



**Present:** Peter Backman (President), Noeleen Cohen (Chair), Russell Baum, Michael Simon, Caronne Graham, Robert Weiner, John Cohen, David Brown, Annabella Martin, Mark Harris, Tracy Harris, Ruth Weiner, Fran Moscow, Dexter Moscow, Angela Wilson, Abi Baum, Juliette Overlander, Michael Overlander, Janine Clements, Rolfe Roseman, Edward Cohen, Robert Jackman, Jackie Goymour, Gary Lipman, Gillian van Gelder, Irit Burkeman, Rosalind Black, Howard Bogod, Helen Bloom, Brenda Freedman, Philip Freedman, Philip Brodie, Susan Pollack, Ruti Amal, Henry Cohn, Victoria Alter, Cheryl Brodie, David Finlay, Alan Brudney, Sue Haskel, Jeremy Baum, Nicola Feuchtwang, Ruth Wellin, Mike Wellin, Ruth Smilg, Anne Towse, Ellen Gilbert, Rachel Lasserson, James Rossiter, Tony Littman, Rabbi Mark Goldsmith, Rabbi Josh Levy, Rabbi Hannah Kingston, Adam Martin

**Apologies:** Nikki Van de Zyl, Alan Perry, Naomi Perry, Jon Epstein, Gill Epstein, Margaret Harris, Nick Morris, Michael Daiches, Annabelle Daiches, Joe Grabiner, Honor Small, Lanny Silverstone, Andrew Gellert, Selina Gellert, Paul Jonas, Jeanette Jonas, Eva Salisch.

**1. Welcome by Peter Backman (President):**

- 1.1. The President welcomed members to the AGM.
- 1.2. The President explained that there would be an election of BOD members to be announced at the end of the meeting and all present were asked to vote using voting forms provided.
- 1.3. The Chair explained the voting system.
- 1.4. The Chair thanked the current deputies for their work over the past 3 years and explained the role of deputies.
- 1.5. The President read the prayer for committee meetings and thanked The Chair for all her work.

**2. Address by outgoing Chair, Noeleen Cohen.**

**3. Approval of minutes of the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on 7 May 2017:**

- i. A resolution to approve the minutes was proposed by David Brown and seconded by Irit Burkeman.
- ii. The minutes of the 84<sup>th</sup> AGM were approved unanimously.

**4. Approval of minutes of Annual Budget General Meeting (ABGM) held on 12 December 2017:**

- i. A resolution to approve the minutes was proposed by Howard Bogod and seconded by Ruth Smilg.
- ii. The minutes of the ABGM were approved unanimously.

**5. To Adopt the Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2017:**

- 5.1** (see attached paper for full report).

5.2 The floor was opened for questions:

- i. Janine Clements asked why there were no direct costs for the youth department. This is due to a change in the departmental descriptor and, hence the youth and education department costs are shown together. This does not change the bottom line.
- ii. Janine asked what the 'dashes' were in Direct Costs. These reflect zero balances. Pensions are to be reflected in Support costs (Note 6.)
- iii. Janine asked about the large sum under Debtors (Note 13.) It was explained that the money was due from a legacy, which had now been received.
- iv. Howard Bogod suggested members be encouraged to pay subscriptions on time to avoid running a small day-to-day deficit.
- v. James Rossiter suggested the cash flow problem was due to gains being down on last year.
- vi. David Finlay noted a large difference between donations and legacies over the last year. (Note 2.) This is due to a re-allocation of the heading.
- vii. John Cohen referred to Note 6. Would Alyth be prepared to change the BOD donation on the subscription form to an opt-in donation in reaction to their stance on organ donation? This will be discussed at future Executive and Council meetings.
- viii. Jeremy Baum requested that 'Other Charitable Expenses' (Note 6.) be better explained in future reports.

5.3 The President called for a vote to approve the Financial Statements and the Trustees Report. *The motion was proposed by Mark Harris and seconded by Alan Brudney.* The meeting approved the motion unanimously.

## **6. To re-appoint Messrs Nyman Libson Paul as Auditors to Alyth for the year 2018:**

6.1 Robert Weiner wanted to be sure the auditors were good value for money.

6.2 The President called for a vote to approve the proposal to appoint Nyman Libson Paul as auditors for the year 2016. The motion was proposed by Michael Simon and seconded by Russell Baum.

6.3 The vote to appoint the auditors was approved by the meeting unanimously.

## **7. Rabbinic Team Report:**

7.1 The Rabbis gave a presentation about trends in the wider Jewish world using information from the JPR (Jewish Policy Research), analysis of Alyth data and conversations with other Rabbis and communities worldwide.

