



# THE JEWISH MANIFESTO FOR SCOTLAND

# INTRODUCTION

The next few years will be critical for all of Scotland's communities as the country faces major constitutional, social, economic and environmental questions. This Manifesto has been published to inform the Scottish Government and existing and prospective members of the Scottish Parliament about the interests and concerns of the Jewish community of Scotland.

There are Jewish people in every local authority area in Scotland, with substantial communities in the Glasgow area, and in Edinburgh and the Lothians. There are also small but vibrant clusters in Tayside and Fife, and around Aberdeen. It should be noted that there are significant numbers of Jewish individuals throughout the whole of Scotland.

The Jewish community prides itself on its representative and democratic structures, and is organised on a local, Scotland-wide and UK-wide basis.

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is the democratic representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It speaks on behalf of the Jewish community of Scotland on matters devolved to the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government, as well as providing a support network to smaller communities and isolated Jewish individuals and families.

The Glasgow Jewish Representative Council is the democratic umbrella body of the largest Jewish community in Scotland, located in Glasgow and East Renfrewshire.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is the cross-communal and democratic representative body of the wider UK Jewish community, made up of 200 synagogues and organisations from Scotland and across the UK's family of nations. The Board of Deputies is the UK-wide voice of the Jewish community to politicians, the media, civil society and different faith communities.

The Jewish Leadership Council is an umbrella body which brings together the major British Jewish charities, including synagogues, care organisations, education charities,

Although there is no single 'Jewish view' on many political issues, there is a great deal of unanimity on issues that directly affect the community, and throughout this document, we have sought to represent as much of that consensus as possible.

# THE TEN COMMITMENTS

**WE HAVE SUMMARISED OUR COMMUNITY'S KEY CONCERNS INTO TEN COMMITMENTS. PLEASE SHARE YOUR SUPPORT FOR THESE ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITH THE HASHTAG #TENCOMMITMENTS**

**@SCOJEC  
@GJRCOUNCIL  
@BOARDOFDEPUTIES  
@JLC\_UK**

## WE ASK POLICYMAKERS TO:

1

**Promote and enhance community safety, by working closely with minority communities to oppose all forms of prejudice, hatred and discrimination; supporting initiatives that foster resilience; and funding appropriate security measures.**

2

**Combat antisemitism in all its forms, wherever it appears. Adopt, promote and implement the full International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism.**

3

**Promote good relations, understanding and cooperation between all of Scotland's communities, and support interfaith and inter-communal activities and initiatives that promote working together to achieve community cohesion.**

4

**Support efforts to remember, educate on, and understand the Holocaust, to confront those who seek to deny or downplay it, and to strive to prevent any further genocide.**

5

**Promote initiatives that unite communities; act responsibly when making statements about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; oppose boycotts and support a two-state solution that affirms Israel's right to peace and security alongside a viable Palestinian state.**

6

**Promote respect for religious observance, including Kosher and Halal meat, religious clothing, circumcision, and flexible working to accommodate Shabbat and holy day observance.**

7

**Ensure that all public services are fully equipped to provide appropriate support for people of different backgrounds, including the provision of religiously and culturally specific services, protect schools of religious character or ethos, and support heritage and cultural institutions.**

8

**Recognise that not all communities equate to geographical neighbourhoods, and that localism can therefore discriminate against minority communities; and promote measures that foster support for communities through a combination of national and local networks and initiatives.**

9

**Assist young people to appreciate the diversity of Scottish society through accurate, accessible, and age-appropriate materials about diverse faiths and cultures and to enable them to express their identity in their own terms and to understand and report discrimination.**

10

**Support and include faith communities in relation to welcoming refugees, addressing poverty and other social ills, tackling climate change and ensuring a strong legacy following the Glasgow-hosted COP26.**

## **1. PROMOTE AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY SAFETY, BY WORKING CLOSELY WITH MINORITY COMMUNITIES TO OPPOSE ALL FORMS OF PREJUDICE, HATRED AND DISCRIMINATION; SUPPORTING INITIATIVES THAT FOSTER RESILIENCE; AND FUNDING APPROPRIATE SECURITY MEASURES.**

- We are grateful for the support that the Scottish government has demonstrated in ensuring the safety of places of worship, which continue to come under threat.
- It is crucial that this work is enhanced to protect minority communities in Scotland, and that, where appropriate, government and its agencies partner with third-party reporting organisations such as, in the case of the Jewish community, the Community Security Trust (CST).

