



Looking back to 1999 when SCoJeC was formed to provide a single, elected body that could speak to the new Scottish Parliament on behalf of all the diverse communities and individual Jewish people in Scotland, it seems so much has changed, but yet so much has stayed the same.

Political parties, individual politicians, and civil servants come and go, but the needs of Jewish people to live the life they desire, free from harm, just as their neighbours do, remains the same. To that end, the work that we do in building relationships with local and national politicians, their offices and staff is vital, so that when they move department or even to jobs outwith political life, they remember that SCoJeC is available with properly researched, advice and information that represents the diverse, cross communal views of Jewish people in Scotland. Similarly relationships built with statutory services, Police, Health Boards etc, along with other Faith Communities, enable us ensure that a Jewish point of view is included when required.

The most impactful example is with the Church of Scotland. Following the *Inheritance of Abraham?* report, which was brought before the General Assembly in 2013 and caused so much hurt to the Jewish community, not just in Scotland, but worldwide, it has taken ten years of behind the scenes work to find ways towards healing the deep divisions this caused. The relationships we had built with individual ministers and lay leaders over many years were invaluable. With many thanks to the initiative of Chief Rabbi, Sir Ephraim Mirvis, this has resulted in a ground-breaking [Jewish-Christian Glossary](#), compiled by a group of Orthodox Rabbis and Church of Scotland ministers, that seeks to address the break-down in relations by looking at the understanding of key terms used in both theological and everyday parlance, from Jewish and Christian perspectives. This year, 2023, the General Assembly invited Rabbi Mirvis, to speak and gave him a prolonged standing ovation. The challenge now, as many said at the Assembly, is to build on this new foundation. We have made a start by inviting the previous Moderator and the Principal Clerk to share a Shabbat dinner in our largest synagogue, and we hope shortly to launch a programme of joint discussions of the topics raised in the Glossary.

Most of the time this work is invisible from the outside, but I can assure you that there is a constant stream of calls and emails, every day, which often take time to answer, whilst views are sought or up-to-date information is gathered – and that is on top of the formal responses required to consultations and other surveys etc.

This relationship also works in reverse, and SCoJeC is able to act as conduit for disseminating information from central and local Government, as well as other organisations. This was particularly marked during the pandemic.

A big thank you goes to our staff for carrying out this work so diligently; our voluntary Director, Ephraim Borowski, whose years of experience and willingness to work when he should be relaxing, have enabled us to build and maintain the excellent reputation we have; Kirsty Robson, our External Engagement Manager, whose vast array of contacts – and skill in making new ones – along with her enthusiasm and modern approach, has energised us all; Leah Granat, our Research and Publications Officer, whose memory and attention to detail mean that everything we produce is consistent and fact checked; Lindsey Livingston, our Education Manager, who arrived and settled straight down to the gargantuan task of taking the newly developed Board of Deputies *Jewish Experience* banners and 'putting a kilt' on them to ensure they had the correct Scottish legal, educational, and welfare information as well as appropriate language to appeal to a Scottish audience – and last but no means least, Eloise Bishop, our Support and Development Officer, who as well as taking fabulous photos of all our events and special occasions, is always

there to lend a hand when we need her most. We are very much looking forward to having Demi Franks, our newly appointed Community Engagement and Outreach Manager take up post next month, which will enable us to pick up the large area of work, reaching out to and connecting Jewish people and communities across Scotland, which we have, so far, not been able to resume post pandemic.

Previous to having this excellent team in place, a lot of the tasks involved in keeping things going fell to Ephraim and myself. Just getting the day-to-day things done meant there was little time for development and strategic planning, so my particular thanks go to the whole team, along with the Executive, for supporting me and each other, so that we are in the best place we can be for the future.

In turn, that has freed me to put my energies into the future, and working with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council (GJRC) to develop a new model of providing the services of both our organisations, which will be more streamlined and efficient. A huge thank you goes to Tim Lovat for being bold and taking the initiative. Whilst the exact details and structure will be decided by a Steering Group, the idea of restructuring provision of representing, supporting, and connecting Jewish people in Scotland had been in my mind for a number of years, so I'm pleased that we are now able to take formal steps to make this happen.

The first job of the Steering Group was planned to be the devising of a new, single, fully funded, staff structure, which will enable the new organisation to better meet the needs of Jewish people in Scotland, and importantly, to allow SCoJeC's voluntary Director to finally retire! We had hoped that at these AGM's Tim Lovat and I would have been able to announce that we had secured the funding to support this.

