



Candidates for the role of Humanist Students President-Elect

Please see below for the details of **Candidate 4: James Dart** standing for the role of Humanist Students President-Elect. Please use the [Voting Form](#) in order to cast your vote. You are only able to vote in this election if you are a student member of Humanists UK. Each member has one vote only.

Candidate 4: James Dart

Biography: Having left my job as a school teacher 12 months ago, I returned to education this year to complete a Masters in European Politics at the University of Exeter. I am the current president of Exeter Humanist Students and founder of Exeter Humanists. In my professional life I work as an intervention support worker, supporting some of the most vulnerable and challenging young people in my community. Beyond my studies/job, I enjoy volunteering and have recently worked at the RAMM museum in Exeter. What's more, I am very active in local politics, having twice acted as an election agent, and more recently, having stood as a city councillor in May of this year. Finally, I'm quite competitive and enjoy keeping fit and challenging myself; hence my enjoyment at having played chess at county level, and competitive football for the last 20 years.

Supporting statement: Hello, Would you like to be more involved in humanism? Would you like to develop your public speaking skills? Do you enjoy writing about science, philosophy, ethics, humanism? As your President-Elect/President, I would like to limit the amount of top-down engagement and help to nurture a stronger grass-roots, bottom up approach, empowering and enabling students in order to foster greater ownership of our shared institution. This would involve finding out how Humanist Students can best serve you. I am also interested in diversifying our range of events, whilst creating greater opportunities for you, as students with a wide range of talents and interests, to take leading roles in the on-going development of Humanist Students.

As a passionate and lifelong humanist, I believe the position of President-Elect/President to be one of great importance. As the scope and reputation of humanism grows across the UK, the important role of university societies will continue to grow with it. Humanist societies offer students a valuable community on UK campuses and provide unique and stimulating events, but there is even more we can be doing.

As President and founder of Exeter Humanists I have come to find that the space offered by humanist societies to be one that is greatly valued by a large cross section of society. From 'spiritualists' and sceptics to agnostics and atheists; from students and the lay-person, to professionals and academics; from the young and energetic to the old and experienced; humanism brings together people from all different backgrounds and experiences - I LOVE this. The socially liberal values of that underpin humanism, that transcend gender, race and sexuality is something that should be celebrated. To that end, forging lasting relationships with those societies who share



our values would be a key part of my presidency. Together, we are stronger.

Furthermore, as the President of Exeter Humanist Students and Exeter Humanists I hold a unique position of leading both local and university societies/groups simultaneously. This experience has strengthened my view that a strong partnership between local and student groups help to create a richer, deeper and more vibrant culture. Building those links between community and student humanist groups would be the second major aim of my Presidency.

Continually, throughout this year, I have organised and run a number of high profile events. As President-Elect/President I would communicate with societies listening to and offering insights into good practice, focusing on the importance of event type and audience, identity and USP, and the use of language in advertisement; all areas for which I have many hours of training.

As a humanist trained school speaker, I have helped deliver training on how to run assemblies, lessons and workshops on the topic of humanism. This has not only broadened my understanding of humanism and its history but has also given me a greater insight into how students of all ages ask questions and think about different world views.

Equally, as a school teacher I have taught Religious Education in schools around the country, including Cardiff, Oxford and Devon. When planning these lessons, it was important that I acted as a co-learner and did not dominate the conversation. The students were empowered to ask questions in a safe environment and were encouraged to challenge different ideas courteously and with respect. These are the principles with which I would work with you as your President-Elect/President.

Continually, it is with this spirit that I sit on the Devon Faith and Belief Forum committee. This organisation brings representatives together from the different religious communities that exist across Devon and work on shared goals and projects. As the humanist representative for Devon it falls to me to make the case for the non-religious community; something I do with great pride. This role requires sensitivity, patience and the ability to compromise, skills that I would utilise as your President-Elect/President.

If you were to vote for me as your President-Elect/President, these are some of the skills and experiences that I would bring to the role. I would prioritise the greater involvement of students in the leading of events and new initiatives. I also believe that cross-society and inter-faith work is increasingly important for humanist societies. Whilst it is not always easy, having a voice at the table, building bridges and opening dialogue and trust is a great way to achieve shared goals.

Thank you.
