



**Edgware & Hendon Reform Synagogue**

**ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT  
OF THE TRUSTEES  
FOR THE YEAR END 31 DECEMBER 2020**

118 STONEGROVE, EDGWARE, MIDDX, HA8 8AB  
REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1172458  
A constituent of Reform Judaism

SENIOR RABBI:	RABBI MARK GOLDSMITH
RABBI:	RABBI DEBBIE YOUNG-SOMERS
PRESIDENT:	RICHARD HARRIS



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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The year began with great excitement with the official induction of Rabbi Mark as the Senior Rabbi of EHRS, which was attended by two Mayors, two MP's, one MEP, one Councillor, assorted members of the Rabbonim including Rabbi's Emeritus Smith and Katz, clergy from various neighbours and of course, our members and family and friends of our 'new' Rabbi. It was a proud day in which to show off the best in EHRS. The early months saw the community engaged in many activities, including new initiatives such as our business breakfasts in the City and locally, and at the other end of the scale, our Stay & Play scheme for toddlers.

However, shortly after a really successful gathering to hear the Megillah at Purim, the world changed. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the synagogue was forced to close its doors in March. I am proud of the way the synagogue reacted to this previously unknown situation – the administration, activities and services moved swiftly, and relatively seamlessly on-line. A call to volunteers to be part of our Community Circles meant that we reached out to over 1000 homes, regularly checking in to see that everyone was managing in very difficult circumstances.

Sadly, as a large synagogue, we were hit more than some others by the illnesses and the deaths of many members of our community. Of course, I have to pay tribute here to Rabbi Neil Kraft z"l who we lost at the end of March. He was a true friend, teacher, mentor to many in our shul and we will remember his kindness, his wit and the twinkle in his eye, not to mention the ties and his etrog vodka. It was a particularly sad loss as he was just about to retire and enjoy the next stage of his life. I must also make mention of Howard Moss, our treasurer, who had guided us through some perilous financial times and will be sadly missed for his voice of reason, and his kind and gentle nature, and of Michael Casale, who sat on our Council, and whose interfaith work will be his legacy.

We lost others, too numerous to name here, during the course of 2020. They will always be remembered for all that they gave us – may their lives and memory be as for a blessing, and each family who is bereaved be comforted by the knowledge of the good they did.

In April we welcomed Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers to our rabbinic team. It seems very strange that she has been here since the Spring, and yet her first time leading an in-person service was in September. She has been particularly involved with our young adults during the year, and with Cornerstone, our

programme for converts and for those who wish to learn more about their Judaism. Although she still had not met too many members of the community in person by the end of the year, hopefully moving into 2021, we will be able to welcome her and her family properly to EHRS.

During the course of the year, we became an online community, apart from short periods in the summer and in November when in person services were allowed, but limited. Surprisingly, in lockdown our activities and services expanded. Apart from our regular classic service there were regular parallel services, family services on Facebook, more informal Babyit services, and much more. There were more opportunities to engage with online Talks of the Week, Schmooze with the Rabbi's, Talmud classes, Hebrew classes, Young Adult Beer and Shiur, Young Family Tea and Tots, Young Parents Wine and Whine, and much, much more. I am so proud of the way we adapted and reached out to so many people. Many people have engaged in activities they have not tried before. It became so much easier to join in a class or attend a talk from the comfort of your own home on a wet, cold Wednesday, then it would have been in ordinary circumstances, and the variety on offer meant that more of our community attended more things.

As I look forward to 2021, I hope that the deprivations caused by the pandemic will soon be at an end, and we can all meet up to take this amazing community forward together as we grow from strength to strength.



**Janet Brand**



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## COMMUNITY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A few years ago we decided to upgrade our telephone system and our IT systems to fit in with what is called a Disaster Recovery or Business Continuity Plan. This is to put systems in place to enable a business or organisation to continue its operation if something happens such that they can't continue at their premises. This is rather like an insurance policy on which you hope you will never have to claim. Then it came to March 2020, when, in effect, we were all told to go home! So how could we ensure that we could still continue to support and communicate with our members well as continue to operate many of the activities that still needed to function. It was the day that we had to call upon that insurance policy. From that day, you might have still phoned or emailed the synagogue. The staff still answered you. Our forward planning, those years ago, allowed us to continue.

