

## Presidential Review

Stephen J Cohen - President

**I have the continued honour to be President of this Kehilla as it commences its 30th anniversary year of celebrations.**

There have been numerous references made about the past 'wilderness' of Hale by visiting dignitaries. There are still voices from outside the community who tend to look at us with - let us say - strained curiosity. However I will not dwell here; and let those people be well.

I wish to reflect on the unique character of **our** community. I say '**our**' because I truly believe we are as one family.

The membership reflects all shades of observance without being judgmental. Most of you will have attended the summer Seudot held at the Rabbi and Ruthie's home. Over those 6 weeks we entertained and fed some 700 souls. Not many UK communities could match this.

Our youth minyan regularly attracts 60-80 teenagers - the youth of our congregation; the shabbatonim for our barmitzvah and bat chayil boys and girls are always full; adult education is continuing to grow; we have a mikvah in our grounds and very soon also a keli mikvah; our Nursery and Cheder go from strength to strength.....

### Why?

I believe that the answer is in the beginnings of the community. The founders started with a blank sheet of paper. There was no 'baggage' or politics that afflict so many other congregations. There was only one shule in Hale - and it was to be for everyone.

The congregation evolved and continues to evolve under the guidance of Rabbi Portnoy.

In case you were not aware, Rabbi Portnoy and Ruthie are in their 20th year with us (bli ayin hora). We all feel a special connection to them. On behalf

of you all I wish them a happy Hale anniversary in the coming year and hope and pray that they continue to derive much nachas and joy from their children (which of course includes you!).

Let me once again thank my wife, Gillian, for all her support and hard work - I could not have managed without it.

I also wish to thank my executive and council for all their support and hard work.

We have seen a continued growth in the membership and warmly welcome those who have recently joined us. Sadly some members have been taken from us and I wish their families a long and healthy life free from further sorrow.

Finally Gillian and I, together with Rebecca and Maxim, wish you all a happy and healthy Yom Tov and may the ensuing year be one of continued growth, simcha and above all peace and security for all Israel.

## GESHER NEEDS YOU!

**We are working on future editions and would love to expand our team of eager editors and advertising assistants.**

**If you would like to be involved, we would love to have you join us.**

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