



Trustees' Report
Annual General Meeting
3 December 2022

It's been a challenging year for us all in so many ways. A year of sadness and of celebration. And one to come together and to (continue to) support each other.

It has also been a 'bounce back' year for YLJC, and we hope that you feel that YLJC has bounced back (post Covid) better than ever, with you all at our side. I will continue – as my Chair's 'slogan' – to say that as equally important as the religious side, YLJC aims to be your Jewish 'family' in York. Following and respecting the Covid previous restrictions, we have thrived and maintained our community and supported each other as best we could. We have spent the past year working hard on getting us back together and re-engaging with each other. To keep doing this, we need to all become proactive and for all of us to work together to build our community spirit and Jewish life in York, whilst continuing to keep everyone safe.

We currently have circa 85 members, including children. The role of Membership Secretary has unfortunately been disjointed this year, but our Vice Chair Shaan Bloch has now also taken over this role and will be contacting those regulars / members whose membership forms and / or fees may have fallen through the cracks. We need membership to enable us to pay our way, but also to get to know better those we engage with and what services we can offer and provide together to better build our community. Please speak with her re any Membership issues, as we try to enlarge the Jewish community of York and its hinterland. As Chair, I have had the pleasure of speaking to various people of all ages and interests wanting to engage with and potentially join us, as well as of course to many of our regular members through both good times and the more difficult ones. I have also engaged with many at Liberal Judaism, who wholeheartedly support us at York in so many ways.

Throughout this previous year's provision of online services and events, we had strong levels of attendance and participation, but we have spent the last year trying to move increasingly to 'in person' services and events. Our Shabbat morning service now takes place regularly at FMH on the 1st Saturday of each month. During the year, Sam Borin and Ruth Morris moved their 3rd Friday of the month Shabbat evening service from the online platform Zoom to meeting in New Earswick, with time to socialise with refreshments before. Based on this success, Howard Duckworth, our warden, is now working with them in introducing an additional Friday night Shabbat service on the 1st Friday of the

month, so we will now have 3 services a month, all now to be located at Friargate Meeting House (FMH) in York. And we have also advertised (and will continue to advertise) the availability of other online offerings by our sister Liberal Judaism communities to provide a fuller range of talks, education opportunities and so much more.

For this last year, we have been so lucky to have Student Rabbi Rafe Thurstance as our spiritual leader and educator. He started with us in September 2021, and agreed to stay on for a 2nd year to provide continuity for all. He has consistently travelled up to York, whilst continuing his Rabbinic training at the Leo Baeck College in London, provided us with a stimulating and considered pastoral range of services, the highlights being his Shabbat morning services, J101 discussions and our now in-house conversion course. He has also led our celebrations of many of our festivals, including the recent High Holidays services, reaching out and endeavouring to include all ages and interests as best we could.

In March, we hosted a very successful and enjoyable a cappella concert of Jewish music by the Pizmon group of students from Columbia University / Jewish Theological Seminary, New York. I coordinated with their team over many months, agreeing a programme that they visited York (the only northern location) as part of a tour of various British Progressive (including other LJ) synagogues. Working with York Interfaith, York University Jewish Society and Sinai Synagogue, we took them on a tour of old York before the concert and enjoyed a (pre covid style) afternoon tea together after. We provided press releases to LJ and other Jewish press to promote Jewish life for all ages in York.

For Purim we held separate events for adults and children. Thanks to Sam for leading a zoom Purim service / megillah reading. And a huge thanks to our new 'Youth Champion' Beth Thorp for taking on this role, who organised a successful Purim party for our children as well as various events since. Beth continues to coordinate and disseminate information on youth activities for us, including LJ camps – a great asset to our team.