However, unfortunately, after considerable work was done to meet the conditions requested of us by the Board of Deputies (BoD) and the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC), with whom you will be aware we have been in discussion with for more than two years, we have, just this week, been informed by the CEOs of both organisations, that they will not provide ANY funding to Scotland! This is hugely disappointing, given they both claim to support and speak on behalf of all Jewish people in the UK. Sadly, this has been a trend recently with other 'national' Jewish organisations reducing input, or pulling out of Scotland.

If the BoD and JLC wish to continue to raise funds on the basis of working in Scotland as part of the UK, they will need to explain to donors how they intend to do this. It is well recognised by politicians of all parties along with policy makers and decision takers in other organisations, that a Scottish voice is needed to speak about the needs of Scottish people, about matters that affect them in Scotland.

At a time when charitable funding is being stretched it behoves organisations to find ways of streamlining their services and being more efficient. Hence the merger of Giffnock and Newton Mearns shuls, the closer working relationship between Jewish Care Scotland and Cosgrove Care and our own restructure – but, that should also include working in partnership with our counterpart organisations in England (and Europe etc). A partnership implies a two-way relationship, not one where Scottish individuals and organisations are expected to contribute their time and energy and raise funds for work being done in England, but receive no support in return.

This has rather blindsided me and my colleagues, and it is not clear where we go from here. A number of pieces of work and planned developments will need to be paused, and the first job of the Steering Group will now be to determine how we move forward.

Nicola Livingston
Chair
July 2023



Treasurer's Report

AGM July 2022

2022 Accounts

Our 2022 accounts have been reviewed and approved by our new Independent Examiner, Margaret Birse of Tangram Accounting. These are presented under a separate item.

Current Year

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
 Financial Summary for 2023 Updated to: 29/06/2023

	Restricted Funds						Unrestricted Funds			2023 TOTAL
	SG CCD	Hybrid Events	Corra Foundation	Other Funds	Photography Project	Pilgrimage Project	General Funds	Events	Special Reserves	
Opening Balance at 1 January 202	-£3,762.38	-£8,930.16	£7,043.50	£916.13	£6,816.94	£3,575.00	£13,712.00	£0.00	£30,000.00	£49,371.03
INCOME										
Affiliations							£2,464.00			£2,464.00
Scottish Government - CCD	£25,000.00									£25,000.00
General Donations							£0.00	£0.00		£0.00
Clarkston Trust								£2,400.00		£2,400.00
Community Trust							£3,333.33			£3,333.33
Corra Foundation			£0.00							£0.00
CST Funding							£2,000.00			£2,000.00
BEMIS							£0.00			£0.00
Education										£0.00
Hybrid Events		£0.00								£0.00
Miscellaneous							£51.44			£51.44
TOTAL	£25,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7,848.77	£2,400.00	£0.00	£35,248.77
EXPENDITURE										
Charitable										
Staff	£15,636.74	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			£3,902.33			£19,539.07
Sessional Staff	£4,253.50	£0.00	£7,769.71	£0.00			£539.00			£12,562.21
Office & Telephone	£1,034.53	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			£0.00			£1,034.53
Volunteer Expenses	£100.70	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			£0.00			£100.70
Advert, Print & Stationery	£2,388.76	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			£50.00			£2,438.76
Travel	£184.25	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			£0.00			£184.25
Hospitality & Events	£426.50	£0.00	£0.00	£400.00			£0.00			£826.50
Subs, Affiliations & Licences	£50.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			£0.00			£50.00
Professional Fees	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			£0.00			£0.00
Sundry Expenses	£126.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			£0.00			£126.00
Subtotal	£24,200.98	£0.00	£7,769.71	£400.00	£0.00	£0.00	£4,491.33	£0.00	£0.00	£36,862.02
Governance & Admin										
Staff	£1,500.00									£1,500.00
Sessional Staff	£0.00									£0.00
Office & Telephone	£237.00									£237.00
Volunteer Expenses	£0.00									£0.00
Advert, Print & Stationery	£0.00									£0.00
Travel	£25.20									£25.20
Hospitality & Events	£0.00									£0.00
Subs, Affiliations & Licences	£0.00									£0.00
Professional Fees	£0.00									£0.00
Sundry Expenses	£0.00									£0.00
Subtotal	£1,762.20	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,762.20
TOTAL	£25,963.18	£0.00	£7,769.71	£400.00	£0.00	£0.00	£4,491.33	£0.00	£0.00	£38,624.22
Surplus/Deficit to date	-£963.18	£0.00	-£7,769.71	-£400.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3,357.44	£2,400.00	£0.00	-£3,375.45
Closing Balance	-£4,725.56	-£8,930.16	-£726.21	£516.13	£6,816.94	£3,575.00	£21,560.77	£2,400.00	£30,000.00	£45,995.58
Represented by:										
Current Account										£10,995.60
Reserve Account										£35,000.00
Total Funds										£45,995.60

Income

Our Income is largely on track. We have received 50% of the Scottish Government grant with another 25% (£12,500) due in July. SCoJeC and GJRC made a successful combined application to the Glasgow Jewish Community Trust for £30,000 of funding based on the planned reorganisation of communal representation. This is being paid in 3 tranches, and SCoJeC has received £3,333 to date.

