

Sukkat Shalom – Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community  
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Present

Nick Silk (chair), Jen Andreacchi, Lisa Barcan, Sue Bard, Michael Elam, Helen Ford, Stewart Green, Rolando Hernandez-Trapero, Barrie Levine, Maurice Naftalin, Charles Raab, Han Smith, Jonathan Staal, Andrea Torres-Trapero, Miriam Vickers

Apologies

Len Alden, Phyllis Alden, Jonathan Broadie, Marjory Broadie, Stefano Giossi, Rebekah Gronowski, Natalie Horowitz, Isobel King, Sue Lieberman, Maureen Mackinnon, Gillian Raab, Mallory Wober

1 Approval of Minutes of 2022 AGM

The minutes of the 2022 AGM were accepted as a true record. (Proposed by C Raab, seconded by S Bard, unanimous vote.)

2 Co-Chairs' Report (S Bard)

S Bard highlighted the following points in presenting the co-Chairs' report:

- 2022 was a year of consolidation following the previous years of lockdown
- There was a small increase in membership numbers
- 2023 has to continue to focus on succession planning since, assuming no-one stands for election as Chair, the co-Chairs want this to be the last year they are in office
- Thanks should be given to G Raab who, while she stood down as a co-Chair during 2022, continues to do lots of work for the community
- Thanks should also be given to Rabbi Mark and also Liberal Judaism for their continued support

L Barcan offered thanks to the co-Chairs for their ongoing commitment to the community.

Acceptance of the co-Chairs' report was proposed by H Smith, seconded by L Barcan and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

### 3 Treasurer's Report and Approval of Accounts

In S Giossi's absence, N Silk presented the Treasurer's report and accounts to the meeting and made the following points:

- There was a surplus of £5,884 in the last financial year, as compared to £13,624 the previous year
- The main difference between the two years is that Rabbi's fees & expenses and expenses for the hire of halls increased in the last financial year. This reflects the increase of in-person services and visits of Rabbi Mark to Edinburgh as we have come out of Covid restrictions

There being no questions, acceptance of the Treasurer's report and accounts was proposed by S Green, seconded by H Smith and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

### 4 Reports on Other Activities

N Silk noted that while the 'reports on other activities' would be considered and discussed individually, he proposed to formally vote on all these 'other reports' together, subject to there being no contentious issues raised during their review.

#### **Religious Affairs Report (N Silk)**

N Silk summarised the report. M Naftalin noted that progress has been made in bringing together cheder classes and services, that two 'cheder-led' services were held last year and more are planned this year.

#### **Cheder Report (G Holliman)**

G Holliman was not at the meeting to present the report. There were no questions or comments on the report.

#### **Membership Report (S Giossi & G Raab)**

S Giossi and G Raab were not at the meeting to present the report. During brief discussion on the report, it was noted that an increase of 2 members and with 15 new members joining, this means that 13 members left the community.

#### **Interfaith (N Silk)**

N Silk summarised the report. There were no questions or comments on the report.

#### **Eco-Synagogue Project (J Staal)**

J Staal briefly summarised the report, noting that there would be fuller discussion of the project after the conclusion of the formal part of the meeting. There were no questions or comments on the report.

#### **Adult Learning (S Bard)**

S Bard summarised the report. There were no questions or comments on the report.

### **Communications (S Bard and R Gronowski)**

S Bard summarised the report, in particular noting that there are plans for activity on social media and the website. In answer to a question, S Bard stated that she is not standing down as editor of Etrog. S Green thanked S Bard and all those involved in producing Etrog, while S Bard noted the work that G Raab does in producing the weekly reminders.

### **Care & Welfare (S Bard)**

S Bard summarised the report, noting in particular that things are in a state of flux following Joe Goldblatt standing down as the co-ordinator of the Care Team. She did note that herself and H Smith are discussing how to progress matters, and also noted the expansion of the Honeycomb project, an initiative of Liberal Judaism and Reform Judaism, which provides services such as bereavement support, particularly aimed at smaller communities who don't have the resources themselves to offer such services.

After the meeting had considered this report, all the 'other reports' were formally voted upon. Acceptance of the reports was proposed by S Green, seconded by H Ford and agreed unanimously.

## 5 Proposed Subscription Level for 2023

N Silk told the meeting that Council, at its last meeting, had decided to propose to the AGM that the annual subscription remain unchanged, at £260 per adult member. There was only very brief discussion on the proposal, with those expressing an opinion agreeing that it would be good to keep the fees unchanged.

