

Ten Years On

WALTER SNEADER, CHAIR OF SCOJEC

Looking back on the first ten years of the Scottish Council, I am amazed how much has been achieved. Until the Devolution referendum, the leaders of the Scottish Communities usually left political matters to the Board of Deputies in London. But when it became clear that the laws governing most of life in Scotland were to be enacted at Holyrood, they wisely established a representative body to speak to the new Government on behalf of the entire Jewish Community of Scotland.

Ten years on the name of SCOJEC is familiar to Ministers, MSPs, senior civil servants, and church and civic leaders throughout Scotland. We have been actively involved with the drafting of legislation that benefits the Jewish Community. We have obtained high level assurances about *Shechitah*, liaised with Government and the Police about security matters, and cooperated with other faith and ethnic minority communities on a wide range of practical matters.

Within the Community, we act as a single clearing house for child-protection and immigration matters, thereby saving individual organisations time, money, and frustration. We have also arranged briefings for organisations on important changes in legislation that affect us. For those isolated and vulnerable Jewish people in rural areas, our Government-funded outreach project has provided welcome support. And we run a website that receives thousands of hits every month.

All that we do costs money. We are grateful for the generous support of the various communities and synagogues, as well as the Scottish Government and the Board of Deputies, but our running costs must be met. At this time of reflection it is appropriate to consider the importance of the political defence of our community. So please support the Council in whatever way you can.

As I have said before, if SCOJEC did not exist, we would have to invent it!

LEFT: EPHRAIM BOROWSKI AND LEAH GRANAT TALKING TO ALEX SALMOND AT A RECEPTION IN EDINBURGH CASTLE; WITH THE LORD ADVOCATE, ELISH ANGIOLINI; LEAH WITH MINISTERS AND MSPS IN THE PARLIAMENT



Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

SCOJEC
UPDATE
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All Aboard For A Kosher Ceilidh!

SCOJEC are delighted to be hosting the first European venture by the outreach organisation "Soul Train". We will be travelling round Scotland with their group of musicians between 17th and 24th November, so look out for an event near you!

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Meeting the Secretary of State

SCOJeC arranged a meeting between Jim Murphy, Secretary of State for Scotland, and communal leaders, including representatives of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee synagogues, welfare and educational organisations, Jewish students and chaplaincy. Unsurprisingly, many questions were concerned with the recent unprecedented level of antisemitic activity. Mr Murphy reassured the meeting of his long-standing support for the community and also spoke of initiatives he has undertaken to promote good community relations and oppose extremism. Other matters raised included Charity funding and regulation, funding for educational projects to break down barriers and increase understanding, and the effects of the recession on Scotland.

SCOJeC also attended a meeting with Jim Murphy at the Scotland Office, together with Archbishop Mario Conti, Ian Galloway, Convener of the Church of Scotland's Church & Society Council, and Shafi Kausar, General Secretary of Glasgow Central Mosque, to discuss the impact of the current economic crisis on Scotland's faith communities.



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND, JIM MURPHY, WITH FAITH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE SCOTLAND OFFICE, EDINBURGH © Paul McSherry

“The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities has bound together people from many outlying areas, keeping us in touch with other communities.

They run on a shoestring, and their minimal funding needs to be used mainly for their representative function rather than a support role.”

PAUL SPICKER
CHAIR DUNDEE SYNAGOGUE



SCOJeC events

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Purim in Dundee
Chanukah in Lochgilphead
Succot in St Andrews

SOME OF THIS YEAR'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Child Protection

A new system for the protection of children and vulnerable adults will be introduced next year by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act, but SCOJeC will continue to act as a Registered Body for the entire Community, in order to enable volunteers to work in any number of communal organisations with only a single "Disclosure".

SCOJeC is represented on various consultative groups concerned with both the old and the new systems, and we have been successful in obtaining changes to secondary legislation that would otherwise have impacted adversely on communal activities.

Preserving the Dignity of the Dead

As Jews, we take the sanctity of the dead very seriously, and therefore welcome innovations that lessen the need for invasive post mortems. SCOJeC has had a number of informal discussions with the Lord Advocate, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, and others, about the possibility of legislating to permit the use of MRI for this purpose in Scotland, and our initial approaches have been very favourably received.

