

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF EDGWARE &
HENDON REFORM SYNAGOGUE
HELD ON THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER AT 8PM
THIS MEETING WAS HELD BY ZOOM DUE TO THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Present: There were 83 requests for the Zoom link.

Apologies: Sandy Young, Amy Taub

In Attendance: Rabbi Mark Goldsmith, Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers

Janet Brand, Chairman of EHRS welcomed everyone to the virtual AGM, JB explained that the AGM had to be postponed but this was allowed in the Government Guidelines during the COVID-19 Pandemic and that it was being held via Zoom and also being recorded. JB advised that if any attendees wished to say anything then they should either use the hand waving icon or physically raise their hand and Robert Brand, moderating, would un-mute them.

Usually the AGM would be for looking back at the previous year 2019, but due to the situation it has been nearly 18 months since an AGM was held. This past year has been devastating to the EHRS Community with the sad losses of Rabbi Neil Kraft, Mike Casale, Howard Moss and the Kinchucks along with the 30 other members who sadly lost their lives. This past year has been challenging, but it has brought the EHRS Community together, giving fantastic on-line Services, along with supporting our Members. We are very lucky to have Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers as part of our Rabbinic Team and I know that some of you have been able to meet with her in person.

JB asked Rabbi Mark Goldsmith & Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers to give the D'Var Torah. RBG & RDYS made a tribute to all those members of EHRS who sadly lost their lives due to COVID-19. RMG advised that this year has been very difficult due to the Pandemic. The Rabbinic Team are looking at new ways to reach out to the community with multi-generational ways to value the prayers and traditions true to EDRS and to make sure that no one should feel unsupported by EHRS. The future to be made positive and all look forward into the next steps of the journey coming out of the Pandemic.

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the AGM held on 19 June 2019

There was 1 amendment – the last page of Any Other Business should read “this was Sharon Price’s last Meeting” the amendment was made.

Proposed by Harry Levene

Seconded by Robert Brand

The Minutes were approved by a majority vote.

2. Trustees Report: Report from the Trustees on Activities held during 2019

JB advised that the Trustees Report for the past year was very comprehensive, from the Community Directors Report, the Services Report, Young Adults, Youth Department, Kiddushim and Day Centre as well as groups within EHRS, such as Not the Women’s Guild, Yoga, Social Action, Board of Deputies, Reform Movement and AJEX. JB opened up the Meeting for any questions.

Jonathon Kramer referred to the Community Director’s Report wanting to know what the proposal for the rest of the HRS windows was. JB advised that some of them have been re-located in the Woolstone Gallery, and the rest of the windows will be re-located as and when any rooms are re-furbished.

Harry Levene asked if there was a way of seeing the windows. RMG confirmed that there are videos on the EHRS Utube channel which are accessible to all. RMG will send the Utube link to any requests he has for this.

Proposed by Ed Shirman

Seconded by Michael Curtis

The Trustees Report was approved by a majority vote.

3. Election of Council for 2020

The Chair advised that since going to print there have been a couple of changes with regards to who is standing for Council. Sandy Young has advised that she is standing down after 12 years of being on Council and Honorary Officer for Education and Youth. JB thanked SY for all her hard work over the years, and said that they have other plans for SY so she is not stepping away altogether.

JB advised all attendees that Annita Tischler was stepping down as Senior Warden after an extended year due to the Pandemic and thanked Annita for all her hard work, and care that she has given to Synagogue Members calling every single person who has a yahrziet on a weekly basis. David Lytton will be taking over from Annita as Senior Warden, Keith Price will be Middle Warden and we Welcome Stephen Gilbert as Junior Warden. JB asked that if anyone knows of Members who may be interested in acting as assistant wardens to let her know

(i) Chairman: Janet Brand - Proposed by Mr J Harrod; seconded by Mr D Mitchell

(ii) Joint Vice-Chairmen: Jeremy Harrod - Proposed by Mrs J Brand seconded by Mr Mitchell

Jo Sigalov - Proposed by Mr J Harrod; seconded by Ms S Young

(iii) Joint Honorary Treasurer: Kevin Maddison - Proposed by Mrs J Brand; seconded by Mrs L Perez.

Joint Honorary Treasurer – Mr M Lerman Proposed Mrs J Brand; seconded by Mr J Harrod

(iv) Honorary Secretary: Michael Weber - Proposed by Mrs J Brand; seconded by Mrs J Langer

(v) 2 Additional Honorary Officers without Portfolio:

Andrew Woolstone - Proposed by Mrs J Sigalov: seconded by Mrs J Brand

The last place is vacant.

