



SOUTH WEST ESSEX AND SETTLEMENT REFORM SYNAGOGUE (SWESRS)



Artist's Impression of the Bimah

RABBINIC APPLICATION PACK

Dear Applicant

We are delighted that you've expressed an interest in the Rabbinic vacancy at South West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue.

After five extremely productive years, our current Rabbi, Rabbi Lisa Barrett, will be leaving us in May 2021 to return to her home city of Manchester, and we have now started the process of recruiting for a replacement to help take our community forward. We welcome applications for full-time or part-time positions, including job shares and other creative solutions, provided these can be demonstrated to meet the needs of our community. This pack includes an overview of SWESRS, together with a job description, person specification and application form. The job description and person specification have been developed from a wide-ranging community consultation, including community wide questionnaires, focus groups, stakeholder consultation and an open community meeting.

We are approaching the recruitment of our new rabbi with an open mind and seek to explore with you the unique ways in which you might contribute to the development of SWESRS. We are looking for someone who will bring their ideas, knowledge and enthusiasm to support our community and its development, working in partnership with our leadership, engaging with the wider community and enhancing the values of Reform Judaism. You will be active in facilitating growth of the community by taking a strong interest in encouraging prospective members to join, supporting new joiners and retaining existing ones. We believe this is an exciting opportunity to join a welcoming community and to make a difference.

SWESRS is one of the largest Reform Synagogues in the Movement for Reform Judaism, with just under one thousand members. It has been home to some exceptional rabbis who have given outstanding service to the community. We are now looking for our next Rabbi, to guide and work with the lay leadership to take the synagogue forward in its development. Having read the information in this pack, if you feel that you would be the sort of Rabbi who could work with us to develop our community in new and innovative ways, we would be delighted to hear from you.

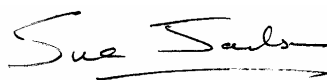
Please be assured that all applications and interviews will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and discretion. Should you have any further queries, please do contact either Michael Dalton on 07979 510950 / calabria17@icloud.com or Sue Jackson on 07585 650597 / sbjackson@aol.com, either of whom would also welcome an informal chat prior to application.

We very much look forward to receiving your application.

Many thanks and kind regards



Michael Dalton
Chairman to the Council



Sue Jackson
Vice-Chair to the Council / Chair Rabbinic Recruitment Group

About Us

Our Vision Statement

Spirituality:

To be a spiritually rich synagogue which is the number one choice for individuals and families in South West Essex, East London and the surrounding areas, providing a range of religious, communal and educational facilities which are a beacon for Reform Judaism and recognised as a model to which other communities might aspire

Welcoming:

To be a welcoming community, respecting differences but united by shared principles and aims, where everyone feels comfortable, valued and proud to be part of SWESRS

Relationships:

To be seen in the wider Jewish and non-Jewish community as a respected ambassador for Reform Judaism, striving to support the principles of charity and social justice and working for positive inter-faith and multi-cultural relationships

SWESRS is a very special place, rich in tradition and inspiring in innovations. There is huge potential for the right Rabbi to make an incredible difference to our current community, young and old, to build and develop the community and to create an ongoing impact and legacy for future generations. We are seeking a Rabbi who will be an inspiring leader and will be fully engaged in the ongoing development of SWESRS, ensuring our future as a synagogue that epitomises the modern face of British Jewry.

Here at SWESRS we are passionate about our commitment to Reform Judaism and to fulfilling our Vision. We have been working hard to move from being transactional to building relationships across the community and to develop the future of SWESRS in ways that are caring and supportive, whilst being open to challenging ourselves as we move into the future. Our Vision is supported by our commitment to key values that have been developed through a series of Open Community Meetings:

- Upholding the core values and traditions of Reform Judaism
- Being a welcoming and caring community with a culture of belonging
- Lifelong learning, education and growth for all
- Being a socially responsible community
- Valuing and developing positive inter-faith and multi-cultural relationships

We are now in the process of developing our next three year strategic plan, 2021-24 / 5782-5785, providing a framework for enabling SWESRS to continue to survive and remain sustainable over the next three years and beyond. We are now looking for a Rabbi who is as passionate about people

and leadership as we are and is ready to work with us to fulfil our aims, eager to take on the exciting challenge of building on our foundations by developing our engagement with families and young people as well as with those in mixed faith relationships.

