

# THE IMPACT



**CENTRE for  
COMMUNITY  
EXCELLENCE**

Office of The  
**CHIEF RABBI**

Dear Friends,

Across Great Britain, we have some of the most exquisite examples of synagogue architecture in the entire world. But the vibrant, committed communities of British Jewry that we see today have their foundations not in bricks, but in people.

It was with these people in mind that I created the Centre for Community Excellence in late 2014, a division of my Office that has rapidly evolved into a busy hub serving over 100 communities around the country. I am pleased to say that over 500 incredible projects and initiatives have been awarded grants since its inception, with many thousands of people benefitting from these activities.

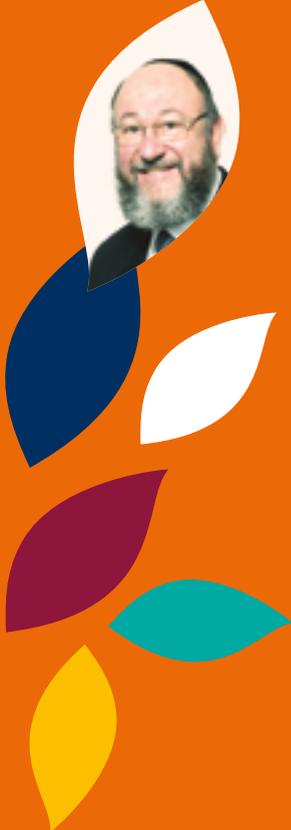
Our communities have been transforming themselves into powerhouses of religious, cultural, educational and social excellence, delivered on the ground by enormously dedicated teams of rabbinic and lay leaders. That is why around half of CCE's work involves partnering and investing in them, by providing training and development opportunities throughout the year.

Thanks to the blossoming partnerships between CCE and our communities, there are now numerous opportunities to celebrate our extraordinary Jewish heritage in a creative and exciting way. But, this is just the beginning. There is still so much to achieve and I invite you to join me in making it a reality.

With warm wishes,



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis



CCE Featured Programme:

## TWINNED SHABBATON BY THE SEA

### BOURNEMOUTH HEBREW CONGREGATION & BIRMINGHAM HEBREW CONGREGATION (SINGERS HILL)

Plans are in the works for another joint Shabbaton after a highly successful visit to Bournemouth by the Singers Hill community. The participants had plenty of opportunities to get to know each other by joining for services, meals and study sessions. An immersive Shabbat experience away from the bustle of daily life allowed many to keep Shabbat who would not normally do so.

#### Could you twin with another UK community?

'A wonderful weekend where we increased our sense of community and meet the very warm Bournemouth community.'  
Birmingham member

#### THE IMPACT

- An excellent example of Community Twinning, whereby two communities were able to forge a meaningful relationship
- A rare opportunity to share ideas and best practice, as well as provide tangible support

'The twinning of the two shuls went really well and now Bournemouth HC are planning to visit us. To be away from Birmingham gave everyone the opportunity to strengthen friendships and community spirit. This could be felt strongly.'

Rabbi Yossi Jacobs,  
Birmingham HC



CCE Featured Programme:

# SPOKEN WORD FOR SHABBATUK

'Ari Lesser really enhanced the services for me. Can we have him again?!'  
Barnet Member

## BARNET UNITED SYNAGOGUE

Hundreds of people had the chance to be entertained and inspired by the talented American spoken word artist Ari Lesser, who educated crowds through rhyme at Barnet's ShabbatUK. He performed at the Challah Make, community meals and services, even rapping a sermon on Shabbat morning. He succeeded in connecting with people of all ages and backgrounds, leaving them with some highly memorable ShabbatUK experiences.

### THE IMPACT

- Less engaged members feel closer to the community
- Creates a fun and unique Shabbat environment



'He was absolutely incredible and loved by every member of our community both young and old, unaffiliated and affiliated. We really can't thank CCE enough.'

