



**SBJC Annual Report 2014/15**  
**To be presented at the AGM on**  
**28 February 2016**

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## SBJC Council Members during 2015

Amanda McFeeters (Chair)  
 David Silverstone (Vice Chair)  
 Gill Parker (Chair of R&P)  
 Jorge Rososchansky (Treasurer)

David Collett  
 Vanessa Harker  
 Mark Simmons  
 Wallace Wormley

### Committee members

#### Rituals and Practices:

Rabbi Rachel Benjamin  
 Gill Parker (Chair)  
 Vanessa Harker  
 David Collett  
 Sarah Murgatroyd  
 Yudit Collard Tremi

#### Finance:

Jorge Rososchansky (Treasurer)  
 David Silverstone  
 Tom Bloch  
 David Collett  
 Paul Nathan

#### Building:

David Silverstone  
 Henry Amar  
 Harry Davies  
 Peter Davison

### Education

#### Cheder:

Rabbi Rachel Benjamin  
 James Davies  
 Yudit Collard Tremi  
 Zac Davies  
 Phoebe McFeeters  
 Becky Bealing

#### Gan:

Sally Geneen  
 Karen Levy

#### Administration:

Eli Kling  
 Mark Simmons

### Other support

#### Membership:

Katie Winterstein  
 Louise Cook

#### Rabbinic Support:

Anita Epstein  
 Debbie Davies  
 Harvey Gritzman  
 Mark Simmons

#### Communications:

##### Ha-Shavua

Geoff Hassell  
 Isobel McFeeters

#### Email contact

Dick Vardy  
 Anita Epstein

#### Phone contact

Sue Bijum

#### Website maintenance

Jacqueline Cohen

#### Social:

Cynthia Hassell  
 Carolyn Barkin

## **Chair's Report**

### **1. Review of the year**

#### **Changes in our Rabbinic Leadership**

For SBJC the most significant event this year has been the need for us to review our rabbinic leadership arrangements: after nearly 10 years of service at SBJC, Rabbi Rachel Benjamin moved on to take up a new post at LJS. Rachel's service with SBJC ended on 13 December with the final Cheder session of the term. I express our thanks to Rachel later in this AGM report.

Over the summer, with the help of Tom Bloch, Debbie Davies and Gerard Geneen (the interview panel), and David Silverstone (recruitment administrator), we sought a replacement Rabbi. I am delighted that we were able to appoint Rabbi Charley Baginsky. Charley will work (as Rachel did) on a 50% basis and will formally take up her new post with SBJC on 1 May 2016, but will be leading some services between now and then.

Charley has been the Rabbi at Kingston Liberal Synagogue for the last 10 years, and is currently on sabbatical. During the sabbatical period she will be dedicating time to specific projects for Liberal Judaism and personal study on Feminist and Literary interpretations of the Talmud, developing work from her rabbinic thesis.

Charley was brought up in Watford but spent several years in Israel in her late teens and early twenties. She has a degree in Theology from Cambridge and Kings College London, where she was awarded the Osterly Prize for Old Testament Studies. Her masters and rabbinical ordination are from Leo Baeck College where she also received the John Rayner Prize for Talmud.

Charley has three children: Joshua (7), Eliana (5) and Cassia (3), and the family will be moving to this area in 2016.

#### **2015 Survey**

In the knowledge that we would be changing our rabbinic arrangements, we took the opportunity to survey members and prospective members of the community. I would like to thank Carolyn Barkin for organising the survey, and everyone who took the time to respond to it.

We received 63 responses to the survey, 80% from members and 20% from non-members. As a result of the survey some immediate changes were implemented (notice of these changes was emailed in December):

- From January 2016, the Children's Erev Shabbat Service, held on the first Friday of the month, will start at the earlier time of 6 pm and last for 45 minutes (ending by 7 pm after Kiddush). All congregants are welcome to this service tailored to our younger members and their families.
- Gan (for children up to the age of 6) will move to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday\* of the month so that families with smaller children can attend the Children's Service and Gan on separate weekends (\* this will be worked around term time, so please check the website for exact dates).

- From January 2016, the monthly Saturday morning service will be a more traditional Liberal service, geared towards our adult members. This is not to say that children are not welcome (in fact children who are nearing their Bar/Bat Mitzvah are expected to attend these services). The service will keep to an hour (10:30 to 11:30) with Kiddush to follow. We would also like to introduce more social events after the Service.

