



## **Annual report for the 2021 AGM**

## **Chair's Report 2020 - Susan Walker**

I would like to begin by saying what a year 2020 was, I can only hope that my final year as chair is somewhat less eventful. Although I have been saddened by the awfulness of this pandemic and the losses that many have suffered, I have also been heartened by the strength of our community, with many making sacrifices for the common good and offering to help others whenever possible.

It has been a great disappointment that we have not been able to meet in person, either in Newcastle, Durham, or Teesside. But we have been gathering virtually for our regular meetings, also for quizzes, book clubs and discussion groups. When we can meet up again, I hope that our newfound expertise online can be used to enable those who cannot travel to the meetings to join us virtually.

Although we have been unable to meet face to face, the committee has been meeting regularly both for our monthly meetings and using our time to develop a future strategy for the group. In the coming year we hope to announce how our commitment to supporting charitable causes will be met in the future.

I would like to thank the members of the management committee who have helped keep me sane this past year and who have been working incredibly hard to keep things ticking over and I would also like to welcome our new committee member Philip Nathan who has joined us this year.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for keeping on supporting us through these tough times. If there is anything you would like us to offer as an organisation, an event or just an idea for a speaker please get in touch either via email [northeasthumanist@gmail.com](mailto:northeasthumanist@gmail.com) or give me a call on 07557 97 8580. Otherwise keep thinking for yourself and acting for others.

## **Membership Secretary's Report for 2020 - Moira Turner**

At the start of January 2020 there were 209 registered members and on December 31<sup>st</sup> 206. Considering the circumstances, it is very gratifying that we have maintained our membership numbers. 20 new members joined, and we lost 23. Of the losses sadly 1 died, 1 is unwell, 1 left the area and 20 did not renew their membership.

### **Attendances at Meetings**

We started the year with good attendances with 33 at the January talk in Newcastle on 'The Biology of Ageing', 25 at the Teesside New Year social and quiz, and 15 at the Durham house group. 300 + attended the public lecture for Darwin Day in February that was a joint venture with Newcastle University's Insights lecture series, and 6 went to the Durham house group. There were 9 at the house group in March just before the lockdown.

Monthly online meetings started in July. It is hard to be precise about the numbers logging on but between October and December about 100 members and guests had 'attended'. The fact that NEH can still present talks is thanks to several of the committee members who deal with the technology involved. Ed Gibney continues

to run our Facebook and website pages and Susan Walker, Liz Armstrong, Irene Wilkinson, and Jan Mole have embraced Zoom and regularly use it for NEH activities fulfilling a valuable role in offering ways to keep members connected.

## **Welfare**

The welfare scheme continues whereby I maintain telephone contact with members who live alone, are ill or do not have online contact with NEH. This year I have spoken with more members who I know are isolated. 3 NEH members have offered help, 2 of whom have now been linked with others.

## **Pastoral Support**

Several NEH members are also part of the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN), members of which are trained and accredited by Humanists UK (HUK) who monitor the service and provide Continuous Professional Development. In our North East region, we have 10 accredited members one of whom, Jessica Grace, has been the HUK Head of Pastoral Support since last February. Members usually volunteer in hospitals, hospices, prisons, and universities but due to the Covid restrictions nobody has had any personal contact within their placements. Several have been able to keep in touch with their teams via email, Zoom meetings and phone and have attended online courses and lectures organised by Jessica and the NRPSN team.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my thanks to our treasurer, **Phil Barraclough** with whom I work in dealing with membership subscriptions, and **Mike Turner** who helps me with any technical problems, with printing and sending the bulletin to those members who do not have email, and printing and collating other NEH documents. Thank you to all my fellow committee members who are committed to keeping NEH thriving especially during these difficult times and last, but not least, thank you to all our members who have continued to subscribe to our charity, thereby supporting Humanism in the North East, and to our new members who joined in 2020.

## **Fundraising and Social Projects Officer's report for 2020 - Mike Turner**

### **Faith to Faithless, Charity of the year 2019/20**

Following the success of the Panel Meeting and Training Event held in Durham in 2019 the plan was to hold similar events in Newcastle in 2020. Unfortunately, a January Panel Meeting had to be postponed and the Covid-19 pandemic put a stop to all activity. We transferred the remaining total of £1887 into the F2F account in May 2020.

