

*Recommendation  
of the Advisory  
Committee*

for the  
appointment of  
**Ner Yisrael's  
Senior Rabbi**

November 2018  
Kislev 5779



---

## *Executive Summary*

**H**aving concluded a robust and thorough process, it is the unanimous view of the Advisory Committee that Rabbi Zobin should be recommended as the next Senior Rabbi of Ner Yisrael.

The Advisory Committee see him as an outstanding candidate against the Selection Criteria that were formed with input from the community.

This recommendation has the full and unreserved support of Rabbi Kimche.

We are in the very fortunate position that we have got to know Rabbi Zobin extremely well over the last 4½ years. This is so advantageous because we can eliminate much of the risk and uncertainty that would be present if we were to appoint an unknown candidate.

We are recommending Rabbi Zobin because of his:

- Indisputable Torah knowledge and insight
- Pastoral care - many in the community have experienced first-hand Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin's personal care and support at sensitive points in their life
- Commitment to continuing the ethos of Ner; our open pulpit policy, support of Israel, embracing modernity and seeking to reconcile it with halachah and masorah
- Close connection and attention to the youth
- Vision for the community; encapsulating tefillah, Talmud Torah, community and chessed
- Leadership skills – Rabbi Zobin has taken the lead in

countless initiatives, including most recently bringing the student minyan into Ner

- Speedy and clear responsiveness to shailot

**Please vote in favour of our recommendation.** The Rules of the community require at least 50% of members to vote and for 75% of the votes to be in favour.

There will be an EGM at 20:00 on Monday 3rd December 2018, at which the Advisory Committee will make a short presentation and conduct a Q&A session. You can vote:

- Via anonymous ballot paper cast in person in the shul office **up until 14.30 Monday 3rd December**
- Via anonymous ballot paper cast in person **at the end of the EGM on Monday 3rd December at 20:00**
- Electronically via a unique, anonymous link that will be sent to all members who have not voted via ballot paper, **between midnight Monday 3rd December and Friday 7th December**

We hope to announce the outcome of the vote by Monday 10th December.

We are keen to share further details of the process and have written the detailed document which follows. This sets out how the Advisory Committee

was chosen, details of the Selection Criteria, feedback received from the community, more detail on the basis for our recommendation and background on Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zabin.

**KERRIN ROSENBERG**

on behalf of the Advisory Committee

---

## *Contents*

Opening Word from Chair of Trustees and Advisory Committee	5
Personal Word from the Shul Chairman	6
Endorsement from the Rav	8
Appointment of the Advisory Committee	9
What process have we followed?	10
Why didn't we advertise the role and consider other candidates?	12
Feedback from the community	14
Selection Criteria	15
Why are we recommending Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin?	16
Role	20
Voting and EGM	22
Background Information on the Zobin family	23

---

## Opening Word from Chair of Trustees and Advisory Committee

Appointing a new Rabbi is probably the most important project any community can undertake. In our case, the question of “who should lead us next?” has a particular nuance. We have spent our entire 34 years as a kehillah under the guidance and inspiration of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kimche. During these years, the community has grown and flourished, so that today we have around 600 adult members, five adult minyanim on Shabbat, and around 1,000 men, women and children who actively use our shul every week. Our active participants are aged 5 to 95 and there are distinct groups who have different views about the shul’s priorities: talmud torah, chessed, tefillah, a place for socialising or somewhere to derive a weekly dose of religious inspiration, to name just a few.

It is inevitable that life will be different under our next Rabbi, but that is not just because each leader has their own unique personal qualities. It is also because our vibrant and growing community is now quite diverse. That diversity means that our Rabbi needs to possess a wide range of skills, appeal to a broad range of ages and lead a variety of distinct minyanim.

We are in the extremely fortunate position that our Associate Rabbi, Rabbi Zobin is such a strong candidate to succeed Rabbi Kimche. We have got to know him extremely well over the last 4½ years; we have listened to his many shiurim, worked closely with him as the Board and Trustees, asked him many of our shailot, been impressed at his confident handling of communal Q&A and experienced his and Rebbetzin Zobin’s compassion and deep personal care during the saddest and happiest life occasions. This is so incredibly advantageous to us because we can remove much of the risk and uncertainty that is inevitably present when a shul appoints a brand new candidate as their Rabbi. Communities that lack such a strong internal candidate and are compelled to hire externally face material risks, no matter how thorough their due diligence.

