

Edgware & Hendon Reform Synagogue

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR END 31 DECEMBER 2024

118 STONEGROVE, EDGWARE, MIDDLESEX, HA8 8AB
REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1172458

A constituent of Reform Judaism

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|---------------|---------------------------|
| SENIOR RABBI: | RABBI MARK GOLDSMITH |
| RABBI: | RABBI DEBBIE YOUNG-SOMERS |
| | RABBI TANYA SAKHNOVICH |
| | CANTOR TAMARA WOLFSON |
| PRESIDENT: | DAVID GILMORE |
| | PETER WEBER |

Edgware & Hendon
Reform Synagogue

ק"ק לדור ודור



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This is my second full report since becoming Chair in Autumn 2022.

Council and Honorary Officers have continued to work extremely well together, and we continue to address the challenges and issues that we have running a synagogue this size. 2024 has been a busy and successful year and whilst we are always sad when existing members pass away, we are delighted when new members join and indeed our membership numbers have ultimately remained reasonably stable during the year. Our aim is to grow our membership so that more people can enjoy the many and varied services, both with a big S and small s, that we provide.

Council meets ten times per year and Honorary Officers every month. Discussions are varied and cover minutia matters as well as big issues.

We have continued to bring down the average age of council members without ignoring the elder members of the community. As I have said before, whilst age comes with knowledge and experience, we must recognise that we are trying to build a younger and more energetic community.

The new role created in 2023, The Membership Engagement Officer, Debbie Drapkin, really came into her own during 2024 and there is no doubt that more members got involved in volunteering and taking part in so many of the varied and wide activities we hold on a regular basis. Coming into the synagogue building now shows how vibrant life is with so many activities taking place.

Cantor Tamara Wolfson started her role in January 2024, meaning that the Clergy team is now complete and they are all working well together and the activities they are running in Synagogue life are so important and revitalising to the community. Children's services are now growing, and Friday nights are beyond recognition with family services and dinners being so well attended.

As one of the largest Reform communities in the country, we have been interested and involved in the proposed new Movement for Progressive Judaism during the year. Another successful forum was held during the year where our members were given the opportunity to question and discuss with representatives of both the Reform and Liberal movement the opportunities and concerns that will no doubt arise whilst these talks take place. In May 2025 the Reform and Liberal movements decided to merge and the plan is for the new movement to start in January 2026. Whilst EHRS abstained in the EGM vote on 18 May, it is EHRS's intention to ensure that all its concerns are addressed so that council can make an informed decision about whether to join the new movement or not in January 2026.

The events of October 7th 2023 continued to be at the forefront of our minds during 2024 and a number of events and a memorial service was held during the year.

In December, Rabbi Mark went with members of the community to Israel to help with several schemes as well as paying respect to those events.

The 2024 AGM was well attended, helped by our second bi-ennial EHRS Fest which showed off all the groups we have at our shul, and we were delighted that the Chair of the Reform Movement Paul Langsford joined us for the Fest event.

Of course, the main change during the year that you will have seen was the extraordinary work done on the outside of the building which was completed on time and on budget just before Rosh Hashanah. It was a delight hearing so many people come into the shul and be so pleasantly shocked as to how different the outside looked and how good it all was. I thank Daniel Mitchell, Andy Weber and Richard Goodman for making it all happen and for liaising with the contractors, Boras Construction.



All the events and the running of the synagogue requires funding, and you will see from the accounts that we currently operate at a deficit. As a result, council have set up a fundraising group and appointed a professional team, Development Partners, to help us reduce this deficit, and whilst it may be too early to see results in 2025, we certainly hope that 2026 will see funds starting to come through and the deficit being significantly reduced.

Finally, I would like to thank Members, Council and Honorary Officers, and all the team at EHRS for their support during the year. Without that support my task would have been impossible.

Jeremy Harrod

CLERGY REPORT

The name of this report demonstrates in itself a first for EHRS. In January 2024, Cantor Tamara Wolfson joined Rabbi Mark Goldsmith, Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich and Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers. She is the first ordained Cantor to serve the Synagogue in its history, having been ordained at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. Her work combines being Music Director for the Synagogue and serving as a full member of our Clergy team in all respects.

Cantor Tamara and Rabbi Tanya have both been building new music opportunities in the Synagogue this year which will carry on into the future. Our EHRS professional choir enhanced almost all of the services this year and we also enjoyed our first Hava Nashira services (Come let us sing) which centred on congregational participation in singing. On Friday nights our Shirah Band and Shirah She’Ba’Lev (Song of the Heart) services brought a congregation often five times larger than our regular Friday night attendance to participate in a service led by an a capella voluntary choir. In August, our Cantor’s Cabaret featured musical talent throughout our community. Yom Ha’Atzmaut was a poignant musical delight in such a tough year for Israel, led by Israeli singer, Yoav Oved, with our Rabbis.

