



Sukkat Shalom  
Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Annual Report 2025

Collated for the Annual General Meeting of 23rd February 2025.

Scottish Charity Number: SC035678  
[www.eljc.org/agm](http://www.eljc.org/agm)

## Table of Contents

Co-Chair Report	3
Religious Affairs	5
Cheder	7
Communications	9
Reminder Email	9
<i>Etrog</i>	9
Website	9
Social Media	10
Membership	12
Adult Education	13
Exploring Judaism	13
Torah Study Group	13
Talmud Study Group	14
Biblical Hebrew with The Ark Synagogue	14
Interfaith	15
Care and Support	16
Social Action	17
Eco Synagogue	18
Appendix A: Supporting Statements for Members Standing for Council	19

# Co-Chair Report

*Sue Bard, Maurice Naftalin and Nick Silk*

Our community's 20 th anniversary this year has prompted reflection of the past, celebration of the achievement of a thriving Progressive Jewish community, appreciation particularly of our founder members and of our two rabbis, the first, Pete Tobias and the second Mark Solomon, who has been our rabbi for the last 15 years and who has done so much to give our community its distinctive character. Sukkat Shalom - the only Liberal Jewish community in Scotland – continues to buck the trend as the only Jewish community in Scotland that is growing. We celebrate this, while remembering that we are still - at under 200 members – a 'small' community and as such, inevitably quite fragile.

This will be our last report as we're all standing down as chairs ( though standing again for council), bringing the process of succession planning that began in 2022 to a close. This year, we've had a full complement of 15 Council members and for the second year running every council member is standing for re-election. Current council members reflect many aspects of our community's diversity including, crucially for succession planning, its age range.

The reduction of council meetings from monthly to bi-monthly, the return to fully in-person council meetings, and the reintroduction of cheese scones and chocolate cake have all played an important part in improving the quality and the experience of council meetings, of building relationships between council members and in creating space for more council members to participate actively in the organisational work of the community.

Outside of the council, increasing members' active participation in helping to run the community is heartening, including help at major festival events, hosting Shabbat dinners and offering support through various whatsapp groups. A weekly Torah Study Group has been a new member initiative. This year, outstanding contributions on the always-important food front have come from our members who have catered banquet-level meals for large numbers of people at our Pesach Seder and our 20 th Anniversary event. Our list of lay leaders continues its slow, steady growth. And of course, we continue to appreciate the huge contribution made by our six members who run our thriving cheder, which this year has expanded to include a social group for ex-cheder young people. A recent initiative of Rabbi Mark's has been a buddying scheme to match up members of the Exploring Judaism group with established members of the community for support during Mark's sabbatical and hopefully beyond.

The decision to employ an administrator was another important aspect of our succession planning. The scope and scale of what the community does, and aspires to do, has grown as our membership has increased and it became obvious that we needed some professional, paid support. This has meant taking on the responsibilities of becoming an employer (Rabbi Mark is self-employed), and in June 2024, Rob Westwood became our first administrator. At

the time, Rob was an Associate Member, but since then, he has been admitted to Judaism and has become a full member. His professional background first in librarianship and then in self-employment, his many skills and interests and his enthusiastic commitment to Sukkat Shalom all contribute to the impact he's making on how our community functions.

We began this report with an acknowledgement of the role that our founder/long-established members have played as we've reached Sukkat Shalom's 20 th anniversary. As the three of us step down and look to the future, we acknowledge the tremendous gifts that our newer and younger members bring, gathered along the diverse paths that have brought them to Sukkat Shalom. We wish our Rabbi Mark a worthwhile and much deserved sabbatical and look forward to welcoming him back in July 2025. We offer our continued support and wish our community, with all its members and friends the very best for the future.

# Religious Affairs

*Nick Silk*

Last year's report started by saying that, as in previous years, we continue to hold at least one service each Shabbat, and that was again the case in 2024. While many of these services are led by Rabbi Mark, be that on-line or in-person (and nearly all of the in-person services are also broadcast as a hybrid online service too) there are a good number of services that are led by community members, and the number involved in leading these services continues to increase. This is especially pleasing given that, in the first six months of 2025, community members are leading nearly all of our services, since Rabbi Mark is taking a well-earned sabbatical.

