



# Engage

Newsletter of the Chris Worfolk Foundation

October 2010

## Editorial



So much has happened since we launched our first newsletter in July, it is hard to know where to start! Sunrise, HCN, SPRL and many other projects are already underway.

I would like to use this space to really thank everyone who has helped out on the various projects we have run over the past few months. There has been mounting pressure surrounding some of the projects and it really means a lot to everyone at CWF that you gave your time to help us grow.

In particular I would like to say a big thank you to Norman and Sonia who have dedicated countless hours to working away in the office. I would also like to thank my fellow trustees Gijsbert and Paul for their efforts also.

I think it is this, rather than the projects themselves, that really make me excited about embracing humanist values. Divided we fall, united we stand. A mindset that I hope all humanists will eventually embrace.

Chris Worfolk

## Sunrise Conference 2010



The first weekend of September this year saw the first Sunrise Conference take place in Leeds, United Kingdom. The conference was designed to focus on leadership, organisation and activism for free thinking groups.

Sunrise was made accessible to all with ticket prices of just £15 for regular tickets and £10 for student tickets – and if people were struggling even to pay that they could apply to have the ticket price waived entirely to ensure that nobody missed out simply because of money.

The origins of Sunrise date back to 2008 when Chris began planning a committee-training weekend for students in the AHS. Unfortunately after a change of executive at the top of the AHS, they decided not to go ahead with the idea and so the project was shelved.

However, with CWF decided to take the concept and broaden it to include leaders from any local groups be they humanist, skeptic, student or otherwise – Sunrise was born.

The conference was hosted between a combination of the Swarthmore Adult Education Centre and the University of Leeds, both providing space over the weekend. While there were some technical issues on the part of Swarthmore's administration, these were soon solved and the conference progressed as planned.

The Saturday morning saw speeches from former AHS president Norman Ralph and Director of Education at CWF Michael Burgess as well as plenty of time for people to get to know each...

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## Upcoming Events

We are pleased to announce that as part of our aims to promote education we are launching an annual lecture sponsorship programme, providing a grant to a local group to stage an educational lecture each year.

The 2010 lecture will be hosted by Leeds Atheist Society and will be presented by Dr. Terrance Key on "Did Life on Earth Originate on Earth?" The lecture will take place Tuesday 23 November at the University of Leeds.

CWF chair Chris is also speaking at a number of local groups:

Humanist Society of West Yorkshire  
Thursday 14 October

Durham Humanist Society  
Wednesday 20 October

Leeds Atheist Society  
Tuesday 2 November

Durham Union  
Friday 18 November

**Humanist Community of Leeds**  
Sunday 3 Oct, 7 Nov, 5 Dec

**Leeds Skeptics**  
Saturday 16 Oct, 20 Nov, 18 Dec

## Useful Info

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Chris Worfolk Foundation is registered charity in England and Wales. 1137220.

## News in brief

Over the summer, Gijsbert was elected onto the University of Leeds Equality & Diversity Committee, allowing him to bring his knowledge and expertise to the highest level at the university.

In **July**, we launched the foundation office as a headquarters for the charity. Based right in the centre of Leeds it provides a base for our operations and is staffed by a team of volunteers.

We also launched SPRL (see below).

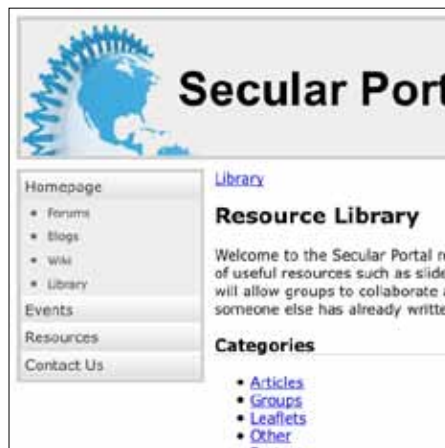
In **August**, we officially announced the Charity Commission had accepted our registration for registered charity status - as a consequence the CWF is now registered charity 1137220.

Meanwhile we also launched our inclusivity programme to allow those suffering from financial hardship to apply for relief from registration fees to educational events we run to ensure nobody misses out.

Chris has also had a busy month with regular slots on the radio talking about everything from UFOs and psychics, to Stephen Hawking officially declaring there was no god.

In **September**, CWF helped the University of Leeds Humanist Chaplaincy run a stall at the university's staff fair, promoting awareness of the Humanist Chaplaincy now operating on the campus.

## Spotlight: Secular Portal Resource Library



Despite having only been launched in July, Secular Portal Resource Library already contains hundreds of documents to download. Indeed the idea has proved so popular that other groups are now trying to do the same thing – since it's launch the AHS have also launched a resource library. While their directory only contains ideas rather than actual documents, it should never the less prove useful to student groups.

In many cases, the Secular Portal Resource Library contains multiple formats of each document so you can pick between a quick and easy finished PDF if you just want something on the fly, to getting the source material that made up the document so you can adapt and re-write it for your group.

We are currently working hard to expand the library to contain many more documents and are inviting every local group – both in the UK and the rest of the world – to submit any documents they would like to share with other groups, to be included in the library.

SPRL does not require any registration – you are welcome to simply visit the site and browse the resources that we have on offer and indeed submit your own! You can find the site at [library.secularportal.com](http://library.secularportal.com).

