MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF LIBERAL JUDAISM (ULPS) – KNOWN AS COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 26 JANUARY 2021 via ZOOM
SUBJECT TO SECTIONS 26 -32 OF THE MEMORANDUM AND ARTICLES OF LIBERAL JUDAISM (ULPS)

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OPENING PRAYER
Rabbi René Pfertzel opens the meeting with a moving reflection about those who have passed away from COVID by reading the poem ‘My Sister is Not a Statistic’ by Dorothy Duffy.

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
Ruth welcomes everyone to the meeting.

Congratulations are offered to:
Abi Jacobi and Yszi Hawkings for being appointed joint chairs of the executive committee of Limmud UK.
Michelle Janes and Claudia Mendoza on their appointment as joint CEOs at the JLC. Michelle is married to Rabbi Neil Janes of SBJC.
Corinne Oppenheimer and David Lipman for their Jewish News 120 Over 80 awards. Other Liberal Jews have also received recognition.
Tom and Victoria Rich on the birth of Otis Charles Rich
RS invites everyone to join Holocaust Memorial Day events. Charley’s Pause for Thoughts on Holocaust Memorial Day will be available to listen to on BBC Sounds.

Henry Cohn, previous Vice President, is currently very ill in hospital after having a fall, we wish him well.

Peter Benscher, Honorary President of ELELS, father of Simon Benscher, Vice President, passed away last weekend. We offer our condolences to Simon and all his family.

**New Members:** Susan Lewis, new treasurer of Stevenage. Rabbi René Pfertzel, Rabbi of KLS and co-chair of CoLRaC. Lilian Coulson of York covering for Shannon, Peter Loble treasurer of LJS and Nick Silk, co-chair of Edinburgh

**Apologies** Paul Silver-Myer and Rob Freudenthal

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF Council Meeting 20/10/2020

Minutes from the October meeting are taken as correct and virtually signed.

Action log to come with the new minutes, and a continually updated decision log will come out with the minutes.

Going forward we will expand the recommendations and decisions on reports so that communities can be more informed and included. We also invite communities to our weekly community briefings on Thursday evenings at 8pm.

### CHAIR’S REPORT

RS clarifies the decisions behind the Senior Leadership Recruitment. The 2.5 posts (CEO, Operations Director and Director of Strategy and Partnerships) were reduced into 2 positions as BoNO felt we could no longer afford 2.5 posts. The job description of the Director of Strategy and Partnerships (0.5) overlapped with what would have been put into the CEO job description, meaning that there was never a full time CEO vacancy that could be advertised. BoNO sought legal advice and the DSP role was removed and transferred into the CEO post. To make the DSP redundant would have counted as constructive dismissal. RS opens up to further questions.

Tamara Joseph asks if there really was no other option but to offer the CEO position to the DSP, and RS clarifies that yes as the job descriptions merged.
Tamara asks if CB’s job description was really over 50% of the CEOs previous job. RS explains the legal stance and that a 0.5 CEO job description would have been hard to write without including the DSP job roles.

Ben Rich explains it seems a lot of the problem is that the previous post holder did not have a job description, so we got ourselves into a bit of a mess. What we need to concern ourselves with, is making sure that everyone has a current and updated job description going forward so we do not have this issue in the future.

Bob Kamall shares the letter that ELELS wrote to RS, via the chat function, and suggests that these matters need to be addressed as he felt that there was not a consultation process or that the questions of ELELS’ letter have been answered sufficiently. RS explains that BoNO has never consulted Council on appointments as it is not required, appointments are the responsibility of BoNO.

David Lipman explains that this is the first council meeting he has been to for approximately 30 years, but feels that Ben Rich had things right – and thinks that we need to think about the legal consequences had we dismissed the DSP position.