Also, a way back we started to operate a "livestreaming" of our synagogue services. It was new technology then and only used by a few to view if they were housebound or family further away who couldn't attend a lifestyle event. It became another solution to a crisis. We have had generally a hundred or two hundred plus "screens" watching the services. That could be 200-400 people. We learnt more about the technology and were able to have people participating from home – which we will continue hopefully in the future. During the High Holy Days we had three parallel live streamed services accommodating a classic service as well as children, families and discussion groups. Of course, many if not most activities paused and some went online. You will read more about those in the individual department's reports. Unfortunately, even many happy occasions and their celebration had to be postponed. This include the weddings that were planned during that period.

During 2020, the use of our premises by external organisations for meetings, training and other activities was starting to climb. Of course, this too had to pause. We expect it to pick up again in 2021. Many other activities have changed shape. We are now trying to do much more electronically. The EHRS postage bill has increased over the past few years. So we are now trying to do much more via email and via the new website. The EHRS website underwent a major revamp and restructure to ensure that we can communicate better and in a more timely fashion. Please do make sure that we have your email addresses and not only for the "senior" members of

the family but also the youngsters as well so that they get their own value out of being members. The youth centre had many activities online – read more about that separately also – so they would like to keep their younger members in contact.

Towards the end of 2020 our membership database also went through a major revamp and upgrade. It is now called "DOROT" as in "generations". This follows the theme of the Hebrew name of EHRS being "LeDor VaDor" as in "from generation to generation". To better support our members, we are asking you let us know who else you are related to or, for those hopefully rare emergencies, your next of kin. We are starting to send your yahrzeit reminders by email as well as membership and subscription information. As part of the improvement to our systems we have been preparing to change from using Standing Orders for the payment of membership subscriptions to Direct Debit. This will improve the management of synagogue funds and will help those members who forget to renew their Standing Orders. This upgrade should be complete by the end of 2021.

It has been a trying year and under these conditions all the staff have worked hard from where-ever they are! Many of them beyond their normal hours as well as evenings and weekends. Many thanks to them all.

**Premises hire:** January 2020 started out very promising with the number of external bookings increasing year on year. Several non-Jewish and commercial organisations continue to use our facilities and a good relationship has been built. On 24 March everything changed with all external groups cancelling their bookings for the foreseeable future, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As summer approached restrictions were lifted, this enabled groups such as Shaolin Kickboxing and Citrus Training to resume their use of the site once a full Risk Assessment had been done. Looking forward to 2021 external companies have rebooked the site along with tentative functions bookings for later in 2021. All weddings with the exception of one booked under the Auspices of EHRS were also cancelled due to the pandemic, all being well they are scheduled to take place from May 2021. Many thanks to Joao Nena and his caretaking team for their support of this important income generation activity.

**Perry Newton**





## RABBIS' REPORT:

As the year began we were a team of three Rabbis benefiting from the experience of Rabbi Neil Kraft z"l as he completed his final months before retirement. Rabbi Emily Reitsma-Jurman was continuing her growth as a generalist Rabbi to the Synagogue as well as her special talent of relating to the young people in the community. We were looking forward with Rabbi Kraft to his joining our Emeritus Rabbis Danny Smith & Steven Katz and to Neil's long and happy retirement.

As Rabbis together we were succeeding well in engaging our young families with nearly 120 attending our pre-Purim event. Our shiurim had strong attendances of engaged members and our parallel services for adults and children were reaching parts of the congregation beyond our Classic Shabbat Morning Service. We were active innovators involved in the whole community of all ages. Our Purim event in early March showed the Synagogue coming together across the generations both to enjoy circus activities and for a lovely Megillah reading. We had succeeded in attracting and appointing Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers to complete our team following Rabbi Kraft's retirement.