We also noted at the start of last year's report that cheder are meeting on a Saturday morning, and this continues to be the case. This means that the cheder children (and parents) participate in Shabbat morning services – whether it's listening to a bar or bat mitzvah (and helping to throw sweets at them!), parading with the scroll or helping at a baby blessing ceremony. We are really pleased that we now have regular involvement of cheder at our services.

In addition to Shabbat services, we celebrated all the major festivals and many of the minor ones too, and while Rabbi Mark leads most of the major festivals, community members led some of the celebrations for minor festivals. We also celebrated b'nei mitvot, baby blessings, admission to Judaism ceremonies and more, with some of the highlights of 2024 being: We celebrated Havdalah with Rabbis Charley Baginsky and Josh Levy, who were visiting us to discuss plans for the new Progressive Judaism movement.

We also had a visit from members of the Leicester community for a shabbat in May, and from members of Glasgow Reform Synagogue in February.

We had a return visit to Glasgow in August, and held a service at Newstead at the end of June (with special thanks to Isobel King for hosting us!)

Our Rosh Hashanah services were led by Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah, and we think our Purim celebration, held with cheder, probably had the biggest turnout we've ever had for Purim

We had b'nei mitzvah for Elias Hershon, Rose Duffy and a joint b'not mitzvah of Talia and Bernadett Khandakar, and a baby blessing for Elliot Wieteska.

We had admission ceremonies for 12 new members, including a record 6 new members at a service in December.

And lastly, while it wasn't a regular religious service, it feels appropriate to conclude by mentioning our 20th anniversary commemorations in November. Rabbi Mark did lead a service but the celebrations were just as notable for the social event afterwards!

As ever, thanks are due to everyone who has helped with our services; all our lay leaders, Charlie Raab, our warden and Phil Wiltshire who is now helping Charlie with wardening duties, Rob Westwood for co-ordinating the venue bookings and everyone who has helped with security and the setting up before and tidying up after services. And lastly big thanks once again to Rabbi Mark for all his work in not just leading services but all the “behind the scenes” work that is involved. We hope that he enjoys some time off during his sabbatical!

And lastly, we are always looking for help with our services, so if you so if you would like to volunteer, just let us know, and similarly if you have any feedback on the types of service, their format of any other aspects of our services please also do let us know.

# Cheder

*Gila Holliman and Mor Kandlik Eltanani*

In 2024 Cheder will continue to meet on Saturday mornings, roughly twice a month on dates planned around Jewish holidays and Edinburgh School breaks. After feedback from families, we decided to include Hebrew learning within the sessions and now meet from 1030-1pm – last year we met from 11-1 with an extra Hebrew session after the main session.

The sessions each have a theme of various Jewish holidays, traditions and values and include stories, games, crafts, songs and discussions alongside Hebrew letters and writing options as part of the crafts and games. Once students know their Aleph-Bet, Mor will work with children individually or in small groups to progress their learning during the craft and activity time. The students can therefore work within their level and progress on an individual basis. Students who have already been learning Hebrew all have workbooks to continue their learning at home.

This year, Cheder includes 15 children between the ages of 3 and 11, and 12 children are registered for our post-cheder social group via WhatsApp. This group has already met this academic year for an outdoor escape room.

As there are fewer in-person services this year, there will be fewer opportunities for the children to participate in services, but when it is possible the children will be brought into the service for 20-30 minutes. Cheder was deliberately scheduled to coincide for the two bat mitzvahs this calendar year so that the children can gain experience and familiarity for attending services when they turn 12.

The cheder continues to be co-led by Mor and Gila, with Mor, Lizzie, Katy, Ash and a new member, Elena, teaching the sessions. The sessions are typically held all together but there are times that the group might split into age groups and the students are taught separately in Hebrew based on level as opposed to age.

