

15 April 2016
07 Nisan 5776

Dear Member

I do hope that you will be able to join us at the Annual General Meeting on **Sunday 15th May 2016 at 10:15 am**. Enclosed with this letter you will find the notice and the agenda for the meeting which includes a presentation of our updated plans for the development of our building into a space which meets the modern needs of a progressive, diverse and thriving community such as our own. Do come and find out more. In the meantime, I would like to let you know about a couple of important developments in the life of Alyth.

Rabbinic Team Update

Alyth is a very special place. There are a number of things that contribute towards making it so special but primary amongst them is the strength of our rabbinic team. Mark and Josh are both outstanding Rabbis in their own right and we are extremely fortunate to have them, but what truly makes them stand out is the unique style of their working relationship as Partners leading this community.

In November 2015 Rabbi Mark and Rabbi Josh proposed to the Vice Chairman and me that we should introduce a clear model of rabbinic partnership which would entail both of them having the title of **Rabbinic Partner** to be used, for example, on our communications, and in the wider Jewish world.

There are a number of reasons why we believe that this is a good idea for Mark and Josh and for the community, and why Council and Executive have agreed that now is a good time to introduce this language:

1. It reflects the reality of the way in which Alyth's rabbis have worked for some time, sharing full responsibility for the life of the shul, and valuing each other's work as partners. We want to positively articulate the way that they both work and to clearly express the long-term commitment of both of them to the community. This will celebrate a unique working relationship, and the different contributions and strengths they both bring to it.
2. This model ensures the long term retention of rabbinic talent, allowing career development from within Alyth without requiring departure for a more 'senior' position.

3. A rabbinic partnership will enable other rabbis (and cantors) to work at Alyth in clear roles which provide strong support where it is needed, without requiring them to be fully responsible for the life of the shul, and making that clear to the membership. It also provides them with a potential career development path within Alyth if they aspire to be a partner.
4. A rabbinic partnership model is a statement of Alyth's leadership values, which we believe permeates through the way our staff team and lay leaders work and treat one another, and which should be positively expressed.

Council and Executive are delighted to have enabled this change, which will ensure continuity for the foreseeable future.

Mark and Josh really enjoy working this way and believe it a good model for Jewish communities. We are sure that a positive articulation of partnership allows them both to have status within the community and outside, as Rabbinic Partners bringing different strengths with different professional experience.

Future Plans

Despite the financial challenges it will bring, we remain committed as ever to the ideal of a three person Rabbinic/Clergy team as a way of expanding the reach and range of Jewish experience that we can offer our members, so long as our equal commitment to excellence in professional leadership is not compromised. We are actively working towards the identification of a third member of our team and I hope that we will have encouraging news to tell you soon.

In the meantime I would like express my sincerest thanks to Rabbi Maurice Michaels and Rabbi Colin Eimer, both of whom have provided rabbinic support to Mark and Josh over the last year. We are delighted to have them both as part of our team.

Thank you

The end of the AGM marks the completion of my two year term and I have to stand down as Chairman. For two years it has been an absolute honour to lead this wonderful community, a team of professionals who love Alyth and who work so hard, and an incredible number of lay volunteers who give so much of their valuable time to make Alyth what it is, and I want to thank everybody.

Finally, I am delighted that my Vice Chair, Noeleen Cohen has agreed to be nominated as the next Chair of the Synagogue, a nomination that I wholeheartedly endorse and recommend to you. In Noeleen I am confident that I leave the Shul in the best possible hands, and I wish her and everyone great success.

I hope to see you at the AGM on Sunday 15th May at 10:15am,

Yours sincerely,



Mark Harris
Chairman