There were other considerations arising from the results of the survey. These need further work before we can finalise any changes:

- Moving Cheder from Sunday to Saturday. The results showed roughly 50:50 for and against. What was clear was that there were many thoughts on how Cheder could be improved, including making Cheder shorter/fewer for the younger Cheder children. Council, advised by our Cheder teachers and the new Rabbi, will review how we deliver Cheder.
- Outside of families with young children, it is clear that other members are not attending the Friday night service because it does not cater to the challenges of modern life, including work and commute. There is the added challenge that SBJC has a hugely diverse geographic base (as evidenced by the diversity in the respondents' postcodes), meaning that most members travel 20-30 minutes or more to attend services. Council, R&P and our new Rabbi will consider how best to respond to this challenge.
- An impressive 20% of the survey respondents were non-members. Their responses suggested that non-members may not be aware of important information that could influence their attendance at "open events" (such as Gan) and in turn their decision to join SBJC. We will be reviewing our website content and how it communicates to potential members.

### **Religious Calendar**

I would like to thank our Rituals and Practices Committee: Working with Rachel they made sure that things are in the right places at the right time for all of our services and festivals.

This year we reinstated the mitzvot rota for the provision of challah. If you are willing to be added to the rota please let Sarah Murgatroyd know (contact details are given on page 18). Duties include bringing a challah, pouring wine for Kiddush and ensuring that, if you are unable to attend, you have found someone to take your place. The more volunteers we have, the wider we can spread the load (new volunteers will be given guidance on what to do).

My thanks also go to our lay leaders, the choir, and our musicians. I am particularly grateful to those who led services while Rachel took some time to be with her mother Bobby in the early part of the year, and to the choir for their work in preparing for the High Holy Day services.

As Rachel started her transition to LJS we invited Rabbi Andrew Goldstein to lead our Yom Kippur services. I am pleased to be able to say that Andrew will also lead our Pesach Seder in 2016.

At services this year we blessed a new baby, Freddie Gillman; honoured Gill Parker and Vanessa Harker at Simchat Torah; we celebrated the Kabbalat Torah of Jessica Geneen and Amelia McFeeters and the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Rabbi Harry Jacobi. We also welcomed Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, to one of our services, and were pleased to see Simon Benscher (the new Chair of LJ) at Rachel's farewell service.

### **Education**

Cheder and Gan continue to thrive - we now have 31 children in Cheder and many young families regularly attend Gan.

At the end of the summer term we said good-bye to teachers Yudit Collard Trembl, Zac Davies and Phoebe McFeeters. At the start of the 2015/16 academic year we welcomed Becky Bealing as a new teacher and I am pleased to report that from January 2016, James Davies will be taking on the role of Head Teacher, and Nick Prag will join the teaching staff. Sally Geneen, supported by Karen Levy continues to lead Gan, and Jessica Geneen will join cheder as a class-room assistant. In 2016 Amelia McFeeters is going to start a class for adults who want to learn some basic Hebrew reading skills.

Eli Kling has been the organiser of our cheder parent/helper rota for some time now, and is handing over to Anita and Andre Katz. Our thanks go to Eli, Anita and Andre, and of course, to the parents who provide security and support to teachers and children.

### **Membership**

I want to record my thanks to Sue Bijum and Dick Vardy, who answer phone calls and emails from people wishing to know more about SBJC, and to Geoff Hassell, who through the weekly email, makes sure that people are informed about what is going on in SBJC and in the wider Jewish community. My thanks also, to Katie Winterstein who took on the role of Membership Secretary in 2015. This year she has been kept busy, as we have increased our numbers 241. More detail is given in our membership report on page 14.

Sadly, this year was marked with the loss of Bobby Benjamin, who will be remembered with great affection by all of us that knew her.

### **Social Events**

We held various events during the year, and I would like to thank everyone who organised or hosted an event. Events included a debate, book club, a Summer Tea Party and Autumn Tea Party, and children's parties at Rosh Hashanah and Chanukah. We also had a lesson in Jewellery making and in January we discussed their new book, *The Rabbi in the Green Jacket*, with Vivien and Deborah Samson.

I would also like to thank Cynthia Hassell who has taken on the role of Social Secretary, and Debbie Davies for the regular members' newsletter, HaGephen.

## **Outreach**

I reported last year that we had been approached by Aylesbury Mosque, and a few of us visited the mosque earlier this year. I am sorry that we weren't able to arrange any joint activities during 2015, but hope to be able to do so in the future. Rachel and others have, however, taken part in various other interfaith events during the year.

We have also been active in our fund-raising: the Cheder tzedakah collection raised money for SBJC and Save a Child's Heart. In the summer we raised money for Cancer Research when we took part in the Aylesbury Relay for Life. We ended the year with our Kol Nidre appeal raising funds in support of SBJC, Save a Child's Heart and the Chiltern MS Centre.