## **Themes for 2024-25**

7 September: Shehechyanu and welcome to the year  
28 September: Rosh Hashanah and Rose's Bat Mitzvah  
5 October: Yom Kippur and Jonah  
26 October: Mezuzah and blessings  
9 November: Weddings and relationships  
23 November: Jewish year on review, Lunar calendar  
7 December: Chanukah traditions around the world  
14 December: Chanukah party  
11, 25 January: Stories from the Torah  
22 February: Torah family tree and Tu Bshvat  
15 March: Purim party  
29 April: Passover mini seder

26 April, 10, 17 May: Jewish prophets  
31 May: Shavuot and the story of Ruth

**Attendance**

7 September: 10 children attended

5 October - 12

26 October - 13

9 November - 13

23 November (snow cancellation) - 5

7 December - 9

14 December - 10 cheder children with siblings and parents for the Chanukah party



# Communications

## Reminder Email

*Rob Westwood*

Each week, a “reminder” email was sent to members of our mailing list. Its main purpose was to communicate the dates, times and venues of services, but it also took the opportunity to highlight Jewish cultural events in Scotland.

Since June 2024, the reminder has been compiled and sent by our Administrator, after receiving feedback from our 6-person comms/newsletter team.

Since June, the email has been scheduled for 3pm on Thursdays, the idea being that it will give people time to plan to attend the following day’s (and/or the following weekend’s) service.

In 2024, we moved from Mailchimp to the Infoodle database, increasing our data security and getting all of our contact information and email functionality “under one roof.”

The final email of 2024 (26 Dec) was received by 534 people.

We have an open rate of 60-65%.

(Email open rates are a good indicator of engagement. The average email open rate across all industries is 21.33%. Ours is very high.)

In recognition of its importance and centrality to our communication efforts, the reminder email was renamed *What’s On*.

## *Etrog*

*Sue Bard*

We’ve been pleased this year to re-launch our magazine, *Etrog*, as a quarterly. While it’s mainly online, we’re also posting print copies to people who need them, as well as having some available at services for people to take away. Our first ‘new’ *Etrog* went out at the end of December 2024, and the second will go out at the end of March 2025.

## Website

*Rob Westwood*

2024 saw the development of a new website for Sukkat Shalom. The site is now live at the original domain: <https://eljic.org>.

The site was redesigned by the WebDev group (Helen Ford, Andrea Tores-Trapero, Maurice Naftalin and Rob Westwood) with Rob handling much of the practical work in a temporary expansion of his Administrator role.

The new site design focuses on clarity of message with a particular audience in mind: people seeking Liberal Jewish culture in Scotland.

Feedback among Sukkat Shalom members has been largely positive, though a few have asked about now-retired site sections or former site sections merged into the new blog format.

Enquiries coming to [contact@eljc.org](mailto:contact@eljc.org) suggest that people are consulting and paying attention to the clear new content of the website.

There are two main areas where further work may be required, to which Rob Westwood and Andrea Tores-Trapero will meet in 2025:

1. Social media integration will offer a key communication opportunity. It is hoped that an app will push blog content (itself curated from the weekly What's On email) onto our social media platforms. The intention is to engage community members who do not regularly read email. Our email open rate is 60-65%, which is excellent but does suggest there are more people who for us to engage.
2. Aesthetics/Beautification will be addressed. Photographs and artwork will make the site more pleasant to look at and help to communicate our liberal values and the friendly open nature of our community.

## Social Media

*Andrea Tores-Trapero*

### Instagram

Instagram page launched with first post on 10 September 2023 (as previously reported for the AGM 2024 Report)

Since March 2024:

As of 12 Feb 2025, the page has a total of 33 posts and 151 followers. An increase of 19 posts and 48 followers to last year.

Momentum has grown with our follower ranging from individual users, JSoc pages from across Scotland/North England, & other LJ communities.