Additional Council Members;

Fiona Aitman – Proposed Mrs J Brand; seconded by Ms S Young

Robert Brand – Proposed by Mr J Harrod; seconded by Mr P Newton

Sharon Garson – Proposed by Ms S Young; seconded by Mrs J Brand

David Mendoza-Wolfson – Proposed by Mrs J Brand; seconded by Mr J Harrod

Daniel Mitchell – Proposed by Mr J Harrod; seconded by Mrs J Brand

Lorna Perez – Proposed by Mrs J Brand; seconded by Ms S Young

Eric Sander – Proposed by Mrs J Brand; seconded by Ms S Young

Bradley Trainis – Proposed by Ms S Young; seconded by Mrs J Brand

Jo Weber – Proposed by Mrs J Brand; seconded by Ms S Young

Audrey Zarach – Proposed by Mrs J Brand; seconded by Ms S Young

4. Election of Junior Warden

The Junior Warden is Stephen Gilbert - Proposed by Mrs A Tischler; seconded by Mrs J Brand

5. Election of Young Members to Council

Amy Taub & Sam Koch are both stepping down. JB thanked both Amy and Sam for all their hard work during the course of the past year and wishes them both well. JB asked all attendees if they know of anyone who may be interested in standing for this position to please let her know.

6. Membership Project Report

JB asked Andrew Woolstone to update the attendees with regards to the Membership Project he has been working on- AW advised the attendees that the Listening Campaign has been running for 2 years, with the guidance and support from Amit Handlesman and Charlotte Fischer from the Reform Movement. AW talked through the presentation slides explaining the process from the first enquiry with regards to joining EHRS, be it word of mouth or a casual caller, the idea is to engage members from the very beginning to be more involved within the Synagogue community. Every new member is contacted by one of the 12 members of the Listening Campaign Committee to find out their needs and requirements of joining EHRS they may be, from living in the area, children attending Nagila or Bookies Babies childminding or leaving the Orthodox Synagogue, and being with family and friends. The Committee Members of the Listening Campaign were arranging face to face meetings up until March this year with all new members, making sure that they felt part of the Community, arranging buddies to meet with them if they felt they wanted company when attending a Service, or arranging for them to speak to a member of the Rabbinic Team or a member of staff if they had a matter that needed discussing. AW advised that the Membership Application Forms and the booklets have been updated to give them a friendlier feel. AW asked that if anyone would like to put themselves forward to be a “buddy” mentoring 1 or 2 families to get in touch with him via the Main Office that would be great, training would be given. AW further advised that the Listening Campaign is also being used throughout the UK in other Reform communities. Murray Brown the EHRS Senior Youth worker asked that all families with youth club aged children could be forwarded to him so that he could also make contact with the children. JB thanked AW for all his hard work time and dedication to this ongoing project.

7. Approval of Audited Accounts 2018.

Kevin Maddison explained that both sets of accounts have a wealth of information – there was a delay in getting the 2018 Accounts signed off due to a number of factors. KM asked if the 2018 accounts to be approved.

2018 Accounts approved by Mr M Curtis; seconded by Mr M Weber

7. Draft Income & Expenditure Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2019.

Kevin Maddison, presented the 2019 accounts and explained that both sets of accounts have a wealth of information. He pointed out that was a delay in the completion and signing off of the 2018 Accounts which was due to a number of factors and outside the control of the

Synagogue. Kevin Maddison advised that there were a couple of adjustments on page 20 on the audited 2019 accounts that were exceptional and if adjusted for would provide the amount of the deficit for unrestricted funds for the year ended 31 December 2019 in respect of the ongoing business of the synagogue.

The £470k total surplus for the year adjusted for 1] the £4k surplus of restricted funds, 2] £448k for the net gains on investments (the comparative amount for the period ended 31 December 2018 being £262k loss) and 3] the release of the provision for the late Mrs Katz of £117k results on a deficit of £99k of unrestrictive funds; this deficit is a reduction from the comparative amount for the period ended 31 December 2018 of £168k deficit. The Net assets as at 31 December 2019 was £13.3m; there were current asset of £534K and £356K of creditors. Fixed asset amounted to £13.1m which include the investments of £5.6m.

Since the beginning of the pandemic the market value of the Cazenove investments have fallen considerably less than the market as a whole which would indicate that they are being managed efficiently. The budget for 2020, which was extremely difficult to prepare due to the continuing effects of the pandemic, show a predicted deficit of £10k for the year ended 31 December 2021. Subscription Income in the current year to date appears to be remaining at the same at the rate as 2019 of just over £1m. It is of paramount importance that the subscriptions remain at this level for 2021 – a 10% drop in subscriptions would produce a deficit of £100,000, and the synagogue would then have to consider cutting costs to offset the loss of income from subscriptions.

KM asked if there were any questions he could now answer on the 2 sets of accounts, and he would welcome any written questions after the meeting which he would reply to as quickly as possible. JB thanked KM & ML for all their hard work with regards to the EHRS Accounts and asked if any attendees had any questions, of which there were none. JB advised that should anyone have any questions once the AGM has finished, please contact either KM or ML

KM asked for the 2019 accounts to be approved.

2019 accounts approved by Mr M Curtis; seconded by Mr E Shirman

8. Approval of Auditors.

Michael Lerman advised the meeting that EHRS have appointed new auditors – Gerald Edelman, in place of Sobell Rhodes, KM confirmed that Gerald Edelman were doing a very good job.

