

שנה טובה!

SHANAH TOVAH from the First Minister

PICTURED BELOW WITH FORMER SCoJeC CHAIR
MICHELINE BRANNAN

I send my warmest greetings to Jewish communities here in Scotland who will be celebrating Rosh Hashanah and marking the holy day of Yom Kippur.

Covid-19 has created particular challenges for many of our faith communities.

For our Jewish communities this included being unable to celebrate festivals as you usually would, as well as being unable to attend synagogue.

These sacrifices have been difficult. However these restrictions have helped us to make major progress in eliminating Covid-19 and have allowed us to ease many of the lockdown restrictions. That

includes the reopening of places of worship, and as a result many of you will be able to gather at synagogues to celebrate. However, I recognise that not everyone will be able to do so, since attendance at places of worship remains limited with physical distancing measures in place.

While some of these restrictions around coming together will remain as you celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I hope you will still find ways to come together, either in smaller groups or virtually.

I am immensely proud of the way in which communities across Scotland have come together to support one another during this crisis, and I hope we can continue to work together to tackle prejudice and build a more inclusive, safer Scotland.

Antisemitism is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. While reported instances of antisemitism remain relatively low in Scotland, I am aware that it remains a significant issue for our Jewish communities and we must not be complacent. I would like to reassure you all that I remain committed to tackling hate crime and prejudice in all its forms.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for all you have done to support communities across Scotland during this crisis. The support of our faith communities, including our Jewish communities, has been invaluable.

I hope you and your loved ones continue to stay safe, and that the year ahead brings joy and happiness to you all. So on behalf of the Scottish Government, and the people of Scotland.

Shanah Tovah!

Office of the First Minister of Scotland
FirstMinister.gov.scot
Prìomh Mhinistear na h-Alba



ISSUE 67 • ROSH HASHANAH 5781 • AUTUMN 2020

Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities

www.SCoJeC.org

REPRESENTING, CONNECTING, AND SUPPORTING
JEWISH PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND



facebook.com/scojec



twitter.com/scojec



youtube.com/c/scojec

Being Jewish in Scotland 2020

FIONA FRANK

After our two previous surveys of *Being Jewish in Scotland* in 2011-12 and 2014-15, we conducted another small-scale survey at the end of 2019, and then contacted our respondents again in June to ask them about their experiences of being Jewish in Scotland during the Covid-19 emergency.

We had a very gratifying 208 respondents to the survey that closed in January and 67 responses to the Covid-19 follow-up survey. We also conducted focus groups in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, and Inverness, and ran an event at Scotland Limmud called *The Only Jew in the Village – being Jewish in Scotland outwith the Central Belt*. So although not a statistically representative sample of Jewish people in Scotland, the responses covered a wide spread in terms of geography, Jewish upbringing, nationality, religious affiliation and observance, and political opinion.

As before, we began with the question "What's good for you about being Jewish in Scotland?"

Some respondents felt that Scotland is welcoming, tolerant, and vibrant both inside and outwith the Jewish community. Mixed and negative responses were also reported, however, with some unable to identify anything positive, and feeling relative isolation even before lockdown.

"There is a sense of pride among Jewish people in Scotland. There is a rich history to the country and to the religion, and they come together in a beautiful way. The Jewish community welcomed me with open arms and made me feel at home in a new country." [M, 30s]



"The alignment between Scottish independence and pro-Palestinian movements has led to the occasional uncomfortable and borderline antisemitic incident. I worry about rising Scottish nationalism and the possibility of a correlating increase in antisemitism." [F, 30s]

A new finding, not raised in our previous surveys, was two separate reports that suppliers had terminated business relationships when they found out that the client was Jewish.

There is a consensus that Israeli policy and Judaism are frequently conflated, so that Jewish people in Scotland are sometimes held accountable for Israeli government policy. One young respondent reported that when a clinician found out that she was going to Israel, she "launched in on how horrible Israel is. It wasn't very appropriate."

