



## **Who We Are**

118 Watling Street, Radlett, Hertfordshire, WD7 7AA

<https://www.radlettreform.org.uk>

Radlett Reform is a vibrant, friendly Reform Jewish community located in leafy, rural Hertfordshire whilst being within an easy commute to central London. Our physical home is in Radlett, with our members living across Hertfordshire and beyond. We are an innovative, progressive community enhancing the religious, educational and social lives of over 850 families.

## **Our Mission**

Our mission is to be a dynamic centre of Reform Judaism in Hertfordshire and beyond – an inclusive, supportive and friendly community that inspires all to lead a fuller Jewish life.

## **Community Goals**

Connecting and re-energising our members to re-engage with their Judaism.

Expanding Our Membership: We want to find new ways of engaging and making Judaism relevant and meaningful to all especially young people, young families, and the unaffiliated.

Improving Our Youth Provision and Educational Programs: In an area where many of our children attend Jewish schools but just as many do not, we recognise the need to offer a diversity of formal and informal youth programming and intergenerational family education. We have recently created the role of Head of Youth and Families and are excited about the opportunities that this affords.

Deepening Our Impact on the Broader Community: Whilst we recognise the good work that Radlett Reform does within the community, we could do more. We need to build on both social action and social justice programming.

## **Our history and demographic**

We were formed as a country-offshoot of one of the largest Reform communities in the UK in 1971. Little did the handful of early pioneers know that just a few decades later, the area around Radlett would grow exponentially Jewishly, with Radlett itself having the highest percentage of a population defining themselves as Jewish for any city, town or village in the UK and Radlett Reform growing to some 850 families. We are living in the frontline for the growth of new Jewish population centres

north of London, an area that stretches far beyond Radlett itself. As such, welcoming new members is an essential part of who we are, including inspiring and retaining those who might otherwise be estranged from Judaism and the Jewish Community.

We recognise that there are many ways to 'do' Jewish, both in and outside the synagogue, and so facilitate and encourage a diverse range of social, cultural, religious, and educational activity, including interfaith and social action. We are inclusive at Radlett Reform. We welcome - in fact encourage - all those who identify with being Jewish and who live in the widest possible local area - Hertfordshire, but stretching to Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire too – to come in and try us out. We want them to find for themselves whether our community is the one they have been looking for, as individuals, couples and families.

Our location has been an important part of our success story. Only a few minutes' walk from our buildings are farms, fields and footpaths and therefore clearly not part of the London rat-race. But we are also near North London by car and only 30 minutes by frequent train from St Pancras and central London. Our location has enabled us to attract those who want to make a new life, yet still be part of a Jewish community, and one that now has Jewish shops, a kosher butcher and Jewish schools (primary and secondary), with a wide variety of social and communal activities. Radlett Reform is in the right place at the right time to take advantage of both demographic change and locational advantage. And as the community grows, the advantages of becoming part of a Jewish community in this area take on a life of their own. It is a virtuous circle.

But the distinctiveness of our demographics does not just rest in the relative size of the population. The bulk of our membership are '30- or 40-somethings'. In recent years, we have additionally welcomed a sizeable number of new older members who have moved synagogue to be near their children and grandchildren. We are thus reversing a historic trend among Anglo-Jewish communities for younger people to remain inactive members of the communities of their parents and grandparents, often even when they have moved away from the area. Because of the attractions of Hertfordshire, our community is seeing a growing number of the parents and grandparents of our younger families coming to join us in worship and community activity. We can be truly proud of our intergenerational membership.

As our community celebrates its 50th anniversary, we are delighted to be the leading Jewish congregation in this exciting new young Jewish frontier.

### **Commitment to Learning**

Radlett Reform is proud to support Jewish learning at all ages to support members' Jewish growth. We have an exceptionally successful and creative religion school led by a Headteacher and a team of dedicated staff. A reputation for learning through fun has led to an unusually high regular attendance rate.

We have a very large and highly successful BMM (Bar/Bat Mitzvah Mechinah) programme with a dedicated BM co-ordinator.