Rabbi Barry Lerer

CCE Featured Programme:

# SHABBATUK-INSPIRED YOUTH SHABBATON

'The event was fantastic. Over 200 people attended, including lots of non-members. The feedback's been amazing.'  
Richard Elton, Organiser

## PRESTWICH HEBREW CONGREGATION (SHRUBBERIES)

Inspired by ShabbatUK, Shrubberies staged a special youth shabbaton that allowed its youngest members to take the lead over Shabbat. The three-day celebration featured a youth Challah Make, a Friday night children's service, family Shabbat lunch and afternoon activities with entertainment and madrichim that culminated in a rousing havdalah ceremony.

### THE IMPACT

- Real sense of excitement for future youth events
- Recreating the unique spirit of ShabbatUK

'It was a fantastic, well-organised weekend of activities for all our family.'

Shrubberies' member

'What a great event. The youth are the future of the Shul, so it's important to have events aimed at the younger generation.'

Shrubberies' member



CCE Featured Programme:

## INSIGHTS INTO ISRAELI SUCCESS

### BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE

Two Israeli scientists shared their expert knowledge and provided fascinating insights into their work at the first of many events taking place in Birmingham to celebrate Israel's 70th anniversary. University Faculty Chair Mouna Maron and Chief Vet Igal Horowitz discussed their respective work, with people travelling from as far afield as Coventry to attend the event.

#### THE IMPACT

- Strengthens bonds between local communities
- Cultivates a stronger knowledge and appreciation for Israel

Get in touch for Israel-related speaker recommendations.

'An excellent event. Both speakers were very informative, highlighting the wonderful work that they were doing in their individual fields.'

Birmingham Central member

'Superb! Inspiring! Heart-warming! Made one proud to be a Jew!'

Birmingham Central member



CCE Featured Programme:

## CREATIVE ISRAEL ENGAGEMENT

### SOUTH HAMPSTEAD UNITED SYNAGOGUE

There was something for everyone at South Hampstead's Israel Festival. The month-long programme included a live book review, an Israeli dance workshop, a hands-on Israeli cooking demo and a ruach-filled Yom Ha'atzmaut Party. By partnering with nearby school Naima JPS for the main communal events, South Hampstead forged an even stronger sense of local Jewish unity.

#### THE IMPACT

- Stronger ties cultivated between local communities
- Enhanced engagement with the culture and current affairs of modern-day Israel

'Everything I attended was excellent, meaningful and engaging.'

South Hampstead member



'The series provided multi access points for people to connect with Israel and our community. It went beyond our regular standard of programming to reach many people in a meaningful and special way.'

Rabbi Eli Levin



CCE Featured Programme:

## STRICTLY KOSHER EXHIBITION

YESHURUN HEBREW CONGREGATION

'I've gained much greater clarity on kashrut issues, including practical advice on buying food when abroad. The speakers were accessible for one-to-one conversations.'

Yeshurun member

Keeping kosher was top of the agenda at Yeshurun Hebrew Congregation's all-day event. A KLBD representative provided information and food samples whilst rabbis from across Manchester and a kashrut authority from Israel gave sessions that explored the ease of keeping kosher and contemporary halachic issues.

### THE IMPACT

- Enhanced understanding of kashrut laws and kosher products
- New food for thought provided by acclaimed scholar

'We were aiming to show people that it is not as difficult as they think to keep kosher. The talks showed the ease of keeping kosher abroad and at home while the KLBD exhibition showed people a wide range of kosher products and how easily they can be bought from normal supermarkets.'

Rabbi Chanan Atlas



CCE Featured Programme:

## SHABBAT SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE

STANMORE & CANONS PARK UNITED SYNAGOGUE

As an authority on community wellbeing and family relationships, Rabbi Kelemen found an enthusiastic and willing audience in the many young families who attend Stanmore shul when he spoke during the Shabbat morning service. He fascinated members with his exploration of parenting strategies that were derived solely from Torah sources and provided them with tips for raising happy children.