I am delighted that we have now received almost £2,500 in contributions from communal bodies. I hope this bodes well for the other communities contributing. We also received grants of £2,000 and £400 from the Netherlee & Clarkston Charitable Trust. The £400 grant was to support a further concert on Arran and was passed on to them.

On the back of the planned reorganisation of communal representation, we also hope to secure funding from the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council. The situation in this regard is reported elsewhere.

Expenditure

Our expenditure is also in line with expectations. We continue to manage our expenditure carefully until the wider financial landscape becomes clearer. The grant from the Netherlee and Clarkston Charitable Trust had been intended for our events programme; however this was curtailed after we parted company with the previous incumbent and was underspent. With the agreement of the Trust we were able to use just under £700 of the grant on the work we undertook in revising the new educational banners we received from the Board of Deputies.

It is likely that expenditure will increase in the 3rd and 4th quarters following the appointment of the new Community Engagement Manager, but equally we also hope to see an increase in income through grants and donations. A further application will be made to the Netherlee and Clarkston Charitable Trust. There will be saving as our Education Officer is leaving and we do not intend to replace her, at least at present.

We are keeping a close eye on our cash flow as we need to give 100 days' notice for withdrawals from our Reserve Account.

Philip Mendelsohn
Treasurer
July 2023



Director's Report

AGM, July 2023

An AGM is always a good opportunity to pause and take stock rather than merely list what's been going on since we last met, and taken together this set of reports show that there's been a lot to take stock of.

There has been little let-up on the external engagement front as public bodies began to return to pre-pandemic levels of activity while virtual meetings with external partners remained the norm. The weekly meetings of faith representatives with the Scottish Government about the effects of Covid has now become a monthly general policy forum, and so a good place to discuss the wide range of issues that might affect us as a community. Current issues include proposals to license funeral directors that could make it impossible for voluntary communal burial societies to function; the practicalities of extending *get* legislation from divorce to the dissolution of civil partnerships; and the continuing campaign for non-invasive port mortems whenever possible. As members know, we were successful in having "Jewish" mentioned as an ethnicity in last year's census; the results, which may not appear for another year, will require close analysis, but what we know is in the previous census 812 people wrote in "Jewish" as their Ethnicity without being asked, of whom 219 (27%) had not identified as Jewish in the Religion question. Sadly antisemitism remains a perennial preoccupation, and Kirsty and I have met with local authorities, MPs, MSPs, university leaders, and other public bodies, as well as our periodic meetings with the CST, Scottish Government, Police Scotland, and Crown Office. When we met the First Minister recently at his request, we spoke very frankly about the effect of the Middle East conflict on people in Scotland, and he was very interested in the significant increase in Jewish students on Scottish campuses and undertook to meet Jewish students to hear about their experiences as his predecessor had done.

There is of course much more to report – after all, we held around 200 meetings in autumn 2022! – so I am personally particularly pleased that for the first time in many years we have a separate External Engagement report from Kirsty Robson, who has increasingly been taking over that portfolio from me. Kirsty is extremely plugged in to the political (capital and small "P") scene in Scotland, and has therefore been mainly responsible for improving our links not just with the Scottish Parliament and Government, but also with local authorities and other public bodies. The pace hasn't been quite as frenetic as it was at the end of 2022 when we held around 175 meetings with external partners, but it remains busy, and I want to place on record my thanks to Kirsty not just for taking the pressure off Nicola and myself, but for increasingly taking the lead herself.

