



Borehamwood
& Elstree Synagogue
Our Community

Reimagining Shul

It's all about Relationships

April 2022
Dr Simon Berman



The Big Idea

If you take just one idea from this report, then take this:

It's all about relationships.

People will come to synagogues, Jewish community centres, and other Jewish organisations for programmes, but they will stay for relationships.

Programmes and services are wonderful opportunities for community members to gather, to celebrate, to learn.

There's nothing 'wrong' with programmes.

But if the programme designers have given no thought to how the experience will offer participants a deeper connection to each other, with the community and with Judaism itself, then it will likely be another lovely evening, afternoon or morning ... with little or no lasting impact.

It's not about programmes.

It's not about marketing.

It's not even about institutions.

It's about relationships.

[Relational Judaism, Ron Wolfson](#)

FOREWORD

CHIEF RABBI EPHRAIM MIRVIS

The old English proverb that ‘necessity is the mother of invention’ has been particularly apt over recent years. In 2020, without any warning, the Coronavirus pandemic created a fundamental rupture in the fabric of our communal life. The dramatic ‘necessity’ in our lives, prompted by the will of Heaven, inspired an unprecedented period of ‘invention’ as we were forced to think carefully about what it means to be a community.

Within the sadness of Covid and its profound challenges, there are numerous valuable lessons to be learned. That is why Shuls around the country are now undertaking pieces of research and strategic work to consider how they can reimagine the way that they serve their members. BES is one of the first to produce a report of this kind. Congratulations to Rabbi & Rebbetzen Chapper, Rabbi & Rebbetzen Taylor, Rabbi Finn, Sam Franklin and his lay team for their outstanding leadership, as well as the Reimagining Shul team for the creativity and commitment that has made this report possible.

I often say that we define a Kehillah as a group of like-minded individuals who share a set of values, experiences and a vision for their future; whose participation in the community enables them to achieve far more than they could ever have done alone and crucially, who will be missed when they are absent. As this report correctly identifies, relationships are indeed essential for creating a sense of community which empowers and inspires its members.

I have every confidence that BES will continue to go mechayil el chayil, from strength to added strength, for many more years to come.

RABBI ALEX CHAPPER

‘In every generation...’

These are words that we read in the Haggadah which describe how we not only recall, but also relive the Pesach experience on a yearly basis.

They also remind us of the need to ensure that Judaism is relevant to our world and the challenges that we face.

There is no doubt that the Coronavirus pandemic presented significant challenges - economically, psychologically and communally, and although our experience may not totally reflect that of our ancestors in Egypt, perhaps we now have a better understanding and appreciation of the privations that they suffered.

More importantly, just as the exodus from Egyptian slavery was the beginning of a new chapter in Jewish history, so too, our emergence from the pandemic, presents us with an opportunity to reimagine community life.

It was for this reason that I commissioned this project.

My sincerest thanks to Simon Berman and the Reimagining Shul core team for all of their hard work, insight, ideas and hours of great discussions, and to everyone else who contributed.

The depth of the report has far exceeded my expectations and provides us with a working document to ensure that we seize this once in a generation opportunity to make BES into the BEST community possible.

RABBI SAM TAYLOR

Salo Wittmayer Baron, the renowned expert in Jewish history, explains that when we went into exile and Synagogues were established throughout the Diaspora, it 'completely shifted the emphasis from the place of worship, the Sanctuary, to the gathering of worshippers, the congregation, assembled at any time and any place in G-d's wide world.'

Historically, Shuls were never places where we just davened, they were always so much more than that which is something we must never forget, especially for communities outside of Israel. Furthermore, the Talmud in Megillah 29a assures us, that if we make our Synagogues in this way, with a broad range of programmes and initiatives which engage people from across community, then G-d's divine presence will continue to be with us.

There can be no greater blessing.

This report has come to fruition with great distinction thanks to the expertise and sensitivity of the Reimagining Shul team, and as a result it is our hope that we will emerge out of the pandemic stronger and even more forward thinking.

SAM FRANKLIN, BES CHAIR

As we came back together last year as a community, many spoke about 'returning to normal'. However, it was quick for all to see that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has not only disrupted communal life but had reset many of our expectations on what Shul, community and BES means to us all.

We are blessed in our community to have many talented and dedicated volunteers and, under Simon Berman's drive and leadership, the Reimagining Shul core team were formed to investigate and make recommendations to the BES Senior Leadership Team and Shul Council.

Whilst we had high expectations, this report exceeds them all! I am immensely grateful to all of the team for the tireless work they have put into the research and report. It paves the way for BES to **rebuild** and **reconnect**.

As the report beautifully summarises, If you remember nothing else, just remember that our focus is all about building relationships between one another, with the community and with our Jewish experience.

BES is our community. We will move forward, together as one community and if after reading this you want to get more involved, please email reimaginingshul@borehamwoodshul.org

INTRODUCTION

WHAT is REIMAGINING SHUL?

Reimagining Shul is a project to work out how best to increase the elements of belonging and inspiration that we've found to be the key aspects of Jewish community that our members are looking for.

WHAT is a COMMUNITY?

Chief Rabbi Mirvis describes a community above as being a group of people that miss you if you're not there. It's a feeling of belonging to a people beyond your friendship groups that want to celebrate with you during the good times and are there to support you in the sad times.

But for a Jewish community there is also a spiritual and religious element which uplifts the soul and provides meaning and purpose to our lives.

WHAT'S in this REPORT?

You'll find lots of recommendations, suggestions and practices in this report to transform BES, and change the emphasis in the way we do community.

However, much of the report focusses on *how* we should operate rather than exactly *what* activities we should run.

Note that this report can be found at borehamwoodshul.org/reimaginingshul and the ideas gathered in our research and discussions at borehamwoodshul.org/reimaginingshulideas



SOME of it is OBVIOUS

Robin Dunbar, a British anthropologist, talks about how belonging and trust is engendered from simple activities: storytelling, singing, feasting, and ritual.

Many recommendations in this report flow from these four ideas: listening to each other's stories; increasing joy and ruach in our services through song; having more community meals, better Kiddush and refreshments at all events; helping people engage more easily with Jewish rituals.

We just need to do more of them

WHAT'S NOT in this REPORT?

It's important to note that this is not a report that provides a root-and-branch assessment of the whole of BES. The remit was to reimagine how we do shul and community and we didn't want to extend the scope too much, dilute our resources and end up with nothing to say. As a result there is not much in this report about the great work that we do in BES within care and pastoral areas. That should continue to go from strength to strength but we should extend the emphasis to not just 'care for' but also 'listen to' our members, to encompass kehilla (community) as well as chesed (kindness).

There is also not much about how to use the community as an engine to make the world a better place, vital though this undoubtedly is for modern Jewish communities. The practices of Meaningful Rabbinic Conversations, Small Community Groups, and Inclusion and Access however should help to identify particular causes that the community wishes to pursue and the individuals that want to lead and make a difference in those areas.

Reimagination Manifesto

We are uncovering better ways of making BES a place of inspiration,
belonging, meaning and connection.

Through this work we have come to value:

Getting to know people over buildings and programmes

Going to meet the community over only meeting on site

Building together over consuming alone

Variety in small groups over one size fits all

Information for all over assuming everyone knows

Pushing boundaries over accepting the status quo

Learning and growing over staying the same

That is, while there may be value in the items on the right,
we value the items on the left more.



IMAGINE A SHUL LIKE THIS

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

You've just moved in to Borehamwood and already the Rabbi has been in touch and taken you and your partner out for a coffee, where you talked about your lives, your kids, your hopes for the future, and your thoughts on being Jewish and the world around us. Later you receive a message from a nearby member of the community to introduce themselves, tell you more about what goes on in the community, and offer to meet you in shul that Shabbat and take you to this week's community Shabbat lunch.

You're a bit anxious about going to shul so you watch the very friendly video on the BES website showing you how to get to either site, what to expect and where to go on arrival.