Yet despite this, Rabbi Zobin was not guaranteed the role of Senior Rabbi and we made no assumption that Rabbi Zobin should be recommended to the community. Before reaching that conclusion, the Advisory Committee undertook a robust, thorough and methodical process.

**I am delighted to confirm, having now completed our work, that it is the unanimous view of the Advisory Committee to recommend Rabbi Zobin as the next Senior Rabbi of the community.**

In total, the Advisory Committee and Trustees have spent over 300 hours on the process and we are keen to share and explain our recommendation with you. In the spirit of full transparency and openness, this document sets out, in significant detail, the rigorous process we followed; the work we did, feedback received from the community and how it informed our process, and most importantly why we are recommending Rabbi Zobin for the role. We also cover certain aspects of Rabbi Zobin's role, including which outside commitments it is proposed that he will retain and our thinking on a future Associate Rabbi.

Obviously, we can only *recommend* a candidate to you. Ultimately, the community will decide.

**PLEASE VOTE.** This is an extremely important decision for the kehillah. Please don't miss your chance to have your say. We've made it extremely easy to do, as will be explained later in the document.

Finally, I would like to thank the Advisory Committee, the Trustees and Board for all their hard work on this project, as well as all the members who provided feedback, suggestions and input. Thanks also to Jeremy Herman and Heather Marchant who both provided valuable help in drafting this document.

**KERRIN ROSENBERG**

---

## *A Personal Word from the Shul Chairman*

I am delighted that the Advisory Committee is making its recommendation to appoint Rabbi Zobin as our next Senior Rabbi.

Rabbi Zobin has been such a positive addition to Ner Yisrael over the past 4½ years. Indeed, when I first met Rabbi Zobin after he was appointed, I was struck by his innate sense of community which emanates from his humanity, empathy and deep care for everyone he and his Rebbetzin interact with. Having had the privilege of working so closely with many rabbis and educators during five years in the USA, two as shul president, I knew that we had someone special in Rabbi Zobin to partner our incredible Rabbi Kimche as the shul entered its fourth decade.

Whilst I had said "never again", Rabbi Zobin's arrival spurred me into accepting the chairmanship of Ner at a time of further change and growth. Together, the rabbinic, professional and lay team have worked hard to harness the enormous talent from the ever-expanding corners of the shul with Rabbi Zobin playing a pivotal role in getting the best out of people with encouragement, wise advice and attention to detail; always

in the context of the big picture. It is not easy keeping a multi-faceted community happy and much thought and care is required to do so.

There are many more qualified than me to extol Rabbi Zobin's extraordinary depth of Torah and secular knowledge combined with an exceptional intellect. Across the shul, across all ages, many have benefitted from his wide-ranging shiurim, classes and conversations; and Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin's pastoral care and hospitality have touched so many – and many more that we don't know about.

Having collectively come to know Rabbi Zobin so well over the past 4½ years, it is clear that many share my respect and admiration for Rabbi Zobin. This became so evident from discussions over the past few weeks and from the informed and unanimous decision taken by the Advisory Committee.

Now that the recommendation is public, I turn to you, the community. What I barely shared, as I had no desire to influence unduly the Committee, was my involvement in the succession of the Senior Rabbi of the Boca Raton Synagogue in 2006. An equally world-class Rav and his Rebbetzin were leaving a multi-faceted community that they had built from the ground up and that had in place an assistant Rav who had endeared himself to and was respected by so many. In

what turns out to be a fairly atypical scenario, the community decided that they had someone special already in place to take over. B'kavod Harav they packed into shul in their hundreds for an EGM, voting unanimously to appoint the assistant Rav as the new Senior Rav without seeking any alternatives. It was a defining moment in the shul's history and a Kiddush Hashem that has stood the community in good stead, growing from 500 to 900 families in those past 12 years.

We too, at Ner, have that rare opportunity to embrace a very special Associate Rav and his Rebbetzin by coming together in large numbers at next week's EGM to approve their appointment. We too can create our own defining moment and Kiddush Hashem – and we at Ner are good at that – proudly ensuring that our incredible past flows seamlessly into a bright, vibrant and successful future. Let's do it.

