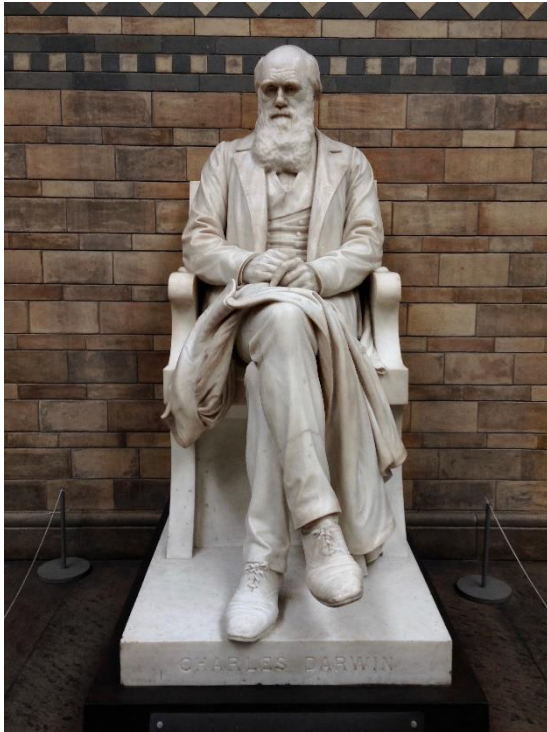


Lori's Story

My name is Lori, I am 35 years old, live in London and I am the volunteer Coordinator of Humanist Climate Action. From a very young age I have been fascinated with life on earth. At first, I thought I wanted to be a palaeontologist (dinosaurs!), then a zoologist (studying animals) and then a paleoanthropologist (studying evolution and the prehistory of humans). As it turns out I went into a completely different career, but I have never lost my curiosity to learn more about our species and our planet. I always loved animals and nature too and at university became active in environmental campaigning. It was also at university that I learnt about humanism and found that it very much reflected my developing beliefs and values.



Charles Darwin was an English naturalist most famously known for his contributions to evolutionary biology

It is the values and beliefs of scientific reasoning, empathy, curiosity and responsibility that lead many humanists to become environmental campaigners and try to act positively for nature in our day-to-day lives. For example, my empathy for other humans also extends more widely to other living creatures on our planet and also forward in time to future generations of humans and other animals. Therefore, I want to behave in a way that means other people, animals and future generations have a healthy and habitable planet on which to live!

Humanists are non-religious and do not believe in the supernatural (any god or gods) or in an afterlife. What we do believe is that we have this one life to live, and therefore we should try to live well by making ethical decisions based on reason and empathy. We give meaning to our lives by seeking happiness and trying to help others do the same by taking responsibility for our actions and acting with integrity. We also believe the universe and everything in it are natural phenomena and look to the scientific method to understand what we see and feel around us.

Once I found out that there was a philosophy of life that reflected my beliefs and values and other people that shared them, I realised that this is also echoed in the deep connection to the natural world that I feel. Believing that the web of life on planet earth was formed over eons by evolution fills me with appreciation and awe for the natural processes at work around us. I am endlessly fascinated and inspired by the interconnections and balance in our natural systems and as a humanist I recognise that I am a part of these systems – not separate from them.



Humanist Climate Action take part in an environmental march along with other faith and belief groups

Humanists use scientific reasoning to guide us and the science on the climate and biodiversity crisis is very clear. We (humans) have been disrupting the natural balance in ecosystems and changing habitats and the planet by over-using resources and producing carbon and other greenhouse gases. We have not treated the earth as if it is the only one we have and as I do not believe we will receive any supernatural help, I think we must take responsibility for our actions, including our present activities and future choices.

When I heard that Humanists UK was setting up Humanist Climate Action – a volunteer-led network of humanists, I knew I had to help!

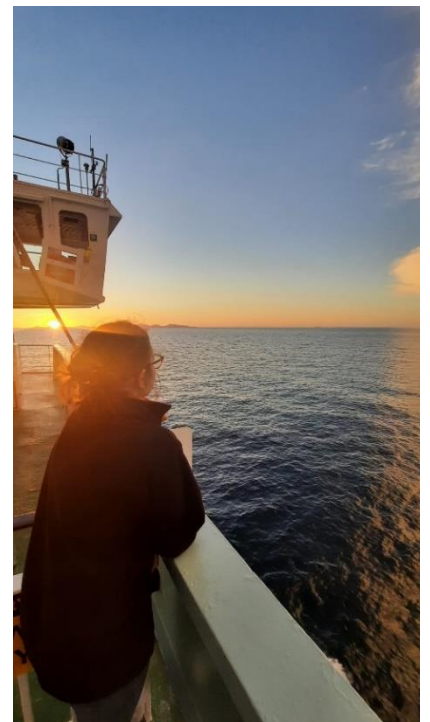
Humanist Climate Action has four main aims:

1. To promote environmentally friendly policies, and to endorse and support the actions of other environmental campaigning groups that have similar objectives.
2. To challenge beliefs that are not evidence-based and disinformation about environmental issues, particularly climate change.
3. To encourage humanists to adopt greener lifestyles, following the best available scientific evidence.
4. To ensure that the humanist voice is heard in religious or belief-led initiatives on environmental issues.

We put these aims into practice by holding events, responding to policy consultations, collaborating with other organisations on campaigns and encouraging other humanists to get involved. At the recent Humanist Convention in June, we encouraged humanists to take part in an activity to look at the various aspects of their life and see how green they were. We also asked people to make an environmental pledge – mine was to more actively avoid palm oil! For me, a really important aspect of this work is joining together with other faith and belief groups and bringing communities together to work toward common environmental goals. For example at COP26 we marched together with representatives from other faith and belief groups for climate justice.

On a personal level, I try my best to live as greenly and ethically as possible, though this isn't always easy! I have reduced the meat and dairy in my diet to help reduce my carbon footprint, I rarely fly and try to take public transport as much as possible, and I buy the majority of my clothing second-hand. Money is also an important and often overlooked aspect of living a greener lifestyle. I make sure I bank with an ethical institution, and I have a green pension (one not invested in fossil fuels). When I am making a big purchase, I try to look into the ethical credentials of the various products on offer. Nature is still very important to me, especially living in a big city. I make sure I regularly visit the countryside and also the green spaces in London, which also really contributes to my mental well-being.

Though we face many challenges, from the climate crisis and biodiversity loss to plastic pollution and resource use, my humanist beliefs and values give me optimism that humans have the empathy and resourcefulness to live on this planet in a sustainable way and in harmony with the other creatures and natural processes around us.



Dolphin watching on the ferry in the Outer Hebrides, Scotland