

# ANNUAL REPORT

Trustees' Report and Statutory Accounts

1 September

23

TO

31 August

24

Alyth

To Pray. To Learn. To Live. Together



# From the Trustees

2023-24 has been a year of significant change both at Alyth and in the world around us. The world has been particularly challenging as we experience the repercussions of 7 October 2023 and feel the impact of uncertainty both in the UK and internationally. Alyth is a synagogue that has lived through many periods of change in its more than 90 years, embracing what comes with optimism and commitment to both Jewish continuity and connection to the world around us. This spirit has characterised a community that remains vibrant, inclusive and forward thinking.

A defining moment this year has been the completion of our beautiful new building. Our renewed and light-filled spaces are already filled with activity. This achievement, many years in the making, owes much to the outstanding dedication of the project management group, led by Noeleen Cohen. We are enormously grateful to them for their tireless work and vision. We look forward to years of praying, singing and learning in a space that reflects the warmth and welcome of our community. Our collective responsibility will be to fill it with Jewish life, fund both the building loan and maintenance, and preserve it as our beautiful home.

The year brought changes to our rabbinic leadership. In October, our Principal Rabbi Josh Levy, moved on from Alyth after 15 years of outstanding service. We are extremely grateful to Rabbi Josh for his inspiring leadership of the community and of the Professional team. We wish him well in his new role co-leading the creation of Progressive Judaism.

Israeli Rabbi, Golan Ben-Chorin joined us in January 2024 as our interim Rabbi. During his nine months with us, Rabbi Golan brought his passion for Jewish life, learning and spirituality to the community. The challenges of these times, particularly the ongoing war, created an immense burden for Rabbi Golan and his family, and in September he returned to Israel. During this period Rabbi Hannah returned from maternity leave, joining Rabbi Elliott and Rabbi Colin, and we welcomed newly ordained Rabbi Nicola to the team. Together the Rabbinic Team maintained their outstanding commitment to learning, prayer, deep care for the community and inspiring leadership. The coming year brings the opportunity to recruit once more to our Rabbinic Team to meet the diverse needs of our community.

Katie Hainbach our Head of Music returned from maternity leave ahead of the High Holy Days while Sam Heller, Head of Membership Engagement is still on maternity leave., having welcomed a new baby in February. In 2023-24 we welcomed a new Head of Finance, a Communications Coordinator to enhance our connection with members and the wider community, and a new Ritual Coordinator to support the Clergy Team. We offer huge thanks to our Professional and Staff Team, under the guidance of Community Director, Adam Martin, who together work hard to ensure that Alyth goes from strength to strength and is there for our members, whatever their needs.

Our community reflects the full spectrum of Jewish life. Our senior members enrich us through active engagement in prayer, learning, and social events. One of the joys of a multigenerational community is seeing how longstanding members share experiences with the young families we welcome. Our youth programming thrives through Galim and Ruach b'nei mitzvah groups, where children and teens forge friendships that continue through residentials, summer activities, and travel. Our valued volunteers ensure full participation in synagogue life.

Each week our calendar demonstrates a commitment to bringing generations together through diverse programming, from rich prayer experiences through interfaith initiatives to learning and social action. The strength of our interfaith relationships has been particularly crucial this year, exemplified by our annual Iftar, where shared meals lead to deeper understanding. These relationships, built over years of engagement, have proved invaluable during challenging times.

As we navigate these times of change, both within our community and in the wider world, we look forward to continuing to grow together in our renewed spiritual home - a thriving, welcoming community that faces the future with optimism and purpose.

**Alyth Trustees:** Justin Wise (Chair) Nicholas Minter-Green (Vice Chair), Simone Silverman, Jeremy Baum, David Bloom, Ian Howe, Terence Heymann, Corinna Hyman, Ilana Pizer-Mason, Daniel Salem, Juliet Levinson, Ben Portner, Noemi Zell



# Our Trustees, Team & Advisors

## Trustee Board

Justin Wise (Chair)  
Nicholas Minter-Green (Vice Chair) (co-opted February 2024)  
Jeremy Baum  
David Bloom  
Ian Howe  
Terence Heymann  
Corinna Hyman  
Ilana Pizer-Mason  
Simone Silverman  
Daniel Salem  
Julia Simmonds (co-opted February 2024, retired June 2024)  
Juliet Levinson (elected February 2024)  
Ben Portner (elected February 2024)  
Noemi Zell (elected February 2024)