***JONATHAN MARRIOTT***

---

## *Endorsement from the Rav*

**N**er Yisrael has been the centre of our life for over 34 years. During that time my wife and I have felt profoundly blessed to be part of the journey with you all, and your families, and we certainly intend to preserve and continue all these friendships into the future. We have immensely enjoyed seeing generations grow and develop, nurtured by the energy and the ethos of the kehillah.

One cannot overstate the role played by a strong kehillah in forming the identity of the youth and young adults, which is especially vital in the current culture of confused identities and rapidly changing roles.

While the Torah itself is eternal and immutable, the way in which it is learnt, applied and experienced changes with each generation. With these changes happening faster than ever, the role of rabbinic leadership becomes increasingly challenging, as it is the Rav who leads the way to adapt and apply authentic Torah to the fluidity of modernity.

Devising new learning programmes, choosing a wide selection of guest speakers, effective personal counselling, grasping contemporary intellectual

and emotional issues, giving a psak halachah that is consistent with modern reality, re-defining and re-framing the tradition to make it intelligible in the 21st century, preserving the Diaspora while keeping the focus on Israel – all this and much more lies at the heart of the rabbinic challenges of Ner.

For all these reasons I have always known that it would be hard to find a Rav of the next generation who would have the personality, the talents, the knowledge and the vision to take Ner to its next phase after Via and I move on to our next stage of life in Yerushalayim.

For the past four years I have had the pleasure of getting to know Rabbi Zobin very well. Working together daily it became clear to me, already early on, that here is an outstanding individual, immensely talented yet modest, who has all the above abilities to a very high degree, and I can hand over to him confidently and with a full heart.

I am therefore very pleased that the Trustees, the Board and the Advisory Committee have unanimously decided to recommend Rabbi Zobin to be appointed to this position by a communal vote. This recommendation has my full and unreserved support and I am sure that under his guidance Ner will continue to flourish and grow in a way that will be a Kiddush Hashem.

***RABBI KIMCHE***

---

## Appointment of the Advisory Committee

About three years ago, a Governance group worked on Rules for the Community. These Rules were shared with the community, and, after some revisions, were presented at the 2016 AGM. The Rules include the following about the process to select a new Rabbi:

*In the event of the post of Rav becoming vacant, the Board of Management shall take steps to fill the office as soon as possible. An Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the Trustees from members of the Board of Management and the Trustees. The Advisory Committee shall have an equal number of male and female members including, where necessary, appointment of further female members by the Trustees. Upon the said Advisory*

*Committee recommending a candidate, by a simple majority of its members in attendance and voting, a General Meeting of all members entitled to vote shall be called when a vote shall be taken on the candidate. The quorum at such General Meeting shall be fifty (50) percent of the Full Members of the shul entitled to vote on the day of the meeting and the vote for the candidate shall be not less than seventy-five (75) percent of the total electorate present at the meeting or voting by other means.*

Although technically, the Rules apply to a new legal structure (a limited liability charity company) that is not yet established, the Trustees and the Board believe that the process for rabbinic succession set out above is sound, and should be followed, with one minor, pragmatic adjustment relating to the use of electronic voting.

The original Advisory Committee appointed by the Trustees was as follows:

TRUSTEES	BOARD	CO-OPTEES
Daniel Green	Veronique Berman	Charlotte Benjamin
Debbie Myer	Simon Bolsom	Carolyn Cohen
Michael Pollak	Benjy Israel	Talya Masher
Kerrin Rosenberg (chair)	Jonathan Marriott	Susan Pascoe
Michelle Sint	Dov Nevies	

The Trustees selected the Advisory Committee by appointing some of the Trustees and Board members and co-opted several women to ensure equal representation between genders. In selecting the Advisory Committee, the Trustees sought to establish a broad and representative committee of men and women, ensuring participation from all minyanim and age groups.

A few members challenged the representativeness of the Advisory Committee. In a couple of cases, the Trustees set aside those challenges, as they were factually incorrect. However, one challenge was felt to be valid, namely that the original Advisory Committee lacked a male representative from the hashkamah minyan. All other minyanim had at least one male and one female representative. The Trustees therefore invited Matthew Pearlman to join the Advisory Committee, and Benjy Israel very graciously agreed to step down, preserving the gender balance on the Committee. This change took place on 16 October, about a week after the initial announcement to the community.