**Crisis Skylight Newcastle** was the only charity nominated as our Charity of the year 2020/21 so collecting began after the AGM. Meetings with their regional fundraiser had produced several potential collaborative ventures but the pandemic

stopped them all. No bucket collections have been allowed in our normal Newcastle or Durham locations.

A donation “button” was set up for Crisis on the NEH website linked to a dedicated JustGiving page, and we have encouraged people to donate at our monthly Zoom meetings and Social events. Susan Walker also sold surplus produce from her garden and allotment on behalf of Crisis. At the end of 2020, the total collected was £860 plus at least £140 Gift Aid. A big “thank you” to everyone who has contributed. Fundraising will continue until the AGM in March 2021.

### **Isaac Newton School in Uganda**

In early 2020 we sent a cheque for £1859 to the Ugandan Humanist Schools Trust to donate to INS. This included all the money collected in 2019 plus a carry-over of funds from the 2018 collection plus the Gift Aid due for the 2019 donations.

Money collected in 2020 has been only £611 including Gift Aid. Donations have been reducing for several years and this prompted a rethink by the NEH Committee. The following actions were agreed:

- For the annual donation to UHST, due in January 2021, we will use some of our reserves to top this up to £2000.
- We have told UHST that we will not be collecting an annual lump sum for them in future.
- We will continue to publicise INS once or twice a year in our Bulletin and ask people to donate as individuals directly to UHST.

### **Charity of the Year 2021/22**

In view of the ongoing pandemic and our inability to do bucket collections for the foreseeable future, plus a current shortage of volunteers to do collections, the NEH Committee decided not to have a Charity of the Year in the coming year.

### **Publicity Officer’s Report for 2020 – Ed Gibney**

#### **The Bulletin**

The production of the monthly bulletin was taken over by the Publicity Officer this year, starting with April’s issue after the AGM. Over the course of the year several new procedures were developed for this. A survey was undertaken to see what content members were interested in. A new layout was designed and implemented. Our mailing lists were consolidated and moved online to MailChimp in order to automate deliveries, signups, and unsubscribing. And the bulletin is now posted online as a pdf, rather than as an attachment to an email, which makes reading and sharing it much easier. All of these changes have received generous notes of support from our members. In 2021, we expect to put back issues of the bulletin on our website so prospective members can see more of our history of activity. We will also strive to continue adding more content of interest to each issue. If anyone would like to contribute ideas or articles to future bulletins, please send them to [contact@northeast-humanists.org.uk](mailto:contact@northeast-humanists.org.uk).

## New Logos

In July, we released the design of our new logos, which had been developed by the NEH trustees in collaboration with a local graphic designer over the course of several months. This was done to give us new and better options for all of the online logos and avatars we use for various websites. It also gave us a “vector graphic” of the logos, which can be scaled to any size for online or print purposes without any pixilation or loss of quality. Projects like these are often contentious for organisations, but this one went very smoothly thanks to the brilliant local designer whose ideas have gathered nothing but praise and excitement. We look forward to using our logos on publications and marketing materials for years to come.



## Webpage

The NEH internet site ([www.northeast-humanists.org.uk](http://www.northeast-humanists.org.uk)) is running smoothly. Only minor tweaks to the website have occurred during what has been a difficult year due to Covid-19 disruptions. Plans had been made to transition the software used to run this website from the free and powerful (but difficult to use and learn) WordPress.org, over to the Weebly platform that is much simpler but costs £48 per year to use. This transition has been delayed, however, due at first to the many uncertainties we were experiencing with the pandemic, but then later due to the decision to undertake an extensive strategic planning effort that is still ongoing. Once the strategic plan is complete, a new web strategy will be executed.

Currently, views of the website are rather low. In 2019, we averaged approximately 205 users per month. As shown in the table below, the first three months of 2020 showed that we were on pace to increase that level of interaction, but once activities fell off and then changed due to Covid, our website interactions dropped considerably. Overall, for 2020, we totalled approximate 180 users per month on the website. We all hope 2021 will be an improved year for the world and that a new website and web strategy will improve these figures.

