

# **BRISTOL HEBREW CONGREGATION**

An Incorporated Charity. Reg: No:  
9, Park Row, Bristol. BS1 5LP

## **CHAIRMAN`S REPORT**

**2016-2017**

**This** has been our first year as an incorporated charity, and the elected board of management has met regularly to conduct the business of the congregation.

Considering some of the turbulence that the community has worked its way through in recent years; perhaps this year may best be described as one of consolidation with some very positive indications. Membership of the congregation has increased, and we are certainly gaining members just a little faster than we are losing them. Shabbos morning attendances have risen to the point where we not only just get a minyan: but sometimes the service actually starts with minyan. Furthermore, many of our shabbos attendees are young and committed.

Attendance over the high holy days was good. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we had the additional cantorial services of Yitz Davies from Manchester, and he likes Bristol so much he wants to do it all again, next year. We got a minyan on just about all of the days, and for a first in my life time, there was a daily minyan on the Chol Moed days of Succot; mainly thanks to our students and visitors. I should note at this juncture that we now enjoy the regular services and input of Chabad Rabbi: Mendy Singer, who remains employed by Chabad Bristol to which we make occasional contributions. We have now been joined by Rabbi Uri Jaskeil of Aish and Rabbi Alex Tzykin of the Student Chaplaincy. Both of whom assist with services but direct their principal efforts to meeting the needs of Bristol University's growing Jewish student population. May I add that these contacts are now spreading to Bath University and the West of England University.

One interesting group to visit was the student fraternity: Alpha Epsilon Pi. who spent a weekend in Bristol as part of their International Conclave Shabbaton.

In addition, we have a few very regular attendees who are not halachically Jewish. However this has not discouraged them from being active in helping to run the shul premises and events. Two of these individuals are actually key holders. Your council has been happy to give four people Associate Membership within the terms of the constitution in recognition of their commitment.

The cheder continues to grow and there are now classes for the very young and the bit older. Our thanks to all of those whose efforts are keeping the cheder going.

Most of you will know that we have now fitted a totally new kitchen. There was initial discussion as to whether the old kitchen could be up-dated, but as this would have included new larger cooker, health regulation compliant wash basins and work services as well as a new accessible window, it was felt that we might as well go all the way, with a totally new kitchen.

Dust bins at the front of the building have been an unsightly problem for as long as the shul house have been flats. Last year, the police contacted us on security matters and noted that the bins standing just inside the gate could prove to be noted by any person wishing to leave an explosive device. We contacted the Community Security Trust who agreed to meet half of the cost of a bin park behind a substantial wall. A copy of the police advice was sent to Bristol city council, who gave planning and listed building consent. We now have a presentable and safer access to our shul.

On other matters of access, our discussions continue with the university in our efforts to secure some sort of access via Medical Avenue. We have waited fifty years, we can wait a year or two more, if necessary.

Necessary work on the roof of the shul house has now been completed, and noting that the roof of the main shul building was last worked upon in 1975; it is not surprising that we now have leaks as the felting deteriorates. Substantial work will be undertaken in the coming year.

As communal activities increase, we are becoming aware of a shortage of space, and for this reason we are having first thoughts about renovating the old Committee Room buildings to provide office, teaching and storage space.

Liaison with wider community takes many forms. Our website ensures that a growing number of Jewish visitors to Bristol attend the shul. We also have an increasing number of occasional attendees.

Moving out into the wider world, we maintain cordial relationships with Bannerman Road and members of that community have been welcomed here at evening and social events.

As the Park Row Synagogue becomes more firmly fixed on the Bristol and West of England map, we are having an increased number of schools visits and visits from adult groups including church groups. We consider these visits to be an essential outreach, particularly schools' visits, when, first contact with Judaism should be direct and positive. Our schools' visits have continued to be organised on the model used by Reading Hebrew Congregation. These are quite labour intensive, involve the assistance of four or five members of the community willing to chat informally around tables here in the hall, laid out with items relating to Jewish observance and life. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have assisted with these visits, but particular thanks to Gerald Levy for taking on the schools' visits liaison. I would also like to take this opportunity to ask for additional volunteers to assist with schools visits; usually scheduled for Tuesdays. Most of the children's questions are disarmingly simple, so you don't have to be an expert on halacha!

The shul has been open to the public on heritage open days in the city. Quite often we receive more than one hundred visitors in a five hour period. All visitors have shown positive attitudes both to Judaism and to the community. And all have admired the building.

