

South Bucks Jewish Community

Annual
Report for
2019





From the Rabbi

It is often said that time moves too fast and that it is hard to believe that we find ourselves at this point again. While the Annual Report is certainly a time to reflect on how much we have achieved as a community this year, it would seem remiss not to acknowledge that this has been a significant year in the Jewish community at large.

The topic of antisemitism has been more talked about this year than I can remember for a long time and the atmosphere of uncertainty and tension has been palpable. But what is striking from looking at our achievements this year is that instead of locking ourselves away SBJC has responded to a growing polarised world with outreach and in-reach – determined to build community for ourselves and with others.

In the 30th year of SBJC we have once again committed ourselves to being a community known for its adaptability, its welcoming atmosphere, its belief in learning and friendship and for creating a Jewish space at home in the modern world. Our Cheder has continued to grow under the new leadership of Frankie and the commitment of our teachers. We have had some outstanding bnei mitzvah services and a wonderful Kabblat Torah service. High Holiday services were well attended, and it is a credit to us that we have so many competent lay leaders and readers. This year's Seder was a highlight for me and a prime example of our outstanding volunteers. But once again the candle lighting in Chesham was a fabulous chance for us to stand side by side with our neighbours and bring some light into the world.

We continue to have weekly Friday night services and fortnightly Saturday morning ones and thanks must be made to our Rituals and Practices Committee, lay leaders and all the volunteers who support. I have learnt a lot from our Theology classes and hope those who attended did as well, I am looking forward to relaunching adult education and would love some input for our next topic. Learning has been a central theme of this year, within sermons, classes, cheder and services. We have tried to build an integrated education programme that reaches all in our community in different places and I hope we continue to build on this.

I have represented SBJC in local news, Jewish news and even national press at events and dinners. It is always a balance being a part time rabbi with another job to contend for her time. However, SBJC is always a present force for me and I believe that we continue to benefit from increased publicity, extra Liberal Judaism support and access to additional resources.

As we enter this new decade as a world and as a community, we need to all reflect on what the new decade will look like. We have decisions to be made about where we will be physically as a community, but also where we want to be spiritually and communally.

We continue to use a diverse range of liturgy, but we also have to continue to feedback on the possible new siddur which means coming to services and letting us know what you think.

We have many happy times in our community, but there are always people who need some extra support, or a visit and we can always do with more volunteers.

Please think about where this year you have benefitted from being part of a community like SBJC and think what you might do to help another have the same reward – however small! There are many thanks which always should be recorded – Our Chair, Gerard, the Council of SBJC, Rituals and Practices, the choir (wonderfully led this year by Nicola), James and Debbie, security, kiddush rota, cheder teachers.... While as the Rabbi I get to stand at the front and be seen, it is all these people that support me and the community that allow us to be the wonderful congregation we continue to be and for that I am immensely grateful.

Cheder Report

Our cheder continues to provide a Jewish space for children to celebrate festivals and take part in our inclusive services, as well as learning about them; to learn through hands on, interactive sessions, crafts, and games in-doors and outside, about Jewish values, culture and history. Above all we encourage children to question, interrogate and engage with Jewish texts; to become Jewish thinkers and doers in an often thoughtless and uncaring world. Our cheder is also the start of

many friendships and plays a formative role in building SBJC.

2019...

- We bade farewell to James Davies after many years of dedicated service as Headteacher and welcomed Frankie Gruzd MA (Jewish Educational Leadership - Leo Baeck College).
- We launched our Shema themed year, held a shofar blowing lesson, a latke dipping quiz, studied de-gendering of language and the role of women in progressive Judaism, made mezuzot, chased feathers of gossip in the playground, and dramatized, debated and danced our way through Torah Stories.
- Our teaching team, Rabbi Charley, Nick Prag, Joel Stern, Sally Geneen, Gerard Geneen, and Ruth Harris, together with our volunteer Robert Cohen developed session formats and delivered a broad range of classes in Judaism and Hebrew.
- The attendance and participation in services, the readiness of pupils to volunteer for tasks or to pitch-in as they did on Mitzvah Day clearing leaves for our Quaker hosts is something precious that all are committed to nurturing.



Rituals and Practices Committee Report

Our Committee of stalwarts - Ade Begon, Vanessa Harker, Ruth Harris, Sarah Murgatroyd and Dick Vardy - feel they have had a reasonably successful year (well at least no-one complained to us!!). Rabbi Charley is always there to advise and support of course, which helps to keep us on track.

Starting with a well-attended Communal Seder, with singing led by Tammy Rich, we had another excellent show of cheese cakes for Shavuot. Planning for the High Holy Days again took up a lot of our efforts and the experience learned from last year stood us in good stead, resulting in very few (visible at least) hitches. We MUST pay tribute here to Nicola Nathan, who more or less single-handedly has taken care of reconstituting and revitalising the choir.

