



<b>Chairman</b>	Tom Nathan
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Vera Pollins
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Paul Burger
<b>Rabbi</b>	Rabbi Rodney Mariner
<b>Cantor</b>	Norman Cohen Falah
<b>Administrator</b>	Henny Levin
<b>Office Hours</b>	Mon-Thurs 9.00am to 5.30pm Friday 9.00am to 2.00pm
<b>Regular Services</b>	Friday Evening 6.45pm Saturday Morning 10.00am

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**What type of community is Belsize Square Synagogue?**

The Synagogue occupies a distinct and significant position in Anglo-Jewry. It offers religious expression, traditional worship and progressive ideals. As a radical - traditionalist congregation within Judaism, we are supportive of pluralism.

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**How was the Synagogue established and what is the historical background?**

Founded in 1939 by the remnant of destroyed communities on the European continent, it is endowed with a great cultural and spiritual heritage. Encouraged and aided in its establishment by the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, it owes much to its first distinguished Chairman, The Hon. Lily H. Montague CBE, Rabbi Dr. George Salzberger its first Minister and Magnus Davidsohn, its first Cantor. From small beginnings in Swiss Cottage, the numbers grew until premises in Belsize Square were acquired in 1947 and subsequently developed. Under the leadership of Rabbi Jakob J Kokotek, 25 years its Minister and Cantor Rev. Josef Dollinger, great progress was achieved.

In January 1989, the Synagogue attained Independent status, allowing wider relationships with all sectors of Anglo-Jewry. The present Minister, Rabbi Rodney J. Mariner, joined the community in 1982 and has given renewed emphasis to the Synagogue's principles and roots and has contributed greatly to the atmosphere of vitality and activity.

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**Does the Synagogue have a Constitution and what is the structure?**

The Synagogue operates under a written Constitution. An elected Chairman and a Board, consisting of 33 members, is the administering body. Honorary Officers and an Executive are elected from the Board.

Committees deal with the following:-

**Editorial and Communications.** A monthly paper "*Our Congregation*", youth magazine "*Gesher*" and an annual Year Book are free to all members and the website updated.

**Liturgical.** The Rabbi chairs this Committee, which is responsible for Services and religious activities.

**Education.** The Religion School, Nursery School and Parent and Toddler Group are the responsibility of this Committee as is youth activities under the leadership of a professional Youth Worker.

**Finance.** Under the Hon. Treasurer's chairmanship, this Committee approves budgets, subscriptions, expenditure etc.

**Constitution.** Our written Constitution is regularly reviewed and amended.

**Building and Management.** The modernised property estate receives regular attention and development.

**Befrienders.** Deals with the lonely, the sick and needy in visiting or welfare provision.

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**What form do Services take, for example, can my whole family sit together?**

Services follow a traditional form, men and women may sit together and there is a mixed choir and an organ is played. The statutory prayers are recited in Hebrew and men wear a head covering and tallit. Services are usually of shorter duration than in Orthodox synagogues, but Torah readings and all elements are otherwise similar.

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**Do women have an active role in Synagogue life?**

Women are members of our Board and Executive and take leading roles in our communal organisation having equal status with men in these respects. In religious Services, women have a more traditional role. Shabbat candle lighting is a regular feature of participation at the commencement of the Friday Evening Service. Girls are encouraged to celebrate Batmitzvah on the same basis as Barmitzvah for boys. Women may serve as Hon. Officers and are well represented at all levels of administration.

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**Are services held at regular times?**

*Shabbat Eve Services:* 6.45pm to 7.45pm.  
*Shabbat Morning Services:* 10.00am to 12.00 noon, followed by Kiddush.

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**Festival Services** also commence at the above time, with the exception of High Holyday Services and Family Services which may vary. Two days are observed for all Festivals. Due to the space limitations of the Synagogue, High Holyday Services are held at an outside venue so that the whole community may pray together.

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**Are family events or special Services held?**

Services and special prayers for Marriages, Baby Blessings, Wedding Anniversaries, Yahrzeits and other family occasions are arranged on request. Passover Seders are held on both evenings in our Hall.

Special Services include:

**Communal Services:** Yom Ha'atzmaut, Selichot.

**Memorial Services:** Kristallnacht, Tisha B'Av, Holocaust Memorial Day.

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**Can adults join a choir?**

**Family Services:** Simchat Torah, Chanukah, Purim.

We have established a 'Community Choir' in addition to our professional adult choir and any member may participate. The choir is frequently involved in Services and occasional social performances.

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**Is there community involvement?**

We encourage the use of our premises by other Jewish and local organisations for our mutual benefit and place high priority on good relationships within the Anglo-Jewish and local non-Jewish community. We support communal bodies, such as the Council of Christians and Jews,, under-privileged children and other various local charities connected with the Royal Free Hospital.

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**Are there religion classes for children?**

We are represented on the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Camden Social Services and Zionist organisations. We are affiliated to the European Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

Religion classes for children of school age and pre-school are held every Sunday morning from 9.45am to 12.30pm. Children have the opportunity of joining our Youth Choir which regularly takes part in Synagogue Services and performs at outside functions. There is a small annual charge for books, and administration.

Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah classes are held each Shabbat morning at 9.15am, followed by attendance at the Service.

An 'Israel Travel Scholarship' is available for young people as well as the 'Rabbi J Kokotek Jewish Educational Fund', which provides assistance for more general Jewish purposes.

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**Are there facilities for very young children at the Synagogue?**

Special Services for children are held on the first Shabbat of each month.

'**Kikar Kids**' (square in Hebrew) commences at 11.00am with three Services. One for 0 - 5 year olds, one for 5 – 9 year olds and one for 9 plus. They are followed by a "mini-Kiddush" and a pot-luck lunch. The children sing prayers, songs and have a chance to become familiar with the Torah and rituals.

A **Parent and Toddler Group** (BUTS) operates in specially designed premises on five mornings a week from 9.30am to 11.30 noon. It is available to non-members and is supervised.

A registered **Nursery School** for 2¼ -5 year olds is available to members and non-members. It is open each weekday morning and is run by trained Jewish teachers. A gentle introduction to Shabbat and Festivals is part of the ethos of both groups.

**What are the arrangements for Bar or Bat-mitzvah?**

Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah are arranged after a period of preparation take place during our Shabbat Morning Service. Tuition is given to boys and girls and special classes are held regularly. A Barmitzvah and is available for girls from 13 years of age onwards. On the anniversary of Bnei Mitzvah, the boy or girl is invited to take part in a Shabbat Service.

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**Are there opportunities for young people to participate?**

On High Holydays, separate Children's Services are held in which they participate and the main Mincha Service on Yom Kippur is conducted entirely by younger members with the Youth Choir.

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**Can children join youth clubs or other activities?**

Clubs are available for various age groups and meet regularly on the Synagogue premises under the guidance of trained youth leaders.

Supervised club weekends away are held for all age groups, at regular intervals, as well as holiday and summer school activities in the Synagogue.

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**What social life is there?**

**Belsize Members' Group** provides social events for all members of the Congregation. The group arranges meetings between New Members and long-standing members. Fund-raising events are undertaken and everyone is encouraged to participate.

**The Parents' Association** of the Religion School assists in security, provides funds and arranges social events for all members of the Congregation.

**The Israel Committee** arranges fund-raising functions and cultural activities, talks and discussion groups.

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**Is there adult education?**

A 'Shiur' is conducted by the Rabbi from time to time after Shabbat Morning Services. Lecture courses and adult discussion groups are arranged on a regular basis.

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**What provision is there for social welfare and care of the needy?**

A **Community Care Co-ordinator** is available for cases where regular attention is required.

Special arrangements are made for those with financial hardship and a flexible attitude is taken towards subscriptions for deserving cases.

**Belsize Square Befrienders** is a group of dedicated members providing help for members in need.

A **Bereavement Counsellor** is also available for immediate or long-term assistance.

The Synagogue subscription includes a payment for ground fees to a Burial and Cremation Scheme through which arrange-

ments for burial at Edgwarebury Lane Cemetery or Cremation at Golders Green Crematorium are possible. Funeral charges are NOT covered. Special arrangements, including cremation, can be discussed and advice given.

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**Is there a Burial Society?**

Our **Chevra Kadisha** is a Society of men and women members who, on a voluntary basis, are dedicated to the task of performing the last religious rituals for the deceased, visiting the bereaved and attending Shiva Services. It holds an annual Remembrance Service for the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

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**How is security arranged while the premises are in use?**

A Security Committee arranges for cover to be available at all internal functions. Volunteers, both men and women below the age of 65 years, are asked to undertake security duty on a rota basis. Members, who have undertaken the Board of Deputies Security Training Programme, act as supervisors. The Religion School arranges its own security from amongst the parents, also on a rota basis.

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**Are the premises open for hire?**

Our Hall is for hire and can accommodate 300 seated for lectures or 150 for dinner. Our kitchen is dairy, kosher only.

The Synagogue seats 250 and accommodates all Services, although on High Holydays we use outside premises. Purpose-built classrooms are used for the Religion School and all meetings and functions can be held on Synagogue premises.

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**What are the types of membership and where can I obtain subscription rates?**

Membership is available to all men and women of the Jewish faith over the age of 18 years. All have equal rights. Family subscription includes children under the age of 18. Special rates are available for students.

Subscription rates are reviewed annually. They can be obtained from the Synagogue Office.

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**Where can I obtain more information and to whom can I address questions?**

Our Synagogue Administrator will answer most of your questions or refer you to the most appropriate Official or Minister.



**To: The Hon. Secretary  
Belsize Square Synagogue  
51, Belsize Square  
London NW3 4HX**

Dear Sir,

Please forward Application Forms/details concerning membership to the following address:

Name. ....

Address. ....

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Telephone No .....  
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I am interested in:

- Membership
- Religion School
- Youth Groups
- Toddler Group
- Nursery School
- Belsize Members Group
- Israel Activities
- Befrienders
- Adult Education
- Chevra Kadisha

Please detach and use this form to make enquiries regarding membership, or telephone our Synagogue Administrator on 020 7794 3949.