A non-Zionist minority reported feeling under pressure to make their political affiliations clear because of their Jewish background, and said they don't feel represented within the mainstream Jewish community.

In the follow-up post-lockdown survey, respondents reported increased pride in being Jewish, having more time to engage with Jewish life, and closer community connections during this challenging time, with shuls working together, Jewish organisations reaching out, and a general sense of support for other members. A recurring theme was the move from in-person to online events, which most welcomed, especially those who encounter geographical or mobility barriers, though others felt isolated by not being able to attend events in person.

Reports on the earlier surveys, which were funded by the Scottish Government, are published on our website at www.scojec.org/resources.html, and a full report on these new inquiries, which were supported by Glasgow University's Q-step programme, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, and carried out by two final year Social Science students, will be published after Rosh Hashanah.

Collaborative, Conscientious, Caring, Cheerful

MICHELINE BRANNAN
SCoJeC CHAIR
FROM 2016 TO 2020
LOOKS BACK

During my time as Chair, SCoJeC adopted the strapline *Representing, connecting and supporting Jewish people in Scotland*. We do this in many ways, but never has the mission been so vital as when Covid-19 struck.

When lockdown was announced just before Pesach, we started holding regular Zoom 'meetings' with the leaders of all our communities to share information and identify how SCoJeC could help, and ensure that everyone felt connected and cared for. Our Director, Ephraim Borowski, was immediately in frequent touch with the Scottish Government and represented the needs of our community very cogently, resulting in a one-off grant for immediate needs, such as delivery of Pesach food parcels to students stranded in Scotland. I also pay tribute to Leah Granat, our Research and Publications Officer, who quickly set up a special website for Covid-related resources. Fiona Frank, our Projects and Outreach Manager, nimbly moved our events online and masterminded them with help from Geanina Beres, as well as hosting many other communal organisations in our 'Zoom room'. This widened access to our events, so I hope it will become a routine way for SCoJeC to operate even when lockdown has fully ended – a silver lining!

It is sometimes hard to remember that I had four 'normal' years before Covid-19 struck, and looking back, I hope that the 'four Cs' that describe my contribution as Chair of SCoJeC are 'Collaborative, Conscientious, Caring, Cheerful'!

I tried to be a conscientious Chair, reaching out where I thought I could help. During my first year, I was in Aberdeen almost every month. I wanted to be there for them during a particularly fierce onslaught of antisemitism masked by anti-Zionism, and also to support their fund-raising to refurbish their shul. I am proud of how our small communities keep Jewish life going in Aberdeen and St Andrews, and in Edinburgh where I used to live.



I am grateful for the collaboration of the successive Presidents of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council. I was also determined to work closely with the Board of Deputies and was delighted to introduce their President, Marie van der Zyl, to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, at the Scottish Parliament [left]. We also have the support of the Jewish Leadership Council through Danielle Bett, their Scottish Public Affairs Manager, who advises and represents us in a way that does herself and the Jewish community credit.

I also tried to be caring by looking out for our staff and helping when possible. I had my shot at doing PVG administration, I have written minutes of meetings, bought food for events, laid out lunches for Council and cleared up, and ensured a plentiful chocolate supply for many anxious meetings. I have been blessed as Chair with a dedicated, experienced and wise team, particularly Ephraim, Leah, Fiona, and Joanne.

And I have had many reasons to be cheerful. Working with people one likes and admires is a wonderful experience and I always looked forward to meetings. I think SCoJeC works well as a team and I tried to listen to everyone and valued their opinions. I hope that I did my job well as Chair and I was sorry to have to stop. Covid-19 will not last forever, though, as I said, it has brought us all closer together in ways I hope will continue. But normality will return and I wish Alan Kay that his term of office will be every bit as enjoyable as mine has been.

A New Sense of Possibility

ALAN KAY
NEW SCoJeC CHAIR
LOOKS FORWARD

We live in unprecedented times. This probably has been said many times in the past, and in all likelihood will be said in the future too. Society has seen a big change, a rapid change. Purim 2020 was the last festival we celebrated under the old normal. Who would have thought that so much could change so quickly? With Pesach and Shavuot we Zoomed into a new 'normal' of lockdown, isolation, and missing human contact. As I write this the worst of lockdown is easing. We are slowly making human contact again. We have seen over the last few months how we all have pulled together to support each other.