She has completely refreshed our music scores, led very successful rehearsals and, we know, produced a fine end result.

As always there are many thank-yous. To Isobel McFeeters for quiet and efficient Shammusing at the High Holy Days; to Vanessa Harker for hosting Succot; to Ade Begon for ace venue fixing and to Toby Friedner for the second, again well-attended, public Chanukiah ceremony in Chesham. Thanks also to our lay service takers. Without them SBJC would struggle to have a weekly religious event.

Ruth and Dick are stepping down at the AGM but will be on-hand to advise our successors. Unfortunately, the challenge of finding new blood to be involved in R&P remains.





Chair's Report

We enjoyed many highlights in 2019; we celebrated festival cycle with High Holydays services, communal Seder, outdoor Sukkot service and Chanukiah lighting, and we continued to enjoy Shabbat-morning services, with many children attending. All were led in an inclusive, open-minded and engaging way by Rabbi Charley, who I would like to thank so much for her spiritual leadership this year. Many congregants commented that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services were extraordinarily moving. Thank you too to Dick and Ruth for their tireless work on R&P.

Members opened their homes warmly at Sukkot and Chanukah and for Book Club among other events. We enjoyed a summer barbecue and a great quiz-night in February, as well as various charity outreach initiatives, which have again raised magnificent totals for different causes. These events are volunteer-led and further volunteers, in teaching, security, catering, service-leading and committees, support this and allow it to happen. Thank you to everyone involved.

I would like to welcome new members, and it is good to report that our membership is approximately unchanged from this time last year.

Cheder provides a happy and stimulating environment in which our children learn about Judaism from Kindergarten to age 15. Thank you to both James Davies and Frankie Grudz for their leadership, and to the teaching team who plan and deliver lessons with such enthusiasm and skill. Well done to our two final-year students who led the Kabalat Torah service in April and to our four 2019 B'nei Mitzvot. Many congratulations and thanks to their parents.

2020 is our 30th anniversary and I would like to pay tribute to all who have steered us to where we now are and recognise all their achievements. Importantly, as we will discuss at the AGM, we now have the possibility to achieve the long-held ambition to have a permanent home for SBJC.

I would like to thank all the members of Council and thank Toby who handed over to me in February. We are a small community and keeping this going isn't easy. Thank you to all the Council members for their work and the way they care for our community and cherish it.

It really is a pleasure to be Chair of our community. Pressures at work, and caring for young and old and for ourselves at home can dominate life. It doesn't help that there are endless tasks, vitriolic news, bigotry, and monumental concerns for our children's futures. Judaism, its noble heritage, Torah, Shabbat, history, and culture offer us a bit of balance in life; a bit of faith and hope and community. Please support SBJC in this task if you can.

I look forward to seeing you at any of our forthcoming 2020 highlights!





South Bucks Jewish Community

Address: PO Box 826, Amersham HP6 5ZZ Phone: 0845 644 2370

South Bucks Jewish Community Financial Activities

September 2018 - August 2019

		Building Fund		Burial Scheme		General		TOTAL	
		Sep 2017 - Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Aug 2018 (PY)	Sep 2017 - Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Aug 2018 (PY)	Sep 2017 - Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Aug 2018 (PY)	Sep 2017 - Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Aug 2018 (PY)
Notes		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income									
	1					29,613	38,044	29,613	38,044
	2			8,452	8,438			8,452	8,438
						2,443	2,467	2,443	2,467
						576	429	576	429
						1,345	2,440	1,345	2,440
		420	1,293			2,378	2,394	2,798	3,687
						4,959	2,795	4,959	2,795
		131	156			9,827	8,402	9,958	8,558
							250	-	250
						145	125	145	125
		551	1,449	8,452	8,438	51,285	57,346	60,288	67,232
Expenditures									
	2			6,717	6,475	33,994	32,498	33,994	32,498
						3,860	3,671	3,860	3,671
						988	504	988	504
						1,100	1,805	1,100	1,805
						5,742	3,993	5,742	3,993
						361	1,122	361	1,122
						1,650	1,346	1,650	1,346
						876	532	876	532
						1,085	1,749	1,085	1,749
						769	835	769	835
						319	311	319	311
						7,963	7,689	7,963	7,689
		-	-	6,717	6,475	58,706	56,055	65,423	62,530
		551	1,449	1,735	1,963	(7,421)	1,291	(5,135)	4,703
Other Income									
		1,290	1,017			521	539	1,812	1,556
		1,842	2,467	1,735	1,963	(6,899)	1,830	(3,323)	6,259

Notes:

- 1 Due to cash accounting rules, Subscriptions include August pre-payments of next year's subs. Renewals were sent later this year so pre-payments were lower. On an accruals basis, subscriptions were £34,148 vs prior year £35,097
- 2 Burial and Funeral Scheme income and costs are shown separately from general funds. This is to ensure appropriate segregation of funds for this purpose.

