



Cumbria Humanist Group

Bob Churchill (BHA Membership and Website Manager), on behalf of Pepper Harow, speaking about the BHA Local Development Project.

**Meeting at the Morton Community Centre, Wigton Road, Carlisle
on Wednesday, 19 March 2008 at 7.30 pm**

Human rights and equality legislation have led to government, both local and national, involving and consulting a number of diversity groups in the development of policies. These range from education to housing and social services, especially as such services are increasingly being contracted out to non-profit sector organisations such as charities rather than being directly provided by local authority departments.

In the current climate a number of these diversity groups are faith-based and members of the **British Humanist Association**, like other non-religious citizens – now a majority in Britain – were becoming increasingly concerned that their views were not being sought in parallel with those of the faith groups. Equality laws confer the right to an equal voice and by broadening the definition to ‘faith *and belief*’ the BHA was successful in its campaign for inclusion in the consultations. Their **Local Development Project**, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, has ensured that during the last year over 200 BHA volunteers have become involved in local consultation groups to ensure that the non-religious perspective is presented.

Members of Cumbria Humanist Group met in Morton Community Centre, Carlisle, on 19 March to hear Bob Churchill of the BHA talk about the background and progress of the project. Bob bravely stepped into the breach, travelling up from London at the last minute as Pepper Harow, who leads the project and was due to speak, was taken ill. Some members expressed doubts about Humanists being included with faith groups, feeling that we should be campaigning to exclude the religions from such influence – beating them rather than joining them! – but we acknowledge that the spectrum of Humanist belief is a broad one, ranging from sharing a philosophical fellowship, promoting a positive caring outlook for the non-religious, to active political opposition to the power of religion in our society.

If you are interested in Humanism, visit our website at www.cumbria-humanists.org.uk or telephone 01228 810592 or 01768 881245 for more information.

(325 words)

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Affiliated to the British Humanist Association