

# **Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation**

*The Synagogue Synagogue Lane St James Square Cheltenham GL50  
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## **Trustee's Report**

1 March 2024 – 28 February 2025

The focus during this year has been maintaining an active Orthodox community and engaging with the wider community.

### **CHC Community Life**

#### **Services**

Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation has benefitted from erev Shabbat services every week led by CHC members Rabbi Amir Morris, Alan Silverston, Leonard Bazar and Joel Huberman.

Rabbi Claude Vecht-Wolf led services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, with thoughtful sermons much appreciated by the congregation. Prior to Rosh Hashanah Alan Silverston led a Service of Remembrance in our Elm Street Cemetery when we remembered family and friends.

#### **CHC Festivals and Holidays**

A Community Seder, led by Allan Sanis, brought members together at Pesach when we shared telling the story of our ancestors leaving slavery in Egypt and renewed our appreciation of freedom.

We held services for Jewish Holidays. At Purim we experienced what Rabbi Lord Sacks called therapeutic joy which involves not being intimidated or defined by our enemies. Chanukah candles were lit later in the year when we were reminded why we mark this key Jewish holiday. Tea, including Jessica's traditional latkas, concluded our Chanukah party.

#### **A Wedding**

Highlight of this year was the wedding of members Emma and Joel Huberman in the Synagogue under the chupah made by Joel and his father. The whole community was invited to a celebratory Shabbat lunch before the wedding.

#### **Education**

##### **Jewish Education**

Our Jewish education was enhanced by weekly Drashas from Rabbi Claude and monthly Torah Studies sessions led online by Jessica Shapiro.

### **Breast Cancer Awareness Session**

A NHS session on breast cancer awareness was led by Breast Surgeon, James Bristol who included details about the genetics of the disease. Those with Jewish ancestry are more likely to get breast cancer compared with the rest of the population because of their inheritance of specific genomic variants. Following this meeting some took advantage of the NHS Jewish BRACA Testing Programme. Sharing a genetic inheritance, The Three Counties Liberal Jewish Community were invited to attend.

A further NHS session, probably on diabetes this time, will be planned for next year.

### **Klezmer-ish Concert**

Klezmer-ish, composed of four classically trained musicians, delighted us with a performance in the Synagogue with rhythms from around the world including klezmer, tango and jazz.

### **CHC Anniversary Brunch**

Laura and Steve Cohen warmly hosted our CHC Anniversary Brunch where we enjoyed Abigail's bagels and other delicacies with great company. Our Summer Lunch was again a highlight of the year, our thanks to Sara and Peter Capie for their whole hearted hospitality.

### **Mental Health Shabbat**

We followed part of one of Cheltenham's Public Art Trails which revealed new places for many of us.

The Elephant Mosaics near the High Street tell the story of an elephant, from Chapman's Circus, visiting Cheltenham and invading a local seed merchants, presumably in search of food, Accident or publicity stunt? We do not know. The walk was an enjoyable experience, sociable and hopefully to be repeated.

### **Pudding Evening**

A pudding evening offered both traditional and modern desserts made by members. All were enjoyed as we indulged and reflected on memories recalled. Our thanks again to Sara and Peter Capie generously hosting.

### **For The Wider Community**

### **Cheltenham's Act of Remembrance for Holocaust Memorial Day**

Leading the Planning Group, we marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp and the 30th anniversary of the Bosnian genocide this year with reflection, prayer, and psalms.

Dr Adam Dunning headed the event which started and concluded with music. Recorded on film and inspired by the Holocaust, Jemimah, a Churchdown Academy student, played her composition. Leonard reflected on Prophet Micah and Pastor Courtenay Morris recalled his early experiences, as a Jewish boy separated from his parents.

Members spoke of the importance of memories. Joel Huberman recited El Malei Rachamim and Alan Silverston concluded with Kaddish.

A new venue will soon be needed for this event, your Chairman will be exploring options.

### **Service for Peace**

The Chairman with husband Alan participated in a Peace Vigil at Gloucester Cathedral on the invitation of The Lord Bishop Treweek.

### **Inter Faith Week**

CHC contributed an open erev Shabbat service to this special week when Service Leaders, Leonard Bazar, Alan Silverston, and Joel Huberman as well as other community members took part, reading and singing prayers and psalms. Followed by a kiddush our many guests expressed their appreciation, especially for the translations and explanations given in English, to complement the service in Hebrew.

