

## **BRISTOL HEBREW CONGREGATION**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 3.00pm at Park Row Synagogue, Frank Cohen Hall**

Meeting opened: 3.20pm

Present: David Turns (President), Tony Gordon (Vice-President), David Stillitz (Secretary), Mark Braude (Treasurer), Ian Kane, Eve Gordon, Garry Temple, Linsey Clarke, Carol Simmons, Ben Sanders

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence
  - a. Apologies: Daniela Bowker, Shelley Braude, Gerald Levy, Leon Smith
2. Remembrance
  - a. A minute's silence was conducted. Specifically remembering members Leonard Glynn, Gerald Gee
3. Minutes of the AGM held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020
  - a. Minutes circulated. Proposed BS, seconded EG.
4. Matters Arising
  - a. none
5. Chairman's Report
  - a. 2019 AGM was on Zoom as we were in a national lockdown and we had a lot of attendees. In the last year we reopened to shul in mid December, for services and none have been skipped. We've had generally good attendance levels. Rabbi Mendy has provided religious leadership in services, with the help from - Clive Lawton, Yoram Adani, the new Aish Rabbi, student chaplain Yosef Citron. Over the summer, there was a big refurbishment of the shul, mostly conducted by Garry Temple, Eve Gordon and Tony Gordon. The community are very grateful. We were back in the shul for the high holy days, and then the 150<sup>th</sup> Year Civic Service. This was well attended and TG acknowledges David Turns for his successful organisation of this. DT acknowledges Clive Lawton and Gerald Levy who organised a lot of the attendees and organisation. There was also Roland Brandman and Mosaic

Voices who made it very enjoyable. DT will circulate a more formal submission of this soon.

- b. James Hicks resigned from council earlier in the year, as well as Gerald Levy who will be standing down from council this year.

#### 6. Treasurer's Report

- a. Accounts up to July 2021 circulated.
- b. 2020 vs 2021, the numbers are very similar, bar the shul refurbishments (£68k) and other maintenance (£20k), with a generous gift from the Chevra. Rental income and membership contributions are very similar.
- c. TG - question last year we spent £11k with the chevra. This was a debt that had to be settled.
- d. GT - gas expenditure £1.8k but we rarely use it. Maybe we are giving it for free for the flats. GT will look into it.
- e. Gift Aid: MB will talk to CS
- f. Mark Braude is standing down and Carol Simmons is taking over as Treasurer.
- g. MB reads out a HSBC bank mandate to allow Carol Simmons to be a signatory on the account. This form was signed by the President and Secretary, and Carol Simmons the new Treasurer in 2022. The council agrees this goes through as bank requires.
- h. This report was proposed by TG and seconded by LC.

#### 7. The Guild Report

Just before the 1st lockdown the Guild purchased two new settees & beanbags which unfortunately remained unseen & unsat upon until we could restart services. More recently two new book cases & a new urn have been purchased.

There have been regular Shabbat Kiddushim even during the refurbishment. With the help of a few ladies we managed to provide an afternoon tea served following the Civic Service.

The Shul Council gave consideration to the purposes of the Guild which originated from the time when women were not represented on Council. With women now on Council involved in all decisions affecting the Shul, a little interest & support for separate women's activities there is little point in maintaining a Guild with separate bank account. Should circumstances change our constitution allows for a Guild to be reformed.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported the Guild over many years. Thanks also to the men who annually change the vestments for the High Holy days & the Cheder for ensuring the Succot was decorated.

Eve Gordon

EG will notify this to the Recorder.

The council acknowledges Eve's contribution for many years.

Proposed GT, seconded DS.

#### 8. Board of Deputies Representative's Report

Report for synagogue AGM 12/12/21 from Leon Smith Board of Deputies representative:

I was very pleased to have been re-elected as the Shuls' Deputy for the current 3-year period. I have now been representing Bristol Hebrew Congregation for about 5 years and for the time being I am happy to continue to do so. It may be however, that the honorary officers at some future point wish to consider succession planning for this role!

This report will be a little shorter than usual as looking back on the reports I have provided over recent years I detect a fair amount of repetition! I will not therefore repeat my own credentials or background. Neither will I provide details of the how the Board operates, its' structure, committee roles, etc. which I have done previously.

I have been a Deputy for many years having previously represented Nightingale House, (now called Nightingale Hammerson). I have therefore been able to witness how as an organisation it has improved and evolved, and above all how it has professionalised.

This is of course largely as a result of the quality of both its lay and professional leadership.