During the High Holy Day season you responded to the appeal for clothes, sleeping bags and tents to be taken to Syrian Refugees, I was literally overwhelmed by the volume of sacks, but with help from Annie Marcuson, all of the items were eventually taken to a collection point. At Sukkot and Simchat Torah we also collected food which we donated to the Swan Foyer, a centre for teenagers who are unable to live at home.

At Mitzvah Day we made cards for children who had undergone heart surgery, we made bunting for the Noah's Ark Hospice, and we planted trees in Heartwood Forest. We also collected CDs and DVDs for Tzedek to sell to raise funds for people living in extreme poverty in Ghana and India.

## **Building**

Once again, we asked for your support when a building which looked suitable for us came onto the market, and, sorry to say, once again, we had another near miss, when we were outbid on the St Johns Ambulance Building in Amersham. Thank you to everyone for your pledges and continued enthusiasm for finding us a building, but in particular to David Silverstone and our Building Committee who put effort into liaising with vendor's agents, and arranging for us to view the property. We continue to look for suitable premises for an SBJC Synagogue.

## **Annual Accounts**

Our Treasurer's report on page 11 shows that we ended the 2014/15 financial year with a surplus of £9,838. Whilst our subscription income has increased, we are not yet in a position where our running costs can be met from subscription income alone, we continue to rely on donations and fund raising events to keep us in surplus.

Our accounts have been audited by Danny Baker, and I recommend to members that we re-appoint Danny as our auditor for 2015/16.

Many thanks go to Jorge Rososchansky for the work that he has done as Treasurer. Due to work commitments, this is Jorge's last year as Treasurer. Subject to his being elected to Council at the AGM, Paul Nathan has volunteered to take on the role of Treasurer.

## **Fundraising**

As well as raising money for other charities, SBJC also benefited from your generosity. Some members help by adding a donation to their regular subscriptions, and others make one-off donations, sponsor events, and support fund raising activities such as the hamper raffle, and the sales of the SBJC Anglo-Jewish calendar. This year we also received gifts from Bobby Benjamin and the estates of Harriet Karsh and Anne Bates.

Where we have approval from donors, we collect gift aid. This allows SBJC to claim 25p for every £1 donated. If you are eligible and have not already done so, a declaration form is included in the AGM support papers

## **And finally**

We ended the year with a service for Rachel as our guest of honour. We heard tributes to Rachel from the Chairs of SBJC (see page 15), and a number of Rachel's past students took part in the Torah Service. Many of you were able to attend in person, others sent their best wishes, and I know that Rachel was thrilled and moved by the service. Both Rachel and Harry will continue to attend the occasional SBJC service, so we will be able to keep in touch with them. Thank you again to all involved in the organisation of this event.

## **2. Forward look**

Looking to the year ahead, which will be my fifth and final year as chair, I thought it would be helpful to set out some of my ambitions for the things we might achieve over the course of the next twelve months.

Our change of Rabbi gives us an opportunity to review how we do things and explore new options. As reported above, we have tried to assist this process by surveying the community during 2015. We now need to work with Rabbi Charley Baginsky to plan how to make some of these a reality.

We will continue to provide Erev Shabbat and Shabbat morning services, and to mark the festivals. Religious education for our children is also a priority. We could do more in respect of adult education provided that there is a desire from the community for that. This is an area I want to explore this year.

We have a reasonably active social calendar, but it would be good if we could establish a Social Committee, and have a team who could organise a small number of events per year, particularly events which bring the whole community together.

Working without a building or any administrative staff has its issues, and I am grateful for the work that goes on to ensure that halls are found and booked, contact lists are maintained and that our communications run smoothly. Over the coming year I would like to review how we do this, to see if we can take further advantage of developments in technology to enable us to be more joined up in the way we tackle these tasks.

Looking further ahead, if we can grow to a point that we have a surplus from membership fees alone, then we will be in a comfortable place to run a building, with

the advantages that will bring. We need, however, to be aware of the administrative overheads that come with running a building, and we will need to prepare both financially and emotionally for that outcome. A building will inevitably need volunteers to help keep it in good shape and in active use.

As a community, we are very reliant on the help of volunteers, and while we have a good number of volunteers, considering our size and make-up, I hope to be able to work with you to encourage more members to help. Just an hour or so of volunteering time can make a real difference to SBJC.

Finally, I know that Charley comes with lots of experience and fresh ideas, and I am looking forward to sharing this first year of her SBJC journey with her.

