

Masorti UK Chairs Report
Joe Carlebach
September 2025 - Elul 5785

This last year has been another year of change, growth and challenge. The ramifications of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East including the horrendous suffering of the hostages and the tragic plight of many innocents in Gaza, has weighed heavily on the minds and hearts of our membership. We have done our level best to accommodate the disparate views within the Masorti 'Kehila' קהילה which has been challenging but also I hope thought provoking. Our strength is in our diversity and the respect we hold for one another, even though sometimes in the heat of debate that is not always obvious. I think our entire community wishes that the coming year will bring peace and with it new hope for all.

The year has also held a number of financial challenges for us which reflect the constraints faced by many across the UK. This has meant careful planning and financial management by our team which they have carried out with skill and compassion. We are now well positioned for the coming year to continue our programmes, community development, youth work, especially Noam and our learning initiatives: all core to our Masorti offering.

During the course of the year we have said some farewells to much loved and respected members of our leadership and welcomed new ones. I want to say a special thank you to Rachel Sklan who filled many senior roles within Masorti including CEO and COO. Rachel was an inspiration to many and a great help to me personally during the early days of my tenure. She may have left us in terms of our formal organisation but I know she is very much still around helping and offering advice. She remains committed to the continued growth and welfare of Masorti UK.

In light of these changes we refreshed our senior leadership team with new appointments including the arrival of Rabbi Adam Zagoria-Moffet as our Director of Strategy. Rabbi Adam continues in his role as senior Rabbi for SAMS, our growing St Albans congregation, and in combining the two roles has already brought

a refreshing new energy and vision to us. Together with Rabbi Adam we have appointed Chantal Jacobs and Martha Limburg to serve as our new senior team. I have high hopes for the new team and I am sure they will continue the excellent contribution they have made to date into the new year.

We also said goodbye to my Co Chair and Trustee of long standing, Miriam Farbey. It was an absolute pleasure to have had the opportunity to work with Miriam who with all her commercial and executive experience was a huge asset to our community, our Board of Trustees and especially to me. I am sure we have not seen the end of Miriam's contribution to Masorti and that she will continue to provide sound experience based advice, guidance and friendship.

The end of this year also sees the departure of three of our most experienced Trustees who have now served the maximum time allowed under our rules. Adam Rose, Joel Fenster and Georgie Friend. They have all worked tirelessly across a number of critical areas for us and I do not think we would have made it through many of the challenges large and small that we have faced, especially in recent times without their help.

Finally I wanted to say a special thank you to our Senior Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg. Jonathan has been unwavering in his support, calling out anti semitism when we have needed to in UK Universities and within the NHS. He continues to tirelessly raise the profile and importance of environmental issues within Masorti and beyond, clearly articulating how this fits with Jewish teaching and thinking. He has brought life to the concept of "Tikkun Olam" תִּיקּוּן עוֹלָם (literally repairing the world) to our community and further afield. Jonathan will be transitioning out of his role as the senior Rabbi at New North London - our largest community and a community he was instrumental in building - but I am delighted that he will be staying on as the Senior Rabbi of the Masorti movement.

I would like to conclude with a special thank you to all our communities and members across the UK. Without all of you we would be nothing, whether as a new member of an existing Kehila

or as one of the growing numbers of communities who are now affiliating with us.

What we have to offer is unique and special, our blend of traditional Judaism complimented by progressive (some might say libertarian) values of tolerance, the acceptance of difference and equality is what makes us special. I am convinced that this unique blend of values and beliefs will continue to facilitate an exciting and uplifting future for our movement. As I mentioned in my introductory remarks our strength is our diversity and our ability to respect differing points of view is fundamental to our future and defines who we are. If we continue to adhere to these principles the coming years will be very fruitful for Masorti and our contribution to the wider Jewish community will be significant.

Wishing everyone a “Ketivah v’chatima tovah” כתיבה וחתימה טובה