm at a damning Ofsted report on an independent Jewish school found to be teaching creationism as science, censoring books, failing to provide books in English, and preventing pupils from entering for GCSEs. These cases illustrate the key role that Ofsted seeks to play in ensuring that schools are not allowed to get away with omitting to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to pupils and we will continue to do all we can to support them in this endeavour.

Illegal schools

In January, Ofsted announced that its unregistered schools team had investigated over 100 suspected illegal religious schools since it was established in 2016 and reiterated its call for further powers to tackle the problem. Hackney Council also stated that, owing to a lack of adequate regulation, 'no real progress' had been made on the problem of the concentration of illegal schools in the Stamford Hill area since the problem was first brought to light (by us and others) over six years ago. In December, Ofsted's annual report once again raised the issue of Government inaction on illegal schools and said that there was 'no room for complacency' on the issue. We continued to press the Government on regulation in this area and discussed it in some depth in our meeting with Shadow Education Secretary Kate Green MP.

In March we welcomed the news that the fourth prosecution of the providers of an unregistered school had been successful, with the accused being awarded the first custodial sentence for this offence.

In May, we responded to a UK Government consultation on the regulation of independent educational institutions, which was later pulled from the Government website on the day it was due to close. We asked members of the APPHG to table questions on the issue and were able to ascertain that the consultation was 'paused' due to capacity constraints and concerns that stakeholders may not have had enough time to respond. In October we welcomed the relaunch of the consultation, and encouraged our members and supporters who hadn't already participated to take action on it. In November we submitted evidence to an Education Select Committee call for evidence on home education which also referenced the way this might be used as a cover for illegal schools. We gave our explicit support for a register of home-educated pupils and called for swift action to tighten the law, both in line with the proposals outlined in our consultation response on regulating independent educational institutions, and with respect to greater powers for Ofsted.

In May we highlighted evidence Amanda Spielman gave to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, including a pamphlet used in registered and unregistered Charedi Jewish schools which she described as 'a manifesto for corporal punishment'. In August we expressed alarm at testimony given by the Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner for Hackney to the Independent Inquiry, saying that safeguarding children attending unregistered yeshivas in the area was impossible because of a lack of engagement from the community.

When in October, the UK Government published its voluntary code of practice for out-of-school settings, such as religious tuition centres, we expressed dismay that the code, due to its optional nature, was utterly insufficient to protect the safety and welfare of children attending these settings and would do nothing to tackle the problem of illegal schools, and actually risked kitemarking poor practice.

Evolution and creationism

In late January, the Welsh Government published the final version of the new curriculum for Wales. Unfortunately, this document did not include a prohibition on teaching creationism on an equal footing with scientifically evidenced theories, and evolution does not feature explicitly in the progression steps that outline what should be taught at each stage of learning until the latter stages of secondary education. We highlighted the issue in our response to the Senedd's call for evidence on the Bill. In March, we attended a meeting with the head of the science and technology curriculum team for the Welsh Government and were reassured that they will be working to ensure that creationism isn't taught as science and that evolution features in the primary curriculum through a package of legislation, additional guidance, and teacher training and support. We have put officials in direct contact with Dr James Williams, Senior Lecturer in Science Education at Sussex University, who might help them develop their approach. We hope that this will feature in the Government's 'What Matters' curriculum codes.

In Northern Ireland, we raised the issue of teaching evolution and banning creationism in our response to the Children's Law Centre's call for evidence on the state of children's rights in Northern Ireland.

Human rights and equality law

At the end of July, the UK Government launched an independent Review of Administrative Law, focusing on judicial review power – the process which allows individuals to challenge the legality of a decision of a government or another public body. The terms of reference for the review indicated a strong desire from the Government to curtail judicial review and limit access to it. In response, we assembled an unprecedented coalition of over 150 of the UK's leading charities and organisations to protest at potential weakening of our human rights framework. We separately joined a smaller coalition of human rights organisations, led by Liberty and the Public Law Project, called 'Page 48', to coordinate our campaigning activities on this review.

We responded ourselves to the call for evidence from the Independent Review, expressing alarm at proposals which could reduce the number of Government decisions that can be challenged in court and insulate abuses of power from any legal scrutiny. We responded similarly to a call for evidence by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee into the Government's plan to establish a Constitution, Democracy, and Rights Commission. In December, the UK Government launched a panel to examine the Human Rights Act 1998, which enshrines the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law and allows citizens to have their cases taken under the Convention heard in UK courts.

In Guernsey, we raised objections to the forthcoming Discrimination Ordinance – the first equality legislation on the Islands – that could potentially set back representation of the non-religious. We clarified for officials that under the ECHR, religion must be read as including non-religious beliefs, in accordance with article 9 (the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief). This means that Guernsey cannot choose to exclude non-religious beliefs from protection without being in contravention of the law.

International freedom of religion or belief

International freedom of religion or belief continued to be a focus, including in our interventions at the UN Human Rights Council. Our earliest intervention raised concerns about President Trump's anti-freedom of religion or belief 'Religious Freedom Alliance', whose first 'Ministerial on Religious Freedom', outside of the US itself, was hosted by Poland. We explained how many countries in the Alliance often use supposed religious freedom as a justification for anti-LGBT persecution. In subsequent interventions throughout the year, we spoke on how blasphemy laws are used to persecute cultural rights activists in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Mauritania; the need for blasphemy law repeal in Brunei; assisted dying as a human right; persecution of the non-religious in Iraq; the persecution of Uighur Muslims in China, (an intervention made jointly with British Muslims for Secular Democracy); threats to secularism in Turkey; and we called on Sudan, which had announced the end of the death penalty for apostasy, to go further and entirely repeal its laws against it, and called on the 13 other states that have the death penalty for blasphemy or apostasy to also repeal their laws.

We continued to have good relations with the freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) team at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. We briefed the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief Rehman Chishti MP on the escalating situation affecting humanists in Nigeria (about which more below), and discussed a new framework for reporting on FoRB violations that will be rolled out to

embassies. We also prepared training materials for the FCDO on the non-religious, which they have told us they intend to take up and integrate into their training programme in the future. At the end of the year we wrote to the Prime Minister and others raising concerns, about the appointment of Fiona Bruce MP (who has a strongly anti-FoRB, anti-humanist, anti-LGBT, and anti-women track record) to replace Chishti in the PM's Special Envoy role.

We also attended many meetings of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on FoRB, including on how we can influence the UK Government to make FoRB an aspect of trade deals, and agreed with APPG staff that Tommy Sheppard MP should become an officer of the Group so it would have humanist representation.

