



To pray. To learn. To live. Together.

Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2016

North Western Reform Synagogue (known as ALYTH)





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North Western Reform Synagogue (known as ALYTH)

Legal and Administrative Information Year Ended 31 December 2016

Address

Alyth Gardens
London
NW11 7EN

Honorary Solicitor

Lawrence Radley LLB
Reed Smith LLP
Broadgate Tower
20 Primrose Street
London EC2A 2RS

Auditors

Nyman Libson Paul
Regina House
124 Finchley Road
London NW3 5JS

Investment advisers

GAM London Limited
20 King Street
London SW1Y 6QY

Bankers

NatWest Bank
45 Tottenham Court Road
London W1T 2G



North Western Reform Synagogue (known as ALYTH)

Legal and Administrative Information Year Ended 31 December 2016

Members of Council

Members

Noeleen Cohen*	Chair. Appointed May 2016
Russell Baum*	Vice Chair. Appointed May 2016
Peter Backman	President. Appointed May 2015
Steve Miller	Vice-president. Retired May 2016
Colette Levy	Vice-president
Rolfe Roseman	Vice-president.
Margaret Harris	Vice-president. Appointed May 2016
Mark Harris	Previous Chair. Retired from Executive May 2016
Michael Simon*	Senior Warden

Elected Members

David Brown*	
Howard Bogod	Retired as Treasurer (July 2015)
Irit Burkeman	Elected to Council May 2016
Jo Chadwick	Retired May 2016
Mark Ebner	Treasurer. Co-opted July 2016
Nicola Feuchtwang*	
David Finlay	Elected to Council May 2016
Jackie Goymour	
Caronne Graham	Elected to Executive May 2016
Sue Haskel*	
Paul Jonas	Retired May 2016
Gary Lipman	Appointed June 2016
David Leigh	Retired May 2016
Clare Lubin	
Arieh Miller	Elected to Executive May 2016
Nicky Minter-Green*	Elected to Executive May 2016
Fran Moscow	
Michael Overlander*	Elected to Executive May 2016
Dan Rosenfield*	Retired from Executive May 2016
Lanny Silverstone*	Honorary Secretary
Honor Small	
Ruth Smilg*	
Joseph Brown	Co-opted as representative for Youth. Retired May 2016

*Trustees of the charity and members of Executive.

The title to the Synagogue building in Alyth Gardens is held by the trustees of North Western Reform Synagogue.



North Western Reform Synagogue (known as ALYTH)

Legal and Administrative Information Year Ended 31 December 2016

Clergy

Rabbi Mark Goldsmith	Rabbinic Partner
Rabbi Josh Levy	Rabbinic Partner
Rabbi Maurice Michaels	Rabbi
Rabbi Colin Eimer	Rabbi

Senior Staff

Lynette Sunderland	Welfare and Lifecycle Director
Adam Martin	Community Director
Cindy Summer	Head of Kindergarten
Katie Hainbach	Head of Music and Arts.
Sarah Langsford	Fundraising & Development Coordinator
Samantha Brunner	Youth & Education Hub Coordinator

Representatives to the Board of Deputies of British Jews

Annabelle Daiches
Michael Daiches
John Fulcher
Jackie Naftalin
Noam Tamir

Representatives to Reform Judaism (RJ)

Paul Winter Treasurer of RJ
Paul Langsford Appointed to RJ Board June 2016

Representatives to the Jewish Joint Burial Society

Hilary Roer Appointed December 2016
Steve Miller Alternate

Organisations with which Alyth is affiliated:

EUPJ – European Union for Progressive Judaism
WUPJ – World Union for Progressive Judaism
IMPJ – Israel Movement for Reform & Progressive Judaism
Board of Deputies of British Jews
Pro Zion (Progressive Judaism in Israel)
Zionist Federation of Great Britain
Citizens UK



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Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2016

1. Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of North Western Reform Synagogue (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2016. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the charity comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