2020 Users of NEH Website			
Month	Users	Month	Users
Jan	256	Jul	122
Feb	259	Aug	151
Mar	256	Sep	222
Apr	125	Oct	172
May	145	Nov	157
Jun	165	Dec	134

## Facebook

The NEH Facebook page started the year with 881 “likes” and finished the year at 964, which was an increase of 9%. This was achieved despite several months of little public activity for NEH, which shows the increasing grip that Facebook has on digital audiences. The publicity report for 2019 noted that “*only four events were advertised on Facebook in 2019 (totalling £40), with the hope that we could determine if advertising was making much of a difference.*” In 2020, we continued experimenting with our Facebook advertising to see how effective it is. We spent £70 on advertising for 5 events — £10 each for three normal events plus £20 each for the two more prominent events with Robin Dunbar in February and Richard Wilkinson in October. We also tried one event with no money spent on Facebook advertising. As shown in the table below, the resulting responses on Facebook were very variable. This seemed to depend more on the topic and speaker than on the amount spent on advertising. However, as there are few other avenues worth pursuing for digital advertising for our events, we plan to continue with a minimum spend of £10 for advertising for all monthly talks going forward, and we will consider spending £20 for more prominent speakers if we expect them to generate more interest.

Event	Facebook Advertising	Facebook Responses
Jan: The Biology of Aging	£10	45
Feb: Darwin Day Lecture	£20	162
Jul: The Humane League	£10	23
Sep: Treating Gambling Addiction	£0	13
Oct: More Equal Societies	£20	210
Nov: Home Education	£10	22

## Twitter

Our activity on Twitter shrunk noticeably in 2020 as conversations about humanism stalled or were drowned out by talk of Covid and politics. Also, we had other priorities in this year of upheaval and Twitter was not one of them. At the end of 2019, we had 1085 followers, but at the end of 2020 we had 1066 (a 1.75% drop). Our total number of “impressions” (the number of times a tweet shows up in somebody’s timeline) has dropped drastically, though, as seen in the chart below. If you are interested in running our Twitter account and trying to build #humanist conversations there, please consider writing us at [contact@northeast-humanists.org.uk](mailto:contact@northeast-humanists.org.uk). If you are on Twitter, we can be found at @NEHumanists and your comments, likes, and retweets can be very helpful.

Year	Twitter Impressions
2017	11,400
2018	61,100
2019	65,100
2020	9,800

## **Report from Education Officer - Kate Hinton**

**Membership of education panel** Kate Hinton, Mike Turner, Irene Wilkinson, Jan Mole, Susan Walker, Stuart Dearlove, Les Milne.

**Meetings** The panel has met three times this year at the end of each school term. This year all the meetings have been done remotely using Zoom which has worked well. We review school visits and other talks, share good practice and ideas, update our information about SACREs and HUK, as well as discuss information about national developments.

**School visits and talks 2020** This year has been dominated by the limitations due to the corona pandemic. As a result, before lockdown a few were done face to face, then a few done remotely but many of the planned visits have been postponed. We learned how to do school talks remotely and have completed these in three schools

Primary / Middle school lessons or assemblies (KS1 / KS2) x2

Secondary / middle school lessons or assemblies (KS3 / KS4) x4 (3 remotely)

**SACRE representation** Currently we have representation on the SACREs in Newcastle, North Tyneside, Gateshead, Northumberland, Durham and most recently, from September 2020, Darlington. Humanists are only gradually becoming more accepted as full voting members, as we should be and as was confirmed in Wales. We are taking this gently and look for opportunities to influence the Agreed Syllabuses. As they are reviewed and up-dated we try to make sure that Humanism is explicitly included and becomes compulsory, at least for some key Stages. As reported last year, Humanism is threaded through the latest Durham syllabus and is supported by the Additional Guidance which we prepared and disseminated to teachers in Durham and North Tyneside. During 2020 Newcastle published a new Agreed Syllabus in which the place of Humanism is considerably strengthened by being compulsory at Key Stages 2 and 3. Our Additional Guidance is referred to as a useful resource and was introduced to teachers at a network meeting. A concern has arisen in North Tyneside where teachers have requested the professional development programme to include Jehovah's Witnesses.

**Religious Education Resource Centres** We are in communication with Karenza Passmore, who is in charge of the two Centres, about Humanist books and resources held by the centres. We have donated a copy of the Little Book of Humanism to each of the centres and are currently reviewing the other resources with the intention of adding to them.

