



CRISPIN BLUNT MP  
Member of Parliament for Reigate

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab  
Lord Chancellor  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London SW1H 9AJ

27 January 2022

Dear Lord Chancellor,

We are writing to implore you to legally recognise humanist marriages as part of the ongoing reform to enable outdoor marriages.

Humanist couples in England and Wales simply ask to have the same freedom of choice to marry in line with their beliefs as their religious counterparts. The Government has had the power to legally recognise humanist marriages since the 2013 Marriage Act but has yet to act.

The recent legal case on humanist marriages, *Harrison*, found the current law to be discriminatory. However, the judge stopped short of issuing a declaration of incompatibility as the Government stated it wished to avoid undertaking piecemeal reform of marriage law ahead of the Law Commission's ongoing review on marriage. Inconsistencies around who could and could not marry outdoors were particularly cited as a reason why such piecemeal reform would be undesirable. However, this argument has been fundamentally undermined by the Government's recent announcement of a consultation to introduce outdoor marriage.

We see no reason for humanists to wait any longer. Granting legal recognition would strengthen families and marriage as an institution, give an economic boost to the Covid-stressed marriage industry, and is well supported by public opinion. It would bring England and Wales into line with Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Jersey, and Guernsey, which have all granted such recognition.

This is not just an issue for humanists. It matters to all of us, of all religions and beliefs, as it is a simple matter of freedom of belief. We urge you to legally recognise humanist marriages, even if on an interim basis, ahead of the implementation of the Law Commission's review on marriage.



Yours sincerely,

Crispin Blunt MP

Baroness Bakewell DBE

Co-Chairs, All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group

Co-signed by:

Aaron Bell MP  
Rehman Chishti MP  
Janet Daby MP  
Sir Ed Davey MP  
Philip Davies MP  
Dame Angela Eagle MP  
Wera Hobhouse MP  
Dame Margaret Hodge MP  
Kevin Hollinrake MP  
Christine Jardine MP  
Ben Lake MP  
Clive Lewis MP  
Caroline Lucas MP  
Kerry McCarthy MP  
John McDonnell MP  
Layla Moran MP  
Luke Pollard MP  
Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP  
Virendra Sharma MP  
Tommy Sheppard MP  
Andy Slaughter MP  
Jeff Smith MP  
Karl Turner MP  
Lord Aberdare DL  
Baroness Barker  
Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

Lord Birt  
Baroness Blackstone  
Baroness Burt of Solihull  
Lord Cashman CBE  
Lord Desai  
Lord Dubs  
Baroness Featherstone  
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock  
Baroness Greengross  
Lord Haworth  
Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town  
Lord Jones of Cheltenham  
Lord Low of Dalston  
Baroness Massey  
Baroness Meacher  
Baroness Murphy  
Lord Rooker  
Lord Soley  
Lord Stevenson of Coddanham  
Lord Taverne  
Baroness Taylor of Bolton  
Baroness Thornton  
Lord Trees  
Lord Warner  
Baroness Whitaker