7.2 Polarisation – the way to overcome polarised views is to engage in conversation.

7.3 Demographic dispersal – catchment areas are widening because there are either small or no synagogue in the area or, no synagogue representing their values. All thriving synagogues are investing in their buildings.

7.4 Synagogue as a service provider – Many people use their synagogue but don't join. Burial rights are no longer seen as a priority. This is the same in America. Using an American model, we can challenge these trends by providing high quality provision, being transparent about what it costs to run a synagogue and changing the New member's form to explain the advantages to becoming a member.

7.5 The Rabbis thanked the Core Leadership team, staff and lay leadership, Executive, Council and the President.

7.6 Thanks was given to Rabbi Hannah Kingston for her work with young families.

7.7 The Rabbis thanked The Chair for all her work over the last two years.

## 8 To elect a Chair

8.1 The President called for a vote to elect Russell Baum as the new Chair of Alyth. The Proposer was Irit Burkeman and the Seconder was David Brown.

8.2 Russell Baum was unanimously voted in as Chair.

## 9 Address by the New Chair

## 10 Resolution to agree that North Western Reform Synagogue (Alyth) become a company limited by guarantee:

10.1 The President reminded those present that the papers for this item had been circulated with the notice of the meeting and that copies were available.

10.2 Time was given for those who hadn't read the paper and for the BOD voting forms to be handed in.

10.3 Robert Weiner stated that the BOD did not reflect Alyth values and in the past neither had the Alyth representatives on the board. He wanted reassurance that the newly elected board members from Alyth would do so and that Executive and Council make sure it happens.

10.4 Questions regarding the resolution were invited.

- Brenda Freedman said she was in favour of the change but had concerns about losing engagement with the community. She asked how the community would be able to air their views. The Chair noted that the changes would provide better opportunities for engagement, provisions for consultation and membership involvement.
- Angela Wilson said that the board of trustees would have statutory obligations to the membership.
- Juliette Overlander asked if the number of people currently on Council would change. It is crucial that more people are actively involved. Noeleen said that 400 volunteers are involved in the life of the synagogue and that the new structure would allow for more of them to come into leadership roles.
- Jackie Goymour hoped there would be more opportunities for members to take on leadership roles.
- Rolfe Roseman said that Incorporating was the start of the restructuring. Leadership responsibilities would be to listen to the needs of the members.
- Cheryl Brodie said she presumed that future committees would have terms of reference and accountability and that these committees or working groups would come from the membership.
- Michael Overlander said that the Governance Group would come back to the community with Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- Brenda Freedman asked that the new board report back on what issues are discussed and give the membership the chance to feed into discussions.
- Anne Towse said she assumed Alyth would remain a charity. This is the case and the synagogue will have to submit accounts to both the Charities Commission and Companies House.
- Mike Wellin commented that this was a vital piece of work and in line with other Charities.

10.5 The Resolution was proposed by Ruth Smilg and Seconded by Michael Overlander. The vote was unanimous.

**11 To elect a Vice President:**

11.1 The President called for a vote to elect Robert Jackman as a new Vice President. The Proposer was Brenda Freedman and the Seconder was Alan Brudney. The vote was unanimous.

**12 To elect members of Council:**

12.1 Howard Bogod, Arieh Miller and Fran Moscow stood for re-election to Council.

12.2. David Brown and Julia Simmonds stood for Council.

12.3 The President presented a resolution to elect members of Council. This was proposed by Nicola Feuchtwang and Seconded by Brenda Freedman. The vote was unanimous.

**13 To elect a Vice Chair:**

13.1 The President called for a vote to elect David Brown as Vice Chair. The Proposer was Howard Bogod and the Seconder was Fran Moscow.

13.2 David Brown was unanimously voted in as Vice Chair.

**14 To elect deputies to the Board of Deputies of British Jews:**

14.1 The votes were counted and verified, and the following members were elected to the BOD:

- Joe Grabiner
- Annabelle Daiches
- Angela Wilson
- Brenda Freedman
- Philip Freedman

**15 AOB**

15.1 Henry Cohn asked if a loan would be taken to part fund the new building and if so, would the interest on the loan affect subscription rates. The Chair said that no decision had been made but that any considerations would be brought to the membership first.

15.2 Could the old caretaker's flat be given to a refugee family. As it is not vacant, consideration about the flat would be given during the building work.

15.3 Robert Weiner said he was delighted that £1.6m had so far been raised for the building fund. He wondered about the time line – when might we break ground? This will depend on how quickly we raise the necessary funds. The target is early 2019 but this will be discussed with the membership beforehand.

15.4 The outgoing Chair thanked the President.

The Meeting closed at 12.37pm

Minutes taken by Caronne Graham

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