The EHRS Shushan Circus at Purim

Then Covid-19 forced us to rethink everything. Very early on our whole community was struck by the tragedy of Rabbi Kraft's untimely death and by the loss of so many beloved members of our community. These tragedies took place together with the need for our Rabbinic Team to take as much of their work online as possible, whilst also conducting up to five funerals per week, together with doing our best to give the support that every bereaved family should expect, especially during the time when they were not permitted to attend funerals in person. To this end Rabbi Emily and I each hosted a Friday night and Shabbat morning service from home, one an online approximation of the regular services at the

Synagogue, working with Ann Sadan and our Cantors to make music of quality, and the other an innovative informal 'Friday Night Lights' and 'Shabbat Ba Bayit' aiming to bring an intimacy to community life pushed apart by Covid-19. We worked with B'nei Mitzvah families to help them to transfer their child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah to home. We created opportunities for our community to meet online, our online talks of the week, voices across continents, linking with other communities worldwide, the weekly Kuddle-Up. Shabbat, Zoom Kiddush with breakout rooms as we learned to work the technology better. Behind all of this was our intention as a Rabbinic team that we would ensure that being a member of EHRS meant that you could experience Jewish community in different, satisfying and heart-warming ways throughout this pandemic. In April, just after we had run Pesach and the Communal Seder online, learning with Ann and with Perry's technical help how to make a festival work in these circumstances, Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers joined our team. Rabbi Debbie's partnership in our team quickly made a difference as she experienced a carefully thought through induction process to enable her to get to know the Synagogue's leader and staff team.



She has done an extraordinary job of becoming our Rabbi whilst being unable to meet the vast majority of our congregation face to face.

When Rabbi Emily made her decision to join West London Synagogue, we had established a very well-functioning Rabbinic team and we will of course miss her presence and skills within it. We work together on many projects, such as our worship services, supporting our EHRS Community Care team and the EHRS Education and Youth team. We work with Val & Marris to be rapidly responsive to pastoral needs and to support our members long term. We work with Marian & Murray to co-create education and youth programmes, notably the complete revamping of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah curriculum, delivered online successfully. We work with Milissa in Nagila Pre-School to ensure that there is, wherever

possible, a strong presence of EHRS Rabbis for our youngest members and their parents.

The High Holy Days presented an extraordinary opportunity to see what we could achieve as a Rabbinic team together with our excellent lay leaders and High Holy Days Co-Ordinator Michael Weber. As we came to the end of Simchat Torah we were able to know that we had done all that we could to reach out to our community, from creating thoughtful services, classes and discussions, to building a beautiful Sukkah as a community achievement, to ensuring that all of our community knew what was on offer through the mailed booklet, which we repeated to make for a successful Chanukah and will repeat again for Pesach 2021.

We are currently supported by Rabbi Roberta Harris-Eckstein as our interim Rabbi who helps us to ensure that we are properly available pastorally to our community as a team. We very much appreciate her contribution.

We thank June Lewis, our P.A., who aids us in so many ways every day. She has been our caring, supporter all year, dealing with so many bereavements with deep and extraordinary empathy. We thank Perry, who has done so much to enable our work and dealt with good humour with our needs for the impossible to be achieved so that a service can be led, a class given, a database improved or an event take place in a technical environment. We thoroughly enjoy working with the hundreds of lay volunteers who make EHRS what it is, whose enthusiasm and willingness to help is critical to our aiming to be a kehillah kedoshah, from Janet Brand, our wise and hardworking Chair, to the wonderful people who came forward to be Community Circle leaders and keep our community connected.

We look forward to making an ever closer connection to the Admin Team of EHRS in the coming year so that together we help our Synagogue to relate kindly and deeply with our members and potential members in all circumstances. We know that with Martine's support this will be very much achievable.

We will continue to be creative and to make the most of whatever situation is thrown at us by the state of the country to make Jewish life through community a support and joy to anyone who is willing to put time into it. As well as being EHRS's Rabbis we also take leading roles among the Assembly of Reform Rabbis and Cantors UK, writing and broadcasting, teaching at Leo Baeck College and each of us leading aspects of Reform Judaism's work.