The issue of Uighur persecution in China was a repeated feature of our FoRB work. We briefed the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group Co-Chair Baroness Bakewell, who raised the plight of Uighurs in the Lords, and signed a letter on the matter from religion or belief leaders, which was covered in places like The Tablet and Premier Christianity. We also attended the launch in Parliament of Open Doors' annual report into persecution of Christians around the world. With various other groups, we came together to launch the UK Freedom of Religion or Belief Forum, and our Chief Executive joined its steering group.

Humanists at Risk

The case of Mubarak Bala had a high prominence in our FoRB work and received widespread media interest. Bala, the President of the Nigerian Humanist Association, was arrested in April and charged with blasphemy following a pattern of online and physical harassment culminating in a legal petition to the police accusing him of being 'provocative and annoying to Muslims' on Facebook. He was then transferred to Kano state, the Islamist stronghold where blasphemy is punishable by the death penalty under sharia law. Our Chief Executive met the Africa Minister and the Human Rights Minister about it, and the former twice raised the matter directly with the Nigerian Foreign Minister. Shadow Foreign Minister Stephen Doughty asked a parliamentary question about Bala. We also wrote to the APPHG asking them to contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to take action. Co-chair of the APPHG Crispin Blunt wrote to Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, and our Chief Executive wrote to the Nigerian High Commission. In June, APPHG Treasurer Lord (Alf) Dubs tabled a parliamentary question on Mr Bala's case at our suggestion. Bala's case was cited by our Chief Executive in at a Department for International Development roundtable with religion and belief leaders as an example of the global impact of coronavirus on humanists and on religious communities, as it also was in the Humanists International Humanists at Risk 2020 report, funded by the FCDO.

Later in the year, we organised a protest outside the Nigerian High Commission as part of a global push for action on Bala's case. We welcomed the Federal High Court of Abuja ordering his release, but it was unclear whether Kano State would comply with the judgment. At the end of 2020, Bala was still in captivity and had not seen his family since his arrest.

Support for humanist asylum seekers and reform of the asylum process continued to feature in our work, although individual asylum cases and interviews were suspended between March and September due to Covid-19. In May, we attended our first

pre-meeting of the Home Office's National Asylum Stakeholders Forum with a range of other asylum stakeholders and, in June, attended our first Home Office meeting with the group.

Assisted dying

Our work on assisted dying continued across several fronts and jurisdictions. One major push was for a public or official inquiry into assisted dying. In January, we briefed a number of members of the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG) about this. In a debate, new MP Rachel Hopkins spoke movingly about how humanist values informed her support for a change in the law. In August, we brought most of the families and living claimants from previous assisted dying cases together, for the first time, to urge the Secretary of State for Justice to initiate a review into assisted dying. Our joint letter was printed in the *Guardian* and our Chief Executive was quoted on the urgent need to launch an inquiry.

Another front concerned the formal opposition of medical bodies to assisted dying (often in spite of support from their members). In February, the British Medical Association (BMA) announced it was consulting its members about this policy, which is currently opposed to a change in the law. Along with our partners in the Assisted Dying Coalition, we published a joint letter in the *Guardian* signed by many of our patrons commenting on the need for doctors to respect their patients' autonomy. In October, it was announced that a majority of BMA members back a change of stance, and we called on the body to implement its members' wishes. Separately, the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) retained its opposition to assisted dying in February, despite a majority of its members preferring either a neutral or supportive stance. In response, our Director of Public Affairs published an opinion piece in *Left Foot Forward* challenging the fairness of the RCGP's decision and we sought independent legal advice as to its legality. In September, we welcomed news that two GPs were considering legal action.

Another front concerned ongoing legal challenges to the current law on assisted dying. In January, the Court of Appeal refused our member Phil Newby permission to judicially review the law on assisted dying. In May, we submitted a final appeal in Paul Lamb's case on assisted dying, which was refused permission by the Court of Appeal, indicating that the issue fundamentally should now be resolved by legislators and not the courts – returning the issue to Parliament. That is why focus has shifted to calls for a Government or Parliamentary inquiry.

Elsewhere, following Jersey's decision to convene a citizens' panel to review the evidence for and against the legalisation of assisted dying, we met Lord Alf Dubs to discuss the proposal further and ensure it covers both the terminally ill and incurably suffering. He subsequently wrote to the Chief Minister of Jersey seeking more information, recommending us as experts for the panel. In June, Jersey announced the review would be delayed due to the pandemic. It is now happening in 2021.

Internationally, the emerging consensus in support of assisted dying for both the incurably suffering and the terminally ill continued to grow. Germany's Constitutional Court ruled that forbidding professional assistance to die for those who are incurably suffering is unconstitutional; Ireland's 'Dying with Dignity Bill' passed its first legislative hurdle in the Dáil; and New Zealand voted by referendum to legalise assisted dying,

albeit only for the terminally ill. In November, the Government confirmed that travelling abroad for the purpose of an assisted death was not prohibited under lockdown restrictions.

Abortion rights

Our work on abortion rights continued. In June, the House of Commons voted for the final time in favour of legalising abortion in Northern Ireland, completing the passage of abortion legislation through the UK Parliament, which we had helped bring about and supported throughout. At the same time, in the Guernsey Assembly, members voted to liberalise the island's abortion laws in a move that is likely to result in Guernsey having amongst the best abortion laws in Europe.

We supported the move to telemedicine for early abortion services as a result of the pandemic. We also signed the letter organised by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch about European governments needing to maintain access to abortion services during the pandemic. We continued to play a leading role in the management of the Voice for Choice coalition and to work with our colleagues at BPAS, to put in place a plan for its future.

Children's rights

Promoting children's rights in line with their increasing maturity, and the UK's compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), has long been a feature of our work, particularly around education and bodily autonomy. In August, we welcomed a report from the Senedd's Children, Young People, and Education Committee recommending that the Welsh Government publish a 'strategic plan' for how it would meet the UN's recommendations for UNCRC compliance, which include the repeal of collective worship. In September, we celebrated the Scottish Government's announcement of a bill to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law. We lobbied the other governments of the UK to follow Scotland's lead and included this in our submissions on the state of children's rights in England and Wales that will be used to inform the next set of Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In our submissions to the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE), Children in Wales, and the Children's Legal Centre in Northern Ireland, we emphasised the children's rights issues that arise as a result of the UK's archaic worship laws. We also suggested questions for the Committee to ask Governments in each of the nations of the UK to establish how they plan to address these problems.

Early in the year, we also helped to found a new coalition based in the UK called ACTION: FGM, calling for the global eradication of FGM by 2030.