## Professional Team

### CLERGY

Rabbi Josh Levy  
Rabbi Golan Ben-Chorin  
Rabbi Hannah Kingston  
Rabbi Elliott Karstadt  
Rabbi Colin Eimer  
Rabbi Nicola Feuchtwang

### CLERGY

Principal Rabbi (until October 2023, then Rabbi Emeritus)  
Interim Rabbi (January - September 2024)  
Rabbi  
Rabbi  
Rabbi  
Rabbi (Student Rabbi until July 2024)

### SENIOR STAFF

Adam Martin  
Lynette Chazen  
Samantha Heller  
Tor Alter

### SENIOR STAFF

Community Director  
Head of Community Care and Lifecycle  
Head of Member Engagement  
Head of Kindergarten

## Financial & Legal

Auditors: Nyman Libson Paul LLP. Regina House. 124 Finchley Road. London. NW3 5JS  
Accounting Services: SJC Bookkeeping Services. 4 Tenterden St, London W1S 1TE  
Bankers: Natwest Bank PLC. 45 Tottenham Court Road. London. W11 2EA  
Honorary Solicitor: Lawrence Radley. Reed Smith LLP. Broadgate Tower. London. EC2A 2RS  
Investment Advisors: Investec Wealth Management. 30 Gresham Street. London. EC2V 7QW  
Legal Advisors - Building Project: Lawrence Stephens Solicitors. 50 Farringdon Road. EC1M 3HE



# A Community for every generation

## B'nei Mitzvah



54 young people became bar or bat mitzvah at Alyth in 2023-24.

## Sunday Morning Galim, Ruach, camps & residentials



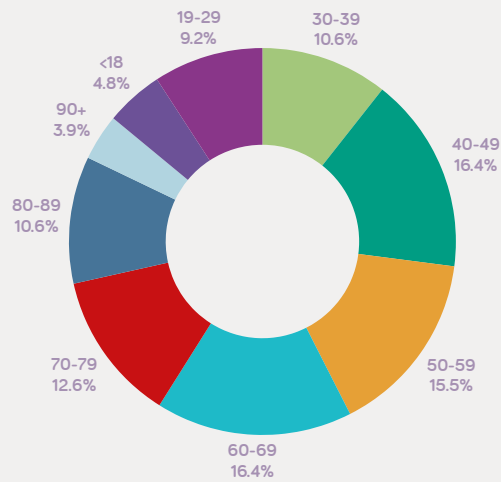
Over 200 of our young people attend Ruach and Sunday Morning Galim (SMG) with around 50 of our teens joining our leadership programme. Nearly 100 young people have enjoyed residentials and camps, with 26 visiting Budapest in October 2023.

## Our Seniors



Alyth has over 550 members aged 75 or over. Weekly social, prayer and learning activities bring many of our members together with friends and the Alyth team.

## Alyth Demographic Profile - % of membership by age



**Marriages in 2023-24: 16**



**New Borns in 2023-24: 13**

## Geographics

Alyth is situated in Golders Green in the London Borough of Barnet, home to the largest number of Jewish households in the UK. (Census 2021)

Members come to Alyth from across North and North West London. Areas include Finchley, Barnet, Camden, Haringey, Harrow, Enfield, Radlett, Elstree and Borehamwood.

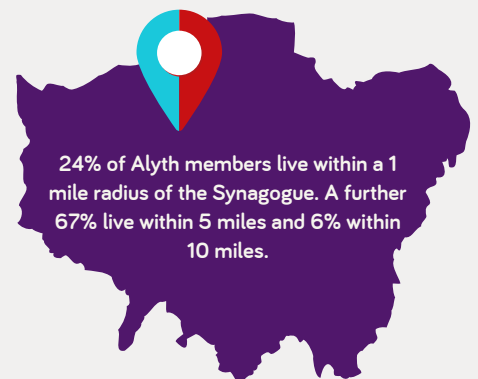
Many young families start their Jewish Journey at our 'Baby Den' and 'Sensory Shabbat' services.



