



## Rabbinic Vacancy – Notice

### The Post

We are advertising to recruit a Rabbi to join our community. We can be flexible on start date to accommodate current commitments. This is planned to be a full-time position but we are willing to consider other possible working arrangements that would satisfy the needs of our community.

A job description is appended to this notice. We are looking for a Rabbi who will support our community and leadership but also bring their own ideas and enthusiasm. The successful candidate will demonstrate qualities of religious leadership, will be active in a pastoral role and will be capable of 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 that being our Rabbi is an exciting opportunity to join a very capable and smooth-running community and to make a difference.

### About us

Our synagogue (Beit Or – House of Light) is situated in South East London, and we attract members from both the local area and from further afield extending into Central London and 50 miles into Kent. We have around 400 adult members. Our proportion of younger members has increased and we now have approximately 135 members under the age of 21 and about 50 families with children under the age of 15 years.

We are very supportive of reform values. A high proportion of our membership is actively involved in synagogue life, attending services, working on our various committees and organising and participating in our many activities. The community has a deserved reputation for being welcoming, informal and inclusive. We have a wonderful, accessible building with service space, social space, professional kitchen and purpose-built classrooms, offices and a library. As well as a Rabbi we employ an administrator, a cheder head teacher, cheder teachers, a cleaner and a caretaker.

Services are held two Fridays a month (though we'd love it to be more often), every Shabbat morning and on all festivals. Services are supported by our volunteer choir singing *a cappella*. Our Religion and Ritual Committee organises events to celebrate the cycle of the Jewish calendar as well as providing wardens for all services, and one-to-one support for those preparing for their bar/bat mitzvah. Beyond our Rabbi's involvement in services, we have many experienced lay readers and an active programme to train more.

There are currently almost 60 children in the Cheder and a large number of post bar/bat mitzvah children stay on as helpers. We deliver a comprehensive syllabus in both Jewish Studies and Hebrew. Our excellent Cheder was largely responsible for our being the first synagogue in the Reform movement to be accredited by the Department for Jewish Education, Leo Baeck College. The Gan (kindergarten) meets alongside the cheder and each week welcomes families with children aged 0-5 for Jewish stories, learning and arts & crafts. This also gives parents a chance to socialise.

We hold regular adult education classes and there are frequent lectures from high-calibre speakers from outside the community in addition to onegei Shabbat.

Every two weeks our over-60s attend a social centre staffed by volunteer members. They enjoy a variety of activities such as discussions, card and board games, physical exercises, and lectures, and are provided with an excellent lunch.

During Covid and the lockdown, our synagogue has continued to run online via Zoom and YouTube as normally as possible. We have provided online Shabbat services, Friday night candle lightings, cheder, bnei mitzvot, study sessions, social events, a social centre and many more events and gatherings.

More information about us can be found on our website: <http://www.bromleyshul.org.uk>. We stream services online via our YouTube channel, where we have the largest number of subscribers of any UK Reform Synagogue. We also have an active social media presence. Our email newsletter (e-Light) complements our monthly newspaper (Highlight).

Further information is available on request from:

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The closing date for applications is Monday 17 May 2021. Applications will be accepted electronically or in writing. Please provide both a personal cover letter and CV / resume.

Prior to inviting applicants for formal interviews (which we intend to hold in June), we will provide an opportunity for an informal discussion with representatives from the community whose role relates to your interests or areas you'd like to find out more about.

Following interviews, we may invite you to visit us to both lead a service / study session and to meet us, see our community in action and ask our members any questions you might have.

We look forward to your interest and application.

### Rabbi

#### Introduction

Our Rabbi is responsible for leading and giving guidance on all religious activities within our Synagogue and our community. The primary role is to promote in the membership of the Synagogue a positive philosophy of Reform Judaism, through the teaching of Jewish knowledge and encouraging the interest of our members in Judaism.

Whoever our new Rabbi, they will have a unique role in helping us achieve our aims.

We are approaching the recruitment of our new Rabbi with an open mind and will seek to explore with candidates the particular ways they could contribute to our development and in return how we might be able to contribute to theirs.

We are open to discussion on working arrangements provided these can be demonstrated as being suitable for the needs of our community. Below are some requirements that we expect to form part of the contract and are intended to give potential applicants an appreciation of how we see the role.

#### Our offer to you

We are a well-established and growing community, with a stable and cohesive leadership. We are very supportive of reform values. We have a core staff supplemented by committees and many volunteers supporting both adult and youth education, social support and communication.

We want to come to a shared understanding with our Rabbi about their job and their role. We are not fixed in our views, and are open to change and new ideas. This is an opportunity to roll up your sleeves and make your mark. We'd love to hear about your vision for the role.