LGBT rights

In July, the Prime Minister restated his predecessor's pledge of two years earlier to ban 'conversion therapy' in the UK. We met the public affairs team at Stonewall and the Rainbow Project, and became a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding on ending conversion therapy in healthcare settings. Our Northern Ireland Coordinator met Northern Ireland officials to discuss banning conversion therapy, in response to our public call to action and suggestion their also signing the Memorandum of Understanding. Subsequently, Justice Minister Naomi Long MLA and Communities

Minister Carál Ni Chuilin MLA committed in a meeting with Health Minister Robin Swann MLA to take forward work to ban the harmful practice. Northern Ireland Humanists (in its own right and as part of Humanists UK) became the first Northern Ireland organisation to join the Coalition against Conversion Therapy. We also met the coordinator of the LGBT All-Party Parliamentary Group to discuss legislative attempts to bring forward a ban.

We were disappointed that the UK Government decided not to press ahead with modest reforms of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, of the kind successfully implemented in Malta and Ireland, which would ease the lives of trans people. We subsequently gave written evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee on how a process of changing legal gender could respect the dignity and human rights of trans people.

We welcomed a decision from the Department of Health and Social Care to enable men who have sex with men in England to donate blood following individualised risk assessments. It will remove a barrier to donating that was not medically justified and that perpetuated prejudiced views towards LGBT people.

Organ donation

In May, we celebrated the coming into effect of England's opt-out organ donation law, following over a decade of lobbying. By automatically considering adults to be donors, the change is likely to save upwards of 700 lives every year. We were part of the NHS committee that developed the changes and the publicity campaign when they came into force. We filmed several videos, funded by the NHS, with our patron Jamie Theakston to publicise the new laws from a humanist perspective. We released them later in the year to coincide with Organ Donation Week, as part of a mini social media campaign, featuring graphical content, quotations, facts, and broader information underlining the importance of organ donation.

We will soon face the realistic prospect of achieving an opt-out organ donor law in every part of the UK, Ireland, and crown dependencies. Scotland's adoption of the same system has been delayed to 2021. In May, the States Assembly in Guernsey enacted an opt-out organ donor law, to be activated by secondary legislation following the pandemic. In October, the House of Keys on the Isle of Man unanimously backed a move to a similar system. In December, the Northern Ireland Department of Health proposed introducing an opt-out system for organ donation and launched a consultation on this policy, which we will campaign in support of.

Animal welfare

We maintained a watching brief on animal welfare issues, which we respond to as and when they arise in parliamentary business, with a particular focus on those which intersect with religion or belief. We publicised a ruling from the European Court of Justice which upheld the legality of a decision by Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, to require all farm animals be stunned before slaughter, following a challenge by Jewish and Muslim groups. As 'retained EU law', the ruling forms binding case law in the UK, even after the end of the Brexit transition period, meaning there is no legal barrier to such a ban from also being introduced domestically.

5. We aim to achieve a situation where we are an expanding, financially healthy and sustainable organisation with high standards of governance and management.

Our first direct mail fundraiser of the year landed on doorsteps just as news of the pandemic was becoming seriously worrying, and saw anaemic results. Later that March, as national lockdown seemed inevitable and a 75% decline in new members began to present, we responded to a significant budgeted shortfall in income by appealing to our members and supporters for help. They gave a very generous response to this appeal and appeals in subsequent months – either joining as full members, increasing their regular monthly fees, or donating generously. Ticket-holders for our cancelled and postponed events were offered the choice of refunds or to let us keep their fees as donations, with a significant proportion choosing the latter.

We cancelled several routine fundraisers and all planned legacy marketing in light of the pandemic. By the end of summer, we had returned to normal fundraising operations. The concerning dip in membership growth around March was short-lived; after the novelty of the pandemic and lockdown wore off, numbers gradually normalised over a period of several months. In October, we partnered with our patron Lord (Alf) Dubs to launch our annual crowdfunder for the work of our Education Campaigns Manager, which went on to achieve its target early in the new year.

As part of our series of events tailored towards our major donor circle, the Blackham Society (a segment of our membership who make substantial regular donations), we hosted a series of intimate events with a number of well-known humanists, including Professor AC Grayling, Professor Francesca Stavrakopoulou, Professor Richard Wiseman, and Dr Adam Rutherford. We saw upsides and downsides to transitioning to an online format: members who do not usually attend events were able to join, including patrons and VIPs, and we also saved on venue costs. The downsides were that some guests missed the social and networking aspects of these evenings and we lost the opportunity to connect with major donors as individuals. Other fundraising and friend-making events, such as the President's Reception and annual thank you events, had to be cancelled in light of the pandemic.

In July we were delighted to receive confirmation of a grant from the AB Charitable Trust to support the expansion of the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network in prisons across the country. This funding will allow us to employ a contractor to help support more volunteers to establish themselves in prisons. This is an area where we have faced hurdles in the past. Additionally, we received £10,000 from the London City Bridge Trust to develop ways to meet the demand for pastoral care in the capital during the early stages of the pandemic, utilizing technology and innovative methods of delivery.

6. We aim to achieve a situation where we are respected as an organization for our expertise and professionalism and recognized as the national voice of Humanism and a leading national voice for the non-religious and for secularism.

Our recognition as the voice of humanism and the non-religious served us well during the national lockdown, as we were able to stay fully engaged with the relevant government departments to advise on issues, particularly around funerals and ceremonies, and this helped us to change government policy in a number of instances where it had an unfair impact on humanists and humanist ceremonies. Our Chief Executive is a member of the Moral and Ethical Advisory Group to the Department for Health and Social Care and Chief Medical Officer, our Wales Coordinator is a member of the Welsh Government's Ceremonies Group and Moral and Ethical Advisory Group, our Northern Ireland Coordinator is part of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action's faith and belief group (which is regularly used for consultation by ministers and officials), while our Director of Community Services was part of the London Resilience Forum, concerned with issues such as funeral capacity in the capital due to Covid-19. Our Chief Executive and Director of Public Affairs and Policy were both consulted by ministers and officials throughout the year on a range of issues.

We continued to be the go-to organisation for media commentary about the non-religious and humanism. When the latest Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey found that 20% of Northern Ireland adults now consider themselves to have 'no religion', a record high, we were asked to comment in various publications, including *Belfast Live*.

Our staff continue to be sought out for their expertise on humanism and the non-religious. Our Head of Humanist Care was invited to chair the final weekend of the Good Grief Festival in Bristol, and was elected Vice Chair of the Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care in Health; our Head of Ceremonies coordinated guidelines to support a set of national guidelines supporting funeral celebrants of all kinds, which was endorsed across the industry; our Director of Understanding Humanism contributed a chapter to *Reforming RE: Power and knowledge in a worldviews curriculum* by Mark Chater.