Very importantly, the views of the Advisory Committee members regarding Rabbi Zobin and the process to be followed were not known in advance.

---

## *What process have we followed?*

The Rules do not state what process the Advisory Committee is required to follow. They simply require the Advisory Committee to recommend a single candidate to the community. After meeting to discuss, we decided to adopt the following process:

### **1. Define Selection Criteria**

Before we could propose any candidate, we needed to have clear Selection Criteria against which they would be assessed. Obviously, we wanted to consult and engage with the community in this task. We received around 30 responses from the community on Selection Criteria (some of which were extremely detailed). Together with input from the 14 members of the Advisory Committee, we had over 40 members' opinions. Based on discussions with other shuls, this is a fairly typical sample size for exercises of this nature. We say more below about the response from the community and the Selection Criteria that we were ultimately able to define.

### **2. Assessing Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin against the criteria**

The fact that Rabbi Zobin had become highly regarded and much loved as our

Associate Rabbi did not automatically guarantee him the role of Senior Rabbi. Whilst we were extremely confident that we knew much about Rabbi Zobin's capabilities in giving shiurim, responding to shailot, his hashkafah, his style of working with shul management and his pastoral capabilities, we were less certain about the areas on which, as Associate Rabbi, he would necessarily have deferred to Rabbi Kimche. We needed to explore his vision for the shul and his leadership qualities. In addition, we wanted to ensure that Rabbi Zobin would be committed to upholding the ethos of Ner (on which we say more later). Finally, many on the Advisory Committee had had limited exposure to Rebbetzin Zobin (who is not, at present, employed by the shul and has no formal role) and we wanted to get to know her better to understand how she would fill the role of Rebbetzin of the community. We therefore engaged in discussion with the Zobins on these topics and sought input from some outside sources, including Immanuel College, where Rabbi Zobin is the Principal.

### **3. Decision to propose Rabbi Zobin**

The Advisory Committee met to consider the feedback from discussions with Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin. We then each scored Rabbi Zobin against our Selection Criteria. The scoring was done privately, and the aggregate results shared with the Committee.

Whilst clearly no individual would score perfectly against all criteria, the assessment of the Advisory Committee was that Rabbi Zobin scored so highly against the vast majority of the criteria, that it would be hard to imagine a stronger overall candidate.

**It was the unanimous conclusion of the Advisory Committee that we should recommend Rabbi Zobin to the community for a vote, and we have therefore decided not to consider other candidates.**

### **4. Agreeing terms and conditions**

Before recommending Rabbi Zobin to the community, the Trustees were asked to agree heads of terms (both role and financial package) with both Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin, so that if the community supports our recommendation via the vote, we will be able to swiftly agree contracts of employment. The Trustees have undertaken market research on local rabbinic packages, both the financial and non-financial aspects. They have taken advice from a consultant with many years experience in rabbinic recruitment. The Trustees have also hired an employment lawyer to assist with employment contracts.

---

## *Why didn't we advertise the role and consider other candidates?*

**W**e are conscious that this was, for a few, a questionable decision. Eleven members of the shul wrote to us expressing concerns that we were not advertising the role and opening up to external candidates.

In contrast, 25 members wrote in expressing strong support for Rabbi Zobin. Many of these congregants endorsed our process, suggesting that we should just get on with recommending Rabbi Zobin. One congregant even took issue with the fact that there is any process at all and argued that the Trustees should simply decide and make the appointment immediately, without any community vote.

The Rules, as quoted above, were not prescriptive, leading the Advisory Committee to its first task: deciding the process. Though an open process, on the face of it, seems the default and is what many shuls are mandated to run, most communities don't have a strong internal candidate. To run an open process without being required to, not only raises the question as to how fairly external candidates could be assessed but also creates uncertainty

about and around the incumbent.

We did not, though, make this decision in isolation. We reached out to five other shuls, both in London and Israel to learn of their processes, experiences and outcomes when appointing their Rabbi. Our approach was received most warmly with open and often sensitive discussions on how they reached their result (or not, in one case), what worked and what didn't. Insights were willingly provided in a spirit of true *achdut* and a desire to help us in our search for the right answers.