Our older children are encouraged to complete our Hadracha leadership programme and are then eligible to work as madrichimot alongside the teaching staff.

Adult learning includes an accessible, welcoming 'Understanding Judaism' course for those wishing to convert or simply learn more, and a range of regular study and lectures. Members of the community are encouraged to teach as well as to learn and we have lay-led contemporary Jewish history classes and Tanakh classes that are very popular as is the rabbi-led weekly innovative 'Novel Talmud' class.

### **Commitment to Caring**

In addition to the pastoral role undertaken by the clergy, our Community Support Worker offers invaluable support for our members, as well as assessing their diverse needs and signposting to other sources of support. She works alongside a number of volunteers in the community such as our bereavement support group.

### **Commitment to Prayer**

We are passionately Reform Jews and provide a range of service styles to meet different congregants' needs. These have included an innovative range of alternative, exploratory services. It is a core part of who we are that we enable congregational involvement: whilst the clergy take the lead, we have a team of Torah readers, service leaders and sermon givers, of all ages. Our Senior Rabbi, Paul Freedman, edits the UK Reform prayer-books and is regularly called upon by the national movement to create liturgy for specific occasions.



### **Commitment to Music**

Our members highly value music as a form of Jewish spiritual expression. Music is especially valued in worship and at times of celebration. We have a voluntary choir and a good number of talented musicians. Different styles of services may be led using instruments, particularly the guitar.

### **Commitment to Innovation and Change**

We are known as a community that is not afraid to innovate. To sample entirely new and original ways of prayer as an alternative alongside our normal minhag, providing for the needs of different members of the community. Examples have included a walking service, prayer through movies or popular music, or using different prayer-books from around the world or of historical interest.

### **Commitment to our role in the community**

As the largest Jewish congregation in Hertfordshire and one of the largest Reform communities in the UK, we understand and embrace the key role we can play in the wider community. We work closely with local churches and organisations. We collect food for local homeless people and those in need and regularly support local Jewish and non-Jewish charities.

### **Commitment to enabling member participation in services**

We are a community that values and respects the skills, abilities, and talents of both our clergy and our members. The clergy team works at the heart of the community enabling members to fully participate and take the next step on their individual Jewish journey. It is perhaps this encouragement that has led several members of the congregation to continue their studies in training as rabbis.

### **Stability and Team Makeup**

We have been fortunate to have had leadership stability as our senior rabbi, Paul Freedman, has been in post since his ordination some 20 years ago. Two other members of the clergy team have recently moved on to more senior roles. We are delighted to have been joined by newly-ordained rabbi, David-Yehuda Stern, who, together with his wife and children, chose Radlett as their spiritual home a few years ago.

### **What does it mean to be a member of the clergy team at Radlett?**

Our clergy work as a team with complementary skills and areas of interest. All members of the team work across the whole community, sharing their core responsibilities including service leading, pastoral care, life cycle and educational roles, promoting a positive philosophy of Reform Judaism and supporting community activities.

## The Clergy role at Radlett – Person Specification:

### *A competent and adaptable service leader*

Our clergy do not just deliver one style of service at Radlett. We have a range of services to engage and inspire our congregation at all ages.

### *An Inspiring Educator*

We are fortunate to have clergy who can instruct and coach on a broad spectrum of subjects: rabbinical, spiritual, historical, Jewish tradition, and religious practice. However, it is important to us that our clergy are equally comfortable teaching shabbat songs to pre-schoolers as they are guiding adults through the intricacies of our tradition and texts; clergy who can apply and communicate Jewish values to everyday challenges and the world we live in through sermons, group engagement, and simple conversation.

### *An Approachable Friend*

Our clergy are sincere and compassionate people who can greet congregants and their families by name and warmly engage in personal conversation, particularly before and after services and other community events, exemplifying our community's welcoming and open nature, whether celebrating a simcha or empathising in sad times.

### *A Strong Communicator*

It is essential that our clergy have strong communication skills, not just in terms of interesting and meaningful sermons but also as effective and empathetic listeners who can facilitate meaningful dialogues.