We will soon be in the High Holy Days. It is unlikely we will be celebrating this year as in past years. Rosh Hashanah is about relations, whether between persons and G-d, or persons and societies, or simply between persons and other persons. It's all about nourishing relationships which sustain us and help us do the same for others. Society has changed, but in some respects has changed for the better. We have seen how kind people can be, with neighbours checking on each other, community spirit has returned.

We have had to rethink how we do things. Distance is not such a problem as it used to be. In the future we will return to meeting in person, prayers in synagogues, and simchahs will be celebrated. I am sure that some additional joy will be shared with the new digital tools we have started to get used to.

When we look into our heart as the New Year starts, may we discover a new sense of possibility, a new belief in the gifts we have to share, and a renewed commitment to our faith and our dreams. May this New Year be filled with health and happiness, and sweet moments. L'shanah Tovah.

Racial Inclusivity IN THE Jewish Community



SCoJeC was delighted to welcome Stephen Bush as the guest speaker at our virtual AGM, shortly after he was appointed by the Board of Deputies of British Jews to chair its new Commission on Racial Inclusivity within the Jewish Community.



Stephen is an accomplished journalist, who, aged only 30, is the political editor of the *New Statesman* and also writes for both the *Guardian* and the *Financial Times*. He is of black and Jewish heritage, and explained that, despite some initial nervousness, he accepted the Board's invitation because of the importance of the issues, and the delicacy and sensitivity with which the Board has handled them. He told us that not only is the Board the only faith representative body that has reacted to the outrage of George Floyd's murder in this way, but the UK Jewish community is the only faith community world-wide that has responded by setting up such an inquiry, having the courage to hold up the mirror and ask what we can do better.

The Commission is due to report in six months time, but Stephen will not walk away after that; his recommendations will, so far as possible, focus on what the Jewish community can itself do differently, and he intends to revisit them at regular intervals to check on implementation.

In the lively discussion session that followed Stephen's presentation, people spoke movingly about their own experiences of discrimination, rejection, and stereotyping. Ideas started to flow, including changing images of Jewish people in publicity material in order to show the full diversity of the community, improving education about the diversity of the Jewish people, and ensuring that anyone doing security duty at a Jewish venue – shops as much as synagogues – has received training about the diversity of the people they may encounter.

The Commission hopes to consult as widely as possible within the Jewish community, listening to people who have been affected by discrimination. To participate in the inquiry, contact anthony.silkoff@bod.org.uk



LEFT: PORTRAIT OF JANE HAINING IN LATE 1930S; YAD VASHEM CERTIFICATE OF HER RECOGNITION AS ONE OF THE "RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS".

RIGHT: JANE WITH HER PUPILS ON LAKE BALATON; PUPILS AND STAFF IN THE GIRLS' HOME 1940S; THE SCHOOL BUILDING IN VOROSMARTY STREET, BUDAPEST.



JANE HAINING

A Life of Love and Courage

WALTER SNEADER

Around 100 people joined an online session, jointly presented by SCoJeC and the Glasgow and West of Scotland branch of the Council of Christians and Jews, to listen to a lecture given by Mary Martin, author of a recently published book about Jane Haining, the only Scot who was killed in Auschwitz, and has been recognised by Yad Vashem as one of the "Righteous among the Nations".

Jane Haining (1897–1944) was born in Dunscore, a small village about nine miles north-west of Dumfries. She abandoned a successful career to train as a matron of the Scottish Mission boarding school for girls in Budapest in 1932. Founded in the 1840s, the school respected the religious values of its Jewish pupils while seeking to expose them to Christian teachings in the hope this would have a lasting influence. By 1935, seven thousand Jewish girls had been sent there by their parents because of its outstanding reputation. Almost one in eight of them had been baptised.

