**Brentwood Reform / Tikvah Chadasha Council**

*Natasha – Community Leader / Rites & Practices*

Welcome to the website of Tikvah Chadasha a.k.a. Bentwood Reform Synagogue /Shenfield & Brentwood Synagogue. I had the honour of being the first Chair of Tikvah Chadasha, a role that has since passed, to Amanda, then Karen onto Geoff & to our current Chair Judith I am also the community’s lay leader, responsible for rites and practices.

I’d like to tell you a little bit about myself. I have been married to James for over twenty-seven years and we have been blessed with three lovely children and one adorable grand child. Our eldest, Alice, served as the Shul’s Youth representative for some time but gave the role up when she embarked on her B.S.C which she finished in May 2022. I am a qualified primary school teacher, have a MA in children’s literature and am currently studying for my Phd. I was the assistant head at a Newham school for many years.  I now run our independent children’s bookshop and tuition centre, The Chicken & Frog (kosher chicken of course) in Brentwood. We have an after school tuition centre based at the shop, these days my teaching is in the form of tuition at the centre. All in all, I’m pretty busy most of the time!

Our Hebrew name of Tikvah Chadasha (New Hope) is perfect, as my hope is that it will continue to be a place for all Jewish people and their families (Jewish or not) to come together and celebrate our cultural heritage.

***Geoff – Photographer and Security***

Hello everyone, my name is Geoff, I am retired living with my wife Judith. We have two children & 6 grand children. We were founder members of Bet Tikvah synagogue in Barkingside & moved to Brentwood Reform /Tikvah Chadasha as founder members 2009.

When I initially joined the council, my idea featured on this site as to take a back seat, simply make up the numbers and continue with the role I had fallen into as “Official Shul photographer”. However, that soon disappeared when I became Chair in 2019.

I think most, of the photographs featured on this site were taken by me. The Shul has an extensive collection of photo’s taken during our existence. I confess, it is nice to look back sometimes and track the progress, particularly of the children as they have grown. Many from babies / little ones, to teenagers and young adults. A few are now at University. The time has certainly flown by.

My hobbies are anything to do with technology & photography & having walks with my dog Sasha. I help to run a IT clinic & photography group in Canvey island where we live. I have always helped were I could on synagogue services & now am retired am pleased to offer more as a council member.

***Karen – Secretary / PA to Chair***

My name is Karen my current role is that of Secretary, a role recently inherited from Amanda, who did a sterling job for many years. I am also PA to our current Chair, Judith. Married to Andy, we are the parents of triplets, Nathan, Amelia and Isabella who recently turned 18.

We have been members of Brentwood Reform /Tikvah Chadasha almost since its inception, when the triplets were very young. The children attended Cheder whilst Andy and I went to the Sunday adult class.

It feels strange now to look at our (very tall) young teenagers who, when we joined, would only go to the front to help undress / dress the Sefer Torah on Shabbat mornings if Alice, Natasha’s eldest daughter, held their hands. Now teenagers themselves, all three are always willing to help out at Shul.

Although small, this community has a lot to offer, not least being very welcoming. A great mix of people and a nice community to introduce or reintroduce yourself to your Jewish heritage.

***Janice – Treasurer/Membership***

Hi, I am Janice, the Treasurer of our Shul. I am one of the older members of council. Married to Louis, we have two married daughters grandma to three wonderful grandchildren. As finance is the field, I have been in for well over 45 years, I guess this made my role almost inevitable. Since our inception, I believe that our community has becomes a source of inspiration and friendship for all those that comes into contact with it.

As well as treasurer, I also take the roles of membership and administration. This leads to a busy life within a growing community, but one I would not change. In reality, we tend to very much share roles and responsibilities, with all council members as well as often members of the wider community, being prepared to help as and when needed.

I feel fortunate to have been at Brentwood Reform since our inception. As our grandchildren have grown from tots to teens, with 2, no longer teens but fully fledged adults within the community. Louis and I feel blessed to have been part of the Shul’s growth and have made many friends along the way. I feel perhaps our biggest strength is being open and welcoming. Once people have made an initial contact, it is rare for them not to become members, a testament to our warm and welcoming philosophy.

