



# Masorti Judaism: New Beginnings

IMPACT REPORT 2021-22





# New beginnings: together again

## Noam Masorti Youth highlights

84 16-17-year-olds went on the first Noam Israel tour since 2019

321 young people came to life-changing Noam summer camps

249 young people attended clubs and new Shabbatonim



7 young people attended Kelim, our relaunched three-week programme at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem

101 4-9-year-olds began their Noam journey at Kaytana day camp

63 madrichim (leaders) enrolled in Noam's bespoke leadership training course



# Oliver's story



“I led camp for the first time in 2019. I missed the next two camps but I felt that my Noam journey wasn't complete and wanted to come back as a first-time rosh (team leader). It's a lot of responsibility but I loved it. I loved losing myself in the 'Noam moments' and giving myself completely to the Noam community. As a rosh I spent lots of time thinking about how I can inspire the leaders and young people. There's something so special about Noam, it's so different to everything else in my life. I grew up secular and Noam has been an important part of forming my Jewish identity and connecting me to a wider Jewish community.”

**Oliver Hill**  
a first-time rosh for Nevatim Alef this summer



# New approaches to inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of Noam. We pay for medical and mental health support for participants and give financial assistance to ensure that money is never a barrier for entry to our community.

## For summer camp 2022

We introduced a new sliding scale pricing policy to reduce costs for lower-income families

We allocated **£20,000** of bursaries to 56 lower-income participants

We created care plans for **55** young people with additional needs, medical issues or mental health challenges

We invested in **4** paediatric nurses and a full-time medical student to take care of campers



# Kitty's story

Kitty is a member of Noam Masorti Youth. She's been involved with Noam since she was nine, did Merkaz Noam, our leadership training course, and in 2022 came to pre-camp as a madricha for the first time. Kitty is proud to be part of Noam.

"I love my Jewish heritage – and Noam helps me connect with that", explains Kitty. "Noam is my family's community."

Because Kitty has Down's Syndrome, Noam has always worked closely with Kitty and her parents, co-creating a care-plan for Kitty's time away. Kitty is allocated a dedicated team of keyworkers, so she always has the support she needs. Throughout each camp, senior Noam madrichim communicate with Kitty's parents, discussing strategies for any challenging situations that might arise. Kitty says: "The madrichim on Noam are amazing. They're helpful, kind and really good to talk to. If you're upset, they cheer you up. They make me feel part of the community".

Kitty's father, Daniel, agrees: "The leadership team at Noam has always made us feel that Kitty is welcome at camp. Their attitude is inclusive and their approach cooperative. Noam's default position is to include Kitty and find ways to make Noam work for her. They have invested time in getting to know Kitty, understanding and putting in place plans that evolve with her needs".

Daniel continues: "Noam gives Kitty a focus during the summer holidays, which might otherwise be quite long and lonely for Kitty. It's lovely that there's somewhere she is happy to go, where she's welcome and feels wanted. It gives Kitty purpose. It's a chance for her to interact with peers, feel part of a larger movement, be part of a team and work towards a common goal. It's an important part of her identity."

***Kitty and her family are members of New London Synagogue and New Stoke Newington Shul***



*Kitty, right, with Noam movement worker Noa Rees*





## New networks for young adults

Jewish life is changing. People's priorities have changed and their connection with Judaism is less certain than it once was. This is particularly true for young people, many of whom feel disconnected from Judaism but crave a closer relationship with their community.

Our response is to create networks of young adults, build relationships between them, our rabbis and our communities, and help them shape meaningful Jewish life on their own terms.



**Nina Fine is our Noam Alumni Coordinator**

"I grew up as a member of New North London Synagogue and Noam, which played a huge part in shaping who I am today. After going to university, I took a hiatus from Jewish life because I couldn't find any spaces that explored Judaism in resonant ways. But, six years later, I found my way back through Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg's Topical Talmud sessions. I am now working for Masorti Judaism, heading up our work with young adults. I've learned that, like me, many young people miss their Judaism. There is clearly something missing and a yearning to be answered. I'm proud to be part of the solution for the next generation of Masorti Jews, helping to actively listen and effectively respond and support now."

### This year we:

- Held 105 one-to-one meetings with young people to build relationships and understand their needs
- Empowered students to lead their own Jewish life on campus through Marom, our organisation for university students
- Welcomed young people into Masorti rabbis' homes for Friday night dinner
- Enabled young people to create peer-led events, like a Hanukah party raising money for projects in Israel
- Supported Ohel Mo'ed, a new Masorti community started by Noam Alumni
- Helped young families build enriching Jewish life through the Havurah, an experimental Masorti community in North London
- Continued to support Our Second Home, a youth movement for refugees and asylum seekers begun by Noam Alumni



"Shabbat dinner at Rabbi Oliver Joseph's home was the kind of Jewish experience a lot of people were hungry for but didn't know existed."

**Guy Pollack**

## New approaches to welcoming

Masorti Judaism is for everyone. This year we launched our new, National Lottery funded, LGBT+ Inclusion Project, in partnership with Keshet UK.

