Welcome to the first issue of the foundation’s newsletter. We’re keeping it short and to the point because as fun as making a newsletter is, we don’t just want to talk about what we’re doing – we want to be out there doing it!

This is a really exciting time for the foundation. We’ve just held out first national conference – Enquiry 2010 – and we’re looking forward to another, Sunrise, taking place in September.

On top of that we’re also opening our office next month and we would love you to join us for the launch party – see the next page for details of that. The opening of our office marks another major landmark in an organisation, which is only a year old and growing at incredible speed.

With this being our first newsletter we would love to get your feedback – both good and bad. So why not drop us an email with your thoughts?

Chris Worfolk
**Upcoming Events**

In celebration of our upcoming office launch, we’ll be hold a reception on Saturday **3 July** consisting of an evening meal and drinks, as well as a chance to see the office.

If you would like an invite to the event, please get in touch.

In August we will be holding our first AGM. It will take place at 6pm on Wednesday **11 August** and will be held in Leeds. More details will be made available on our website nearer the time.

Sunrise Conference 2010 will take place **4 - 5 September** (over a weekend) in Leeds. More details can be found on page 4.

**Humanist Community of Leeds**

Sunday 4 July  
Sunday 1 August  
Sunday 12 September  
Sunday 3 October

**Leeds Skeptics**

Saturday 17 July  
Saturday 21 August  
Saturday 18 September  
Saturday 16 October

**Useful Info**

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Enquiry 2010 Conference

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Sunday was kicked off by Dr Antony Lempert, co-ordinator of the Secular Medical Forum who have a powerful speech on where religion interferes, in some cases quite horrifically with the lives of both practitioners but far more worrying to the children of practitioners who are unable to make their own choices.

He was followed by former MP of Oxford West and honorary president of Westminster Skeptics, Dr Even Harris who discussed his places to fight for his seat once again in the next election.

After lunch Professor A. C. Grayling delivered a stirring talk reminding us that in our lives we have less than 1,000 months to enjoy and the day was finished off by Dr Gijsbert Stoet discussing humanist chaplains.

The latter talk really provoked some debate with the room being split as to whether Dr Stoet’s vision of as more organised community-based humanism was the way forward or starting to become a little too much like a religion – something I address in an article in this issue.

The weekend shows that there are many contrasting opinions within the freethinking movement though of course we’re all very much aware of that already! What is fantastic is that the differing opinions – such as the divisions between Maryam and Andrew for example don’t prevent them from working together for common good.

This is something I hope the foundation will be able to achieve with organisations such as the British Humanist Association and National Secular Society – we certainly have different opinions and different ways of working but in end will form a much stronger front if we can work together rather than competing with each other.

Comment: Almost, religious?

One of the most controversial talks to take place at the Enquiry 2010 conference was Chris Worfolk Foundation trustee Dr. Gijsbert Stoet’s talk on humanist chaplaincy. In the talk he discussed a vision for a more united and organised humanism movement which was less focused on politics and lobbying and a little more focused on local groups and humanist (now known as positive) psychology, discussing both humanist communities and humanist chaplains.

The room was very much divided on the subject – some felt that it would be a very positive step to have more humanist community groups which people could attend while others felt that the idea, at least as put forward in the talk, smacked a little too much of organised religion.

This is very much representative of the wider humanist community. Indeed as far up as the British Humanist Association seem to be divided on the subject with one of their staff describing it as “very silly” when asked to comment on it by the BBC, meanwhile chief executive Andrew Copson recently told a conference it was something he was planning to seriously look into.

The question then eventually arises – what is it that separates a humanist group from a religious one? If the idea of having a Sunday morning meeting, which includes tea, coffee and discussions is seen as a religious idea then we have a very big challenge ahead of us indeed – the idea that religion has a monopoly on community groups and social outlets is a big claim indeed!

No, what I believe separates humanist community groups from a religious service comes down to the fundamental building blocks of the group – the bottom up approach of group discussions, interaction and variety of opinions that you find in humanist meetings that fall in stark contrast to the top down preaching, dogmatic approach you find in the halls of the religious.

What separates humanist community groups from religious services is the same thing that separates humanism from religion – an environment where free thought and open discussion is encouraged.

The idea that we should accept proposition that simply creating such groups to bring people together and form stronger social communities is a religious idea is not only wrong it also verges on offensive. Humanists not only believe in social communities – it’s our central tenant!
Get Involved

We need your support. We’re an organisation that really makes things happen – we get out there and do stuff, we go full speed and believe you can achieve amazing things so long as you have confidence in yourself.

There has never been a better time to get involved in the foundation, nor has there ever been more opportunities. With our brand new office just opening in Leeds we need volunteers to help us push forward with our ambitious projects and initiatives.

Across the country we are also seeking a network of volunteers to ask as regional representatives, volunteer as humanist chaplains, start a local HCoL or HAGs group just to name a few of the opportunities for you to get involved.

If you can spare some time to help us change the world, please get in touch. Send us an email today.

If you can’t, consider supporting our efforts financially. You get the same great sense of self-satisfaction that you’ve supported charity without having to do anything! See our website for ways of supporting us, either via standard order a one off donation, all of which can be done online.

Why get involved?

It’s fantastic experience. The skills you learn and develop when volunteer are simply immeasurable, from management and leadership to communication and organisation.

Increasingly employers are looking for people with well-rounded CVs including volunteer work with charities.

Most importantly of course – you’ll be making a real difference and can sleep sound at night knowing you made the world a fractionally better place!

Sunrise

Taking place the first weekend of September – Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th – Sunrise is a national summit for leaders and future leaders of free thinking groups across the UK, which will take place in Leeds.

The conference is designed for anyone who is or wants to be involved in running a humanist, atheist, secular, sceptical or other such group with the aim of improving everyone’s knowledge and creating ideas as to how we can better lead and improve our local groups.

During the conference there will be a mix of talks, seminars, round tables and discussions on local groups as well as plenty of opportunities to get to know other group leaders and build contacts.

Sunrise will be running multiple streams including several for local groups as well as a students’ stream, which we are currently discussing with the National Federation of Atheist, Humanist and Secular Student Societies.

There will also be a stream for people looking to train to become volunteer humanist chaplains. This is the first of its kind in terms of offering specifically non-religious chaplain training and will form a key part of the Humanist Chaplaincy Network.

Registration for the conference will be available for £15 for a regular ticket and £10 for a student ticket, which covers access to all events throughout the weekend.

You can find out more information and register your interest on the conference website, [www.sunriseconference.org](http://www.sunriseconference.org).

Comic

![Humani and churchy...](image)

What is this humanist community everybody talks about?

Is is a bit like church, but without praying and dogma. It focuses on community, just having a tea and making friends.

Makes sense, I have a feeling that is what my church members are really coming for anyway.