## Sunrise Conference 2010

...other over teas, coffees and chocolate biscuits – a winning combination for any conference.

Saturday afternoon was kicked off by founder of Derbyshire Secularists & Humanists Mike Lake who delivered a excellent speech on “The Active Atheist.” This was followed by Daryl Marples from the University of Huddersfield discussing the line where futurology becomes religious.

Sunday’s programme included CWF chair Chris Worfolk deliver his first seminar as well as AHS secretary and former Leeds Atheist Society interfaith coordinator



Nicola Jackson presenting sessions on interfaith and diversity.

Sunday also saw the chaplaincy training stream run by Humanist Chaplaincy Network coordinator and CWF trustee Gijsbert Stoet, with further input from other speakers.

This was warmly received by all who attended it.

Attendance to the conference was good – we’re pleased to say that people travelled the length and breadth of the country to be there with delegates arriving from north, south, east and west of Leeds.

Ultimately it was the attendees at the conference that made it the success it was and thus we would like to say a big thank you to everyone who took the time to attend the conference, in



particular our guest speakers, all of who delivered excellent and well received talks.

We also accumulated a record amount of feedback during the conference, collecting feedback sheets after every session as well as a post-conference questionnaire being sent round – the results of which are currently being compiled so we can make the conference even better next time.

Overall, we were very pleased with how Sunrise 2010 went and are confident it will be even better next year.

## Comment: Why can't we work together?



**Charlotte Gibs**

One thing you have probably noticed if you are involved in the free thinking movement, is that there are many organisations and not many members. BHA, NSS, AHS, CFI, CWF, Brights, the list goes on and on. Surely you have to wonder whether so many groups are necessary?

There is an argument to be made that indeed they are. It is simply really hard to co-ordinate a coherent movement. Look at the Christian church, they have had thousands of years of practice at it and still there are, according to Wikipedia, 38,000 different denominations. That’s a lot.

Then of course there is the argument that arranging atheists is like trying

to herd cats – we are all free thinking people after all and so are not the kind of people that like to fall into line under one banner.

The problem with this approach, of course, is that we need to act as a coherent movement in order to really get anything done. As hopefully – given we would imagine ourselves as the enlightened ones – should be able to work out when it is in our best interest to work together for a common cause.

The solution then could well be to have so many different groups and yet when it comes to fighting on common issues for the groups to come together to give us some leverage.

Unfortunately, this doesn’t seem to be particularly easy either. It’s reasonably rare that you see organisations such as

the BHA and NSS come together though perhaps there is hope with the recent collaboration on Protest the Pope.

What has really impressed me during the short time I have spent volunteering with CWF though is that they are open to working with anyone, as long as it gets the job done. One of the first questions with any new projects seems to be “who else can we get involved in this?”

I hope that other national organisations, which have so far been somewhat unresponsive to such offers, decide it is in their best interest to get involved in the future as this to me is the untapped potential of humanism in the UK – if we all work together, we can achieve great things.

## Get Involved

We need your support. We are 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 act 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 or 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 will be making a real difference and can sleep sound at night knowing you made the world a fractionally better place!

## Humanist Chaplaincy Network

In September, we launched the Humanist Chaplaincy Network, the worldwide support network for those volunteering and working as non-religious chaplains.

The network is funded by CWF, and coordinated by CWF trustee Dr. Gijsbert Stoet. Gijsbert is currently working as a lecturer in psychology at the University of Leeds and has previously worked in The Netherlands, Germany, Japan, the United States and elsewhere in the UK. Also being a Humanist and serving as a Humanist Chaplain, as well as chairing the Ethics Committee of his department and sitting on the University of Leeds Equality & Diversity Committee makes him an ideal candidate.

Before launching the network, we spent a year intensively researching. As part of this work, we have given Humanist Chaplains a contemporary definition. In it, Humanist Chaplains are people who serve as representatives of the Humanist community, and who are available to discuss existential questions from a Humanist perspective. They are available as a Humanist friend, as somebody to talk to about Humanism, and as representatives of Humanists in large organisations, such as Universities.

We believe that Humanist Chaplains are not counsellors or therapists, and in fact should not serve in that role. Indeed, we believe that it can be unethical to

serve simultaneously as counsellor and as chaplain. This is because one of the ethical rules of professional counsellors is that their counselling should not be influenced by their private life-stance. That ethical rule conflicts, in our opinion, with the fact that talking about the private life-stance (e.g., Humanism) is exactly the role of the chaplain! You cannot be a good chaplain without this life stance having a major influence on what you talk about! Therefore, our policy is that chaplaincy and counselling are separate domains of work.

That does not mean that a chaplain cannot talk about difficult issues, such as grievance. In fact, the chaplain can, but much more in the way one speaks as a friend than as a psychotherapist - and it is the role of the chaplain to clarify this. A client should never be confused about what service is being provided. It is either chaplaincy or it is counselling, but you cannot be both in the same role.

We believe that developing a clear ethical code is of importance, especially given the existing confusion about what exactly Humanist chaplains are (both among Humanists and the public). Therefore, an important aim of the Humanist Chaplaincy Network is to develop this code of ethics for people serving as Humanist chaplains as well as providing support, resources, and training. More information can be found at [www.humanistchaplains.org](http://www.humanistchaplains.org).

## Comic

