

Sukkat Shalom Council

Information for and expectations of new and existing council members February 2024

Background

Sukkat Shalom is the only Liberal Jewish community and one of only two Progressive Jewish communities in Scotland (the other being Glasgow Reform). It's the only Scottish Jewish community that's growing, and particularly since the pandemic, has attracted many members who don't live in Edinburgh but who can participate in the online services and events that we're committed to retaining. Our membership is diverse, including people of all ages, living in many different types of households and coming to Judaism via different routes. It includes LGBTQI+ Jews; our rabbi, Mark Solomon has been at the forefront within Liberal Judaism nationally and within our own community in ensuring that LGBTQI+ Jews can participate fully in the life of the synagogue.

Our growing and changing community is run almost entirely voluntarily and our Council is key to how this works. It's important that our Council is representative of our community, and we'd really like (and really need) more people who care about the future of Sukkat Shalom and have some time and energy to spare, to consider becoming Council members

Benefits to and expectations of Council members

By being on the Council you will be able to bring your own ideas, to suggest ways we could better serve our members and to contribute to decisions being made about how the community should be run. But there are also expectations of council members. Being a council member isn't a spectator sport. Your active presence, participation and involvement is required! This includes:

Being at council meetings

During the covid pandemic in 2020/21 our council meetings – like everything else - were held on Zoom. Unlike everything else, they stayed that way. But from March 2024 they will go back to being in-person. We believe that in-person meetings will generate better discussion and decision making and strengthen relationships between council members. We have also reduced the frequency of council meetings from once a month to every two months and the dates for the meetings will be set for six months at a time. We expect council members to be committed to coming to meetings

Our constitution provides that council members can be removed if: *they are absent (without permission of the Council) from more than three consecutive meetings of the Council, and two thirds of the Council resolve to remove them from office.*

Preparing for meetings

By preparing for meetings by reading any papers beforehand. The agenda and minutes of the previous meeting are circulated in draft form before each meeting for comment and all supporting papers are also circulated ahead of time.

Participating in meetings

By contributing to discussion and decision making.

Being involved in and taking responsibility for the life of the community

By supporting its activities as much as they can and being prepared to take on one-off and more sustained responsibilities within the community.

Undertaking required training

Including reading the OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) guidance and undertaking the online LJ (Liberal Judaism) safeguarding training.

How Sukkat Shalom Council operates and what it does

- The council consists of up to 15 members who are elected at the AGM usually in February, but the constitution allows co-option of members between AGMs. 4 members are required for meetings to be quorate.
- At the moment we have 3 co-chairs. We are currently reviewing our structure and processes, including creating long- and short-life subgroups to which responsibility can be delegated
- We meet every two month (with a minimum requirement of 6 meetings a year) in-person.
- We formally approve applications for membership. We approve the accounts and get reports on religious affairs, membership, finance and other items that may be relevant. There are a number of standing items that always appear on the agenda.
- Any member or associate member of Sukkat Shalom can attend Council meetings. It is our current practice to invite an associate member to attend. Other members (e.g. cheder teachers) are sometimes invited to attend for individual items on the agenda.
- Under Charity Legislation in Scotland all members of the Council are trustees of the organisation who are responsible for its conduct as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). See Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator <https://www.oscr.org.uk/>
- Council members may sometimes be privy to personal information about our members. It is important that this information is not shared with anyone outside the Council and is only used for the purposes of running the Community. Requests from any source to obtain information about a Community member should always be dealt with by passing the request to the Community member themselves

Important information about our community

The organisation page <http://eljc.org/organisation> provides links to the formal items. Some may require a password that can be obtained by emailing admin@eljc.org). In particular

- Our constitution
- A list of current Council members
- Minutes of AGMs and Council meetings.

- Reports and accounts submitted annually to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.
- A little bit about our history – more on this elsewhere on our web site.
- Our Community Information Directory

If you would like any more information including an opportunity for an informal chat then please approach any council member. See list [here](#).