Karen Newman speaks as the chair of the working party for the appointment. We were in a fortunate position as CB and SSD had led the organisation when DR was on Sabbatical a few years ago. When Danny stepped down, BoNO decided to use the same interim team. No one expected a pandemic to happen during the recruitment process, but CB and SSD stepped up incredibly to the job. The working group initially felt that the way forward was to publicise the vacancies but two things became clear when preparations began: the financial position of LJ, exaggerated by the unknowns of COVID, for example what if CAFs became impacted by the shrinking economy, could LJ afford a full time CEO long term? The answer was no. If BoNO created and advertised a part time CEO vacancy, it seemed very likely that the people to apply for a part time CEO vacancy would be someone who was also working part time as a rabbi for one of our communities. If that were to happen, there would be a built-in conflict with that person – you cannot be a Chief Executive of a company and represent a constituent part of the company at the same time. The second problem was that when BoNO looked to write the job description of the CEO, it could not be done without getting the DSP job description. Creating and advertising a part time position would have made things very difficult, and by removing the DSP position we would be leaving ourselves open to a constructive dismissal case. Karen reminds everyone that
the appointments have been greeted with acclamation and LJ are phenomenally lucky to have Charley Baginsky as CEO and Shelley Shocolinsky-Dwyer as COO. They hold these posts because they are the right people to hold these posts.

Bob Kamall feels that it is a shame that this explanation was not shared earlier.

Rabbi Richard Jacobi questions why no financial concerns or strategic options were mentioned at the last LJ Council Meeting in October. Council should have been briefed on these decisions. Karen Newman explains that it was an omission that the consultation was not fed back, and hopes Graham Carpenter can do that later in the meeting. Karen also explains that a recruitment process cannot be conducted in public, especially when in this case the person in question was currently doing the job.

Moving on, RS says that she has been really enjoying visiting communities – if she has not invited herself, please do invite her via Tanya.

Julian Sampson asks how the committees that have been created fit into BoNO. RS explains that most of the committees are informal committees that have been set up for specific interest and have a mixture of trustees and staff members, plus others if required, e.g., the cemetery committee has Phil Stone in it as this is his expertise. The committees meet outside of BoNO meetings and report back to BoNO. Trustees also have a portfolio that they report back on, as this allows BoNO to cover more. The Black Jews and Jews of Colour committee is a Council committee. Julian asks if the finance reports have already been reviewed by BoNO and RS explains that yes, BoNO gets finance reports ahead of every meeting and our finance committee meets between each BoNO meeting too. All reports are written by the committee, approved by BoNO and then come to Council.

**Decisions**
No decisions were made.

**Actions**
- Please invite Ruth Seager to visit your communities for Shabbat via Tanya (t.garfield@liberaljudaism.org)

**REPORTS - all reports circulated prior to the meeting**
Finance Report

Questions on Report
RP asks where the CoLRaC fees go – SSD explains that these go into ‘other income’ and welcomes RP and RB to make a meeting to discuss CoLRaC money if needed as they come into the roles.

Ben Rich asks if there is another page to help people understand our youth expenses. SSD explains that Youth is very much money in versus money out. Youth activities are held within various places of our budget. Ben requests a spreadsheet of Youth costs.

Decisions
No decisions were made

Actions
No actions recorded

CEO and COO Report
CB explains she is happy to highlight where council can be involved more at the top of her reports going forward as requested.

Questions on Report
Julian Sampson asks what CB’s meeting was with Ephraim Mervis. CB explains that they had a really open, frank meeting. He addressed her as Rabbi and it was a really good meeting.

Lilian Coulson asks about meeting with the Israeli Ambassador and CB explains that for many years Liberal Judaism has been developing a relationship with the Israeli Embassy. The new ambassador is very different and we hope to keep the door open and work with her closely. We hope to host an open meeting for LJ community members with the Ambassador too. RS adds that she was very keen to meet with women rabbis and that was lovely to see that she respects our women rabbis.