**Involvement with HUK** We continue to have regular communication with HUK about school visits and SACREs.

A few of us attended an education webinar in October and as the Education Day was run remotely, in November, four of us were able to attend. These gave us a lot of useful material and good advice, especially about leading assemblies and lessons in schools. The emphasis was on using three main themes – Asking questions, Being kind and Finding happiness.

HUK is in the process of establishing regional education groups on the same basis as our Education Panel and has noted the strengths of our approach.

### **North East Humanists' Virtual Bookclub - Jan Mole**

Jan Mole has run the NEH 'Zoom' bookclub during the last year since the first lockdown period in March. It is a friendly gathering of people who enjoy expanding their reading of fiction and non-fiction and all of the members get to choose a book for the group to read and discuss a month later. Meetings are held at 7-30pm on the third Tuesday of each month and the next one will be Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April.

All are welcome, simply contact Jan and she will send the link to Zoom prior to the meeting. [janet.mole@ntlworld.com](mailto:janet.mole@ntlworld.com)

### **Current Affairs Email Group - Beryl Downing**

This group has been running since June and currently has 20 members. It was suggested as part of our response to the current situation in which we are unable to meet in person. It is a supplement to the monthly Zoom talks and is also useful for those who do not have Zoom facilities, but still wish to consider matters of interest.

The convener chooses a topic or topics in each week's news and selects articles from newspapers, current affairs magazines, journals and current affairs blogs, together with an introductory sentence or two. Usually, there will be several articles from a range of political and cultural viewpoints and a variety of published sources.

Members of the group can suggest current topics for inclusion, send articles and comment. Comments can be to the whole group, or simply responses to the convener. Names of members are shown, but email addresses are Bcc, so responses are made through the convener.

We are looking to encourage more debate and would be pleased to have more members. If you would like to join, please contact: Beryl Downing, [beryl Downing@icloud.com](mailto:beryl Downing@icloud.com)

### **North East Humanists Quiz Nights - Irene Wilkinson**

North East Humanists have been running a Zoom Quiz Night since April 2020. When the first lockdown began last March, and we could no longer attend our monthly meetings, the committee thought that it would be a good idea to have a regular fun social occasion so that we could still keep in touch with each other.

We thought that a virtual quiz night might prove to be an enjoyable event and so we decided to have a trial run in April 2020. I undertook to be the quiz master and thankfully it turned out to be a success, so we decided to hold a regular monthly session from 7:00pm to about 9:00pm every last Thursday in the month.

So far, we have had six sessions with an average of ten people participating each time we meet. However, most of these are members of the committee.

We would very much like it if more people from the wider membership would join us. It offers a great opportunity to get to know one another better and it is also great fun. The questions are never alarmingly difficult. They are mostly presented in multiple

choice form. So, you have a one in three chance of getting the right answer if you are in 'I am baffled mode'!

So please come and join us. Check out the monthly bulletin for more information.

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# North East Humanists

## Financial Report

For the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

North East Humanists (NEH) started the year with cash balances of £18,403.55 and ended with balances of £16,327.61. The fall in balances is mainly due to the payments made to supported charities during the year, specifically £1,859 to the Isaac Newton School and £1,628 to Faith2Faithless.

A small surplus has been made on the NEH activity for the year, of £583, and a deficit of income over expenditure on Charities activity of £2659.

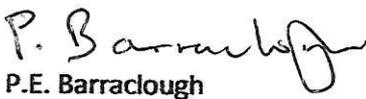
The exceptional circumstances of the year have resulted in both lower income and lower expenditure, for instance in the cost of meetings and talks and socials. Street collections were suspended and there was no charity of the year. Gift Aid received in 2020 relates mainly to income received in 2019.

Total NEH income of £3362.15 (2019 £4985.58) includes membership subscriptions of £2144 (2019 £2816). There were no large donations received during the year and small donations have been included in memberships. The figure for donations last year was £1,229.

£767 (2019 £2,115) was received in donations for the Isaac Newton Humanist School in Uganda.

The largest item of expenditure during the year was a donation of £500 to Humanists UK, and the new NEH logo design (recorded in Other Costs) £250.

Of other expenditure, committee meetings have cost £271 compared to £752 last year. Other Costs (£3720 appear lower than last year (2019 £1,410), but the figure for 2019 does include £1000 donated to the charity Crisis. Stationery costs (£482) were lower compared to last year (£607).