On arrival, the welcoming team are genuinely pleased to see you and spend a few minutes asking about you and your family. Your community contact is there to help you find a seat, books and the place in the service, (although the gabbai often calls out the page numbers so it's easy to keep track), and sits with you and a couple of other friendly members that they introduce you to later.

The service is full of rousing songs and ruach and the regulars are clearly enjoying being amongst friends and being able to get involved in the singing.

During the service the Rabbi takes a moment to explain the meaning behind the Shema and Aleinu, and provides a little insight into the Torah readings, which helps you connect to the meaning of the prayers a bit more easily.

One man is called up to the Torah for a blessing for his new born daughter and the Rabbi gives the blessing at the mechitzah right next to both parents and their child.

You are also asked if you would like to be called up and the Rabbi mentions to the community that you and your partner have just moved in so be nice!

But community isn't just about religious practice and so your partner decides to try out one of the other options on site that morning and joins a discussion on Judaism and materialism relating to a story from the news that week. In the process they get to meet some more members.

Kiddush is a fun informal affair with some lovely food and drink. The Rabbi greets you and introduces you to more people and before long you have three invites to Shabbat meals in the next month!

At Kiddush, there is an announcement about some small B'Yachad Groups that people are encouraged to get involved with, and you ask about joining a Jewish cookery group, one learning about reflections for Rosh Hashanah, a group focussing on career experiences and mentoring, and one for older women. Each group feels like a great way to get to know other like-minded people in the community.

The community lunch is wonderful, a great opportunity to meet more people, hear from the Rabbi as well as some interesting speakers, eat some great food and drink some whisky or peach schnapps!

During the week, your teenage kids go to a youth event where they discuss their thoughts on Eco-Judaism, play table tennis and get to know the youth leaders along with a bunch of other welcoming and fun BES teenagers.

All in all it's a great week and you are so pleased you've been to BES - you will definitely recommend it to your friends!

AN EXISTENTIAL CHALLENGE

WHY WE NEED TO REIMAGINE

Covid changed everything. But Covid also accelerated trends that have been slowly affecting our community for decades.

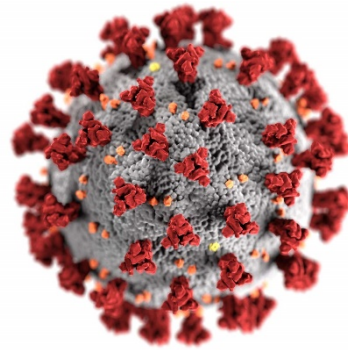
Our research showed time and time again that our members, and those of communities far from our doors, have drifted away from engaging with BES and with communal Jewish experiences.

For some, Covid was the main impact. They are out of the habit of going to shul, and are now quite enjoying reclaiming Saturday mornings for other pastimes: a walk, spending time with their children, a lie-in! Or they have found that Covid regulations have turned the shul experience into a sterile and unenjoyable one: the masks, the distancing. Or they are still concerned about being in a room with lots of people at close quarters.

For others they had already drifted. They might no longer feel the duty to engage with their community that they did some time ago. The world has less respect for authority than it used to and people want to be in more control of their decisions, and this can affect their religious choices.

Many people find that they can get everything that they need online for a Jewish experience (a great speaker, an online service, an insightful article) apart from deep and lasting relationships with people who care about you: connecting you to others, and growing your Jewish experience.

As a result of all of this, we frequently heard that **our members are feeling disconnected, fragmented, and missing the unity in community.**



Jewish communities have become transactional, focussing on programmes and services rather than people.

This was borne out by the results of the United Synagogue member survey in Summer 2021. BES was below the average response on all five of the overall metrics relating to relative satisfaction since before Covid.

For a modern Orthodox community like BES, this is an existential challenge.

Communities to the 'right' of the United Synagogue are powered more by a duty to observe whereas BES needs a value proposition for all its members, giving them a reason to engage.

For all of these reasons, it's clear that we need to change, to reimagine how we do shul and community in BES.

Drivers for change

- *People are out of the shul habit*
- *It's too easy to be Jewish online*
- *Fear of Covid*
- *Covid makes shul dull and cold*
- *No longer a duty to go to shul*
- *US Survey results: BES below average*
- *People feel disconnected and fragmented*

METHODOLOGY

WHAT WE DID AS A TEAM

The Reimagining Shul core team was built to be representative of BES: across generations, geography, gender and observance.

Through our six Community Reimagination sessions comprising over 70 attendees of all age groups, both face-to-face and over Zoom, we endeavoured to find out what the community thought about BES now and in the past, and what they wanted to see in the future: how to increase the level of belonging and inspiration felt within our membership.

But we didn't want to just look inwards. We sought out best practice within the United Synagogue, Anglo Jewry, and throughout the world, from Jewish and non-Jewish faith groups, seeking to learn from those that have been down this path and implemented good ideas.

We read, watched, interviewed, discussed and analysed. We visited Shabbat services at Croxdale Road and Yavneh sites and also at other local shuls.

We reviewed the demographics of BES, summarised below (as of March 2021).

Throughout the project, we have kept the BES leadership briefed and up-to-date. Our steering group comprised of Honorary Officers and Rabbis, our core team included members of the Shul Council, and the Council was briefed before we began and with interim findings.

The Rabbinic Team and the Honorary Officers were briefed and consulted before this report was published to ensure that they own and want to deliver its recommendations, but they also felt strongly that the core team should progress independently to reach our conclusions.



BES demographics

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-11	381	348	729
12-18	251	194	445
19-30	168	148	317
31-40	239	282	521
41-50	316	295	611
51-60	187	207	394
61-70	183	181	364
71-80	135	156	291
81+	45	74	119
Total	1,905	1,885	3,790

- 2,508 adult members
- 2,044 married adult members
- 1,401 households
- 1,174 under 18

Guiding principles during the project

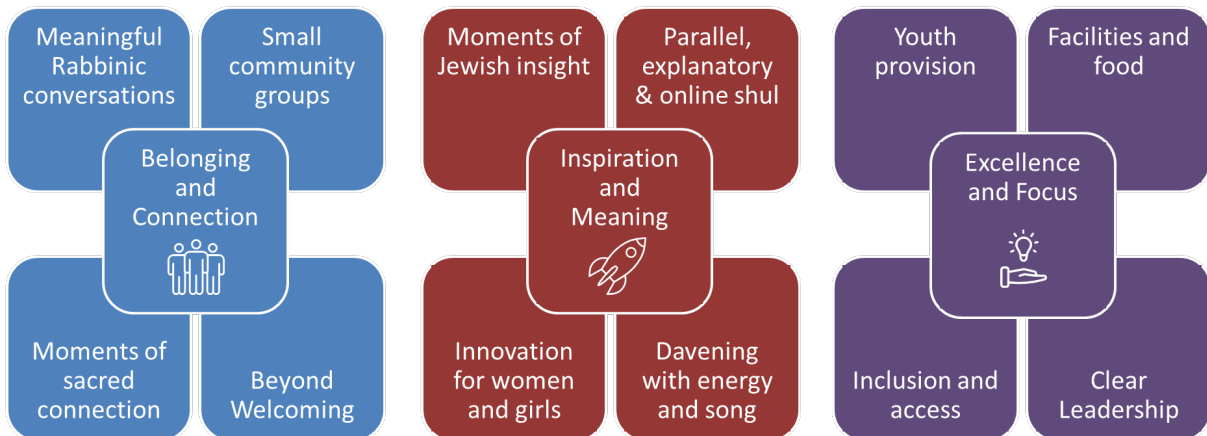
- *Obtain community buy-in*
- *No red lines except halacha and Covid regulations*
- *Hear everyone's voice, although not all suggestions will be implemented*
- *Identify what to keep from Covid times*
- *Covers both sites and off-site*
- *Provide interim updates*
- *Aim to publish recommendations by Pesach 2022*

A FRAMEWORK FOR REIMAGINATION

From the results of our discussions, conversations and research we have created a framework of ideas, principles and practices that together will enable us to transform BES, shown in Figure 1.