Though the communities we spoke to were quite diverse in terms of size, location, history, independence (or not), it was remarkable how similar their processes were. Briefly:

- None of them had a strong incumbent – they had to undertake a global search
- The processes lasted 6–18 months (though in one case it has still not concluded three years on)
- In all cases, the recommended candidate had less than 12 hours cumulative exposure to the selection committee, i.e. a decision was reached with very limited exposure to the leading candidate
- In most cases, a single candidate was presented to the community for a meet 'n greet Shabbat

immediately before the vote, with a high degree of trust put into the selection committee to have made the right decision

- No candidate scored 10/10 on every criterion, with the committees' recommendation most often made on best fit
- Where a high percentage of shul members voted in favour (over 90%), this was considered to be a vote for the process rather than the candidate
- Many described their processes as "hit or miss"

We were in a very different position with a strong internal candidate, who had been with the shul for 4½ years and has been pastorally involved with large parts of the community, has a strong and growing external reputation and was being courted by others.

We listened to the full range of views expressed by our community and consulted widely outside; ultimately we had to decide what we thought was best for the community. We concluded that we would evaluate Rabbi Zobin in a systematic and methodical way first, without inviting external candidates. There were many reasons for this:

- Kavod HaRav, as expressed by so many in the community, for an outstanding individual who

had outperformed in so many areas throughout our community over the past 4½ years

- If we had the right person, why engage with, potentially mislead and risk the exposure of other candidates just for the sake of seeing who's out there?
- How fairly and realistically could we compare a candidate we had just met with someone we know extremely well?

There were external factors to consider too:

- We had to be realistic as to whom we could attract. A UK package for a leading Rabbi is very different to what an average community Rabbi would get in the USA, never mind a rising star or someone at the top – and that's before moving and housing expenses. We are a relatively small shul with a limit as to what we can afford
- Employing a candidate, particularly non-UK born, from Israel or elsewhere, especially with a young family, runs the risk of not settling down in a different environment and culture, and could be short-lived
- We were also most concerned that we could lose Rabbi Zobin during an open process and

none of the Advisory Committee were willing to run that risk

- Finally, we took some comfort from the fact that the successful candidate needs a quorum of at least 50% of the community to vote and 75% in favour, a much higher threshold than is usually the case in rabbinic appointments (e.g. United Synagogues require 65% of the vote in favour, with no quorum)

---

## *Feedback from the community*

We'd like to thank the many members of the community who responded constructively and thoughtfully during the last few weeks.

In total, about 50 members have corresponded with us during the process:

- About half of these offered their unsolicited support for Rabbi Zobin, often urging us to move quickly to recommend him
- About a quarter expressed concerns with the fact that we did not advertise the role or consider other candidates. This has been covered above
- The other quarter covered a range of issues, including asking clarification over the process, thanking us for taking on this important task, etc.

All members who wrote in received replies, and all correspondence was shared with the full Advisory Committee.

## Selection Criteria

In total about 30 members submitted their thoughts on Selection Criteria. In many cases, these were very well thought through and detailed documents. Together with

input from the 14 members of the Advisory Committee, we had over 40 members' opinions, and we distilled these into criteria below.

We were also able to look at the Selection Criteria applied by one or two other shuls, and there was a remarkable degree of overlap with ours.

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	% RESPONDENTS WHO MENTIONED THIS POINT
<b>Spiritual dynamism, Leadership and Inspirational speaking</b>	Talmid Chacham	97%
	Excellent Orator / Charismatic Speaker	66%
	Leadership - strong, thoughtful, open-minded, collaborative	50%
	Piskei Halacha / Responding to shailot	39%
	Inspires community to greater religious values	34%
<b>Exceptional pastoral care</b>	Strong personal relationships with community / pastoral care	74%
<b>Engagement and involvement with all parts of the Ner Yisrael community</b>	Engages with all ages and groups	39%
	Promotes a fulfilling role for women within the confines of Halacha	26%
<b>Education</b>	Good shiurim	24%
	Diversity of educational speakers	21%
<b>Organisational skills</b>	Works well with other members of a professional team and lay leaders	32%
	Leads initiatives; and drives them through to delivery	18%
<b>Personality style and values</b>	Support of Israel	45%
	Has an ethos that matches with the Modern Orthodox approach of Ner	39%

---

## Why are we recommending Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zabin?

Our comments below are based on the collective experience of the Advisory Committee working with Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zabin over the last 4½ years, specific discussions held with Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zabin during this process and input provided by a representative of Immanuel College.

