

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

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|-------------------|--|----------|---------------------------------|--------|
| 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. | | | |
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| | 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 Fein 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 | | 109,604 | 1,562,276 | 1,671,880 | 124,224 | 1,515,238 | 1,639,462 |
| BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER | | <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> |

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 Funds | Unrestricted Funds | Total | Total |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 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 Funds | Unrestricted Funds | Total | Total |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 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 | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | Direct Costs | Support Costs | Total |
| 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 | 100,345 | 109,637 | 209,982 |
| | <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.