2. Highlights of the Year

- The development of the building and sharing our vision for the project were a key focus in 2016. We held four community consultations and had meetings with our neighbours. The planning application was submitted to Barnet Council and our plans were approved in March 2017.
- We celebrated with 42 children and their families, their becoming *B'nei mitzvah*. Our rabbis officiated at weddings, celebrating with 13 newly married couples and we continued to welcome new converts to Judaism into our community.
- This year we marked 25 years of dedicated service with our Director of Welfare and Lifecycle – Lynette Sunderland.
- Early years education continued to grow and develop. The Alyth Kindergarten and our partner Day Care Centre are both full, thriving centres of Jewish education and care for young families.
- The Youth and Education Hub ran residential camps over the summer and for our b'nei mitzvah year, as well as running day schemes over Pesach and in the summer; engaging over 100 of our under 18's. In October half term, a group of teens went to Budapest and the Alyth Youth Singers went to Scotland.
- We came together for the High Holy Days at Alyth and in the tent on Sternberg Centre site. The outstanding programme of prayer, learning and being together as a community highlighted all that makes Alyth so special.
- Adult education continued to grow. We welcomed 14 guest speakers/teachers in 2016, 50 of our members attended Limmud, and we were well represented at the European Union for Progressive Judaism Biennial Conference in London.
- Alyth members joined other faith communities at the Citizens UK Mayoral Assembly at the Olympic Stadium to hear the election manifestos of London Mayoral candidates. Sadiq Khan and Zac Goldsmith. We also held our third Kosher Iftar, celebrating Ramadan with Muslim neighbours and friends
- 2016 marked the 25th anniversary of the Alyth Sukkot Sleepout. Originally conceived to enable our young people to understand the meaning of homelessness, the annual 'sleepout' has raised many thousands of pounds for Homeless Action in Barnet.

3. Our Values

In order to achieve its objectives, the Synagogue is committed to the advancement of Reform Judaism and to play its part in the teaching of Progressive Jewish values.

Alyth is a vibrant and welcoming community where we embrace prayer (Tefillah) and learning. We practice a shared Judaism that is innovative and Inclusive and that engages with the world around us.

At Alyth everything we do is built together from a shared set of values.

- We believe that nothing is more important in the life of a Jewish community than the relationships that we build and the welcome that we can give to one another.
- We believe in equality and inclusion as religious principles. We include everyone equally irrespective of gender, ability, race, wealth, age and sexual orientation.
- We believe that Judaism is best when it is shared with a diverse group of people. Ours is an accessible, grown up Judaism that nurtures and challenges our young people. It is both a Judaism for families and one that responds to the individual.
- Alyth is built on a foundation of mutual care in which we share one another's joys and sorrows and accompany one another through our life journeys.
- We believe that prayer and Jewish learning are central to a meaningful Jewish life. We aim to create opportunities for worship and study that are intellectually rich, grounded in Jewish tradition and inspiring for all.
- We are committed to innovation in the sacred task of creating an engaging Judaism. Sometimes we get things wrong and when we do, we learn from this too.
- We believe in a Judaism that is utterly engaged with the world around us, both within the Jewish people and in the wider community.
- We work as a respectful, collaborative partnership of professionals and lay leaders, working together for the good of our community and the individuals within it.

Together we create a Kehilla K'dosha, a sacred community.

Alyth, in common with many charities, relies on the contributions made by the many volunteers who work alongside the professional staff in all areas of synagogue life. Volunteers support the work of the professional staff by helping with the organisation and planning social events and meals for different groups of members, providing support on outings for all ages, visiting members and making phone calls. Lay leaders volunteer as members of Council and Executive and work collaboratively with the Rabbis, professionals and staff team to create a vibrant, dynamic and community focused home for all our members.

4. Review of Activities

Alyth is the leading Progressive Jewish community in the UK, with the range and quality of activities of a large synagogue and the feel and warmth of a local community.

Our members enjoy a range of activities and programming that meet the diverse needs of our 3,400 members. The relationships that we build and the welcome and care that we give to one another, are central to all that we do.

Alyth is a community that offers Jewish engagement in many different ways. We offer diverse, engaging prayer, social and cultural activities for young children, teens, families, young adults and anyone in the 0 to 90+ age groups.

PRAY WITH US: We believe that prayer is central to a meaningful Jewish life. We aim to create opportunities for worship that are intellectually rich, grounded in Jewish tradition and inspiring for all.