This is what we've achieved:

- Membership of the Masorti LGBT+ Network increased by **50%** over the last year
- Leaders from New North London and St Albans Masorti Synagogues worked to improve LGBT+ inclusion in their communities, looking at how services, community activities and communications can be adapted to ensure everyone feels welcome
- A joint interfaith Pride event with Hidayah LGBTQI+, a Queer Muslim charity, in which participants shared their experiences as LGBT+ people of faith
- 13** Masorti communities celebrated Pride Shabbat with community meals, special services and pride flags
- Our Pride campaign reached **26,620** people on social media
- We ran a full day of training for Masorti rabbis and chazanim, creating a shared language around inclusion and allyship and exploring how to respond to sensitive issues in the community
- We've helped **7** of our synagogues become licensed to register same-sex marriages



“

“When one of the Masorti rabbis invited myself and my girlfriend to Shabbat dinner, I felt the warm glow of being seen and accepted for who I am. I'm so proud to be part of a community that welcomes and celebrates LGBT+ identities.”  
**Hannah Kashman is a member of New Essex Masorti Synagogue**





# New beginnings in our communities

## October 2021:

Edgware and Elstree & Borehamwood Masorti synagogues merge to create **SHEMA** – South Herts and Edgware Masorti Community

## March 2022:

The new **Havurah** community celebrates its first Bar Mitzvah

## April 2022:

**New North London Synagogue** relaunches their first in-person Drop In for Asylum Seekers

**Senior Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg** visits refugee camps and Masorti communities in Ukraine in a delegation of faith leaders

## May 2022:

**New Stoke Newington Shul** dedicates its new Sefer Torah

## June 2022:

**Masorti Brighton** hold their first meeting

**Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue** receives an EcoSynagogue award for environmental good practice

## July 2022:

Two new cantorial leads, David Djemal and Yoav Oved, join **New London Synagogue**

**Anthony Lazarus Magrill** receives semicha (ordination) and becomes our newest Masorti rabbi

**Mosaic Masorti Synagogue** moves into its new home in Stanmore Hill



*Jonathan Barnett is a new lay leader who took part in this year's Jewish Community Organising course*

"I joined Elstree and Borehamwood Masorti Community in 2019 after moving to the area with my wife. I became very involved in the community and regularly attended services. I enrolled in Masorti Judaism's Jewish Community Organising course and began to help with the proposed merger with Edgware Masorti Synagogue.

The Jewish Community Organising course completely transformed how I think about community building. We learned about different community models, and I now think about the value of communities in an entirely different way.

Following the JCO course, I had a new understanding about effective communication and how to bring people on board. I was able to utilise this after the merger had been agreed and SHEMA had officially formed, by helping to organise an open forum, to hear the community's views on how the transition was working in practice. The process was a fun challenge and very rewarding and I hope something the community can build on going forward.

I'm still involved with SHEMA, helping to organise services in Borehamwood. SHEMA has a bright future and I'm excited to see where our community goes next. I'm grateful for the support that Masorti Judaism has provided as we build the SHEMA community and appreciate how the Jewish Community Organising course feeds into the process."



This year, Masorti Judaism has supported our communities

We've worked with community chairs

We've trained lay-leaders and mentored new Rabbis

We've developed 9 emerging leaders through our Jewish Community Organising course

## Plans for the future



The purpose of Masorti Judaism is to develop flourishing communities, rooted in traditional practice and modern values, where people can find meaning by connecting to Judaism and to each other.

### Our values:

We aspire for all our communities and the movement as a whole to be:

- Traditional
- Inclusive
- Learning
- Empowering

### Our strategic priorities are:

#### Leadership development

- Training rabbis, community organisers, leaders of prayer and Jewish educators

#### The Masorti message

- Raising our profile in the media and building an online community

#### Young people

- Growing Noam Masorti Youth's activities and developing innovative community-building work with young adults

#### Community support

- Practical support on safeguarding, inclusion, leadership and community development

## What's new for 2023

- Expand Noam Alumni's Friday night dinner initiative to host 15 Shabbat dinners and connect 160 young adults with Jewish life
- Distribute micro-grants for young adults to spark creative Jewish programming
- Identify young leaders to host communal gatherings and activities on Jewish festivals
- Create an online resource of Jewish prayer and ritual, develop leaders of prayer and run educational events across the Masorti movement – all supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Support two student rabbis: Jessica Spencer and Sarah-Beth Neville, both studying in Israel
- Produce Masorti Judaism's first ever siddur, dedicated in memory of Rina Wolfson z"l
- Send 8 young people on Drachim, Noam's transformational 6-month gap year programme in Israel – our biggest group since 2012
- Welcome 325 young people on Noam summer camps and Israel tours
- Relaunch Noam's weekly Beit Midrash Jewish learning programme for 6th formers
- Hold our first fundraising dinner since 2020 and increase overall donations by 48%



**Thanks to those people who made our achievements possible:**

- Our inspiring and talented rabbis and chazanim
- Our dedicated community lay leaders
- Our committed trustees and committee members
- Our generous donors and funders



Registered UK charity No. 117590



@masortijudaism