Following an election earlier this year the current president Marie Van der Zahl was re-elected for a further 3-year term, albeit it was the first time a sitting president had been challenged in an election for a number of years. The chief executive Gillian Merron who had served for 6 years was awarded a life peerage and decided earlier this year to leave the Board to take up her role in the House of Lords where she is now the oppositions' spokesman on Health and Social Care. There is some irony here as she was awarded her peerage for her work for the Jewish community through the Board.

After having served for some months as acting CEO, her successor Michael Wegier has now been confirmed in this post. He has previously served in leadership roles in numerous communal organisations including UJIA. Michael attended the recent civic service in the Shul where some of you may have met him.

The Board historically was widely known for representing Synagogues. It now has a much wider and diverse membership representing many organisations who are active in the community and in Israel advocacy in various forms.

Recent new members have included JAMI, the Jewish vegetarian society Harif, (Sephardi community) and many others. The other encouraging change is the increased number of younger deputies and observers, partly as a result of various youth and student organisations now being affiliated. There are currently some 300 deputies. The plenary meetings are for the time being still being held by Zoom which works well. The membership organisations continue to represent the major shades of religiosity, perhaps with the

exception of the Charedi community. Although there are links with organisations from that part of our community, few have actually become members.

The Board is an apolitical organisation in so much as it does not make political statements. The Corbyn leadership period was perhaps , and understandably an exception . One of the areas of sensitivity is in relation to Israel and its politics where sometimes particular deputies will want the Board to comment in favour or against certain policies such as new housing /settlements. The Board will usually refrain from being seen to “interfere “with Israeli politics.

The regular communal briefings which the Board issues are always carried in the Synagogue magazine, therefore regular and avid readers will be familiar with the sort of issues which arise.

As a consequence, I will refer to a small number of issues only that have been dealt with this year.

The David Miller problem at Bristol university was one which caused considerable distress across the community but of course particularly amongst the Jewish student body at the university.

Support was shown for the students from various individuals and Organisations and the Board was particularly proactive. Apart from advocating it played an important role in facilitation and coordination of the various interested groups.

A Zoom call was arranged with representatives from the local Jewish student body and the UJS, with the two Bristol synagogues and the the local MP Thangam

Debbonaire who was particularly supportive of the students by criticising the university for not acting on Millers comments. He was of course eventually dismissed however the situation at Bristol university and others will need to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

And now in a spirit of openness I should say that I am always very positive about the Board and the work which it does. If there is one area however where I am less than enthused it is on the question of governance. An inordinate amount of time has been taken up this year on the question of updating its governance structure / constitution. A proposal which was long debated was the adoption of a totally new governance structure, however after much debate this was rejected, and for the time being is shelved.

When there are so many issues that need to be dealt with that it is sometimes frustrating to see that we spent so much time looking in ourselves.

My apologies if I am not totally fulfilling my job description by failing to enthuse over such matters!

I am always impressed by the sheer breadth and volume of issues which the Board is involved with. These issues are both proactive and reactive. In particular reacting to any acts of anti-Semitism which occur whether in the political, cultural, sporting, academic, or other fields.

In this area it works closely with the CST and JLC (Jewish Leadership council)

During the year a seminar was run on Jewish issues for local government councillors together with these 2 organisations.

The situation regarding the ban on Shechita in Belgium has been carefully monitored. Board representatives attended COP 26, and a lot of work has been done on behalf of and in coordination with various refugee groups.

Input was made into a review on antisemitism in the Plaid Cymru party in Wales.

Lobbying has been carried out into the serious problem of anti-Semitism and incitement in Palestinian schools' textbooks. Some success has been achieved in reducing funding from some European countries.

The Board has been very active in fighting BDS and the so called "Israel apartheid week "It has contributed to international women's day and LGBTQ history month.

In the wake of the George Floyd incident and subsequent reaction to that across the world, a review was commissioned by the Board into Racial inclusivity in our community. This was carried out by Stephen Bush the journalist and political editor of the New Statesman. His report will be published early next year.

A lot of work continues to be done in the field of education and training is carried out with youth organisations on how to fight anti-Semitism particularly on campus.

A number of workshops have been held.

The Board together with other organisation attended a meeting with the prime minister on various issues of concern to the community. One of these was a request to proscribe the whole of Hamas in the UK and this fortunately has now happened.

Meetings were held with the Home Secretary following the huge surge in anti-Semitic acts in May following on from the latest round of problems with Gaza etc.

The Board successfully campaigned for the UK government to boycott the UN event held to commemorate the anniversary of the notoriously anti-Semitic Durban conference.

There is considerable contact with diplomats from numerous foreign embassies, with the commonwealth Jewish council forum, trade unions, the armed forces, and many other organisations too numerous to mention.

Advocacy is taking place on behalf of the community in Northern Ireland who are having difficulties in obtaining Kosher meat supplies as a consequence of the Northern Ireland protocol.

