

Gateshead Rov is heading for new role in London

The Federation of Synagogues this week announced the appointment of Rav Shraga Feivel Zimmerman as its Rov and Av Beis Din. It follows the announcement of the retirement of Rosh Beis Din Dayan Yisroel Yaakov Lichtenstein. Rav Zimmerman met last Sunday with the Federation's representative council, in addition to its Trustees and some of its *rabbonim*. This followed a meeting last week with the organisation's *dayanim*.

Rav Zimmerman's move to the Federation comes after 11 years as the Rov of Gateshead. A *talmid* of the Mirrer yeshiva, Rav Zimmerman served as a *dayan* for the Kehal Adass Yeshurun *kehilla* in Washington Heights, and later as Rov of Khal Bnei Ashkenaz of Monsey.

Rav Zimmerman's appointment marks the end of an era for the Federation, which Dayan Lichtenstein has served for over three decades. He joined the organisation as Rosh Beis Din in 1988, shortly after its centenary year. Over the past 31 years, he has focused his *dayanus* on improving standards, particularly in *kashrus* and *shechitah*, the *beis din*, and the *chevra kadisha*.

Andrew Cohen, President of the Federation, said: "This appointment marks a major milestone in the renaissance of the Federation as a primary communal organisation in North West London and beyond. Rav Zimmerman



Federation President Andrew Cohen with the Gateshead Rov.

is acknowledged as one of the most influential leaders and *poskim* in this country and he will provide the Federation and the wider London community with a transformed level of Rabbinical authority and leadership. He will also be tasked in driving forward the vision and strategic growth of the Federation and enhancing its rapidly expanding range of valued communal services. This appointment is a recognition and endorsement of the significant achievements of the past five years and we are truly excited at the

future prospects under his leadership and guidance."

Rav Zimmerman commented: "It is an honour to have been appointed as Rov and Av Beis Din of the Federation. *Besiyatoh dishmayoh* I look forward to building upon the achievements of my predecessors and fellow *dayanim*, and to work with them to continue serving *klal Yisroel*."

Rav Zimmerman will take up his post at the Federation over the course of the coming year.

Bidding farewell to a unique kehilla

Nechama Gold

Last Shabbos afternoon after his *Pirkei Avos* shiur, Rav Zimmerman announced to his *kehillah* that he was leaving for London on Sunday, where he would be signing his acceptance of the position as Av Beis Din of the Federation of Synagogues.

The *kehillah* had previously known that Rav Zimmerman was in negotiations with the Federation of Synagogues but nothing was sure until Rav Zimmerman made his announcement.

"The *kehillah's* reaction is one of sadness" says one long-time Gateshead resident. "Over the past eleven years that the Rov and Rebbetzin have been with us, people have grown to like and respect them very much." However, the same person explained that people understand that moving to larger *kehillos* is something that some *rabbonim* do. "It has always been this way in *Klal Yisroel's* history and Rav Zimmerman is fully entitled to take this position."

It seems like the sentiment amongst the *kehillah* members is one of sadness coupled with acceptance, and everyone wishes the Rov well in his new position.

Rav Zimmerman came to Gateshead in 2008, following the *petirah* of

Rav Bezalel Rakow in 2003. He had previously been a Rov in Monsey, NY and a *Dayan* in the *Beis Din* in Washington Heights. Since his arrival in Gateshead the *kehilla* has grown dramatically, with currently six hundred families living there, as well as an incredible seven *yeshivos*, seven *kollelim*, and two seminaries for girls. The *kehilla* has developed incrementally, and the Rov has supported the consolidation and growth of the schools and also encouraged the formation of mini-*kehillos* by way of four new *botei midrash*, each with their own niche, all under the umbrella of the Gateshead *kehilla*.

As the Rov of the town, his approach was always to have an *ayin tovah*, coming to add but not to dominate. His last and greatest achievement is his drive to expand the shul complex, with a wedding hall and a new *mikvah* for the town. With the help of a vastly successful crowdfunding campaign which he spearheaded, £2.4 million was raised for the project and the building work is already underway.

It is expected that the Rov will be moving in November, and he will act as Rov of Gateshead for another four months, giving the *kehilla* some time to find a fitting replacement.

הקמת מצבה

The Hakomas Matzeivaoh for
Mrs Estella Weinberg נ"ה

Mother of יבלחט"א
Paulina and Gedaliah Weinberg

Will take place on
Sunday 7th July at 11am

at the
Enfield Adass Yisroel
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