Throughout the year, there were monthly Israel events and speakers, including our organising for two teenagers from the Leo Baeck Education Centre in Haifa to spend two weeks with us over the summer and culminating in a trip to Israel in December for EHRS members, led by Rabbi Mark, visiting the Kibbutz and meeting the family of Keith Siegel, who was then held hostage by Hamas in Gaza. We also built our connections with Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism synagogues and more.

Rabbi Tanya led Synagogue trips to Poland, which included EHRS long term lending a Sefer Torah to the Reform congregation in Vilnius, Lithuania, to the Czech Republic, to build our connections with the Sobeslav community from which one of our Sifrei Torah originates and which was the first pre-war pulpit of Rabbi Arthur Katz z”l, and with our post-bnei Mitzvah young people on the Facing History course to Berlin. Rabbi Debbie co-led our EHRS Camping Weekend with Sarah Koster, taking over 70 people away for a beautiful Shabbat.

Rabbi Debbie continued to innovate in learning, including the Cornerstone class for people intending to convert to Judaism, her Cookalong sessions, teaching Jewish food culture, and participating with all of the Clergy team in leading shiurim throughout the year. Two highlights of the year were the first EHRS open Iftar (Ramadan fast breaking), co-hosted by Rabbi Debbie and the Faiths Forum for London, where we welcomed our Muslim neighbours—an especially meaningful event in a year of strained community relations—and a combined Tu B’Shevat Seder and Burns Night celebration, led with our Scottish members. Rabbi Mark’s regular Talmud Class and our Oud and Food programme which we are

building, this time celebrating the heritage of Egyptian Jews, continued to be popular.

All the Clergy were constantly involved with our young people, from leading Kiddush at Shabbat Stay and Play, Kuddle Up Shabbat, our Shabbat Club and Shirah service, Build-a-Bible and Torah Story on weeks when there is not a special children’s service. We worked closely with the whole Youth and Education team to do so. For post B’nei Mitzvah, Rabbi Tanya created Facing History with educator Mike Walton, forming a special bond between the young people. All the Clergy taught in the Friday night Bar and Bat Mitzvah programme every week with educator Steve Wax. Rabbi Debbie led our Young Adult programme, with Shabbat dinners and her regular Beer and Shiur programme.

The list of worship services which we led and innovated is too lengthy for this report. We continued, of course, to lead the regular Classic services every Shabbat, and the parallel services, which we have been running for several years, continued. This year our innovations included Rabbi Mark’s Deep Torah Dive, a special Torah reading analysing the meaning of the portion, and we also led Friday Night Dinners in member’s homes to which EHRS members in the local area were invited. For the second successful year running we joined our local Reform and Liberal Communities for Tikkun Ley’l Shavout, this time at Mosaic Synagogue, all night until 5am! Rabbi Debbie created an Interfaith service, again aiming to open the Synagogue to our neighbours.

Our Clergy worked hard to ensure that EHRS makes a difference to the Jewish and wider community. Rabbi Debbie remained our main representative to media, broadcasting on LBC, Radio 2, Radio London and Talk TV. We all wrote regularly for the Jewish News for the Leap of Faith column. Rabbi Tanya created a podcast on Jews and World Politics, recording, with Phil Dave, several episodes which are hosted on our EHRS website. The True Tube religious education service made a film about Sukkot for schools at EHRS and Rabbi Debbie’s home. Rabbi Tanya led the vocational training aspect of Leo Baeck College where Rabbi Mark taught Homiletics, Rabbi Debbie taught Interfaith studies and Cantor Tamara Liturgy and Music. Rabbi Tanya led our synagogue Eco Action Team while Rabbi Mark served as a trustee of EcoJudaism. He also finalised the publication of the new Movement for Reform Judaism Machzor for which he served as Chair of the Editorial Committee and represented EHRS at the Bi-ennial Conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in Israel.

We were delighted to work with our EHRS Chair, Jeremy Harrod, Vice Chairs Jo Sigalov and Andrew Woolstone, the Synagogue Honorary Officers and Council, the wardens led by Annita Tischler, the Services Committee led by Michael Weber, and countless volunteers and thank them all. The Synagogue staff team all helped us greatly, every one of them has been a delight to work with, making an important contribution to our work and we especially thank our Clergy PA, June Lewis and our ‘Friday PA’ Trishna Malam.

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 and forthcoming services. Although the Education Committee manages Children's and Youth Services, the Committee has input into the timing and format of these services.

With the horrors of October 7th still present throughout the year, prayers for the remaining hostages' safe return were said weekly and a photo of Keith Siegel remained on a seat awaiting his release.