Posts vary for

- o 1) individual events (i.e., 20 th anniversary, photos from Pride Parade),
- o 2) On a bi-monthly basis we post a highlight of the upcoming events/services

This has been the most popular post across our platforms as it gives members a glimpse of the diary dates for our events/services for the next 2 months.

## **Facebook**

Our Facebook page has existed longer, however, I was able to gain access from the end of June 2023.

As of 12 Feb 2025, this page has 568 Followers (only an increase of 10 to last year). Similarly, to Instagram, the same posts that have gone live there, have also gone live on Facebook to keep consistency in messaging.

The highest peak of page visits came on 29 November (aligning with the post promoting our activity from the 20 th Anniversary celebration).

From February 2025, Han Smith and Jen Andreacchi will oversee the social pages.

# Membership

*Gillian Raab*

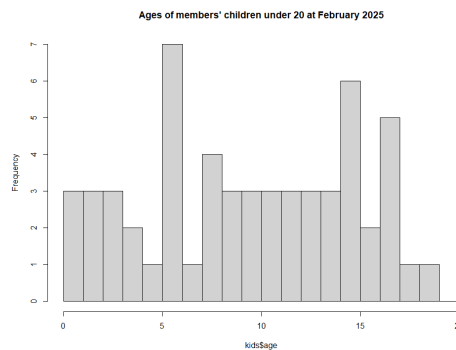
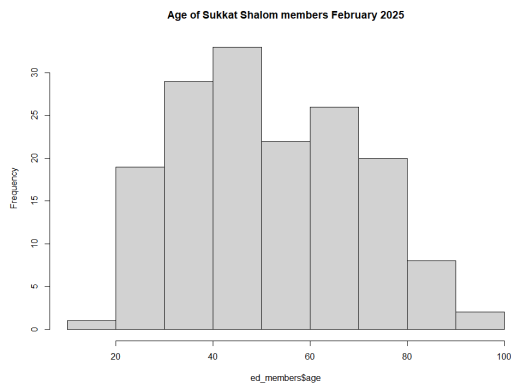
The table below gives our membership figures as of 9/2/2025 compared to those reported to the 2023 and 2024 AGMs at similar times of year.

Membership numbers are showing an increase from last year, similar to that experienced the year before.

<b>AGM year</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Adult members	160	143	127
Children of members (0-19)	57	56	Not reported
Associate members	22	26	22

The 22 associate members are mainly those on a path to conversion, but also include 5 people who are not Jewish but wish to be associated with Sukkat Shalom; some are partners of members.

We are sad that two of our members (Len Alden and Charlotte Gamsu z”l) passed away during the year. May their memory be for a blessing.



The figure gives the age distribution of members. It is encouraging to see that we now have many members in their 20s, 30s and 40s. Some of them are now helping to run the community.

The right hand figure gives the ages of children of members, including children of associate members.

## Adult Education

### Exploring Judaism

*Rob Westwood*

Exploring Judaism (EJ) classes were held on most Sundays through 2024.

Some students attended in person in Edinburgh and Leicester, and the class was consistently accessible via Zoom.

Under the tuition of Rabbi Mark Solomon, students progressed through a syllabus taking in the three modules of Jewish Time and Worship, Cycle of a Jewish Life, and Jewish Belief and History.

In addition to classes, students were encouraged to study independently with the help of a recommended reading list.

Students working towards conversion were required to submit two essays (one titled “what does Judaism mean to me?” and a subject of the student’s choice) or one essay and an oral test held by the Beit Din.

A “buddy scheme” was organised to help support students during Rabbi Mark’s 2025 sabbatical. Students were matched with Sukkat Shalom members for the purposes of practical and moral support pertaining to Judaism and conversion.

2024 saw 9 students graduate and attend admission ceremonies.

2024 ended with 26 students on the course.

### Torah Study Group

*Daniel Power*

We started Our Study Group after Shavuot 5784 - We meet weekly online, Daniel P believes without pause, and so we have gathered to discuss Parashot 37 times to date.