The prayer needs of our community are diverse. In order to meet these needs, we hold a number of services over Shabbat, on festivals and the High Holy Days. Services include a Friday night (*Kabbalat Shabbat*) service that is one of the most inspiring and well-attended services in the UK today. On Saturday morning we have our Classical Service in which we host a bar or bat mitzvah most weeks. There are alternative services most Saturdays: *Kollot* – the ‘sound of voices’, our family friendly Big Bang service and Kuddle up Shabbat – an early service for parents with very young children. We also have creative services one Shabbat a month, which appeal to a broad range of members and allow us to try new things. There is a regular, lay-led Sunday *Shacharit* (morning) service.

Alyth is led by a dynamic, dedicated and professional rabbinic team, which consists of two full-time and two part-time rabbis. Rabbis Mark Goldsmith and Josh Levy work closely together in a rabbinic partnership to manage, inspire and lead the community. Our Rabbis are innovative, dynamic and committed to building engaging and meaningful relationships with our members across the community. Rabbi Colin Eimer and Rabbi Maurice Michaels both work as part time members of the rabbinic team, providing a high quality of rabbinic, pastoral and teaching support. Our services do not run with clergy alone. We are grateful for the support of our volunteer choir, lay service leaders and readers, and a star team of wardens who ensure that the community prays, sings and learns together week after week.

LEARN WITH US: We believe that Jewish learning is central to a meaningful Jewish life. We aim to create opportunities for study that are intellectually rich, grounded in Jewish tradition and inspiring for all – both accessible, grown-up Jewish learning, and learning that nurtures and challenges our young people.

Learning is at the very heart of all we do at Alyth. Opportunities to learn together are accessible, intellectually rich, grounded in Jewish traditions and inspiring for everyone.

We offer learning for those who are new to Judaism, those who want to increase their Jewish knowledge and those for whom learning is central to their lives. Different stages in members' Jewish journeys provide different opportunities to learn – before getting married, whilst at school, as a family, preparing for b'nei mitzvah and all the way through our adult lives.

Learning at Alyth:



Alyth Kindergarten:

Under the leadership of Head Teacher, Cindy Summer, supported by Deputy Head, Tor Alter, the Alyth Kindergarten is now very much a part of the synagogue community and works closely with our Rabbis and the Youth and Education Hub team. Alyth Kindergarten provides a high quality of learning and care for children aged 2 to 4. The secure, creative and educationally sound environment supports the development of independent, sociable, learning ready little people.



In recognition of this excellent work, the Kindergarten was awarded 'Outstanding' by OFSTED in 2015. We are extremely proud of Cindy and Tor and the team for their collaborative and hardworking efforts that resulted in this recognition and grateful to them for their continued commitment to the standards of care and excellence that have been set.

There were many highlights this year. As well as singing for the elderly and celebrating the festivals, children from the Kindergarten are at the heart of the JOY programme – bringing older members of the community and kindergarten children together on a regular basis to chat, read and sing together. The youngest children were introduced to the Bounce Back resilience programme that is focused on developing confidence and self esteem from a very early age. On Fridays, parents are invited to come in to sing and welcome in Shabbat with their children.

Shofar Daycare Nursery



Over the past year we have been involved in the creation of a dynamic, new, Jewish day care Nursery for babies and children aged six months to five years old in Finchley. Shofar is an inspiring collaboration between Alyth and Finchley Reform Synagogue (FRS). This exciting new venture opened in November 2015. Shofar provides families with the highest quality day care in a creative, caring, stimulating, Reform Jewish environment.

The new, purpose designed space at the Sternberg Centre near Finchley Central is staffed by a dedicated team, led by Sharon Lee, an experienced and committed Head Teacher. The centre is filled with a range of activities and resources that allow children to grow and develop whilst receiving the highest quality care.

Youth & Education Hub:

Our Youth and Education Hub was restructured in the summer of 2015. It provides learning and Jewish engagement programmes for ages 4 – 18, led by a dedicated and ambitious team of educators. Sunday Morning Galim is a nourishing space for young people to build, develop and explore their Jewish identity. Learning is achieved through experiential learning in the classroom, where both the building of knowledge and a solid peer group are equally valued.