Efforts are being made to find members of the community who are prepared to sit on local authority SACRE committees (standing advisory committee on religious education) as there are currently a number of areas without Jewish representatives. The board is very much involved with numerous interfaith groups and activities.

Every effort is made to maintain and enhance profile within the community by participation in various cross communal events such as Limmud , the AJEX parade, Maccabi fun run, mitzvah day, and more.

The above is by no means an exclusive list and there are many other activities which the Board is involved with I hope however that this report gives a flavour of the Boards activities.

If anyone would like to know any more about its work or have a specific comment or question, please do not hesitate to contact me.

leonclaudesmith@btinternet.com  
07770 553674

The council is happy for Leon to carry on as our representative.

9. Security Report

- a. None

10. Housekeeping & Flats Management Report

- a. All flats have been tenanted all year as has the shop.
- b. Side wall of the top flat so we had some scaffolding and redecoration.
- c. Basement flat has new storage heater to meet standards.
- d. Middle flat has new roof over its kitchen, so we have re-felted their roof.
- e. Top flat had a break in, and so a new front door was fitted.
- f. Re painted and redecorated the shul throughout. We have a new garden, and thanks to the chevra for their contribution. New handrail and tiled floors. We have found wood worm and dry rot over 2 windows, so a lot was treated here and also damp prevention to the back walls.
- g. The chandelier near the front entrance has had a new chain and wire. Chandelier in the main shul has a new electric hoist.
- h. Alarm, fire extinguishers and shed have all been maintained but all should report any things that need to be repaired.
- i. Noticed that condensation coming through the ark. GT has installed a heater to prevent damp.
- j. No news on the mikvah despite GT sending them emails. The builder came to have a look, but their engineer found concrete beneath the earth, by a wall belonging to the University.
- k. EG presents GT with his own tool kit as a show of thanks.

11. Chevra Kadisha Report

The society is entirely independent of the BHC and can arrange funerals both for those within and without the congregation as long as they are halachically Orthodox. Burials can be at either the cemetery in Oakdene Avenue or the Memorial Woodlands site near Alveston.

Since the BHC's last AGM there have been funerals for Alex Schlesinger, Leonard Glynn, Ivor Cohen (of Glastonbury) and Ruth Curwen.

Ben Bar-Orian continues to maintain well both our Bristol cemeteries - Oakdene Road and the historic one in Barton Vale. Ben's maintenance does not include the graves themselves - which are the responsibility of the next-of-kin. Access to the Oakdene Road site is available with prior notice to Yoram Adani or Alan Elkan who will advise on the code for the tumbler padlock on its front gates.

Recent research at Oakdene Road by our long-time funeral directors HG Harris of Staple Hill has found that there are currently at least 12 spare plots in addition to plots already reserved. At Memorial Woodlands there are over 140 spare plots – which we do not envisage ever being filled up!

Funerals at Oakdene Road are carried out by HG Harris; those at Memorial Woodlands by Memorial Woodlands themselves.

As BHC members will know from The Recorder, since the start of the first Covid lockdown in 2020 the society's tehara teams are no more. However, personal effects of the deceased can be given to the funeral director to put into the coffin.

Should Covid restrictions on funerals and access to the mortuary be lifted, I do not know who would find volunteers for tehara and reconvene the teams. I do not expect it to be me, as I really would like to resign my post eventually - after 9 years so far.

Like the BHC, the chevra is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a new charity number and, more importantly, total indemnity for trustees – albeit at a considerable cost of fees!

Alan Elkan

## 12. Cheder Report

Over the past year we have run Cheder over Zoom for an hour and a half every Sunday morning during term time.

There are 4 parts to the Cheder sessions:

1. Singing tefilla (Modeh Ani, Shema, Ma Tov, etc.)
2. Learning to read in Hebrew.
3. Saying a blessing over a snack (and eating it!)
4. Learning about the week's parsha.

At Simchat Torah we came to the end of the parsha and the children and I decided that we would prefer to continue learning about the story of the Israelites and so we will be reading through the books of the prophets, starting with the Book of Joshua (rather than restarting the Parsha).

As well as the zoom sessions, the Cheder community has run a few standalone events, including:

- A sukkah decorating session
- A pot luck Friday night supper at the Bean Tree Cafe.
- A Rosh Hashana gathering in the Park.

- A Children's service on Rosh Hashana in the Gordon's garden.

It's been a good year!

Shelley Braude

There are 8 families that regularly attend the Zoom cheder. To add to the events we had a Sukkah party as well as a Chanukah party which was attended by over 40 children, run alongside PJ Library. They co funded a workshop at the Chanukah party. There are 75 families in the Jewish WhatsApp group.