BES Together: it's all about relationships

Torah, Avodah, Kehillah, Gemilat Chassadim



Principles : Meaningful conversations : Telling stories : Meeting the community : Building together
: Options and information : Continual learning : Pushing boundaries : Tracking progress

Figure 1: A Framework For Reimagination

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Hineh mah tov umah na'im, Shevet achim [gam] yachad

How good and pleasing it is for people to sit [also] together.

Some commentators say that 'gam' (also), which seems an unnecessary word, is included to imply that when we sit and talk and work together in unity and create a deep and spiritual connection, then we also bring the Divine into that relationship.

Yachad, together, is a word that really sums up our research, conversations and analysis and describes how we need to work in order to transform BES and our community.

THREE CORE IDEAS

Three pillars of **Belonging and Connection**, **Inspiration and Meaning**, and **Excellence and Focus** form the core structure in which our key practices, recommendations and activities sit.

PRINCIPLES FOR REIMAGINATION

Weaved around these activities are eight principles that apply to everything we do, and four core ideals from Jewish tradition: **Torah** (learning and tradition), **Avodah** (prayer and service), **Kehillah** (community), and **Gemilat Chassadim** (kindness).

The pillars, principles and practices are described in more detail in the next pages.

If you remember nothing else, just remember that our focus is all about building relationships between one another, with the community and with our Jewish experience

THREE CORE IDEAS

Three pillars provide the structure around which the principles and practices of a reimagined BES can sit.

BELONGING and CONNECTION

Community needs to become more relational and less transactional. It should be about the social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs, fears and aspirations of our members, rather than the number of people that turn up to listen to a speaker.

The key to reimagining BES is to focus on things that increase the sense of belonging and connection to one another, to our community, and to our Judaism.



INSPIRATION and MEANING

Belonging is fundamental to community but it's not enough for a Jewish community. We've found that our members want to find inspiration and meaning in the connections that they make to our community, in particular within our religious services.

Meaning provides a sense that there is more to life than me and that there is work to do to help and improve the world around me.



EXCELLENCE and FOCUS

Our work, and our conversations with the community, has found that alongside belonging, connection, inspiration and meaning, there are some aspects of our community that we already do but where we need to do them better, i.e. areas where we need to focus to develop excellence.



PRINCIPLES for REIMAGINATION

Underpinning the core principle that 'It's all about relationships', we've found a number of other principles that can create a community of belonging and connection, inspiration and meaning.

MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

We have to build time and structure within our activities, our services, and our community experiences for people to meet one another through a meaningful conversation.

This means the community leadership taking more opportunities to deeply understand and listen to us as members of the BES community.

TELLING STORIES

A great way and a very Jewish way to find out more about somebody on a deeper level is to hear their story.

We have done that very well in the past at BES with Community Stories and booklets like *Maggid*, and we can use that to great effect in many other formats and opportunities, enabling our community to get to know each other better.

MEETING the COMMUNITY

Given that most of the community doesn't come to shul that often, we need to find ways to engage with our members where they are, rather than expecting or hoping that they will find their way to Croxdale Road or Yavneh.

Rabbi and Rebbetzen Goldgrab did this successfully in Borehamwood East, with barbeques in their garden and deliveries of gift packages to people's homes, organically building connection and community.



Measurements for success

- *Net Promoter Score: would you recommend BES to a friend?*

Suggestions for action

- *coffee shop chats*
- *community phone calls*
- *events in homes*
- *streaming services and speakers*
- *inspiring comms*
- *mentoring in, for instance, community leadership, davening, professional advice*

BUILDING TOGETHER

The Torah describes the building of the Mishkan, God's dwelling place in the wilderness, as a communal endeavour, in which everyone contributed material or time to create the holiest of places.

In the same way, our community must be built together if it to be strong and vibrant. Reimagining BES is not something that can be done by the Rabbinic and lay leadership alone. We need to combine the many talents of members of our community to do great things.

OPTIONS AND INFORMATION

One size does not fit all.

In a community the size of BES we need to be offering a variety of options both for services and for events. Whether that is based on demographics, geography, interests or observance and Jewish literacy, it's clear that not everyone will enjoy everything offered by the community.

However, clear information should be provided to everyone. Signposting for where and when things happen, how to get there and what is happening (particularly in services) is vital to making our community and our religion more accessible.

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Reimagining Shul means rethinking how we have always done things. Within the constraints of halacha and the law, we shouldn't do something just because that's the way it's always been done.

At BES, our leadership are prepared to be challenged with suggestions for new ways to look at old ideas, as long as we are prepared that not every suggestion will be acted on.

CONTINUAL LEARNING

Reimagining Shul involved a lot of discussion via focus groups and other conversations to understand the viewpoints of many members of the BES community and beyond.

But it can't stop here. We have to ensure that continual conversation, feedback and learning is built into the way that we do community so that we constantly have a finger on the pulse of what the community wants.

TRACKING PROGRESS

The recommendations in this report don't just cover suggestions for what activities to run and how to run them but also what is important to measure and track if we want to get to a community full of belonging, connection, inspiration and meaning.

By measuring the right things, we'll drive growth and engagement within our community.

MEANINGFUL RABBINIC CONVERSATIONS

SHEMA YISRAEL

Shema Yisrael, our central prayer, can be read as an exhortation to listen to the community of Israel: to listen to us.

More than that, it is by listening to Israel that we hear the Divine.

Martin Buber, the great 20th century Jewish thinker, talks of two kinds of relationship: I-You, the normal level of interaction between two people, and I-Thou being a deep and spiritual connection between two people that emulates a Divine relationship.

We need to find ways to bring more I-Thou relationships into our community, and it's our spiritual leaders, our Rabbinic Team, that are best placed to do so, by listening to us.

REORIENT OUR RABBIS

[Measuring Success](#), a consultancy for not-for-profit organisations found that Rabbis from 12 New York synagogues spent on average 20% of their time **personally interacting** with just 20% of the community (with half of that being pastoral care).

We found during our focus groups and conversations that our members feel disconnected from the community, fragmented and, during Covid, physically cut-off. Many of our members did not have the contact that they had hoped for.

Most of the time that our members have a long conversation with our Rabbinic Team is during a lifecycle event when they are either celebrating or sorrowful. This is not meant as a slight on our Rabbis – it's the way that most Rabbis are asked to operate.

But we need to find a way for our Rabbinic Team to meet our members for long conversations at other times, to get to know us better, to hear our stories.



We should be patient though: this will take a while. We also need to provide our Rabbinic Team with support and training as they transition to new ways of working.

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

In a community as big as ours, software is needed to keep track of the interactions the Rabbinic Team have had with members and under what circumstances. This will help ensure people are not missed out and help the team share the load more effectively.

Measurements for success

- *Number of meaningful conversations*
- *Net Promoter Score: would you recommend BES to a friend?*

Quick wins and priorities

- *Rabbinic Team should spend significantly more time in meaningful conversations with the community*
- *Use CRM software to track who they interact with and for what reason.*
- *Aim to reach people that do not normally talk to the Rabbis*
- *Shul Council call community members at e.g. Pesach and Rosh Hashanah*
- *Rabbinic Team share findings and learn what works to plan and improve*
- *Provide support and training for Rabbinic Team where required*



SMALL COMMUNITY GROUPS

INTIMACY in MEGA CHURCHES

Rick Warren is pastor of Saddleback Church in Orange County, California, a mega-church with a 3,500 seat auditorium that is filled every week, and yet one in which its members feel a sense of intimacy and community that belies its size.

One of the key ways in which they accomplish this is through Small Groups: groups of like-minded people where everyone is known and supported in their life and in their spiritual journey. Studying, praying, socialising and making a difference together.

We've spoken to Laura Treneer from Holland Road Baptist Church in Hove. She's part of a similar movement in the UK and confirmed that small groups really work.

SMALL GROUPS in JUDAISM

Jewish tradition has small groups front and centre: the minyan, the chevra, the shteibel.