We get a variation in participant numbers, usually between 4-8. In total we have had 16 people who have participated in the Group. Membership is extremely intergenerational and this provides a very fruitful discussion. We also have members based across Scotland, the UK and the USA. Membership also includes Exploring Judaism Members as well as Halachically Jewish Members, everyone brings their own interesting and unique contributions!!!!

We began by rotating leadership of the study, but now we instead choose a focus on the third choice in the Liberal Judaism Lectionary, after saying a baracha, reading these verses in English as well as for those who want to practice their Hebrew. This follows with an open discussion regarding the whole Parshah and often far further abroad topics.

We have an online database of past leaders' notes and other resources, but this is currently in need of more maintenance.

## Talmud Study Group

*Ellen Galford*

Our long-running Talmud study group continues to attract an enthusiastic, multi-generational assortment of longstanding and new participants. Our hour-long Zoom sessions, running weekly more or less in parallel with the academic year, bring together local members of the congregation and friends of the community from much further afield, with approximately 8 to 10 people each week taking part online, and an unknown (?) number of others who are unable to attend in person receiving recordings of each session.

This year, with the inspired and inspiring guidance of Rabbi Mark we've been exploring the literary, spiritual and cultural riches of Midrash, in a close look at Bereshit Rabbah, with its narratives, commentaries and arguments around the meanings and messages within the Book of Genesis.

## Biblical Hebrew with The Ark Synagogue

*Sue Bard*

A number of our members participate in the excellent weekly Biblical Hebrew classes run by The Ark Synagogue in Northwood, London and taught by their two senior rabbis, Rabbi Aaron Goldstein and Rabbi Lea Muhlstein. These classes are free – donations from students are welcomed. The classes operate at three levels: Learning to Read Hebrew; Improve your reading and understanding of Biblical Hebrew; Translating the Hebrew Bible.

## Interfaith

*Nick Silk*

During 2024 the Edinburgh Interfaith Association (EIFA) held various events which I, as well as other members of Sukkat Shalom, attended. These included the Holocaust Memorial Day commemorative event, peace walks and peace services, and the Edinburgh Religious Leaders meeting. At our tu b'shvat seder we also welcomed members of other communities. I am also a member of the West Lothian Faith Group and in January 2025 I was invited to say prayers at their Holocaust Memorial Day event.

# Care and Support

*Andrea Tores-Trapero and Han Smith*

In the 2024-2025 year, Sukkat Shalom Council brainstormed and initiated several care activities. In this report, we outline the care initiatives that were considered, the ones which were pursued and the ones that were paused or delayed. We explore activities that may be possible in future years, and we hope to create space for Sukkat Shalom members to provide feedback and insight into care initiatives moving forward.

During this past year, individual council members, namely Sue Bard, took responsibility for reaching out to general members in need of care, such as members undergoing surgery. Additionally, in recent weeks, a system has been established to pair students of Exploring Judaism with experienced members of Sukkat Shalom. This 'Buddying System' is in place to create a space for those converting to stay in contact with the congregation as Rabbi Mark Solomon is away on sabbatical. Finally, services, such as Rabbi Mark's meditative service, have been offered at least once a year to integrate mental well-being and Judaism.

Sukkat Shalom is also aware of several organisations that provide mental healthcare to Jewish individuals throughout the UK. Specifically, we distribute information to our members about Jami, a mental health organisation dedicated to 'saving and improving' Jewish lives impacted by mental illness. Jami has a system through which one can make referrals and access resources. We also circulate information about Jami's counselling service, Raphael. Raphael offers counselling, or talking therapy, for Jewish people across the UK.

In recent years, Sukkat Shalom Council has considered other care initiatives. For example, we have contemplated implementing a buddy system for any member of Sukkat Shalom who would like to be involved. This pairing would create opportunities for perhaps more accessible and intimate one-to-one engagements. However, the buddying system was not pursued due to a lack of resources and a sense that this may not be popularly received by the community. Additionally, Sukkat Shalom Council reached out to me, Han Smith, hoping to create workshops or services specifically integrating mental health and Judaism. I am unable to accomplish this until completing my dissertation due to limited availability. Nonetheless, if there is community interest, I would be happy to revisit this proposal in the summer.