The B'nei Mitzvah programme (Ruach) runs on a Friday evening and provides an opportunity for those approaching their b'nei mitzvah to build their knowledge of and relationship to Judaism. This transitional time allows our young people to develop their Jewish identity and prepare to take on the responsibilities of young adults in the community.



There are regular weekday activities for our youth. These include summer and winter residential camps, weekends away for different age groups, festival related activities, as well as music and drama groups for every age. Groups of teenagers travelled to Budapest, Dublin and Israel. These trips are transformational in the lives of many of our children, enabling them to share experiences with their peers, make new connections and meet Progressive Jewish communities around the world.

Drama groups include: PACT (Preparatory Alyth Children's Theatre) for ages 4-7; ACT (Alyth Children's Theatre) for ages 7-13 and AAPA (Alyth Academy of Performing Arts) for ages 13-18. This past year, ACT put on a fantastic performance of Peter Pan. The Academy performance of "Gentleman Prefer Blondes" showcased not only the acting talent in the community but the staging skills too.

We have two inspiring MUSIC groups for our young people: Kids Choir, for anyone aged 4-12 and our hugely popular, life affirming Alyth Youth Singers, open to anyone aged 13 -18 who loves to sing. This past year they have sung at Holocaust memorial events, at the Citizens UK Mayoral Assembly at the Olympic Park as well as at many of our Jewish old age homes and at festival celebrations

Adult Learning:



There are many learning opportunities at Alyth that meet the needs and interests of our members. They provide a welcoming space for learning together in a spirit of shared enquiry with people who care about what others have to say and where questioning is valued and welcome.

Weekly shiurim and studying Torah are central to our adult learning. Our "Jewish Essentials" programme has been well received by those on our conversion course as well as into the wider community. The course aims to bring together a wider group of people who wish to consolidate a lifetime of learning or who are new to Judaism. This year saw the introduction of regular "Progressive Rabbinic Decision Making" sessions and the "Alyth Biblical Book Club". The Talmud Class continues to meet regularly to study and discuss these ancient texts and interpretations. In April, a group of 35 people from the Talmud Class travelled to Israel for an inspiring week of learning.

LIVE WITH US: Alyth is built on a foundation of mutual care in which we share one another's joys and sorrows and accompany one another through our life journeys.

Alyth is a community that cares. There is no greater joy than living as part of a community that offers support when we are failing and shares our joy and success in happy times. Our Director of Welfare and Life Cycle, Lynette Sunderland is a dedicated professional who has created a culture of care and commitment to people at every age and stage of their life journey. Care is built into the fabric of everything we do at Alyth.

This past year, we continued to care for the older members of our community as well as those who have special needs and disabilities. Activities included regular gatherings to talk about the news [Jews, news and schmooze], to socialise and to share meals at our regular **Bayit Cham** lunches and Friday night communal dinners. We continued to extend a warm welcome to those with special needs from JAMI (The Jewish Association for Mental Illness) and Jewish Care's Shalom Centre. The **Monday Club** has been running for over 40 years providing a regular, friendly meeting space for people with learning difficulties.

Our Rabbis, Director of Welfare and Community Director accompanied many members through a range of lifecycle events. This past year we celebrated 13 weddings, 42 B'nei Mitzvah, welcomed dozens of new babies into the community and supported many families through the loss of a loved one. Illness in all its guises is an inevitable part of communal life, and giving care and support to those who are ill and their families, is at the core of Alyth.

Alyth is at the forefront of caring for our own and in the wider community. This year our Director of Welfare and Lifecycle, Lynette Sunderland was a key contributor to the "Care in Community" initiative introduced at Chagigah (Reform Judaism's biennial conference) in June.

Our professional team, as well as members of the community, is on hand to support those who are not well. Our ongoing commitment to dealing with mental illness and helping individuals to cope with the related complexities, continues to be a key area of focus for the team. Our professional staff are leading in the initial stage of developing a programme of support and guidance for those in our community experiencing mental health issues.



This year we celebrated 25 Years at Alyth with our dedicated Director of Welfare and Lifecycle, Lynette Sunderland. Having grown up at Alyth, Lynette has a deep sense of understanding of Alyth. She delivers outstanding care and support to members of the community with a wide range of needs, across the many age groups within the community. Mazel tov Lynette.