The Lord Advocate and the Head of Policy at the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service have both told the Justice Committee of Parliament that "in principle there is no objection to its use", and have suggested that its introduction may not require a change in the law, but only a direction from the Lord Advocate.

When we met the Lord Advocate, Elish Angiolini, earlier this month, she told us she is sensitive to the feelings of families, and confirmed that the establishment of new specialist investigatory unit that can call on a variety of medical and scientific expertise would help achieve this.

Visitors and Visas

The Community has already been affected by the tightening of border controls, so that someone coming from outwith the European Economic Area to work or participate in an event in Scotland (even as a volunteer) must be sponsored by an organisation registered with the UK Border Agency, and then also apply for their visa under the new "points-based system". This is the only way they may enter the UK - even a rabbi coming to officiate at a single wedding must obtain a visa under this scheme.

SCOJeC has registered as a sponsor - a significant service to communal organisations, who would otherwise have to register separately, with associated costs and other risks.

Fire and Water

SCOJeC joined with the churches and SCVO to make representations to the Scottish Government about changes to surface drainage charges due to be implemented in 2010. This would have resulted in greatly increased costs for synagogues and other communal buildings. The Minister has now announced that implementation will be deferred for further consideration.

We were also able to secure changes to guidance on the new Fire Safety Regulations that would otherwise have interfered with the normal use of communal properties.

Happy Birthday SCOJeC

I congratulate the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities on the completion of ten successful years. Their work for the welfare of the Jewish community in Scotland is a model for the relationship between a civil and religious society and its Jewish minority.

office of the
CHIEF RABBI

CHIEF RABBI, SIR JONATHAN SACKS



The Jewish community in Scotland has a long and proud tradition and has played a significant role in enriching our nation's culture. In providing a voice for Scotland's Jewish community, SCOJeC has helped to uphold those traditions and values while providing a useful link between the community and the Scottish Government.

FERGUS EWING, MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

Since devolution, SCOJeC has become well respected on both sides of the border, and in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, for the exemplary way in which they have carried out their work.

VIVIAN WINEMAN, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DEPUTIES

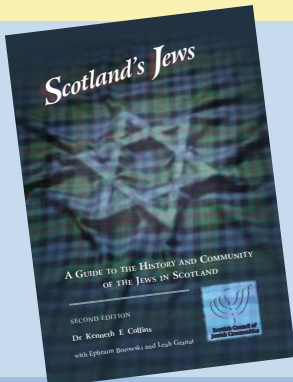


Outreach & Inbring!

SCOJeC is delighted to be working with three other communal organisations to progress our Scottish Government funded project “to reach out to bring people in” from outwith the mainstream community, particularly in rural Scotland. We received expressions of interest from 11 organisations, and after a selection process, will work together with:

- **the Student Chaplaincy Board**, to enable the newly appointed Chaplains, Garry and Suzanne Wayland, to visit the smaller communities around Scotland, and to strengthen links between student groups and the local communities.
- **Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation**, to create educational resources for primary age children in small communities.
- **Limmud Scotland**, to provide bursaries for people from outlying areas, who would not otherwise be able to participate in its activities.

Making the announcement, SCOJeC Chair Walter Sneader said: “We are delighted to be able to assist other organisations to expand their activities, and at the same time to strengthen the cohesion of the scattered Scotland-wide Jewish community.”



SCOJeC PUBLICATIONS

Scotland's Jews was produced by SCOJeC in order to improve public understanding of the Jewish community, and Scottish Government funding has enabled us to provide copies free of charge to all schools, public libraries, and relevant NHS and police departments in Scotland. The book includes information about the contemporary community, Jewish issues in employment, health and other contexts, demography, and an illustrated guide to John Clark's celebrated Queens Park windows now housed in Giffnock Synagogue.

http://www.scojec.org/resources/files/scotlands_jews.pdf
or available from SCOJeC £6.00 inc p&p

SCOJeC's popular online *Guide to Jewish Facilities in Scotland* provides information about the community for people visiting Scotland. <http://www.scojec.org/communities/guidebook.pdf>