### THE IMPACT

- Real sense that the shul is investing in and supporting its community
- Greater interest in raising one's children in an authentic Jewish manner

'Rabbi Kelemen was superb. He was without doubt a great speaker and got more people thinking and engaged with Torah content.'

Rabbi Daniel Fine

'Rabbi Kelemen was brilliant - well thought out, relatable and some amazing ideas. I have gained a new awareness and perspective on marriage and parenting.'

Stanmore member



CCE Featured Programme:

## INSPIRATIONAL YOM LIMMUD

### HAMPSTEAD UNITED SYNAGOGUE

As part of its 125th anniversary celebrations, Hampstead Synagogue joined with Mizrachi UK to host the 'Spirit of Hampstead' Festival. A full day's programming combined Jewish themes and textual learning, with sessions featuring prominent leaders and thinkers in culture and politics. Speakers included prominent lawyer Anthony Julius, Rabbi Andrew Shaw of Mizrachi and local MP Tulip Siddiq.

#### THE IMPACT

- Engagement with Jewish learning, history and current affairs
- Paves the way for more exciting and varied programming

Get in touch if you would like some speaker suggestions for a Yom Limmud.

'The festival focused on modern orthodox principles including Jewish learning, Israel and engagement with the wider community. It was a wonderful opportunity to share learning, socialise and see Hampstead at its best.'

Adrienne Powell, Former Co-Chair



'Well done and thank you for all the hard work that went in. It certainly paid off.'

Hampstead member

CCE Featured Programme:

## TISHA B'AV WITH A DIFFERENCE

### BUSHEY & DISTRICT UNITED SYNAGOGUE

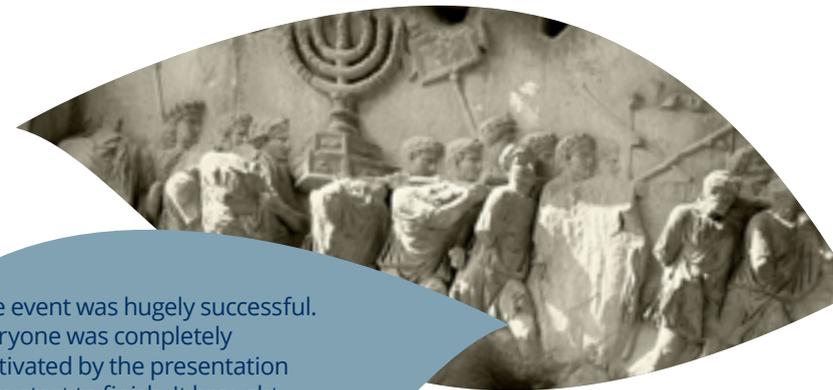
Bushey synagogue hosted a Tisha B'Av programme with a difference when they invited World Jewish Relief to deliver a fascinating presentation about their refugee archives and their work reconnecting people with their family history. The session was open to everyone, with the opportunity for members to research their own family history. Refreshments were also provided to break the fast.

#### THE IMPACT

- Appealed to those who would not usually observe Tisha B'Av, as well as those who would
- Combined Jewish heritage with religious observance to create an innovative and inspiring programme

'These events are terrific. I love having specialist speakers in.'

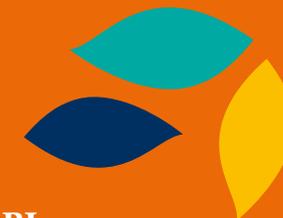
Bushey member



'The event was hugely successful. Everyone was completely captivated by the presentation from start to finish. It brought people to shul for Tisha B'av who wouldn't normally have come.'

Sarah Zackheim, Organiser

# CCE PERSPECTIVES



**GEOFFREY CLEMENTS**  
**CHAIR, BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE**

'Working with CCE over the past few years has been a pleasure and has really made a difference. Birmingham Central has been able to start new initiatives and attract a wider audience to events - by making them either free or more affordable - with CCE's financial support. We have tried to address all demographics in our small community - including ShabbatUK luncheons together with the local student community; day-trips for the Rosh Chodesh Group; high calibre, internationally-recognised speakers and our Friday night Shindigs which now regularly attract over 50 people who otherwise would not be having a traditional Shabbat experience.'