We invite Sukkat Shalom Members to provide feedback and insight into these completed and hypothetical initiatives. Furthermore, we would be pleased to hear about other possible ideas and needs our community has pertaining to care.



## Social Action

*Sue Bard*

Social action this year has focused mainly on fundraising for our Kol Nidrei charities, and additionally this year for a Purim-related charity.

Our Kol Nidrei Appeal is one of the ways in which we try to recognise our various responsibilities for Tikkun Olam – that is, for the wider world. Each year we choose to support a range of charities that between them represent local, international, Jewish and non-Jewish causes.

This year, the four charities chosen were all suggested by our members, who had personal knowledge of and in some cases involvement with them. They were: Emunah <https://www.emunah.org.uk/> ; Women Wage Peace <https://www.womenwagepeace.org.il/en/>; Queer Yeshiva <https://www.yeshiva.lgbt/> and The Welcoming <https://www.thewelcoming.org/> .

Every penny contributed goes to our designated charities and this year, we raised £3982.00 thanks to the generosity of our small community and our High Holy Day visitors. This is slightly more than we raised last year and will be increased by the addition of Gift Aid.

This year, for the first time, we supported a charity at Purim as well. This was 'The Flying Seagulls' who say ' our trained teams of clowns, musicians and entertainers create safe environments for play and laughter in challenging and desperate situations, in the UK and around the world' . It was suggested by one of our members who met them on the Island of Samos whilst working for Samos Volunteers. We raised £544.00.

This year we were unable to participate in National Mitzvah Day, which clashed with our community's 20 th anniversary, but hope to do so again in November 2025.

Our Social Action WhatsApp group was established to encourage communication between interested people and to provide a place and a sounding board where anyone who wanted to start a discussion or flag up an idea could do so. While there hasn't been a lot of activity on it, it is a forum where people can discuss and initiate action and we will be reminding our members of its existence during the coming year.

# Eco Synagogue

*Jonathan Staal and Rob Westwood*

The concept of Tikkun Olam, "repairing the world," is central to Jewish ethics and increasingly relevant in the context of the climate crisis. Halachically, it is not just a suggested act of kindness but a fundamental imperative stemming from core Jewish values. The Torah teaches *bal tashchit* (do not destroy), prohibiting wanton destruction and waste, which directly applies to environmental degradation. We are stewards of the earth, entrusted with its care.

The climate crisis presents a profound challenge to Tikkun Olam. The consequences—rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and ecological imbalances—disproportionately affect the vulnerable, echoing the Torah's concern for the poor and marginalized. Failing to act is a violation of our responsibility. Halachic literature and contemporary rabbinic pronouncements increasingly emphasize that combating climate change is a *mitzvah* (commandment). Reducing carbon emissions, advocating for sustainable practices, and supporting policies that protect the environment become a moral and religious obligation, aligning with the overarching goal of repairing and preserving the world for future generations.

We ran monthly "Eco Suggestions" in the reminder/What's On email to 500+ people on our mailing list. Early suggestions were submitted by Jonathan Staal and we thank him for his efforts. When we ran out of Jonathan's contributions, suggestions were written by Rob Westwood and approved by the comms/newsletter team. Going forward into 2025, Helen Ford will be the writer of Eco Suggestions.

Maybe in the year ahead, we could think about reaching further to meet the ever increasing challenges of our times?

## Appendix A: Supporting Statements for Members Standing for Council

### **Sue Bard**

I've been a member of Sukkat Shalom for ten years, a council member for nine years and a co-chair for the last five of them. I'm standing again for council this year as I'd like to draw on the experience I've had to give non-intrusive support to the council in the coming year. I think my work and personal background in the charity, voluntary and public sectors has been relevant and helpful to some of the things I've done as a council member. But most of all, I feel a deep commitment to Sukkat Shalom and to Progressive Judaism for showing me a way back into Judaism and an empathy with members that may be on long, difficult or unusual paths to Judaism and I value the opportunities that being a council member offers to contribute in a practical and creative way to our community.