In 2023-24 we welcomed 118 new members of every age and stage into the community. That's net, 25 new households.



1 in every 6 of our members volunteers over the year as a leader, as part of our social activities, as drivers, deliverers, on security, and as wardens and welcome.



# Alyth Together



## Be With Us

The Alyth family has a wide range of interests. We ensure that throughout the year, there are programmes and events that are inclusive and engage many of our members. Many groups, including the Alyth Social; Ramblers; Community Cycling Club and Book Club (to name a few) are run collaboratively by the Alyth Professional team with members. Alyth is also home to film nights, Jewish Mindfulness Meditation, yoga and fitness classes as well as special events such as the election hustings.

## Live With Us

Alyth is one big extended family and the building, as well as being a place of worship and spiritual home, is also where our members can come to learn, to talk, to celebrate, to mourn and to just be. Our Welfare Fund and the Clergy Jewish Participation Fund ensure that members are supported at times that they most need it. Every aspect of Jewish life is supported, whether through services, programmes, events or confidential one to one conversations. At Alyth, we always ensure that our family is not alone, whatever life throws at us.

## Build With Us

2023-24 was the year of 'the build'. Over the 16 months that began in April 2023, the old Leo Baeck wing was demolished and replaced with a beautiful new structure, filled with light and modern, welcoming spaces. It was a time of patience and tolerance as the community, the Kindergarten and our resilient Staff Team, adapted to reduced space, exposure to the elements and the disruption of the builders. Finally, in August 2024, the construction work was completed and the building was ours once again, ready to be filled with services, activities and events for our members, our visitors and the wider community.

## Pray With Us

Prayer and learning is at the heart of Alyth and our Jewish lives. Our multi-generational community has diverse prayer needs which we meet through a range of services on Friday nights and Shabbat morning, on festivals and over the High Holy Days. We offer most services online to ensure that those who are unable to join us in person can still participate.

## Together With Us

2023-24 was a year of two halves – pre and post 7 October with a focus on our inter faith relationships. We hosted our eleventh Iftar, bringing communities together to talk, study and eat. We are grateful for the friendships that have grown over the years at this very special event in our annual calendar.

On Mitzvah Day, we collected and delivered supplies for the All Saints Childs' Hill Food Bank. The Alyth Refugee Drop-in monthly meet-ups continue, alongside regular outings and meetings of the ever popular Refugee Drop-in Choir.

Monday Club, a gathering for people with learning and other disabilities, is a vital part of the week for many, enjoying an evening of music, fun and activities. Alyth continues to support and provide food for the Together in Barnet Winter Shelter project which works with the homeless over the colder months.

Voting and participating in the political process are not just encouraged, but required by our Jewish tradition. In collaboration with the London Jewish Forum and Golders Green Parish Church, Alyth hosted a special multi-faith general election hustings for the Finchley and Golders Green constituency, giving attendees the opportunity to hear from the candidates about their vision for our borough.

The newly formed Legacy group organised a tea and beautiful piano recital at Hammerson House, with guests given the opportunity to hear about leaving a legacy to Alyth to ensure continuity and a vibrant future.

# Alyth Together

## Learn With Us

### Youth & Education

Responsible for the Jewish learning and engagement of our 4 to 18 year olds, our team of dedicated professionals, educators and young leaders devise and provide a varied programme of activities, B'nei mitzvah preparation and Hadracha (leadership) for our teens.

In 2024 our Ruach programme underwent a makeover, ready for the new academic year. Along with Sunday Morning Galim (SMG), they set the standard for our youth education provision. Holidays are for having fun and the Jolly July, SpringWAYS, SWAYAway and SWAYDays camps were filled with over 130 young people, making memories and lifelong friendships. Our B'nei Mitzvah teens travelled to Budapest once again, and to more local venues for weekend residentials.

Our Academy of Performing Arts group performed an excellent Little Shop Of Horrors in March, and in June, the Alyth Children's Theatre (ACT) entertained us with Disney Junior's, Beauty & The Beast.

During every festival, the Youth & Education team work closely with the Clergy to ensure that there are services and spaces for all the younger members and teens to attend, either with parents or as individuals.