However, Small Groups are a particular approach of building and supporting groups of usually between eight to twenty members who come together on a regular basis, perhaps weekly, bi-weekly or monthly over the course of three to six months, in order to get to know and deepen their connections to one another, to the broader community and to their Jewish tradition.

The number of people in the group should be large enough to keep things interesting but small enough so that everyone gets to know everyone else in a meaningful way. Groups are peer-led, with each member of the group sharing in the responsibility of owning the group and crafting its culture and agenda.

In BES we might call them B'Yachad (or Together) Groups.



TYPES of SMALL GROUPS

Some groups might form around geography (BES members that live near me), some would relate to demography (people at my age or stage), others could be more about affinity, common interests and needs, and some might relate to a common desire to get things done and engage in social action.

Suggestions for BES Small Groups

- *Neighbourhood Kiddush*
- *Omer or Elul Spiritual Growth*
- *Familiarity with the service*
- *Jewish cookery*
- *Jewish films*
- *Cycling or running*
- *Bridge or kalooki*
- *Eco shul, social action*
- *Learning about Davening*
- *Moments of Jewish insight*



SMALL GROUPS are PEER LED

To create a Small Group experience that goes beyond an evening class or a regular shiur there are a few components that are fairly important.

Small groups are peer-led but with input for content, and occasional inspirational visits, from the Rabbinic Team. They might meet in member's homes or in coffee shops; they do not need to meet in shul buildings.

TELLING OUR STORIES

The best way to get to know one another and deepen our relationships in a Small Group is to tell our stories and listen to what makes us tick.

Shema Yisrael: listen to Israel.

LEARNING OUR TRADITIONS

As part of a Jewish community, Small Groups are encouraged to include an element of Jewish learning or discussion to deepen their connection to their Jewish experience. For some groups this might be the essence and the reason that they decided to meet. But even for something more prosaic like Jewish cooking or playing bridge, it's a chance to introduce an element of Jewish tradition, history, culture or Torah related to the activity - possibly just some questions and a conversation about an interesting newspaper or website article.

EXPERIENCING OUR COMMUNITY

Once the group has formed and got to know each other, they might decide to take part in a community event or a Shabbat service together and experience their Small Group as part of the wider community.

PLANNING OUR ACTIONS

For some groups, the point of getting together is to make a difference in the world. For these groups, planning and acting and making a difference together is what it's all about.

However, by telling our stories and learning our traditions as well, this group can be elevated beyond a committee or action group and can become a close support network of like-minded people.

ORGANISING SMALL GROUPS

Small Groups present a very different way of operating within a Jewish community and, as such, would benefit from a team dedicated to working out the best way to run them in BES, making sure that they happen, defining the criteria for what is and is not a Small Group, and learning together as we go.

BES can also offer Small Groups logistical support to plan, financial support for materials and perhaps some food, training for Small Group leaders to ensure that they are able to get the best out of their group, and relational support to find people that would like to take part.

Measurements for success

- *Number of active Small Groups*

Useful resources

- [Central Synagogue, New York discussion guides for Small Groups](#)
- [Congregation B'nai Israel, California resources for Small Groups](#)

Important Principles

There are a few principles to bear in mind for Small Groups to be effective and to prevent them becoming cliques:

- *Keep groups open and inviting*
- *Bring in new members*
- *Suggest a time bound commitment*
- *Create ground rules for respect, accountability, confidentiality, curiosity and ownership*
- *Provide support, training and suggestions for content for Small Group leaders*

MOMENTS of SACRED CONNECTION

SUPPORT and CONNECT in SHUL

There are many opportunities within the shul service to make our rituals more personal and use that to make it easier to help and support one another.

An example would be where a mourner enters shul on a Friday evening and, instead of the congregation turning to them and simply reciting some Hebrew words of comfort as part of a ritual, the Rabbi first says something like 'This week David lost his father Arnie, and so together we wish David comfort and strength and a long life as we say ...'. In this way, the congregants now know who David is, what he is going through and almost have permission to wish him long life and find out more about his father.

Other examples include making an enthusiastic announcement when someone is given a blessing on a special birthday or similar simcha, and potentially including people's English names in the refuah shleimah healing prayer. As a community we can then celebrate the good times together and provide support in times of difficulty.

SUPPORT and CONNECT in the COMMUNITY

We can take this idea into the community, perhaps by publishing stories about loved ones that have died alongside the annual Yizkor books, again providing opportunities for a stronger connection as we learn more about each other's families and a deeper understanding of who within our community is going through a tough time.

CELEBRATE SACRED MOMENTS

Let's also think about how key lifecycle moments in shul can focus on people first and provide creative and meaningful ways to celebrate.

For instance, a baby blessing for a girl could be performed at the mechitzah with both parents (and the baby) present.

Or grandchildren could do a d'var torah in shul, telling the story of their grandparents, to celebrate their Golden Wedding or Second Bar Mitzvah.

Quick wins and priorities

- *Names for Friday night mourners*
- *Rabbi welcomes everyone to the service*
- *Yizkor stories booklets*
- *Shabbat meditation space*
- *Include English names in refuah shleimah (healing) prayer*
- *Include mental health in refuah shleimah (healing) prayer*
- *English names and relationships for yahrzeit prayer*
- *Girl's baby blessing at mechitzah with both parents*
- *Grandchildren do d'var torah in shul for grandparents Golden Wedding or Second Bar Mitzvah*



BEYOND WELCOMING

LET'S LEARN from ABRAHAM

In the Torah portion of Vayera, Abraham rushes to welcome the three angels that pass by as he is waiting for visitors in the entranceway to his tent. He and his wife prepare food and drink, help them wash and get comfortable after a trek through the wilderness, and talk to them about their journeys and needs.

There is much that we can learn from this archetypal story of welcoming from our tradition.

We have created welcoming rotas in BES on both sites over recent years but it's now time to go beyond simply greeting people and providing directions on arrival to a Shabbat service.

EVENTS as well as SERVICES

In Relational Judaism, Ron Wolfson talks about a woman who tells her Rabbi that she is leaving her community after 30 years. 'Why?' asks the Rabbi. He's told that the woman had attended shul events for years and years, she's heard some great speakers, but she's never actually met anyone.

We have to take ideas on welcoming into our shul events as well as our Shabbat and Yom Tov services so that we can use our events as places to deepen the connections between our members and within our community.

Ideas include refreshments and opportunities for schmoozing, name tags to make it easier to say hello, icebreakers to help us meet new people, interaction and breakouts to enable us to exchange thoughts beyond asking questions.



MORE THAN JUST GREETING

Our welcoming rotas need to engage people as well as greet them. Let people know that it's great that they're back, or simply let them know that you haven't seen them for a while. Find out who they are if you're not sure, ask them about their story, get to know them. Help people realise that it's not just a service or an event, it's an opportunity to meet people.

FROM EVENTS to EXPERIENCES

Experiential education is one of the most effective ways to engage people with Judaism. Just think about Israel tours, trips to Poland, and conferences.

These experiences share certain characteristics:

- Content: something is learned
- Emotion: something is felt
- Food: something is eaten
- Role models: someone leads
- Action: something is accomplished
- Celebration: some recognition of achievement

Quick wins and priorities

- *Refreshments and schmoozing as standard*
- *Coffee and conversation room at shul*
- *Name tags for all at events*
- *Icebreakers and breakout structures to make it easier to meet people*
- *Interactive children's services to make it easier to meet new people*
- *Welcoming process for new members*
- *Training for welcoming rota groups and discussion of what more to do*
- *Discussion group for CRP parents*
- *Clear information about what's on, where and when*

MOMENTS of JEWISH INSIGHT

SHUL SHOULD UPLIFT the SOUL

It's worth stepping back and thinking about what we are trying to achieve with our shul services. We've heard that people are looking for inspiration and meaning, for connection to the Divine, for Jewish spirituality, for a better understanding of our traditions, for a moment to uplift the soul.

However, we've also found that given that most of the service is in Hebrew, for many within our community the shul service is inaccessible at best, and can even be a source of anxiety, a feeling that *'I'd like to go I don't feel brave enough: I'd just feel completely lost there, both physically and spiritually'*

So we need to take steps to make the service more accessible, beyond it being welcoming.