Jane Haining would have met few if any Jews before taking up her appointment in Budapest, and she had been brought up to accept a somewhat negative picture of Judaism. It was therefore not unreasonable for her to believe that the objective of the Mission School in Budapest was altruistic, especially when she met the Rabbi responsible for Jewish education at the school. When antisemitism in Europe took a turn for the worse, Jane and the Revd George Knight, superintendent of the school, realised that its key objective must be to counter rapidly deteriorating Christian-Jewish relations in Budapest. Jane was a highly intelligent woman who must have been shaken by events unfolding before her eyes, and would have recognised the fearsome consequences of the persistent hatred of the Jews and the claim of the inferiority of their religion that had all too often been propagated by the Church. She responded with love of her young pupils to protect them in their hour of greatest need. She and Revd Knight strove to help pupils to escape to Great Britain, and assisted other Jews whenever possible. She repeatedly rejected demands from her church headquarters in Edinburgh to return there to safety.

The lecturer, Mary Miller is to be congratulated for ensuring wider recognition of this often forgotten heroine, the only Scot who died at Auschwitz, and her presentation welcomed by all who seek to enhance Christian-Jewish relations in Scotland.

Creativity in Crisis

DEBBY TAYLOR

I was due to go to Israel in March for three weeks, and Mark, my husband, was due to be working abroad for two weeks followed by another trip abroad, so my food cupboard was empty and household supplies had been used up. So when our trips were cancelled and with lockdown imminent, I found myself in the local supermarkets looking for food and supplies. The shelves had been emptied and I had a wasted trip. I was both amazed and angry. Amazed because I was then told that people had been buying extra fridges and freezers to stockpile food, and angry at the selfishness of people only thinking about themselves. So I produced a quilted wall hanging titled *Toilet Paper, a Symbol of Generic Panic* – toilet rolls, a map, and graphs of how far the pandemic had spread by then, with the words, (quoted from media reports) "It's ridiculous," Ms Kelly said of the 'panic buying' behaviour – particularly of hoarding loo rolls. Another said, "We have become an uncaring and selfish society. It's all me, me, me." The quilted wall hanging is funny but carries a serious message. It was hung in the window of a local shop and has instigated quite a bit of conversation. The local postie commented that it gave a new meaning to the term 'quilted toilet paper'!

A draw will be held for the quilt at a forthcoming SCoJeC event to raise funds for the Aberdeen Synagogue Roof Fund. £19 000 is still needed to pay off the outstanding debt for the roof repairs, meet the cost of other necessary work, and remove the danger of having to close the building.



Scottish Jewish Covid Archive

HARVEY KAPLAN



Although the Archives Centre has been closed to the public since March because of Covid-19, like many other archives, we have been recording people's experience during the pandemic and lockdown. This new collection currently consists of around 170 paper items or digital files relating to more than twenty Jewish communities, organisations, charities, and committees in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, including newsletters, press cuttings, leaflets, emails, and personal lockdown stories – even a poem!

Work on the new Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre at Garnethill Synagogue also had to be paused during the pandemic, but is now well under way. Finishing touches are being made to building works, and new display and interpretation panels are being installed, as well as furniture, equipment, and resources.

Volunteer recruitment and training for the Weekday Guiding Service, School Visit Service, and Weekend Events and Activities Programme will resume in early autumn, and we are planning looking forward to when the new Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre Manager will come into post.

The Heritage Centre, which will include the creation of a Scottish Holocaust-era Study Centre, is a partnership project between the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre and Garnethill Synagogue Preservation Trust, and we are grateful to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Association of Jewish Refugees, the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust, the German Federal Government, the Architectural Heritage Fund, and the William Grant Foundation.

For more info or to help with the project please email: info@sjac.org.uk



SCOTLAND'S VIRTUAL JEWISH

Coffee Morning

SCOJeC was delighted to host an online Coffee Morning in association with the Jewish communities in Aberdeen, Tayside and Fife, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, that provided a Scotland-wide experience of Jewish community and identity. Many of the 68 participants shared stories about themselves and their family history.