Bristol will be the host city for a Limmud Sunday on 10th June 2018. For practical reasons most of the activities will be centred on the premises of Bristol Cathedral School. However, notices have gone out and members of the congregation are cordially invited to participate.

On matters of liaison with the wider community, we have had one most unpleasant experience, this year: namely the pro-Labour, anti Tory and quite frankly, indisputably anti-Semitic banner that appeared on College Green, Cathedral property administered by the city council, and subsequently moved to council property known as the Bear Pit. To its credit, the cathedral chapter phoned the police as soon as they saw the banner on College Green. The city authority officers first attempted to say the banner was not their responsibility. They then permitted the banner to be moved to the Bear Pit. By that time the press had got hold of the story and the banner was amended to hide the Mogen David earring on Mrs. May.....who had been characterised with a hook-nose. Subsequently, the banner was taken down by council officers who gave it back to the two people who had put it up. One of whom told the press that some of his best friends are Jewish.

I raised the whole matter with council party leaders, drawing their attention to the similarity between the Bristol Banner and the virulent anti Jewish propaganda of the Nazis. Three of the party leaders expressed their total condemnation of the banner. But from one party leader and from the

Mayor of Bristol, there came not a word,; although I did receive a somewhat wishy-washy condemnation of racism from Mayor Rees about three weeks later. There has, however, been one positive development further to this nasty event. A couple of council party leaders and the MEP have asked for a meeting with some representatives of the community to discuss the problem of re-emergent anti-Semitism.

I doubt whether Mayor Rees will be in attendance.

It now just remains for me to thank all the people who have worked to carry this community forward. I am not going to name names because the list will be delightfully long, underlining a sense that this community has a good future. However, I will just name one person; and that is Haggai: who despite being in and out of hospital with life threatening illness, has come to shul and undertaken the leyning on every shabbos when he was not actually in hospital. We`re a small community, but there is a lot to be said for its spirit.

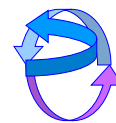
Alex Schlesinger. Hon President: Bristol Hebrew Congregation. December 2017.

# Bristol Hebrew Congregation

Charity Number 1165722 (Incorporated 24th February 2016)

Bank Accounts - movement for the 11 month period ending 31st July 2017

Esther White ACA  
Chartered Accountants  
236 Henleaze Road, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4NG  
Tel: 0117 962 5708 Email: [esther@estherwhite.com](mailto:esther@estherwhite.com)



	July 2017	Month of Aug 2016
<b>Income</b>		
Members Contributions	£8,714.22	£2,653.29
Golden Giving	£421.36	£0.00
EEA Distribution	£9,746.51	£0.00
Sundry credit	£14,880.00	£0.00
Donations and Offerings	£17,390.95	£89.47
Investment Income	£18,800.01	£1,006.31
Gross Rental Income	£16,083.20	£2,050.00
	<b>£86,036.25</b>	<b>£5,799.07</b>

	July 2017	Month of Aug 2016
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Ministerial Assistance	£7,275.00	£0.00
Gas	£1,051.55	£0.00
Electricity	£411.60	£0.00
Rates (Water & General)	£160.88	£0.00
Telephone	£208.89	£18.99
Insurance	£4,949.69	£0.00
Subscriptions & Donations	£4,666.00	£0.00
Repairs, Maintenance & Cleaning	£74,080.09	£504.46
Recorder	£399.36	£0.00
Wine and provisions	£621.95	£0.00
Rental Expenses	£0.00	£196.82
Legal Expenses	£1,180.80	£0.00
School visits	£992.71	£0.00
Accountancy	£918.00	£0.00
	<b>£96,916.52</b>	<b>£720.27</b>

Movement for the period	-£10,880.27	£5,078.80
Bank Balance Brought Forward / Introduced	£12,566.49	£7,487.69
	<b>£1,686.22</b>	<b>£12,566.49</b>

Reconciled Bank Balance Carried Forward	-£150.31	£12,566.49
Gift Aid Refund due @ 31st July 2017	£1,836.53	

	<b>£1,686.22</b>	<b>£12,566.49</b>
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Approved by



Esther White ACA

DATE: 6th December 20

**Investment Schedule**

EEA Fund Management	Value @ *	31-Jul-17	£11,166.57
Smith & Williamson - Investments	Value @	31-Jul-17	£223,331.00
594 Imperial Tobacco Shares	Value @	31-Jul-17	£27,998.19
281 Astra Zeneca Shares	Value @	31-Jul-17	£12,642.58
* nearest information available to the date			<b>£275,138.34</b>