## **2. COMBAT ANTISEMITISM IN ALL ITS FORMS, WHEREVER IT APPEARS. ADOPT, PROMOTE AND IMPLEMENT THE FULL INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM.**

- Hate crime and hate incidents have been consistently on the rise in recent years, and Scotland is no exception. Between 2016 and 2020, the number of antisemitic incidents recorded by the CST in Scotland doubled and is now the highest it has ever been.
- We ask Scottish politicians to stand with us in solidarity with those communities that face hatred, including the anti-Muslim hatred, anti-black racism, and sectarianism that persist in our society.
- Much of this is attributable to an increase in online hatred. We look to governments to enact and implement legislation to tackle the challenge of online harms.
- We call on the Scottish Government to bear down on hatred and prejudice through robust and enforceable laws. The new Hate Crime Bill must be fully implemented and kept under review.
- We are grateful to the Scottish Government and the political parties who have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition on antisemitism, as this helps identify and tackle anti-Jewish racism. We urge parties to continue to promote and implement it with local authorities, educational institutions, and other key parts of society.

## **3. PROMOTE GOOD RELATIONS, UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL OF SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITIES, AND SUPPORT INTERFAITH AND INTER-COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE COMMUNITY COHESION.**

- The Jewish community is committed to positive and authentic engagement with people from all of Scotland's diverse communities, of all faiths and none, through its participation in bodies that promote cooperation and mutual support such as Interfaith Scotland and BEMIS. The support of the Scottish Government is crucial to ensuring the ability of such bodies to promote good community relations.

## **4. SUPPORT EFFORTS TO REMEMBER, EDUCATE ON, AND UNDERSTAND THE HOLOCAUST, TO CONFRONT THOSE WHO SEEK TO DENY OR DOWNPLAY IT, AND TO STRIVE TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER GENOCIDE.**

- The uniqueness of the state-sponsored industrial scale of the Holocaust should be recognised, and the use of language that belittles it – and not only Holocaust denial – should be recognised as a form of antisemitism.
- With each passing year fewer Holocaust survivors are left to describe their first-hand experiences. It is therefore important to educate current and future generations by recording their testimonies and preserving documents and artefacts that illustrate the horrors perpetrated against Jews, Romani people, LGBT+ people, disabled people, and all the other victims of Nazi persecution. Mobilising the general public against genocide now and in the future is a critical bulwark against such atrocities. But this is only possible if the lessons of the Holocaust are widely known and understood.
- We are grateful to the Scottish Government for their support of the Lessons from Auschwitz programme. We ask that funding continues for a Scottish regional outreach worker for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

## **5. PROMOTE INITIATIVES THAT UNITE COMMUNITIES; ACT RESPONSIBLY WHEN MAKING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT; OPPOSE BOYCOTTS AND SUPPORT A TWO-STATE SOLUTION THAT AFFIRMS ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO PEACE AND SECURITY ALONGSIDE A VIABLE PALESTINIAN STATE.**

- The vast majority of the Jewish community in the Scotland regard Israel as part of their identity as Jews, regardless of their views on the country's politics. The religion and history of Judaism and the Jewish people is inextricably linked to Israel and many Scottish Jews have family living there.
- Events in the Middle East have an inevitable impact on diaspora communities, including Scotland. Every outbreak of violence in the Middle East leads to an increase in antisemitic incidents targeting Jewish individuals and communities here.
- We call on Scottish politicians to recognise the damaging effect that the "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions" (BDS) campaign has on Jewish people and community relations in Scotland. We expect to see constructive engagement between our Scottish political representatives and those of Israel in culture, arts, sports, business, and academia.
- The Jewish community longs for peace between Israelis and their neighbours and overwhelmingly supports a two-state solution, with a secure Israel alongside a viable Palestinian state. Rather than import conflict, we want Scotland to export peace.