### Visiting Us

We welcomed several visiting Clergy to Alyth during the year. In November, Rabbi Or Zohar, from the Mlsgav region in the Galilee, joined us for a three week residency to teach and lead services, bringing his unique musical gifts to our community. As a Progressive Rabbi in Israel, he offered a unique perspective on what it means to live in Israel before and after the tragic events of 7 October.

In April, we were honoured to welcome Sir Keir Starmer to Alyth. During the visit he heard how members of our Professional Team celebrate Pesach with their families and met communal leaders.

In May, as part of Alyth's Goldman Composer In Residence programme, Cantor Natalie Young joined us for an extended weekend of inspiring learning and singing together. Cantor Natalie is an internationally renowned composer and spiritual leader.

Chair of the Charity Commission, Orlando Fraser KC, met with Lay Leaders and Professionals to speak about Alyth's governance structure and to hear from a Progressive Jewish Community how we felt about and responded to the events of 7 October.

## Learn With Us

### Alyth Kindergarten

Our Ofsted rated "Outstanding" Kindergarten continues to thrive, providing a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment for children to grow and develop. The children leave us happy, sociable and resilient; ready for "big" school. The Kindergarten places a strong emphasis on fostering a Jewish values lead, inclusive environment where children learn about diversity, different faiths and cultures, promoting respect, empathy and a broader appreciation of the world around them. The positive feedback from parents, alongside the dedication of our staff, ensures that we continue to meet and exceed expectations, creating a strong foundation for all of our children's early years' experience.



“ I just love Alyth. I come to the social club on Mondays, I join in the study session (Pardes) on Thursdays and attend at least one service online over the weekend. I am so blessed to have Alyth and Alyth people in my life. Member of 43 years ”



# The Numbers, Risk, Reserves, Investments & Statutory Information

# The Numbers

## Financial Review

The Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 reflect the activities of the Synagogue over a year in which the work to redevelop our building was completed. The past 12 months have been a time of considered and collaborative leadership by the Trustees, Finance Advisory Group, Project Management Group and Senior Professionals, managing the ongoing operation of the Synagogue and the redevelopment of the building which began in April 2023.

### INCOME & EXPENDITURE

The Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 August 2024 reflects income of £2.385m (2023: £2.15m) brought in by subscription income and Gift Aid, and donations made primarily for the development of the building. The reduction in total funds reflects a lower level of donations to the Building Fund during construction of £300k in the year, vs £2million in 2022-23. Additional income of £437k (2023: (£528k)) was received from members to cover operating costs in relation to trips, events and activities that are not covered by member subscriptions.

2023-24 was the year of "the build". The Professional Team worked hard to maintain the same level of efficiency and service delivery in reduced space, ensuring minimum disruption to the Kindergarten and our day-to-day operations. Alongside the build costs which were funded by donations and the CAF loan, the Synagogue absorbed additional costs in relation to having a construction site adjacent to an operating Synagogue and Kindergarten.

#### Factors impacting on this year's results are:

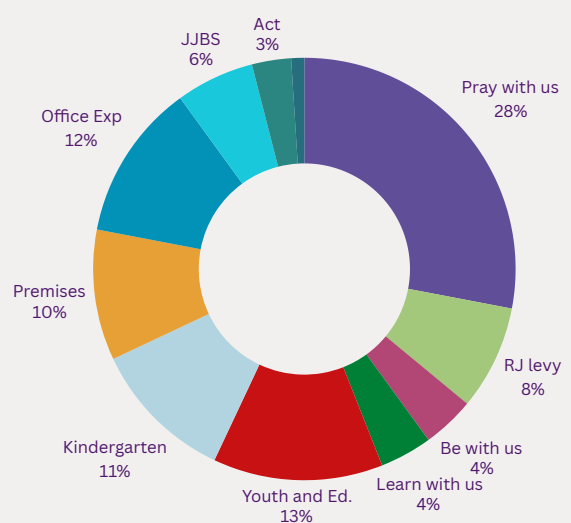
The year-on-year increase in member subscriptions reflects increases in inflation/CPI. Efforts are focussed on efficient collection of subscriptions, with a particular emphasis on members maximising the number of members paying by direct debit, on collecting outstanding subscriptions towards the end of the financial year, and on retention of members through relationships and assessment of affordability for our membership.

