Rabbanim at the inauguration of Rabbi Reuven Stepsky (3rd R.) as rav of Kehillas Netzach Yisroel, Edgware.

Kehillas Netzach Yisroel Celebrates Inauguration of Rabbi Reuven Stepsky

Kehillas Netzach Yisroel, Edgware, were delighted to celebrate the inauguration of Rabbi Reuven Stepsky on Sunday. The Federation *kehillah* community were honoured by the presence of its Rav and Av Beis Din, Harav Shraga Feivel Zimmerman and Rosh Beis Din Dayan Y.Y. Lichtenstein, as well as Rabbi Stepsky's Rav and mentor of the past 30 years, Rabbi Yaacov Abenson, *Mashgiach Ruchani* of Sunderland Yeshiva, and all of Edgware's local Rabbanim.

The evening, chaired by Federation Trustee, Geoffrey Douek, started with an introduction about the community by the shul chairman, Mr Simon Carr, thanking the *kehillah's* most recent Rav, Rabbi Dovid Roberts, who served for 18 years. He remarked that the community has already formed a close bond with the Stepskys since they took up the position, a function of the care and hospitality they have been shown by the *kehillah's* members. The shul was packed with members, Edgware locals and admirers of the Stepskys from further afield.

Following the recital of *Tehillim*, Rabbi Abenson gave his *divrei brachah*. The *shtar Rabbanus* was read in Hebrew by Dayan Lichtenstein, in English by Rabbi David Lister and presented to Rabbi Stepsky by Stephen Ufland, one of the longest-standing members of the shul.

Harav Zimmerman's address to the *kehillah* and their new Rav focused on the importance of choosing good neighbours and being involved in a vibrant community with a dedicated and foresighted Rav. Rabbi Eliezer Schneebalg followed with his *divrei brachah* and *mishebeirach* and Dayan Elimelech Vanzetta recited a *mishebeirach* for the *kehillah*.

To everyone's delight, Mr Joe Stepsky, the Rav's father, was able to come from Israel especially for the occasion, and in a poignant moment, prior to Rabbi Stepsky's address, his father *bentched* him in front of the gathering. Jonny Phillips then presented him with a new *tallis*, on which he made *birchas shehechiyanu*, encompassing the special occasion as well.

The Rav began by thanking his *Rebbeim*, family, friends and the community for all the support he has received. A special thank you went to Rebbetzin Stepsky for all the support she has given him, without which he would not have been able to serve the *klal* and together with her he looks forward to serving Kehillas Netzach Yisroel.

The ambiance of the evening was enhanced by interludes of light music provided by Danny Shine of the Neshama Band.

The inauguration concluded with a celebratory *l'chaim* prepared by Mrs Adele Aremband. The smooth running of the event was due to the efforts of Mrs Nicole Levitus, Mr Jonny Phillips and Mrs Francine Wunsh.

Bahrain's Only Jewish Parliamentarian Speaks at Synagogue

A packed audience at Lauderdale Road Synagogue last week heard Nancy Khedouri, the only Jewish member of Bahrain's Legislative Assembly speak about what it means to be a Jew in Bahrain.

At the landmark event, organised by the Board of Deputies, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain and Lauderdale Road Synagogue, Ms Khedouri said, "The Jewish community of Bahrain is able to live and worship freely. Bahrain is a model in the region and wider world for peaceful coexistence and mutual respect."

She added that she was equally proud of her Jewish and Bahraini heritage.

Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl spoke of her happiness at being a part of the first ever event organised in cooperation with an Arab embassy. She said, "In what seems like an increasingly polarised and divided world it is the relationships between communities and peoples, coming together in good faith, which hold the key for a better tomorrow."

After the event a spokesperson from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, said, "Religious tolerance and coexistence has a long history in Bahrain and it's something that we have taken for granted. Given what is happening in the region, tonight was a historic and wonderful opportunity to honour that heritage. Bahrain is proud of its Jewish population and the contribution it has made. H.E. Nancy Khedouri is an amazing example of this. We look forward to deepening links with the UK Jewish community."

Rabbi Israel Elia of Lauderdale Synagogue also spoke at the event.

New Rabbi and Rebbetzin for Borehamwood and Elstree US

Borehamwood and Elstree United Synagogue have announced the appointment of Rabbi Sam and Rebbetzin Emma Taylor as their new community Rabbi and Rebbetzin.

Rabbi Sam and Rebbetzin Emma will work across the community and will lead the Yavneh community in the south side of Borehamwood. In addition, Rebbetzin Taylor will take on the role of community educator on a part-time basis, developing the community's women's education initiatives.

Rabbi Taylor currently serves as the community Rabbi at the Western Marble Arch Synagogue where he oversees programming, including publications, outreach and interfaith work. In addition to his role at Western Marble Arch, Rabbi Taylor is the Young US Rabbi at the United Synagogue and the Jewish chaplain at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.

Rebbetzin Taylor is the community Rebbetzin at the Western Marble Arch Synagogue and teaches history at Hasmonean High School, which she will continue to do part time.

Rabbi Alex Chapper, senior Rabbi of Borehamwood and Elstree United Synagogue, said, "Eva and I are delighted at the appointment of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Taylor. We are confident they will be a huge asset to the rabbinic team. We wish them much *hatzlachah* in their new role."

Simon Mitchell, shul chair, said, "As leading educators and experts in communal programming they have demonstrated warmth, sincerity, leadership, creativity and empathy, which will serve our community well. Combining their talents with those of Rabbi Alex and Eva Chapper and Rabbi Finn will realise our vision of a world-class rabbinic team to lead our amazing community."