We were pleased to appoint a number of new patrons, including psychologist and former NBA player John Amaechi OBE; the Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka; the feminist writer Zoe Fairbairns; the science communicator and professional poker player Liv Boeree; actors Ralf Little and Kristian Nairn; and the Nobel Prize-winning geneticist Sir Paul Nurse.

For the third year in a row, we were awarded a London Faith & Belief Community Award for our work with the London Humanist Choir, and in particular its innovative work in lockdown.

Our Chief Executive was invited once again to represent humanists and the non-religious at the Cenotaph for the national Remembrance Day ceremony.

Financial Review

We ended the year with a surplus on unrestricted funds of £971k. We received a record amount of legacy income (£894k), including the largest single legacy in the history of the organisation (£672k). As our legacy income is too volatile to predict, we endeavour to treat this income as windfall rather than core funding due to its uncertainty. We will use the opportunity this income gives us to implement our new strategic plan, prioritising activities that will 1) grow our capacity to promote awareness of humanism, 2) help non-religious people to live happier, more confident and more ethical lives, and 3) enable people to enjoy freedom of thought, expression and choice over their own lives.

Following a sharp decline in donation and membership income at the start of the pandemic, an emergency appeal reversed this situation and we continued to build support throughout the rest of the year, for which we are exceedingly grateful. Membership income grew by 10%, reflecting both a growth in member numbers and in the average membership fee people chose to pay, but our ongoing challenge remains to widen the pool of our supporters by increasing awareness of humanism generally and of our work specifically.

Our members and supporters continued to be extremely generous throughout the year, volunteering time to engage in new online activities, and giving financial support both for specific projects and in furtherance of our general charitable activities. Our Education Campaigns Manager was funded for the year ahead, as was our Assisted Dying campaigner. Donations in support of our Faith to Faithless programme and Northern Ireland work continue to support the development of these areas.

We received grant income in furtherance of pastoral support activities, some specifically for efforts in support of covid-relief efforts. We also received Job Retention Scheme (furlough) grants from the Government.

We reacted to the Covid crisis by controlling costs wherever possible, taking advantage of governmental support for employment, and delaying, (with agreement) payment of rent. Our intention, in the early days of the crisis, was to maximise our liquidity. We used the furlough scheme extensively and flexibly, moving colleagues into and out of furlough as the work programme required.

Expenditure on charitable activity decreased by 17%, reflecting the restrictions on face-to-face activities that were in place during the pandemic. Events and training courses were cancelled, postponed or moved online while some public affairs & policy work was curtailed as the Government focussed on the emergency situation.

Our education and promotion of humanism expenditure decreased largely due to the cancellation of public events and focus on the *Humanism at Home* programme. The training of pastoral care volunteers was paused while resources are put into supporting those people working in institutions during the emergency situation. Celebrant training moved online (reducing expenditure). These activities clustered under the *Humanists UK Community Response* banner.

The decreased expenditure on Public Affairs (13%) reflected the lack of activity earlier in the year while some staff were on furlough, and lack of in-person activities (such as stalls at party conferences).

As a result of the legacy income, the remarkable support of our members plus the necessarily reduced expenditure, our financial position is healthier than at the start of 2020. Given the uncertain wider economic outlook, this is a fortunate position to be in and we are grateful to everyone involved in making it so. We are in a strong position to weather the continuing challenges of operating in a pandemic, while we work towards return to normality in the year ahead.

Reserves

Our reserves are defined as the funds available to be spent at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the Charity (thus excluding restricted funds donated for specific purposes). The reserves policy is reviewed every three years. The policy remains that Humanists UK will hold an upper limit of three months' expenditure and a lower limit of two months' expenditure in reserves, with the following considerations as its basis:

The level of reserves that Humanists UK holds should be sufficient to:

- allow the Association to continue its work in the event of a temporary downturn in income streams. An obvious concern might be an absence of any legacy income for a few years which, while we deliberately do not budget for legacy income, may restrict a number of activities from being undertaken;
- take advantage of an unforeseen opportunity: an item of news, for example, which could trigger a publicity campaign;
- meet an unforeseen need: a legal challenge, for example, or default by a major creditor.
- provide financial protection for the trustees. Incorporated charities, such as Humanists UK, are subject to insolvency law. Should an insolvency arise and it can be shown that the trustees allowed the Association to continue to trade, when it should have been apparent that there was little prospect of it being able to meet its liabilities, then they could be deemed personally liable for a proportion of the Association's debts.

At the end of the year total funds held amounted to £2,662,151 of which £129,075 are held for restricted purposes, £394,946 are for designated purposes (including a £390,000 building fund) and £19,566 are represented by the Association's tangible fixed assets and can only be realised on their disposal. Therefore, the financial assets of the Association were £2,118,564. This is more than sufficient to meet the requirements above (three months budgeted expenditure being £680k). For this reason we have agreed a deficit budget for 2021.

Fundraising Policy

Our approach to fundraising reflects that supporters are at the heart of what we do, and fundraising materials are designed to ensure that donors and potential donors understand that they can withdraw from fundraising communications, or any other communications, at any time, simply and without fuss. We do not use fundraising

services, consultants, or external professional fundraisers to undertake fundraising activities on our behalf, and we do not sell or license data to (or buy data from) any external agencies or third parties. We send a weekly e-newsletter to subscribers (which they can unsubscribe from) sharing information about our charitable work and fundraising activities. All new marketing materials are checked to comply with the Fundraising Code of Practice as part of an internal publications sign-off procedure.

We host a range of events throughout the year. Fundraising events are explicitly billed as such. Events are closely monitored at internal meetings before and after every event, and detailed profit and loss registers are kept for large events. We will never exert undue pressure on those invited to attend an event or to donate. All income and expenditure related to volunteer-led fundraising is reported to the appropriate line manager within the staff team, and annual statements are approved by both the volunteer and the responsible manager.

We take very seriously our responsibility and make our best efforts not to approach or pressure vulnerable people to support our work. We take a robust approach to complaints about fundraising, whether in person, or online, or by another medium; these are promptly followed up by the responsible officers, their line managers, or by a member of the Board (as appropriate).

Investment policy and objectives

The Trustees' investment policy is to generate the highest possible returns over the long term, consistent with our risk appetite and appropriate protection for our capital, so as to maximise the resources that can be expended on our charitable objectives. Monitoring of the investment performance takes place through regular investment reports and investment performance results are reported and discussed at Trustee meetings and compared to industry benchmarks where applicable.