**It is the unanimous view of the Advisory Committee that Rabbi Zabin should be recommended to the community. The Advisory Committee see him as an outstanding candidate against the Selection Criteria as set out above.**

- Rabbi Zabin's Torah knowledge and insight is widely known within and outside of our community. It will be a credit to Ner to have such an outstanding Talmid Chacham as our next Senior Rabbi
- Given Rabbi Zabin's 4½ year tenure, we believe that many in the community have experienced first-hand Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zabin's personal care and support at sensitive points in their life. Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zabin believe passionately that members need

to feel listened to and cared for. They believe in being available and providing constant pastoral care (dealing with families, shalom bayit, chatan/kallah, counselling and support). This already takes up a huge part of their time and is, in their opinion, essential to promote a sense of belonging and one of the core functions of a rabbinic couple

- Rabbi Zabin's speedy and clear responsiveness to shailot is well known. In fact, he answers shailot from within the community, from ShailaText, from students past and present, and from many younger rabbis within the United Synagogue and beyond, personally dealing with several hundred shailot in a typical month
- Whilst Rabbi Zabin hasn't spoken frequently in the Main Minyan on Shabbat morning, he has habitually addressed the 8.30 and Netzach minyanim, as well as, since Bobby Hill retired, giving the regular Shabbat morning shiur to the Hashkamah Minyan. During the week, Rabbi Zabin gives a number of shiurim within Ner and beyond, including his "Contemporary Conversations" that looks at the interplay between modernity, science, philosophy and Torah, a shiur for post Sem girls on Jewish thought and personal growth, a

Rambam-based shiur to the boys in the Beis program, as well as regular halachah and gemara shiurim

- Equally, his close connection and attention to the youth and younger members of the community is widely recognised, including his ready availability for their questions and his deep educational insight. Key achievements in this area include his programmes for the Bar and Bat Mitzvah years, close work with and mentoring of the Youth directors, madrichim and madrichot, hosting youth activities, his continued connection and visits to gap year students in Israel, and introducing and integrating the Netzach minyan – a demographic previously weak in Ner – and most recently the Student Minyan. He has also been closely involved in the launch of Lahava, the learning programme for girls and young ladies
- Rabbi Zobin has a mindset which is respectful, tolerant and non-judgemental. This is epitomised in the role he plays at Immanuel College, where his relationships with staff, parents and students reflect these values on a daily basis. Immanuel is a very mixed school in terms of religious background. Rabbi Zobin brings a non-judgemental mindset to bear, keeps in touch with

students during and after they leave school, offering guidance, advice and a listening ear. Pupils going through a religiously-questioning phase (temporary or permanent) know they can talk to him and be taken seriously and thoughtfully. He is an educational leader in PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and British Values within Immanuel, and is consulted in this area by other Jewish schools, as well as by the Chief Rabbi in the development of his recent booklet on alternative lifestyles

- At Immanuel, Israel is one of the unifying factors across the student body. Immanuel celebrates Israel with huge reverence and enthusiasm on Yom Hazikaron and Yom Haatzmaut. Israeli charities are highlighted, celebrated and funds are raised for them with Rabbi Zobin's active encouragement and promotion. He developed an Israel advocacy programme for Immanuel's sixth formers and is concerned with Immanuel students having "sound knowledge of Israel". Rabbi Zobin supports a "drip feed" approach to Israel awareness, and was instrumental in utilising more slots for the Israel curriculum at Immanuel
- Within Immanuel College, Rabbi Zobin has led the restructuring of

the Kodesh department over the last 5 years. He provides vision and leadership, and works patiently and tirelessly to ensure that change needed eventually happens. He is the “go-to” mentor for all governors, Kodesh staff, and the Heads of Kodesh in both the Senior and Prep School, as well as for the whole of senior management