During the year, we held approximately 250 Sabbath and festival services. Throughout the year, we have celebrated many occasions with families and individuals—B'nei Mitzvah's, Auf Ruf's, baby blessings, as well significant milestone birthdays and anniversaries. Our family services are flourishing and our youngest attend Chumash babies which is becoming increasingly popular. We also introduced a play mat area with soft toys to keep them entertained in the Beit Tefillah. We have continued to offer a variety of alternative services, including various musical services, attended both in person and online, a monthly Hebrew only traditional Shabbat service, and also outdoor services on different themes and at various venues. We held our first Hava Nashira service in November, one without the choir in attendance. We continue to hold regular Sunday morning shacharit services. We are seeking to actively develop new alternative services that may appeal to members to encourage community engagement. We continue to assist the Rabbis in leading Shiva prayers for mourners.

We were also able to provide a scroll on a long-term loan basis to the young growing Jewish community in Vilnius, Lithuania, which was delivered by Rabbi Tanya and members from the Synagogue.

We were delighted to welcome Cantor Tamara Wolfson to the Clergy team, who joins us as musical director and Cantor and will assist with many other duties. We are grateful to the entire Clergy team for their continued guidance and enthusiasm for all our services.

The Services Committee expresses its thanks to all those people, too numerous to mention individually, who have assisted in maintaining the spirituality and organisation of all our services.

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 welcome new members as well as visitors, including those of different faiths, and through our broadcast services, we are able to reach a wider audience both within the UK and worldwide. The Services Committee therefore believes that we maintain our Public Benefit commitment.

KIDDUSH: Whether it is a regular Shabbat or we have a B'nei Mitzvah, Auf Ruf, Baby Blessing, milestone birthday or anniversary, members and guests have enjoyed getting together after the service to enjoy the variety of food laid out and the company.

Whilst prices have increased, as with everything else, we have tried to keep this to a minimum and be supportive to those putting on a kiddush.

We have put on several special kiddush's as well as honouring those chosen as Chatan's/Challah's at Simchat Torah.

A lot of time and effort is put into corresponding with all those celebrating as well sourcing the food from numerous suppliers, to ensure a memorable time is enjoyed by all—it is pleasure to do so.

HIGH HOLY DAYS: This year saw a change in the HHD Co-Ordinator, but we are pleased to say that the services ran seamlessly with the assistance of the whole Clergy Team, the office Staff and the caretaking team, together with the variety of volunteers, whether as wardens, security, stewarding or on the Tech Team who offer their time to ensure all members have the best HHD experience, without whom HHD at EHRS would not happen.

The HHD organization commenced in March with monthly meetings thereafter.

The usual programme of preparing the synagogue for the HHD went into full force, including the annual cleaning of the silver rimonim on the Torahs by the Brownies and the setting of the Torah scrolls by the Warden Team for each service.

Our Elul programme was packed with activities including stone painting, Kol Echad workshops, a Renew your Body and Spirit workshop, Cookalongs, amongst many other events.

It was decided to keep almost the same schedule of services as in the previous year which proved successful - so much so that attendance at the services showed an increase of approximately 25% on last year and slightly higher in some of the family services with a 50% increase on members staying for the Neilah and Havdalah services. This culminated in some fabulous dancing on the Bimah to end our very spiritual time at the synagogue during the Yom Kippur day, even with empty stomachs!

We also again prepared the pocket-size HHD brochure with an array of information and details of all services so members would easily be able to check what was going on, where and when, and for what ages, and members were also provided with their annual membership cards.

This year, we were honoured to use the new HHD Machzor, managed by our own Rabbi Mark and, with the huge amount of work undertaken specifically by Rabbis Mark and Debbie to implement the timetable of the prayers and songs, the services followed to time and many positive comments were received from the members.

If you ventured into the Community Centre on your way into the various family or youth services, you would have had the pleasure of experiencing the theme of Space and the Universe, with all the decorations arranged by the Youth and Education teams.

Our family and youth services, ranging from babies attending with parents and grandparents to post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah students, are growing in numbers, particularly among young families. We were also fortunate with the weather, which allowed the young families to enjoy the fabulous new outside area, as well as benefitting from the amazing space and sensory experience offered by the Jack Senitt Sensory Room on the first floor of the Community Centre.

With the growing numbers in our young families, we will be looking to find a larger space for their services to accommodate them comfortably, where they will have space to move around.

Thank you to all who gave their invaluable help in the smooth-running of this year's HHD.

YOUTH & EDUCATION

It's been a very busy year overall in Youth and Education. The staff team work hard alongside extremely dedicated volunteers to bring together an outstanding offering to both member families and others who choose to join. The committee met four times over the year to provide oversight and guidance.

Nagila has become a full year-round nursery which enables many more families to send their young ones and has been very well received.

In early December, our Youth Worker handed in his notice after three years in post. He is moving to a different role within the Jewish charity sector and we wish him the best of luck.