Amanda McFeeters  
SBJC Chair

## Rabbi's Report

It is with a bitter-sweet feeling that I sit down to write my Annual Report this year. In January 2015, I little thought that I would be writing this after leaving this beloved community, to serve elsewhere. On one hand, it has been a very good year for SBJC, in lots of ways, and I feel so proud of what we have achieved together. On the other, it has been a challenging year for me personally, with the sudden serious illness and death of my mother. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who offered your support and understanding at that time. It meant more than I can say. I was not the only SBJC member to lose her mother this last year, and our thoughts have been with Vanessa Harker, Juliet Kramer and Ruth Harris, too.

If you will permit me, I will only focus now on the positives this year – there have been many. The importance of interfaith work cannot be over-stressed, and there have been several initiatives begun at SBJC: Amanda McFeeters, David Silverstone and I met with Imam Shams and others from Aylesbury Mosque; we made a connection with the Islamic Unity Society; I was one of the founders of a new multi-faith group in Chesham, called Multi Faith One Vision (MFOV) – and I am grateful to David Collett who represented SBJC at the MFOV stall at the Chesham Christmas Fair in November; I attended the launch of Nisa-Nashim, the Jewish and Muslim Women's Network; I spoke at a Wycombe Sharing of Faiths reflective evening on the topic of 'Living Simply'; and our Wycombe JCM (Jewish-Christian-Muslim) group continued to move forward together positively and constructively. We welcomed a group of police students from Bucks New University to talk to them about Judaism, show them a synagogue (thanks to NPLS, our hosts that day), and discuss security concerns with them.

Among the highlights... the successful 'Assisted Dying' Debate that took place at the home of David and Tricia Silverstone; I attended the Liberal Judaism Day of Celebration at The Liberal Jewish Synagogue, together with Ruth Harris and some of our Kabbalat Torah students; conducted the Baby Blessing of Freddie Gillman; led a Home Blessing (Chanukat Ha-Bayit) ceremony for the delightful Friedner family, relatively new to our community (and Mazel Tov on the recent birth of Isaac Henry!); participated in the Aylesbury Cancer Research UK Relay for Life, with the SBJC Strollers team, which raised a fantastic sum of money, and had a great time doing it; welcomed Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive and Senior Rabbi of Liberal Judaism to a service; honoured Gill Parker and Vanessa Harker at Simchat Torah, for their dedication and commitment to SBJC; saw our KT students, Jessica Geneen and Amelia McFeeters lead their KT service beautifully; and celebrated Rabbi Harry Jacobi's 90th birthday with his SBJC family.

It felt strange not to be with the community at Yom Kippur, but I liaised with Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, who led the services, and I know that he and Sharon enjoyed the experience very much, and were enormously impressed by the congregation. I was proud of Debbie Davies, Gerard Geneen and the choir, who took it upon themselves to prepare the music for the High Holy Days, and did it so successfully.

Cheder and Gan have gone from strength to strength over this past year. We were sad to say 'goodbye' to Yudit Collard Trembl at the end of last year. Yudit had taught in our Cheder for several years, and we expressed our gratitude for all she had done

over that time. In September, I am delighted to say that we recorded more than 30 students in our Cheder, for the first time ever, I believe. With the burgeoning number of children in our Gan, led by Sally Geneen with the assistance of Karen Levy and Hannah Bealing, this really does bode well for the future of SBJC, and I look forward to following the progress of Cheder and Gan over the coming years.

I would like to record a special 'Thank You' to James Davies, who stepped in seamlessly on a number of occasions, when my mother was so ill, and who has been the principal leader of the Hebrew part of Cheder. He has put effort and commitment into Cheder way above and beyond the call of duty, and I am pleased that he is now taking over the role of Head Teacher, and feel confident that Cheder is in the best possible hands.

James and Robin Moss led a session at the LJ Education Seminar in May, to introduce our innovative Hebrew programme (devised mainly by James, Debbie Davies and Robin) to other communities. It was enthusiastically received and, immediately afterwards, Birmingham Progressive Synagogue instituted the programme themselves. What an accolade – and deserved recognition for what we have achieved.

We were thrilled to welcome Becky Bealing as a new teacher in September and, as of this Winter Term, Nick Prag, also. It is a good teaching team, and I am sure Cheder will continue to grow and develop.

I would like to record another special 'Thank You' to Ruth Harris and Dick Vardy, Nick Prag and Gerard Geneen who all stepped in to lead services when my focus needed to be on my mother and family. It has been one of my pleasures to encourage lay leadership in our services.

