



Written March 2024

CHUM – a random update on what’s been happening and looking forward.



This is the first communication of its kind from Chester Humanists (CHUM) – an attempt to try and share something of the direction and approach of the group. Since we became independent in July 2023 the group’s focus has been on re-building* and encouraging humanist community involvement.

CHUM has adopted a loose structure to try and avoid too much pressure falling on any one person. To that end, whilst having some of the traditional roles – primarily so the group can communicate and function at a basic level – it has adopted a less conventional and looser approach to it’s activities.

Every month the following activities take place.

Monthly Social To ensure some continuity and some presence on a regular basis CHUM holds a monthly social meet on the third Tuesday every month. This is currently held at the Brewhouse and Kitchen on Love Street in Chester. The thinking is that even if nothing else happens in a month there will be an opportunity for like minded people to enjoy good conversation and exchange thoughts and ideas.

Thinking Out Loud Twice a month a “Thinking Out Loud” session takes place at Storyhouse where literature is read aloud and discussed – very mindful and prompting fascinating discussions. Numbers are limited on this so registration is recommended (through Meet Up – please see Contacts below).

Other events and activities take place less regularly including:

Gardening: The group helps maintains a garden area in Grosvenor Park and there are frequent meetups in Grosvenor Park to tend the garden area.

Creative Projects: An ongoing project seeks to construct beautiful and informative mosaic signs to sit within the garden area and potentially a sculpture – to offer visitors a pleasing and informative focal point to complement other areas of the park.

Talks: For example in February, some folk also enjoyed a super informative and entertaining talk @ Storyhouse on the history of knowledge sharing from a fanatical public librarian. More talks and workshops are planned.

Signposting: The group is also of the view that, rather than trying to replicate what other groups are already doing very well – groups like SciBar, Friends of the Earth, Merseyside Sceptics etc, we would instead seek to identify and promote events run by other local groups which may be of interest to humanists in the Chester area.

Other activity envisaged over coming months includes:

Regular discussion evenings on different topics

Workshop on preparing for death

Talk on logical fallacies

Humanist taster and One Life Humanism Course

Walks

“Outings” – to shows, places and other events (many such outings happen organically as people advertise something they’re interested in and several CHUMs end up attending.

Possible CHUM attendance at this years QED in Manchester

And next year CHUM hope to hold a “Retreat” weekend.

There are several longer term ambitions too – certainly no shortage of aspiration etc

Be great to have people to help realise some plans.

*Chester Humanists was a participant in a pilot project run by Humanists UK. On coming out of the pilot the group is being run independently and as a result has to start again with building membership etc



About Chester Humanists - An outline of recent history and future direction relating to activity

Several people have come to meetings fairly recently and so it may be helpful to give something of an overview and a flavour of the sort of things CHUM gets involved in.

Firstly - Chester Humanists is an independent group of humanists based in Chester with members from Chester and surrounding areas, Wirral and North Wales. It exists to provide opportunities for humanists in the local area to get together and enrich our lives.

In recent years the group has held “Great Get Togethers” in memory of Jo Cox mp to try and help different local communities meet and interact, engaged with Chester Pride, engaged in dialogue activities with people of faith, run courses, workshops – including playing the bodhran, talks, walks including introductions to some of Chester’s archaeology and canal system, dinners and social evenings as well as trips to conventions and shows (such as the Book of Mormon!) and to places of interest like nearby Jodrell Bank.

Individual members offer talks to local groups and schools, pastoral support services, and celebrant services for civic events and for personal life celebrations such as Naming ceremonies, Weddings and Vow renewals , Funerals and Memorials.

CHUM also support involvement in various campaigns – such as lobbying for a change in the law on assisted dying and many human rights issues that affect people in the local area and beyond. CHUM also wish to help humanists involved in other groups – such as environmental groups, volunteer projects etc and provide volunteering opportunities for those that want to help other projects around the area.

Structure

Chester Humanists currently have a committee of 10 people who together help organise activities and make sure the group remains viable and identifies opportunities to help local humanists and our wider local community.

People who aren’t on the committee help in numerous ways too with IT, arranging events. There is always a need for more help – the more people involved – the more can be offered and the more secure the group becomes.

Please see the Roles and Responsibilities page on the group website [here](#). We’d love you to be involved in shaping your group.

The AGM in July will look to encourage people to take up roles on the committee or in another capacity to help grow the group and help us offer more support and activities.

Activity has so far been financed through contributions from the committee members. Going forward the committee hope that the group can self finance through donations rather than asking for membership fees.



Contacts

There are various means of contacting the group/being part of the groups online community (which often spills over into “life”!). Please do get in touch if something appeals to you or you simply want to get in touch!

WhatsApp CHUM runs a small but active WhatsApp Community with various sub-groups. The community is quite interactive and many of the events etc are advertised and discussed here. If you would like to join please email chesterhumanists@gmail.com

Website The groups website is <https://www.chester.humanist.org.uk/>

You can become a member of the website if you wish: If you leave your email address and some basic details we can add you to our contact list and send occasional newsletters and other communications when we get these up and running. In the future there may be member only areas as well. You will always be in control and can join/cancel being part of this at any time by emailing chesterhumanists@gmail.com

Please contact the group on chesterhumanists@gmail.com

Facebook: You can also reach the group through Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ChesterHumanists> and we also run a private facebook group which allows free expression and where many of our activities are publicised and where people share thoughts.

Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/Chester-Humanists/> Please sign up to receive up to date information on our events.