NAGILA: Nagila used the academic year to explore the cycle of Jewish festivals and enjoyed learning about different cultures. We organised a number of visitors to help the children learn about their world. These included the local librarian, our Barnet Oral Health expert who introduced a daily tooth brushing programme for the over 3s, and a Paramedic. We have continued to provide awe and wonder through a Living Eggs Programme whereby the children were able to watch live chicks hatch and develop over a 10 day period. We have had continuous support and regular involvement from all members of the Rabbinical Team. We continue to work closely with the EHRS Young Families Lead to promote their activities to our families.

To continue the important tradition of giving to charity, we have participated in a variety of 'charity days' across the year. In November, we participated in the global event - Mitzvah Day, with parents and children working together to support a number of charities, including Homeless Action in Barnet and Sebby's corner. We also participated in Just ONE Tree Day and the parents' fundraising efforts raised enough to plant a

further 22 trees to contribute to global reforestation. Through these fun days we hope to help teach our children that their actions, no matter how small, can make a real difference.

Nagila is open to members and non-members alike, of all faiths, and provides a warm introduction for many young families to EHRS.

EDUCATION: The Education, Young Families and Youth team (EYFY) continue to work closely together to bring successful programmes and events to both members and non-members.

Orot continues to meet on Sunday mornings. We start every session with z'man kehillah, time for all the children to join together as a community for an assembly often led by our Clergy. The morning is then structured into 3 x 45-minute sessions. The first two are Hebrew and Jewish Studies. During the third session, the children choose between cookery, art or drama sessions. We often celebrate festivals with the Young families and the wider community. Highlights this year were the Purim party, Sukkot and the EHRS Festival and Chanukah parties. All of these successful events, planned and delivered by the EYFY team, demonstrated what EHRS has to offer our families with children.

The Bnei Mitzvah programme continues to meet on Friday evenings. The students have the opportunity to come to our Drop in Youth Club beforehand, where they can relax and socialise before the teaching session starts. The B'nei Mitzvah programme is immensely enriched by our Clergy's integral role in teaching.

Our 1:1 BBM tutoring continues mostly online as it offers more flexibility for both the students and tutors. The BBM mentoring programme continues to be a wonderful, enriching programme for both mentors and mentees, which encourages post B'nei Mitzvah students to guide and support their younger peers approaching Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The EYFY team held an amazing Mega Shabbaton weekend at Phasels Wood for B'nei Mitzvah students.

Our first cohort of post B'nei Mitzvah students, who participated in our Facing History programme jointly with students from Finchley Progressive Synagogue, travelled to Berlin as the culmination of the programme. We successfully obtained a grant of £1,000 towards this trip from the Jack Petchey Foundation.

One of the distinct times that members join EHRS is for their child to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The very positive feedback from parents suggests that EHRS offers a distinctive and enriching programme from many other shuls nowadays.

We are approached throughout the year by schools who want to come to visit EHRS. The EYFY deliver a very successful programme that engages the children in a very creative way and the feedback from teachers is highly positive.

For Holocaust Memorial Day in January, we welcomed over 200 children and their teachers to hear a survivor speaker and participate in a specially created

programme that educates the young people about the actions of people during the Holocaust and what we can learn from that today. The programme is supported by donations from members of EHRS and by local Mayors and Members of Parliament who attend the programme. Over 30 EHRS volunteers helped to deliver the event and programme.

YOUTH: We delivered 5 holiday camps, which all continue to be very popular, particularly with non-members who we have a great reputation with. They continue to grow in number, and we have to sell out days where we reach full capacity.

For HHD's we offered a great youth programme, having youth attend our 'chill zone' and activities throughout the day, particularly on Yom Kippur.

Weekly Drop Zone club continues to be enjoyed and well attended and works as a lovely social for our young people before their classes.

Hadracha continues to be delivered monthly. We have a new cohort of 10 young leaders.

In May, we were involved in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah groups' Mega Shabbaton weekend away, planning and leading programmes throughout the weekend and building connections with the young people. It was a great weekend, and an important example of joined-up working by the youth and education team.

Our Part time Youth Worker moved on after Kaytana. She brought lots of creativity to events and programming and ran an Art club during her time working with us.



YOUNG FAMILIES:

Services:

- Kuddle Up Shabbat – Primary aged children and their siblings. Once a month, Friday afternoons. Plus additional Festival themed Kuddle Ups
- Shabbat Club and birthday blessings– 4th Shabbat of every month
- HHD family services and Stay & Schmooze after service activities
- Baby services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
- Build a Bible – 3rd Shabbat and Torah Time – 1st Shabbat
- Chumash babies

Regular Groups:

- Shabbat Stay & Play – preschool group runs weekly on Friday mornings
- Sing & Sensory baby group – Thursday mornings
- New SEND Grandparents support group
- SEND Parents support group
- Summer Stay & play - 3 weeks in August

Key Events:

- Pizza in the Hut for Sukkot
- Dinosaur themed Chanukah Party for families
- Purim Party – Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
- Mitzvah Nappy drive for Sebbys Corner
- Delivery of baby packs to all members and prospective members welcoming new babies
- EHRS has got the point! Online information and Q&A session to support parents with the collection of CRP (Certificate of Religious Practice) points for Jewish school admission
- Family Camping Shabbaton at Wellington Country Park
- In conversation with the Blakers, SEND event
- EHRS Fest Family Zone

2024 saw continued engagement for members and non-members coming to our events, services and activities. We have over 650 families, members and non-members on the young families mailing list. We were joined by many non-member families at our children's services over the HHD's, choosing to purchase a ticket to be involved with EHRS. Five of these families have since joined as members.