**Rabbi Mark Goldsmith**

## SERVICES:

The Services Committee is responsible for the planning and operation of all Synagogue services in conjunction with the Rabbis, Wardens and Council. The Committee meets quarterly and receives reports from the Senior Rabbi and the Senior Warden on recent services and updates on forthcoming services. Although the Education Committee manages Children's & Youth Services, the Committee has considerable input into the timing and format of these services. During the year we held around 300 services. This figure includes our regular Shabbat services, Sunday morning Shacharit, special one-off services, a variety of children & family services, as well as High Holy Day and Festival services. Most weeks the Rabbis hold an alternative service, including explanatory and contemplative services and also ones that explore the music and liturgy of Shabbat. This year was additionally challenging as the Synagogue sought to cope with the Covid-19 lockdowns. All services were taken online and broadcast via our livestream feed, over Zoom and on Facebook with only very limited in person attendance possible for a short period of time between lockdowns. We have continued to assist the Rabbis in leading Shiva prayers for mourners in these difficult times. High Holy Days remain the hardest services to run logistically. A full programme of traditional, alternative and innovative services was offered online. The Services Committee expresses its thanks to all those who assisted in maintaining the spirituality and organisation of our services. The support of the Rabbis and the Choir in adapting to the technology, and their innovative approach to services being broadcast online, was crucial to ensuring that the Community was able to participate in all our services when unable to attend in person. The Services Committee particularly wishes to thank the Community Director and the Technical Team for their speedy and invaluable assistance in setting up and maintaining the broadcasting systems that enabled us to broadcast high quality services to the Community. When planning our Services, the Committee have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. EHRS is committed to enabling as many people as possible to pray in our Synagogue and we



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welcome new members as well as visitors, including those of different faiths. Our broadcast services enabled us to reach a wide audience both within the UK and worldwide. Our Committee believes that thereby we maintain our Public Benefit commitment.

## EDUCATION:

**NAGILA:** Nagila used the academic year to explore the cycle of Jewish festivals and also enjoyed learning about different cultures. This has involved increasing support and regular involvement from all members of the Rabbinical Team. For the first half of the summer term although we were in lockdown, we continued to support our families with a weekly activity email with suggestions for each day of the week. The 3 week summer scheme was successful and attracted new families. In November we participated in the global event, Mitzvah Day, with parents and children working together to support a number of charities, including The Together Plan, Homeless Action in Barnet and Camp Simcha. Both Nagila and its associated holiday scheme are open to members and non-members alike and provide a warm introduction for many young families to EHRS.



Nagila in the Sukkah at Sukkot

**OROT:** The year started off with normal in person activities with a highlight being the Purim festivities on the themes of the circus in early March. No one could expect what was to happen in March with a total lockdown. Orot teaching staff instantly rose to the challenge of on-line teaching which continued through the rest of 2020. We had very good take up and engagement and parents expressed their gratitude for our efforts to keep their children engaged in their community and learning throughout these challenging times. We adapted the teaching times for on-line learning but apart from that continued our schedule pretty much as normal.

**BAR/BAT MITZVAH:** We introduced our new programme in September which now takes place on Friday evening from 17:15-18:15 on Zoom. Again, we have had very good engagement and the quality of the programme written and taught largely by our rabbis is high quality. As with all our learning through 2020 our 1:1 tutoring continued online and is so successful that potentially it will stay online as it offers more flexibility for both the students and tutors.

**ALL THINGS JEWISH (ATJ):** As with our programmes for children and teens, ATJ took all its programmes and events online when lock down happened in March. We didn't cancel any events and in fact increased our offerings with very good attendance figures for many of them, probably better than if we had been in the shul. We were more accessible to people who may have struggled to get to EHRS. One outstanding event was a zoom interview with Heather Morris, the author of the Tattooist of Auschwitz which saw us reach our total capacity for participants. Heather did the interview from Australia at 5am in the morning. One positive to come out of having to be online is that we have been able to link up with people from all around the world, to offer a rich and varied programme and events which would not have been possible to do that in person. Before lockdown, we were able to organise the second EHRS Awards. This event recognises the members of the EHRS community who achieve greatness outside of the synagogue walls. This again was a very well attended evening.