The approval of Gerald Edelman was proposed by Mr M Lerman; seconded by Mr K Maddison.

9. Subscription Proposal for 2021.

JB advised that in light of such a difficult year, to consider and if thought fit to pass the following resolution that there was not to be an increase in the Synagogue subscription for

2021. KM & ML have worked along the lines that if everyone maintains their subscription payments at the same rate as 2020 this should be sufficient, and the 21/22 accounts will be clearer.

From 1st January 2021 £960.00 per annum gross for family annual subscription
£480.00 gross per annum for single membership.

The Special Projects Fund to remain at the same rate as 2020 of £30.00 per annum gross for family membership and £15.00 per annum gross for single membership.

The Higher Rate taxpayers will have the same net cost to them to be identical to that of the Standard Rate taxpayers. The Honorary Treasurers to additionally empowered to set reduced scale rates for the young adults (18-35 years).

The EHRS Lottery remains a voluntary option of £36.00 per annum with a monthly winner of £250.00

The Board of Deputies has a voluntary contribution of £15.00 per person, this rate is set by the BOD.

JB asked all attendees to approve the Subscription Proposal Mr J Harrod Approved; Ms J Sigalov seconded, there were 2 opposed and no abstentions.

i. Keith Price asked how was the Special Project Fund used in 2019 and how will it be used in 2020. JB advised that the refurbishment works of the 1st Floor Main Building, The Lounge, the HRS Windows in the Beit Hamidrash and Woolstone Gallery were all installed along with the fitting out of the Kitchenette opposite the Lounge were funded by the 2019 Special Project Fund. Looking forward for 2021 the drains need a lot of work doing along with the Main Car Park which keeps flooding, JB would also look to get the Main Kitchen refurbished along with the Ground Floor Community Centre.

ii. Ed Shirman suggested that the EHRS Lottery should be encouraged, as it is the easiest way of fundraising for the Synagogue, broken down £36.00 per annum works out at 10p per day, this would bring in a substantial revenue. JB thanked ES and said that fundraising was something that is being looked at for the coming year.

iii. Michael Curtis thanked the Treasurers for keeping the subscription rate at the same rate for 2021 as he along with many others has been affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. MC also thanked the Rabbis, along with the Tech team for all their hard work during the High Holy Days. JB also thanked the Tech Team for all their hard work, Perry & Ari for their commitment in making everything run so smoothly – it was truly amazing.

iv. Stewart Winton asked if the next AGM will be in May 2021 and also asked if the number of members have increased or stayed the same. JB updated all attendees that due to the Pandemic the AGM had been postponed, it had been scheduled for September just before the High Holy Days, but it was decided to reschedule to November. At the last EGM in 2019 the attendance was so low that there were just enough attendees for form a quorum. The idea going forward it to have just the AGM in October just after Yom Tov and it will be combined

with the EGM. With regards to SW's second question, there are approximately 3500 people which is holding steady. The ambition is to have more young families joining along with the fact the general feeling from all those watching all that was on offer over the High Holy Days and subsequently every week on line will attract members.

10. Any other Business.

i. Jeremy Harrod replied to one of the questions on the chat from Kay Bagon. The Rabbinic succession party has reformed with regards to recruiting for a new Rabbi to replace Rabbi Emily who we will be very sad to see leave. The Rabbinic Team have made plans for the interim period and they are doing a fantastic job with the smooth running of the Services. JH thanked JB for doing such an amazing job as Chairman during such a difficult time, as no one foresaw what 2020 would bring and how challenging this would be. JH also went on to thank all Council Members, Honorary Officers and staff for also keeping the Synagogue running effortlessly. JB thanked JH for his very kind words saying that it was a team effort and she could not do what she did without the support around her.

ii JB advised all attendees that the last Shabbat Service for Rabbi Emily would be Saturday 5 December, JB wishes Rabbi Emily good luck in her new position, it's a fantastic career move and she will be a fantastic addition to the West London team of Rabbis. Rabbi Emily will be very missed at EHRS as we have seen her grow and become a serious and mature Rabbi. We will still have contact with Rabbi Emily as there will be some programming between EHRS and WLS, Rabbi Emily will remain a member of EHRS.

iii JB updated all attendees ex officio Stephen Garfinkel and Philip Bright were to be made Vice-Presidents and so glad that they are still part of the EHRS family.

iv JB Finally wanted to thank Val and Marissa in the Welfare Department. This year has been unprecedented - a huge thank you to you both for all the hard work you've both done, the care and compassion that you've shown all the members and their families you've given them during such a difficult time for all, it is so very appreciated from everyone.

v JB thanked the Administration team, Site Manager and his team along with the Security Guards for all their hard work during the past year.

vi Stephen Garfinkel thanked the Honorary Officers for making him and Philip Bright Vice-presidents and said that he would do all he could to help the Synagogue.

The meeting ended at approximately 9.20 pm