



Masorti Judaism; Annual General Meeting 2024

Minutes - Thursday 19th September 2024

In person at SHEMA and Online via Zoom

Members present

SHEMA	Leeds
NLS	NNLS
Noam	Marom

Online

Associate members in attendance

The Havurah

Associate members online

In attendance - Present

Trustees

Miriam Farbey (Co-Chair); Joe Carlebach (Co-Chair); David Caplan; Stephen Greene; Jonathan Wiseman

David Grossman; Riki Williams (Noam); Elisabeth Sharp (Marom); Sasha Gordon

Staff

Rachel Sklan (CEO)
Chantal Jacobs (Director of Operations)
Janine Clements (Note-taker)

Online

1. Introductions and apologies

Joe welcomed everyone and explained that as 5 members were present with 14 votes represented, the meeting was Quorate. (Required numbers are 5 members and 10 votes)

Apologies received from Adam Rose

Alexander House, 3 Shakespeare Road, London N3 1XE | Tel 020 8349 6650 | hello@masorti.org.uk | www.masorti.org.uk
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2. **Minutes of last year's meeting** were unanimously approved as an accurate record.

3. **Opening address - Senior Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg**

Rabbi Wittenberg addressed the meeting by first stating that he cannot put into words his appreciation. There has been a sense of solidarity across the whole team and a generous working relationship. The challenges of letters received, anti-Semitism and critical voices against us, in an extraordinary year has been difficult. Each community holds different views and tensions. It is difficult to be Jewish and yet we have shown deepened resistance and affirmed and engaged with others – we need to work for the depth of Torah. There is attrition of interfaith relationships in public, perhaps although he had experienced gestures of friendship. Going forwards, relationships are important and it is vital that we engage locally, but also with Government and with faith communities. The relationship with Israel – our people – whether we agree or not – needs us to be aware of the human line and ask ourselves the question: Where do I stand? Since Oct 7th last year it has been tough, but we are strong and Rabbi Jonathan felt very grateful to be part of Masorti Judaism.

Miriam thanked Rabbi Jonathan for his address and his work as the movement's Senior Rabbi reciprocating the gratitude and questioning 'where we would have been without him'.

David C. referred to the relationship with Government. After 7th October, Met Police reached out centrally and locally. The 'jury is out' on Government and although David Lammy, Keir Starmer and Yvette Cooper do not appear to be being disingenuous, no one knows how robust they are. Starmer is tough and may hold his line. Lammy's decision had terrible timing and a statement was anodyne and *David* had been questioned about 'why don't I challenge and question'. *Rabbi Jonathan* responded by saying that 'Rabbis need to be seen and put our feet where our mouths are.' Joe talked about anti-Semitism being experienced by (our) students and *David* asked that we focused on isolated students who were not being supported.

4. **To adopt the Proposal to amend the MJ Articles of Association**

The proposal was read to those present and adopted with a unanimous vote. Oxford was afforded the opportunity to vote as an associate member as they contribute annual dues.

5. **Election of New Trustees**

The new trustees were proposed by the Board and unanimously elected by the meeting. The meeting also agreed that Adam Rose and Joel Fenster could extend their terms as trustees and be co-opted for another year at the first Board Meeting following the AGM. Outgoing trustees, Treasurer David Caplan and Safeguarding Lead, Clare Levy were thanked sincerely for their amazing contributions and loyalty and hard work.

6. **Report on Board of Deputies' representation**

Paul Harris is now the Masorti Judaism's representative at the Board of Deputies.

7. Chief Executive's report

Rachel referred those present to her report circulated prior to the meeting. She echoed Rabbi Jonathan with regard to the year being a tough one.

Masorti pivoted to respond quickly to the challenges of 7th October.

From October through to January, Masorti provided intensive responses and since January onwards have tried to return to the year's strategy. There is now a status quo and we are working on our relationship with Israel and have Noam and Marom as key priorities. Synagogues are doing well and Masorti Judaism needs to identify how to assist them in their growth and development.

Joe thanked *Rachel* for all her hard work and commitment.

8. Co-Chairs' report

The Co-Chairs drew attention to their circulated report and also reflected on the difficult year. They focussed on those on campuses who have been impacted by all that is happening. The aim is to develop a role on campus and, with Rabbi Jonathan, to continue to write to individual Deans and Colleges which are brought to their attention. A most recent letter was sent to an NHS Trust which had appeared to be blatantly anti-Semitic in a broadly distributed document.

Lucy Cohen, outgoing Director of Noam, was thanked for all her efforts and enthusiasm with particular regard for Camps and Drachim and wished every success in her new endeavours.

The co-chairs also acknowledged the level of inclusion, mentioning the assisted places on camps and LGBTQi+ projects as examples.

No questions were raised.

9. Treasurer's report and annual audited accounts

As with previous reports, *David* referred to his sent prior to the meeting which included the audited accounts for 2022-2023. He expressed his thanks to *Joe*, *Rachel* and *Chantal* for their support. He felt that we were up to speed with SJC Accounting and, that since *Chantal's* arrival, we are better procedurally. He reported that the reserves were lower than anticipated but that plans were in place, with the help of the Finance Committee, to restore them over the next three years. He believed the charity's financial position to be 'good'.

The 2022/23 audited accounts were approved and adopted by those present.

10. Appointment of auditors

The tender discussed at last year's meeting was completed and there was a vote by correspondence to the members and the firm, Goldwins Ltd were proposed as our auditors and unanimously approved.

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The Co-Chairs and the whole AGM thanked David for all his hard work on behalf of the organisation and wished him well at the end of his term as a trustee.

11. Any other business

Noam was asked to inform all communities about the make-up of the team and offer articles for the shuls' magazines.

Thanks were given by the Co-chairs to those present and to SHEMA for hosting and reciprocated by the meeting to the Chairs and Board.

The meeting was closed at 20.40hrs.