

Michelle the Mayor

Shortly after she took up the role of Bury Mayor, Cllr Michelle Wiseman spoke with David Lewis about her role, the Representative Council and the future.

'It's harder to hold back than speak out' says Cllr Michelle Wiseman, who since May 2014 has had the honour of being appointed the Mayor of Bury. 'In my role as Mayor I have to maintain a position of neutrality and stepping back from a controversial issue can often create difficulties for me'.

But Michelle is an experienced politician who has served on Bury Council for thirteen years, for the most part representing the Conservative Party and latterly as an Independent. She knows full well the obligations, as well as the privileges, that come with her role. It is with enormous pride that she wears her robes and chains of office and takes great pleasure in showing visitors the well-appointed Mayor's Parlour with its magnificent collection of paintings and ceremonial objects d'art.

Her connection with the Representative Council has been a long one. Previously, she served as an Executive Member and looks forward to the opportunity of strengthening the relationship between the Representative Council and the Borough throughout her mayoral year. She has already been present at several Jewish functions and hopes to attend many more over the coming months.

Following this she will serve as Deputy Mayor for a year but has made the decision not to stand for re-election when her term as a Councillor comes to an end in 2016. 'After all those years', she says 'I will be looking for new challenges' and adds that she may look for a greater

involvement within the Representative Council itself.

Although as Mayor, Michelle does not of course, represent the Jewish Community in an official capacity, she does carry her Jewish identity with her into the position. The religious service to mark her installation was carried out at the Whitefield Synagogue and her chaplain is Rabbi Guttentag. She does not undertake duties on Friday nights though may attend some functions on a Saturday provided it does not compromise her religious practice. Michelle will attend Church services when required, though she has declined to participate when asked to give readings, "On such occasions," she says, "having a Deputy Mayor to rely upon is invaluable."

Michelle is ably assisted as Mayoress by Danielle, her 22 year-old daughter. On the brink of what will clearly be a successful legal career, Danielle gained a degree in law from Birmingham University and passed with distinction her Law Practice Certificate. While her primary role as Mayoress is to act as escort to the Mayor, Danielle has already performed some solo duties such as officially receiving the proceeds from the recent Prestwich Carnival.

Michelle is very grateful to Manchester Jewish Community Care, where she is Director, for giving her the flexibility in her professional role to perform her civic duties. Notwithstanding the huge commitment of time and effort required, she looks forward enthusiastically to the months ahead.



Cllr Michelle Wiseman, Mayor of Bury, with her Mayoress, and Daughter, Danielle

A League Apart

Sheila Johnson, President of The League of Jewish Women gives us an insight into the League, its history and its continuing work.

The League of Jewish Women began in London in 1943, started by several distinguished Jewish ladies. In 1944, a group of local ladies formed a group which they called Didsbury group and which had a small membership.

Towards the end of that year it was decided to form a proper North West Region of the League of Jewish Women, and the chairman at that time was a Mrs. C Hassan, who represented the Didsbury group and whose term of office was from 1945-49. By this time there was another group, Broughton, and so the League was beginning to form. London area had their 70th Anniversary last year, and North West Region has theirs this year.

We now have nine groups Bury & Whitefield, Brantwood, Bowdon & Hale, Cheadle & Gatley, Fylde, Kingsway, Park Windsor, Prestwich, and Sale & Altrincham. Also under the

league umbrella are Care Concern and the Talking Newspaper.

Over the years some of the groups have ceased to operate but many have amalgamated and continued their work. We volunteer in the general community for many organisations that RepPresents readers maybe interested in:

Charity Shops, Carers Centre, Bury Hospice, Bury Blind Society, Childline, Jewish Museum, Allingham House, Talking about Judaism, Schools helping with reading, Hazel Grove Stroke Club, Stockport Talking Newspaper, Bury Metro Pipeline, Northern Jewish Talking Newspaper, St. Anne's Hospice, South Manchester, Wilbraham Road Luncheon Club at Sale Synagogue, Stockport Magistrates, Bury Magistrates and Manchester Crown Courts, Friendship Clubs, Nicky Alliance Day Centre, Langdon College,

Reminiscence Sessions, Maccabi, Salford Family Contact Centre, Disabled Living, Strangeways Prison, SSFA (Soldiers, Sailors and Families Association), Heathlands Village/Eventhall House, Wythenshawe Hospital, The Christie, Genesis Centre, Leaflet editing, Victoria Hospital Blackpool, Crumpsall and Fairfield Hospitals, Woodend Residential Home, CAB Blackpool, Blackpool Hospice, AJR, Oldham General.