A new children's playground was designed by Young Families and was completed in September. It has been a great addition to the outside area and for our families, being used at the HHD schmoozes and enjoyed at any outside events and a communal space for families coming in and out of the shul to enjoy.

Our term time weekly groups, Shabbat Stay & Play and Sing and Sensory, continue to be loved by our members. These groups are now included in their membership. They are also very popular with non-members and are a gateway into getting more involved with EHRS.

Festival events continue to sell out with attendances in the 100's. Pizza in the Hut was a highlight, being able to run it in the new outside courtyard and use the playground. The Yom Kippur baby service and the Rosh Hashanah one, which was a success last year, will run again. These services are very popular.

For Family Camping in July, we returned to Wellington Country Park. We were joined by 16 families, selling out and filling a whole field to ourselves.

We have created two new children's services, Torah Time and Build a Bible, which now creates an offer of a children's service every Shabbat. This came directly from feedback from parents, and the short interactive service means families who want to attend shul more or are attending for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah always have a breakout service.

UNIFORMED GROUPS: 2024 was another year of outdoor activities and skills for life at 3rd Edgware Scout Group, where we provide for young people aged 6 to 8 years old from across the whole Jewish community of Edgware and surrounding areas.

Weekly meetings are a mix of sessions in the community centre at EHRS (where members get to play games and work towards badges) and adventurous activities (such as air rifle shooting, fire lighting and climbing) at local Scout campsites.

Sadly, our Beaver colony had to close as the temporary leader stood down. We are actively recruiting for more adult volunteers.

Cubs (ages 8-10½) get the chance to take part in events organised by the district team, including a swimming gala (where we won a gold and two bronze medal), a quiz (which we won) and a chess tournament (which we won).

On top of the weekly meetings, we offered three residential experiences; an indoor group camp in February where attendees have the opportunity to take part in a number of outdoor activities, a Beaver/Cub summer camp for the younger sections where attendees get to experience sleeping in tents, and a narrowboat camp in October half-term, where attendees travel down the Regents Canal in London (steering the ship and opening the locks), spending the night at Little Venice.

STONEGROVE LIFE

Stonegrove Life offered inspiring educational programmes, events and entertainment that covered a plethora of Jewish topics and themes. It has deservedly earned the reputation of “putting on very good events”, evidenced by the numbers of people coming to the vast array of offerings. As well as our regular breakfast shiurim, Rosh Chodesh, Schmooze with the Rabbis and Talmud classes led by our Clergy team, Stonegrove Life offered all our adult members opportunities throughout the year to learn, grow and celebrate the joy of Jewish life together.

Our ever-growing list of Together Groups continues to bring our community members together, to share common interests and passions. Our groups include the ever-popular Stonegrove Serenade Concerts, presenting the most amazing professional musicians who love the acoustics in our Beit Tefillah. Rabbi Kraft's Memorial Book Club, Whisky Tasting, Coffee and Chat, Cookalongs, Israeli Dancing, Singing Circle, Pimms and Poetry, Rambling, Foraging, Bridge, Art and Opera Appreciation, Rummikub, TV Addicts Club and many more. Explore the EHRS website and Whats On at EHRS for a full list.

Just some of the highlights that Stonegrove Life organised and presented this year have been – Burns Night celebration, Life Sculpture by world renowned sculptor Frances Segelman of Holocaust survivor Kurt Marx, Oud and Food celebrating Moroccan and Egyptian Jewry, summer outing to Hughenden Manor, home of Disraeli.



One of our contributions to public benefit was our amazing Mitzvah Day interfaith Cookalong with friends from Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities who took over our kitchen in the most delightful way to cook meals for the Night Shelter at EHRS. On the back of this, Marian Cohen was invited to speak on International Women's Day at the Hindu Temple in Neasden.

COMMUNITY CARE

Community Care and Wellbeing 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. Our strong community networks allow us to work in partnership with external organisations.

There were 62 member deaths in the community during 2024 and an additional 33 families were affected by the deaths of non-member relatives. Surviving relatives were offered telephone support and demand remained high from the bereaved for support and we have three bereavement social groups run by members for different age groups.

