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THE FUTURE FOR HWPS

Members of the congregation were given the opportunity to raise their concerns about the future of the Synagogue at a forum meeting held on Sunday November 8. A total of 121 people, 25% of our membership, attended and three observers from Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NLPS) Council were present. Many people who were unable to attend had already sent their views by letter or e-mail and these were read out.

The current situation was outlined by Chairman of Council, Adrian Cohen; Treasurer Steven Sanderson explained why our income is declining and that we will be in deficit by 2011; Rabbi Frank reiterated the options open to us [see Hakol November 2009]. It was emphasised that no decisions have been taken and that all options are still on the table.

The meeting was then thrown open to the members for questions and comments.

The concerns raised fell into five main topic areas

- Finance
- Burial rights
- Transport
- Maintaining local links
- Cheder

Finance

Our income is shrinking year on year due to declining membership and the fact that a substantial percentage of members are on reduced level of subscription or family memberships. The balance owed is restored to the synagogue on death but not all estates are sufficient to cover this expense. We receive around 50% of the monies owed. Increasing subscriptions is not an option in the current financial climate, nor are we in a position to ask for substantial donations from our members.

Equity release on the building was suggested but it was pointed out that there is no way we could obtain equity release, as we are not attracting new young members. Young Jews are not moving into the area. The banks would be very concerned about the size of our projected deficit. We doubt if any bank would be willing to lend us money, as they would not be confident we could repay it. On current projections there would be few members left in twenty years time.

Sale of the building would clear our debts and secure our burial fund as well as providing a sum to carry forward into whatever new arrangement we decide upon. The importance of timing the sale so as to optimise the sum raised was mentioned. We should not rush the procedure but wait for the market to improve. Leaseback of the building was also suggested, but it is doubtful that we could afford the rental and our running costs would remain.

The option of sharing our building was still being explored but there is the difficulty of finding a suitable match.

Burial rights

Many people raised concerns about burial rights. These remain secure so long as membership remains within the Liberal movement. Should you choose to join another synagogue in another movement your burial rights will lapse. Anyone planning to move to a Reform Synagogue is advised to retain their Liberal membership and become a "friend" of their chosen new destination.

Transport

If we decide upon a merger with Northwood and Pinner, transport might be a problem for some people. Metropolitan Line services are good between Preston Road and Northwood although it is not certain how many of our members actually live in the immediate area of the synagogue.

We are looking into the possibility of a minibus to collect people and take them to Northwood. We would also extend the existing network of people giving lifts to the elderly and disabled. This is part of our thinking. If we merge we want to take as many people as possible with us so friendships can continue

Maintaining local links

Worries were expressed that members will split into separate synagogues and that lifelong friendships will be lost. It is hoped to arrange services in the Preston Road area in members' homes or in nearby halls, with the possibility of arranging local overflow services for the High Holy days. Some existing activities could also function in people's homes. We could perhaps be organised as a satellite of NLPS.

Cheder

Our Cheder is perhaps viable for another two years. We have kept going against the odds, the teachers and children love it and it is a personal passion of the Rabbi. At the moment we have just under twenty children, with a really good Kabbalat Torah class next year. We have almost no new children joining us and it will be hard to justify after next year. Kenton, Belmont and Wembley have closed their cheders. NPLS has 120 pupils in their Cheder. Parents of children currently in religion school tend to favour an early move to Northwood.

There were many contributions from the floor clearly urging Council and the Rabbi to continue discussions with NPLS with the objective of achieving a merger proposal which could be presented to both congregations for approval. We would be joining a vibrant community but we have many strengths and talents to offer.

A show of hands vote gave a result of 111 members in favour of seeking a merger with NLPS with 10 members voting against.

Note: this is a much-condensed report of the meeting. A full verbatim account is available from the synagogue office (preferably by e-mail)

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday December 2 Food for Fun

Friday December 11 Chanukah 1st candle

Sunday December 13 Adult Education

Tuesday December 15 Photography Group

Friday December 18 Speaking Freely

Saturday December 19

Kiddush for Geo Khan

Friday December 25 Erev Shabbat

JOURNEY TO BERLIN

Our latest HWPS journey to Berlin (17-20 June 2010) offers a superb opportunity, for both repeat and first-time visitors, to discover the fruitful as well as painful Jewish heritage to be found in this extraordinary city. Now, after the reunification, unparalleled freedom, renewal and hope may be witnessed. Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith who is intimately familiar with Berlin, both past and present will lead our journey.

Itinerary

Thursday, 17 June 2010 - A very early departure on British Airways flight 990, leaving Heathrow Terminal 5 at 7.15am. Arriving at Tegel-Airport in Berlin at 10.05am, we'll first check into the ideally located Hotel Sheunenviertel. After a snack, we'll visit the renowned Jewish Museum designed by Daniel Liebeskind that is, in great part, devoted to the profound contributions that Jews made to German life and culture since Roman times. Then some free time late in the afternoon for resting or walking and dinner out in the evening.

Friday, 18 June 2010 - Breakfast at 8.30am and then an excursion by S-Bahn to 'Track-17', a most thoughtful deportation memorial located at Grünwald train station and this is followed by seeing the stadium built for the 1936 Olympics. Free time for lunch (and shopping!) in the famous Ka-De-We department store food hall located in the Kurfürstendamm area. For the mid-afternoon, we are arranging a discussion session with prominent installation artist and teacher Nikolai von Rosen whose practice is devoted to the question of what it means to live and work in contemporary Berlin. In the evening, Erev Shabbat services at the Neue Synagogue on Oranienburgerstrasse followed by dinner.