EHRS Awards 2020



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## YOUTH DEPARTMENT:

2020 was a challenging year for the youth centre but we were able to adapt and still provide as much contact with our young people as possible. This was done with a combination of face to face events (when allowed) and online activities. In February we ran our first ever Winter Warmer Scheme which ran for 4 days over the half term. This Scheme was held onsite. We employed Murray Brown as our youth worker in March. Throughout the lockdown period (March-July) we ran Youth Media Moments. These were a wide range of online activities for 5-11 year olds including quizzes, arts and crafts, discussions and games. Youth Media Moments ran during term time after the school day. The children really enjoyed the 'Design a Tie' competition in memory of Rabbi Neil Kraft z"l as we all knew how much he loved his ties, picking ties that reflected the weekly Torah portions.



Double sided tie of the 10 plagues

In place of our Pesach Play Scheme, which usually takes place in April, we ran online activities throughout the afternoons during the holidays.

In August we were able to put on a hybrid Summer Scheme which was a combination of face to face, socially distant days and online activities. Our first ever Awesome Autumn Scheme was able to take place onsite during the October half term. This was an extremely popular and positive experience for all involved. Due to the commencing lockdown we moved our Funnukah Scheme (December) to online activities with the help of our team of leaders.

Despite the restrictions we were able to complete the leadership training of 11 new leaders. Their sessions moved to Zoom and they completed an assessment in June. There are a further 15 young people in the middle of the course who will graduate in June 2021.

## WITHIN EHRS:

**NEW OPTIONS:** New Options caters for the retired and semi-retired (60 plus). Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we were unable to continue with the extremely popular Wednesday Bridge afternoons, which were attended by over 80 people each week. We hope to re-start again later in the summer. During the 'lockdown', we continued, through using Zoom, with the monthly light-hearted topical discussions, 'Schmoozing with the Rabbis'. All our Rabbis contributed, each in their own individual style, to make it lively and popular.

**KIDDUSHIM:** The year started off with a major event when we had the civic induction for Rabbi Mark attended by 350 people. We used the occasion to once again serve hot latkes and spring rolls which went down very well. We had a few B'nei Mitzvah's to celebrate from January to early March and had our final kiddush celebration on 14 March 14 and was the last service we held with a kiddush in 2020. We look forward to being able to providing kiddush after the service and once again playing a part in families celebrations.

**YOUNG ADULTS:** For Rabbi Debbie it has been a huge pleasure to begin to re-establish a young adults programme over the last year. She hopes that when we are able to be together again, the online offerings of 2020 combined with the work Rabbi Emily and others had established prior to this, will form a good starting point for more!

We have successfully established a monthly 'Beer and Shiur' programme where a core group of our young adults come together to learn. Topics have included Jewish Texts on Racism, exploring Choseness, Teshuvah in the movies and How Green is Judaism? We have around 7 regular attendees and are slowly growing. We plan to move this to a pub when able to!

We also began a monthly young adults Cook-a-Long. These were a lot of fun, however we received so much interest in them from other members of the community that we decided to open them up more broadly. We have enjoyed creating delicious treats such as Vegan desserts, Mulled wine to stay warm in Winter, Shavuot and Chanukah themed food, and



some Chinese dishes. These remain an open friendly place where members across the community cook together.

As Zoom fatigue grows we are cautious of over programming however when there is a return to in person opportunities we know there is interest in Young Adult opportunities to travel and celebrate festivals together, and we are hopefully that EHRS will become a place Young Adults come to do just this.



A member's  
cheesecake made  
during the  
Shavuot  
Cook-a-Long

## COMMUNITY CARE:

Community Care and Wellbeing (previously Welfare), continues to offer members support, advice and advocacy through difficult times in their lives. We offer practical and emotional support often when people are at their most vulnerable. We have developed strong community networks that allow us to work in partnership with external organisations.