In May, we ran an initial 'one off' coffee morning for newly bereaved members who had lost their partners within the preceding 15 months as it was identified that this group may benefit from additional in person support at EHRS during the first 2 years following their partner's death. A further coffee morning was held before Rosh Hashanah as it was recognised that this is a difficult time for bereaved partners and due to the level of need in the community, regular monthly coffee mornings commenced from December.

Community Care encourages friendships to help reduce loneliness and promote active inclusion in our community and the wider local community through the monthly lunch club that has continued to grow in popularity. We have approximately 15 regular attendees and at times welcome up to a further 5-10 additional visitors. We have a team of lunch club volunteers who assist.

The EHRS Memory Way Café provides a regular social gathering for people living with dementia and their family carers. The Cafe is very popular, with contact from both members and non-members in the local area and regularly hosts between 6-8 couples monthly. We provide an entertainment and activity programme emphasising

support, participation, motivation and enjoyment. We have two regular volunteers who assist.

We have 473 members over the age of 85 and Telenet calls are 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, and any concerns are followed up by Community Care staff.

During 2024, we were again fortunate to continue having increased contact from members wishing to volunteer.

WITHIN EHRS

EHRS FEST: A main project for 2024 was planning and running the second EHRS Fest, an event run on the same day as the AGM, to showcase all the activities run by EHRS, back by popular demand. The Fest met its objectives of increasing engagement with existing members and increasing AGM attendance. There were 57 stalls including external charities with overwhelming positive feedback and a real buzz of excitement at the event.

TZEDAKAH GROUP: Each year, a small group of people choose from among the various charities that approach us during the year for help and decide which charities will best suit our community in our annual appeal. These are put out to you all in the High Holy Days Appeal.

We are delighted to inform the community that we raised just over £25,000 in our appeal last September for our chosen charities: EHRS Community Needs Fund, Citizens Advice Barnet, Jewish Deaf Association, Jewish Women's Aid, Leket UK, World Jewish Relief, Israel Movement for Reform & Progressive Judaism, British Friends of Migdal Ohr and the Friends of Leo Baeck, Haifa. This was especially generous given that the events of 7 October 2023 still have repercussions in the choices people make when donating to charities, and when so many of our members are affected by the rising cost of living.

NEW OPTIONS: We cater for the retired and semi-retired (65 plus).

The Wednesday Bridge Afternoons were still very popular, attracting about 40-50 people each week for an enjoyable and social afternoon together with tea. Over half the people who attend are non-EHRS members.

The monthly light-hearted topical discussions, 'Schmoozing with the Rabbis', were now only held 'in person' and not on Zoom. About 18-20 people attended each time. All our Rabbis contributed, each in their own individual style, to make it lively and popular.

NOT THE WOMEN'S GUILD: Not the Women's Guild continues to welcome women of all ages who belong to EHRS. The group is informal, and programmes are decided democratically. It holds meetings monthly in the

afternoon at EHRS. The days of the week vary to be fair to those who have weekly commitments. Events include outings to theatres, local restaurants, talks by our Rabbis and visits to museums and stately homes. Socials are often based around festivals. The mixture of cultural and social activities suits the group, and we hope to continue in the same way.

ASSOCIATED GROUPS

Over the past year, we have held weekly events for our older members in a warm and friendly environment. We were thrilled to host speakers on various subjects who shared stories from various walks of life, delighting and inspiring us all.

We also had visits from singers who performed live music or with backing tracks, inviting our members to sit back and enjoy or join in for songs we knew and loved.

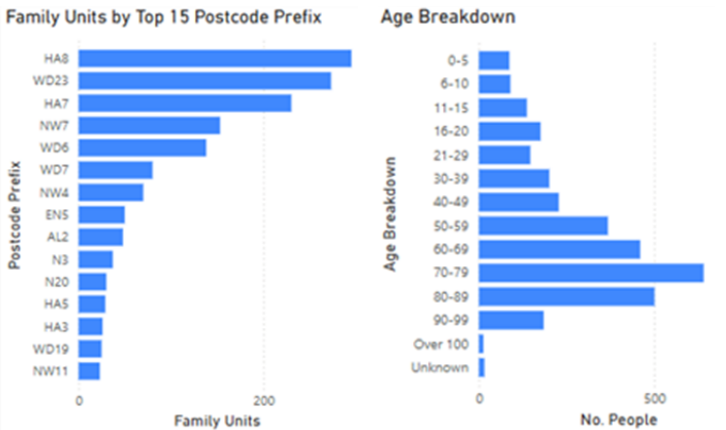
Quizzes gave our members a chance to stretch their memories and brains, after all our activities, we have tea and cake and a chat with friends.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership function actively encourages new members whilst also looking after our existing membership.