ACCESS and INSIGHT for ALL

Introducing more moments to explain the details of the service would enable more people to understand, to reflect, to feel part of, and to gain insight into their Judaism.

Starting from an assumption that everyone would like to know a bit more about what is going on, and providing insight in an engaging and bite sized way, should be worthwhile for all.

Stephen Levey has done this brilliantly for many years within our Kol Nidre service, and [Rabbi Landau from Barnet US](#) took it further and introduced thoughtful reflection sessions within the Rosh Hashanah service.

We don't need to do this all the time and perhaps not even in every service but certainly much more than we currently do.

IT'S NOT just a SHUL THING

We know that many in our community do

not come to shul services.

So we also need to go out to the community and provide bite-sized insights throughout the week and in innovative ways.

Alongside this, BES should bring in more high quality external speakers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, local, national and international, to discuss our traditions and the issues of the day, both in shul and during the week.

TECH can HELP

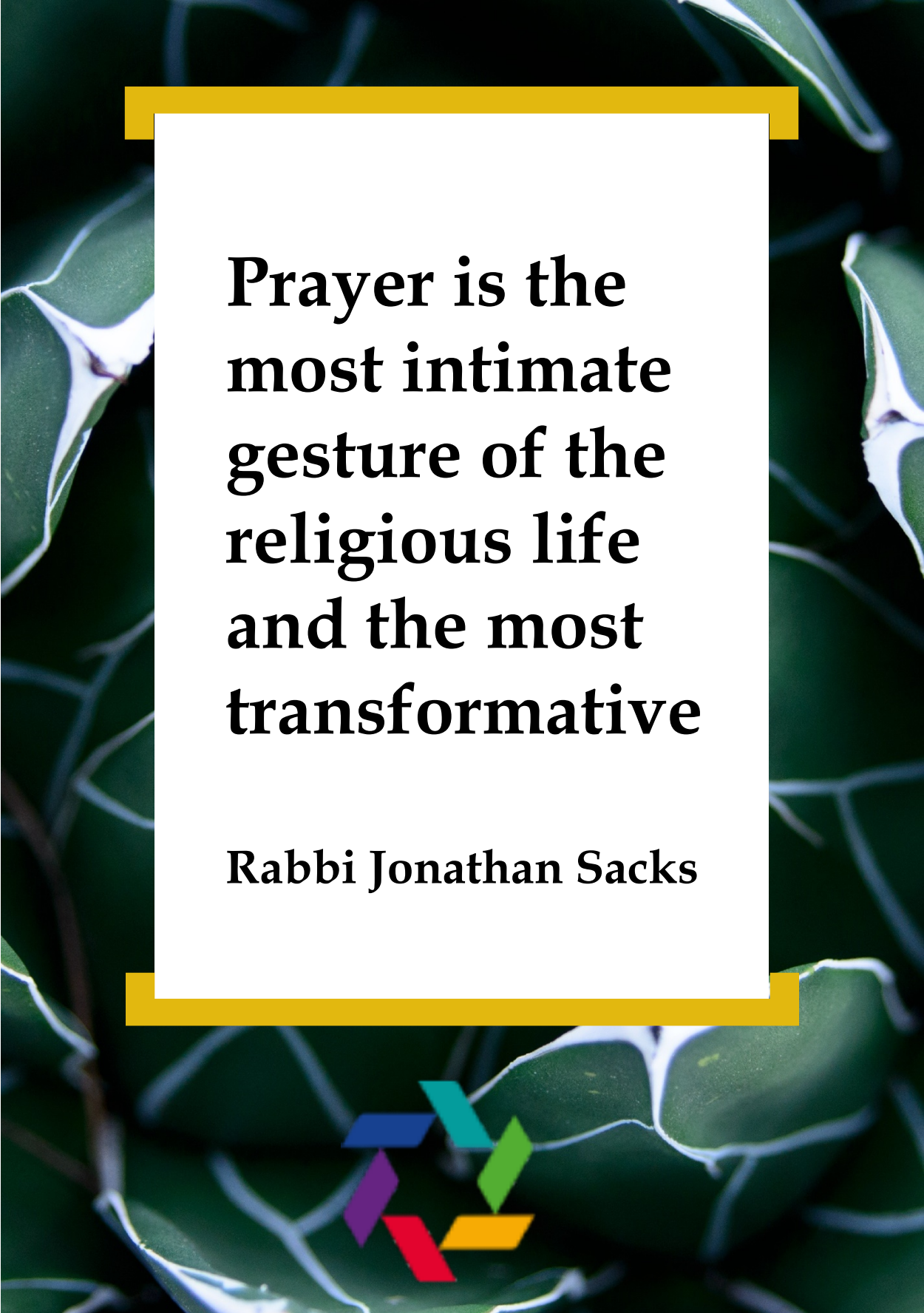
Let's use modern technology and social media to help members access insight that is often only found at shul.

D'var torah videos, trailers for speakers and Bar/Bat Mitzvah video messages bring more insight and connection into the community. We can put all this on our website or YouTube so people can find it easily if they forget to watch it initially.

Quick wins and priorities

- *Tell the story of the Torah reading*
- *Occasional commentary on prayers*
- *Run a whole service with prayer commentary and insight*
- *Provide guidance for Amidah repetition to continue your prayers*
- *Liberal use of page numbers*
- *Send out Rabbis' video d'var torahs, Bar/Bat Mitzvah video messages, video recipes, Yom Tov video guidance*
- *Put all Rabbis' d'var torahs, DHL, etc. on BES website and YouTube*
- *Put all BES 'stories' booklets online*
- *Send out inspiring trailers for speakers*
- *Live stream speakers and services*
- *Be creative with sermons and link them to wider issues today*





**Prayer is the
most intimate
gesture of the
religious life
and the most
transformative**

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks



PARALLEL, ONLINE & EXPLANATORY in SHUL

MORE OPTIONS are GOOD OPTIONS

We've heard a lot from focus groups and community conversations that people want a more intimate prayer experience with a smaller group of people that they can get to know better.

We also know that often a suggestion was welcomed by some but not liked by others.

So we've come to the conclusion that multiple options on both sites on Shabbat and Yom Tov is imperative, that shul doesn't have to be about going to the 'main' service, as long as all options are advertised, welcoming and *open to all*, even if *targeted* at a particular demographic.

PARALLEL OPTIONS

Services already exist like Limmud, Haskamah, Nitzan, youth and others, but there could also be services for, for instance, those with young children (and including the children in the service), or those that come specifically for CRP.

They could, but don't need to be run every week: perhaps there's a monthly option or something that only runs for a few times, or at a certain time of year.

Alongside parallel prayer options, we already run discussions, meditation, community stories, educational talks, coffee chats, and children's storytime. We should continue to do so but up the ante and make sure that there is always an option beyond prayer.

MAIN SHUL OPTIONS

Why not reinvigorate the main shul in Croxdale by using the space for an explanatory service or big speaker (Jewish or not Jewish) whenever there isn't a simcha?

EXPLANATORY OPTIONS

Many people have said that they would like to understand aspects of the prayer service better.

Explanatory, essential or commentated services have run very successfully in the past and should be continued and run more often if suitable people are available to run them.

ONLINE OPTIONS

We know that online services were essential during Covid and this is one area where we've heard that there is a real desire to keep going online.

In doing so, many people that would not want to, or are not able to, attend face-to-face services can feel part of the community and can access a spiritual Jewish experience.

There are of course halachic limitations but there are also many services that can be streamed, even if that doesn't fulfil a halachic requirement. For instance, hearing the megillah online might be a better option for some members than not hearing it at all.

Quick wins and priorities

- *Frequent HIT, J-Live, Community Stories, coffee chats*
- *Short explanatory or essentials service*
- *Main shul options and big speakers*
- *Online Havdalah, Purim megillah, Chanukah lighting, Kabbalat Shabbat, weekday services, Gingerbread Storytime*



INNOVATION for WOMEN and GIRLS

WE'VE MADE PROGRESS ...