BE WITH US: We believe that nothing is more important in the life of the community than the relationships that we build and the welcome that we can give to one another.

To be a community is to share a broader range of interests and activities, in addition to prayer and learning. At Alyth we do this with enthusiasm, a sense of fun and always, inclusiveness. We sing, act, cycle, ramble, paint, cook, eat, meditate and go on outings together. We share the joy of the moment and find time to listen to one another's stories.



What do we do?

Our building is full every day of the week with our many groups and clubs running activities for members across the community. We also welcome non-members to a range of activities knowing that it is an opportunity to socialise and enjoy time together.

Every week our Kindergarten children join with our seniors to enjoy music, chatting and a snack under the guidance of Kindergarten Head Cindy Summer and the **JOY Programme** (Joining Old and Young).

The **Alyth Meditation Group** continues to provide a warm and welcoming space in the synagogue. Offering a time to practice mindfulness and meditation, the group continues to grow and provide regular opportunities for reflective, spiritual practice.

Clubs include our **Senior Club** for over 60's which is organised by a team of dedicated volunteers and meets at Alyth on Mondays. The programme of events includes speakers and outings. This year they have welcomed a number of speakers and had a number of musical performances.

The Coffee House Poetry Group and **Alyth Film Club** meet to read, watch, listen and share ideas. The **Bridge Club**, **Toddler Group** and regular **Yoga** classes continue to run at Alyth. As well as pregnancy yoga and mellow yoga classes, the Kavanah Yoga continues to bring a Jewish flavour to this ancient practice, offering a chance to combine reading text and practice breathing, movement and meditation.

The **Alyth Cycling community** and **Alyth Ramblers** are always on the move. Both groups explore cycle routes and walks in the area outside London. The Alyth Ramblers did regular walks in and around the UK, as well as their annual walk in Israel.

Music is at the very heart of Alyth. Our Head of Music and Arts, Katie Hainbach has brought her passion for music to Alyth. She has worked with the Alyth Youth Singers (AYS) and the Kids Choir embracing their love of singing and being together. Katie works closely with the synagogue choir to develop their repertoire and their voices. Our choirs for young and old continue to bring music to every part of the community. Opportunities to learn new music at our "new music evenings" have been warmly received and has introduced a range of music to members of the community beyond the choir. The Alyth Youth Singers toured Scotland in October and continue to perform at events both in Alyth and in the wider community.

The Alyth Choral Society, made up of members and non-members, performed three concerts this past year. A spring concert with works by Bob Chilcott and Julian Dawes, Schubert and Friends in the summer and Handel's Samson in December 2016.

Once again the **Tekiyah Fundraising Group** ran a successful Supper Quiz in November. This has become a much anticipated, fun filled evening that generates much needed funds for our building project. The group also organised a fashion show to raise money and to bring together women of all ages from across the local Jewish community. These projects together raised £7,000.

ACT WITH US: We believe in a Judaism that is utterly engaged with the world around us, both within the Jewish people and our wider community.

To be Jewish is to care about the world around us and to take responsibility for it. Alyth is home to the social awareness and activism that Judaism demands of us.

From our willingness to have difficult conversations about Israel, to our work to support our twin community in Kerch in the Crimea; from our volunteer-led monthly refugee drop-in and winter homeless shelter, to our work to enable those with mental illness to enjoy Jewish life; from our campaigning work for social justice to the extraordinary contributions of our members to life in the wider community – Alyth is a community engaged in the world around us.

Our **Refugee Drop In for recent refugees** provides a safe, welcoming space hosted by Alyth volunteers on the last Sunday of every month. The sessions are attended by refugees from countries including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Syria. They are welcomed into the synagogue building, offered a meal and chance to chat and meet old and new friends. They also receive advice on accessing services, courses for study, grants, CV writing and interview skills, as well as a chance to practice English.

Once again this year we participated in the **Together in Barnet Night Shelter**, in partnership with Golders Green Parish Church. We were also recently part of the team that planned and volunteered for the Christmas Shelter which ran for four days from Christmas Eve, working with the team at FRS who hosted the Shelter. We participated in Mitzvah Day in November, making food for the night shelter, running an intergenerational reading programme and helping in the newly opened Kisharon shop.