**SARAH ZACKHEIM**  
**VICE-CHAIR, BUSHEY UNITED SYNAGOGUE**

'Our community has been truly privileged to benefit from CCE. Over the last two years we have reached more people than we have ever done before, through an innovative and inclusive programme. Highlights have been an under 50s pub quiz, a Tisha b'Av evening with World Jewish Relief and a community Purim party with a drumming workshop. We have used CCE for social, cultural, educational and children's programmes and it has made the world of difference to our community.'



**RABBI FINE, ASSISTANT RABBI**  
**STANMORE & CANONS PARK SYNAGOGUE**

'I am hugely grateful for all that CCE has done for Stanmore. From helping us to put on Young Families Havdalah events to supporting us in bringing over fantastic, international speakers, our shul has gained far more than it could have ever imagined from CCE. It routinely allows us to put on events that are fairly priced, while enabling us to raise the bar in terms of the calibre of events and speakers.'



**RABBI PINK**  
**SOLIHULL & DISTRICT HEBREW CONGREGATION**

'As a minuscule community we have always tried to punch above our weight and provide a full programme of religious, social and educational events, however we were severely hampered by a lack of funding. CCE and its unstinting support and advice has allowed us to organise activities that we would otherwise have only been able to dream of. An example of this is a residential Shabbaton jointly with other small provincial communities for 150 members.'



**IRENE LEEMAN**  
**CHAIR, KENTON UNITED SYNAGOGUE**

'Kenton Synagogue received two CCE grants in the last year and we are very grateful. One of them went towards our communal Seder, which greatly impacted on the community. The grant enabled us to charge a modest fee and all those who would not otherwise have had a seder, came to shul and joined in. Having a communal seder of any size is so important, as no one should be left without one to go to.'



CCE Featured Programme:

# ROSH HASHANA COOKING WORKSHOP

## BRISTOL HEBREW CONGREGATION

By way of appealing to both regular and less frequent shul-goers, Bristol Hebrew Congregation invited Jewish professional chef Denise Phillips to give a culinary workshop that showcased traditional Sephardi recipes for Rosh Hashana. Participants were given an insight into the particular customs observed by Sephardim on the High Holy Days and had the chance to cook and eat their own food. It set a celebratory mood for the impending holidays.

### Do you have any ideas for a Jewish cookery workshop?

'Really fun, a great experience, the right mix of religious education and social interaction with the community.'

Bristol member

'This hands-on cooking event attracted people who would not otherwise attend shul. Denise is an amazing presenter and really educated attendees about Rosh Hashana customs.'

Rabbi Mendy Singer

'It was a great way to bring people together who wouldn't otherwise meet, and an amazing culinary education.'

Bristol member

### THE IMPACT

- Cooking inspiration for Rosh Hashana meals
- Warm relationships formed in a relaxed environment



# CCE PRIORITY PROJECTS

## THE ETZ CHAIM PROJECT

The Etz Chaim Project brings groups of Madrichim to communities for Shabbatot and Chagim.

Etz Chaim groups bring energy and Simcha to communities!

They can assist with Kriyat HaTorah, leading Tefillah, giving Divrei Torah, youth programming, running communal meals and generally helping to create a wonderful ruach (atmosphere).

Contact CCE to arrange an Etz Chaim team of Madrichim to visit your community:

0208 343 6241  
talía@chiefrabbi.org



'The madrichim were fantastic and we had a wonderful Shabbat. When can they come again?'

Ashley Bernstein,  
President of Childwall Synagogue



# FINDING YOUR OTHER HALF WITH COMMUNITY TWINNING

Over the last few years, the communal landscape has been quietly but determinedly shifting towards a more unified and self-sustaining whole, as the Chief Rabbi's *Centre for Community Excellence* (CCE) inspires and funds a twinning programme that fosters intercommunity partnerships across the UK.