### **Jonathan Broadie**

I confirm that I've read the expectations we have of council members, and our values.

I am honoured to be an existing member of council. I have experience in the specific areas of treasurer, burials and security in which I have held Sukkat Shalom roles, but also across a whole range of religious and communal activities. It has been a privilege to do this. As a chartered accountant, I can continue to offer a financial perspective.

Our community is a very precious thing. There are few options for progressive Jews in Scotland, but we have been able to create a haven for our community which is unique, and which I cherish. I would continue to support it and protect it to the best of my ability.

### **Marjory Broadie**

I care passionately about Sukat Shalom and its future. So I would like to stand again for election to Sukkat Shalom Council.

I confirm that I have reread 'Our Purpose and Values' and the 'Information for Existing or Prospective Council Members'.

As an existing member it's been a pleasure and privilege to serve on the Council.

For many years I was in charge of, and organised all aspects of security for Sukkat Shalom Services and Social Events. I also have experience in burials, and have helped perform the ritual of Taharah.

There have been a number of other events/roles where I've contributed to the running or the organisation e.g. Our Tenth Anniversary Celebration.

As a member of Sukkat Shalom Council I would contribute, as well as I can, to the continuing growth and development of our very special and unique Community.

### **Helen Ford**

I have been a part of the Sukkat Shalom community since joining the choosing judaism class in 2006 and a member since converting in 2007.

I believe what I can offer the community is knowledge of accessibility issues, I am both an ambulant wheelchair user and an Assistance Dog Handler. I also believe this experience could help in making decisions and making events more accessible. In addition to that I am also autistic and can help make events less overwhelming by using my experiences.

### **Samara Leibner**

I'm motivated to join Sukkat Shalom's council to contribute to my new Jewish community. I like to keep abreast of Jewish initiatives, writing, art and projects; it's inspiring to see all of the ways in which Jewishness can be progressive. Sitting on Sukkat Shalom's council seems like an opportunity to help shape and engage with one such progressive initiative, one I have been particularly drawn to and am proud to be a part of.

In my adult life, I've met many Jews who have been made to feel alone or unwelcome by a limited idea of what Jews are or should be. I recognise Sukkat Shalom as a place where those Jews (including myself) can be, and I want to help it grow.

I believe that sitting on a council for an organisation whose work I value would be an enriching experience for me as well, especially as I now work in the third sector.

As a council member I would bring broad experience. I grew up Orthodox and benefited from a full-time Hebrew education in Montreal, a city with a large and diverse Jewish community.

Although there was a lot about Orthodoxy that wasn't for me, I remain grateful for the robust, fearless, and joyful attitude toward Jewish practice, culture, texts, and ways of being it taught me. At the same time, I grew up as a queer person in an interfaith and multilingual family, and I've experienced the UK's and Canada's hostile immigration processes firsthand.

Due to my background and interests, I have a wide-ranging 'directory' for Jewish culture, projects, and initiatives. I would share this with council, so that Sukkat Shalom might benefit from these connections and ideas. At the same time, this broad base of knowledge helps me to

appreciate a variety of viewpoints on Jewish and other issues, and work productively with people even if we don't agree on everything.

In my professional life, I spent many years working in funeral care in Glasgow, where I was often called upon to practice empathy, diplomacy, and patience. I've now moved into working in the third sector, for a small but active death education charity in Edinburgh. I'd be happy to share my relevant professional experience with council and with our community in areas where that would help.

### **Barrie Levine**

Born in Glasgow and currently living there, I have been a member of Sukkat Shalom since 2018 and was previously a member of Council from 2021, although I had to take a step back in 2024 due to ill-health. I was brought up in an Orthodox family in Glasgow, cheder educated with reasonably fluent biblical Hebrew; although I was also a member of Habonim (a socialist, Zionist youth group) for most of my youth, including spending a year on kibbutz in Israel in 1973/74 which gave me a crash lesson in the politics of Israel/Palestine.