In all these places the work we do can include transport, serving meals or tea in a tea bar, hand massage or handcare, Headstart (for patients who may lose their hair during chemotherapy), running friendship clubs and many different tasks happily carried out by our caring volunteers.

A full list of all these rotas is given out at our AGM and a copy can be given to anybody who would like to see the full list.



Above: l-r Hon Sec. Rabbi Arnold Saunders, President Sharon Bannister, Mayor of Bury Cllr Michelle Wiseman, Yaakov Wise, Vice President Jacky Buchsbaum.

Below: l-r Rabbi Arnold Saunders, Rabbi Amir Ellituv, Mayor of Trafford Cllr Ejaz Malik, Sharon Bannister, Past President Louis Rapaport during courtesy visit.



Ladies in Blue from Park Windsor Group serving lunches at the Nicky l to r: Anne Morris, Arlene Levy, Sharon Freeman, Helen Lustman

A Grave Undertaking

The North Manchester Jewish Cemeteries Trust (NMJCT) was formed some two years ago in September 2012 to address the increasing problems in just maintaining our cemeteries on a day today basis.

It had become obvious that the operation and maintenance of our cemeteries was disparate, having grown out of necessity as individual synagogues, had over the years, set up their own communal amenities to service their own needs. It was clear that the system for maintaining our cemeteries was no longer fit for purpose and that there was a pressing need to establish regular, long term and adequate income to ensure ongoing future day to day maintenance and servicing of our cemeteries.

The Trust was also acutely aware of the impending shortage of existing burial spaces and the need to procure new burial grounds. Some 20 to 30 acres of farmland will need to be sourced and its purchase and re-development as a cemetery funded. This will then need to be managed and maintained on a permanent basis.

A major objective which The Trust set for itself was to bring about a single organisation which would operate and coordinate the maintenance and servicing of all our cemeteries. To this end individual burial boards have come together and are working as the North Manchester Joint Burial Board to achieve this goal.

We have come a long way in two years and the community is now viewing The Trust as the pivotal organisation to solve the cemetery problems.

At the end of June 2014

another landmark decision was reached when the Joint Burial Board agreed unanimously that NMJCT would take over the responsibility for the operation and maintenance of our cemeteries on behalf of the Joint Burial Board. This means that NMJCT will become a direct employment organisation in contrast to the current system of employing companies and individuals on a sub-contract basis. This change will take place progressively over the coming months with full regard for the position and obligations of all existing sub contractors and NMJCT.

NMJCT staff and equipment will be based in new accommodation and offices at Rainsough Cemetery. The rationale and impetus for this change is;

- To enable overall control of the operation and maintenance of our cemeteries
- Streamline management and administration.
- Streamline working practices
- Ensure that all work carried out is to agreed specified standards.
- Ensure compliance with all Health & Safety Regulations.
- Maintain ongoing renovation work and cemetery improvements.

In doing so NMJCT will be looking in the coming months to offer a full range of services including;

- A 'Care Programme' to enable families to purchase contracts for the cleaning, repair and maintenance of tombstones. (All routine maintenance and cleaning will be undertaken by the Trust's trained ground staff. Any major repairs will be undertaken only by the Trust's licensed stonemasons and in consultation with the family)
 - Tombstone Insurance.
 - A 'Commemorative Programme' where families will be able to dedicate Rose trees, benches or a plaque on the cemetery memorial wall in memory of their loved ones.
- Some of the key benefits will be;
- One point of contact for all services.
 - Financing and funding administered by one new centralised organisation.
 - Enhanced ability to rectify decades of communal neglect and underfunding.
 - Economies of scale.
 - Forward planning of future communal burial space requirements.
 - Budgetary control and forecasting, including programs for remedial and ongoing works.

