



SCOJEC

**Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities**

Annual Report and

UPDATE

2012

Chief Rabbi's Visit to the Scottish Parliament

SCOJEC was delighted to arrange the Chief Rabbi's first visit to the Scottish Parliament for six years. As he did on his previous visits he led the Time for Reflection that opens the parliamentary plenary each week, and also met political and church leaders.

First Minister Alex Salmond spoke about his Government's commitment to tackling religious hatred, and the Chief Rabbi described how faith communities can contribute to promoting community cohesion and integration.

After their meeting the First Minister commented "I am delighted to have met the Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks for the first time today. Our discussions have reflected the fact that Scotland's diversity of cultures and faiths has always been a source of great strength. Each culture and faith brings with it values, ideas and innovations that enrich our arts, science, language, and national life, and Scotland's Jewish community is a valued part of that rich cultural fabric that makes up our nation."

Chief Rabbi said: "For many years, Scottish Jewry has managed to achieve the delicate balance of integration without assimilation, combining strong loyalty to our Jewish faith and way of life with a deep attachment to Scottish culture and identity.

This is something that is deeply understood and appreciated by the First Minister Alex Salmond, and it was a pleasure meeting him."

THE CHIEF RABBI, LORD SACKS, VISITS THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT.

FROM TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: WITH THE FIRST MINISTER ALEX SALMOND, LEAH GRANAT AND EPHRAIM BOROWSKI [ALLAN MILLIGAN PHOTOGRAPHY]; WITH CARDINAL KEITH O'BRIEN; DELIVERING TIME FOR REFLECTION IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT; ADDRESSING MSPs, FAITH AND CIVIC LEADERS; WITH STUDENTS, STUDENT CHAPLAIN GARRY WAYLAND, AND PROF JOHN HALDANE;



Being Jewish in Scotland

"When people think of "community safety" they often think of being protected by the police, but there is more to it. Promoting the strengths and assets of communities can mean people are better connected and feel safer," writes Lorna Ascroft, Deputy Head of the Scottish Government Community Safety Unit. "This project has gathered views, experiences, and insights that can help organisations and agencies, including the Scottish Government and SCoJeC themselves, to improve their services, and the process, has itself also been valuable."

SCoJeC is working with the Scottish Government to discuss the issues raised by all those who participated in the project, with the NHS, local authorities, education authorities, employers, faith groups, and others. These include the availability of kosher food in hospitals and schools, education to improve understanding of Judaism, and more effective policies in schools, universities, and workplaces for dealing with name-calling and racist incidents.

To get involved in the next stage of the project, see www.scojec.org/jewishinscotland.html or contact Fiona Frank: fiona@scojec.org or 07779 206 522

"I do count myself incredibly lucky to be Scottish and Jewish. I wouldn't change either if I had to be born again."

Dancing in Dunoon

The first Jewish event in Dunoon for almost 20 years took place in April when we organised a celebration of Jewish music with Glasgow-based Klezmer band, Kasha-Malasha. We weren't expecting a big audience, but when the doors of opened, more than thirty people turned up!



High Court Confirmed that Anti-Israel Attack on Jewish Student was "Racist"

Last September, Paul Donnachie, a student at St Andrews University, was convicted and sentenced to 150 hours community service for "acting in a racially aggravated manner that caused distress or alarm" to a Jewish fellow-student, by jumping on him when was asleep in bed, calling him a "terrorist", and wiping his hand on his genitals and then onto an Israeli flag that had been a present from Chanan's brother.

The Sheriff said he was satisfied that the attack was "motivated by malice and ill-will". The issue was neither antisemitism nor the Israel-Palestine conflict, and because it was motivated by identification with Israel, it was a "racist attack", as defined in law.

Donnachie appealed, and a High Court bench presided over by the Lord Justice Clerk upheld the ruling that an attack on a Jewish student because he had an Israeli flag on his wall was "racially motivated", and could not be justified by his political beliefs.

Welcoming the verdict, Nicola Livingston, chair of the Scottish University Jewish Chaplaincy Board, said, "The Jewish student community will welcome this definitive ruling that abusing a Jewish student for his identification with Israel is criminal and racist. Interest in Israel's legitimate welfare is an integral part of the Jewish identity of the mainstream Jewish community, and the High Court's decision upholds the rights of Jewish students to express that, if they wish, without harassment, intimidation, or racist attack."



