

Present: Peter Backman, Noeleen Cohen (In the Chair), Lanny Silverstone, Mark Ebner (Hon. Treasurer), Russell Baum, Michael Simon, Mark Harris, John Cohen, Robert Weiner, Tracy Harris, Nicola Feuchtwang, David Brown, Michael Overlander, Ruth Smilg, Clare Lubin, Adam Martin, Caronne Graham, Fran Moscow, Miriam Halahmy, Russell Raphael, Steve Miller, Irit Burkeman, Jeremy Baum, Annabelle Daiches, H Levy, Howard Bogod, Anne Towse, Paul Harris, Edward Gold, Ellen Gilbert Hertz, Margaret Harris, Rabbi Josh Levy.

Apologies: Jon Epstein, Colette Levy, Honor Small, Gary Lipman, Rabbi Mark Goldsmith.

1. **Introduction** from the President, Peter Backman. Peter welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **D'var Torah** given by Michael Simon.
3. **Budget Presentation:** Mark Ebner (Hon. Treasurer) and Russell Baum (Vice Chair) presented the proposed 2017 Budget.
 - 3.1 Mark reported that for the current year to October 2016, the accounts reflected a deficit and that it is anticipated that the income shown in November will have a positive impact on this. Due to a change in Fund Managers we should show a profit on investments in the longer term.
 - 3.2 Russell presented the budget report, as Mark had only become Hon. Treasurer part of the way through the year and was less familiar with the detail of the accounts. It was noted that Russell had been very helpful in assisting with the preparation of the budget for 2017.
 - 3.3 Russell read the report for the current financial year. A copy of the presentation is available on the website.
4. Comments and questions were taken from the floor:
 - 4.1 Howard Bogod noted that there had been a fall in income, which reflected the reduction of self-declared higher rate taxpayers compared with standard rate taxpayers. The figures for 2017 assumed basic rate recovery but anticipated donations of higher rate taxpayers as a separate item. Russell said that the reduction in numbers had only been seen for one year and was therefore not yet statistically significant. This will be kept under review in the coming year.
 - 4.2 Howard asked for, and was given confirmation that the Kindergarten figures did not take into account an additional £5000, which had been received as deposits and which were still to be transferred from the bank account, and would be reflected as income.
 - 4.3 It was noted that there has been a reduction in 'pledges' in anticipation of the building project. It was recognised that some donors might wish to contribute to the building project and therefore pledged funding would again be sought to support programming and other specific funds.

- 4.4 Jeremy Baum asked about an item in 'religious services' costs. It was explained that a separate sum has been allowed, distinct from clergy and administration costs, which is intended to be used to pay for 'scholars in residence'. It was important to be able to track such expenditure. £1000 had been allocated for this purpose.
- 4.5 It was noted that there is no line in the budget to reflect expenses incurred in relation to the building project. So far costs of £35,000 that had been incurred have been funded from the Tekiyah Fund. It was intended that the fundraising for the building project would be distinct from the general costs of running the synagogue. A separate bank account will be set up for this purpose.
- 4.6 There has been an allowance made for 'young families'. This will enable our new rabbi, Rabbi Hannah Kingston to develop programmes for this membership demographic.
- 4.7 Clare Lubin registered her concern about the deficit shown in the budget impacted by the high level of Movement subscriptions and a three member rabbinic team. Russell Baum noted that we have had a model of three Rabbis in the past (one part-time) and that the Movement recommends a ratio of one rabbi per 750 members. We have been functioning with a ratio of about 1:1600 and two very hard working rabbis. This is not sustainable.
- 4.8 Robert Weiner said that he is very excited about the new building. He said we should be cautious about spending too much money on the maintenance of the building, before the project breaks ground. Over the last few years, there has been less maintenance work done to the building, due to budgetary constraints, cost and in anticipation of the building project. The estimated cost of all necessary repair work to the building would be about £1m.
- 4.9 It is anticipated that the building project will start in late 2018.

5. Resolutions:

- 5.1 To confirm the recommendation from Council that the Synagogue annual subscription for 2017 (net of basic rate tax) be increased between £13 and £23 depending upon the tax status of the Member, this being the equivalent to an increase of approximately 2%.

Proposed by Ruth Smilg

Seconded by Robert Weiner

The resolution was passed unanimously.

- 5.2 To confirm the recommendation from the Honorary Treasurer and Council that the proposed budget for the year ending 31 December 2017, as amended to reflect the increase in the MRJ contribution, be adopted.

Proposed by Mark Ebner

Seconded by Noeleen Cohen

The resolution was passed with one vote against and no abstentions.

6. There being no other business the President brought the meeting to a close.