

Darlington

The United Nations Charter

Let's look on the bright side.

In the midst of a worldwide disease and mounting divisions over the deprivation it causes, let's remember a time when the peoples of the earth stood together.

Let's remember the day, 75 years ago, when human beings were full of optimism.

It was June 26, 1945, and the world was putting down its weapons.

Almost every country had sent representatives to the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center to sign a document.

In the previous 30 years wars had killed 40 million human beings. The delegates who gathered on the Californian coast that day represented 80 per cent of the people still alive. And they were on a mission.

What they were signing was the United Nations Charter. In it, they were vowing to maintain international peace and security, uphold international law, achieve higher standards of living, address economic, social, health, and related problems...

... and also to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion", as they put it way back then.

It's been a tough set of ambitions to achieve. But, all around the world, billions try to live by those principles. Sometimes they fail. Often they succeed.

Just now, when nations, cities, towns and villages look to protect themselves from a disease that has itself already killed more than one million, it would be easy to forget the rights and freedoms of all except those closest to us. We could decide to build walls, buy-up provisions and head for the bunkers. You can see the signs in the daily news.

You can see the signs in the steady rise of prejudice, of nationalism and of hate-crime and hate-speech against people who don't belong to our own "tribe". As economies suffer, you can see the signs of widening division, caused by unemployment and fear.

Some would say that the United Nations Charter turned out to be just words on expensive paper... "do-gooding" on a planetary scale. We believe that view is short-sighted. However much humans may disagree on a multitude of matters, the United Nations Charter gave us all a common path which few would claim leads in the wrong direction.

The Charter doesn't say: "Lest we forget." It tells us what we must remember. It was written by people who had suffered the consequences of memory failure a mere three decades since "the war to end all wars".

At times like those ... and these ... we do need reminding of the humanitarian principles that bind the world together.

There's not a lot our town, by itself, can do to "maintain international peace and security" or "uphold international law". But we *can* address economic, social, health and related problems by acting together for the benefit of everyone.

By the way we live our own lives and by the way we behave towards others, we can certainly "promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion", as the UN Charter put it all those years ago..

So, as Hate Crime Awareness Week 2020 fades from our memories while the statistics imply that we are getting forgetful of history again, we are proposing our own United Darlington Charter which, we hope, can be adopted by all

And we ask all who care about respect, equality and kindness -- no matter what may otherwise divide us -- to sign it, display it and spread it far and wide around the 100,000-plus individuals who, together, form the community of Darlington.

We are More In Common Darlington

Contact us at admin@moreincommondarlo.com

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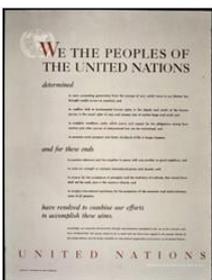
The United Darlington Charter

Whereas Darlington is home to people of many origins, beliefs, skills, fortunes, educations, occupations and personal choices...

Whereas people may be thought to differ by nationality, ethnicity, ability, gender or any other characteristic...

Whereas people may agree, disagree or are ambivalent about politics or religion...

We declare that all who live in, work in or visit our town will be afforded equal respect, status, trust, hospitality, friendship and kindness.



Inspired by The United Nations Charter of 1945 and signed in 2020 by