  
P.E. Barraclough

Treasurer      22/01/2021

This organisation, like lots of similar sized bodies, derives some of its income from cash which cannot be verified until entered into the accounting records. Subject to that I am satisfied from the examinations I have made that the Accounts reflect the financial position of the North East Humanists.



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**NORTH EAST HUMANISTS**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**For the 12 months ended 31st December 2020**

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	2020	2020	2019	2019
	£	£	£	£
<b><u>NEH</u></b>				
Subscriptions	2144.09		2816.00	
Donations			1229.25	
Humanist UK Northern Pride			135.00	
Xmas social			204.00	
Newcastle Meetings	77.50		423.72	
Interest received	32.00			
HMRC gift aid (inc £400.82 reimbursement of F2F claim)	1108.72		177.61	
		<u>3362.31</u>		<u>4985.58</u>
<b><u>Charities</u></b>				
Street collection Newcastle				
Street collection Durham			1254.50	
Isaac Newton school donations	767.95		2115.36	
Annual Charity 2019	138.00		88.00	
F2F			724.64	
Gift Aid for Equal Arts	22.00			
Gift Aid for INS			302.80	
		<u>927.95</u>		<u>4485.30</u>
<b>Total Income for year to date</b>		<u>4290.26</u>		<u>9470.88</u>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>				
<b><u>NEH</u></b>				
Post, Stationery & Printing	481.93		607.19	
Newcastle Meetings	271.00		752.75	
Committee	110.40		1207.51	
Web costs	121.19		60.00	
Education	0.00		93.55	
Teesside meetings	0.00		25.95	
WinterSocial			239.00	
Donation by NEH (to Humanists UK)	500.00			
Wreaths for remembrance day	81.00		60.00	
Affiliations	347.22		270.85	
External audit	50.00		50.00	
Other costs (inc £250 Logo; £47.08 Advertising events)	372.08		1410.28	
Bank Fees inc Paypal	18.30		21.85	
F2F gift aid paid and reimbursed	400.84			
Jesmond debate	25.00			
		<u>2778.96</u>		<u>4798.93</u>
<b><u>Charities</u></b>				
Isaac Newton	1859.21		1950.00	
F2F Panel	1628.03		625.33	
Annual Charity 2018	100.00		3626.30	
		<u>3587.24</u>		<u>6201.63</u>
<b>Total expenditure for the year to date</b>		<u>6366.20</u>		<u>11000.56</u>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit for the year to date)</b>		<u>-2075.94</u>		<u>-1529.68</u>
<b>NEH</b>		<u>583.35</u>		<u>186.65</u>
<b>Charities</b>		<u>-2659.29</u>		<u>-1716.33</u>
		<u>-2075.94</u>		<u>-1529.68</u>

**NORTH EAST HUMANISTS**  
**BALANCE SHEET AT 31st December 2020**

	2020	2020	2019	2019
	£	£	£	£
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>				
Bank current account		6190.45		8329.55
Bank investment account		10032.00		10000.00
PayPal		105.16		
Cash in Hand				74.00
Bank accounts and cash in hand		<u>16327.61</u>		<u>18403.55</u>
Debtor    INS gift aid to claim	65.00		168.88	
Debtor    F2F gift aid to claim			366.34	
Debtor    EA gift aid to claim			22.00	
Debtor    NEH gift to claim	<u>301.35</u>		<u>707.83</u>	
		366.35		1265.05
		<u>16693.96</u>		<u>19668.60</u>
 <b><u>LIABILITIES</u></b>				
External Audit			50.00	
Irish Centre			150.00	
MEA House			<u>55.20</u>	
				255.20
<b><u>Due to Charities</u></b>				
Issac Newton School	610.67		1690.33	
Annual Charity			1465.36	
Annual Charity unspent Grants			24.67	
Equal Arts			88	
Gift Aid to claim for Equal Arts			22	
Gift Aid to claim for INS			168.88	
Gift Aid to claim for F2F			<u>366.34</u>	
		<u>610.67</u>		<u>3825.58</u>
		610.67		4080.78
Reserves		<u>16083.29</u>		<u>15587.82</u>
		<u>16693.96</u>		<u>19668.60</u>