The membership statistics up until 31/12/2024 are below:

| STATISTICS AS AT | 2024 | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| MEMBER FAMILIES | 1,836 | 1,864 | 1,841 | 1,890 | 1,908 |
| NUMBER OF ADULTS | 2,677 | 2,722 | 2,679 | 2,855 | 2,793 |
| NUMBER OF CHILDREN | 487 | 504 | 449 | 445 | 456 |
| NUMBER OF AFFILIATES Jewish with burial rights elsewhere | 29 | 24 | 30 | 22 | 14 |
| NUMBER OF ASSOCIATES Non-Jewish with EHRS Jewish partner | 26 | 22 | 23 | 16 | 16 |
| NUMBER OF CORNERSTONE MEMBERS | 11 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| NUMBER OF EHRS FRIENDS Non-Jewish without EHRS Jewish partner | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |



Membership Platform – ShulCloud: EHRS had long relied on its internally customised system, Dorot, to manage crucial synagogue operations such as member data, subscriptions, and yahrzeits. Originally developed from Rakafet, Dorot has been critical over the years but now become outdated and in need of replacement. In 2024, a project was undertaken to evaluate replacement options and identify a suitable technology partner.

Following this evaluation, EHRS migrated to ShulCloud, a widely used, cloud-based synagogue management system from the US. ShulCloud is purpose-built and requires no customisation. It's trusted by over 1,600 synagogues, including several local ones such as Alyth and FRS. Its cloud infrastructure means reduced IT overhead and increased security. The move represents a financial investment, with expected benefits of; improved member engagement, significant time savings, reduced risk of errors, improved management information, improved communications, member self-service features, and elimination of email and backup tools – which made it a cost-effective and strategic upgrade.

SECURITY

During 2024, extensive refurbishments to the external areas and the envelope of the main building were undertaken that included the provision of new pedestrian site entrance. The Security Committee worked extensively with the architects and contractors to ensure that the security cabin was moved to the new entrance location with minimal downtime (half a day) and that the all the requirements of the security systems were integrated into the design (especially underground cable connection routes, access control equipment locations and the location of the video entry system onto the new gates).

At the same time, the opportunity was taken to upgrade the CCTV cameras across the premises while those on the main building were being removed anyway to be relocated onto the new cladding. Again, this took careful coordination with the contractors to minimise the number of cameras not operating at any one time.

The provision of the new CCTV and Access Control equipment was part funded by CST, and the Security Committee carried out the grant application and discussions with CST to obtain this money.

As with all venues within the Jewish Community, protecting our community is the security committee's priority. We have launched a system that sends out pre-allocated dates to our community so that we can have volunteers to assist CST trained members but, as with all venues, we need more help, so if you are between the age of 18-70 please volunteer on a Shabbat when you are available as we need as much help as we can and not just during the High Holy Days. You can contact us on security@ehrs.uk.

BEYOND EHRS

Beyond EHRS's work over this last year achieved the following:

- Demonstrates the charity's commitment to the advancement of education for the public benefit; and
- Supports the charity's commitment to providing services within its borough of operation (London Borough of Barnet), benefiting members of the public - who needn't be members of the synagogue.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE:

- Trips: Rabbi Tanya led trips to Prague and Sobeslav for members of the community to understand the origins of the EHRS Czech Torah. A trip to Poland was also held to visit the Jewish community there, as well as former concentration camps. A trip to Berlin for our post B'nei Mitzvah students took place as part of the 'Facing History' course. Rabbi Mark has also led a trip to Hughenden Manor, the home of Benjamin Disraeli.
- History & Culture: Our 'Cantor's Cabaret' with Cantor Tamara featured Jewish music of many kinds, together with show tunes and much more. The Stonegrove Serenade events have brought beautiful music to the Synagogue, with hundreds of people attending throughout the year, and has included some extraordinarily accomplished musicians. 'Oud and Food' this last year was about the heritage of Egyptian Judaism, stretching back two thousand years, and featured an academic from the 'Cairo Genizah' project in Cambridge. We have had lots of activities around our Czech Scroll, including a Shabbat dinner with a speaker from the Memorial Scrolls Trust, which attracted over 60 people.

ISRAEL: There have been Israel events; from our memorial event for October 7th, our Yom Ha'Atzmaut party and Yom HaZikaron commemoration, our Synagogue delegations to the "Bring them Home" and October 7th commemoration rallies led by Rabbi Mark. We have also had political events with journalist Nathan Jeffay and civil rights campaigner Orly Erez Lichovsky, and opportunities to meet with Israeli teenagers. We have also had discussions and Israeli food sharing. An EHRS trip to Israel took place in December.

INTERFAITH: The newly restored Interfaith Group had a busy 2024. Major events included our first Iftar, where we hosted 100 people to break their Ramadan fast, and an Interfaith Walk visiting a Methodist Church, a Mosque, our own synagogue and ending at our neighbours, OneStonegrove.