South Bucks Jewish Community
Balance Sheet
As of August 31, 2019

Note	Building Fund	Funeral & Burial Scheme	General	TOTAL	Prior Year 31/08/2018
	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed Asset					
Tangible assets					
Religious Regalia			6,553	6,553	6,553
Total Tangible assets			6,553	6,553	6,553
Total Fixed Asset			6,553	6,553	6,553
Cash at bank and in hand					
BDG Bath	77,283			77,283	76,555
BDG Santander	13,418		637	14,054	13,557
BDG Virgin	71,032			71,032	70,547
Business Bank Account		5,283	6,540	11,823	16,429
PayPal Bank			1,313	1,313	2,503
Skipton			65,597	65,597	65,076
TSB Current Account			4,720	4,720	4,480
TSB Deposit Account			479	479	478
Total Cash at bank and in hand	161,733	5,283	79,285	246,301	249,625
Current Assets					
Unapplied income			31	31	30
Total Current Assets	161,733	5,283	79,317	246,332	30
Total net assets (liabilities)	161,733	5,283	85,870	252,885	249,655
Charity funds					249,655
Opening Charity Funds	159,891	3,549	92,769	256,208	249,950
Surplus/(Deficit)	1,842	1,735	(6,899)	(3,323)	6,259
Total Charity funds	161,733	5,283	85,870	252,885	256,208

Notes

- 3 £637 of general funds held in Santander BDG account
- 4 Burial reserve held in HSBC Current Account

**South Bucks Jewish Community
Financial Activities
September 2018 - August 2019**

	Building Fund		Burial Scheme		General		TOTAL	
	Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Sep 2017 - Aug 2018 (PY)	Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Sep 2017 - Aug 2018 (PY)	Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Sep 2017 - Aug 2018 (PY)	Sep 2018 - Aug 2019	Sep 2017 - Aug 2018 (PY)
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income								
Net Subscriptions					29,613	38,044	29,613	38,044
Burial Scheme Charges			8,452	8,438			8,452	8,438
Cheder Fees					2,443	2,467	2,443	2,467
H-H / Seder Tickets					576	429	576	429
Donations					1,345	2,440	1,345	2,440
Fund Raising	420	1,293			2,378	2,394	2,798	3,687
Kol Nidre Appeal					4,959	2,795	4,959	2,795
Gift Aid	131	156			9,827	8,402	9,958	8,558
Grants						250	-	250
Other Income					145	125	145	125
Total Income	551	1,449	8,452	8,438	51,285	57,346	60,288	67,232
Expenditures								
Rabbi's Office					33,994	32,498	33,994	32,498
Funeral & Burial Fees			6,717	6,475			6,717	6,475
Friends Meeting House					3,860	3,671	3,860	3,671
Other Halls					988	504	988	504
Synagogue Expenses					1,100	1,805	1,100	1,805
Cheder Costs					5,742	3,993	5,742	3,993
Fund Raising Costs					361	1,122	361	1,122
Charitable Contributions					1,650	1,346	1,650	1,346
Meals and entertainment					876	532	876	532
Administrative Expenses					1,085	1,749	1,085	1,749
Insurances					769	835	769	835
Bank Charges					319	311	319	311
LJ Congregational Assessment Fee					7,963	7,689	7,963	7,689
Total Expenditures	-	-	6,717	6,475	58,706	56,055	65,423	62,530
Net Operating Income	551	1,449	1,735	1,963	(7,421)	1,291	(5,135)	4,703
Other Income								
Interest earned	1,290	1,017			521	539	1,812	1,556
Net Income/(Expenditure)	1,842	2,467	1,735	1,963	(6,899)	1,830	(3,323)	6,259

Notes:

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H. D. Baker
HERBERT DANIEL BAKER FCA. FIIA
17 DECEMBER 2019

South Bucks Jewish Community
Balance Sheet
As of August 31, 2019

Note	Building	Funeral &	General	TOTAL
	Fund	Burial		
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Asset				
	Tangible assets			
			6,553	6,553
			6,553	6,553
	Total Tangible assets			
			6,553	6,553
	Total Fixed Asset			
	Cash at bank and in hand			
	77,283			77,283
3	13,418		637	14,054
	71,032			71,032
4		5,283	6,540	11,823
			1,313	1,313
			65,597	65,597
			4,720	4,720
			479	479
	161,733	5,283	79,285	246,301
	Current Assets			
			31	31
	161,733	5,283	79,317	246,332
	161,733	5,283	85,870	252,885
	Charity funds			
	159,891	3,549	92,769	256,208
	1,842	1,735	(6,899)	(3,323)
	161,733	5,283	85,870	252,885

Notes

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17 DECEMBER 2019