Professionally, my background is in professional social work where I worked in various fields including child protection, drugs work, HIV&AIDs, and homelessness. Following a substantial period in practice, I moved to academia and taught social work at university for many years, again in Glasgow. Now retired from full-time teaching, I work part-time and also chair the board of trustees of Scotland's largest not-for-profit community law centre, based in Glasgow.

In standing again for Council I believe I could bring a combination of experience: a professional background in social work and higher education; many years' experience of governance, financial oversight and committee work in the third sector; experience of organisational systems which allowed me to lead initially on the creation of the administrator post for Sukkat Shalom; experience of being on council and a general awareness of the needs of the community. Living in Glasgow, I further appreciate the needs of the sections of the community who are more remote geographically and can represent this experience to an extent on council. Oh, and a qualification in Egyptology and a rudimentary knowledge of reading Egyptian hieroglyphs if anyone wants to discuss the Exodus story!

### **Daniel Naftalin**

I have grown up within the ELJC and always thought it a friendly and welcoming community. I've always felt that the community is a supportive and inclusive environment, and I feel it represents the best of what Judaism has to offer. I am keen to be part of the journey of ELJC and to support it to continue to uphold the values that have made it such a unique place.

I am a patient and empathetic person, having spent many years working with people with additional support needs. In my personal life, I have been responsible for creating financial systems for managing my brother's finances – I would be able to bring same systematic

nature and enthusiasm to supporting ELJC's finances.

### **Maurice Naftalin**

I would like to be on Council so that I can continue passing on the experience of my long involvement with Sukkat Shalom to the people who will form the leadership of the community in the future.

What I would bring to Council is some perspective from that experience, and some knowledge about how various systems – technical, personal, and religious – sustain the continuing life of the community.

I expect to continue, for the moment anyway, as joint religious affairs organiser and as the main IT admin.

### **Gillian Raab**

I have been involved with the progressive community in Edinburgh since the years ebgiven before Sukkat Shalom was founded, taking on various roles. For me the most important thing I would like to foster is to make it into welcoming community where people can be helped to live a Jewish life and to give support to one another, and the rest of the world. I carry out various tasks as secretary - the most onerous of which is keeping track of our members. I would like to share this with someone else soon.

### **Nick Silk**

I have been a member of Sukkat Shalom since it was founded and have been on Council for all of that time. I have been Chair and co-Chair of our community as well as being on the Religious Affairs (RA) committee and if I am elected to Council, I hope to continue as a member of the RA committee and continue to help co-ordinate our services, and also to lead some of our services.

As well as helping with the running of the community, I hope that I can use my experience to help newer members of Council, but with the clear intention of helping and not trying to continue doing the things the way they have always been done!

### **Andrea Tores-Trapero (for Chair)**

I kindly ask for your consideration for my nomination to Council in our upcoming AGM, which includes putting my name for Council Chair.

For over two years, I have been an active member of Sukkat Shalom and have happily sat in Council during this period. Since 2021, this community has opened its arms to my husband and I and we couldn't have found a better religious home to practice our faith.

During my time as a member, I have been honoured to represent the community as a participant of Liberal Judaism's Emerging Leaders Programme and assisted in leading our social media / coordinating our 20th anniversary. Now entering, what will be my third year as Council member, I would like to put forward my name as Chair. I appreciate the hard work that our current chairs have given our community the past 5+ years, and look forward to working with them as continuing members of council. However, I feel that through my short tenure in Council, they have helped me gain the confidence to put my name forward for this position. Since converting into Judaism in 2022, I hoped to one day share my organisational / leadership skills with a community. To me, embracing Judaism involves finding ways to give back to my community and I hope that as Chair, I can help usher in new ways for our members to connect with each other and our community to grow.

**Standing without a personal statement:**

Jen Andreacchi  
Oliver Davidson-Richards  
Han Smith  
Phil Wiltshire