Less in the public eye, Leah of course continues to provide many of our back-room services, from being the general organisational memory, keeping an eye out for, and keeping the rest of us up to date with, developments that might affect Jewish life in Scotland, preparing responses to formal consultations, answering miscellaneous queries ranging from the seriously urgent to the bizarre ("Where's the communal seder on Mull?"), supporting everyone else with her meticulous fact-checking and proof-reading, and so much more. Perhaps most importantly for the Jewish Community in Scotland, but only visible to those who need it, it is Leah liaises with National Registers of Scotland to enable Jewish people wanting to be married by a celebrant from elsewhere are able to do so; Leah who can spend literally a whole day on shuttle

diplomacy with Procurator Fiscal, police, pathologists, medical reviewers, and registrars to ensure that Jewish funerals can take place with minimal delay; and it is Leah who negotiates the labyrinth of immigration legislation to enable foreign workers and volunteers to work in the Scottish Community. Not just SCoJeC as an organisation, but the Jewish Community of Scotland is hugely indebted to her.

For the past year we have also benefitted enormously from the experience and professionalism of Lindsey Livingston as our Education Manager, and we are very sorry to see her go as she returns to full-time teaching. As she reports below, much of her time has been taken up with revising the Board of Deputies “Jewish Living Experience” exhibition materials to make them more appropriate for us in Scottish schools, and devising other support materials to go with them. This has dovetailed nicely with our project funded by Sky through the Corra Foundation to produce educational materials to counter antisemitism by demystifying Judaism and the Jewish Community. All these materials are very close to completion and will then be available on our website, and we are very grateful to Danielle Bett, our former Public Affairs Manager, for coming back to us to lead on this.

The pandemic completely changed how we worked, and as we have reported previously, it has been very difficult to negotiate the new hybrid world it left behind, particularly as an organisation seeking to support and connect Jewish people throughout Scotland – hybrid should be a boon by allowing remote and disadvantaged people to join events taking place live in the cities, but only provided that doesn’t discourage the city-dwellers from attending in person; and we need to think too of the added value of people who rarely meet other Jewish people being able to socialise around our traditional bagels and smoked salmon! So I am delighted to report that we have recently appointed a new Community Development Manager to explore these options and take forward our programming. Demi Franks has recently been working in a similar role for the Manchester Jewish Museum, and has previously worked in theatre and community engagement for communal charities, so we very much look forward to her joining us in August.

We are grateful also to those who helped keep the show on the road during and after the pandemic: Kirsty, who was always willing to help with work outside her own remit, Abel Keszler, who helped particularly with events to connect Jewish students with the community, and Eloise Bishop, who has been willing to turn her hand to anything to assist (and won prizes for her photography while doing so!) For my own part, I must also add my thanks to my colleagues on our Executive, particularly Nicola who was once our Public Affairs Officer herself and is still happy to help with attending meetings and drafting documents; Philip who has the unenviable task of trying to balance the books; Hilary who continues to oversee our administration of PVG (“Disclosure”) for communal organisations; and Fiona, Gillian, and Micheline for relieving me of the burden of taking minutes. I am grateful too to them all for their helpful advice on so many matters throughout the year.

If this sounds like a valedictory, that was my intention, as I wanted to welcome our agreement with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council to work together to create a new organisation and structure, within the next year if possible, to take over from both organisations without losing their distinct roles, autonomy, and the brand recognition that opens doors to us both. However just this week our plans have been dealt a significant blow as the JLC and the Board of Deputies have decided that they will not contribute to funding our new structure. I have to declare an interest as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board, albeit not representing SCoJeC, but can reassure you that I have repeatedly pressed the point that only a Scottish organisation, whose policies are made specifically by and for Jewish people in

Scotland, can speak on Scottish matters to other Scottish bodies and society, and not, dare I say, one that thinks we have coroners, decrees nisi, and Ofsted! When we established SCoJeC, the then President of the Board said “The question is not whether we can afford to support SCoJeC; the question is whether we can afford not to”. Given that it is only weeks since the JLC and the Board agreed to fund the employment of a Chief Executive for the London Jewish Forum it is beyond comprehension that bodies who claim to “work for the betterment of the UK Jewish community” do not see the necessity of doing the same to assist with enabling and supporting Scottish organisations to do that work in Scotland.

We will obviously now have to discuss this situation further amongst ourselves, but for now we will continue to represent, connect, and support Jewish people across Scotland, and we can only hope that colleagues inside the M25 will see the need to reconsider.

Ephraim Borowski
July 2023



Representation and External Engagement Report

AGM, July 2023

Since the last AGM, we have continued to increase our external engagement activities very considerably, and have held several hundred meetings with Government, members of the Scottish and UK parliaments, public bodies, and other external organisations.

Political Engagement

We were delighted to host and welcome the new First Minister Humza Yousaf MSP to our office in Giffnock to meet with communal leaders in May. The meeting was well received (read more [here!](#)) and we look forward to our future working relationship.