In the preceding year, the portfolio consisted of units held in Barclays Charity Fund. Given the current instability in the financial markets, as a result of Brexit, the Board, at its meeting in November 2018, took the view (which they continued to hold later in view of the coronavirus pandemic) that it would be prudent to hold all the charity's financial assets in instant access funds on a temporary basis. The Fund units were sold and partly retained with Barclays Wealth on deposit. The balance together with additional funds received during 2020 were reinvested as cash deposits with Flagstone.

Risk management

The Trustees are satisfied that appropriate systems and procedures have been established to identify and manage the major risks faced by the Association. They have developed a comprehensive risk management policy to ensure that all important risks are evaluated and appropriate mitigating action taken. Governance and management, operational, financial, legal and other risks are reviewed annually by the Trustees and continually monitored by the senior management team who take responsibility for implementation of the policies and procedures identified to reduce risks. Corrective actions are based on the likelihood of particular events occurring and how critical the consequences would be. Annual risk reviews include considerations of operating plan activities, finance, insurance, trademark, office building, fire, health and safety, and terms and conditions of employment of staff. Significant potential risks identified were reputational and legal risks associated with front-line service provision such as pastoral

support, compliance risks with new regulatory frameworks such as data protection, and operational risks as a result of poor media relations or insufficient income generation. Actions taken to mitigate risks included improving the codes of conduct relating to our front-line services, implementing a GDPR compliance framework, and improving our communications and development plans.

Future Plans

Having deferred development of our new strategic plan during the pandemic, in 2021 we will finalise and launch this new phase of our work. Humanists UK's key objectives for 2021 are to implement this new strategy, in particular promoting a wider understanding of humanism, enabling humanists to express their beliefs and values and enabling more people to enjoy greater freedom of thought, of expression, and of choice over their own lives.

The key planned activities to achieve these objectives are partly a continuation of those outlined in this report – public affairs work on a range of policy issues, greater provision of education materials, growth of our networks of celebrants, school volunteers, humanist care volunteers and Faith to Faithless volunteers. There are also new activities such as a greater emphasis on creating a range of humanism-focussed resources for the public, plus a development programme to ensure our people (whether volunteers, staff, or contractors) are supported to enable the charity to thrive in these challenging times.

Like the many other organisations who have adapted to working differently during a pandemic, we will be re-examining our property needs. Our reserves and investments policies will also be reviewed so they may best serve us through our five-year plan.

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

Humanists UK's trustees are directors of the company for the purposes of company law and are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable company and charity law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Association for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the principles of the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue to operate.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Association and

enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Association and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Association's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Directors confirm that, in the case of each of the persons who are Directors at the date of this report, the following applies:

- so far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the Company's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the Company's auditors are unaware; and
- each Director has taken steps to make herself/himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

In accordance with S485 of the Companies Act 2006, a resolution proposing the reappointment of Knox Cropper LLP as auditors will be put to General Meeting.

On behalf of the Board: Tamar Ghosh, Chair, 8 May 2021

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2020

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the British Humanist Association (the 'charitable company', operating as Humanists UK) for the year ended 31 December 2020 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2020 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2020 (cont.)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2020 (cont.)

small companies' exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Directors.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- The Charitable Company is required to comply with both company law and charity law and, based on our knowledge of its activities, we identified that the legal requirement to accurately account for restricted funds was of key significance.
- We gained an understanding of how the charitable company complied with its legal and regulatory framework, including the requirement to properly account for restricted funds, through discussions with management and a review of the documented policies, procedures and controls.
- The audit team, which is experienced in the audit of charities, considered the charitable company's susceptibility to material misstatement and how fraud may occur. Our considerations included the risk of management override.
- Our approach was to check that restricted income was properly identified and separately accounted for and to ensure that only valid and appropriate

Independent auditor's report to the members of the British Humanist Association for the year ended 31st December 2020 (cont.)

expenditure was charged to restricted funds. This included reviewing journal adjustments and unusual transactions.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken, so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

Richard Billinghamurst (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Knox Cropper LLP, Statutory Auditor
65 Leadenhall Street
London
EC3A 2AD

25 May 2021

Statement of Financial Activities including the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2020

		Funds 2020			Funds 2019		
	Notes	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total 2020 £	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total £
INCOME FROM:							
- Legacies and donations	2	289,741	1,695,384	1,985,125	189,068	1,212,273	1,401,341
- Other trading activities	3	-	240	240	-	14,890	14,890
- Investments	4	-	2,408	2,408	-	4,310	4,310
- Charitable activities	5	-	1,209,104	1,209,104	-	1,250,110	1,250,110
Total		<u>289,741</u>	<u>2,907,136</u>	<u>3,196,877</u>	<u>189,068</u>	<u>2,481,583</u>	<u>2,670,651</u>
EXPENDITURE ON:							
- Raising funds	6	-	(173,558)	(173,558)	-	(195,132)	(195,132)
- Charitable activities	7,8	(270,270)	(1,762,778)	(2,033,048)	(203,688)	(2,239,384)	(2,443,072)
Total		<u>(270,270)</u>	<u>(1,936,336)</u>	<u>(2,206,606)</u>	<u>(203,688)</u>	<u>(2,434,516)</u>	<u>(2,638,204)</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	11	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(29)</u>	<u>(29)</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		19,471	970,800	990,271	(14,620)	47,038	32,418
Transfers between funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		19,471	970,800	990,271	(14,620)	47,038	32,418
Balances brought forward at 1 January		<u>109,604</u>	<u>1,562,276</u>	<u>1,671,880</u>	<u>124,224</u>	<u>1,515,238</u>	<u>1,639,462</u>
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER		<u><u>129,075</u></u>	<u><u>2,533,076</u></u>	<u><u>2,662,151</u></u>	<u><u>109,604</u></u>	<u><u>1,562,276</u></u>	<u><u>1,671,880</u></u>

All amounts relate to continuing activities.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2020

	Notes	2020		2019	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Office equipment	10		19,566		31,219
Investments	11		<u>1,649,371</u>		<u>725,362</u>
			1,668,937		756,581
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	108,096		299,394	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>989,746</u>		<u>794,226</u>	
		1,097,842		1,093,620	
LIABILITIES					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(104,628)</u>		<u>(178,321)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>993,214</u>		<u>915,299</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>2,662,151</u>		<u>1,671,880</u>
Represented by					
FUNDS :					
Unrestricted	14		2,533,076		1,562,276
Restricted	15		<u>129,075</u>		<u>109,604</u>
Total Funds			<u>2,662,151</u>		<u>1,671,880</u>

The accounts are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act relating to small companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard 102.