### **Education**

We have had many visitors, of all ages to the Synagogue keen to learn about Judaism. Scout groups have completed simple exercises to reinforce their learning, school children have been drawn in with stories that can relate to their experiences. Tolerance for diversity, based on understanding, is encouraged by these sessions.

No charge is made for these services.

### **Heritage Days**

With musical interludes of psalms sung by Alan, Geoff and Jessica our guests enjoyed engaging with members who shared experiences of Jewish life. Our precious Torahs were examined and admired. This was an opportunity to demystify aspects of Judaism and express the joy of the faith.

### **Building and Maintenance**

## **5 Year report**

Following the advice of our specialist architect in his 5 year Report we conducted reports for asbestos, for electrical systems and fire safety. All are required by law and action is being taken to ensure that we comply. A small amount of asbestos related material was removed from under the mat in the entrance hall and improvements to electrical systems were made that provide emergency lighting. A fire risk security programme is underway, nearing completion.

Broken ventilation grills have been replaced and repairs to the lantern above the dome have been approved.

Redecorating the Prayer Hall of the Community Cemetery and the attached guttering have been approved and will take place in due course.

## **Security**

Following the General Election, contact has been made with the new MP. Contact has also been made with the Police Inspector for Communities in Cheltenham and this is ongoing.

## **CPC Hampler Scamper Appeal**

Members contributed generously to the Cheltenham Caring for People and Communities seasonal appeal.

## **Media**

Requests for information about aspects of Judaism were all responded to. A discussion about Jewish Wedding Customs was held with with Kate Clark from Radio Gloucestershire.

## **Thank you**

My thanks to all who have contributed to the well being of CHC.

The Board of Management has been composed of Allan Sanis, Senior Warden; Jessica Shapiro, Treasurer; Abigail Fisher, Secretary; Steve Cohen, Assistant Treasurer; Christine Dyer, Minutes Secretary; Sara Capie, Jane Hill, Joel Huberman, Elizabeth Jacobs and Joanna Yass as well as myself.

Many thanks also to Leonard Bazar, Board of Deputies Representative who has also been CHC Examiner this year and Alan Silverston, Security Officer and Buildings and Maintenance Officer.

We look forward to next year and, we hope, for all the religious, educational and social events to come.



**CHELTENHAM HEBREW CONGREGATION**  
**INCOME & EXPENDITURE - YEAR TO FEBRUARY 28 2025**

<b>2024</b>	<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>2025</b>
	Contributions		
11,831	Members Subscriptions	(1)	12,381
424	Friends and Associates Subscriptions	(2)	441
<u>12,255</u>	Total Contributions		<u>12,822</u>
	Donations		
5,606	Donations	(3)	4,339
204	Donation for B.O.D		213
<u>5,810</u>	Total Donations		<u>4,552</u>
<u>18,065</u>	Total Contributions & Donations		<u>17,374</u>
	Other Income		
1,620	Bank Interest	(4)	2,199
78	Rent from No. 44 Elm Street		78
195	Donation from School Visits		140
2,651	Gift Aid & tax Repaid	(5)	2,723
0	Grants		30
13	Books Sold		12
648	Congregation Events	(6)	41
<u>5,205</u>			<u>5,223</u>
<b>23,270</b>	<b>TOTAL CONGREGATION INCOME</b>		<b>22,597</b>
	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
	Property : Synagogue & Elm Street		
548	Lighting, Heating, Water for the Synagogue		211
2,664	Synagogue Maintenance	(7)	5,311
676	Cleaning		707
50	Rates - Elm Street		53
	Electricity - Elm Street Cemetery		85
78	Elm Street Maintenance		558
5,853	Insurance	(8)	5,335
<u>9,869</u>			<u>12,260</u>
	Other Expenses		
150	Representations & Donations to B.O.D		362
220	Fees to Rabbinate		235
1,407	200 Year Event		0
2,938	Fees and Expenses for High Holy Days Ceremony		4,360
38	Postage & Stationery		47
22	Printing & Photocopying		23
1,746	Sundry Expenses	(9)	321
<u>6,521</u>			<u>5,348</u>
<b>16,390</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>17,608</b>
<u>6,880</u>	<b>EXCESS / (DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>		<u>4,989</u>