Over the past few years, BES has made a point of introducing more religious options specifically for women and girls. This has been facilitated by the appointment of a Vice Chair specifically responsible for understanding and improving women's experiences within the community.

BES now hosts a very successful women's Megillah reading, a regular women's Kabbalat Shabbat (Friday evening service), an occasional Shema Koleinu Shabbat morning service, women's Hallel, and has employed Rebbetzen Emma Taylor as an educator and a role model.

... BUT THERE'S MORE TO DO

However, even with all of this progress, within our focus groups, particularly one that concentrated on the role of women within BES, we heard that some women (although by no means all) felt excluded to some extent and wanted more involvement in the religious life of the community.

It's clear that there is a spectrum of views and that some women would find it uncomfortable if the suggestions of other women were implemented. However, using the principle of providing options, there is room to try out some new ideas without everyone needing to do everything.

Alongside this there was a feeling that it would be helpful to learn more about the halacha that determines what women can and cannot do within Judaism.



SUPPORT AS WELL AS SOUL

Many of the suggestions made that related to women and girls were as much about finding ways to support one another as they were about engaging more in religious life.

In particular, we have to work especially hard to ensure that teenage girls feel positive about, rather than disillusioned with, Judaism.

Quick wins and priorities

- *Published guidance for women's kaddish and lone yahrzeits*
- *Published options for Bat (and Bar) Mitzvah in and out of the service*
- *Suggestions for Simchat Bat ceremonies in and out of the service*
- *Women's support networks, mums and daughter circles, or Rosh Chodesh gatherings, as Small Groups*
- *Continue with women's megillah, women's services, options for women to dance with Torah at Simchat Torah, women's Hallel, women's lulav and etrog prayers*
- *More sermons from women*
- *Investigate further options within the women's service like Kaddish, Kedushah, repetition of the Amidah*



DAVENING with ENERGY and SONG

LET'S MAKE SHUL VIBRANT AGAIN

Many responses within our focus groups talked about how shul had become dull during Covid. Unfortunately, with singing and socialising banned for so long, this was probably inevitable.

But we now have to work doubly hard to bring back the ruach (energy) and make shul services places that people want to come back to and to recommend to their friends.



SINGING is BELIEVING

As the British anthropologist [Robin Dunbar points out](#), singing is one of the main ways that we connect with one another.

We need to ensure that our services utilise the power of song, particularly the favourite and well-known tunes that are loved by the community, judiciously interspersed with new modern inspirational tunes.

This may need some work on the part of our davening team to ensure a level of consistency across leaders, services and sites.

FAIL to PLAN, PLAN to FAIL

There's a lot going on in a shul service and, despite what it sometimes feels, there is not a lot of time to get through everything. So there's also sometimes reticence to add in too many tunes.

However, with a bit of thought and planning, and event management on the day, we should be able to speed up some parts of the service and dwell a bit longer of those sections that inspire us or we love.

Quick wins and priorities

- *Treat shul services as an event planned to delight an audience*
- *Standards and consistency for energy and song in Davening*
- *Don't forget the popular songs*
- *Keep services to 2¼ hours maximum*



INCLUSION and ACCESS

INCLUSION: BELONGING IN A GROUP

If a community of belonging is one where every individual feels as if they are an integral part, each one connected to many others and to the community as a whole, then a community of inclusion is one where every section of the community feels accepted, and included as an integral part of BES.

Our focus groups and conversations highlighted that there are many sections of our community where we need to do more for them to feel accepted and included.

Inclusion covers a wide remit: any grouping where we can, and often need, to do more to help them belong.

We need to think about how best to include people with disabilities, special educational needs, autism, particular dietary needs including vegetarians, vegans, people with celiac or other allergies and food intolerances.

We need to do more to include women and girls, Jews of colour, singles young and old and those that are single again for whatever reason, non-nuclear families of all sorts, the LGBTQ+ community, mixed faith couples.

Each of these groups has different, often very different, needs and each needs a different conversation about what BES can do to make our community more accepting and inclusive.

For some groups, much can be done by thinking carefully about our messaging and advertising to avoid being exclusive.

For others, we may need to start conversations, raise awareness and give permission for us to discuss topics that might otherwise feel taboo.

But if we are truly a community where it's all about relationships, then this is something that we cannot ignore.



Useful resources

- [Mill Hill US Inclusion Shabbat](#)
- [Muswell Hill US LGBTQ+ policy](#)
- [Chabad Disability Inclusion Checklist](#)
- [Make Jewish spaces accessible](#)
- [Making Jewish life accessible for deaf people](#)
- [Keshet UK](#)

Quick wins and priorities

- *Review all sites and events to find ways of improving accessibility*
- *Make it easier to let the office and Rabbis know if someone is attending an event or service with a disability or special need*
- *Start a conversation around the content of an LGBTQ+ policy to publicly show inclusion and to address halachic boundaries*
- *Hold occasional Shabbatons on inclusion topics to raise awareness and make a difference*
- *Ensure that every Kiddush and meal can cater for vegan, gluten-free and celiac members*
- *Stop using meat as a way to sell community meals*
- *Checklist for advertising and publications to prevent exclusive language and assumptions about nuclear families*
- *Create small groups where people feel they would provide mutual support*



YOUTH PROVISION

YOUTH are our FUTURE

It sounds like a cliché but we ignore it at our peril.

Our young people of secondary school age are at risk of becoming disenchanted with Judaism and, more generally, are under immense stress socially and educationally, a situation only enhanced by two years of lockdown.

Mental health, social media and an uncertain world mean that more than ever we, as a vibrant Jewish community, need to provide them with support and a strong foundation for their personal and Jewish identity.

There is an African proverb *'it takes a village to raise a child'* and there is nothing better than the whole community celebrating the Bar or Bat Mitzvah of one of our own.

Almost everyone that we spoke to with youth-aged children put 'youth' as a major priority for BES. And we have a huge number of 12-18 year olds, almost 450 of them.

YOUTH WORK is RELATIONAL WORK

As much as or perhaps even more so than with any other part of the community, effective youth work is all about getting to know our young people, finding out what makes them tick, their dreams, their desires and how we as a community can help them with that.

We need high quality youth workers to bring out the best in our youth and to bring back the hundreds of BES youth that are not involved.



YOUTH WORK is EMPOWERMENT

Yes, our youth need fun events and opportunities to socialise together, but we should also be letting them lead.

Our young people should be given the leadership training and skills so that they can make more of the decisions about how to run services and events, with the youth workers and office providing support and advice for logistics and bookings, and suggestions for how to do more within the community.

We would do well to look to the Zionist youth movements for how best to empower young people.

Quick wins and priorities

- *Employ high quality Youth Director and madrichim*
- *Engage in relational youth work: get to know our young people*
- *Give our youth leadership roles and training*
- *Make use of Tribe's Learn 2 Lead programme*
- *Regular youth takeover of shul services*
- *Youth helping in children services*
- *Better links with Jewish and Zionist youth movements*



FOOD and FACILITIES

KIDDUSH brings EVERYONE TOGETHER

Rabbi Boudilovsky used to say that the Kiddush was the most important part of the Shabbat morning shul experience. It is there that people can enjoy each other's company, meet old friends and new, have a chat with the Rabbi, and see people that perhaps were not in the same activity as them during the morning.

Kiddush has to be high quality as it forms such a centerpiece and, as Robin Dunbar points out, feasting is one of the key places to form relationships.

MORE COMMUNITY MEALS

We do community meals really well at BES but the problem is that they sell out so fast!

This is especially true after Covid as so many people want to experience the wonderful feeling of being together for a meal as part of the wider BES community.

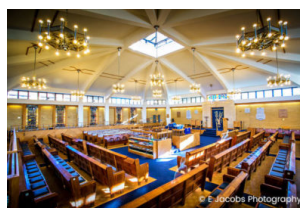
There are many people who would love to come along but often there aren't the opportunities to do so.