"I loved all the personal anecdotes about family history, childhood memories"

"It was lovely to see people from across Scotland and meet some new people".

David Bleiman, from Edinburgh, shared a photograph of his grandmother, Gretl Taubes. She was an amateur opera singer in Vienna before emigrating to Cape Town, and he played part of a recording of her singing *Der Lindenbaum* by Schubert, and *Ständchen* by Richard Strauss – her only recordings, which were made in 1935, and accompanied by Gunther Pulvermacher, an accomplished pianist and Hungarian Jewish émigré. David talked about the joy of conserving this record, made more than 85 years ago, that enabled him to hear the singing voice of his grandmother.

Judy Townsend, who recently moved to Edinburgh from the United States, shared a photograph of herself with her mother and daughter, and told us the story of her mother who had emigrated to Chicago from Czechoslovakia after surviving Auschwitz. Despite her suffering in Europe and harsh experiences in the US as an immigrant who didn't speak English, Judy told us that her mother is a very positive and resilient person who inspires her to be positive as well.

Hilary Franklin showed us the Black Belt in Karate she won in 1985. There were so few women competing in karate at that time, she had to fight against a 12-year-old boy who was the only person in her weight and height category. She went on to train as a referee, and organised for her club to go to Germany in 1987 to compete, where they stayed in the 1936 Berlin Olympic stadium. She also showed two Hakata figurines that she had been given by her instructor for winning her black belt.

Howard Brodie shared a photograph of his great-great-grandparents David and Eitel Itsicovitz and their family. The photo was taken in 1887 in Ragola or Ariogola in Kovno Govorno in the Russian Pale of Settlement (now Lithuania), and Howard commented how unusual it is to have a photo taken in the 'old country'.

John Danzig showed the participants a certificate attesting to his family's links with the fur trade, which led to a fascinating discussion about changing ethical standards through the ages.



DITZA HOPPENSTEIN

What a Year!

If any year deserves an epithet like that it is this one. The whole world as we knew it changed drastically. No-one was left unaffected. No-one's life stayed absolutely the same. Who would have predicted last Rosh HaShanah that people would be forced indoors and to distance themselves physically from family, friends, and acquaintances. It could have been a story from the sci-fi section, but no – it was reality. It started in a trickle which suddenly turned into a flood that took everyone by surprise. But by now we have settled into a new sort of normal, and maybe we can take a breather to reflect and to look back on the year.

The Torah teaches us that there are no things such as coincidences; even what seems to be natural cause and effect is all carefully designed and directed by G-d to encourage us to grow, work on ourselves, and to reach our potential. It would be a sad thing to go through life and not be stimulated to change.

There are definitely global messages that can be taken from this pandemic, and wiser people than I have expanded on those, but there are also personal messages for each of us to discover and act upon. Although the pandemic was global, everyone's story was different (was anyone else in isolation not only with four high-energy children but with a major indoor sewage leak to deal with as well?), and thinking about our own story can highlight what we, as individuals, need to work on.

The Torah also tells us, amazingly, how to make changes that stick, because, let's be honest, we often make commitments to change but somehow at the end of the year, not much seems to have happened. First, choose the area in which you need to improve and then choose a practical action. Done? Ok, now halve that action, and again, and again, into what may seem miniscule and pointless – but the Gemara tells us that G-d says "open Me an opening the size of a needle, and I will open you an opening the size of a banqueting hall".

I can tell you from experience that the year I accomplished the most growth was the year I decided to work on patience. My concrete commitment was just once a week to take one breath when I felt impatient or angry. That's it! No commitment to lessen any reaction. Nothing at all. Just take one breath. Once a week. However, by the end of that year my level of patience had increased far more than if I'd gone for a more challenging commitment. Try it. Try it in the area that you decide you need to work on. Please let me know how it goes. I would really love to know. Shanah Tovah!

