



Chair's Report to the Annual General Meeting, Radlett Reform Synagogue

In recent end of Shabbat morning announcements I invited members to attend tonight's AGM describing it as a recognition and celebration of what we have all achieved in the last year and I hope my report gives you a flavour as to why.

This year has been one of consolidation, implementing projects started by the previous chair, Elizabeth, and one of creating and improving infrastructure.

Physical infrastructure changes have taken place in the synagogue building – new walls added in the Menorah Hall to make it a really useful space for our changing needs and the new flooring in the Jon Young Hall, much needed after 20 years of use, has really smartened up that space. Plans to refurbish the kitchen are well underway, the Executive made the decision to wait for the same builder to be able to do the work and we are hopeful that the work will be done by the High Holy Days.

Any organization is as strong as its people - we recognized the growing needs of our community by signing a contract with Sarah Grabiner, who joins our already amazing, and much envied, clergy team next summer following her ordination as a cantor. We were sad to lose Yael, Man-Yee and Lois in the last year and wish them all well. We are however delighted to welcome Pippa as our first Community Director and Maithili to look after our accounts administration.

The third element of infrastructure change is still on-going and that is the streamlining and consolidation of our internal systems into a new database and content management system designed for 21st Century synagogue use. It has already enabled improved security and efficiency, with better reporting facilities and more to come.

There has also been considerable thinking around and restructuring of our membership categories to be as inclusive as we can and to maximize income.

So, what of the coming year? As you already know, a key aspect of our vision is to build communities within our larger community. With some of these building blocks now in place, we have the enablers for us to connect our community better, whether that be by geographic region, interest group or indeed any other demographic.

One of the projects currently underway is our member engagement project, we are actively talking to a cross section of our membership about their experience of joining us and of being a member here at Radlett and, if they

would like, how they might be more involved. If you would like to be part of the project team do please let me know.

But as I just said, we really couldn't do this without great people. I'd like to take the opportunity to say a big thank you to our wonderful professional team, we are truly fortunate to have the Rabbis and staff that we have, they handle a huge range of enquiries and they support members through every life cycle event as well as dealing with growing demand on our building.

An equally big thank you to our large team of volunteers, without whom we really couldn't function. The work that each and every one of those volunteers does, really is greatly valued, whether they are regularly visible or behind the scenes, within the synagogue or representing us in the wider community.

In particular I'm very grateful for the hard work of the Executive and Board and would like to pay tribute to those stepping down this year after generously giving more hours than you can imagine. Lisa Leighton as Honorary Secretary has made most of the building and people things just happen; Susan Zonneveld as Head of Ritual and Jack Alvarez as Head Warden have worked hard to support the Rabbinic team introducing innovation and study and enabling more services than ever before to run like clockwork.

Thank you too to Lana for her years of representing us on the Board of Deputies, an important voice in the wider world in which we live and to the wardens standing down this evening.

All of your successors have hard acts to follow.

I'm looking forward to an exciting year ahead and I hope you all do too.

Thank you.

Irene Blaston
17.5.2018