Let's endeavour to make our wonderful community meals more regular so that there are more opportunities for others in the community to join in.

BUILDINGS do make a DIFFERENCE

Our Reimagination Manifesto says that there is more value in getting to know people than in buildings and programmes. That's true but buildings still play a part especially if they don't provide a comfortable and welcoming environment.

Let's face it: our Croxdale Road site needs a major face lift.



There are plans afoot to rebuild and provide a purpose built shul and community centre, but until then we should at least tidy up and provide a lick of paint to make Croxdale Road more inviting.

Quick wins and priorities

- *Make Kiddush delightful every time*
- *Refreshments and hot drinks at every service, event and committee meeting*
- *Have regular community meals*
- *Signage and directions available on site for every multi-room event*
- *Permanent branded signs naming every Croxdale Road building*
- *Permanent directions for Croxdale Road site available near the entrance*
- *Include directions and signs for the mikveh at Croxdale Road*
- *Good automatic lighting on Croxdale Road site, including for committee meetings held on site*
- *Redecorate & tidy Croxdale Road site*
- *Maps, room names and directions for both sites available on BES website*
- *Ensure anyone who books a room know where maps and directions are and knows how to get on site and into relevant buildings*
- *Plan to rebuild Croxdale Road site*



CLEAR LEADERSHIP

A CLEAR COMMUNITY VISION

For BES to thrive, we need a clear vision that the whole community believes in and a team of leaders that are passionate and enthusiastic about delivering to that vision.

This includes both our Rabbinic Team and our Honorary Officers.

It was clear during our focus groups and discussions that community leadership was highly valued when it was clear and visible, provided direction, and spoke with passion and enthusiasm and aligned with our values.

PROVIDING HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEAMS

One of the Reimagining Shul framework principles is Continual Learning and this applies to the communal leadership as much as anything else.

To this end, and to help deliver this report's recommendations, we have discussed the idea of providing team coaching to our BES leadership teams, on the basis that everyone is able to improve, and doing so will only enhance the way we operate as a community.

Coaching guru [Peter Hawkins's](#) model below will help the teams examine key questions about how they operate in service of the BES community.

There are five sections to the model:

- Commissioning: What are we here for and who does it matter to?
- Clarifying: How do we know if we have been successful as a team? How do we create shared identity and purpose and communicate this with our community?
- Co-creating: How do we work together with our community?
- Connecting: How do we spread enthusiasm and engagement beyond the team to all interested parties?
- Core Learning: How do we grow and learn collectively?

Priorities

- *Providing Leadership Team Coaching*
- Great speakers, Jewish and non-Jewish
- Better comms to target information on what's on in BES, and enable members to choose the comms to receive and the channels to use e.g. email, Facebook, WhatsApp, text, etc.
- *Comms to enable our leaders and speakers to speak to us where we are e.g. via embedded video newsletters*





IMAGINING THE WAY FORWARD

So how do we get to the vision of the future where BES is full of feelings of belonging and inspiration, and where excellence is commonplace?

There are many important ideas and recommendations in this report but there are probably three practices that will make the most difference in terms of transforming the community and enabling us to rise to the existential challenge that we currently face.

Each of them would benefit from changes to the way that BES is organised.

Key Practice	Operational changes
Meaningful Rabbinic Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the Rabbinic Team prioritise and track conversations with the community, and are given the training and software to enable them to do so effectively
Small Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Small Groups portfolio so that someone owns and develops a strategy for roll-out of Small Groups, helps people create and develop Small Groups, and supports and tracks their growth
Inclusion and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the current Inclusion portfolio to focus on more sections of the community and create a Small Group committee to discuss Jewish viewpoints on inclusion and how best to move the dial

CREATE a SENSE of URGENCY AROUND a BIG OPPORTUNITY

Management guru, [John Kotter in his book Accelerate](#), says that creating and maintaining a sense of urgency is key to driving transformational change in organisations.

He also advocates for many people driving change as part of a Guiding Coalition that sits alongside the organisation's hierarchy, forming a network of interested partners that are enthusiastic to see the change happen, can talk in terms of the heart as well as the head, who understand the big urgent opportunity, and who can be a source of ideas and constructive feedback for the hierarchy.

In the case of BES, a Guiding Coalition would include members of the Rabbinic Team and Honorary Officers as well as a representative and enthusiastic group of people from across the community.

Building on Kotter's ideas, the three overarching pillars of the Reimagining Shul framework need organisational changes to help bring them to life and to ensure that we retain a sense of passion and urgency for delivering transformational change within BES.

Pillar	Operational changes
Belonging and Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the Honorary Officers should own the BES Together agenda, ensuring that belonging and connection permeate BES.• Create a BES Together Guiding Coalition of people with passion to transform the levels of belonging and connection within BES. Do so by mid May 2022 for the best chance of creating a sense of urgency.• Extend the Welcoming and Facilities portfolio to focus more on belonging and connection within BES
Inspiration and Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a Religious Inspiration group to bring people together that can transform the levels of inspiration and meaning within BES
Excellence and Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide our senior leadership teams with coaching to ensure clarity of purpose and to support the transformation of BES

A CALL to ARMS

Delivering on the changes described above is going to take a lot of people.

John Kotter also talks about assembling a volunteer army to generate momentum and keep things moving. Alongside that, creating Small Groups is going to need the involvement of many people within the community.

So if you are reading this as a member of BES, there are ways that you can get involved. If you are enthusiastic about the ideas in this report and you are interested in:

- being part of the BES Together Guiding Coalition,
- being part of the Religious Inspiration group

then please get in touch on reimaginingshul@borehamwoodshul.org



REQUIREMENTS for FUNDING

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

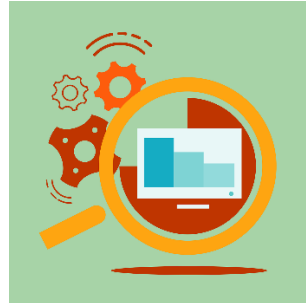
As mentioned elsewhere in this report, software is needed to help the Rabbinic Team and the Honorary Officers engage more effectively in relational Judaism.

We need to make sure that we have a **Community Relationship Management (CRM) system**, and the accompanying processes and skills, to meet the following requirements.

1. **Track** meaningful interactions between community members and leadership: when and where they happen, for what reason, and any salient insights.
2. **Share** interaction details amongst the Rabbinic Team and our Care Coordinator so that they have a one-team view of the community and any issues they face.
3. **Group** community members into cohorts so that communications can be better targeted and members don't have to wade through everything to find things that interest them, and so that members can choose which channels to receive comms.
4. **Report** on the level of meaningful interactions that are undertaken to ensure that we can celebrate success but also to identify members and groups within the community that have been missed out.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

1. Provide training and support to the Rabbinic Team for providing meaningful conversations
2. Provide training and support for leaders of Small Groups



ENGAGING COMMUNICATIONS

A CRM system can enable more targeted communications to community members but we also need to provide more engaging newsletters, messages and social media posts.

Again technology can help.

For instance, software like [PageTiger](#) can bring stale newsletters and emails to life by embedding video and other excited content.

We need to make sure that we have a comms system, and the accompanying processes and skills, to meet the following requirements.