There were 86 member deaths in the community during 2020 and an additional 28 members were affected by the deaths of non-member relatives. Surviving relatives have been offered telephone support, which was initially difficult due to the high number of deaths at the beginning but as they reduced, support became more manageable. Two new bereavement volunteers received basic zoom training in the Autumn and a bereavement co-coordinator was recruited.

Community circles were set up during the pandemic. These have provided invaluable support to members, for many reducing their sense of isolation during this difficult time. We encourage friendships to help reduce loneliness and promote active inclusion in our community through the monthly lunch club, that was continuing to grow in popularity

until the first lockdown. Since lockdown lunch club volunteers have been in contact with regular attendees by phone and many received honey cakes at Rosh Hashanah.

The EHRS Memory Way Café provides a regular social gathering for people living with dementia and their family carers but had to close 'inhouse' in March 2020 due to the pandemic. It restarted in July 2020 on zoom and runs on a fortnightly basis, providing essential support to carers. It is popular with both members and non-members.

We have 395 members over the age of 85 and Telenet calls continue to be made by volunteers who provide invaluable feedback on each call. Telenet is a vital outreach initiative that has allowed EHRS to get to know its membership and their needs. Any concerns raised by volunteers are followed up by Community Care staff.

Befrienders have been unable to visit the more isolated members since March 2020 but have been making regular telephone calls.

## ASSOCIATED GROUPS:

**YOGA:** The yoga class meets every Tuesday during term time 10:00-11:30 run by Ros Anderson, with an average of 15 women attending each week (although men are also welcome) paying £5 per session. Each person brings their own mat and wears any loose and comfortable clothing. The class provides public benefit by being open to anybody and helps all ages to improve fitness. We exercise our bodies and relax our minds, and is enjoyed by all. We were able to provide 2 months of classes before we were put into lockdown.

**DAY CENTRE:** The day centre under the auspices of Jewish Care runs 43 weeks of the year on the site of EHRS. Together we try to combat isolation in older adults, whilst promoting independence. We offer a high quality, social and activity-based club over four days per week. Transport is provided where possible, by 2 care buses.

In these extraordinary times, our staff, volunteers, supporters and community responded in the most extraordinary way. In early March 2020, Jewish Care like the rest of the world were deeply impacted by



Covid-19, and shut down the EHRS site. The day centre closed in March 2021.

**JACS:** Because of COVID-19, only 10 meetings were held until 12 March before the lockdown. There were 4 music meetings, 4 talks and 1 current affairs and 1 AGM. Besides the music events which members particularly enjoy, the talks were educational and informative to assist the attendees where they could benefit. The talks were very well received in Black history, The history of Nightingale house and its activities, The changing face of Israel and Current affairs interspersed with comic poetry readings. Attendances varied 16 to 45 people.

## MEMBERSHIP:

The function of the membership committee is to actively encourage new members whilst also looking after our existing membership.

The main initiative in the past year has been continuing the listening campaign for new members and the joining process:

1. Final meetings with the committee were carried out to review the research and learning and make recommendations which were presented at the AGM
2. The recommendations were documented and implemented with the office staff and Rabbis
3. Meetings/calls with new members have been taking place
4. A buddy team is being established

## TZEDAKAH:

During the course of each year the synagogue receives many requests for donations for various causes. We tend to keep these until the High Holy Days and then ask the various charities to make an application to us, preferably with a project. This year 22 application forms were sent out, but only 12 applications were made for the group to consider. This could be because applications were at a time when everyone was pre-occupied with the coronavirus and charities were concerned with other things. The charities were divided into 3 categories: - Tikkun Atzmi: the repair and improvement of ourselves and our own community, Tikkun Ami: support of Jews both in the UK and abroad, and Tikkun Olam: helping to repair the wider community. The Appeal in 2020 raised just over £32,000 split between 8 charities including our own Community Needs Fund. The other charities were The Alan

Senitt Memorial Trust youth leadership project, Chai Cancer Care In-school Project, Moishe House, an organisation aimed at young adults living together forming communal attachments to make Jewish Life meaningful in a relevant way, The Malki Foundation's new Equipment Lending Unit at the Alyn Hospital in Jerusalem, Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service's training for on-line counselling, Hope Not Hate, an interfaith project twinning EHRS with a local Chinese Community, and Save A Child's Heart, an Israeli Non-Profit Organisation that brings to Israel children born with heart disease from developing countries for surgery. All of the charities are truly grateful for the support of the community, particularly during the pandemic when support is needed more than ever.