Although we face real challenges, for example our age demographic, SWESRS is nevertheless proud to remain one of the largest communities in Reform Judaism. We have a rich heritage. Our congregation is an amalgamation of the St. George's Settlement Synagogue, formerly situated in the heart of London's East End, and the South West Essex Reform Synagogue based in Oaks Lane, Newbury Park, Essex. We are active members of ECAMPS (Eastern Counties Association of Masorti and Progressive Synagogues) and hold regular events and services with the other ECAMPS communities.



The Bimah



Our Sukkah

Services at SWESRS are held every Friday evening, Shabbat morning and now online for Havdalah, together with all festivals. We are proud of the ways in which we have changed and adapted in these current times to have all services on Zoom, as well as live-streaming to Facebook. We are developing hybrid services that are taking place (when we are able after lockdown restrictions) in our beautiful prayer hall whilst still having a strong online presence. We hold themed Shabbat services on a regular basis: recent events include Pride Shabbat, Remembrance Shabbat, Jewish Women's Aid Shabbat and Mental Health Shabbat. We have just begun talks with Clore Tikva, our local pluralist Jewish Primary School, to jointly develop an autism friendly service. Music is very important to us at our services and we are supported by our wonderful volunteer choir and by other musicians including at our Kol HaMishpachot musical services, to which we have invited families from Clore Tikva.

SWESRS is owned and managed by the membership. We have a Council which meets monthly and is elected annually. There are a number of Sub-Committees and groups that deal with detailed discussions in specific areas and report to Council. The synagogue employs an Office Manager, Finance Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Community Care Co-ordinator, Senior Teacher, Hebrew Tutors, Choirmasters and Caretaker. We have a group of very committed members who contribute to the life of the synagogue through, for example, being Wardens, Lay Readers, members of the choir, organisers of social and cultural activities, Care Team, producers of Alonim (the synagogue magazine), fund raisers and more. We are particularly pleased that 150 of our members stepped up

to volunteer during this pandemic, phoning members, shopping, collecting prescriptions and otherwise supporting each other.

We are a community of around 1000 members. Our demographics by age are:

10 and under	24	51-60	138
11-20	91	61-70	192
21-30	32	71-80	241
31-40	42	81-90	174
41-50	67	91 and over	62

We cover a wide geographic area in Essex, East London and beyond, although 417 households have IG (Ilford) postcodes. 100 of 266 family households are on reduced subscriptions as are 308 of our 419 single members.

Ideally situated, the synagogue is just a few minutes' walk from Newbury Park tube station on the underground Central Line. The synagogue is readily accessible by road, being located off the main A12 and within easy reach of the M11 and M25 motorways. We are very well situated for schools in the area, including Clore Tikva Primary School (a pluralist Jewish school with whom we are developing ever closer links), Ilford Jewish Primary School and Kantor King Solomon High School all within easy reach. A number of secondary school students travel to JCoSS (The Jewish Community Secondary School) in north London who provide transport from Redbridge. The Sternberg Centre is just 45 minutes round the North Circular Road; London's West End a 45 minute tube journey; and Epping Forest and the countryside a short 20 minute car drive away.



Our award-winning circular sanctuary

You can discover more about us at <https://www.swesrs.org.uk>
<https://www.facebook.com/South-West-Essex-and-Settlement-Reform-Synagogue>

Job description

Reports to: Chair

Community Development and Engagement

- To lead on and facilitate the growth of the community by reaching out to prospective members, including families and young people, unaffiliated Jews, and those in mixed-faith relationships
- To develop new ways of engaging with Reform Judaism for members who are less involved
- To develop strategies and methods for increasing synagogue membership in conjunction with lay leadership
- Represent the synagogue on various local government, educational and inter-faith bodies as required
- Be active in the use of social media to reach out to members and prospective members
- Assist with the planning of community and festival activities and support community and fundraising events

Religious and spiritual life

- To officiate at Shabbat, festival and other services
- To deliver inspiring and thought provoking sermons that connect with the membership
- To officiate at weddings, funerals, cremations and tombstone consecrations
- In conjunction with lay readers, to lead shiva prayers as required
- To be involved in other religious lifecycle events as appropriate
- To liaise with families regarding lifecycle events
- To produce a quarterly service calendar
- To support and develop a group of lay readers
- To liaise as necessary with the Senior Warden, Choirmasters and lay readers to ensure that services are properly planned and conducted
- To attend meetings of the Religious Services Sub-Committee