Approved by the Directors on 8 May 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

Tamar Ghosh _____ Hon. Chair

John Adams _____ Hon. Treasurer

Company number: 00228781

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ending 31 December 2020

Statement of Cash Flows

		2020 £	2019 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating act	24	<u>1,117,121</u>	<u>(35,385)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends and interest from investments		2,408	4,310
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		-	(5,962)
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	10,259
Purchase of investments		-	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>2,408</u>	<u>8,607</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		1,119,529	(26,778)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		1,519,588	1,546,366
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	25	<u><u>2,639,117</u></u>	<u><u>1,519,588</u></u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020

1. Accounting policies

Basis of Preparation

These Financial Statements are presented in pounds sterling and have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (the Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Humanists UK meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. The world continues to face economic uncertainty in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of our prudent reserves policy (see above) we are in a better relative position than some other charities, but financial uncertainty does remain.

Short term debtors and creditors

Debtors are recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably, and it is probable that the income will be received. Creditors are recognised when the Charity has a present legal or constructive obligation resulting from a past event to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty are detailed in the above accounting policies where applicable.

Prepayments & Accruals

Prepayments and accruals less than £100 have not been taken into consideration.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible assets costing more than £500 were capitalised and all tangible assets are valued at historic cost. Provision is made for depreciation on tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life.

Office Equipment:	20% p.a. straight line
Computer equipment:	33 1/3% p.a. straight line
Office fixtures & fittings:	10% p.a. straight line

Fixed asset investments

Investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. The statement of financial activities includes the net gains and losses arising on the revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

Realised gains and losses on investments are arrived at by comparing the net sale proceeds with the market value at the end of the previous financial year. Unrealised gains and losses represent the difference between the market value of investments still held at the end of the financial year with their value at the beginning of the year or with their cost if purchased subsequently.

Value Added Tax

The Charity is registered for VAT and where applicable amounts are included net of VAT.

Funds

Unrestricted funds are those funds which can be used at the trustees' discretion. Restricted Funds are those funds where application is restricted by conditions set by the donor. Designated Funds are those funds, which have been earmarked by the trustees for specific purposes.

Deferrals Policy

Income is recognised when all the following criteria are met:

- Control over the rights or other access to the economic benefit exists
- It is more likely than not that the economic benefits will pass to the Association
- The monetary value of the income can be measured reliably.

Grants Receivable

Revenue grants are credited to incoming resources on the earlier of the date they are received or the date they are receivable, unless they relate to a specific future period, in which case they are deferred. Capital grants for the purchase of fixed assets are credited to restricted incoming resources when they become receivable. Depreciation on the related fixed assets is charged against the restricted fund.

Donations and Legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised as income when the Association becomes unconditionally entitled to receive them, and when the receipt is probable and its value can be predicted with reasonable accuracy.

Charitable Activities

Costs of charitable activities include direct expenditure and an apportionment of overhead, governance and support costs as shown in note 7.

Allocation of Overhead, Governance and Support Costs

Overhead and support costs are incurred centrally across the range of our activities throughout the year. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the Charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These include costs related to statutory audit. All these costs have been apportioned between charitable activities on the basis of staff time or office space depending on the nature of the cost. The Directors consider this to be a reasonable reflection of the utilisation of resources.

Pensions

The Charity contributes to various defined contribution pension schemes on behalf of employees and, as the charity's liability is limited to paying amounts as they fall due, the pension charge reflected in the accounts represents the amount payable for the year.

2. Legacies, grants and donations

	2020			2019
	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Donations and Gift Aid	169,564	801,431	970,995	798,468
Grants	120,177	-	120,177	-
Legacies	-	893,953	893,953	602,873
	<u>289,741</u>	<u>1,695,384</u>	<u>1,985,125</u>	<u>1,401,341</u>

In the preceding year Donations and Gift Aid included £189,068 restricted income.

Grants income in the current year includes £95,188 receivable from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

3. Income from other trading activities

	2020			2019
	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Rent & charges to tenants	-	240	240	14,890
	<u>-</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>14,890</u>

4. Investment income

	2020			2019
	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Interest	-	2,223	2,223	3,184
Dividends	-	185	185	1,126
	<u>-</u>	<u>2,408</u>	<u>2,408</u>	<u>4,310</u>

5. Income from charitable activities

	2020			2019
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds		
	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions	-	844,159	844,159	768,624
Group fees	-	2,860	2,860	870
Celebrants' training	-	171,730	171,730	214,912
Celebrants' accreditation fees	-	117,445	117,445	119,796
Events & activities	-	49,378	49,378	110,200
Sales of literature & merchandise	-	8,462	8,462	8,665
Sundry income	-	15,070	15,070	8,650
Pastoral support	-	0	0	18,393
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,209,104</u>	<u>1,209,104</u>	<u>1,250,110</u>

6. Cost of raising funds

	2020			2019
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds		
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising costs	-	169,439	169,439	187,691
Investment manager's fees	-	2,243	2,243	5,130
Purchase of merchandise	-	1,876	1,876	2,311
	<u>-</u>	<u>173,558</u>	<u>173,558</u>	<u>195,132</u>

7. Analysis of costs of charitable activities

	2020		Total
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	
Education and Promotion of Humanism	456,157	163,253	619,410
Ceremonies	250,564	106,766	357,330
Pastoral Support	103,230	77,835	181,065
Public Affairs & Policy	402,483	262,778	665,261
Activities for Members and Partner Groups	<u>100,345</u>	<u>109,637</u>	<u>209,982</u>
	<u>1,312,779</u>	<u>720,269</u>	<u>2,033,048</u>

	2019		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
<i>Education and Promotion of Humanism</i>	530,378	180,053	710,431
<i>Ceremonies</i>	390,562	109,350	499,912
<i>Pastoral Support</i>	154,125	86,185	240,310
<i>Public Affairs & Policy</i>	474,235	293,927	768,162
<i>Activities for Members and Partner Groups</i>	102,336	121,921	224,257
	<u>1,651,636</u>	<u>791,436</u>	<u>2,443,072</u>

8. Analysis of support and governance costs

	2020	2019
	£	£
Staff costs	370,096	380,450
Rent and rates	103,339	127,660
Repairs, maintenance & utilities	15,150	30,080
Postage and stationery	23,312	24,645
ICT	81,536	90,248
Irrecoverable VAT	30,076	46,005
Subscriptions	5,712	4,824
Bank charges & interest	55,518	51,408
Depreciation	11,653	12,372
Other costs	12,745	8,690
Governance	<u>11,132</u>	<u>15,054</u>
	<u>720,269</u>	<u>791,436</u>

Support costs have been apportioned between categories of charitable activity according to whether they are overheads or centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities. Overheads have been apportioned in relation to the office space occupied by each area of activity, and centrally incurred expenditure on charitable activities has been apportioned in relation to the staff time employed in each area of activity. The Directors consider this provides a reasonable approximation to the utilisation of resources.