Our “Being Jewish in Scotland” training sessions for local authority staff and councillors has been well received, and we have worked with:

- East Renfrewshire Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- Inverclyde Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Glasgow City Council (Green Group)

And we have plans to extend this programme to:

- South Lanarkshire Council
- Wider Glasgow City Council

We adapted our ‘Being Jewish in Scotland’ briefing when we met with the SNP Group at Westminster, and we also invited the CST to brief them about antisemitism. The meeting took place immediately before their regular group meeting and was attended by 17 MPs. We also met separately with Margaret Ferrier MP, and later with Alison Thewliss MP and Kirsty Blackman MP off the back of the session.

Following the resignation of Ian Blackford and Kirsten Oswald as SNP Westminster Leader and Deputy, we met with their successors Stephen Flynn MP and Mhairi Black MP at Giffnock Synagogue, and are grateful to Rabbi Rubin for joining us. This was a productive meeting, with interest in collaborating further on work engaging with other communities.

We continue to meet with MSPs, and have held several successful face to face meetings with Scottish Labour Leader Anas Sarwar MSP, Scottish Liberal Democrat Leader Alex Cole Hamilton MSP, and Liam McArthur MSP, Deputy Presiding Officer, as well as Paul O’Kane MSP, Pauline McNeill MSP, and Christina McKelvie MSP.

As a result of our meeting with Anas Sarwar, we hope to move ahead with a presentation to all Scottish Labour MSPs, in addition to their existing training with JLM, to brief them on issues facing the Jewish community in Scotland. Conversations are continuing with the new Labour Equalities Spokesperson, Paul O’Kane MSP.

We continue to attend meetings of Cross-Party Groups on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Building Bridges with Israel, and Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice, the latter of which we were delighted to give a presentation to in the last year.

Engagement with the Scottish Government

The Scottish Government round table with faith communities continues to meet regularly; recent topics have included Mainstreaming Equalities and their proposed new Hate Crime strategy. We were consulted on the Faith and Belief Engagement strategy which aims to “strengthen communication and collaboration between Scottish Government and Scotland’s diverse faith and belief communities”, which includes provision for an annual meeting with relevant Ministers. We continued to attend regular meetings with the Scottish Government, Police Scotland, Crown Office, and the CST which were chaired by the former Equalities Minister, Christina McKelvie MSP, but following the recent reshuffle it is not yet clear how this engagement will develop under the new Equalities Minister Emma Roddick MSP.

Other interactions this year with Scottish Government have included meetings about: equality data, “Promoting Jewish Scotland”, matching Jewish Ukrainians with suitable accommodation, “Safeguarding” (i.e. counter-extremism and the ‘Prevent’ programme), assistance with cost of living for vulnerable people, banning “conversion practices”, the forthcoming COVID-19 Inquiry, vaccine roll-out to minority communities, tackling anti-social behaviour, and establishing a faith community events and festival calendar that can be used by government to guide their comms.

We attend meetings of the SG/NHS Vaccine Inclusion Steering Group and the SG Funeral Directors Licensing Working Group, and as a result of our representations to the latter after consulting communal Burial Societies, the Scottish Government has agreed that small voluntary organisations should be exempt from the requirement under the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act to be registered and licensed. We will need to keep this under review and make engage with the Parliament when the draft Regulations are published.

We have also continued to have frequent dealings with civil servants about various aspects of Family Law, most recently to ensure that the provisions we argued for successfully relating to Jewish divorce are also in place for the dissolution of Civil Partnerships.

Interfaith Engagement

Our relationship with the Church of Scotland has gone from strength to strength since our last AGM. After meeting with the, then new, Principal Clerk of the Church of Scotland at the Service of Reflection for the late Queen, we have met several times to discuss the working relationship between our communities. This included a meeting in Giffnock, a meeting in the Church headquarters, and attendance at a service at Giffnock Newton Mearns Shul at the request of the outgoing Moderator, following which we hosted them at a Friday night dinner. We are grateful to Rev Fiona Smith for her tireless support of our work. In addition to our day to day working relationships, we were pleased to see, and attend, the launch by the Chief Rabbi at the General Assembly of the ground-breaking Jewish-Christian Glossary, compiled by a group of Orthodox Rabbis and Church of Scotland ministers, that looks at the understanding of key terms such as “chosen people”, “covenant”, and “Israel” from Jewish and Christian perspectives, and seeks to address the break-down in relations that resulted from the publication ten years ago of a report entitled *The Inheritance of Abraham?*

We have also held several meetings with faith leaders, including the Catholic Archbishop of Edinburgh at the end of last year, with the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and with leading members of the Sunni, Shia, Hindu, and Sikh communities.