First Jewish Event in Inverness for 50 Years

SCoJeC took three award-winning writers to Inverness in a celebration of Scottish Jewish writing. The event, at Inverness public library, attracted a diverse group of people, some Jewish, and others with Jewish family background, or an interest in the Jewish community.

Klezmer in Kirkcubright

Being Jewish in Scotland came to Dumfriesshire, with a klezmer concert and talk from artist Gordon Cockburn.

"To say that all who attended enjoyed themselves would be an understatement," said one participant. "If I were asked what I miss most about contact with other Jewish people, I would have said our common identity and history, the food, the festivals, the sense of humour. Many of these things, including wonderful music, were present at this event."



"I am a community of one - SCoJeC is my community"

A Musical Supper in Edinburgh

When SCoJeC Vice-Chair, Gillian Raab, offered to host a *Being Jewish in Scotland* dinner for Jewish people who are not affiliated to either of the communities in Edinburgh, we didn't expect a large turnout. We couldn't have been more mistaken! In the end, 17 people squeezed around Gillian's dining room table and were entertained by Edinburgh-based klezmer band Beyond the Pale; another six, who were unable to attend, have asked to be included in future events.



SCoJeC becomes a SCIO

SCoJeC was the first charity in the Jewish Community to be approved by the Scottish Charity Regulator as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), giving it its own legal personality. SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski said, "For a charity that already complies with all the legal requirements, the process of becoming a SCIO is completely painless and requires no significant additional administration. It's a very easy way for charities to protect their office-bearers and encourage more people to get involved."



SCOJEJC's Government Grant Renewed

We have been awarded Scottish Government funding for the next three years for our "Empowering and Connecting Communities" project.

The grant will enable SCOJEJC to continue to produce MEMO, a weekly digest of information for ethnic minority communities, which is circulated to more than 2500 people, who then cascade it to their colleagues. It also receives around 3000 hits a month on the SCOJEJC website.

The second strand of the grant is for SCOJEJC's own outreach work to support the smaller Jewish communities and isolated individuals outwith them, as well as to provide information to Government, public authorities, faith groups, the media, and others, about Judaism, the Jewish Community, and its concerns.

SCOJEJC Director Ephraim Borowski said: "We are delighted to have earned the trust of the Scottish Government by consistently fulfilling our commitment to deliver high quality work both within and on behalf of the Jewish Community."



New Grant to Encourage Volunteering

SCOJEJC has been awarded £10 000 by the Voluntary Action Fund to implement some of the findings of the Being Jewish in Scotland project. We found that many isolated older Jewish people around Scotland live far from their children and grandchildren, and our new project aims to link them using communication technology.

Would you like to take part in this project? We want to hear from:

- ▲ older people who want to learn how to use computers to keep in touch
- ▲ people who want to improve their skills to help others get on-line
- ▲ IT-savvy young people and students

We will provide training, travel, and equipment. If you'd like to get involved, contact fiona@scojec.org or 0777-920 652



TOP TO BOTTOM:
HILARY RIFKIND
GILLIAN RAAB
SHARON LEVY
NICOLA LIVINGSTON
NEIL LIVINGSTON

AGM in brief

SCOJEJC's AGM in June elected Hilary Rifkind (Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation) as Chair, and Gillian Raab (Sukkat Shalom) as Vice-Chair. Nicola Livingston (Chaplaincy) continues as Hon Secretary and Neil Livingstone (coopted) as Hon Treasurer. Sharon Levy (Dundee) becomes representative of small communities.

The AGM heard that in 2011, SCOJEJC had a total turnover of £86 483, generating a small surplus of £4 603. There was an adequate reserve (£28 888) in general funds, excluding restricted funds such as for *Being Jewish in Scotland*. In addition to the renewal of our Scottish Government Equality Funding (see above), the meeting welcomed commitments from both the Board of Deputies and BEMIS. Speaking at the AGM, Jonathan Arkush, Vice-President of the Board, praised SCOJEJC for "achieving so much with such limited resources".