Education and Learning

- Support and contribute to the work of Education and Youth Sub-Committee
- To liaise with the Senior Teacher and Chair of Education and Youth Sub-Committee as required, to support, help and develop high quality Bar/ Bat Mitzvah programmes
- To undertake teaching duties as required
- To undertake B'nei Mitzvah tuition and coaching as required
- To initiate and contribute to adult learning as appropriate
- To welcome prospective converts into the community and to teach, coach and support individuals considering or undergoing conversion, including on the shared ECAMPS Access to Judaism conversion programme

Students and Young People

- To plan and develop a student liaison programme in conjunction with the Education and Youth Sub-Committee and Religious Services Sub-Committee, as appropriate
- To plan and develop activities and services for young people and children in conjunction with Religious Services Sub-Committee and Education and Youth Sub-Committee as appropriate

- To encourage young people to maintain and develop involvement in the community
- To develop and guide a strategy for young people that includes social, educational and religious activities and develops a sense of community
- To strengthen and promote relationships with local Jewish schools

Pastoral Care

- To be the principal provider of pastoral care to congregants with the support where relevant of the Community Care Co-ordinator
- To support the sick, the dying and the bereaved
- To give support and guidance to members who are in need of pastoral support
- Through the Care Team, to develop and support wider pastoral facilities in the community
- To liaise with the Care Co-ordinator and office manager to ensure effective communication regarding members' pastoral needs

The Rabbi is expected to fulfil a range of external duties and responsibilities:

- The Rabbi is expected to be a member of or to join the Assembly of Reform Rabbis and Cantors
- To regularly attend Rabbinic Assembly meetings and feedback to Council and the lay leadership, any points of relevance emanating from discussions at the Assembly or Reform Judaism
- To reflect and report the views of SWESRS' members to the Assembly and Reform Judaism
- Represent the synagogue on various Reform Judaism committees as required
- Promote Reform Judaism among members of the synagogue
- Promote Reform Judaism and represent the views and interests of Reform Jews in general and the congregation of SWESRS in particular, to any relevant audiences in the wider community
- To be actively involved with inter-faith work as SWESRS' representative
- To be actively committed to the spiritual and communal wellbeing of SWESRS' members
- Meet with other rabbis of ECAMPS communities to plan joint events and services

The Rabbi is expected to participate in the management of the synagogue and to:

- Attend Council meetings and report to Council on rabbinic matters and tasks
- Attend regular review and development meetings with the Chair
- To work in active and positive partnership with the lay leadership
- Meet with the Office Manager as required
- Meet with the Senior Warden and Choirmasters regarding the management of religious services and other services that the synagogue provides to its members as required
- Regularly contribute to the synagogue's newsletter and weekly emails

In addition, the Rabbi is expected to:

- Take responsibility for professional development and to identify, in consultation with the Chair, any developmental or training activities that may be appropriate.
- Provide support to a Student Rabbi and/or an Associate Rabbi if required
- Undertake any other duties or activities appropriate to the role as required

Person specification

Qualifications:	
A member of the Assembly of Reform Rabbis and Cantors UK or equivalent	Essential
A relevant degree or higher education qualification	Desirable
Special Knowledge:	
A good understanding of the values of Reform Judaism in the UK	Essential
An understanding of the current issues facing Jewry in the UK and SWESRS in particular	Essential
Qualities:	
Dynamic and charismatic leader	Essential
Warm, compassionate and empathetic	Essential
Diplomatic, approachable and non-judgemental	Essential
Openness, curiosity and wisdom	Essential
Flexible and open to new ideas	Essential
Skills and abilities:	
The ability to engage with, inspire and influence congregants of all ages, backgrounds and views	Essential
Ability to act effectively in a leadership role	Essential
Team player who enjoys building strong relationships	Essential
The ability to thrive in a high pressure environment	Essential
Experienced in leading Shabbat, festival and life cycle services in a progressive community	Essential
Excellent pastoral skills	Essential
A clear understanding of issues relating to diversity and equality of opportunity	Essential
Ability to understand, read and write Hebrew fluently	Essential
An experienced teacher who can inspire others through learning	Essential
Ability to work closely with lay leadership, using a broad range of practical rabbinic skills to support the synagogue's key objectives	Essential
Excellent written, verbal and listening skills in all media	Essential
Very good IT and social media skills	Essential
Ability to work in partnership with lay leaders and volunteers and to promote and support community development	Essential
Ability to represent SWESRS in the wider Jewish and secular community and working with other faith groups	Desirable
Ability to quickly acquire a good knowledge of the synagogue and the services that it provides to its members and the community	Essential
Previous experience in a rabbinic position or as a student rabbi or cantor	Essential
Counselling skills	Desirable