Last, but very much not least, I would like to mention my Farewell Service. I have really said what I want to say in the latest issue of HaGephen, but I would like you to know that the service was the best possible leaving gift that you could have given me, and I will remember it always, and will always treasure the book of messages that many of you wrote to me. SBJC is a special community, and I am proud to have served it for the past nine and a half years. I will keep in touch, and look forward to hearing about the continuing progress of SBJC under its new spiritual leader, Rabbi Charley Baginsky.

There are always many thanks to be made at this time, not least to all those people I have mentioned already, for all you do to make SBJC the vibrant, warm, welcoming community it is, and for the work you do with our children, to ensure our future. Thank you to the members of our Council, for their considerable contribution to the life and running of SBJC; to Gill Parker, Vanessa Harker and the Rituals and Practices Committee for the work they do to make sure our services and festivals run smoothly; to James and Debbie Davies, for their musical support – and leading – of services; to Debbie for the creative and readable HaGephen; to Geoff Hassell who continues to send out the excellent Weekly E-mail; to our lay service leaders; to those who open up the FMH for services; to all the Chairpeople with whom I have served, and to all the SBJC Council members and those who sit on committees, for

the time, effort and commitment they make to SBJC; and to our members who attend and participate in the life of SBJC.

Finally, I would like to say a special 'Thank You' to Amanda McFeeters. Amanda is a superb Chairperson of SBJC – a Rabbi's dream - and I am grateful to her for her support, advice, encouragement and friendship. I value greatly her honesty and integrity. I am a better Rabbi for having had Amanda as the Chairperson I have worked with over the past four years.

Thank you all, and l'hitra'ot – I'll be seeing you!

Rabbi Rachel Benjamin

## **Treasurer's Report**

This report covers the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015.

During this period we recorded a surplus of £9,838 (including debtors and creditors movement), this surplus is the direct result of increase in donations (74% increase year on year) which was mainly generated by a very special donation of one person for £9000, subscription increased 8% showing a positive trend of increase in number of members to our community.

Rabbi's office cost decreased 3% year on year, as a result from reductions in HMRC/NI costs.

Although Cheder costs increased by 36%, as a direct result of more participants, they were one of the key sponsors of membership growth.

The net result of all our expenses maintained the positive trend of previous years, and the combine result of all costs showed a decrease of 3% when compared to previous year.

For the next fiscal year we are anticipating a surplus between £5,000 and £6,000, this surplus would come from a small increase in subscriptions, due to inflation adjustment and the growth trend, combined with a reduction in Rabbi's office due to gap period between Rachel and our new Rabbi. It is therefore important that we continue to monitor our expenses very carefully, and continue to grow our community.

I would like to thank you for the support I have received over the last 3 years as Treasurer of SBJC, as I will be passing the position due to personal commitments that will force me to travel all the time. It has been an honour and a privilege to share this period with a great team of people in the council.

Jorge Rososchansky  
Treasurer

## Report from the Chair of the Rituals and Practices Committee

Services including religious content co-ordination, Chavurot, Mitzvot Rota, Service Security,

### **Chairperson**

Gill Parker

### **Committee Members**

Rabbi Rachel Benjamin, Vanessa Harker, David Collett, Sarah Murgatroyd, Yudit Collard Trembl

### **Mitzvot Rota**

Sarah Murgatroyd

### **Yahrzeit List**

Gill Parker

### **Transport Support**

David Collett

2015 has again been a very busy and varied year for SBJC and especially the R & P Committee. The following events were held during the year:

January	AGM
February	Tu B'shvat
April	Yom Ha'Shoah Freddie Gillman's Baby Blessing
May	Shavuot and cheesecake competition
July	Relay for Life
September	Rosh Hashanah at Coleshill Village Hall Yom Kippur at Kings Church, Amersham Succot at the home of the Harker Family
October	Rabbi Danny Rich to FMH with bring and share supper Tea party at Helen and Alvin Cohen's Simchat Torah
November	Service and supper to celebrate Rabbi Harry Jacobi's 90th birthday KT service

December Farewell service plus Kiddush for Rabbi Rachel  
Chanukah

I would like to thank the R & P committee for all their help in 2015 and a special thanks again to Amanda McFeeters for attending our meetings and providing help and advice during the year for which we are immensely grateful. Also thanks go to the support network who step forward with help, particularly at special events.

The committee meets approx. 4-5 times per year, usually in Chesham, and we would welcome any new members. We are especially looking for someone to take on hall bookings!!! Please contact Gill Parker if you are interested!!!!!!