N Silk formally proposed the retention of the membership fee at £260, S Bard seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

## 6 Election of Office Bearers & Council Members for 2023

### **Chair**

There were no nominations for Chair. That being the case, N Silk noted that himself, S Bard and M Naftalin were prepared to continue as co-Chairs. B Levine proposed that the three co-Chairs be accepted, L Barcan seconded the motion and the meeting unanimously approved that the three co-Chairs continue in post.

B Levine thanked the co-Chairs for their continuing work, and G Raab was again thanked for all her work as a co-Chair.

### **Treasurer**

S Giossi had indicated that he was prepared to continue as Treasurer. His nomination was formally proposed by S Bard, seconded by R Hernandez-Trapero and unanimously approved.

**Secretary**

G Raab had indicated that she would be prepared to continue as Secretary. Her nomination was proposed by H Smith, seconded by M Naftalin and approved by all but 1 member present, the 1 member abstaining.

**Council**

The following members had indicated they wished to be considered for Council. Each nomination was considered individually, and in all cases the nomination was approved unanimously. There was some discussion as to whether the co-Chairs needed to be individually approved; for the sake of completeness they were formally elected to Council.

- S Bard (co-Chair)
- J Broadie
- M Broadie
- M Elam
- H Ford
- S Giossi (already on Council as Treasurer)
- B Levine
- M Naftalin (co-Chair)
- G Raab
- N Silk (co-Chair)
- H Smith
- A Torres-Trapero

7 AOB

There was no other business.

Sukkat Shalom – Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community  
Notes from Discussion following the Annual General Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup>  
March 2023

Introduction

Following the Annual General Meeting, Jonathan Staal led a discussion on the Eco-Synagogue project. While this discussion was not part of the AGM, these notes provide a record of the discussions.

The Eco-Synagogue Project

J Staal gave a brief introduction to the Eco-Synagogue project. The Board of Deputies as well as other communities are involved, and J Staal has been to several briefings with these other communities. There are six areas of focus – Management, Prayer & Teaching, Lifestyle, Catering, Travel Planning and Community & Global Activism – and J Staal suggested that as a community we have so far not done much as regards the climate crisis.

J Staal then suggested some of the areas where we could develop the Eco-Synagogue project:

- When we hold kiddushim, we should consider how we dispose of rubbish – can it be composted – and not have any single use cutlery, plates etc
- The best way of making the principles of the Eco-Synagogue permanent, as opposed to it being a one-off project that fades away, is to incorporate the principles into our existing structures
- We should agree priorities and objectives
- If we are to do anything meaningful we will need to do quite a bit of research:
  - Map activities against our current structures
  - Map what we'll do in the next 12-18 months
  - Identify what help we'll need

There then followed general discussion during which the following points were made:

- Our existing structures are fairly ad hoc
- We don't often have elaborate kiddushim
- If we are to take the project seriously, we have to be 'more intentional' on what we do and how it links to the climate crisis

- We should formally adopt the principle of sustainability such that anything we do as a community considers sustainability. Perhaps do this on an audit basis and make sure it is always on our agenda
- Is there anything / are there any actions we could 'borrow' from other communities or the Board of Deputies?
- It isn't clear how the recycling systems work at St Mark's or Marchmont St Giles. J Staal noted that he had tried to contact both venues to discuss this but without success
- Could we partner with St Mark's and Marchmont St Giles?
- Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation have a designated group and they are 1-2 years ahead of us. Could we link in with them?
- Are there things we could do in Edinburgh e.g., litter picking along the Water of Leith. Perhaps this could involve our cheder, and even be done as an interfaith project
- We should consider educating our members as there will be different levels of understanding
- We should use our prayers and teachings to emphasise the importance of tackling the climate crisis
- We should emphasise sustainability at every opportunity – in Etrog, during services etc.
- Members should be empowered by Council to act on its behalf e.g., in setting up a procedure for recycling at St Mark's

The discussion concluded with J Staal noting that the momentum of the Eco-Synagogue project group has stalled a bit and it would be good to re-energise it. It was suggested that we could use Shavuot as a 'marker' for spreading the message to the wider community and getting more people involved. There was general agreement that we should use Shavuot as a focus for sustainability, that this would be confirmed/discussed at the next Council meeting, that we need to liaise with Rabbi Mark to confirm he is OK with this and thereafter J Staal will liaise with Rabbi Mark before Shavuot to confirm how sustainability can be highlighted in the Shavuot seder.