**Pirkei Avot 5:13: A person who gives charity, and wants others to give, is pious.**

## SECURITY:

The Security Committee advises Council and the community on security matters, develops robust security procedures (appropriate to the situation at any given time) and runs the security for Shabbat mornings, Orot classes and the High Holydays. The evolving threat means the Committee is constantly assessing and reviewing what is required. 2020 was, as we know, a year like no other. From late March the rotas for the security committee for Shabbat mornings and Orot were cancelled as the building closed for lockdown. During the quieter times, the main activity was the upgrading of the guardhouse as the old 'shed' was replaced with a new cabin. This work was completed in July.



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## BEYOND EHRS:

**CULTURAL & HERITAGE GROUP:** On 25 February, our member Laurie Marks, gave a community briefing on the Israeli election. This was well attended and received. Thereafter, our attempts to bring Jews of different cultures and heritages together was totally compromised by Covid-19 as event after event had to be withdrawn. This included planned celebrations for Israel's Independence Day, which were superseded by joining the Reform Movement's own online programme. The year finished with a wonderful Chanukah week which involved communities from around the world and activities for each age group and interest. We are looking for new members to join the committee in the hope of putting on new events in 2021.

**INTERFAITH:** At the start of 2020 members of the EHRS team met with our local community centre OneStonegrove (which includes St Peters Church) to talk about how we might be able to work together where there is a need for community volunteering and to help our young people to get to know each other. This effort turned during the beginning of the pandemic to members of EHRS helping with OneStonegrove's foodbank and food deliveries to vulnerable local people. We look forward to doing more together in coming years. As the pandemic began to take its toll the Stanmore Islamic Centre on Wood Lane offered us the opportunity to join them in the provision of inexpensive breathing equipment as the crisis with ventilator provision began to build up. Though we did not become part of this scheme it was very good to offer each other moral support based on the relationships that have been built over the years by Mike Casale z"l, whose loss as leader of interfaith work at EHRS is sorely missed.

Rabbi Debbie taught 'World Religions – Encounter and Dialogue' for student Rabbis at Leo Baeck College and helps with the interfaith element of clergy training for Christian ministers in a number of seminaries. In November 2020 we worked with our local churches to create the online Edgware Remembrance Day Service, which was broadcast from EHRS with nearly 200 participants. Rabbi Mark produced videos on the Jewish festivals for local mainstream primary schools to use and is one of the Jewish representatives on the Barnet Borough Standing Committee on Religious Education. We look forward to being together with our friends of all faiths in 2021.

**SOCIAL ACTION:** In 2020, volunteers from the EHRS community hosted a rolling night shelter in partnership with Together in Barnet (TiB) for homeless guests with low support needs. Fourteen volunteers hosted one overnight session 16/03/20 when we gave 15 guests a hot meal, a safe place to sleep, company and breakfast in the morning. Following government advice regarding the coronavirus pandemic, EHRS Council closed the synagogue premises. EHRS volunteers continued to provide food and support at another venue while our guests were found temporary accommodation. After the government implemented its Everyone In policy, EHRS volunteers took donations of non-perishable food to the food hub at Homeless Action Barnet (HAB). Our volunteer drivers also collected care packages from HAB and delivered them to people in temporary accommodation every week for the rest of the year. We are incredibly grateful to EHRS Council for their donation in November 2020 of £200 which was the sum requested from every community involved in supporting TiB to go directly to landlords and will enable those homeless who are eligible for government assistance to secure tenancies for 6-12 months.

The EHRS community provided mentors to 6th formers at The London Academy in Edgware working with Career Ready a social mobility charity that prepares A level students for the world of work. EHRS sent 2 volunteers to The Separated Child Foundation to compile Arrival and Sleep Packs for unaccompanied child refugees. The EHRS community collected donations and sent £301 to World Jewish Relief.