Alyth is a **member of Citizens UK**, a community organising body that works with communities to act together for social justice and the common good. Alyth members joined other faith communities at the Citizens UK Mayoral Assembly at the Olympic Park to hear the election manifestos of London Mayoral candidates, Sadiq Khan and Zac Goldsmith



Developing mutual understanding across faith communities is at the heart of our interfaith work at Alyth. In 2016 we hosted an *Iftar*, welcoming over 50 friends from Muslim communities to break their fast during Ramadan.

Rabbi Maurice Michaels has helped us to build relationships with our neighbours to foster better understanding and build local community and continued to work with the Alyth Interfaith group to build relationships across the faiths.

Alyth is always engaged with **Israel** but never afraid of dealing with Israel's complexities. In 2016 the Synagogue programme included a number of encounters which opened up Israeli society to our members. Through sermons in our services, open forums, panel discussions and talks at the Synagogue and in members' homes we heard from speakers with wide ranging views and engaged with the issues facing Israel and Israeli society today. Once again, two *Madrichim* from the Leo Baeck Education Centre in Haifa joined Alyth's youth leaders on our residential Summer Days camp, bringing the voice of Israel's youth to the heart of our Youth and Education Hub.

The annual **High Holy Days Appeal** is an opportunity for the community to donate to a range of charities that are chosen by our members. After many years of supporting a broad range of charities, the decision was made to review the High Holy Days Appeal in 2016. It was agreed that this year the appeal supported our 3 'home' charities – The Rabbis' Charitable Fund, the Alyth Welfare Fund and a Social Justice Fund that will support the work that we do in our partner communities in Israel and Kerch, and social justice initiatives closer to home. The High Holy Days Appeal raised £45,000 (2015: £62,800)

In March 2017 we held a fundraising morning as part of our Purim activities. The aim was to raise funds for 4 charities chosen by a group of members. These charities were Manna (Meir Panim UK), JCORE (Jewish Council for Racial Equality), Bright Minds and The Bike Project.



5. Financial Review

The Executive Committee are the Trustees of the synagogue and are responsible for the management of risk faced by the Synagogue. Having reviewed the principal risks and uncertainties facing the synagogue, the Trustees are satisfied that the major risks identified have been adequately mitigated where possible. It is recognised that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately identified. The task of monitoring the charity's financial control systems is delegated to the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC).

The total funds at 31 December 2016 were £2.9m (2015 £3.0m). Of these the restricted funds were £2.4m (2015 £2.4m).

The income during 2016 consisted of subscriptions of £604k (2015 £609k) and donations £419k (2015 £490k). There was also income tax recoverable of £159k (2015 £168k). There was a loss in 2016 of £95k (£138k) on the net movement of funds. The trustees consider that the reflected loss is largely due to less fundraising activity during the year as the focus of the fundraising strategy has been on securing initial pledges for the building development project. Plans for the redevelopment of the building were submitted to the London Borough of Barnet. Planning permission was granted in early 2017.

With a shift in focus to fundraising for the development of the building, the trustees will continue to monitor expenditure and look for new sources of funds (grants and trusts) to support the ongoing programming needs of the community. It was noted that subscription income had fallen marginally. The trustees will continue to monitor the demographic profile of members to identify shifts in payment of subscriptions.

The Synagogue was a member of a multi employer defined benefit scheme which has subsequently now converted to a defined contribution scheme. The deficit in the scheme was apportioned in early 2013 over the member charities. For Alyth the share of the deficit was calculated at the rate of £5,922 per annum plus 3% per annum to be paid over 10 years. Full provision for the deficit is included in the accounts. This has reduced free reserves by about £65k.

The Synagogue is a member of the Jewish Joint Burial Society (JJBS). It is a requirement that every member of the synagogue contributes to the JJBS. For £48 per annum (2015 £47) every full member is entitled to a burial at Cheshunt Cemetery or a cremation, normally held at Golders Green Crematorium. During 2016 £100k (2015 £105k) was collected from the members and £101k (£105k) was transferred to the JJBS. There is a restricted funds which is set aside to help with any shortfall required to pay for a funeral.