Community Consultation

We have engaged in wide consultation prior to preparing this pack, which has in part been developed from the views received. We sent questionnaires to the whole community; invited 230 people to attend facilitated discussions on zoom; held a community open meeting; and invited key stakeholders to present a paper to and/or attend a meeting with the Rabbinic Recruitment Group.

Questionnaires: Members overwhelmingly believe that the Rabbi should be our spiritual leader, providing a spiritual and moral lead to the community, playing a leadership role in religious services, leading on and developing the area of ethics. Most members rated their own Jewish identity very highly and the majority of respondents observe Shabbat and many Jewish traditions at home. The most valued activity within the synagogue is Shabbat services. Members see pastoral work as one of the key areas of the new role, with the highest score given to 'supporting the bereaved' which rated very highly. Likewise the highest score for lifecycle events was support at funerals and shivas; although working with Bnei mitzvah families also scored very highly. The words seen most often in describing what people want in a Rabbi are warmth, compassion, kindness and empathy.

Focus groups and stakeholder consultations: Members are proud to belong to SWESRS because they see us as welcoming and inclusive and are especially proud of the ways in which we have supported members during this pandemic. For example, members were 'very proud of how well and how quickly SWESRS embraced technology to be able to offer services – religious, cultural and social - on Zoom' and how well we are supporting members through our phone tree, our volunteers and our Care Team. Members also said that they were proud of SWESRS' role in developing Reform Judaism, citing this as the reason they joined the shul. Hopes and concerns were two sides of the same coin, with a very strong wish that over the next three years we develop ways to include and encourage younger members and mixed faith families, and a concern that without this our elderly community will dwindle. In making a new rabbinic appointment the overwhelming hope was to secure the future of SWESRS by recruiting younger families and developing community outreach whilst recognising that an incoming Rabbi would also need to be 'caring and supportive of our unique community' and would celebrate inclusivity. As one respondent stated, we hope to find 'someone who is invested in the SWESRS community and feels at home with us. Someone who will embrace what we as a community have to offer and build on it'.

Open Meeting: Those attending the Community Open Meeting agree that it is really important that a new Rabbi finds ways to reach out to younger members, to mixed-faith families and to unaffiliated Jews. In doing so, there should be an emphasis on Reform Judaism and what it has to offer. Members are generally willing to accept job shares as long as the tasks are discretely defined. With regard to services, members feel that it is good to embrace different ways of praying and different musical experiences in services. The Rabbi should be free to introduce different forms of services - as Reform Jews we should welcome difference and have alternative spaces for different ways of praying – whilst recognising our traditions. There was a general, but not unanimous, view that services exploring particular themes and social issues should be welcomed. Members unanimously hope that our new Rabbi will become an integral part of the SWESRS community, and will be dynamic and innovative, finding ways to take us forward with new strength and enthusiasm.

What happens next?

We hope that, having read this information, you are as excited as we are about this opportunity and that you believe that you have the necessary skills and experience to work with the lay leadership to take SWESRS forward to this crucial stage in its development. Our incoming Rabbi will help us develop and share a vision for the future whilst recognising our rich heritage, and will be fully supported by Council and an active team of volunteers.

If you think this could be you, please forward your CV and application form, together with a Supporting Statement if relevant, marked *Confidential* to Sue Jackson, Chair Rabbinic Recruitment Group, by email to recruitment@swesrs.org.uk or by post to South West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue, Oaks Lane, Newbury Park, Ilford, Essex IG2 7PL by **Friday 19th March 2021**.

If you are applying for a part-time position please clearly state how many hours you are able to give and what your main areas of interest are. If you are applying as a job share, please clearly show which elements of the role each person in the job share proposes taking on.