Dates for your 2016 diary so far are:

February 28 <sup>th</sup>	AGM at Ley Hill
March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Purim service led by Rabbi Charley Baginsky
April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Second night Seder at Amersham Free Church
October 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup>	Rosh Hashanah at Coleshill Village Hall
October 11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup>	Yom Kippur (venue to be confirmed)

Gill Parker  
R&P Chair

## Membership Report

2015 has been a busy summer with several new families, one friend and a single adult joining our community. We welcome Stephen Beck, Neil & Nathalie Weisberger, Linda Liston, Toby & Laura Friedner, Ruth & Nathan Miller, Donald Tendell, Annie Marcuson, Gilman and Seiff families. There have been very few people leaving SBJC.

This has put our total number of members to 241 of which 10 are friends of SBJC.

	2013	2014	2015
Total number	194	207	241

As the table shows there has been consistent increase in membership numbers with an increase of 16% between 2014 and 2015. There has been ongoing interest in the community and we look forward to maintaining and continuing to increase the numbers.

Thank you

Katie Winterstein  
Membership Secretary

## **Thank you Rabbi Rachel Benjamin**

Rachel joined SBJC as our Rabbi in 2006. Looking at the AGM report for that year, I was reminded of some of Rachel's achievements:

- Cheder has grown from 13 children to 31
- Gan – our pre-school group – was introduced in 2006
- In her first AGM report Rachel expressed the desire to get us singing, and she certainly has achieved that
- In that same AGM report, the idea of holding regular Shabbat morning services was raised, and in the interim, there would be Torah readings once a month at the Friday night service. Regular Shabbat morning services were introduced in 2008

Rachel has been at the heart of SBJC, she has helped us to grow in stature and in number, whilst retaining that warm and friendly atmosphere for which SBJC is known.

For many of us, Rachel has helped us through the happiest and saddest moments of our lives, and she has done this with warmth, respect and good humour. We reflected on this at our service on 12 December, and the following "Thank you" was prepared on behalf of the community and reflecting the grateful appreciation of the whole community at SBJC.

### **Dick Vardy**

It must be 20 or more years ago when I first got to know Rabbi Rachel. A Leo Baeck student, she had volunteered (been volunteered?) to help our still fledgling community, by leading our High Holy Days services. In my role as choir leader we met to go through the copious music for the two days. I realised quickly that she is far more musical than me! Gentle and quiet, she rapidly got to grips with things and made quite an impression, although she told me only afterwards how nervous she had been. She never let it show. Ten years later, when she was appointed as our Rabbi, it felt like a homecoming to me. It's been a delight to see Rachel grow in stature (metaphorically!) and in confidence to become as close to the ideal community Rabbi as I think it is possible. Her ability to relate to children is outstanding and shows itself clearly in the way the Cheder has grown and the way the kids respond to her. The whole community owes her a huge debt of gratitude for her energy, leadership and commitment. I know I'm not the only one to have been lifted by her presence and her new role is well deserved. It reflects all those strengths we have come to know.

### **David Sacker**

Who would want to be a community Rabbi? As Abraham Lincoln might have said "A rabbi can please all the community some of the time, and some of the community all of the time, but cannot please all the community all the time". And yet somehow, Rabbi Rachel seems to have managed to do just that. Although Amanda [Sacker] and I met Rachel some 20 years ago when she was a student rabbi, for much of the recent times that she has been our rabbi, we were away living in deepest Essex.

However, whenever we did return from the wilds for a High Holyday Service or a 2nd night Seder, Rachel always greeted us as if we were the most treasured friends and members (and grabbed Amanda for the choir!). I think that one of her greatest qualities is that she relates so well to everyone, and makes us all feel really valued. Through her warm smile, soft musical voice and smiley eyes and laughter (and Jewish knowledge!) she appeals to everyone, from the youngest child to the greyest of us, men and women alike, whatever their connection with Judaism. The community has grown so well under her rabbinic leadership and is now ready to continue to grow into the future. For all this we owe her a real debt of gratitude and we wish her well for her new role at LJS. We are very fortunate that we will soon be joined by Rabbi Charley but Rabbi Rachel will always be missed and welcomed at SBJC.