Festival Calendar

Rosh HaShanah	
Fri evening to Sun night:	18-20 Sep
Fast of Gedaliah	
Mon daytime:	21 Sep
Kol Nidrei	
Sun evening:	27 Sep
Yom Kippur	
Sun evening to Mon night:	27-28 Sep
Succot	
Fri evening to Sun night:	2-4 Oct
Chol HaMoed	
Sun night to Fri night:	5-9 Oct
Hoshanah Rabbah	
Thurs evening to Fri night:	8-9 Oct
Shemini Atzeret / Simchat Torah	
Fri evening to Sun night:	9-11 Oct
Chanukah	
Thurs evening to Fri:	10-18 Dec

Antisemitism in Scotland Increases



Although there was an overall decrease of 13% in antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the first half of the year – from 911 in 2019 to 789 in 2020 – there was an increase in specific regions, including Scotland. In the first six months of 2020, 21 incidents were reported as occurring in Scotland, compared to nine incidents across the same period in 2019. All 21 fall into the category of Abusive Behaviour, and the fact that 15 of these took place online is significant in determining why incidents in Scotland appear to have more than doubled.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic may explain the drop in incidents that depend on public interactions, the 344 online incidents in the UK recorded from January to June 2020 is the most ever recorded by CST in the first half of a year. Online incidents do not require proximity to Jewish people or communities – only the desire to express anti-Jewish sentiment.

As well as six off-line incidents including antisemitic graffiti, stickers, and posters, online incidents in Scotland have encompassed the range of antisemitic discourse, including Holocaust denial, Holocaust glorification, conspiracy theories about Jewish power, the misappropriation of Jewish religious texts, and the unprovoked targeting of a Jewish person with criticism of Israel. Online platforms continue to be a convenient, far-reaching, anonymising, and secure-feeling environment for those who wish to voice and incite hatred – especially at a time when anxiety over face-to-face contact with others is heightened.

Climate Network for the Scottish Jewish Community

COP26, the United Nations Climate Summit, was planned to take place in Glasgow in November 2020. Although it has now been postponed to 2021 because of the global pandemic, there will still be a lot of online activity around the original dates of the summit, 9th to 20th November, and we plan to be involved!

Some of us are already working hard to reduce our own and our community's carbon footprint and energy use, but others don't yet know much about the issues involved. So SCoJeC is planning to get people together, using Zoom, to learn about the issues, facilitate discussion, and share ideas for climate action right across the Scottish Jewish community – including how we travel, shop, heat and light our synagogues and our homes, and how we relate to the world as Jews.

There is a lovely midrash that reminds us of the imperative not to destroy our world since there is no-one else to come and rescue us:

When G d created the first man, He took him and showed him all the trees of the Garden of Eden, and said to him, "See My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are. And everything that I created, I created it for you. Be careful not to spoil or destroy My world – for if you do, there will be nobody after you to repair it." (Kohelet Rabbah 7:28).

SCoJeC is planning a series of events to help Jewish people and organisations here in Scotland think about what we can do to change how we live.

We'll start with the basics: what are 'carbon emissions' and what harm do they do?

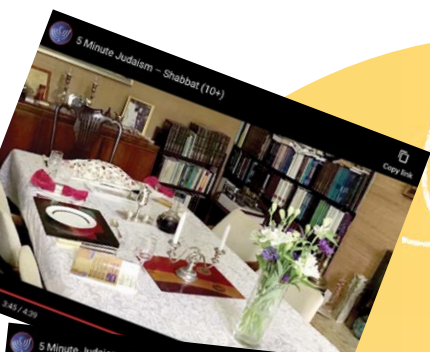
What is the 'greenhouse effect'? Why is the melting of the polar ice-cap a problem? We'll give you a chance to ask the questions that you might not have been able to ask before. Then we'll have some discussion time to start to think about actions – including contacting other climate groups in our local areas.

Whether you're a climate expert or a climate newbie, if this excites you, please get in touch to help us plan the process and develop this work.

