



Candidates for the role of Humanist Students President-Elect

Please see below for the details of **Candidate 1: James Dart** standing for the role of Humanist Students President-Elect. Please use the [Voting Form](#) in order to cast your vote. You are only able to vote in this election if you are a student member of Humanists UK. Each member has one vote only.

Candidate 1: James Dart

Biography:

My name is James Dart, I am 27 years old and I am currently studying for an MA in European Politics at the University of Exeter. Prior to this year I worked as a teacher in a special school in Devon and I now work as a supply teacher alongside my studies. I enjoy volunteering and have recently worked at the RAMM museum in Exeter. Finally, I am active in local politics and have twice acted as an election agent, most recently in the GE in 2016. I enjoy chess and reading and play football most nights of the week.

Supporting statement:

Hello,

As a passionate humanist, I believe the position of President-Elect to be one of great importance. As the scope and reputation of humanism grows across the UK, the important role of university societies will continue to grow with it. Humanist societies offer students a valuable community on UK campuses and provide unique and stimulating events – this is something I wish to help strengthen.

As the President and founder of Exeter Humanists I have come to find that the space offered by humanist societies to be one that is greatly valued by a large cross section of society. From ‘spiritualists’ and sceptics to agnostics and atheists; from students and the lay-person, to professionals and academics; from the young and energetic to the old and experienced; humanism brings people from all different backgrounds and experiences together. The liberal values of humanism transcend gender, race and sexuality and building upon our USP is something that I am passionate about. To that end, I would love to help integrate our student societies with Young Humanist and local groups.

As the General Secretary of Exeter Humanist Students and President of Exeter Humanists I hold a unique position of being active in both local and university societies simultaneously. This experience has strengthened my view that a strong partnership between local and student groups helps create a richer, deeper and more vibrant culture.

Furthermore, in my capacity as General Secretary of Exeter Humanist Students, I have organised and run a number of events. As President-Elect (and President) I would communicate with societies



listening to and offering insights into good practice, focusing on the importance of event type, identity and advertisement.

As a humanist trained school speaker, I have helped deliver training on how to run assemblies, lessons and workshops on the topic of humanism. This has not only broadened my understanding of humanism and its history, but has also given me a greater insight into how students of all ages ask questions and think about different world views. Equally, as a school teacher I have taught Religious Education in schools around the country, including Cardiff, Oxford and Devon. When planning these lessons, it was important that I acted as a co-learner and did not dominate the conversation. The students were empowered to ask questions in a safe environment and were encouraged to challenge different ideas courteously and with respect.

Continually, it is with this spirit that I sit on the Devon Faith and Belief Forum Committee. This organisation brings representatives together from the different religious communities that exist across Devon and work together on shared goals and projects. As the humanist representative for Devon it often falls to me to make the case for the non-religious community. This role requires sensitivity, patience and the ability to compromise, skills that I would utilise as President-Elect (and President).

If I were to become the President-Elect, these are some of the skills and experiences that I would bring to the role. I believe that inter-faith work is important for humanist societies. Whilst it is not always easy, having a voice at the table, building bridges and opening dialogue and trust is a great way to achieve shared goals. Equally, I believe that building humanist communities is really important and as such I would build on the excellent work that Hannah Timson and Hari Parekh have done over the past two years, listening to students and offering advice and direction where needed.
