

## The Decision to Close Dundee Synagogue

Paul Spicker, Chair of the Tayside and Fife Jewish Community, reflects:

The decision to close the shul in Dundee has been prolonged and difficult; the shul has helped to bring a community together, but we have known for years that we could not go on indefinitely. We have tiny numbers of people coming, and no income.

Despite everything, Dundee has been a happy place; we have had friendly, welcoming services, and we have kept going for many years despite the odds.

The closing ceremony was remarkable, if bitter-sweet. It began with reminiscences from the congregation, beginning with the longest standing members; continued with a Dvar Torah [homily] from Bill Shackman, who has been instrumental in developing the community in St Andrews; and continuing with the Minchah service and removing the Torah scrolls from the ark, led by Rabbi David Rose.



Many of the community's things are moving to our new facility in St Andrews, where there are two Sifrei Torah, prayer books, and bibles. But there is a great deal we will no longer have room for. One of our central aims is to promote Jewish life in Scotland.

One scroll has gone to Edinburgh, for use by Sukkat Shalom and Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation; one to Garnethill shul. Our records and war memorial plaque are with the Scottish Jewish Archives. Our chairs, and much of our kitchen equipment, will be going to Aberdeen. We are part of a wider Jewish community too, and we should be able to rely on each other – If we can still help others, we will.

The shul now is closed, and sifrei torah at its heart are now in other places. After the closing ceremony, old and new members helped to clean up the hall. My last act before leaving was to turn off the Ner Tamid [eternal light].