Governance costs

	2020	2019
	£	£
Audit fee- current year	5,597	5,350
- previous year underprovision	-	-
Other professional expenses	13	13
Trustee meeting expenses	<u>5,522</u>	<u>9,691</u>
	<u><u>11,132</u></u>	<u><u>15,054</u></u>

9. Staff costs

	2020	2019
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,127,065	1,050,234
Social security costs	120,078	109,471
Pension contributions	<u>51,052</u>	<u>38,891</u>
Total payroll costs	1,298,195	1,198,595
Staff recruitment	3,759	18,236
Temporary staff	<u>612</u>	<u>2,622</u>
	<u><u>1,302,566</u></u>	<u><u>1,219,453</u></u>
Average number of employees (FTE)	30	28
Average number of employees	31	29

One employee earned in excess of £80,000 (2019: one) and that salary fell in band £80,000 to £90,000 (2019: £80,000-£90,000).

Key management personnel (£440,633) (2019: £464,622) includes Chief Executive, Director of Public Affairs & Policy, Director of Community Services, Director of Communications & Development, Director of Operations, Director of Understanding Humanism, Director of Humanist Care (until February 2020), Head of Humanist Care (from February 2020) Head of Ceremonies (until May 2020).

10. Tangible assets

	2020 £	2019 £
Office Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment		
Cost at 1 January	106,975	101,013
Additions	-	5,962
Disposals	-	-
As at 31 December	<u>106,975</u>	<u>106,975</u>
Depreciation at 1 January	(75,756)	(63,384)
Charge for the year	(11,653)	(12,372)
Disposals	-	-
Depreciation at 31 December	<u>(87,409)</u>	<u>(75,756)</u>
Net book value at 31 December	<u>19,566</u>	<u>31,219</u>

11. Investments

INVESTMENTS

	2020 £	2019 £
Market value at 1 January	-	10,288
Additions	-	-
Disposal proceeds	-	(10,259)
Realised gains/(losses)	-	-
Unrealised gains/(losses)	-	(29)
Market value at 31 December	-	-
Cash with brokers	<u>1,649,371</u>	<u>725,362</u>
Total investments at 31 December	<u>1,649,371</u>	<u>725,362</u>
Investments at cost 31 December	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

In the preceding year, the portfolio consisted of units held in Barclays Charity Fund. Given the current instability in the financial markets, as a result of Brexit and the Coronavirus pandemic the Board took the view that it would be prudent to hold all the charity's financial assets in instant access funds on a temporary basis. The Fund units were sold and partly retained with Barclays Wealth on deposit. The balance together with additional funds received during 2020 were reinvested as cash deposits with Flagstone.

12. Debtors

	2020	2019
	£	£
Prepayments	4,990	60,029
Legacies receivable	-	102,000
Gift Aid	99,391	120,940
Other accrued income	3,715	-
Other debtors	-	16,425
	<u>108,096</u>	<u>299,394</u>

Prepayments are usually primarily event venue costs such as for our Annual Convention. Due to the pandemic we did not incur such costs in 2020.

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year:

	2020	2019
	£	£
Accruals	36,244	65,910
Taxes: Payroll taxes	39,897	31,068
VAT	16,880	44,487
Deferred income	-	24,983
Holiday	11,607	11,873
	<u>104,628</u>	<u>178,321</u>

Deferred income usually relates to event ticket sales, such as for our Annual Convention, though due to the pandemic such income was significantly curtailed. All deferred income is recognised in the following financial year.

14. a) General reserves

	2020		
	Revaluation Reserve	Accumulated Income	Total
	£	£	£
Balance at 1 January 2020	-	1,557,330	1,557,330
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	-	970,800	970,800
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	-	-	-
Transfer on realisation	-	-	-
Transfer to designated funds	-	(390,000)	(390,000)
Balance at 31 December 2020	<u>-</u>	<u>2,138,130</u>	<u>2,138,130</u>

	2019		
	Revaluation Reserve	Accumulated Income	Total
	£	£	£
<i>Balance at 1 January 2020</i>	-	1,510,292	1,510,292
<i>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</i>	-	47,067	47,067
<i>Realised gains/(losses) on investments</i>	-	(29)	(29)
<i>Transfer on realisation</i>	-	-	-
<i>Transfer to designated funds</i>	-	-	-
<i>Balance at 31 December 2020</i>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,557,330</u>	<u>1,557,330</u>

b) Designated Reserves

	Balance at 1 January 2020	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
Building fund				390,000	390,000
Music (the Humanist choirs)	4,946	-	-	-	4,946
	<u>4,946</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>390,000</u>	<u>394,946</u>

	Balance at 1 January 2019	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2019
	£	£	£	£	£
Music (the Humanist choirs)	4,946	-	-	-	4,946
	<u>4,946</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,946</u>

15. Restricted funds

	Balance at 1 January 2020	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
Education	-	155	(155)	-	-
Public Affairs	-	2,216	(4,471)	2,255	-
Ceremonies	-	975	(975)	-	-
Local groups	7,151	2,161	(2,414)	-	6,898
Music (the Humanist choirs)	2,380	11,635	(7,708)	-	6,307
Campaign Against Faith Schools	27,594	56,417	(46,267)	(2,255)	35,489
Faith to Faithless	15,355	4,146	(15,811)	-	3,690
Accord	-	40,163	(40,163)	-	-
Assisted Dying	49,327	43,388	(38,904)	-	53,811
Defence Humanists	114	368	-	-	482
LGBT Humanists	7,684	1,789	(1,092)	-	8,381
Pastoral Support	-	25,210	(11,193)	-	14,017
Northern Ireland development	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	-	95,118	(95,118)	-	-
	<u>109,604</u>	<u>289,741</u>	<u>(270,270)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>129,075</u>

	Balance at 1 January 2019	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfer	Balance at 31 December 2019
	£	£	£	£	£
Education	3,432	164	(3,596)	-	-
Public Affairs	-	1,497	(14,618)	13,121	-
Ceremonies	-	1,961	(1,961)	-	-
Local groups	14,693	2,965	(10,507)	-	7,151
Music (the Humanist choirs)	-	10,491	(8,111)	-	2,380
Campaign Against Faith Schools	24,827	62,805	(46,917)	(13,121)	27,594
Faith to Faithless	18,141	18,587	(21,373)	-	15,355
Accord	-	41,912	(41,912)	-	-
Assisted Dying	51,972	31,614	(34,259)	-	49,327
Defence Humanists	349	443	(678)	-	114
LGBT Humanists	10,811	7,433	(10,560)	-	7,684
Young Humanists	-	775	(775)	-	-
Pastoral Support	-	672	(672)	-	-
Northern Ireland development	-	7,750	(7,750)	-	-
	<u>124,224</u>	<u>189,068</u>	<u>(203,689)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>109,604</u>

Accord

Donations to cover the payroll costs of one member of Humanists UK staff to work for the Accord Coalition.

