



## ***Tikvah Chadasha***

Tikvah Chadasha (a.k.a Shenfield & Brentwood Synagogue), began as a small satellite group of Bet Tikvah in Newbury Park. Key members of the community had moved out to Brentwood in Essex and realised that there was something missing; a Jewish community! We began with the odd service and social function, but after three years, Janice and Louis, along with Natasha, decided to make the brave decision to 'go it alone'. More people were attending for Shabbat services and there was a growing demand for a cheder (Sunday school). Our first members joined in October 2009.

It is still overwhelming when we take a moment to think about what we have achieved so far and what the future may hold for us.

We are a Reform Synagogue and are members of Reform Judaism. We do perhaps lean towards a more traditional approach to services. Around half of our service is conducted in English. This could be a little more or less service depending on who is leading the service. Most Shabbat services are Rabbi led, Friday evenings are always lay led.

Our initial intention is to provide a base for likeminded people to worship together in a setting whereby all are made to feel welcome. Indeed, we pride ourselves on the warm welcome that visitors and prospective members assure us is felt from the moment they enter our doors.

We value sincere worship and inspiring educational opportunities for adults and children. We encourage new members who are Jewish or in mixed faith relationships to come and meet likeminded individuals for fun and prayers on an ongoing basis. Men and women sit together and, with that in mind, we consider ourselves a non-orthodox community. However, the traditions of Judaism are strictly adhered to.

We are blessed with a wonderfully warm congregation, of all ages and backgrounds. For us, one of the most important things is that all who walk through our doors feel welcome. Many of our families are of mixed faith, and may not have felt comfortable elsewhere. However, all of our congregation are encouraged to join in at whatever level they wish. In keeping with our ethos, we have a non-Jewish trustee who a joint member with his Jewish wife. We also have many non-Jewish spouses who attend regularly and are actively encouraged to participate in services, reading from the siddur alongside family and friends. The sense of community spirit is very strong, resulting in a thriving cheder and very busy services.

When we began, we held services in the conservatory of Janice & Louis. We officially outgrew the conservatory (which only held about 32 people) and in June 2011 moved our Shabbat Services to a local school where the Head teacher kindly found a place to store our Small Ark housing 2 Sifri Torah. In June 2014 we once again moved our Shabbat services, this time to a very

nice hall in Brentwood. We were most grateful to the school, but it was time to move on. Again, we were fortunate in that our small Ark & reading desk is stored for us. We felt the move was a good one as the new hall can generally accommodate us for our festival services, not possible during term time at the school. The conservatory is still used on a Friday evening and our larger Ark housing our three Sifri Torah has its permanent home there.

The Cheder is an integral part of Tikvah Chadasha. We open our doors to all children. Children are taught Hebrew, Jewish Studies and partake in various fun activities, cooking and projects. Our older children have built a replica of Anne Frank's house.

We have regular conversion classes and are always willing to speak to anyone who expresses a genuine desire to convert to Judaism. Indeed, in our short life, we have thus far had no less than 9 people convert to Judaism with us. Whilst it is often assumed people convert due to marriage to a Jewish spouse, and indeed sometimes this is the case. In our experience, half of our proselytes have been those who have no prior links to Judaism. They simply have a strong belief in the principles of Judaism and most have gone on to become very active, strong supporters of the community.

Tikvah Chadasha provides an outreach service, visiting schools and local places of worship. The format of these visits varies greatly, including formal talks and more hands-on workshops for adults and children alike. We believe that this is an important part of services to the wider community and someone is usually available to travel practically anywhere in Essex, as long as we are given fair warning. It certainly keeps us busy, as does all of our Council work.

Two members of our community, Louis and Natasha, are the Jewish Chaplin's for Basildon Hospital. Perhaps not the most pleasant of tasks, however, one that is sadly necessary and of great importance to the relatives of loved ones who, whilst Jewish, have no Synagogue affiliation.

We also link up with others through our website [www.tikvahchadasha.com](http://www.tikvahchadasha.com) and via Facebook and twitter. The website keeps people updated with our diary of events, as well as providing useful information.

Our members are encouraged to share ideas and articles of interest are included in our monthly e-newsletter. Our Editors are always happy to receive contributions to this.

We have in place a Beni Mitzvah contract and a Certificate of Religious Practice (CRP) that can be found under the heading [CONTRACTS](#) on this web site.

Our fee structure is designed to help our younger members regardless of single or family status. Our fee structure as well as information about burial can be found under Membership / Burial section on this site. You can also contact us on 01277-888610 or 07526 989875.

For more information please explore our website, or for specific questions please use the "Contact Us" section.

Tikvah Chadasha, Charity Number 1145743

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**Natasha**

Community Leader / Rites & Practices