



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on Thursday 27th June 2024 at Maidenhead Synagogue**

The meeting started at 19:35 with a short talk by Rabbi Josh Levy (CEO of Reform Judaism) and Rabbi Charley Baginsky (CEO of Liberal Judaism) about the proposed link between the two movements.

Speakers were delighted to be invited and shared that in April 2023 the Movement for Reform Judaism (MRJ) and Liberal Judaism (LJ) announced that they will be working in close partnership to create one new unified movement to represent all of Britain's Progressive Jews.

One joint movement is more effective than having two competing movements side by side. It is not just cost effective, but a joint power and representation inside and outside of the movement.

Speakers expressed:

1. Our voice as a joint movement matters
2. We want more Jewish people to have access to the movement.

Speakers highlighted some of the frequently asked questions from the past 6-months:

Why create a new movement?

We can change now how the world will see progressive Judaism.

By coming together, we will now represent one third of all Jews who are affiliated to synagogues in the UK, and we will be better able to reach out to all those who identify as Jewish but have not yet joined a community. Not just being cost effective, but more effective as one movement. New conversations, collaborations are opening. New ways of working and thinking are coming together inside and outside of the movement.

Why do you think this time is going to happen?

The last time there was a concerted effort to unite the two movements in this way was 40 years ago.

At that time, there were significant differences in ideology and practice between the two. In the past 40 years, both Reform and Liberal Judaism have been through changes which means that they are closer together now than at any time in the past.

We are committed to honouring the different histories of our two movements, and recognising the reality that the present has brought us closer together.

There are remarkably few areas in which Liberal and Reform practice differ, and where they do, this diversity can be retained within a shared organisation.

Diversity will make us special, there is no intention to change communities.

What is the time scale involved?

Over the last 6 months speakers have been travelling, visiting communities. There will be continuous talks in the coming 6 months and the opportunity to shape the movement. At the end of the year, there will be a proposal communities will be asked for their consent about being part of the movement.

Early spring next year there will be a proposed vote for the community about consolidation.

Questions from the audience:

Do you have a joint communications strategy?

We have a weekly newsletter as part of the new strategy. We try to own our space and make our voice heard. We must have a real voice of our leadership. Our aim is consolidation and flourishing.

Is this happening elsewhere in the world?

This is our chance now.

How many Shuls are members?

There are 80 progressive communities, who have already joined the movement.

Speakers thanked us for the invitation and asked everyone to visit their website for more information about the movement:

<https://pathtoprogressivejudaism.org.uk>

Notice is therefore hereby given that the Annual General Meeting will take place in Grenfell Lodge at **7:30 pm on Thursday 27 June 2024** for the following purposes as set out in the agenda items 1–8 below:

The Agenda:

1. To approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 29 June 2023.
2. To receive the Chairman's and Treasurer's reports together with other reports from trustees
3. To receive and approve the audited Financial Statements, including the Report of the Trustees and Independent Auditor's Report, for the year ended 31 August 2023.
4. To consider the re-appointment of the Auditors.
5. To accept the retirement of trustees and to consider elections of trustees from nominations received (if applicable).
6. To appoint a representative for the Board of Deputies of British Jews.
7. To transact the rabbi transition.
8. To transact any other business.

Dated 9 May 2024, by order of the Council
Martin BIRCH, Chairman

1. Approval of the Minutes:

The Minutes of the AGM held on Thursday 29 June 2023 were proposed by Till Gins and seconded by Shel Musiker. All the remaining attendees voted in agreement and no comments or corrections were made.

2. Chairman's Report, Treasurer's Report: together with other reports from trustees (see Hadashot)

I would like to start by welcoming everyone, especially Jonathan as it is his last Annual General Meeting as our rabbi. We have a Farewell Party planned for the 14th July to say our thanks for his outstanding work he has done in 44 years. He has also been our friend, confidant and one we can trust.

I have been the Chair of Maidenhead Synagogue for 4 years now and it was my role to find the new rabbi. As the Synagogue movements progress, we need to progress as well. There will be differences in the future but no radical changes.

I would like to ask everyone to show support to our new rabbi, who will officially start on the 1st September 2024.

One last word to Jonathan: THANK YOU! & More to follow on the 14th July.

Trustees' reports have all been published in Hadashot.

3. Financial Reports and statements

Rob Gilbert Treasure's Report:

The financial year ending August 2023 was a year of mixed results.

Total Income fell from £554,822 (21/22) to £509,864 (22/23). This was the result of a donation of £47,000 made to support the Jewish community in Ukraine following the invasion in February 2022, and which was not repeated in 22/23.

Additionally, the level of donations and legacies fell by £12,135 from the previous year.

To offset the fall in income we reduced the expenditure on buildings maintenance which had been exceptionally high in 21/22.

We also increased subscriptions in 23/24 to take account of high Inflation. We continue to monitor our cash position very carefully. The current cash balance is sufficient to cover operational expenses plus planned capital expenditure until the end of the fiscal year (31st August 2024).

If necessary, we can defer some capital expenditure and maintenance to a later date. In the unlikely event that lockdowns were to return, we project there would still be sufficient income to maintain the Synagogue's operations for a further 12 months or more.

There is however a need to raise a small concern over future cashflow as we continue to run at a deficit without the benefit of donations and legacies. As at 26/06/24 we have a reserve bank balance of £230,000.

However, so far this year we are below budget, for legacies and donations but have every hope that this will change by the year end.

As we already run with a small deficit, and we have additional expenditure, this will have an impact on our bank balance. We forecast that as of 31/08/24 our cash balance will be £195,000. If in the next financial year, we do not receive any legacies or donations

(which seems unlikely as we have always received them before) we would see our cash reserves reduced to £150,000, which would not be an acceptable situation.

As treasurer it is my duty to raise the above concerns at this early stage with the trustees, but feel confident we can remedy the situation.

Lastly thank you for Graham, Alison and Agnes for all their work in the office.

Accounts were approved by Lincoln Ball and seconded by Elizabeth Prais.

4. Re Appointments of the Auditors

Done

5. To accept the retirement of trustees and to consider elections of trustees from nominations received (if applicable)

None

6. To appoint a representative for the Board of Deputies of British Jews

Leigh Dworkin was appointed as the representative of Maidenhead Synagogue for the Board of Deputies of British Jews. He was appointed with everyone supporting his re-election.

7. To transact the rabbi transition

Our new rabbi, Rene Pfertzel will start on the 1st September 2024, with 3 Bar/Bat Mitzvahs and HHD. He has already met with key staff and Cheder teachers. We are planning an official introduction for him in November.

8. To transact any other business

Till Gins said thank you to Martin for his dedication and hard work as our chair.

Leigh Dworkin raised his concerns about IT & Livestreaming. Martin suggested to approach Lincoln Ball Vice-Chair, who is responsible for IT & Technology. Lincoln commented on Leigh's concerns and confirmed that we have improved the Livestreaming and disruptions are reduced significantly and reports suggest that the livestreaming is stable.

The Annual General Meeting finished at 20:26.