



To pray. To learn. To live. Together.

North Western Reform Synagogue

Minutes of:

Annual Budget General Meeting

held on 10th December 2019 at 8.00pm

Present: Jon Epstein, Russell Baum (In the Chair), Caronne Graham, Michael Simon, Noeleen Cohen, John Cohen, Robert Weiner, Ruth Weiner, Judy Smith, Gordon Smith, Jeremy Baum, Nicola Feuchtwang, Richard Fraiman, Alan Brudney, Val Russell, Ruth Smilg, Simone Aspis, Michael Overlander, Howard Bogod, Scott Schwager, Henry Levi, Margaret Harris, Gideon Davis, Judith Cohen, Paul Alter.

Apologies: David Brown, Andrew Gellert, Naomi Perry, Alan Perry, Fran Moscow.

Professional Team in attendance: Rabbi Josh Levy, Adam Martin, Sam Heller.

1. Introduction from President, Jon Epstein. Jon welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. D'var Torah given by Rabbi Josh Levy.
3. Russell Baum presented the proposed 2020 Budget.
4. A copy of the presentation is included below.
5. Comments and questions were taken from the floor:
 - a. Simone Aspis asked for assurances that the new building will be accessible to the disabled community. She suggested grants be applied for from Jewish Blind and Disabled and The Jewish Deaf Association.
 - b. Simone Aspis asked about the 3% rise in subscriptions, this being just above inflation. Russell explained that for many years there was no rise in subscriptions above inflation. The resulting deficit needs to be recovered.
 - c. Val Russell queried the reduced expenditure in the kindergarten. Russell clarified that the kindergarten generally runs at a surplus. It is fully resourced, and income is variable. The reduction in surplus is due to two spaces in K2.
 - d. Jeremy Baum asked why printing costs had gone up. Adam Martin has recently negotiated a new contract in which Alyth will receive a £10,000 rebate. (This is not shown on this year's accounts). Where possible we are digitalising mail-outs.
 - e. Robert Weiner thanked Russell for a very comprehensive budget statement. He is proud of the community but wondered if we were being aspirational enough in only seeking two additional members of the clergy. In response both Russell and Michael Simon said we needed to be prudent with our finances.
 - f. Margaret Harris wondered how the explanation of the budget was being communicated to the rest of the community. A copy of the budget went to every household and all members are invited to attend the ABGM and submit questions. Only two people submitted questions.
 - g. John Cohen wanted to know if ShulCloud would enable members to opt out of paying monies to the BOD and enable the membership to know how much we give to the BOD per annum. [RB to follow up.](#)

- h. Scott Shwager said members should have to opt in to receive paper mail – this is already the case. He asked how our subscription rates compare to other synagogues of a similar size – Alyth’s rates are slightly above average but not at the top end compared to other communities. He commented that it was worth asking members if their companies would match donations received. He suggested that wealthier members could offset the shortfall on subsidised subscriptions.
- i. Howard Bogod commented that it was sensible to show a modest surplus.

6. Resolutions:

- a. To confirm the recommendation from Council that the Synagogue Annual Subscription for 2020 (net of basic rate tax) be increased between £15 and £36, depending upon the tax status of the single Member, this being the equivalent to an increase of 3%.

Proposed by Robert Weiner

Seconded by Paul Alter

The Resolution was passed with one vote against.

- b. To confirm the recommendation from the Trustees and Council, that the proposed Budget for the year ending 31 December 2020 be adopted.

Proposed by Ruth Smilg

Seconded by Michael Overlander

The resolution was passed with one abstention.

- 7. There being no other business the President thanked Russell Baum and brought the meeting to a close.