- The Advisory Committee firmly believes that Rabbi Zobin will continue the ethos of the shul: an uncompromising acceptance of halachah and masorah whilst simultaneously engaging with modernity and the secular world. We believe that Rabbi Zobin’s shiurim, derashot, halachic approach and personal style demonstrate his broad learning and familiarity with science, contemporary philosophy and culture, and that he is passionate about engaging openly and proactively with the outside world
- As some of us have heard in Rabbi Zobin’s drashot, he holds a special connection to Israel and relates to it as an incredible miracle and bracha of the modern age. On joining the shul, he felt that Yom Yerushalayim was underserved in Ner, and over the last few years has been one of the initiators and organisers of the very successful musical Hallel

celebrations. In addition, in line with his belief that Israel must be a vital ingredient in Ner events and our visiting speaker agenda, he has been instrumental in much of our recent programming such as the recent Seuda Shelishit with Lieutenant Colonel S, the intelligence officer

- Rabbi Zobin recalls fondly how he was a beneficiary of Ner’s open pulpit, regularly attending Rabbi Bernstein z’tzal’s shiurim with his grandmother. He has sat on the education committee for several years and he and Rebbetzin Zobin have proposed many of the speakers, including championing an increase in the number of female speakers and scholars in residence (such as Dr Avigail Rock and Simi Peters) and broadening our agenda to include topics like mental health awareness
- Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin believe that speakers need to cater for the full demographic of the shul, including engaging all ages and catering for different interests. Deciding where to draw the line is complex; it involves taking a hashkafic, halachic and social perspective into account, and it is impossible to define the boundaries in advance, but we are confident that our shul would remain open to a wide variety of speakers

- Rabbi Zobin recognises the strengths and challenges of a shul as large and active as Ner. Both in his time in Ner and in Immanuel he has demonstrated that he is a man with vision and the skills necessary to actualise it, whether by empowering, inspiring or innovating. Qualitative growth is more important than numbers; every member must feel well served and cared for. The aim is to have a healthy and vibrant shul, one that encapsulates tefillah, talmud torah, community and chessed:
  - o *Tefillah*: With five adult minyanim we have a diversity which is both a huge strength and also creates challenges to which there are no easy answers. Rabbi Zobin appreciates the delicate decisions that need to be made in this respect, and the necessity of balancing the need for communal cohesion and space constraints with the need for diversity and giving members a choice
  - o *Talmud Torah*: Shiurim and activities should be programmed to cater for all demographics and a wide range of interests and levels
  - o *Community*: In this area, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin feel strongly that having grown to a large and healthy size, the shul needs more structure and a systematic approach, as the community won't simply come together of its own accord. Community is about having a sense of cohesion and belonging, which is challenging in Hendon because there is so much choice. This is a task that, in terms of the structure, has begun during the last few years, with Rabbi Zobin working in conjunction with the Board to institute different subcommittees and a hachnasat orchim group within the shul, and also increase transparency and openness (including with finances). As another important ingredient for communal cohesion, the Zobins would want to increase the shared social opportunities, be they educational trips or purely social events. Members need to feel listened to and cared for. As noted above, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin believe passionately in being available and providing constant pastoral care, and this is, in their opinion, essential to promote a sense of belonging
  - o *Chessed*: The Zobins are in awe of the chessed that exists within the community. Whilst chessed is primarily built around personal

care, attention and giving, nonetheless as with community building, chessed needs to have a somewhat structured and systematic framework, or all too easily people or causes can slip through the gap

- For the last 4½ years, Rabbi Zobin has worked closely with the Board, regularly attending monthly Board meetings, and having frequent meetings with the Chairman and Trustees. We have developed an excellent working partnership, and Rabbi Zobin has played a particularly active role on the education committee and taken the lead in countless initiatives, including most recently bringing the student minyan into Ner.

---

## Role

If the community vote in favour of the Advisory Committee's recommendation, we intend to move quickly to appoint Rabbi Zobin. The Trustees have, therefore, agreed heads of terms with Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin, **subject to the community voting in favour**. Some of the key aspects of the role are set out below:

- Rabbi Zobin will be employed by Ner full time for 5 days a week. The Trustees have agreed that Rabbi Zobin will retain his role as Principal of Immanuel College. This is expected to involve one day per week. In addition, Rabbi Zobin will continue to be part of the Federation ShailaText team
- The Trustees believe that Rabbi Zobin can meet the needs of the community within these parameters. Both of these roles are considered by the Trustees to be compatible with full time obligations to the Ner community. Other outside roles would need to be agreed with the Trustees
- Rebbetzin Zobin will be employed on a part-time 2½ day a week capacity. Her role will be to sit on the educational committee, involved with educational

programming as well as giving shiurim, providing pastoral care and hosting members of the community