### *A Team Player*

In a community of our size, whilst we also expect our clergy to be able to work under their own initiative and with their own projects, it is critical that the clergy work as a team, sharing all aspects of the role and communicating well across the team.

### *A Leader in the Jewish Community and the Wider Community*

Radlett Reform is the 4th largest Reform community in the UK and plays a key role in the local community in Hertfordshire (and beyond). As a result, our clergy need to be comfortable serving in a leadership capacity outside of our synagogue, whether that be at the local Jewish primary school or representing Radlett to the local churches and other interfaith gatherings, or playing an active role in the Assembly of Reform Rabbis and Cantors UK. Our clergy interact with colleagues across the movement, with leaders of other religious communities and actively participate in dialogue.

### *A Connector and Change-Agent*

All communities are finding it challenging to engage members in their increasingly busy and stressful lives. Our clergy team understands the need to connect our members to recreate the local engagement and the sense of belonging to a community within a larger community. A key goal is

to create new models of engagement that will attract not just our own members but also those living a Reform lifestyle but who have not yet joined us.

### *A Role Model*

It is important that the members of our clergy team all share our excitement about being part of the Radlett Reform community and create a positive feeling about being Jewish in Hertfordshire.

### *Safeguarding*

Radlett Reform community is committed to creating an environment where children and vulnerable adults may engage in our activities safely. All staff are required to attend safeguarding training. We draw your attention to our safer recruitment which is attached.

This position involves regulated activity with children, the position is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and that any prior cautions or convictions that would normally be considered 'spent' must be declared in accordance with this.

### **As a Member of Radlett Reform Clergy**

You will be welcomed and embraced. We are a warm and supportive community looking to grow our team with another member for whom such things really matter.

Opportunities for your own growth and development are important to us and as a member of the clergy team you will have an opportunity to develop your skills and interests, including areas of work that you find most stimulating and rewarding. We are sought after for rabbinic students as a training ground.

Your thoughts, opinions, and suggestions will be valued. Your efforts as a creative innovator will be appreciated and integrated into our existing traditions and practices so that we explore the best practices in the Reform Movement. We are eager to advance, improve, and adapt to a changing landscape.

### **Job Specification in Summary**

The position will include:-

- Reaching out to existing and new members, and encouraging engagement
- Leading Bar / Bat mitzvah services (including preparing with the family)
- Conducting some funerals, weddings, shiva prayers and pastoral work
- Some High Holyday and festival service-leading or programming
- Leading/participating in some Shabbat services, events and activities (including for different age groups)
- Delivering sermons in a thought-provoking and relaxed manner
- Using life cycle events, holidays and adult education to deepen people's understanding of how Judaism adds value and meaning to their lives

## Person Profile

We would like to employ a candidate with many of the following attributes and would be asking for examples during the interview process:

- You must be eligible for Membership of the Assembly of Reform Rabbis & Cantors UK
- You are a passionate advocate of Reform Judaism and its values
- You have the ability to lead services confidently in keeping with our minhag
- You are a confident communicator
- You are a team worker with a flexible, friendly and co-operative style
- You have experience of working with and successfully teaching young people
- You will need highly developed interpersonal skills to establish rapport with our members, including B'nei /B'not Mitzvah and their families
- You will need to be personally resilient and self-managing
- You must have reliable organisational skills including the ability to prioritise multiple tasks and work to tight deadlines

## To Apply

Please complete an application form [[click here](#)] and send a covering letter of application to Rabbi Paul Freedman, Senior Rabbi, Radlett Reform Synagogue, 118 Watling Street, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 7AA (or to [rabbipaul@radlettreform.org.uk](mailto:rabbipaul@radlettreform.org.uk)). In your covering letter please explain what you can add to our community and why Radlett Reform Synagogue is the right place for you. Initial informal enquiries are also welcome before and will be treated in confidence. You are also welcome to make informal enquiries directly to Rabbi Paul Freedman.

## Our Recruitment Process

We have a dedicated group who will ensure that prospective candidates are treated with the utmost respect and applications will be kept confidential.

Interviews will be held in the week of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024

Deadline for receipt of applications: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024