

Dear Members

Chazan Avromi, High Holydays, Rabbinical Search, 8 Norrice Lea, Adult Education

We are writing to update you in relation to a number of matters arising in the community over the Summer period.

Chazan Avromi

Members will remember that Chazan Avromi was ill for an extended period in 2006. Unfortunately, the surgery he underwent at the time resulted in long term effects which have serious implications for his quality of life. He has borne these difficulties with amazing fortitude but has now decided to undergo further elective surgery which he hopes will alleviate these effects. This will take place shortly and in time for him to recuperate before Rosh Hashanah. On your behalf we wish Chazan Avromi the very best and a complete and speedy recovery. We have no doubt that members of the community will want to wish Avromi well whilst he is in hospital and subsequently recuperating at home. However, we have been asked to request that members respect his privacy and that of his family during this period, and rather than visit him, personal letters or cards would be greatly appreciated. Whilst we hope and pray that Chazan Avromi will be back to full health in time for Rosh Hashanah we are making arrangements to lighten his workload over the very busy and demanding Festival period.

High Holydays

Whilst on the subject of the Yamim Noraim, given the increasing proportion of the community who use the Art Scroll Machzor we have decided that on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we will be substantially following the order of the service as set out in the Art Scroll Machzor in all our services (other than the Sephardi minyan). We believe this will enable a significant number of members to follow the services more readily. To help members who do not have Art Scroll Machzorim we have negotiated a special discount and are able to sell Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur machzorim at £20 each. These will be available for purchase from the shul office.

The final matter we would like to draw to members attention regarding the Yamim Noraim relates to the Yizkor booklet which we publish every year for Yom Kippur listing the names of deceased relatives who members wish to remember at this time of the year. We have been asked to remind members that it has not been our practice to read out all the names in the booklet during Yizkor because to do so would now take over 20 minutes. Instead we will include in the Yizkor prayer a special reference to those people listed in the booklet.

Rabbinical Search

The application period in response to our advertisements for a Senior Rabbi to replace Rabbi Livingstone, closed just before Shavuot. We received a large number of applications from the UK and abroad and have, in addition, initiated some further conversations with prospective candidates. The Selection Committee has considered all of the applications and the candidates who have been shortlisted will be having initial interviews over the next few weeks. Members will appreciate that all applications have been made to us in the strictest of confidence and therefore there is little further detail that we can divulge at the moment. Please be assured that the securing of a new Rabbi is a major priority for us and one to which we will be devoting much of our time and energy over the next few months. As soon as there is any further update that we can share with you, we will be communicating again.

8 Norrice Lea

Members may have noticed that 8 Norrice Lea is being refurbished following the departure of the Livingstone family. It is anticipated that these works will be largely completed by the end of June. At the same time the tenancy on Rabbi Knopf's house in Brim Hill will be coming to an end. The HOs feel that it would not be a good use of community resources to seek a new tenancy elsewhere when our own accommodation lies empty. We have therefore decided that, in the interim period until we are able to appoint a new Senior Rabbi, Rabbi Knopf and his family will occupy 8 Norrice Lea on a temporary basis. They will be moving in at the beginning of July, and members will be notified of their new contact details in due course.

Adult Education

The service next Shabbat (19 June) will include an explanation by Chazan Avromi about Kaddish, its significance and certain relevant customs including the correct way to respond when one hears the recitation of kaddish by mourners. We are hoping, once the congregation understands that the purpose of saying Kaddish is to elicit the correct responses from members, that there will be better decorum at this time. This will help mourners across the shul to say Kaddish in unison and for the whole congregation also to respond together and thus show appropriate respect.

In addition, Rabbi Knopf has organised a wonderful Seudah Shlishit series on Shabbat afternoons over the summer in addition to the very many other educational programmes going on throughout the year. Details of these are in the shul newsletter and can be found on the website. Please do take a look at what is on offer and come and join us.

We wish all members an enjoyable Summer

Yours sincerely

Keith Barnett, Chairman

Simon Johnson, Vice-Chairman

Jeffrey Davidson, Financial Representative

Julian Lewis, Warden

Meyer Pearlman, Warden