



July 21st 2020

Charity No. 1163562

Dear Kehillah members

The high holidays of 2020/5781 are fast approaching and plans are already under way from our fantastic high holiday planning team. The high holidays are, for many of us, a highlight of the Jewish calendar and we would like to write with an update of our plans.

Liberal Judaism, in consultation with Public Health England and Reform Judaism, have strongly advised us to carry out our high holiday services online, with the recommendation that we build around some of the outdoor activities that form a natural part of our calendar, with some options for meeting in smaller groups outdoors over the course of the whole of the whole festival season. [The recommendations of Liberal and Reform Judaism are available here.](#)

This recommendation has been made on the basis that most synagogues expect a higher attendance at the high holidays, that our venues are not adequately equipped for the sufficient social distancing necessary, and that a significant proportion of our membership may be continuing to shield or avoid large gatherings of people due to themselves being at significant risk should they become infected with Covid-19, or may be avoiding large gatherings due to concern about infecting those that they care for.

On matters of Public Health collective action is required in order to have any positive impact. On this issue we therefore felt that it was necessary, along with all other Liberal and Reform synagogues, to follow the guidance of our larger umbrella organisations - Liberal Judaism and Reform Judaism - and carry out our High Holiday services online.

The decision to carry out our High Holiday services online has not been an easy one. For many of us, our sense of spirituality is rooted in being around others in our community, and while we now know that online services can be meaningful and uplifting, most of us are yearning to be able to participate in services in person, together, in the same space. We have therefore taken seriously the recommendation to build around outdoor activities, and there will certainly be opportunities over the High Holidays for us to be together in person - over Rosh Hashannah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot.

Moving forward, we have already started the process of meeting with the staff at the Community Rooms to enable us to do the necessary risk assessments and to understand the adjustments that we will need to make for a safe return to in person services. More information will be sent out about this in due course.

Please do get in touch at any time if you would like to discuss any concerns.

Hazak hazak v'nitchazek - be strong, be strong, and let's strengthen one another,

With all best wishes

Rabbi Leah Jordan, Robert Freudenthal (chair) and the Kehillah Management Committee