When setting the budget and level of member subscriptions, the Finance Advisory Group and Trustees aim to achieve a balanced budget. In doing this, they considered the impact of prevailing economic pressures, and the core operating costs required to run the Synagogue. On this basis, the Trustees agreed an increase in member subscriptions in 2023-24 of 5%.

Repayment of the CAF Loan: In 2023-24, repayments of the loan are interest only. The repayment period began in November 2023 and is represented by £132k of borrowing costs which were capitalised in the year.

Operating costs of £1.45m (2022-23: £1.34m) remained within budget expectations, despite the economic uncertainty of 2024 and global pressure on utilities.

As well as increased insurance, maintenance and storage costs relating to the building work, security costs increased in response to the need for Jewish places of worship to increase the level of security provision in the wake of the 7 October attack by Hamas on Israel.



Staff salaries and on-costs of £1,084m account for 74% of the support costs of the Synagogue. This reflects the Synagogues' investment in people, enabling us to deliver outstanding services and support to meet the breadth of needs of our multigenerational community.



## RESERVES

The Trustees adopt an integrated approach to setting the level of reserves, taking into account current and future financial needs of the organisation and regular monitoring of KPI's to meet and address changing circumstances.

The charity aims to maintain sufficient reserves to represent between 3 - 6 months' cover of Alyth's normal charitable activity expenditure. The Trustees continue to monitor this KPI and note that, including the above designated balances, the Synagogue is currently operating within the agreed range.

The Restricted Funds of £5.83m (2023: £5.28m) predominantly comprise the value of the land and buildings, which has increased from £3.34m in 2023 to £4.41m in 2024. There are funds of £1.42m (2023: £1.94m), the use of which is mandated by trust deeds. Of these, the largest fund is £824k (2023: £1.29m) set aside for the redevelopment of the building.

Particular attention is given to setting a budget that is strategically aligned and based on accurate assumptions of operating costs and repayment of loan interest in 2024-25.

Total unrestricted funds at 31 August 2024 amount to £861k (2023: £1.09m). The total unrestricted expenditure on charitable activities, excluding JJBS contributions and inclusive of total staff costs, was £2.27m (2023: £2.04m).

Unrestricted funds include free reserves as defined by the Charity's SORP of £117k (2023: £401k). In addition £400k (2023: £400k) is held in a Contingency Fund and may be undesignated if required to increase the free reserves balance, together with £308k (2023: £245k) that has been designated to various projects and worthy causes which are regarded as part of normal charitable activities. These allocations are internal and can be amended by the Trustees if required.

## INVESTMENTS

### *Investment Policy:*

The Synagogue invests funds so as to generate reasonable long-term capital and income growth commensurate with the need to finance its long-term expenditure requirements and to protect the Synagogue's capital against the risk of inflation.

The investment manager is responsible for asset allocation and for making investments through a carefully selected group of both internal and external fund managers, in accordance with the policy and any restrictions set out in the policy. cont...

“ Like many people,, we are feeling the financial pinch and with a young, growing family, despite wanting to do everything, we have to make difficult decisions. However, thanks to the Clergy Jewish Participation Fund, we have been able to attend a couple of special community activities, which would otherwise have been impossible.

Alyth Members with three children ”

**Investment Performance:**

The investment portfolio held by Investec on Alyth's behalf was valued at £1.04m on 31 August 2024. It was a challenging year for investments with the portfolio bouncing back from the low of 2023, but still performing below expectation. In the year, investments generated income of £84k, with net gains of £74k. The below expected performance was largely due to global market downturns, fluctuating bond yields, and challenges at home in the UK marked by currency devaluation and inflationary pressure, and ongoing geo-political instability.

The annual review of the investment portfolio was undertaken by the Investment Managers with members of Alyth's Finance Advisory Group (FAG). The purpose of the review is to assess the performance of the portfolio and the Synagogue's circumstances, to ensure that Investment Manager's mandate remains appropriate. This was confirmed by the Finance Advisory Group to the Trustees.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Trustees of the Synagogue are responsible for financial oversight and the management of risk. They regularly consider and review the principal risks and uncertainties facing the Synagogue.

The Trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the Synagogue faces and confirm that appropriated systems and processes have been established to ensure regular review of risks and the production of reports; so that the necessary steps can be taken to mitigate risks as appropriate. It is recognised that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately identified.