There is increasing recognition and acceptance that the financial and practical responsibility for establishing a robust system falls jointly on the cemetery owners, the community and the families of the loved ones buried in the cemeteries.

This is a massive change in the way that Manchester has operated its cemeteries and the



Steven Niman of the NMJCT addresses June's meeting of the Representative Council, flanked by President, Sharon Bannister and Past President, Frank Baigel

NMJCT urges the whole community to help fund this major shift and help implement these important innovations and

improvements now. Contact Details: Email: adam@nmjct.org Web: www.nmjct.org

The Challenge of Change

The Fed are undertaking major developments to the Heathlands site and have kept the Representative Council informed of their progress through various meetings. Here, Karen Phillips, Chief Executive of The Fed, comments on the way she sees living through change.

Change dust, noise and debris here we are in the middle of building works that will transform Heathlands Village; home to communal services and to over 170 older people who live in our care village. They are proving themselves to be a very resilient bunch, demanding for sure, yet full of fun and positivity amidst the rubble.

But why wouldn't they be positive? Many have been through the blitz; through the concentration camps; through poverty and displacement. This then is small fry.

Change our residents have influenced it; they criticise it; some days, some of them hate it; yet most view it with patience and humour a transitory phase that brings the promise of better things to come.

Our residents live here because they cannot manage any longer in their own homes. Some are physically unwell and most live with varying and challenging forms of dementia the very reason we must make the changes to their new home here with us.

We have employed extra staff to help residents through this period, navigating them away from newly emerged walls and along re-routed thoroughfares, discouraging them from twiddling with the builders' ear plug dispenser (which looks so much

like a bubble-gum machine, I can't resist a twiddle myself) - generally ensuring that life is disrupted as little as possible.

Yes, at times residents get

THE LOOKING AFTER EACH OTHER FED

fraught. We all do. It would be impossible to remain unaffected by the noise of drilling and power-hammers, of power-cuts and the water going off but there are many people I have to thank for making all this bearable:

- the 102 year old lady resident who, when asked by a visiting Director of Social Services the secret of her longevity, mysteriously replied, "Never show your belly button to



Karen Phillips, The Fed's CEO

anyone!"

- the builder who told me "I love working here", in spite of criticism from a resident that "My son could have done this better".

- the staff, volunteers and relatives who cheerfully vibrate around the place in rhythm with our own brand of fracking and Jurassic Park soundtrack.

- a lady resident who told me that she might not live to see the changes completed but loved it here anyway.

Change: it's a slow process but we are almost there. I love my job.



Representative Council Vice-President, Jonny Wineberg, and new Executive member, Steve Weller, met with the UJIA Leadership Group in July along with Richard Verber of the 'Change the Board' campaign

It Pays to Talk

Past President, Frank Baigel, describes the success of the Representative Council in challenging the wearing of Nazi uniforms in Bury.

Many of you will have heard of the East Lancashire Railway, otherwise known as the ELR, but will have had little idea as to 'what it's all about'.

I had only heard of the ELR for a number of years in connection with the wearing of Nazi uniforms at 1940s themed re enactments but was otherwise ignorant of its activities.

The day after I became President (at 8.55 am Mon 12 May 2012 to be precise), I received a phone call from a journalist asking for a statement about the previous day's activities of a number of people who had paraded in an ostentatious manner in full SS and Nazi Uniforms.

On a quick learning curve, I found out that the ELR ran varied special themed events throughout the Summer season and that the last May Bank Holiday weekend always featured a 1940s event with music and fashions from that era. The

railway runs from Bury to Ramsbottom on the privately restored line and it even has a Thomas the Tank weekend too!

We initiated a meeting with representatives of the ELR two years ago and met them with local Bury Police representatives. We explained the disquiet which members of our Community felt about the display of Nazi uniforms and paraphernalia. They assured us at our first meeting that all participants would be written to in future, in advance, and warned not to wear such material. This was very effective in 2013 in minimising problems.