## What we'd like you to do

The table below summarises our views on aspects of our Rabbi's job and their relative importance. As well as these roles there are a number of cross-cutting aspects or ways of working, to be:

- welcoming and accessible;
- active/proactive;
- context-aware of memberships needs, backgrounds and demographics; and
- embracing of technology and social media (streaming, blogs, posts).

| Rabbinic Activities   | Role Description   |
|---|--|
| Pastoral  | Fully committed to actively supporting all our members in their times of need.   |
| B'nei Mitzvah   | Fully involved to ensure that Bar/Bat Mitzvah pupils are properly prepared and to work closely on preparing their drashot.   |
| High Holy Day services  | Lead all services but with good support from lay members.  |
| Wedding and funerals  | To be there and lead at these special/difficult times.   |
| Involvement in running of the synagogue in partnership with the Chair, Board and Committees | To take an active involvement in planning for the future of the synagogue by regular attendance at Board meetings. Regularly contribute to our membership communications (Highlight; e-Light, Talking Highlight and streaming/social media). |
| Membership recruitment and retention  | To be actively involved in membership recruitment and retention and to foster personal contact with prospective members and potential leavers.   |
| Adult and family education  | To give support to this but direct involvement can be tailored to your own personal interests.   |
| Interfaith and intrafaith activities  | To represent the synagogue across interfaith and intrafaith interests including public services, the Bromley 3-Faiths Group, the progressive movement and engagement with local institutions.  |
| Leading Shabbat morning and Friday night services   | Most Shabbat mornings and around two Friday night services per month.  |
| Leading festival services   | As required.   |
| Supervising conversion courses  | Not necessarily running classes (but we can discuss this if it is important to you) but providing direction, encouragement and specific tuition as required.   |
| Cheder presence and interest  | Be present at most cheder mornings to speak to children/parents and be involved in syllabus development where appropriate. To support and work with the Head of Cheder.  |



## Job description

### 1. Pastoral

- 1.1. Provide pastoral support to members of the synagogue, in particular to support the dying and bereaved, to give family support and guidance and to visit the sick at home and in hospital.
- 1.2. Liaise with the Caring Group to provide support for members at times of stress and illness.
- 1.3. Provide guidance and support for those involved with pastoral and welfare work within the community.

### 2. Services

- 2.1. In conjunction with the appropriate personnel, prepare and ensure leadership of all services – both main and family services – including Shabbat, festivals, weddings, funerals, shivot and tombstone consecrations. The Rabbi has every opportunity to be creative in the areas of services and celebrations.
- 2.2. Arrange for participating lay readers on a regular basis, and seek to further develop lay-reading capabilities.
- 2.3. Liaise with and provide guidance to those who lead services other than main synagogue services.
- 2.4. Together with the Religion and Ritual Committee, consult with the Board on any proposed substantive changes to synagogue services.

### 3. Education & Youth

- 3.1. Liaise with and advise the Head of Cheder on curriculum and programmes with the object of fostering a love of Judaism and of integrating the educational activities within the overall religious life of the synagogue.
- 3.2. Be an inspirational leader for all our youth at Cheder, at assembly and beyond.
- 3.3. Participate creatively in the work of the Cheder.
- 3.4. Ensure that Bar/Bat Mitzvah pupils are properly prepared and that the highest



standards are reached. Encourage the full involvement of the family within the process.

- 3.5. Give guidance and advice on adult education; help to initiate programmes for all age groups and abilities and participating whenever possible.
- 3.6. Promote family education and foster the development of home observance.
- 3.7. Give guidance on developing an involvement strategy for youth that includes social, educational and religious participation.

#### 4. Weddings

- 4.1. Oversee the necessary formalities including Jewish status.
- 4.2. Meet with the couple in good time before the wedding and advise on commitments being undertaken, the ceremony, etc.
- 4.3. Officiate whenever possible at the marriage or arrange for an appropriate deputy.

#### 5. Funerals

- 5.1. Officiate whenever possible at funerals, cremations and tombstone consecrations or arrange for an appropriate deputy.
- 5.2. Respond positively to requests for Shiva services, liaising with lay readers to help when necessary and generally to provide bereavement support.

#### 6. Conversion

- 6.1. Interview prospective converts sympathetically. To teach and support as appropriate with a view to conversion in accordance with the procedures of the Beth Din of Reform Judaism.
- 6.2. Help to involve converts in all aspects of community life, and work towards converts being comfortable with their Judaism.

#### 7. Synagogue Administration

- 7.1. Attend and participate in meetings of the Executive Committee, Board, Education Committee and the Religion and Ritual Committee.
- 7.2. Work closely with the synagogue administration.





- 7.3. Work closely with the Chair on all matters relating to the synagogue through regular consultation.
- 7.4. Be at the synagogue during reasonable office hours so as to be available for consultation by members of the synagogue.
- 7.5. As ex-officio member of all synagogue committees, the Rabbi should attend such committee meetings as are appropriate and provide guidance and teaching to committees where relevant.

## 8. Our Community

- 8.1. Exercise an enlightened and inspirational role in the community, shaping members' lives in a positive Jewish way and involving them in the community as well as initiating communal ideas and programmes.
- 8.2. Encourage and promote with the support of the Membership group the recruitment of new members to the synagogue.
- 8.3. Reach out to and inspire the young 'missing generation' to participate in the community.
- 8.4. Meet and support members in relation to life-cycle events.
- 8.5. Help to promote a strong and pro-active lay leadership.
- 8.6. Contribute on a regular basis to our membership communications such as Highlight, e-Light, Talking Highlight, our website and social media.
- 8.7. Promote an interest in Israel.

## 9. Wider Community

- 9.1. Actively promote and represent the synagogue in dealing with outside bodies, non-Jewish as well as Jewish.

## 10. General

- 10.1. Be willing to undertake other tasks or duties as requested by the Board of the synagogue.
- 10.2. Support and communicate to the membership the work of Reform Judaism and encourage members to be involved.
- 10.3. Encourage appropriate consideration of the environment.

