

From the Chair

Hello everybody. I am quite excited at penning (keyboarding?) my first Ruach column as Chair. No doubt the excitement will wear off in time...

So far things seem to be going fairly smoothly, although we are on a steep learning curve regarding administrative and other management processes, with new incumbents as both Chair and Secretary. One issue that has emerged is that our membership list is not up to date. If you think we may not have your current postal or email address please get in touch...

I intend to use my first few columns to set out elements of what it might be pompous to call my vision for the next few years... perhaps more appropriately some key themes I would like to address.

the first is: **we're not as big as we think we are**

NPJC is a small community which has historically sought to punch above its weight. It ensured it had its own building early in its development, and historically a sizeable proportion of the congregation has thought we should have a full-time rabbi. NPJC has always been very active and visible in Liberal Judaism, and provided our parent organisation with several officers and indeed Chairmen.

This has advantages, but also drawbacks.

The fact that we look like a bigger, more solidly established organisation than we are makes it less likely that our members feel the pull to be actively involved in making things happen. People think the way it works is that you pay your fees and the organisation provides its services.

People also often think that they can have no influence because there is a small group of established members who make all the decisions and veto any new ideas.

I would like to promote the opposite view. I have joked that I have three years to turn the congregation into an anarchist co-op... and although I would reassure the more conservative of our members that that will not happen, I would like us to operate in a more collectivist and diverse manner. Essentially anybody who has an idea for an event, activity or way of doing things is welcome to suggest it, and unless it contradicts the fundamental objectives of the congregation, or conflicts with other plans, my position is likely to be that we should give things a try. It is OK for us to have a diversity of services and other activities, and members can make choices about attending or not attending events based on their preferences.

I would welcome views, suggestions and any other ideas.

Looking forward to hearing from you

Susan King
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