## 6. PROMOTE RESPECT FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE, INCLUDING KOSHER AND HALAL MEAT, RELIGIOUS CLOTHING, CIRCUMCISION, AND FLEXIBLE WORKING TO ACCOMMODATE SHABBAT AND HOLY DAY OBSERVANCE.

- In recent years, the human right to freedom of religion and belief has frequently come under attack around Europe from populist movements. We ask political representatives to protect the right of Jews and Muslims to produce Kosher and Halal meat.
- We ask for the protection of the initiation rite of circumcision of boys at eight days old, when conducted by a suitably trained practitioner.
- The default position of society should be that any expression of faith – such as clothing or holy day observance – should be accommodated wherever possible.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that many workplaces are able to adopt flexible working arrangements. This should be encouraged to accommodate cultural and religious practices to enable minority workers to participate fully in the workforce.

## 7. ENSURE THAT ALL PUBLIC SERVICES ARE FULLY EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF RELIGIOUSLY AND CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SERVICES, PROTECT SCHOOLS OF RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OR ETHOS, AND SUPPORTING HERITAGE AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS.

- For many Jewish patients, the availability of kosher meals in hospital and other health care settings is very important to recovery and well-being.
- Access to a Jewish chaplain can also be extremely important, particularly for Jewish patients approaching the end of life.
- NHS guidance on how to treat people with religious and cultural sensitivity after death, and the sensitivity of staff to these situations, is welcomed – but guidance and training, including regarding organ donation, must be refreshed regularly.
- The community supports the continued public funding of denominational schools and is proud that Scotland's only Jewish school, Calderwood Lodge Primary School, is a pioneering interfaith initiative that shares its site with the Roman Catholic St Clare's Primary School.
- The Scottish Jewish community is grateful for Scottish Government support for its culture and heritage including welfare organisations, an archives centre, synagogues, and a network of support for dispersed and isolated Jewish people.

## 8. RECOGNISE THAT NOT ALL COMMUNITIES EQUATE TO GEOGRAPHICAL NEIGHBOURHOODS, AND THAT LOCALISM CAN THEREFORE DISCRIMINATE AGAINST MINORITY COMMUNITIES; AND PROMOTE MEASURES THAT FOSTER SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES THROUGH A COMBINATION OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL NETWORKS AND INITIATIVES.

- In many parts of the country, principally rural, the total minority population is a fraction of one per cent, and diverse distinct minorities are barely detectable. Additionally, there are many reasons why the census underestimates the size of minorities in a region. "Localism" therefore cannot meet the religious, cultural and educational needs of these communities, which need to be supported through national organisations and networks that connect them with other community members in Scotland.

## 9. ASSIST YOUNG PEOPLE TO APPRECIATE THE DIVERSITY OF SCOTTISH SOCIETY THROUGH ACCURATE, ACCESSIBLE, AND AGE-APPROPRIATE MATERIALS ABOUT DIVERSE FAITHS AND CULTURES; TO ENABLE THEM TO EXPRESS THEIR IDENTITY IN THEIR OWN TERMS AND TO UNDERSTAND AND REPORT DISCRIMINATION.

- Anti-racism education in general is crucial, and should be taught in all schools in order to empower young people to understand their rights, to identify racism and discrimination, and to know how and where to report them.
- Funding is needed to provide good, authoritative, age-appropriate, educational materials (physical and virtual) for use to teach about different faiths, including Judaism. Schools should engage with the relevant communities to ensure the accuracy of what is being taught.
- School time allocated to faith teaching should not be reduced or shared with other topics. It is critical that school pupils understand our shared cultural heritage often rooted in religious traditions. Furthermore, at a time when antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and hatred against other faiths is a concern, it is critical that the lives of faith communities are demystified and normalised.

