

From the Chair [*insert pic of a chair*]

As I write the High Holy Days are just around the corner, and on Council we are having the annual debate about whether to charge visitors to attend High Holy Day Services. For a long time the view prevailed that it was inappropriate to charge people to go to shul. However in more recent years we have started to come round to the view that if people who are not members want to come to a service, it is appropriate to ask them to contribute, if they can afford to. Most other synagogues do this, some having ticket-only admission.

However each year there is some debate about the issue. Some still feel no one should have to pay to attend a religious service. As a Jewish community, you could say we have a duty to welcome any who would like to pray with us. This is especially the case with students who might be at one of the Universities and have nowhere to go for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It also makes many uncomfortable that we might charge congregants' extended family members who are visiting for the Chagim.

For me it comes back to the question I discussed in my last column: what kind of community are we? If we are an institution that provides a service, this might include free High Holy Day services for anyone who wants to attend. Or you might think it is characteristic of a faceless institution to charge people for everything.

However I think of NPJC as a group of 120 households, about 170 adults, who club together to run Jewish activities, services, and a building, as best we can. To this end we share costs both in money and effort. It seems appropriate therefore for anyone who wishes to join us to share some of the outlay. Of course this should be managed sensitively, and people should not be asked to contribute in any way that is beyond their means.

We have agreed not to charge students. We have also agreed to request a donation from people who have no connection to the synagogue or its members, suggesting whatever they can afford between £5 (the cost of producing a security pass) and £50. We have also agreed to be more flexible regarding extended family of our congregants, suggesting that young grown up children just starting out in life may attend free, but other family members of independent means might be encouraged to contribute.

I am very happy with our decision, and think it reflects the kind of cooperative community we are and should aspire to be. As ever I'd be glad of your feedback.

Shanah Tovah and Gemar Chatimah tovah to all

Susan King
Chair
September 2008

Situations vacant

We are a small community, and only run by the combined efforts of our members. There are a few jobs that are currently vacant, or being filled by someone in a caretaker position.

●**Security Coordinator:** someone to maintain and circulate the security rota for services, and issue security passes for visitors.

●**Membership secretary:** someone to receive enquiries from potential members, and nurture them through the process of deciding whether to join us, and applying for membership. That person could also maintain the membership list.

●**Social Committee Chair and Members:** we have not had a Social Committee for a while. Previously this committee has organised a range of activities, parties, musical events, etc.

If you are interested in any of the above positions, or have any other talents or skills to offer, contact Susan King on 9622447, or by email at sjking@shoshana.demon.co.uk