Ephraim was recently invited by the Chief Constable to participate in an interfaith group led by Cardinal Vincent Nichols and UN Special Envoy Gordon Brown to discuss law and ethics around human trafficking.

There has been interest from a number of our contacts in repeating our very successful interfaith pilgrimage, but with more of a civic society orientation. We aim to convene a small planning group with other organisations to work on this.

Holocaust Memorial Day and Holocaust Education

We attended a number of public events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, while making the point that HMD is not in any sense a Jewish event, but it is important for the community to show support. Kirsty was also involved in planning national events as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust's Scotland Support Worker.

Outside of HMD, we met with the Anne Frank Trust UK and Anne Frank Scotland to discuss their work in Scotland. Kirsty attended their Annual Lunch on SCoJeC's behalf, and was delighted to accept a role as an Advisory Member of their Communications Committee. Ephraim was asked to join their Advisory Board, which was set up in response to concerns raised by the Jewish community in 2022. It will look at how well the Trust's programmes reflect Jewish experience and address antisemitism.

Hate Crime

We continue to work closely with CST, including regular meetings with members of their Northern team. Kirsty and Nicola met with Dr Dave Rich, Director of Policy, when he was in Glasgow to give a talk about his book 'Everyday Hate'. We are working with them to host a self defence class in August in Giffnock.

Kirsty has met with Hope Not Hate to discuss possible routes for collaborative working in Scotland, especially given some recent activity by "The Highland Division", a far right group.

We continue to work with Police Scotland and welcome their creation of a new department under an Assistant Chief Constable to address issues around equality, diversity, and inclusion within the service. Ephraim continues to chair their National Independent Strategic Advisory Group.

Further Education

Together with University Chaplaincy Scotland we arranged a ground-breaking Jewish Student Summit which was attended by students from 6 Jewish Student Societies, both Chaplaincy couples, the Union of Jewish Students, and the CST. This model was well liked by all in attendance, and we are working with UJCS and UJS to organise a similar event early in the new academic year.

We have met senior management at two universities and remain in close contact with University Chaplaincy Scotland, UJS and Jewish Student Societies about antisemitic incidents of various kinds on campus.

Other External Engagement

Following the death of the Queen, Ephraim was invited to both the Service of Reflection and Thanksgiving in St Giles and the Condolence meeting of the Scottish Parliament. This was followed by a reception which provided an excellent opportunity for networking with representatives of other communities and organisations. Ephraim was also invited to the presentation of the Honours of Scotland to the new King.

Kirsty and Danielle have attended meetings with the Corra Foundation and the other recipients of Sky funding for their project to tackle racism and antisemitism through education. These include Bemis, the Edinburgh Interfaith Association, and YouthLink Scotland.

SCoJeC has been invited to give several talks and presentations, with Ephraim speaking on matters relating to Jewish burial and mourning practices to the annual NHS Education Bereavement Conference; on “Free Speech, Responsible Speech, and Hate Speech” to the Edinburgh International Centre for Spirituality and Peace; and on "Nationality – A Personal Perspective" to the Scottish Enterprise Multicultural Group. His talk to the Law Faculty at Glasgow University on Law and Religion was attended by the then Moderator and representatives of other faith groups. He was also interviewed on AwazFM about the use of scanning for post mortems.

Kirsty Robson
External Engagement Manager
July 2023



Political and other monitoring

- In order to respond promptly and effectively to relevant issues, the community needs to be up-to-date with current affairs. I therefore monitor the activities of the Scottish, UK, Welsh, and Northern Ireland Parliaments and Governments on a daily basis, as well as the European Parliament, United Nations, and a large number of other relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations for information of interest to the Jewish community and circulate relevant information to an extensive mailing list in daily briefing e-mails and by means of *Political Affairs Digest* and *MEMO*.

Consultations

- I consult with all branches of the community in order to prepare consultation responses and participate in online consultative meetings with civil servants on matters of relevance to Jewish people in Scotland. This enables SCoJeC's input to reflect the full spectrum of views across the community, and ensures that these are heard at policy level in the Scottish Parliament and Government, and by other relevant bodies. SCoJeC has received much praise both within and outwith the community for the effective and balanced way in which we have presented very different, even conflicting views about controversial issues that are held by different branches of the community.