Hundreds of miles have been covered as groups come together for meticulously-planned Shabbatonim, festivals and social events where friendships are forged and the unique character of each community is celebrated – all part and parcel of the wider vision for communities that the Chief Rabbi set out upon entering office.

Reflecting on the progress of the Community Twinning initiative, the Chief Rabbi said: "We are seeing the emergence of a robust community network that takes as its point of reference authentic and meaningful Jewish experiences that enable communities to establish a common ground, while strengthening their own sense of identity. It is thrilling to see these partnerships form and I look forward to hearing more about what British Jewry can achieve as it works more closely together."

## Twinning Ideas:

Twinned Shabbaton

Festival celebrations

Community anniversary event

Joint youth programming

Educational activities

Concert of Jewish music

Group day trip

Jewish heritage trip abroad

Joint Chesed project



# "INVESTING IN REBBETZENS

HAS CARVED OUT A DEDICATED AND NURTURING SPACE FOR THE INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN LEADING OUR COMMUNITIES."

— Valerie Mirvis



It is three years since the launch of the *Investing in Rebbetzens* programme, which provides female leaders with empowering experiences and community leadership skills that have equipped them to better fulfil their roles and given them access to high-level Torah scholars and academics.

Led by Valerie Mirvis, who spearheads the programme, the series of seminars and events has emphasised peer-to-peer learning, with rebbetzens themselves presenting on a range of issues.

Seminar days have provided welcome space for networking, while trips abroad have allowed for constructive relationships to be consolidated in an inspiring, immersive and education-focused environment.

## 2018 HIGHLIGHTS

### JANUARY SEMINAR

Rebbetzens attended a workshop on how to assist divorcing couples, heard from Rebbetzen Rina Shindler on the importance of setting boundaries and learnt about problem-solving techniques with Valerie.

### TRIP TO VIENNA

Rebbetzens returned to their communities feeling inspired and valued following a two-day study and leadership trip to Vienna, accompanied by renowned educator Yael Leibowitz and Jewish Historian Rabbi Aubrey Hersh.



## CCE 2018 EVENTS & TRIPS AT A GLANCE

'I feel sure that every single rabbi came back with a real sense of chizuk and deepened knowledge, understanding, appreciation of and connection to our roots in Ashkenaz.'

— Rabbi Ginsbury

### WINTER - CHEVRA KADISHA SEMINAR

Over 120 members of regional Chevrot Kadisha gathered in Manchester for an unprecedented seminar dedicated to providing practical training and guidance on performing Taharat. Separate demonstrations for male and female volunteers formed the core of the programme, which also recapped on halachic requirements for safeguarding the deceased, and provided insight into coronial procedure and the importance of scanning for Jewish communities.

### SPRING - REGIONAL COMMUNITY LEADERS CONFERENCE

Embracing innovation was a key theme at the third Regional Community Leaders Conference, which took place at UHC Leeds with 19 communities represented. The day served as an open forum for delegates to exchange ideas and hear from senior leadership figures including the Chief Rabbi and the Chief Executive of the Jewish Leadership Council, Simon Johnson. Seven delegates gave short presentations on innovative projects taking place in their communities.

### SPRING - THE CHIEF RABBI'S TRIP

The Chief Rabbi led the first ever two-day study trip for 41 UK Rabbis, who accompanied him through historic centres of Jewish life in France and Germany. The group visited sites in Worms, Frankfurt and Strasbourg where renowned Rabbis lived, learned and taught, and also met with current community leaders including Chief Rabbi Harold Weill of Strasbourg and his senior Rabbanim. Rabbis visited the graves and former communities of such legendary scholars as the Chavot Yair, the Maharam m'Rotenberg and Rav Natan Adler.





Do you have other ideas?  
We love ideas!  
Please get in touch:  
talia@chiefrabbi.org  
0208 343 6241  
[www.chiefrabbi.org/cce](http://www.chiefrabbi.org/cce)



Office of The

