

2025 AGM – 3 JULY AT 7 pm

COUNCIL PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Your Council has had another busy year! The AGM report from each Portfolio is reprinted here for your convenience.



CHAIR – Martin Birch

Dear members, it's incredible what a difference a year makes. This time last year, we were all dealing with the prospect of Jonathan's retirement and what the future held for our community. We all did Jonathan proud by giving him a good send off and thanked him for his tremendous 44 years in establishing our vibrant, inclusive, and caring community.

Now we have a new era with our dear new Rabbi Rene, who joined us last September. His relaxed style, humour, and caring manner make him a pleasure to listen to, and of course, he can sing. The services are more musical, and he brings joy to us with his soft and caring manner. Rene has made tremendous inroads to get to know our diverse community. I believe he has settled in extremely well and is respected by all who meet him.

I have worked closely with him to ensure he has the best support to deliver his role. Of course, that is also only possible with the huge help that everyone around provides. Agnes, Barbara, Alison, Graham and now Liya and Aaron are just incredible at maintaining the essential infrastructure of our synagogue. I would like to extend my personal thanks to them. We also have a huge volunteer base and teaching staff that brings a vibrancy to shul life. Thank you to those who do so much.

Now to council business. We have many exciting new projects ahead of us. Some are essential works, such as heating, but also the creation of a Jewish cultural/education room. Plans are currently being developed, and we hope by next Pesach to have this completed. We received a large donation and part of those funds are being utilised for this project. There is a raft of other projects

on the list, such as installing TVs in each classroom to assist teachers, and new AV systems to enhance online capability, so hopefully no more changing batteries mid-service.

I have agreed to stay in position until June 2026 and then relinquish my responsibilities as Chair. Jon Berman, who was responsible for buildings, has been great during his tenure, but has asked to step down. I asked Tony Nothman to step into this role, as he has extensive operational experience, which will help in future projects. Matt Loewenthal, security, has also asked to step down due to work commitments and Marcus Richards has agreed to take on this role. I would like to thank Vikki and Dave for their continued support. Without them, we would not be able to provide security. Over the coming months, we will be enhancing security further. New systems of entry are being explored and once plans have been agreed, we will instigate these measures which will create a more secure and safer environment.

Sue Henry is stepping down. She has been amazing with the environmental portfolio and has secured a silver EcoJudaism award for the synagogue for all the efforts in making us more environmentally sustainable – thank you. We are seeking a new eco warrior. Please let me know if you are interested in taking on this role. In communications, Elizabeth, who has been exemplary at producing Hadashot, has handed the magazine over to an editorial team that continues to produce this excellent publication. A massive thank you to all the team.

In terms of finance, we are in a strong position but still need further funds to support some of our ongoing projects. We would very much welcome any donation to assist us in our objectives. We will also be undertaking a review of the membership fee structure to ensure fairness across the membership.

Finally, I would like to say that the energy and passion I see across the board with synagogue life is great, and I would urge you to show up as much as you can to breathe further life into our vibrant community. If you have ideas, want changes, or want to do more activities, please step up.

Thank you and have a wonderful summer.