Linsey Clarke

BS suggests connecting those families to BHC to create a more integrated community, although there may be a block with the families to attend onsite at BHC; possibly because they have young children to keep occupied.

TG suggests we would 1<sup>st</sup> understand what the group would want in a service, and then we can provide it. LC to enquire with that community to find out what they would want.

### 13. Election of Honorary Officers and Members of Council

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Nomination</b>	<b>Seconded</b>	<b>Position</b>
1	David Turns	David Stillitz	Garry Temple	President
2	Tony Gordon	David Turns	Garry Temple	Vice-President
3	Carol Simmons	David Turns	Garry Temple	Treasurer
4	David Stillitz	David Turns	Garry Temple	Secretary
5	Garry Temple	David Turns	David Stillitz	Security / Flats
6	Eve Gordon	David Turns	Garry Temple	
7	Ben Sanders	Tony Gordon	Eve Gordon	
8	Shelley Braude	Tony Gordon	Eve Gordon	
9	Linsey Clarke	Tony Gordon	Eve Gordon	
10	Mark Braude	Ben Sanders	David Stillitz	



14. Election of Board of Deputies Representative

- a. Leon Smith has agreed to stand as our representative. Proposed BS, seconded TG.

15. Any Other Business

- a. Membership and School Visits should be included on the agenda for next year, with a report being requested.
- b. TG has 4 school visits planned for the year.
- c. Membership report: 11 new members this year. Changed the renewal date to 1<sup>st</sup> October. The membership form is still to be altered to change the wording around men / women.
- d. Recorder: EG will change the email and contact details for Treasurer & Membership
- e. Mechitza - decided not to put the mechitza back up after the Civic Service until we have a better, more permanent version in place. TG aims to approach this asap.

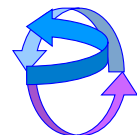
Meeting ends 5.30pm

# Bristol Hebrew Congregation

Charity Number 1165722 (Incorporated 24th February 2016)

Bank Accounts - movement for the year ending 31st July 2021

Esther White ACA  
Chartered Accountants  
236 Henleaze Road, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4NG  
[Tel: 07971 543016](tel:07971543016) Email: [esther@estherwhite.com](mailto:esther@estherwhite.com)



	July 2021	July 2020
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
Members Contributions	£7,172.50	£6,042.92
Events	£0.00	£1,067.50
Donations and Offerings	£15,000.00	£1,395.60
Investment Income	£5,741.69	£5,223.06
Rental Income	£41,226.77	£41,826.22
Council Tax credit	£0.00	£2,175.81
School visits	£292.50	£35.00
Investment sale	£50,000.00	£0.00

<b>£119,433.46</b>	<b>£57,766.11</b>
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	July 2021	July 2020
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>		
Ministerial Assistance	£16,964.95	£14,687.05
Rabbi Expenses	£0.00	£1,351.26
Gas	£1,873.58	£1,556.48
Electricity	£909.38	£299.60
Rates (Water & General)	£528.18	£938.94
Telephone	£0.00	£36.14
Insurance	£6,581.46	£6,230.95
Subscriptions & Donations	£516.04	£376.58
Repairs, Maintenance & Cleaning	£20,025.63	£6,793.10
Recorder	£825.68	£767.00
Wine and provisions	£0.00	£615.67
Guild payment	£500.00	£0.00
Accountancy	£774.00	£600.00
Events - costs	£0.00	£1,214.35
Cheder payments	£0.00	£117.21
Website	£96.00	£0.00
Refurbishment of synagogue	£68,905.20	£2,689.50
Chevra (burial society)	£0.00	£11,655.67

<b>£118,500.10</b>	<b>£49,929.50</b>
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Movement for the period	£933.36	£7,836.61
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Bank Balance Brought Forward / Introduced	£36,408.55	£28,571.94
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Bank Balance C/Fwd	<b>£37,341.91</b>	<b>£36,408.55</b>
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Approved by



Esther White ACA  
DATE: 9 December 2021

#### Investment Schedule

EEA Fund Management	Value @ * 31-Jul-21	£5,738.21
Smith & Williamson - Investments	Value @ * 31-Jul-21	£333,914.30

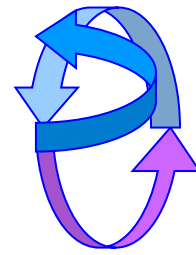
<b>£339,652.51</b>
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Esther White

Chartered Accountants

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Bristol Hebrew Congregation

13<sup>th</sup> May 2022

To Whom it may concern

**Bristol Hebrew Congregation**

I prepared the bank account movement balances for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021 from the records provided by Bristol Hebrew Congregation.

I can confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the preparation of the accounts.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Esther White". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Esther White