Early in 2014 the manager of the ELR Mr Andy Morris contacted me again and asked if it would be possible to introduce some Jewish content as they had come to some understanding of our concerns. A small group of us from the Representative Council met with ELR representatives.

After examining various options and parts of their extensive premises, it was suggested by Mr Joe Flacks, the incoming Chairman of AJEX, that a display from the Jewish Military Museum, which is run by AJEX in London, should be shown. The display highlighted the Jewish contribution to the British Armed Forces over 250 years and especially in the two World Wars.

This year, on Sunday 25th and Monday 26th May at the Bury ELR station, the display was present. No one appeared in Nazi uniform but many looked at the Jewish Military Exhibition, staffed all day by Mr Flacks and some AJEX colleagues.

This display and input of AJEX was deemed to have been a great success.

It pays to talk; a job well done.

Meeting the Mosque

The International Weekend of Twinning encourages Synagogues and Mosques to visit each other over one weekend in November. Here, Charles Bloom QC describes his experience of forging Links with Cheadle Mosque.

On 16th November 2013, as part of an international initiative, members of Cheadle Mosque, including Dr Usman Choudry, chairman of the board of the Mosque, Afzal Choudhri and Shahid Saleem paid a visit to Yeshurun synagogue. They were well received and participated in the Kiddush after the service, where they mingled in lively conversation with members of the Yeshurun congregation.

Two days later members of Yeshurun paid a reciprocal visit to the Mosque. Those attending were myself, my wife Janice

Bloom, Tony Kaye, chairman of the Yeshurun Board of management, his wife Lesley Kaye, and Amanda Kremnitzer, who is also a Yeshurun board member. We were present throughout the evening prayers, attended by about eighty Mosque members and then we met with about twelve members of the Mosque, including Dr. Usman.

There followed a very positive dialogue, which lasted for more than two hours, in which we discussed various aspects of our respective faiths and their religious and cultural customs,

laws and traditions. It was astonishing and heart-warming to discover just how much the two faiths have in common in all areas.

The atmosphere was warm, convivial and very positive. We were thoughtfully provided with kosher food and drink and even kosher grape juice, on which I was proud to make a beracha for all. I believe that we have forged lasting links between the two local communities. Dialogue and a further successful meeting took place at the Mosque in June 2014 at which Tony Kaye and I attended, and the two communities aim to have further meetings and open discussions in the near future.

There is still the opportunity for Synagogues to link with local

Mosques for the 2014 Weekend of Twinning in November. For more information and support,

contact the Muslim Jewish Forum by email at mail@muslimjewish.org.uk.



Last year's visit by Yeshurun members to the Cheadle Mosque, which they intend to repeat this November

THE BOARD
OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS
PROUD TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY

GENERAL ELECTION 2015: THE MANCHESTER JEWISH KICK-OFF

The Board of Deputies, together with the Jewish Representative Council, invite you to a meeting to discuss the 2015 General Election.

The Board has produced a Jewish Manifesto to advise policy makers and candidates in of the community's key aspirations and concerns.

We hope you will join us to discuss and explore key issues with the panel:

Graham Brady, MP for Altrincham & Sale West
Louise Ellman, MP for Liverpool Wavertree (invited)
John Leech, MP for Manchester Withington (invited)

and Gillian Merron, Chief Executive, the Board of Deputies of British Jews

Sunday 21st September 2014 Reception 7.00pm Panel 7.45pm
North Manchester Location (address advised shortly before event)

RSVP: events@bod.org.uk



From the President

During these last few weeks of heightened tensions and conflict, I have been intensely proud and heartened by the way our Manchester Community has performed. The response to hate campaigns on both mainstream and social media as well

as a physical presence in Manchester City Centre has shown us and our detractors that we will be neither intimidated nor quietened and that we will stand up to oppression in all forms.

The response has been from many sections of our community: young and older, frum and secular, from existing organisations, from those who have always been committed and encouragingly by many individuals who have never before been active in this way.

The Manchester Jewish Representative Council has been extremely busy co-ordinating and



supporting some of these activities, publicising others and its Honorary Officers, Executive and Past Presidents have never been busier in recent times.