Saturday, 19 June 2010 - Breakfast at 9.00am. We will then visit the former schoolhouse where Nazi leaders formally surrendered to the Allies. This will be followed by a visit to the Museum Insel where icons such as the Pergamon Altar and the bust of Nefertiti are exhibited. In the afternoon, free time for a walk or early supper. At 8.00 in the evening, a classical music concert programme featuring works by Bartok, Sibelius and Brahms.

Sunday, 20 June 2010 - Breakfast at 8.00am followed by a day trip to Ravensbrück concentration camp, about 1½ hours north of Berlin by train. Alternatives will be offered to those wishing to remain in Berlin. Our flight home (BA 987) departs from Berlin at 7.55pm and arrives at Terminal 5 at 8.55pm.

For information on cost and booking a place on this trip, please contact Rabbi Frank on 020 8908 2601

About our Members

Condolences to:

David Kreeger on the loss of his sister

Get well wishes to:

Trudy Goodman

Rita Foreman

Ben Spilfogel

Good Luck

in their new home to Robert and Pauline Symons

Mazeltov

to Feo Kahn on her 100th birthday

Cheder Birthdays

Noah Leon-Hunt

Sam Rozewicz



SECURITY- YOUR SYNAGOGUE NEEDS YOU!

A Call for Volunteers

We are very fortunate that HWPS has a fantastic security team, who protect us throughout the year come rain or shine; at services, at the Cheder and over the High Holy Days. But we need more volunteers. **Don't let the few protect the many** - please offer your services by contacting Ashley Winston via the Synagogue Office. Donations to help keep our security facilities up to date are also welcome.

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Are you a keen photographer?
 Then you will be interested in our **PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP.**

Their next meeting "100 years of photographs for the Jewish Daily Forward" will be on Tuesday December 15 at 8pm.



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A Message from Susan Slade

To all my friends at HWPS:

First of all, a huge thank you to everyone for your very generous gift to me of my holiday in Berlin next year. I was amazed to receive this, and it is typical of the warmth and kindness which you have shown me throughout my 20 years at HWP

I reflect on the time past, and think how fortunate I have been. I have worked with two gifted, kind and helpful Rabbis, who have taught me the ritual with patience and good humour. With their guidance I have been able to explore and learn about the rich tradition of Judaism, a fund of thought and wisdom compiled over many centuries. Some things were familiar, often startlingly so, but most things were unknown to me when I arrived, and I have always been refreshed and renewed by the services and opportunities for study.

Also I have been able to be part of a community which has felt like family and is very special to me. Thank you all for your encouragement and appreciation, which has always cheered me and got me through some difficult times in my life – the Friday evening service really has been an oasis of peace for me.

I have also had the opportunity to work with my favourite organist! John and I have known each other since I was a music student back in 1970 – nearly 40 years, and I was so delighted when he agreed to my letter requesting that he should come and work with me at HWPS. I have also greatly enjoyed working with Mary, Bob and Lobo, and latterly with Ronan on the staff, and with many other singers, particularly Elaine – it has been a real privilege for me to work with all these talented musicians.

I shall keep in touch, and I look forward to visiting you and catching up with all your news. Once again my thanks to you all.

With love from Susan

Since the beginning of November we have welcomed Mary Banks in Susan's place. We wish her and all the team a happy and rewarding time with our community.

AJEX PARADE

On the 15th November the 75th AJEX Parade was held in Whitehall to commemorate the Jewish servicemen and women who gave their lives in two world wars and later conflicts. In the Second World War about 70,000 British Jews served in the forces and over 3000 gave their lives. Shortly after the war up to 20,000 people would take part in the parades, the salute being taken by members of the Royal Family or top military leaders, with very large crowds watching. This year less than a thousand marched and many of these were ex-National Servicemen. This is not surprising as the youngest World War II veteran is now 83 and time has taken its toll. There were however many watching and participating in what is still one of the biggest and most impressive Jewish gatherings. The salute was taken by Brigadier (retd.) Allan Julius, the most senior recent Jewish officer.

Following the march from Horse

Guards Parade, the service took place around the Cenotaph, and was conducted by the Chief Rabbi and our former Rabbi, Harry Jacobi. Among the many wreaths was one representing the Jewish Brigade laid by Gideon Fiegel from our synagogue. It was sad to feel the absence of Stanley Marks who up to last year had been a very regular participant in past Parades.

The band of the Royal Air Force and the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade provided music for the march and service where one of the memorable aspects was the mass singing of Adon Olam.

This event is still one of the most important and meaningful in the Jewish calendar. Sadly however this may well have been the last commemoration its present format. It is to be hoped that a new type of event will be organised to act as a reminder of the sacrifices made by our forebears in the service of their country.

George Vulkan

STANLEY MARKS ART WORKSHOP



The Art workshop, named in commemoration of its founder Stanley Marks, meets every Thursday morning from 9.45 until 12.00. It is a thriving group which welcomes new members.

Everyone is invited to come along and see their work and join them at their Chanukah party on the morning of December 17. Coffee and doughnuts will be served.

Rosemary Wolfson

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Chanukah 5770

This year Chanukah begins on Friday evening December 11. So that the community can celebrate together we shall be lighting the First Candle at our Family Service which will begin at 7pm.

Come along with all your family and friends to enjoy this special occasion. You are promised latkes and doughnuts but above all a warm welcome. Bring your own Chanukah if you wish.