## 10. SUPPORT AND INCLUDE FAITH COMMUNITIES IN RELATION TO WELCOMING REFUGEES, ADDRESSING POVERTY AND OTHER SOCIAL ILLS, TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENSURING A STRONG LEGACY FOLLOWING THE GLASGOW-HOSTED COP26.

- Faith communities are at the fore of social action and social justice. Faith-based social action should be championed by elected representatives, because it promotes good relations and social cohesion in general.
- The Jewish community supports social action through initiatives, such as Mitzvah Day, which provide unparalleled opportunities for politicians and different faith groups to work together for the common good.
- The Jewish community takes a special interest in the plight of refugees with so many Jewish families having a story in their history of being forced to flee places that they had regarded as their home. We support adequate programmes of support and resettlement and urge politicians to resist language that stigmatises this vulnerable group.
- The COP26 climate change conference in Glasgow in November 2021, sets Scotland at the centre of this global challenge. Faith communities have already indicated their wish to engage, and the Scottish Government should support faith and other civil society groups' efforts to help meet our planet's biggest challenge.

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# CONTACT DETAILS

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## Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)

The democratic representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland, SCoJeC speaks on behalf of the Jewish community of Scotland to Government, national agencies, and others, provides information and assistance about the Jewish religion, culture, and community, and promotes dialogue, good relations, and understanding among community groups, as well as providing a support network for Jewish individuals and families, and assisting communal organisations with various regulatory requirements.

T 0141 638 6411  
E [scojec@scojec.org](mailto:scojec@scojec.org)  
W [www.scojec.org](http://www.scojec.org)  
🐦 @SCOJEC

222 Fenwick Road  
Glasgow  
G46 6UE

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, no. SC029438.

## Glasgow Jewish Representative Council

Formed in 1914, the Rep Council is the democratic umbrella body of the Jewish community in and around Glasgow. It promotes cordial relations between the Jewish community and other civic and religious groups, and provides a forum for religious, welfare, cultural, social, educational, and youth organisations to ensure the wellbeing of the community.

T 0141 577 8200  
E [office@glasgowjewishrepCouncil.org](mailto:office@glasgowjewishrepCouncil.org)  
🐦 @GJRCouncil  
W [www.jewishglasgow.org](http://www.jewishglasgow.org)

The Charitable arm of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council is Scottish Charity no. SC016626

Contact information for other local Jewish Communities and communal organisations is available from the Guide to Jewish Facilities in Scotland: <http://www.scojec.org/resources/files/guidebook.pdf>

## The Board of Deputies of British Jews

The cross-communal and democratic representative body of the UK Jewish community. It is the voice of the community to the UK Government and others seeking to understand the UK Jewish community's interests and concerns. Thus the Jewish community of Scotland is therefore represented by SCoJeC with regard to all devolved matters, and by the Board of Deputies on matters reserved to Westminster.

T 020 7543 5400  
E [info@bod.org.uk](mailto:info@bod.org.uk)  
🐦 @BoardofDeputies  
W [www.bod.org.uk](http://www.bod.org.uk)

1 Torriano Mews  
London  
NW5 2RZ

Charitable activities with which The Board of Deputies of British Jews is identified are funded by The Board of Deputies Charitable Foundation (Registered Charity No. 1058107), a company limited by guarantee and registered in England.

## The Jewish Leadership Council

The JLC connects and coordinates the Jewish charitable sector, strengthens and supports leadership across our community, and magnifies and amplifies the collective voice of our member organisations.

T 0207 242 9734  
E [info@thejlc.org](mailto:info@thejlc.org)  
🐦 @JLC\_uk  
W [www.thejlc.org](http://www.thejlc.org)

Shield House  
Harmony Way  
London  
NW4 2BZ