It is essential that all this excellent work continues because those who seek to harm us will be unlikely to lessen their efforts.

As individuals we can each use whatever means is at our disposal to challenge and correct lies, untruths and distortions, in person, at our workplaces, across the dinner table, at social events, on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, on websites open for comments and by letters to the media, councillors, MPs and MEPs.

Please continue to respond, engage in dialogue, be seen, be heard. For more information, please email us at: office@jewishmanchester.org or telephone 0161 720 8721.

COMMUNITY EVENTS DIARY

- Sunday September 1 1.00pm to 3.30pm- FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT: HAPPY JEWISH NEW YEAR. Manchester Jewish Museum. Admission Free
- Sunday, September 21 6.30pm to 7.30pm - NHS Bury & Salford CCG Consultation at Nicky Alliance Centre
- Sunday, September 21 7.00pm - General Election 2015 Kick-Off RSVP: events@bod.org.uk
- Monday, September 22 7.30pm - Hamburger Lecture, Guest Speaker Jonathan Sacerdoti. Details of venue contact 740 8835 or zcc.man@zen.co.uk
- Monday, October 20 9.30am to 4.00pm - One-day Holocaust conference sponsored by Centre for Jewish Studies and Imperial War Museum North at IWM North. Free, but booking necessary. Further information: www.manchesterjewishstudies.org
- Thursday, October 23 4pm - Centre for Jewish Studies research seminar: Sarah Hirschhorn, 'The Origins of the Redemption in Occupied Suburbia? Rabbi Shlomo Riskin and the Jewish-American Makings of the West Bank Settlement of Efrat, 1973-2014'. Further information: www.manchesterjewishstudies.org
- 24 Oct - 29 May 2015 - Made In Manchester: The Art Of Emmanuel Levy (1900-1986). First retrospective of Levy's work for over 30 years. FREE with museum admission. www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com/whats-on or contact Andrea Donner 0161 830 1433 marketing@manchesterjewishmuseum.com
- Shabbat, October 24 & 25 - Communal Shabbat Project. See Page 3 for details
- Tuesday, October 28 - Council of Christians & Jews, Maurice Brunner Lecture, Reverend David Walker, Bishop of Manchester. Manchester Jewish Museum
- Sunday, November 2 10.30am - JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL Monthly Meeting at Wilbraham Road Jewish Students Centre
- Thursday, November 6 - CCJ Holocaust Study Day at Menorah Synagogue, Guest Speaker Dr James Smith, co-founder of the UK Holocaust Centre (Beth Shalom) and the Aegis Trust. Contact francescafrazer@gmail.com
- Thursday, November 6 until November 23 - UK Jewish Film Festival. Opening screening and reception. Contact judith.gordon@ukjewishfilm.org
- Sunday, November 23 7.30pm - JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL COMMUNITY CHALLENGE QUIZ – HILTON SUITE, PRESTWICH HEBREW CONGREGATION. TABLES OF 10 REQUIRED. CONTACT 720 8721 FOR MORE DETAILS
- Saturday, December 6 7.00pm - Faith Network 4 Manchester AGM, Dialogue: 'Faith Responding to Adversity' and Festive Meal. Manchester Multifaith Centre
- Sunday, December 7 10.30am - JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL Monthly Meeting at Nicky Alliance Centre
- Sunday, January 11 - ZCC/Zionist Federation Israel Advocacy Workshop. All day event. Contact 740 8835
- Sunday, February 1 - MANCHESTER DAY LIMMUD. William Hulme's Grammar School. On-line registration open October @ www.limmud.org/day/manchester
- Thursday, April 23 - Yom Ha'atzmaut – further details to follow
- Sunday, April 26 - Community Sherman Lecture followed by lectures at Manchester University from Monday, April 27th to Thursday, April 30th. The Sherman Lectures in Jewish Studies 2015 will be given by Amy-Jill Levine, Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, Vanderbilt University

FOR DETAILS OF ALL FORTHCOMING EVENTS, CONSULT THE COMMUNAL DIARY @ WWW.JEWISHMANCHESTER.ORG