

# Board of Deputies Report 2019

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I should like to start by thanking the membership for electing Richard Burn, Bernadette Hillman and myself, at last year's AGM to serve as your Deputies for the present triennium. Over the past year we have alternated in reporting to the Board of Management to keep you updated with activities of the Board of Deputies on a regular basis.

Since last year's AGM your Deputies have attended all London meetings of the Board; we regard our presence, and that of delegates from our sister reform synagogues as being of vital to this Community, to Progressive Judaism as a whole and to the wider Anglo-Jewish community. The Board is fortunately no longer split along sectarian lines to the same extent as it once appeared to be; there are many issues that unite members from all wings of our faith community. However I can assure you that the Progressives Deputies continue to be among the Board's most active and effective members. We were all both surprised and delighted by Marie Van der Zyl's (West London Synagogue) success the Board's Presidential Elections last year. She became only the second woman ever to hold the Presidency. Stuart McDonald (LJS) remains the Treasurer as well as chairing the vitally important Finance and Organisation Division. Gillian Merron, also a member of the Liberal Synagogue, continues to impress as our Chief Executive.

It goes without saying that this past year the Board have been greatly pre-occupied by the alarming evidence of outbreaks of anti-Semitism, often disguised as anti-Zionism, within a major British political party. Our new President has met with the Leader of that party and has put our communal concerns most strongly, however it would be fair to say that her complaints about the behaviour of members and groups within that party have sadly not always resulted appropriate action being taken against the people involved.

The Board is the sole democratic cross-communal forum in the United Kingdom. It represents almost all shades of mainstream Anglo-Jewish opinion and encompasses the vast majority of our multifarious communal organisations. It has served as the eyes and ears and most importantly the mouthpiece of the Community for over 350 years. The government recognises the Board as the authentic voice of Britain's Jewish population. The Board of Deputies, as an organisation, is envied by many of the United Kingdom's minority communities; it is seen as being a model which many of them aspire to emulate, but sadly few groups have yet succeeded in doing so. After a short hiatus, whilst the Board clarified the legal ramifications of live-streaming its meetings, plenaries have once again been made available for online viewing.

As always we need to stress the vital importance of financial support for the Board. We must ask all members kindly not to opt out of including their voluntary annual contribution, currently just £30.00, when paying their annual Synagogue subscriptions. This small donation, were it to be paid by all Synagogue members throughout the country, would be adequate to relieve the Board's ongoing funding problems and to ensure its future as Anglo-Jewry's foremost communal institution.

Roger Kutchinsky.