Sign up to our enews to hear more at www.scojec.org/mailling-lists.html

Or contact us by email or phone, and tell us how you'd like to be involved. Ruby@scojec.org or 07779 206522

The first meeting will take place on Tuesday 29th September at 7.30pm. For more information and to register, see www.scojec.org/events.html



Five Minute Judaism

Under lockdown, while the schools have been closed, we've been training two new cohorts of Volunteer Ambassadors using Zoom! Part of the training sessions has included putting together a new set of videos and other resources designed to be used by parents supporting home based schooling, as well as for teachers to use after a 'phased return' to school. In fact, anyone who's interested in finding out more about Judaism can use the resources.

Called *Five Minute Judaism*, the videos are designed to be accessible to all. Each features one or two of our volunteers explaining some aspect of Judaism, illustrated with film footage of them demonstrating customs and ceremonies with the appropriate artefacts. The lockdown has allowed us to work with volunteers from Helensburgh, Orkney, and Invernesshire as well as from the central belt, which has been a great advantage.

Check out the new resources at www.scojec.org/5-minute-judaism.html

If you're interested in joining our training and becoming a Volunteer Ambassador, please contact our Education Officer Joanne Gabbay at education@scojec.org

Thanks are due to the People's Postcode Trust for funding the training and the video production, our Social Media and Marketing Assistant Geanina Beres for video editing, long time SCoJeC volunteer and former SCoJeC council member Joe Goldblatt for the idea and encouragement, and all our volunteers: Diane, Jane, Bill, Maia, Caitlin, Jen, Ariella, and Margalit for all their work on the project.



Goodbye . . . Hello!

FIONA FRANK LOOKS BACK AND RUBY KATZ LOOKS FORWARD

Back in August 2011 I'd just submitted my PhD, the Department of Continuing Education at Lancaster University where I'd been working had closed down, and I was looking out for my next challenge. It was beyond my wildest dreams that I'd find my 'dream job' – a year with SCoJeC, researching the experience of *Being Jewish in Scotland*, running Jewish cultural events around Scotland, and conducting focus groups from the Borders to the Islands, as well as conducting a survey, and analysing and writing up the results.

Since that first year, when we discovered that many Scottish Jews outwith the central belt felt pretty isolated and were very keen to connect with each other, we've run events all round the country to make that 'connection' happen, we've trained students to help older people use IT to communicate with their children and grandchildren, and we've trained our Volunteer Ambassadors to go into schools to run activities about Judaism.

I've had a **BALL** working with SCoJeC over the past nine years. I've met Jewish people all over the country; I've travelled to Shetland, to Arran, to Islay, to the cities and the countryside, **'representing, connecting and supporting Jewish people in Scotland'**. We've conducted two more inquiries into the experience of being

Jewish in Scotland, which we've used to update how we work and ensure that people feel their voices are being heard.

I've particularly enjoyed bringing Klezmer music to wider audiences, and thinking up original ideas for events. One highlight was when we brought together Jewish and Muslim young people in Falkirk as part of Interfaith Week to work with a Jewish and a Muslim paper cutter, and they produced fantastic art work.

I've been very busy during lockdown, running concerts, talks, a Scottish Jewish Art Club, and regular Zoom training sessions, as well as supporting other communal organisations to use our Zoom meeting space.

We have many benefits from online events – people from remote villages and people with disabilities have been able to attend our events for the first time, and we've been able to engage speakers and performers – as well as audience members – from all over the world. So I hope that SCoJeC's future will include a 'blended offer' – continuing to run some Zoom events as well as our traditional face-to-face activities – some of which will be filmed and broadcast to a remote audience too. I'll be very sad to leave SCoJeC, but I was very impressed by Ruby's plans, and I'm sure the organisation – and the community – will be left in good hands!



A big "Hello!" to the SCoJeC community and readers of *Four Corners*! My name is Ruby Katz, and I am the incoming Projects and Outreach Manager for SCoJeC. I feel that my appointment could not have come at a more perfect time. With Rosh Hashanah on the horizon we are given the opportunity to look ahead into 5781 with fresh eyes, seeing all the exciting possibilities. I look forward to the ways we will come together as a community, and I know we will be able to meet the many challenges facing society today while continuing to stay connected to our religious and traditional values.