Publications

- **Website** (www.scojec.org)
I design and regularly update SCoJeC's very popular website which received well over 2,000,000 hits during 2022-3. Feedback from users is very positive, and we have often been told that they regard the website as an extremely reliable and comprehensive resource. I also regularly update SCoJeC's facebook, twitter, and youtube accounts.
- **Political Affairs Digest** (www.scojec.org/pad.html)
I produce 4-5 issues of *Political Affairs Digest* each week, which enables communal organisations in the Scottish and UK Jewish communities to be aware of and respond to political and policy issues as soon as they arise. *Political Affairs Digest* receives around 20,000 hits each month on the website. Each new issue generally receives 400-500 hits in the first week after publication, and the remainder of the c20,000 are on back issues, which makes it clear that many people find it an accessible archive.
- **MEMO** (www.scojec.org/memo.html)
I also collate information of interest to minority communities more widely in *MEMO*, and this is circulated to a wide range of minority-led organisations in Scotland. This initiative, which is funded by the Scottish Government and promotes equality and good community relations, facilitates public participation by groups that would not otherwise have easy access to information about matters affecting their communities. *MEMO* receives around 9,000 hits each month on the website – around 350 on each new issue in the first week after publication, and the remainder on the accessible archive. *MEMO* is also circulated by Bemis to their extensive mailing list.

Both *Political Affairs Digest* and *MEMO* are also widely read by MSPs, MPs, civil servants, senior figures in the police, and NHS management, etc, who tell us that they find the publications invaluable in alerting them to issues of interest to the Jewish community, and other minority communities, enabling them to respond more quickly and effectively to our needs.

- **Four Corners** (www.scojec.org/4Cs.html)
I contribute to the writing, editing, and design of SCoJeC's quarterly newsletter *Four Corners*.
- **Guide to Jewish Facilities in Scotland** (www.scojec.org/guidebook.html)
I regularly update the *Guide to Jewish Facilities in Scotland*. For the last 22 years (it was first published in 2007) this has consistently been the most popular single item on the SCoJeC website, and is generally downloaded around 15,000 times each month.
- **Other materials**
As required, I assist with the production of briefings and other materials on a range of subjects relevant to the community.

Services to the Community

- In order to avoid delays to burial when COPFS require a post-mortem examination, I liaise with the Procurator Fiscal Service, Registrars, and Pathologists when requested by bereaved families, rabbanim, and the various communal burial societies, to request the use of non-invasive 'view and grant' examinations in place of surgical procedures, and to expedite Medical Review of death certificates and registration procedures. Because our expertise is widely known, we were recently asked by the Muslim community to assist them in liaising with the legal authorities to avoid a delay to burial, and received their grateful thanks when Ephraim and I were successful in facilitating the release of the deceased within 24 hours for burial.
- The proliferation of legislation and statutory regulation makes it increasingly difficult for communal organisations to employ workers from overseas, and I manage SCoJeC's sponsor registration with UK Visas and Immigration, which enables communal organisations to comply with regulations and so employ staff and volunteers from outwith the UK. I also provide information about the immigration system to communal organisations as required.
- I liaise with National Records of Scotland and each of the branches of the Jewish community to facilitate compliance with the relevant regulations when a couple wishes their marriage or civil partnership to be conducted by a Rabbi from outwith Scotland.

Other Activities

- I respond to a large number of miscellaneous enquiries each week from individuals, public bodies, the media, NGOs, hospital and care home chaplains, the police, the prison service, and others. These cover a wide range of topics relating to the Scottish Jewish community including communal welfare and social support services, access to kosher food and other communal facilities, religious activities, matters relating to weddings and funerals, and general information about Judaism.
- I provide information, support, and reassurance to members of the community who have been, or who fear becoming, the victim, of an antisemitic incident.
- I contribute to the drafting of a wide variety of SCoJeC documents including letters to Scottish Government Ministers, public statements, publicity materials, resources, and responses to relevant publications from other organisations.
- I assist with the preparation of funding applications.
- I assist with the preparation of reports to funders, in particular the Scottish Government.
- I provide IT advice and administrative support to SCoJeC staff as required.