6. Investments

Policy: The current investment policy was agreed in July 2013 and will be reviewed in 2017. The Synagogue invests funds so as to generate reasonable long term growth commensurate with the need to finance its long term expenditure requirements and to protect the Synagogue's capital against the risk of inflation. The investment policy, agreed with the investment manager, is to invest so as to generate long term capital appreciation over the full investment cycle, typically five years, with a target level of volatility of approximately half of the world equity markets. The policy requires equity exposure to be held in a range between 40% and 60% of the investment portfolio subject to ongoing discussions with the investment managers

For the majority of 2016, GAM were the investment managers on a discretionary basis. In line with the current policy of reviewing investment managers on a three year cycle, in July 2016 the FAC met with and received presentations from three fund managers: GAM, Investec and Cazenove. After much discussion it was decided that on this occasion, due to Investec's large exposure to and experience of charity investment portfolios, Investec would be appointed to manage Alyth's investments on a discretionary basis. The transfer process commenced in November 2016 and was completed in April 2017. Investec have now taken all the responsibility previously held by GAM. The investment manager is responsible for asset allocation and for making investments through a carefully selected group of both internal and external fund managers. A number of restrictions have been given to Investec including those that avoid excessive portfolio concentration; alternative investments such as hedge funds are not permitted and foreign exchange transactions are only permitted for hedging currency risk and not for speculation. The Total Expense Ratio (TER) should be less than 1.25%

The investment performance is considered regularly by the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) that meets four times per year. The FAC and Executive have discussed whether they should identify social, environmental or ethical areas in which the synagogue should not invest. However as they have selected an investment manager that invests in a broad range of funds rather than individual equities, only an immaterial percentage of the fund might be invested indirectly in any company which might conflict with the Synagogue's principles and it has therefore been agreed that ethical restrictions would not be necessary.

Performance As at 31 December 2016 the Synagogue held an investment portfolio of £1,035k (2015 £959k). The total return before expenses for 2016 was 8.1% (2015 1.5%) compared with the benchmark for 2016, which rose by 10.8%. The performance of the portfolio was below the industry standard, in part due to the requirement for lower risk assets.

From 31 December 2016 to 31 March 2017 the portfolio has risen by 2.4% to £1,058,988 compared to a +3.0% change in the benchmark; the IA Mixed Investment 20-60% Shares Average in GBP. The slight underperformance of the portfolio relative to the benchmark was due to the currency hedging positions which removed much of the gains seen by other assets.

7. Reserves Policy

The trustees aim to maintain sufficient general and contingency reserves so as to be able to meet unexpected operating costs of the synagogue and to contribute to such contingencies as the maintenance of the building. The free reserves at 31 December 2016 amounted to £646k (2015 £648k). This compares to the annual spend on staff salaries of £883k (2015 £917k) and the total outgoings excluding JJBS contributions of £1,885k (2015 £1,899k). The free reserves include £246k (2015 248k) that has been allocated to various projects and causes but these allocations are internal and can be changed by the Trustees.

The restricted funds of £2.9m (2015 £3.0m) predominantly comprise the value of the land on which the building sits. No formal valuation has been carried out. There are additional reserves of £496k (2015 £539k) the use of which is mandated by trust deeds.

8. Plans for the Future

2017 looks set to be an exciting year for the community. At the forefront of our activities will be a fundraising programme that will enable us to raise the £4.5million needed for the development of our building. Led by our Rabbinic Partners, Rabbis Mark Goldsmith and Josh Levy, we have built a vibrant, thriving, and innovative community that has been vital to the Jewish lives of so many of our members. To continue to inspire and engage our members, we want to have a building in which we have spaces to be together in prayer and learning, and where we come to socialise and laugh and find ways to make the world a better place. It is our vision for Alyth to be home to generations of members, new and old, who love being part of a welcoming Jewish community that meets their spiritual, communal and educational needs.

The ongoing operations and core activity of the synagogue continue to be a priority. We are looking forward to welcoming Hannah Kingston, the newest member of our Rabbinic Team. Hannah will join us in time for the High Holy Days in 2017. As well as regular rabbinic duties, Hannah will support the work of our Rabbinic Partners to expand the reach and range of Jewish experience that we can offer our members. We look forward to welcoming Hannah and continuing to build the community with our dynamic rabbinic team.