### **Helen Cohen**

My grateful thanks go to Rachel, my rabbi for more than 9 years and a friend for many many more. I have learnt that “Giraffes Eat Leaves and Not Doughnuts” for Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and to have “An attitude of Gratitude”, not a glib Americanism but a deep rooted and positive approach to life, which Rachel’s sermon encouraged me to embrace. I have watched Rachel blossom from a gifted but soft spoken student rabbi with a voice like an angel, to a confident senior rabbi with clear authority and still with a voice like an angel. She charms the room with her genuine goodness, and intrinsic sympathy. As Rachel has grown our community and our knowledge, so too has the confidence that she inspire in others. Rachel has given me the confidence to take services, read a Torah portion, understand some of the messages in our liturgy, and through her example, has made me more patient and tolerant with others (although Alvin may not completely agree!). Rachel brings serenity, even if inside she may suffer the turmoil that afflicts us all, she brings inclusiveness and learning, and to top it all she brings a mean recipe for brie with garlic, parsley and scrumptious goodies. I thank her so much for bringing to SBJC Harry, Bobby (who we miss), Alec, and all the extended Davies family, for bringing the sunshine and the strong motivation to learn, to our community. I also thank her for being the inspirational rabbi that I recruited to SBJC all those years ago, and for growing SBJC, to what it is today. Thank you my Rabbi Rachel.

### **Anita Epstein**

From the moment you joined SBJC as our Rabbi, you took the community into your heart and became one of us. Though I’d not had the pleasure of meeting you before, I soon realised how fortunate we were to have you. Your warm personality and generous spirit gave us an enthusiastic teacher, and your memorable sermons brought us inspiring lessons for life. Your sense of fun provided us with engaging communal and charitable activities, while your caring demeanour with people, whatever their connection to Judaism, has helped consolidate and grow our community. These could be enough, but over the years I’ve also had the pleasure of watching children and young adults alike thrive under your creative leadership in Cheder, developing in them a love of learning Torah, singing during the services and forging lasting friendships. You leave us with many gifts, and in return I hope you take from us a sense that we have appreciated and supported your work. You will always be part of SBJC, and as we welcome Rabbi Charley into our midst, we’ll also be thinking of you in your challenging new journey with LJS in St. John’s Wood. On a

personal level, the friendship shown by you and Harry to both Mark and I has been wonderful to experience, whether watching Manchester United or going to musical evenings in London, and of course we've had the special privilege of a close relationship with your wonderful parents. You will all be forever in our hearts. Shalom and thank you.

### **Amanda McFeeters**

As we walk through life, we make new connections with people, and we form memories and pictures of them that we carry with us for ever. I carry so many mental pictures of Rachel, from the first meeting at Helen's when we were interviewing for a new Rabbi through to the latest of seeing her here today. I am unique among the Chairs in having had my children grow up with Rachel as their Rabbi, and it is as a parent that I speak today. Rachel has played an enormous role in teaching the children – their religious and cultural heritage of course, but what is all of that for if it isn't to help make them decent human beings - "a mensch". I have watched my and others' children coming through Cheder and I have seen the enthusiasm and fun that is part and parcel of the fantastic atmosphere that Rachel has created at Cheder. I watch their faces at the kid's services, the eagerness with which they raise their hands to make their contributions, and the joy in their faces as they join in the singing. But more importantly I have watched them learn from Rachel about being supportive and caring of others, being proud of their Jewish heritage and traditions, and confident enough to speak and act accordingly. I know that they like me will carry mental pictures of Rachel through their lives: which of us doesn't remember that teacher who made a difference to our lives?



## CONTACT LISTS

We have a number of “SBJC” email accounts, if you are not sure who to contact, please refer to the list below. Your email will then be directed to the current post holder.

<b>Who do I speak to about...</b>	<b>email address</b>
Items in the diary, or our Anglo/Jewish wall calendar	calendar@sbjc.org.uk
Cheder	sbjc.cheder@sbjc.org.uk
Contributions to HaGephen, our members' newsletter	hagephen@sbjc.org.uk
Information about the High Holy Days, or other Festivals/Services	highholydays@sbjc.org.uk
Membership	membership@sbjc.org.uk
If you want to volunteer to join the Mitzvot Rota	mitzvot@sbjc.org.uk
Attending or organising a social event	social@sbjc.org.uk
Finance	treasurer@sbjc.org.uk
Yahrzeit at services	yahrzeit@sbjc.org.uk

<b>General Enquiries...</b>	<b>email address</b>
The Chair of SBJC	chairperson@sbjc.org.uk
The Rabbi	rabbi@sbjc.org.uk
Contacts via the Website	info@sbjc.org.uk



# South Bucks Jewish Community

## ACCOUNTS

For the Year Ended 31st August 2015

*SBJC is a member of Liberal Judaism (LJ) and a registered charity number 1098078*