Tamara Joseph asks about the upcoming BoD elections and if we can work together to increase the Liberal voice at the BoD. CB says she thinks that this is already starting to happen. We have a Community Briefing with the BoD on 4 February 2021 and Lauren Keiles who is Community Engagement Officer at the BoD is happy to come to your communities too. SSD can help with BoD forms if needed.
Chris Nash thinks that it is awful that we are having warm meetings with the Israeli Ambassador given her history and asks what the benefits are of us meeting and conversing with her. Andrew Goldstein explains that at this meeting they started the conversation by explaining how serious they are about Judaism and Zionism in order to open the channels of communication and hopes that in the future they will be able to put more questions to her about the policies of her government. René Pfertzel explains he has met with her in another role and put questions to her about British conversion and she was not hostile and listened to us.

Chris feels that we have been outdone by the Reform Movement and Laura JK and he is concerned about LJ having a clear voice. CB explains that LJK can say what she wants as she is no longer associated with RJ. RJ also met with the Ambassador. The only way for us to elicit change is for us to speak to power and not just issue press statements. We have to be in the conversation and we will have a seat around the table for discussions.

**Decisions**
No decisions were made

**Actions**
No actions recorded

**Biennial Update**
No questions on the report.

RS thanks everyone involved as it sounds like it is going to be a great event.

**Decisions**
No decisions were made

**Actions**
No actions recorded

**Chaplain Report**
No questions on the report. CB draws attention to the Careers Month happening in February, for anyone aged 16 to early 20s. Janet Berkman has a huge amount of recruitment experience that she has offered to Anna. RS thanks Anna for all the work she is doing during this difficult time.
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**CoLRaC Report**
René Pfertzel thanks AaG for all his hard work as the previous chair of CoLRaC and thanks Tanya Garfield for her admin support.
CoLRaC are exploring different options for Senior Rabbi and looking at ways to come together informally.
Andrew Goldstein highlights that as well as RP being co-Chair of CoLRaC, he has also just been re-elected as the Chair of European Rabbis Association.

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**LBC Working Group Update**
Karen explains the need for the LBC Working Group and the hope of creating a partnership with LBC. When Karen spoke to Deborah Kahn-Harris about this, she suggested we call the memorandum of understanding being worked on between RJ, LJ and LBC a Brit.

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**Black Jews and Jews of Colour Working Group Update**
Since writing the report CB has ensured BJ and JoC are being included in the vaccination advertising and this is really good.
RS says she notes that both the work of the BJ and JoC group and Owen’s inclusivity group have started to be integrated into all our work.

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**Feedback from Senior Professional Leadership Consultation**
Graham thanks everyone on the Board for completing the process. This is a great snapshot of how the movement feels and shows the great work that the interim team were doing at the time. Graham draws people’s attention to the key headlines and takes questions.

Tamara Joseph asks Graham to clarify how the voice of Liberal Judaism works and what has happened to the Senior Rabbi role? GC explains that the consultation informed the Board that we did not need a rabbi to fulfil the position of CEO therefore the Senior Rabbi role was removed from the Senior Leadership Position and is in the hands of CoLRAc. CoLRAc are having an ongoing discussion regarding this voice. In terms of the cabinet style approach; this is something that Charley was already bringing to the Movement during her interim position and it was validated by BoNO and it came through in the consultation, which is a great endorsement. The CEO is in charge of the Voice of Liberal Judaism and she is doing a great job of distributing speaking opportunities around the movement to rabbis as appropriate. GC hopes this continues as it really uses our rabbis to their strengths.

**Decisions**
No decisions were made

**Actions**
No actions recorded

**AOB**
Karen – reminds communities about the upcoming BoD Elections
Becca Fetterman – reminds communities about the Safeguarding Training that is on 9 February 2021 at 19:00 – 21:00. More information is available here: [https://www.liberaljudaism.org/calendar/safeguarding-training/](https://www.liberaljudaism.org/calendar/safeguarding-training/)
Shelley – LJ representatives of BoD – Stuart Macdonald and Dan Smith, who will both be standing for re-election at the next Council Meeting. Further details will follow.

**Next Meeting**
*Tuesday 27 April 2021 - via Zoom*