Volunteer engagement and the development of our lay leadership continues to be a priority. In 2017 we plan to update and review the Synagogue governance and propose a path into leadership that is aligned with the demands of the full work and family lives of our members, balanced with a desire to lead and volunteer.

To do this we must ensure that we resource the work of the community with the people, talent and skills that enable us to continue to serve the community and meet the diversity of needs within it.



2017 will be another busy year at Alyth. The development of the building is our priority as we begin the fundraising activities in the first quarter of the year. We believe that with the support of every member of the community, we will raise the funds needed to build an Alyth that meets our needs today and creates the foundation of a Jewish home for future generations of inspired Reform Jews in the heart of the community.

9. Constitution and Purpose

Alyth is constituted by a Deed of Trust dated 23 February 1966 and registered with the Charity Commission under charity number 247081. The most recent major amendment was in May 2008 and since then a minor update in May 2015.

The synagogue is a Congregation of the Jewish Religion, whose purpose is the pursuance of Reform Judaism in the spheres of public worship, and religious, educational, cultural, social and charitable activities.

It is a member of Reform Judaism. Reform Judaism is an informed and questioning, compassionate and egalitarian expression of a unique faith and culture, rooted in the tradition of the Torah, yet in dialogue with modernity. Alyth is committed to the advancement of the tradition of Reform Judaism and to playing its part in the development of the Progressive teaching of Judaism as a constantly evolving tradition.

Alyth exists in order to sustain and develop a Jewish centre for its members based on Progressive Jewish values and ethics, to meet its members' religious and communal needs, and to contribute to the wider Jewish and non-Jewish communities. The purpose of Alyth as set out in our constitution is the development of Reform Judaism in the spheres of public worship and religious education, cultural, social and charitable activities.

In April 2015 a framework was adopted to achieve a shared sense of values. This emphasises that nothing is more important in the life of a Jewish community than the relationships that are built and the welcome that is given to one another. It strives for equality, inclusion and mutual care. Prayer and Jewish learning are central and the aim is to create opportunities for worship and study.

10. Structure, Governance and Management

The Synagogue Council is responsible for the overall policy and direction of the Synagogue and the overall religious and ritual direction of the Synagogue. Council currently consists of 26 members, 8 of whom are ex-officio. Members are elected annually in May for terms of 3 years (renewable). A Rabbi attends the meetings and there is often a nominated youth representative. There are normally 11 Council meetings held per year. Any other member or senior employee of the synagogue may attend the meetings.

The Executive Committee carries out the management of the affairs of the Synagogue. Members of Executive are responsible for implementing the policies and direction of the Synagogue as determined by Council. They manage the staff, operations and the financial affairs of the Synagogue. They delegate much of the day to day work of the Synagogue to the staff but remain responsible for supervision of the work. Council retain oversight of the Executive Committee.

All members of the Executive Committee are also members of Council. There are currently 11 members of the Executive Committee and they meet 11 times per year, monthly except for August. Members of the Executive Committee are trustees of the Synagogue for the purposes of the Charity Commission.

There are a number of sub-committees that represent most areas of synagogue life including prayer, building, finance, youth and education, welfare, security and kindergarten. These committees report to the Executive Committee through members of the Executive who hold a particular portfolio or to Council.

There is an informal induction programme for those coming on to Council for the first time. New members of Council may meet with the Chair who takes them through the key aspects of the constitution and governance structure. It is our intention to develop a more formal and robust programme for induction on to both Council and Executive. The Constitution requires all members to have sat on Council for at least 12 months in the previous 5 years before they are eligible for election to Executive.

In shaping the objectives for the year and planning the activities, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'. They aim to engage with the outside world, both within the Jewish people and in the wider community. To this end the synagogue engages in a wide range of activities with other faith groups and community based organisations. These activities enable the congregation to develop relationships with and gain a better understanding of the local and wider community and to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

The two most senior employees are rabbis whose remuneration is set with reference to the Rabbinic Scales provided by Reform Judaism. Salaries in general are reviewed with reference to RPI and changes in average earnings.

11. Trustees Responsibility Statement

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The report was approved by the Trustees on 2nd May 2017 and signed on their behalf by:



Noeleen Cohen
CHAIR / TRUSTEE