1. **Embed** engaging and inspiring video content in emails
2. **Target** communications to a cohort so that members don't have to wade through everything to find things that interest them
3. **Send** communications to multiple channels, and the channels that members choose

CONCLUSION

IT'S TIME TO TRANSFORM BES

- Along with other United Synagogue shuls and other faith groups, **BES faces an existential challenge** in engaging our members, one that Covid has only exacerbated.
- To meet this challenge, **we need to transform the way we do community** to become relational rather than transactional.
- We need to **focus on connections between ourselves and our Judaism**, and create more of a feeling of belonging and inspiration for our members.
- Key to doing this is the idea that **it's all about relationships**, along with the core practices of:
 - **Meaningful Rabbinic conversations,**
 - **Small community groups,**
 - **Inclusion and access, and**
 - **Moments of Jewish insight.**



DELIVERING CHANGE

- Transforming our community is not going to be easy and we will need to do it together.
- **We need enthusiastic people to be part of a BES Together Guiding Coalition** and a Religious Inspiration group to create the **sense of urgency around a big opportunity** that is necessary to drive change.
- If you want to get involved then please email reimaginingshul@borehamwoodshul.org

A SENSE OF URGENCY

If we are going to grasp this opportunity before it's too late, we need to do some things soon:

1. By mid-May: form a BES Together Guiding Coalition
2. By Shavuot: agree strategic initiatives and roll-out quick wins
3. By mid-June: start a Small Groups pilot
4. By end of the Summer: set up a Religious Inspiration group

THANK YOU'S

CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you so much to everyone that has contributed to the Reimagining Shul project. In particular to:

- All of our wonderful community members that took part in the Community Reimagination focus groups
- Rabbi Chapper for commissioning the project and encouraging us to challenge the status quo
- Our steering group of Honorary Officers and Rabbis
- Rabbi and Rebbetzen Chapper, Rabbi and Rebbetzen Taylor and Rabbi Finn for your thoughts and discussion
- Rabbi Michael Laitner, Director of Education for the United Synagogue
- Rabbi Samuel Landau, Barnet United Synagogue
- Dr Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz, LSJS Research Fellow
- Laura Treneer, Holland Road Baptist Church
- Dalia Fleming, Executive Director and Alex Foley, Head of Community Life, Keshet UK
- Jo Grose, Director of Communities & Strategy, United Synagogue
- Dr Ron Wolfson, author of Relational Judaism
- Gidon O'Hana and Adam Cohen, Woodside Park United Synagogue
- Everyone else that has provided ideas and suggestions

CORE TEAM

A massive thank you to the core Reimagining Shul team for all of their hard work, insight, ideas and hours of great discussions:

- Judith Freedman
- Tilda Boosman
- Lloyd Dean
- Jonathan Cohen
- Philip Mitchell
- Daniel Hirschfield
- Ruth Mellish
- Jonny Friedman
- Vivienne Newton



BEYOND WELCOMING CHECKLIST

WELCOMING at EVENTS

Before the event starts

Will it be clear to a new member:

- what event is on?
- where the event is taking place?

During the event

- Are people offered name badges?
- Are refreshments (food, hot and cold drink) available?
- Are leaders getting to know attendees?
- Is there an icebreaker to help people meet each other?
- Is there an opportunity for people to tell their stories?

WELCOMING at SHUL

Before shul starts

Will clear information be provided about:

- what services and activities are on?
- where and when services and activities are taking place?

Have welcoming guidelines been provided to the welcomers?

During shul

Do the welcoming team:

- wear 'Here to Help' lanyards or name tags?
- make sure visitors know where to go?
- make sure visitors to the shul have a seat and a siddur?
- ask visitors if they want help following the service?
- talk to visitors they haven't met or seen in a while?
- introduce new visitors to other members?
- smile?

Is there a room for coffee, tea and chat?

On CRP weeks:

- is there a discussion group for CRP parents?

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

Before sending an email or posting on social media about an activity

Is clear information, or links to it, provided about:

- where and when the activity takes place?
- how to get to the activity?
- how to register or pay in advance or if you can just turn up?

Is the language and messaging welcoming?

Is the language and messaging inclusive? Does it avoid:

- unnecessary references to traditional nuclear families?
- references to meaty food?
- flyers with pictures of people that lack diversity?
- an unnecessarily restrictive age range?

When reviewing the BES website

• Is clear information provided about:

- all of the regular services and activities?
- services and activities that are happening in the next few weeks?
- where and when the services and activities take place?
- how to get to the services and activities?
- how to ask if you have a question about access or inclusion?
- what to expect in our services and how to take part?

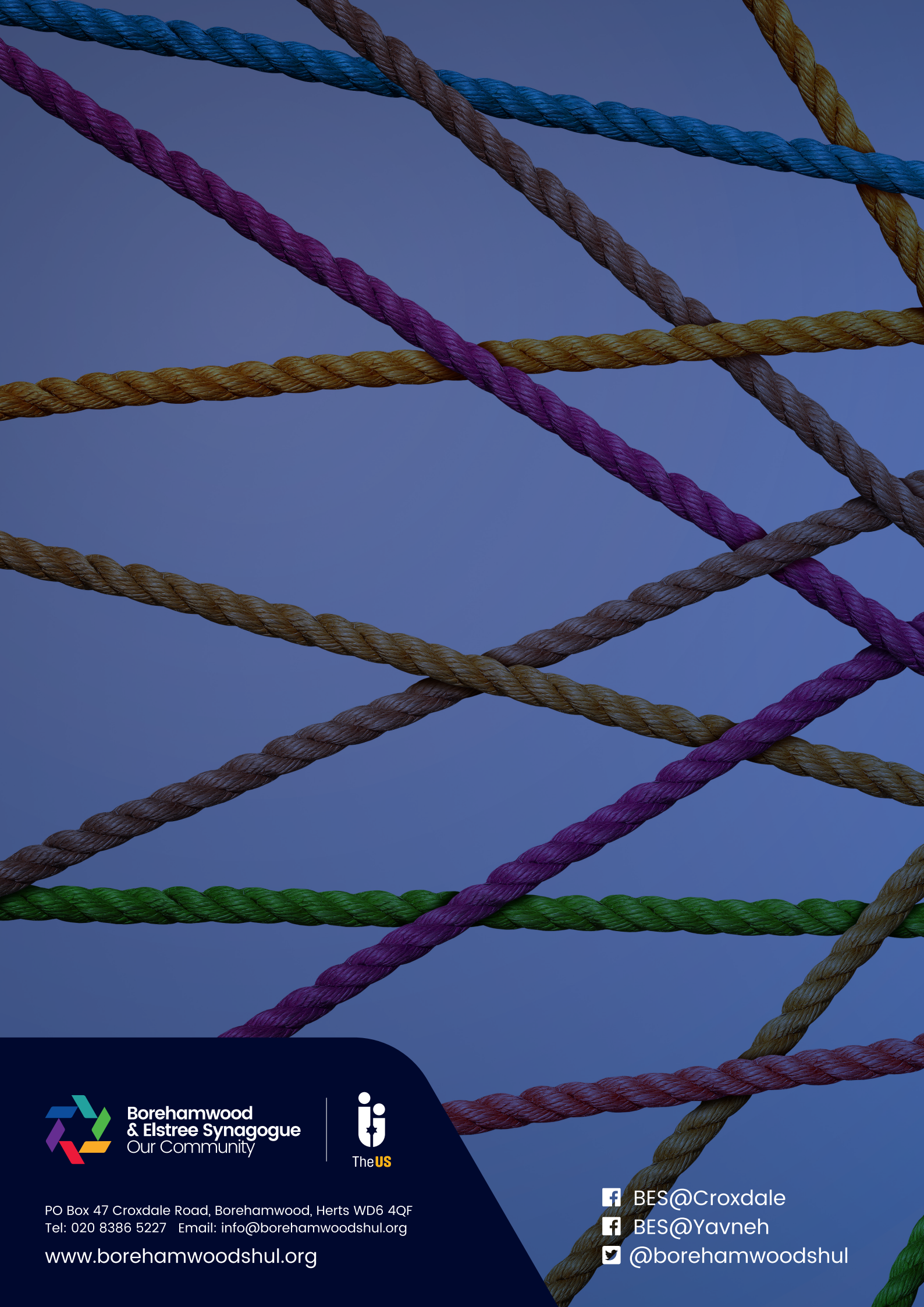
Is the language and messaging welcoming?

Is the language and messaging inclusive? Does it avoid:

- unnecessary references to traditional nuclear families?
- references to meaty food?
- pictures of people that lack diversity?
- unnecessarily restrictive age ranges?

Is it easy to find:

- a statement of our values?
- our community structure and pictures of our HOs and Rabbinic Team?
- recordings of sermons, speakers, and other words of wisdom?



**Borehamwood
& Elstree Synagogue**
Our Community



TheUS

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