## JEWISH AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS:

**AJEX:** The Edgware and District AJEX branch has just over 100 members actively paying their annual subscriptions. The branch has an executive of about 8 members who take an active part in the running of the branch, with particular emphasis on welfare. This year the branch helped a member who is visually impaired and through their limited provided that person with a "talking" clock which has been a great aid given that person's limited capacity. The branch's main event of the year is Remembrance Sunday. This year, they laid a wreath on behalf of AJEX at the local War Memorial, which was videoed and it was put into



a larger AJEX tapestry that was shown on Remembrance Sunday.

**JEWISH JOINT BURIAL SOCIETY:** In 2020 JJBS arranged 370 funerals/cremations, more than in any previous year. Stone settings had to be delayed in the year and whilst re-arranged dates were offered to families, often relayed on Zoom, some families had postponed the stone setting for some time to enable a greater number of family members and friends to attend. As the year progressed, even those decisions have had to be revisited. There has been a rise in the number of burials at the Woodland Cemetery with some 70 funerals by the end of the year. The Woodland has increasingly been chosen as the place of burial by both members and non-members. Funerals continue at the Western Cemetery, Edgwarebury Cemetery and Southgate Cemetery. The Woodland Hall has now been completed and its cost was just over budget at £1.89 million as opposed to £1.75 million. The additional cost arose by reason of delays caused by the pandemic and by bad weather. The Hall is used as a gathering and prayer hall and can be hired for family gatherings after a funeral. The offices of JJBS are now based at the Hall. The columbarium extension at the Woodland has been landscaped and the remainder of the proposed landscaping will begin in Spring 2021.

**MOVEMENT FOR REFORM JUDAISM:** In 2020, with a reduced workforce and restricted income due to the pandemic, MRJ went through significant change. The year saw the departure of Rabbi Laura, and the arrival of a new board, giving the organisation the opportunity to review how they interact with their Synagogues and build a family of communities - building a Reform Jewish Home for the generations to come. The organisation has seen a significant decline in younger age groups, and it set a priority over the next period to understand the reasons and work to arrest this decline. MRJ set up a working group jointly with Liberal Judaism doing difficult but valuable work in looking at the future of Rabbinic training in the UK and seeking to develop a blueprint for the future. The organisation is also looking for a Safeguarding and Fundraising trustee to support them.

**BOARD OF DEPUTIES:** The Board of Deputies moved many activities online for the majority of 2020, including Divisional meetings, plenaries and other events. The organisation also launched a series of podcasts with politicians, finding new ways to engage its members and the community-at-large. The Board

has, on behalf of the community, led parliamentary engagement, including through the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Jews, holding regular meetings and events, and providing briefings. One prominent example of success in 2020 for the Board was its work with the Government, Opposition and Muslim community to create an amendment, to allow the religious practices of those who have died from Covid-19 to be respected. Their advocacy ensured a clause for forced cremation of the deceased to be removed.

## **EHR'S ANNUAL TRUSTEES REPORT FOR 2020**

### **TRUSTEES OF THE EDGWARE & HENDON REFORM SYNAGOGUE**

**ELECTED TO THE BOARD OF EHR'S,  
12 NOVEMBER 2020**

Mrs F Aitman  
Mrs J Brand  
Mr R Brand  
Mrs S Garson  
Mr J Harrod  
Mr K Maddison  
Mr D Mendoza-Wolfson  
Mr D Mitchell  
Mr M Lerman  
Mrs L Perez  
Mr E Sander  
Mrs J Sigalov  
Mr B Trainis  
Mrs J Weber  
Mr M Weber  
Mr A Woolstone  
Ms Sandy Young  
Mrs A Zarach

**Signed by:**

**J Brand - Trustee & Chairman**

**M Weber - Trustee & Honorary Secretary**



Edgware & Hendon  
Reform Synagogue  
ק"ק לדור ודור





Edgware & Hendon  
Reform Synagogue  
ק"ק לדור ודור