You will be informed of the outcome of your application by Tuesday 30th March and shortlisted candidates will at that time be given details of the interview process. It is highly likely that interviews will take place on Zoom but this will be confirmed nearer the time. Interviews will be held on Tuesday 6th April 2021 and a second interview may be held on Tuesday 13th April. The interview panel will consist of 6 people (the Chair of SWESRS, the Chair of the Rabbinic Recruitment Group, the Chair of the Religious Services Sub-Committee, the Chair of the Education and Youth Sub-Committee, a member of Council and a member representing parents of Bnei mitzvah children). At the interview you will be asked to respond to tasks set in advance and to engage in an open discussion about the role. Salary will be agreed with reference to Reform Judaism's rabbinic salary recommendations, and subject to negotiation.

We are committed to ensuring that your application and interview process will remain strictly confidential and discreet. Applications will only be seen by the Rabbinic Recruitment Group and interview panel. It is only at appointment stage that Council will be asked to ratify the recommendation(s) of the interview panel.

Should you have any further queries, please contact Michael Dalton (calabria17@icloud.com / 07979 510950) or Sue Jackson (sbjackson@aol.com / 07585 650597).

We look forward to receiving your completed application form.

Cover painting by Philip Keen, reproduced with the kind permission of Linda Gould

JOB APPLICATION FORM	
For the position of	RABBI

HOW TO FILL IN THIS FORM
<p>When filling out this application form please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer all the questions • Type or write in black ink or ball-point as this form will be photocopied • Continue on additional sheets if there is insufficient space <p>The information that you provide on this form will be used to make our initial selection. It is important that you relate your skills and experience to the criteria in the Person Specification.</p> <p>South West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue (SWESRS) is an inclusive employer, committed to equal opportunities in the recruitment, training and retention of its employees. Please let us know if you need any adjustments or support to help you with your application or the recruitment process.</p>

PERSONAL DETAILS			
Surname		Forename(s)	
Title			
Street			
Town/City			
County			
Postcode		Mobile Number	
Home Tel:		Work Tel:	
Email			
Date from which you are available to work (DD/MM/YYYY)	/ /		
Nationality			
Salary Expectation	£	Current/Last Salary	£
How did you learn about this vacancy?			

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS		
Name of Association/Institute	Grade/Class of membership and Registration or membership number	Date

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY			
Please list in order (most recent job first) the organisation you have worked for both full time and part time, paid or unpaid, including relevant voluntary work.			
From	To	Employer	Job Title/Main Duties

EDUCATION & TRAINING	
Please include details of studies undertaken and qualifications obtained from secondary education onwards	
School/College	Qualifications and grades gained

HEALTH
Do you have any physical conditions which could limit your ability to perform the job for which you are applying? YES/NO If yes, please provide details below of reasonable adjustments that we might be able to make to help you do your job.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Our initial selection process will be based on your **Application Form**. You should demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the **Personal Specification** by completing the following section. For example, this can be through relevant skills and experience attained. If you feel there is any extra information which will support your application, such as additional skills, feel free to add an additional **Supporting Statement**.

Remember, the information provided on this form will be used to decide whether you are suited to the vacancy on offer and constitutes an important part of our selection process.

Demonstrate how your **QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIFIC JOB SKILLS, COMMUNICATION AND OTHER RELEVANT SKILLS** meet the expectations stated in the Person Specification

Demonstrate that you have the relevant **EXPERIENCE** as stated in the Person Specification

Please explain how your **PERSONAL QUALITIES** meet the expectations of the role

REFERENCES

Please give the details of three people who are familiar with your abilities and are willing to act as a referee, one of whom should be your current or recent employer. **Your referees will only be contacted if we intend to offer the role to you and we have informed you.**

Referee 1

Name		
Position		
Street		
Town/City		
County		
Postcode		
Email		

Referee 2

Name		
Position		
Street		
Town/City		
County		
Postcode		
Email		

Referee 3

Name		
Position		
Street		
Town/City		
County		
Postcode		
Email		

DECLARATION

Should your application be successful, the offer of employment will be subject to clearance by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

In compliance with amendments made to the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, we require all applicants to provide evidence that they are legally permitted to work in the UK.

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information I have given is correct and I understand that any contract offered to me is based on the information provided.

Signed		Date (DD/MM/YY)	/ /
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Please note: If you are employed by the South West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue, information provided on this form may be retained on computer and part may be transferred to third parties where we are required to do so by operation of law. Full details of our data protection policy can be requested from the office.