Leah Granat
July 2023

Written consultation response

- [Proposed Abortion Services \(Safe Access Zones\) \(Scotland\) Bill \(Scottish Parliament\)](#)

Four Corners

- [July 2022](#)
- [September 2022](#)
- [May 2023](#)

Political Affairs Digest

- [June 2022 to July 2023: 198 issues](#)

MEMO

- [June 2022 to July 2023: 49 issues](#)

Statements and Comment

- [September 2022](#)
[BBC Scotland discussion of the impact Queen Elizabeth II had on faith communities](#)
- [September 2022](#)
[Tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II](#)
https://www.scojec.org/news/2022/22ix_queen_elizabeth_ii/queen_elizabeth_ii.html
- [June 2022](#)
[Congratulations to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee](#)

Events

- [May 2022](#)
[SCoJeC welcomes publication of Jewish-Christian Glossary as fresh start to relations with Church of Scotland](#)
- [December 2022](#)
[SCoJeC Council and Chanukah Candle-Lighting at the Scottish Parliament](#)
- [November 2022](#)
[Inaugural Jewish Student Summit](#)
- [September 2022](#)
[New Funding for *Sharing Jewish Scotland*](#)
- [September 2022](#)
[SCoJeC Director represents Community at Memorial for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II](#)

Politics

- [May 2023](#)
[Meeting with the First Minister Humza Yousaf MSP](#)
- [March 2023](#)
[SCoJeC Chair Nicola Livingston congratulated Humza Yousaf on his election as First Minister](#)
- [March 2023](#)
[Mazal Tov and Ramadan Mubarak! SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski was asked by the JT to comment on the election of Humza Yousaf MSP as First Minister](#)
- [February 2023](#)
[SNP Leadership Meeting with SCoJeC](#)
- [December 2022](#)
[BBC Scotland interview about Lord Mann's proposal that schools teach about modern antisemitism](#)
- [December 2022](#)
[BBC Scotland interview about Lord Mann's report on antisemitism in school](#)
- [November 2022](#)
[SCoJeC briefing for SNP at Westminster](#)
- [September 2022](#)
[Rosh HaShanah Message from the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP](#)
- [August 2022](#)
[Being Jewish in Scotland Briefings for Local Councillors](#)



Educational Activities Report AGM, July 2023

As the academic year draws to a close, it is often a time for reflection on what has transpired during the course of the year. This is certainly the case in the Education Office at the time of writing this report. Much of the work since March has been largely administrative and very much resource creation, rather than outreach or field work. Resources have been created for the Sharing Jewish Scotland project, an accompanying teachers guide to a travelling exhibition about Jewish life is being edited, and attempts have been made to recruit volunteers. A recent meeting with Joe Walker of Education Scotland has led to some interesting discussion about the future of the role of Education at SCoJeC, being a more consultative and authoritative body, rather than providing visiting speakers.

The demand for speakers to visit schools has fallen dramatically since Covid and with volunteer numbers at a very low level, the time has come to think about the future education offering at SCoJeC. There are a number of excellent online learning materials on our website and it important to build on these resources, rather than reinvent the wheel. I see the future of Education at SCoJeC being part of a wider level of community engagement, rather than a separate entity. Offering educational visits and opportunities when requested or as part of community events for young people. Much of the future focus could also be on digital resources for teachers to download for use in their classrooms. This could be in the format of short films, worksheets, presentations etc.

I have welcomed the opportunity to work with the team at SCoJeC during the last few months. As I move on to pastures new in August, I would sincerely like to thank you all for supporting the work of the Education Office. It will be interesting to see how the future of education at SCoJeC evolves in the future and I have been thankful to be a very small part of that journey.

Lindsey Livingston
Education Manager

July 2023



Sharing Jewish Scotland

AGM, July 2023

We are now in the final stage of the CORRA/Sky project, officially titled 'Sharing Jewish Scotland'.

Content

- Most content has now been written, and is in stages of being reviewed and final edits being made.
- We have covered a broad range of topics: Jewish holidays, faith, culture and language as well as more complex issues such as inclusivity, antisemitism or Israel
- We have also created some activities to make the content more engaging for children and young people of different ages, and to encourage educators to engage as these are going to be classroom activities they can use

Branding

The final stage will be branding and rollout. Branding means making sure the resources look:

- Consistent
- Modern
- Clean and easy to understand as a non-Jewish educator or young person

Rollout

Once the content has been created we will approach rollout which will be led by SCoJeC as part of their current political engagement at local and national level.

We are confident that our political parties will support this work – the main challenge being the existing school curriculum. We are expecting this will take time to be used by schools and will start by targeting a smaller number of council and schools, but also inserting into political discussions to help engage with local authorities that have a small number of Jews, and may especially need help in better understanding our community, faith and culture.

Engagement

We have been regularly engaged with our partners in CORRA and other recipients of this funding. This is quite key as we can share challenges and lessons, particularly when it comes to rolling out content into schools and ensuring schools make use of this content.

This has been helpful and in line with SCoJeC's approach to interfaith and working cross communally to work for a Scotland which is more friendly to and better engaged with minority communities.

Danielle Bett
Programme Manager
July 2023