Fiona has been dedicated to this position for the past nine years, paving the way in research, funding, programming, and above all, bringing us Jews in Scotland together. I look forward to following in her footsteps while working to weave in my own strengths.

As I grow into this position, it is my hope that we will bridge gaps across our community's varying denominations. I look forward to creating programming that can be specific to us as individuals and our interests, and that will lead to finding others in the same walk of life. I want to introduce programming that interests everyone, from cooking lessons to yoga to discussions on Jewish and Israeli politics on a global scale. Judaism can be the theme that guides us as we consider what programming to develop and as we reflect on what Judaism means to us.

Finally, I would like to consider opportunities for members of the Scottish Jewish community to leave our bubble. To look for opportunities to volunteer in our communities, to link in with charitable organisations that feel close to our hearts, and to utilise this new digital age to expand our horizons and to connect to Jewish communities abroad.

What I want to impart most is that we as a community have opportunities for growth – as well as room to celebrate everything accomplished. I hope to fill Fiona's shoes in a way that services the community, and I look forward to meeting all of you along the way.



SCoJeC



JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE,
222 FENWICK ROAD, GLASGOW G46 6UE

scojec@scojec.org

0141 – 638 6411
07887 – 488 100

POLICY & RESEARCH leah@scojec.org	LEAH 0141 – 638 6411
PROJECTS & OUTREACH ruby@scojec.org	RUBY 07779 – 206 522
EDUCATION & EVENTS joanne@scojec.org	JOANNE 07724 – 549 817

Contacts in the Corners

GLASGOW office@glasgowjewishrepcouncil.org	EVY/KIRSTY 0141 – 577 8200
EDINBURGH edinburgh@scojec.org	0141 – 638 6411
TAYSIDE & FIFE taysideandfife@scojec.org	PAUL 07906 – 219 262
ABERDEEN aberdeensynagogue@gmail.com	07955 – 706 333
HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS, BORDERS AND ELSEWHERE communities@scojec.org	0141 – 638 6411
SCOTTISH ISRAELI CULTURAL ASSOCIATION info@scotil.org	(SICA)
STUDENTS scotchchaplain@mychaplancy.co.uk	AHARON 07791 – 292 790 HODAYA 07817 – 250 732

The views expressed in *Four Corners* are those of the author, not necessarily of the Council.

© SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES
Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438

◆ Forthcoming Events:

SEE DETAILS OF WHATS ON

Creative Thursdays: Jewish Textile Art
Open House: Farewell Fiona, Hello Ruby
Climate Network meeting (see p5)

www.scojec.org/events.html

◆ News:

SIGN UP FOR RSS NEWS FEEDS

www.scojec.org/rss/rss.xml

SIGN UP FOR E-NEWS, NEWSLETTERS, ETC

www.scojec.org/mailling-lists.html

◆ Coronavirus (Covid-19)

PANDEMIC INFO: COMMUNAL SUPPORT,
WELFARE SERVICES, ONLINE ACTIVITIES

www.scojec.org/lockdown.html

◆ SCoJeC is grateful for the generous support of:

- the Netherlee and Clarkston Charitable Trust for our real and virtual events
- the People's Postcode Trust for our virtual educational programme
- Tobii Dynavox for use of the Boardmaker Picture Communication Symbols® in our *Five Minute Judaism* videos

◆ SCoJeC needs your support! Help us to help your community:

◆ DONATE AT <http://smtgiv.uk/scojec>

◆ SHOP AT [amazon smile](https://www.amazon.co.uk/ch/SC029438)

Amazon donates 5p for every £10 you spend! It costs you nothing, but we only benefit if you use Amazon Smile instead of Amazon.

REGISTER AT <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/SC029438>

BOOKMARK www.smile.amazon.co.uk

AND SHOP NORMALLY

AmazonSmile is now available in the Amazon Shopping app on iPhones and Android phones