We held a successful 'in person' Pesach community Seder for circa 40 people. Rafe unfortunately was ill on the day so was unable to attend, so the Seder was led jointly by myself and Ben Rich. Our biggest ever 'in person' Seder was this year at Rosh Hashanah, led by Rafe, for circa 65 people! There were, as expected, smaller attendances at our other High Holidays services, with good attendances at the Family service (where the story of the Book of Jonah was read by our youngsters). A huge thanks to Howard, Ben, Shaan and Sarah especially for all the work put into preplanning and working on these and many other days; definitely worthwhile as enjoyed by many.

We again held an outside Shabbat 'Service in the Park' in June at Homestead Park in York, thanks to the hospitality of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, combining the celebrations of Shavuot with YLJC's 8th birthday.

We continue to be wonderfully supported by Liberal Judaism and were delighted to host one of the LJ 120th Year of Celebration services at our Shabbat morning service in September. Various LJ attendees include Rabbi Charley Baginsky (CEO) and Rabbi Danny Rich (who now leads our conversion course with Rafe) et al. We also made this our annual Interfaith service and invited all our York Interfaith Group friends as well as Civic Dignitaries and our friends at York Minster, with whom we work increasingly throughout the year (including 600 Candles).

To re-concentrate on and engage with our children, Cheder re-commenced at the beginning of 2022 under Rafe and Oliver, our student teacher. We so enjoy involving our youngsters in our services and

events, seeing them grow and develop, with Cheder teaching them Hebrew as well as the meaning behind much of what we do. Please contact Rafe or Shaan if you have yet to sign your child(ren) up. Ruth and Sam also tried to set up a 'Shabbat Tots' group prior to our Shabbat morning service, but had little response – this can be restarted at any time should there is sufficient interest.

On a positive note, huge congratulations again to Rufus and Finlay who both had their Bar Mitzvahs in April. We are very proud of them both, and their commitment to a Jewish life and our LJ values. With another BM scheduled for later next year, our community continues to inspire and thrive and we truly love that of our youth.

In a wider community perspective, we are proud to confirm that YLJC is now very much recognised as York's Jewish representative community. This has been emphasised by the various events this year at which I and other members of the Committee have been delighted to represent YLJC. Following many years of working with English Heritage and others regarding Clifford's Tower and the Eye of York area, we were invited to English Heritage's pre-opening event at Clifford's Tower in March. To celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in June, the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire and the Archbishop of York invited us to their Jubilee Garden Party and service at York Minster, where we lit a candle to the Queen as one of York's faith representatives. Soon after, we sadly returned to York Minster for the now late Queen's commemoration service in September, where Ben and I laid flowers to her as York's faith representatives as part of the service. And we also participated in York University's faith service, and signed various condolence books. One Yorkshire Committee's invitation to the 'Yorkshire Reception' in June at the House of Lords (invite organised by Laurence Saffer of LRJC) was deferred to November due to train strikes, and here we were represented by Ben. And finally, we were truly honoured to again be invited by York Minster (as one of only 3 faith representatives) to the recent visit by King Charles III and the Queen Consort in November for their unveiling of a new statue to the late Queen, where I was introduced to the Queen Consort and told her more about our community. King Charles describes his role - and we welcome in response - as 'Defender of Faiths' (rather than of 'The Faith') and his intention to protect the diversity of religion in Britain.

YLJC has successfully raised in excess of £80,000 through our 'Rabbi for York' fund to cover the costs of a part time Rabbi for three years. Unfortunately, a shortage of Rabbis in the UK has delayed the process. The committee is determined to find a candidate who is the right fit for York, not just to fill the post. We continue to invite individual applications and hope to start seeing candidates in the new year. At the same time the shortage of candidates means that we are also looking at non-rabbinic options to support the growth and development of our community, for example a community organiser. We will discuss with you the options being considered as we welcome your views and will keep you informed of any progress made.