***Amanda – Marriage Secretary***

Hi I’m Amanda, I was one of the founder members of Brentwood Reform. After 3 years as Vice Chair I took over from Natasha as Chair, a role which was then passed to Karen.  My current role on the council is that of Marriage Secretary along with Jennifer, our second Marriage Secretary. I generally support the other Shul’s activities, minute taking when Karen is not available. In reality, our council is very flexible and we will all step in and cover pretty much all roles as and when required.

I am married to Michael and we have 2 almost grown boys, our eldest, Elliot is at University and our youngest, Jake is studying for his A levels. The boy’s became Bar- Mitzvah at the Shul, a wonderful time to remember now as they are young men.

I have worked full time in the financial services industry for over 30 years, 17 of those being based in Brentwood where we live. The fact that there is a Shul with a to attend my area is fantastic, Michael is one of our Trustees and our whole family have always taken, and I hope will continue to take, an active role in Shul life. I very much look forward to being a part of Brentwood Reform’s continuing success.

***Louis – Burial Officer***

I am one of the older members of the council, married to Janice and dad to Natasha, so as you can see, very involved family. My part on council, well much like everyone else, my roles are multiple. That said most of them did revolve around teaching until in 2022 Cheder was passed onto the very capable, Jeniffer and Suzanne, both qualified teachers.

I am the Shul’s Burial Officer. I am also the one who roles the Sefer Torah’s to the correct Parsha’s for Shabbat & festival services. In reality, we all do whatever is required to keep our very friendly community running smoothly.

***Alon – Security***

Of Israeli descent, I have been a member of Tikvah Chadasha along with my wife Jennifer since not long after it’s inception. We were married by Natasha at Tikvah Chadasha. Natasha also blessed our beautiful children Keila and Gidon.

My current role is that of security officer for the community. I was trained by the C.S.T and take the role of security very seriously. I acted as Vice Chair for 3 years, however with work and a growing family, I was unable to commit to the role of Chair at that time. Our current Chair, Geoff, helps out with security and all of our members can be relied upon, particularly over the High Holidays to help out.

Brentwood Reform Synagogue is a warm, welcoming community with something to suit everyone, a great community within which to bring up your children and teach them of their Jewish heritage.

***Judith – Chair, Welfare, Care & Community Support****.*

My name is Judith, happily married to Geoff for over 50 years, we have two children, Ian and Karen and 6 grandchildren. Geoff and I were founder members of Bet Tikvah in Barkingside, transferring to become founder members of Brentwood Reform when they formed in October 2009.

I would say that by nature I am a caring individual, so shortly after joining the council I suggested that it was perhaps time to have care in the community as a designated role as opposed to people ‘mucking in’ as and when the need arose. Although a fairly small community, we not only offer support within the Shul itself, but to the wider community as and when required. Louis has been for many years been the Jewish Chaplin for Basildon Hospital. Until our inception, they really had no one to call on for Jews who, possibly at the end of their lives, with no particular affiliation, required a visit.

At the AGM in July 2022, I had the honour of being nominated and voted in as Chair of the community, a role I took over from my husband Geoff. I will do my best to further the warm reception received by all who come to Brentwood and serve the community as it’s chair.

I also enjoy the welfare role I undertake at Tikvah Chadasha and feel it is an important part of Community life. Not always a sad role, I will always be available to make telephone calls or send cards for births, marriages, and of course death or sickness.

***Hannah – Social Media / Marketing & Youth Representative***

Hi, I am Hannah, most certainly the youngest member of Council, by a fair amount I guess. I can not say that when I first joined Tikvah Chadasha back around 2016 it ever occurred to me that I would end up on council, however here I am.

I speak several languages, including being fluent in Mandarin.  I guess I was kind of ‘volunteered’ for council, rather than actually volunteering.  I attend all services, something I would encourage people to do, they services are always enjoyable and even the sermons are interesting and often thought provoking. If you are considering Shul membership, I would certainly encourage giving Tikvah Chadasha consideration. You will not be disappointed.