Risk	Mitigation
Financial: Risk of not being able to fully service the repayments on the loan from CAF Bank once the building work is complete (Summer 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritising the generation of non-subscription income through fundraising from members, contribution from the building levy, and hiring out the newly created spaces for events, parties and local conferences.</li> </ul>
Financial: Risk of a reduction income from subscription income due to economic pressures and an increase in the number of members on reduced subscriptions or through a drop in the number of members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued efforts by the Professional Team to manage subscription income and follow up non-payers.</li> <li>• Tracking membership data to identify downward trends and reasons members may leave the synagogue.</li> <li>• Regular monitoring of individual members on reduced subscriptions and focus on moving people back up to full membership when their circumstances can support this.</li> <li>• Focus on strategic priorities, meeting the diverse needs of our members, through quality, innovative and engaging prayer and programme offerings.</li> </ul>
Financial: The final account with the contractor has yet to be settled as we move into the 2024-25 financial year. Whilst this is considered to be "low risk" it is key to identify as an area of financial focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing monitoring of outstanding items at Practical Completion. The Project Management Group are working with the Contractor to complete all outstanding work within the agreed contract.</li> <li>• Maintaining tight control over finalisation and settlement of the Contractor's final account within the available funds.</li> </ul>

# Looking AHEAD

## 2024 - 25 and beyond



### Filling and funding our building

The redevelopment of the building has given us beautiful, welcoming spaces in which our multigenerational community can continue to come together to pray, learn, sing, and to welcome visitors and friends. Our modern, multi-use spaces provide an opportunity to generate new income streams through hiring out these spaces for events, celebrations and conferences. Fundraising will be a key focus for the Community in 2025 to ensure that we meet our financial obligations to CAF Bank. We must also ensure that Alyth continues to be resourced to deliver excellence in our prayer and programming.



### Connection and engagement

Ours is a diverse community with a breadth of needs and hopes. At Alyth we believe that nothing is more important than the relationships that we build and the welcome that we give one another. A key focus for 2024-25 will be on fostering deeper engagement and connection, on enabling members of all ages to build relationships with their peers and across the generations. We must continue to be a community of care and support for one another, and in a fast-paced, often divided world, we will continue to practise our values of inclusion and welcome, and open our doors to our neighbours and the wider community.



### Our Volunteers

Volunteers and volunteering is at the heart of all that we do at Alyth. Our Members volunteer through lay leadership and joining Advisory and Working Groups. Young members are leaders in the Youth & Education Hub and dedicated volunteers are at the heart of the weekly Alyth Social and Monday Club gatherings, of the Bereavement Group and driving our refugee and homeless shelter projects. The focus on volunteers and volunteering will continue in 2024-25. We must continue to identify and develop lay leaders, build relationships and strengthening our volunteer base.



### Operational efficiency and effectiveness

The Trustees and Professional Team continue to focus on delivering a high level of efficiency in the day-to-day operation of the Synagogue. In 2024-25 the Trustees will focus on the expansion and development of the Rabbinic Team and on communications, including an update of the website and our regular communication with Members. The Trustees will prioritise finance. This means a focus on funding the annual repayments to CAF Bank through fundraising and hiring out our spaces, on maintaining the building and on collection of subscription income that covers operating expenditure and delivery of prayer and programming.

## Basis of Preparation of Accounts:

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of North Western Reform Synagogue (the charity) for the period 1 September 2023 - 31 August 2024. The Trustees confirm that the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements of the charity comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

## Fundraising Compliance:

The charity is committed to best practice, as outlined by the Fundraising Regulator, in its approach to fundraising and closely monitors its activities in this area, ensuring that vulnerable members are protected. No professional fundraisers are used by the charity. Fundraising for the building project was ongoing during 2023-24 and will continue into 2025 and for the foreseeable future.

## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities:

The trustees (who are also directors of North Western Reform Synagogue for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information

Small company exemptions:

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

**This report was approved by the Trustees on 13 January 2025 and signed on their behalf by:**



**Justin Wise**  
Chair



**Statutory Accounts for the period:  
1 September 2023 to  
31 August 2024**