As devastating as coronavirus has been and continues in some form, Liberal Judaism congregations still come together in various forms with much reduced need to travel, which is to be welcomed. Many meetings, conferences and events are livestreamed for free, and other events have been made available to us, such as Hebrew lessons and educational sessions. All can be attended from the comfort of our homes, without the need for long-distance travel, which has enabled greater participation, and many such events will continue in this way. Much as we would encourage you to attend our and others' events in the future 'in person', we appreciate that there will continue to be a role for online participation and we are investing in new technology accordingly.

I wish to thank the YLJC Committee this year for their commitment and the work they have done in such uncertain times. In particular, there are always some who give so much and these people must be given especial thanks: Shaan Bloch has been my ever supportive Vice Chair in her usual efficient and pro-active way, and Howard Duckworth is our ever active ever wanting to do more friendly Warden. Ben Rich remains our Treasurer but as always does so much more, including pro-actively fund raising and raising our profile in the wider UK Progressive Jewish community. Brian Berry was our membership secretary but has now left our community; hence Shaan has taken over this role too, Owen Power, our LJ Link Officer, is our Facebook champion and our Board of Deputies representative. Jay Prosser has re-joined us to lead Social Action, working with Sharon Tagger leading on school visits and Adrian Tellwright attending York Interfaith Group as our representative. And of course, a very special thanks to Sam Borin and Ruth Morris who continue to regularly lead our Friday night Shabbat services and so much more as knowledgeable lay readers and advisors to our community, and Ruth is also editor and puts together our community newsletter 'Jews on the Ouse'. Of course, many others also work hard behind the scenes, and I thank them too for their service.

Sadly, we received a complaint about the conduct of the committee during the year, which was investigated by a member of the committee not mentioned in the complaint on our behalf. This was not upheld, with LJ also providing advice and confirming no need to take the matter further.

We must also thank all of our Members, Associates and Friends for your invaluable support and for making us the unique and inclusive community that we are today. Please continue to join in with our many services and activities; suggestions and volunteers will always be welcomed!

Again, please can I say that we would love to welcome new members onto the Committee. Please let me know if you would like to be involved and if you have a special interest or skill or if you have new ideas – you will receive the support you need. There is no better way to get to know people, to make new friends and to feel an integral part of the community of YLJC, than to join in and contribute to the work we all do for each other.

Finally, we say a huge thank you to the NLPS Trust for their continuing financial support and to all the Rabbis and staff at Liberal Judaism, and my colleagues at the other LJ Communities, for their leadership, advice and support, especially during this past year.

Lilian Coulson
Chair
York Liberal Jewish Community

20 November 2022

York Liberal Jewish Community Receipts and payments account

Year ended 4 April 2022

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2021
Receipts				
General donations	1,183	15,010	16,193	27,414
High holy day appeal	950	-	950	-
Grant income	-	-	-	-
Interest	3	1	4	6
Membership fees	12,556	-	12,556	12,078
Total receipts	14,692	15,011	29,703	39,498
Payments				
Accountancy fees	480	-	480	840
Bank charges	16	-	16	-
Charitable contributions	250	-	250	645
Insurance - other	314	-	314	127
Newsletter	-	-	-	99
Rabbinic expenses	70	-	70	158
Rabbinic salary	3,689	-	3,689	6,500
Room booking	975	-	975	-
Staff training & welfare	-	-	-	254
Subscriptions	2,207	-	2,207	1,283
Sundry expenses	5	-	5	-
Telephone	391	-	391	72
Total payments	8,397	-	8,397	9,978
Net receipts	6,295	15,011	21,306	29,520
Cash funds last year end	22,171	21,998	44,169	14,649
Cash funds this year end	28,466	37,009	65,475	44,169

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

Cash assets

Current account	10,006
Savings account	55,469
	<u>65,475</u>

Restricted funds

Rabbinic Fund	33,009
Bursary fund	4,000
	<u>37,009</u>

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signed by an Independent Examiner: P Silver-Myer FCCA on 17th August 2022 who has reviewed the above account and confirms that it accurately represents the financial transactions of the York Liberal Jewish Community for the year ended 4th April 2022

R&P Accounts 2022

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