- In addition, the Trustees have agreed that every 7 years, Rabbi Zobin will be given 3 months paid sabbatical leave to pursue further studies, and recharge. Given that he has already worked part time for 4½ years, the Trustees have agreed that the first sabbatical will be no sooner than summer 2023. Sabbatical leave of this nature is now a standard feature of many senior rabbinical appointments in the UK
- Should they be appointed, Rabbi Zobin has requested a short break before he and Rebbetzin Zobin commence their new roles, and the Trustees have agreed to give them January off. Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kimche have kindly agreed to stay until the end of January. Therefore, Rabbi Zobin's start date will be in early February 2019
- Other key aspects of Rabbi and Rebbetzin's employment contracts have been agreed, including annual leave, all very much in line with best practice for senior rabbinic contracts
- It is our intention that the shul will appoint an Associate Rabbi, however, this will not be done immediately, for two reasons:

- o We would like to give Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin some time to settle into their new roles, and
- o We would like to take time to analyse the needs of the shul, and what a potential Associate Rabbi job specification might look like

We expect to return to the question of Associate Rabbi towards the end of 2019.

---

## Voting and EGM

We will hold an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on **Monday 3rd December 2018 at 20:00**. At the EGM, the Advisory Committee will make a short presentation regarding the process and conduct a Q&A session.

Members will be able to vote in one of three ways:

- Via anonymous ballot paper cast in person in the shul office up **until 14.30 Monday 3rd December**
- Via anonymous ballot paper cast in person **at the end of the EGM on Monday 3rd December at 20:00**
- Electronically via a unique, anonymous link that will be sent to all members who have not voted via ballot paper, **between midnight Monday 3rd December and Friday 7th December**

All members are entitled to vote. Single members are entitled to one vote and Family members are entitled to two adult votes. Friends are not entitled to vote.

The Rules of the community state that for a candidate to pass they require 75% of the votes cast to be in favour.

We expect to announce the results of the vote by Monday 10th December 2018.

To ensure independent oversight of the voting process, the Trustees are extremely grateful that David Cohen has agreed to be our Returning Officer. David is a former partner of a City law firm and a former governor of the Independent Jewish Day School. He is a member of Dunstan Road and Shomrei Hadath Synagogues.

---

## *Background information on the Zobin family*

**R**abbi Eliezer and Aviva Zobin grew up in Golders Green, both within the Munks community and Hasmonean High School. After getting married in February 1999, the Zobins made aliyah, and lived in Israel for 11 years, where Rabbi Zobin continued his studies, as well as teaching. During his time in Israel, Rabbi Zobin learned at Yeshivat Be'er Ya'akov, as well as under R. Yitzchak Soloveichik, and received his semichah in 2008. In addition to his rabbinic studies, Rabbi Zobin also holds an MA in Jewish Education from London University, and is a qualified teacher (QTLS). Since returning to the UK, Rabbi Zobin has been Head of Sixth Form Jewish Studies at Immanuel College, lecturer on the Montefiore Semicha Programme, Maggid Shiur at Shaarei Orah and acting Rabbi at Golders Green United Synagogue ("Dunstan Road"). Currently, alongside his role as our Associate Rav, he is Principal at Immanuel College, Rosh Beit HaMidrash at LSJS, Federation ShailaText Rabbi and Maggid Shiur at "The Hendon Beis".

Whilst living in Israel, Aviva earned a BA in Humanities and trained and worked as a technical writer and editor, including several years of

editing degree level examinations. She is also a graduate of the LSJS Susi Bradfield Educational Leadership Programme. More recently she has been working alongside Rabbi Zobin in communal activities, including Kallah teaching, pastoral care, and teaching and mentoring.

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zobin have four children, Miriam, Shulamis, Mordechai and Meir, aged between 18 and 12.

## **EGM**

**will take place at  
20:00 on Monday 3rd  
December 2018**

## **VOTING**

- In person at the shul office **up until 14.30 Monday 3rd December**
- In person at the end of the EGM **on Monday 3rd December at 20:00**
- Electronically **between midnight Monday 3rd December and Friday 7th December**

We hope to announce the outcome of the vote by Monday 10th December.