Assisted Dying

This fund was created in 2018 to manage donations to cover the payroll costs of one member of Humanists UK staff to work on the Assisted Dying campaign with the My Death, My Decision coalition. The fund also includes donations towards assisted dying legal cases.

Ceremonies

This fund results from legacies and donations given to Humanists UK specifically for ceremonies work.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

This fund was created in 2020 to reflect grant income relating to staff who were on furlough during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Education

This fund results from legacies and donations given to support Humanists UK's work in promoting the understanding of Humanism in the education sphere. This includes efforts to place a free copy of the *What is Humanism? How Do You Live Without a God? And Other Big Questions for Kids* in every primary school in Britain.

Campaign Against Faith Schools

Campaign against faith schools appeal funds are restricted to Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work relating to 'faith' schools and related education campaigns. Funds raised by appeal in excess of the target sought are restricted to the public affairs fund, and are disclosed as a transfer above.

Defence Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by the Defence Humanists, which joined as a new section in 2011.

Faith to Faithless

This fund was created in 2015 to manage income and expenditure in support of our Faith to Faithless programme, which helps people who are leaving religions.

LGBT Humanists

This fund was created in 2012 to manage income and expenditure by GALHA (now LGBT Humanists) which joined Humanists UK as a section in 2012.

Local Groups

This fund is for activities relating to the development of local humanist groups, including branches. It was formerly called Community Service Projects.

Music

This fund was initiated in 2010 by a donation from Alec Reed to fund a composer for two years and to establish the Humanists UK choirs on a secure footing. Current income derives directly from the activities of the choirs.

Northern Ireland Development

This fund was created in 2017 to support the development of Humanist UK's work in Northern Ireland.

Pastoral Support

This fund was created in 2012 to collect donations supporting our new initiative directed towards providing pastoral support to non-religious people in prison or in hospital. This fund was previously known as 'Community Services excluding Ceremonies'.

Public Affairs

This fund results from legacies and donations given to support Humanists UK lobbying and campaigning work.

16. Operating leases

At 31 December 2020 the Company had the following commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings		Other	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
	£	£	£	£
Falling due within one year	97,608	97,608	8,955	8,570
Falling due between one and five years	108,453	206,061	21,324	28,277
Falling due later than five years	-	-	-	-
	<u>206,061</u>	<u>303,669</u>	<u>30,279</u>	<u>36,847</u>

The commitment in respect of land and buildings reflects the lease on the Association's premises which ends in February 2023. We have not yet set a provision for any dilapidation costs associated with the end of this lease.

17. Taxation

Humanists UK is a registered charity and is potentially exempt from tax in respect of income and capital gains received within the categories covered by Part II of the Corporation Taxes Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are exclusively applied to charitable purposes.

18. Directors' remuneration and expenses

No remuneration, directly or indirectly, out of the funds of the charity was paid or is payable for the year to any director or to any person known to be connected with any of them.

Directors were reimbursed a total of £1,443 (2019: £3,742) for travel expenses to attend meetings in connection with their duties. Expenses not reported in Note 18 normally include travel to various events, including public lectures and fundraising events.

19. Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at 31 December 2020 (2019: nil).

20. Pension commitments

The charity contributed to individual defined contribution pension schemes for several employees. The assets of the schemes are held separately from those of the charity in independently administered funds. Total employer's contributions paid in the year were £50,052 (2019: £38,891).

21. Net assets

	2020		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	1,668,937	864,141	2,533,077
Restricted funds	-	129,075	129,075
	<u>1,668,937</u>	<u>993,215</u>	<u>2,662,151</u>

	2019		
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	756,581	805,696	1,562,277
Restricted funds	-	109,604	109,604
	<u>756,581</u>	<u>915,299</u>	<u>1,671,880</u>

22. Reversionary interest

Humanists UK has been bequeathed a reversionary interest in a trust established under the terms of the Will of Christine Cotton, who died on 24 January 2000. The trust assets comprise a property occupied by the Life Tenant, investments and bank accounts. The value of the investments as at 5 April 2020 was £44,369 (28 February 2019: £56,042). The trustees have indicated to Humanists UK that the property (bought in 2002 for

£85,000) had a value in 2020 of between £145,000 and £158,000 by comparison with similar properties in the locality.

Because Humanists UK cannot predict when it will become entitled to the receipt of this legacy, no accrued income has been reflected in the accounts.

23. Related party transactions

Directors are not remunerated but are able to recover out of pocket expenses for attendance at Board meetings, the total amount reimbursed being disclosed in Note 18.

The Chief Executive of Humanists UK is also a Director of Humanists International and their President. Humanists International rented part of Humanists UK's office accommodation until December 2019 and associated fees charged in 2020 amounted to £240 (2019: £14,890). The Association paid an annual subscription to Humanists International of £21,852 (2019: £20,900).

The Director of Public Affairs and Policy of Humanists UK (Richy Thompson) is a member of the Executive of the Accord Coalition. The Accord Coalition uses desk space and office facilities at Humanist UK's premises for no charge.

24. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2020	2019
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period	990,271	32,418
Depreciation charges	11,653	12,372
(Gains)/losses on investments	-	29
Dividends and interest from investments	(2,408)	(4,310)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	191,298	(60,863)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(73,693)	(15,031)
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operative activities	<u>1,117,122</u>	<u>(35,385)</u>

25. Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year

	2020	2019
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	989,746	794,226
Cash at brokers	<u>1,649,371</u>	<u>725,362</u>
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>2,639,117</u>	<u>1,519,588</u>

26. Statutory information

The British Humanist Association, operating as Humanists UK, is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England. The Association's registered number and registered office address can be found on the Legal and Administrative page of this Annual Report.