SBJC BALANCE SHEET FOR PERIOD ENDING 31st AUGUST 2015

<u>Assets</u>	Full Year 2013/2014	Full Year 2014/2015
<b>BANK ACCOUNTS</b>		
<u>General Fund</u>		
Current Account - TSB Including Adj	£13,204	£2,238
Current Account - HSBC	£770	£20,891
Deposit Account - TSB	£476	£477
Skipton	£0	£47,670
Reserve Account - Santander	£47,228	£0
	£61,677	£71,275
 <u>Building Fund</u>		
Natwest Incl Adjustment	£243	£243
Santander	£6,893	£7,814
Virgin Bank	£58,316	£59,096
Bath Building Society	£83,226	£83,986
	£148,678	£151,139
 <u>Other Assets</u>		
Religious Regalia	£6,553	£6,553
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>£216,908</b>	<b>£228,967</b>
 Represented by		
Debtors (Subscriptions and other income received in advance)	-£580	-£190
Creditors (Cheques / Expenses not cashed)	£6,769	£6,138
 <b>General Fund</b>	 £62,042	 £71,880
<b>Building Fund</b>	£148,678	£151,139
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>£216,908</b>	<b>£228,967</b>

South Bucks Jewish Community (SBJC)  
Income and Expenditure Account  
For the Year ending 31st August 2015

	2013/2014 Full Year	2014/2015 Full Year
<b>Income</b>		
Subscriptions	£36,592	£39,739
Donation / Other Income	£30,585	£32,483
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£67,177</b>	<b>£72,222</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Rabbi Office	£37,659	£36,649
Other Expenses	£25,958	£24,953
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£63,617</b>	<b>£61,602</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>£3,560</b>	<b>£10,620</b>
Debtors/Creditors Movement		<b>-£782</b>
General Fund Brought Forward	£57,322	£62,042
General Fund Carried Forward	£62,042	£71,880

SBJC Income and Expenditure For the Year Ending 31st Augsut 2015

	2013/2014	2014/2015
	Last Year	Full Year
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	36,592.05	39,739.32
Donation	7,910.83	13,822.33
Kol Nidre	6,053.00	3,782.50
Gift Aid Subs	8,188.23	8,027.79
Gift Aid Others	2,372.36	936.16
Cheder fees	2,616.50	1,897.00
HHD Tickets	0.00	570.00
Fund Raising	0.00	522.12
Funeral & Burial fees	1,543.55	1,361.00
Calendar	0.00	0.00
Grant	333.60	0.00
Miscellaneous Income	0.00	350.32
Bank Interest	70.94	213.31
Matching Donations with Fund Raising	1,496.25	1,000.00
Next Year Subscription	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>67,177.31</b>	<b>72,221.85</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>1 Rabbi's Office</b>	<b>37,659.32</b>	<b>36,649.47</b>
<b>Funeral and Burial Fees</b>	<b>8,684.25</b>	<b>7,859.00</b>
L J Capitation	7,638.75	7,668.75
<b>Cheder Sub-Total</b>	<b>3,179.20</b>	<b>4,342.50</b>
LJ other	200.00	720.00
Friends House	693.00	2,066.00
Other halls	1,625.25	622.00
Kol Nidre donation	1,545.75	350.00
Fund raising costs	370.73	0.00
Insurance	698.68	806.56
Photocopying	288.00	258.00
Miscellaneous + Admin.	355.56	54.12
Advertising/Mrketing	376.99	118.75
Bank charges	301.88	87.15
Contingencies	0.00	0.00
Pesach/Shavuot/Others	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>	<b>63,617.36</b>	<b>61,602.30</b>
Surplus / (Deficit)	<b>3,559.95</b>	<b>10,619.55</b>

1 The Rabbi Office expenditure includes salaries, tax, expenses and synagogue expenses

South Bucks Jewish Community (SBJC)  
 Building Fund Accounts  
 For the Year ending 31st Augst 2015

	2013/2014	2014/2015
<b>Income</b>		
Donation	£ -	£ 715
Bank Interest	£ 2,862	£ 1,566
Gift Aid	£ 236	£ 180
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£3,098</b>	<b>£2,461</b>
 <b>Expenses</b>		
Bank Fees / Others	£0	£0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
 Adjustments		
Surplus / (Deficit)	£3,098	£2,461
 <b>Building Fund Brought Forward</b>	<b>£145,580</b>	<b>£148,678</b>
 <b>Building Fund Carried Forward</b>	<b>£148,678</b>	<b>£151,139</b>



**SOUTH BUCKS  
JEWISH  
COMMUNITY**

**AUDITORS STATEMENT ON THE SBJC ACCOUNTS FOR 2014-2015**

I certify I have audited and found correct SBJC Accounts for the Financial Year 2014-2015

Dated: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015

H D Baker  
FCA FiiA