

Suffolk Humanists Monthly Bulletin

March 2021

CENSUS 2021 If you are not religious SAY SO

I am sure you are all aware that the 2021 census is now underway and that for humanists the 'No Religion' option is the appropriate box to tick.

Please do not use the 'Other' box or fill in with 'Atheist' or 'Humanist' as doing so dilutes the number recorded as 'No Religion'.

Although the majority of people in the UK are not religious in any way, many still feel "culturally obliged" to tick one of the main religions.

So don't keep it to yourself. If you get the opportunity let those acquaintances as well as friends and family who are not religious know why they should tick the 'No Religion' box.

Here are some reasons why it is important

In the past exaggerated religion figures have been used to justify unfair religious discrimination in our society. Over the last decade this has included:

- *Increasing the number of faith schools
- *Enforcing compulsory Christian worship in schools
- *Contracting out public services to religious organisations who can discriminate against non-religious or LGBT service users
- *Preserving 26 bishops who vote in Parliament
- *Opting religious groups out of equality laws and other new legislation
- *Making even more religious-only programming on the BBC, such as Thought for the Day.

Religion, Science and statistics in the time of Covid

In a previous bulletin I remarked upon how religious communities that were traditionally reluctant to accept vaccination were now actively encouraging it.

Perhaps that is not surprising. A recent study "Religious affiliation and the risk of COVID 19 related mortality; a retrospective analysis of variation in pre and post lockdown risk by religious group in England and Wales" by the Office for National Statistics spells out just how disproportionately religious groups were affected in the first wave of the pandemic.

It then goes on to show how, after a forced lockdown and closure of places of worship, the mortality rate in these groups dropped dramatically.

Allowing for age and socio-economic differences it revealed stark differences with Hindu, Jewish and Muslim communities originally experiencing death rates far in excess of others. Lowest overall were those of 'No Religion' whose death rate was unchanged before and after lockdown. This strongly suggests that religious practices such as community worship were a major factor in spreading the virus.

Annual General Meeting

Now planned for Tuesday 27th April at 6.00 pm (by Zoom) Details to follow.

Suffolk Humanists

23 Ipswich Road, Woodbridge, IP12 4BS
01394 383122
elisabeth.thompson90@gmail.com (secretary)

www:suffolkhumanists.org.uk
email: denisjohnston@btinternet.com (chair)
www.facebook.com/suffolkhands
Twitter (@suffolkhands)