In July, we held an Interfaith Shabbat service where Rabbie Debbie explained the form and content of the service to our visitors from Christian, Hindu and Muslim communities. In November for Mitzvah Day, we joined

with other Interfaith groups for a Reverse Tashlich, cleaning out a stream in Burnt Oak and helping to clear rubbish at Box Tree Park in Harrow. As Autumn drew in, we held an Interfaith Cookalong, led by Rabbi Debbie, to create desserts for our Winter Night Shelter. Most of our events were organised with the help of the synagogue's Eco team, giving an additional public benefit.

The Interfaith Group is always looking for new members and ideas of how to reach out to our new and old friends in other local communities. If you are interested in joining us, please contact the synagogue for further information.

SOCIAL ACTION GROUP: The synagogue has once again continued with its homeless shelter, through its partnership with Together in Barnet; providing emergency accommodation to rough sleepers.

ASSOCIATED GROUPS

Over the past year, we have held weekly events for our older members in a warm and friendly environment. We were thrilled to host speakers on various subjects who shared stories from various walks of life, delighting and inspiring us all.

We also had visits from singers who performed live music or with backing tracks, inviting our members to sit back and enjoy or join in for songs we knew and loved.

Quizzes gave our members a chance to stretch their memories and brains, after all our activities, we have tea and cake and a chat with friends.

JEWISH AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

MRJ: Last October, the opening of the newly created courtyard, front entrance to the Synagogue and children's playground, was combined with an open day to learn about the myriad activities the community offers, the EHRS Fest. There are so many ways to be involved and connected. The innovation and fresh thinking put into this work is inspiring, making EHRS not just a place of prayer, but equally a Jewish community social hub where there are opportunities for everyone to embrace their interests and make friendships.

EHRS can play an exciting role in the new Progressive Movement, not only in its own right, but also through sharing its knowledge and expertise and partnering in programmes and activities with other shuls, the Movement and within the local community.

Paul Langsford, Chair, Movement for Reform Judaism

Joint Jewish Burial Society (JJBS): EHRS is a member of the JJBS and all members of the community pay towards its upkeep through an annual subscription. When the time comes, the JJBS are instrumental in assisting all congregants with burial of loved ones in a kind, caring and professional manner. Applications to be

buried in the Woodland Cemetery are increasing generally among the 44 synagogues who are members of the society, although, maybe surprisingly for a community the size of EHRS, the numbers of our community being buried here are low in proportion to other synagogues. The Woodland Cemetery is a calm, peaceful environment, with a beautiful new prayer hall and the welcome addition of a hall where refreshments can be organised after an interment or stone setting.

AJEX: The Edgware branch of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen do not meet as often as they used to as members are increasingly elderly, however, as usual, some members attended two Remembrance Day services, one at EHRS and one at Edgware United Synagogue. They also attended the annual parade on Whitehall on 17 November 2024, with a small contingent from the synagogue. It is appreciated that synagogue members attend the parade to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

BOARD OF DEPUTIES: Since October 7th 2023, the main priority of the Board has been campaigning for the return of the hostages imprisoned by Hamas in Gaza. Working with synagogues and organisations across the community, we have run vigils, organised marches, run community pairing and Seder Seat initiatives, and advocated at every level of government, both before and since the general election.

The unconditional release of hostages was one of the keystone commitments included in the Jewish Manifesto which the Board released ahead of the General Election last year. Drafted following extensive engagement across the community, the manifesto set out consensus community year. Drafted following extensive engagement across the community, the manifesto set out consensus community positions and key policy asks in relation to antisemitism and extremism, security and religious freedoms, and other key aspects of Jewish life in the UK. Since the election, we have engaged extensively with the new government and large crop of new MPs to hold them accountable and ensure their commitments are honoured.

Alongside this political engagement, much of the Board's day-to-day work relates to individuals or institutions, to support and defend British Jews and their rights. Our ongoing work includes the BBC's news coverage and working environment, the wellbeing of students and academics on campuses, and the policing of protests – as well as more positive work on education, heritage and Interfaith.

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

**ELECTED TO THE BOARD OF EHRS
20 OCTOBER 2023**

Mr R Brand
Mr K Darvill
Ms N Davidov
Mr N Flash
Mrs S Garson
Mr J Harrod
Mr A Hirsh
Mr B Konyn
Mr R Koster
Mrs T Levy
Mrs A Lipman
Mr K Maddison
Mr N Mailer
Mr D Mendoza-Wolfson
Mr D Mitchell
Mr M Lerman
Mrs J Sigalov
Mr D Stiasny
Mr B Trainis
Mr M Weber
Mr G Wittenberg
Mr A Woolstone

Signed by:

J Harrod - Trustee & Chairman

M Weber - Trustee & Honorary Secretary



Edgware & Hendon
Reform Synagogue
ק"ק לדור ודור

