



MAY 2025 NEWSLETTER



HUMANISTS UK CONVENTION 2025

If you're attending the [Humanists UK Convention](#) in Sheffield from Friday 13 June to Sunday 15 June, come and see us! As in previous years, we'll have a stall. It will be with the other stalls at the back of the room in which the main sessions are held. We'll have a quiz with prizes – an opportunity to try out your knowledge of climate change and environmental issues! (We promise there will be no humiliation...) Come and chat, tell us what you are doing, and share your ideas of how we can go on working together.

We'll also be running a workshop as part of the [Humanism in Action day](#) ahead of the Convention proper on Friday, from 15:15-16:00. The weekend itself falls within the Climate Coalition's [Great Big Green Week](#). For ideas on actions you can take in your own locality as part of the week, see our [March newsletter](#).

THE CLIMATE CRISIS –

HUMANISTS IN THE US ARE BEGINNING TO ACT

by **Beth C. Kantrowitz**

Beth is a member of the American Humanist Association, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, American Atheists, and the Freedom from Religion Foundation. She works for the Environmental Law Institute in Washington, DC and lives in Maryland with her dog Darwin.



Beth lobbying her member of congress

In this newsletter we all agree that the current climate crisis is a humanist issue because humans have caused it, humans are experiencing its effects, and humans can both mitigate some of its effects and prevent or lessen the impact of the worst possible outcomes.

It is a humanist issue because it impacts all aspects of human society. Very few humans spend their days in air-conditioned homes, cars, and workspaces; have access to supermarkets, restaurants, and food delivery services; and spend most of their time facing screens that satisfy much of their social, mental, and emotional needs. Those humans who live in less-developed nations, overpopulated developing and developed nations, and the rural and impoverished areas in our own nations, but also in our own communities, are our neighbors. As humanists we care about all humans, wherever they live, however they live.

Urban and coastal areas are experiencing increased property and infrastructure damage due to climate-related effects such as more frequent and severe wildfires and storms and rising sea levels. Changes in climate are shifting the what, where, and when decisions of the agricultural system, how much water and pesticides are needed, and how to deal with extreme temperatures, fires, storms, and pollution. These events can also directly injure or kill humans, overwhelm power systems, and damage energy infrastructure, exposing more people to the

deadly effects of extreme heat. Climate change has expanded the range of diseases, vectors, worsened air quality, and created a simultaneous mental health crisis. These effects are not equally distributed, which leads to social upheaval and conflict.

The UK is well ahead of the US in responding to the existential threat of climate change, and all actions by the US government to mitigate it or prevent it have now been halted and are in the process of being reversed. That does not mean that we in the US are frozen in fear or too blinded by heat of anger to act. We know that we are what democracy looks like when we use our free will and individual voices, blended together, to express what is right and fair and good. Humanists are well positioned to do this.

Much as Humanists UK established Humanist Climate Action, the American Humanist Association (AHA) in 2019 established [Humanist Environmental Response Effort \(HERE\) for Climate](#) to 'encourage local, immediate action that will make a difference – even when our federal government may not.' This follows directly from the documents at the heart of what AHA does, most recently *Humanism and its Aspirations* (2003), otherwise known as [Humanist Manifesto III](#).

Beyond AHA, other secular organisations in the US, such as [Americans United for the Separation of Church and State](#), are beginning to address environmental issues including the climate crisis. There is also an increasing focus on climate change in US academia in the area of the humanities, a word with the same root as our movement. This ranges from articles in peer-reviewed journals and books to events and new programs, such as the [UC Humanities Research Institute](#) in the University of California system.

What else are US humanists doing? We are supporting politicians and leaders who recognise the reality of the climate crisis, accept science, respect scientists, and support action from the local to the international level to address the crisis. We are also talking to our friends, family, neighbors, students, and colleagues about the human part of the climate crisis without the minefields of politics or religion. We are talking to our fellow humans, as humanists. With increased understanding we may be able to survive.

LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT 9 JULY



Humanist Climate Action is supporting the Mass Lobby of Parliament on **Wednesday 9 July**, which is being organised by The Climate Coalition. It will be asking MPs to back practical action on the climate and nature, by committing to:

1. Deliver vital funding to communities hit hardest by climate change here and around the world;
2. Cut bills, back UK jobs and secure a greener fairer future for all;
3. Restore nature to create a safer, healthier future.

We hope that HCA supporters will join the event. There is more information on the [Climate Coalition website](#), and more details still to come. For now, the main action to take is to go to the website and [register to take part](#) in the lobby on 9 July. The Climate Coalition will then make arrangements for meetings with MPs in Westminster, and you'll receive more information in due course. There are plans still to be revealed for a collective action aimed at getting media publicity, which will probably be timed for midday. We'd like to arrange for HCA supporters to meet up before that for our own photo-opportunity. We'll send you more details nearer the time in a special one-off mailing. Please look out for that. In the meantime we hope you'll be able to get the date in your diary and register on-line.

If you can't make it to London, you could make your own arrangements to meet with your MP in your constituency, and it's suggested that a good day for this would be Friday 11 July as MPs often return to their constituencies on Fridays. Maybe you could get together with other humanists to set up such a meeting. Please do what you can!

ONE SMALL STEP

Continuing our series on simple actions we can all take



Food waste

The UK [throws away around 9.5 million tonnes of food waste](#) every year. By cutting down, we can reduce the amount of food we need to produce and therefore the emissions associated with it.

Luckily, around 66% of people in the UK say that they are already making an effort when it comes to food waste. Here is a quick checklist to see if you can reduce what you waste.

1. Look at where you waste

Spend a week paying attention to what you throw out, or just open your bin and look what's inside. Thinking about this will help you work out where to focus your attention.

2. Plan your meals and make a shopping list

Checking your cupboards and making a shopping list means you won't forget what you have or end up buying lots of random things. For some of us, planning meals and shopping accordingly can be a great step, because it means you know you have exactly what you need.

3. Make plans for leftovers

There are lots of things you can do with leftovers. You could eat them for lunch or freeze them.

4. Freeze excess fresh food

There are also often things you can do with excess fresh ingredients. Some vegetables and lots of dairy products can be frozen. Do an internet search to check how best to freeze them.

Some vegetables and fruits lose texture once frozen: get around this by blitzing or pre-cooking. For example, you could cook tomatoes down and freeze for sauces. You could stew and freeze apples for breakfast. You could freeze bananas and strawberries and then blitz them into smoothies.

Happily, unlike some other environmentally responsible actions we may take, this one saves money!

Pauline Element

KEEP IN TOUCH

We welcome feedback and responses to items in HCA newsletters. We aim to exemplify the humanist commitment to rational discussion and debate. You can contact us at climateaction@humanists.uk. All newsletters to date can be found on the [Humanist Climate Action section of the Humanists UK website](#). We aim to produce a newsletter every two months.

As always, all signed contributions to the newsletter represent simply the views of the individual writers and are not necessarily endorsed by either Humanist Climate Action or Humanists UK.