**REPORT FOR NEMS AGM**

Since the last AGM NEMS has faced a range of unique and difficult challenges which as a community we have faced together.

**Building**

We were previously based in the community centre at SWESRS. Sadly due to a change of circumstances NEMS was given notice as the other tenants wished to use of it on a Saturday morning.

We entered lengthy negotiations with SWESRS, who were committed to us remaining on site and within their building. To enable us to do this, they completed major structural changes to the building – this included the installation of a lift, an accessible toilet upstairs, new windows and a total redecoration of the first floor. NEMS now has the use of the seminar room for Shabbat Services, with added provision for the use of a smaller room for children services. With notice, we can still use SWESRS main shul for bat\bar mitzvah celebrations.

As part of the renovations NEMS donated funds for new flooring in the room and we will be installing cupboards at the back of the seminar room where we will store our prayer books for easy access.

In addition to members of the executive and shul trustees, special thanks are due to Nick Goldreich who kindly gave up his time to provide extensive legal advice in regard to the Contract. As a result of his support the shul now has a home for the next 5 years.

**Covid19**

Covid19 has had a major impact on NEMS and with the support of the community we have risen to the challenges it has created, providing regular services and activities online:

Every Thursday evening Rabbi Zahavit has led evening services /study sessions. This has included the provision for members to be able to say kaddish for their loved ones this and has also given us the opportunity to regularly meet.

**Social meet up**

These have been incredibly popular – thank you Guy Sasson and Jeremy Solomons for organising the Sunday morning get togethers - the quizzes have been very enjoyable and well attended.

**Piano evenings**

Our very own and very talented Jason Rose has kindly tinkled the ivories live on NEMS Facebook taking requests from community members and guests who have joined us on our Facebook page.

**Cooking with Micky for our younger members**

Micky Kashman from Manchester has kindly, through the wonders of technology, led cooking sessions for our younger members; all families have reported good results and sent in pictures that can be viewed on the NEMS website

**Shiurim**

We have organised three shiurim (learning session) which proved to be interesting and thought-provoking evenings with hopefully more to follow.

**Southend social activities**

Prior to lockdown NEMS had arranged a social gathering with our members who live in Southend. When the lockdown occurred and we couldn’t meet in person, we decided instead to meet everyone on Zoom with Rabbi Zahavit. A successful afternoon was had and we look forward to arranging more meet ups in the future.

**Technology**

NEMS was aware that Covid19 could result in social isolation for many of our members; we purchased a number of tablets which we have now loaned out to individuals in our community enabling them to be involved in shul activities. Eyal Myers kindly provided the technical support to get people online and continues to support them to make sure they can access online activities.

**Grant**

NEMS was more than happy to financially invest in purchasing the tablets but with the assistance of Masorti Judaism, we applied to a major anonymous donor who has kindly funded the full cost of the equipment.

**Food**

At Shavout and Rosh Hashannah Sarah Myers organised delivery of cheesecake, honey cake, biscuits, and information to our members, all appreciated by the community.

**Welfare**

Janet Kogan kindly volunteered for this position, little expecting the impact Covid would have on the world and our community. She has proven to be a lifeline to members keeping in contact and providing regular support and feedback to Rabbi Zahavit when required.

Added to this the executive has re-activated the Rabbi’s fund, now known as the NEMS fund for members of the community facing hardship.

**External links and publicity**

Throughout the year we have increased our links with the wider local Jewish community and Masorti Judaism. For Mitzvah Day we joined forces with Sinclair House with members buying many boxes of food for the Redbridge Foodbank – many thanks for all who contributed. Sara Myers kindly represents us at Essex K and at the Joint Jewish Burial Society. Guy Sasson and Eyal Myers regularly attend the Masorti Chairs meeting giving us the opportunity to share ideas within the wider Masoriti Community. Leigh Kogan has worked as our link for the Board of Deputies; an important role as it gives us a voice regarding national events.

During this year we have been ably supported by Sue Geist who works for us on a freelance basis. She creates publicity materials for all our events and ensures that we reach out not only to our community but to the wider Jewish Community. She constantly updates our Facebook and website (nemsynagogue.co.uk) Both Jacqui and Sue have updated our weekly newsletter which is now more mobile friendly and easier for people to read when they are on the go.

**High Holy Days/Succot and future services**

Sadly, since March 2020 we have been unable to meet in person. Whilst this was a difficult decision, the welfare of our members has always been paramount, and we have used Government guidelines as a minimum to ensure people’s safety. The executive spent time discussing how to make the High Holy Days and Succot a meaningful experience, and with the amazing hard work of Guy Sasson, Mark Carter, John Simons and Rose Mitchell who created audio and video files and supported others to record sections of the services which could be uploaded to the NEMS website. We were able to track the number of visits during the High Holy Days and Succot period and are delighted to say that there were 880 page views across 395 sessions by 177 unique users. This was an amazing achievement and many thanks for all those who participated and recorded their part of the service.

We also had zoom services pre Rosh Hashanah and Yizkor before Yom Kippur, all helping to bring the community together. Added to this we had an in person Yizkor service for a small number of people, who had to book to attend, keeping within Government guidelines, led by Rafi Benshir outside in the playground at Clore Tikva School.

After Simchat Torah went out we celebrated on Zoom with our Challah Torah and Chatan Bereshit, Janet and Leigh Kogan the annual reading of the torah scrolls. A very noisy but enjoyable event.

**Future services**

We are working towards an amended shabbat service to take place in our new home in SWESRS – look out for the flyer explaining how you will be able to book a place and join us for a shabbat experience. Please note you will need to book as we can only admit a certain number of people and we need to follow the Track and Trace guidelines.

**Thank you**

The last year for the shul has been challenging and none of the above would have happened without the support of:

Executive Guy, Ric, Shim, Dan, Jeremy, Eyal and Yvonne

Trustees Ed, Renee, Spencer and Shim

Religious lay leaders, Mark John, Rose and Shim for his three-minute droshas and everyone who has generously given up their time to contribute to services and the running of the Shul.

Rabbi Zahavit for her patience, wisdom, wit and kindness to us all.

Sara for provision of food and goody bags and advice on the building in SWESRS.

Nick for legal advice and patience

Jacqui and Sue for keeping us all in contact, and up to date whilst being very patient will all the last-minute changes which kept being thrown at them

Ruth for her accounting skills and keeping the shul books on an even keel.