



# Alei Tzion

## Road Map 2018-2020

### A. WHO ARE WE?

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Alan Weider, Alastair Goldrein, Ari Stern, Ben Freedman, Benji Silverblatt, Brett Bernstein, Charles Braunstein, Dan Keene, Eliot Kaye, Gideon Glass, Jake Pater, Jemma Jacobs, Miriam Seitler, Nathan Woodward, Rachel Baigel, Samantha Aarons, Shoshi Silverblatt, Simon Klinger, Yehudit Bauernfreund and [further names to follow].

These individuals represent a broad cross-section of the community and have all confirmed their agreement with, and commitment towards, implementing the goals set out in this Roadmap.

### B. WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

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#### 1. MAKE ALEI TZION THE KEHILLA OF CHOICE FOR MODERN ORTHODOX FAMILIES AND SINGLES IN NW LONDON

- a. People returning from yeshivot or seminaries (particularly, but not exclusively, hesder/modern orthodox institutions), BA Bogrim, modern orthodox singles, married couples and families should look no further than Alei Tzion as the natural fit for their future.
- b. Generally, the shul needs to be re-energised and considerably busier. Everyone wants to be a member of a shul which is popular with others.
- c. People are drawn to a shul that explicitly embodies their ideals.

#### 2. MAKE ALEI TZION THE CENTRE OF GRAVITY FOR ALL THINGS MODERN ORTHODOX AND ZIONIST IN NW LONDON

- a. If something Zionist and/or Modern Orthodox is happening in London, Alei Tzion should be the first shul that people have in mind to be involved.

#### 3. TO FOCUS ON OUR UNIQUE SELLING POINTS IN A CROWDED MARKET, INCLUDING:

- a. Commitment to Torah and high quality learning.
  - b. Commitment to genuinely modern orthodox ideals.
  - c. Commitment to Zionism.
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- d. A genuine community offering a comprehensive range of community services, from cradle to grave.
- e. A fun, welcoming and warm community to be a part of.
- f. A commitment to delivering chessed in the community.

#### 4. TO BE AMBITIOUS AND PUSH BOUNDARIES IN THE PURSUIT OF OUR IDEALS

- a. For too long, Alei Tzion has operated in a "comfort zone". We need to work together as a team to rebuild Alei Tzion from the bottom up, proud of who we are, true to halacha but unafraid of intellectual honesty and constantly challenging ourselves to grow.
- b. We need to judge everything we do by these principles, sensitively scrutinising the cost/benefit analysis of each decision.

#### 5. TO LEAD COLLABORATIVELY AND EMPOWERING AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE

- a. We want to reinstate a model of collaborative leadership, where decisions are reached by consensus by as many levels of the community as possible – we want to make every member of Alei Tzion feel like they have a real stake in the community of which they must feel a key part.

### C. HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT?

#### 1. MANY MANY MORE PEOPLE NEED A STAKE IN THE RUNNING AND FUTURE OF ALEI TZION (ALSO SEE BELOW RE LEADERSHIP)

- a. Far too much control has been centralised and insufficient people have been enfranchised in the Kehilla. A change to this paradigm is of paramount important.
- b. The executive branch / board of management of the shul will be replaced by one Leadership Team, meeting on a monthly basis but working with a plethora of sub-committees in which every member of the community will be encouraged to participate.
- c. We want to form committees to run education, membership, events, youth initiatives, fundraising.
- d. The Leadership Team and the Rav will be actively involved in approaching people and asking them to undertake roles in the Kehilla: we recognise that the community is comprised of an exceptionally talented and dynamic membership who are individually able to contribute hugely to the success of the community. We want to harness these talents and in doing so give them a stakeholding in the future of Alei Tzion.

- e. Each member of the Leadership Team must commit to "pulling their weight" in every sense in the running and activity of the shul.
- f. We need thorough and thought-out processes for running the shul. To provide structure for planning events and ensuring that information is available to everyone who needs it.

## **2. MIGRATE FOCUS OF SHUL EVENTS/WEEKLY SHIURIM TO MEMBERS' HOMES**

- a. Move events away from the shul will change the "shul event" dynamic.
- b. Approach will incentivise event/shiur hosts to attract friends/potential new members to events/shiurim.
- c. Will also help to build a greater sense of community as members get to know one another better.

## **3. ADD CHABUROT AND CHAVRUTA STYLE LEARNING**

- a. In addition to shiurim, we will explore introducing more chaburah style learning initiatives and space for chavruta learning within the community.

## **4. USE EXISTING FUNDS TO MAXIMISE POTENTIAL OF EXISTING PREMISES AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY**

- a. Jake Pater and team to make a recommendation to the Leadership Team within 1 month as to the best option for premises.
- b. Upon recommendation, target commencement of works in July with a target completion date prior to Yamim Noraim.
- c. Engage an interior designer to explore ways in which existing building can be transformed
  - i. One option to be explored would be sliding glass patio doors onto the courtyard onto which a marquee could be attached for simchas/functions.
  - ii. Re-arrange the layout of the shul to have the bimah next to the mechitza.
- d. Provisional strategy: Allocate up to 75% of existing savings to building project:
  - i. United Synagogue to be approached to "match" our capex contribution and guarantee lease.
  - ii. A number of members have indicated that they wish to sponsor certain aspects of the redevelopment of the shul – fundraising committee to be tasked with this.

- iii. Secure an improved deal with LSJS – what are rental comps?
- iv. Charitable trusts to be approached to partner in the redevelopment.
- e. Shul Sukkah across the whole courtyard to host events over Sukkot, noting that certain (particularly younger) members do not have the benefit of a Sukkah at home. (We note that the US Community Development Fund provides the opportunity of up to £25k of grant monies for a project such as this if it can be shown to promote growth of the community).

## **5. USE EXISTING FUNDS TO PUT ON HIGH-PROFILE, STIMULATING EVENTS INVOLVING CUTTING EDGE, HIGH-PROFILE SPEAKERS AND SHAPERS OF DEBATE IN THE WORLD OF MODERN ORTHODOXY AND ZIONISM**

- a. Momentum and energy is urgently required to boost the profile of Alei Tzion. People have forgotten that we exist.
- b. Alei Tzion should be at the centre of all debate involving issues related to modern orthodoxy and Zionism.
- c. As part of this strategy, we will not shy away from debate and examination of issues that may be perceived by some as controversial.
- d. An education committee will be formed to implement this strategy working closely with the Rav.
- e. Any such events could be run in conjunction with Mizrachi / Bnei Akiva / LSJS / the Midrasha / the Beis.
- f. As a community, we also have members with exciting and dynamic professional lives. We will look to harness educational talent from within, particularly where members' professional experiences interface with issues relevant to Modern Orthodoxy.

## **6. FURTHER ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN IN ALEI TZION**

- a. Initiatives such as the women's Kabbalat Shabbat and megillah reading have been a success. We want to build on that success in line with a stated ambition to make Alei Tzion the centre of gravity for all things Modern Orthodox.
- b. Regular focus groups with the women of Alei Tzion to gauge how they would like the shul to help them engage.
- c. The leadership would work closely with the Rabbi to ensure that women are taking as active a role in the community as is possible within Halacha.
- d. The Gabbai would take responsibility to ensure that every service that Alei Tzion runs has a mechitza and an Ezrat Nashim set up from the beginning of the service.

- e. A new mechtiza will be sourced in consultation with the Rav as priority in conjunction with the renovation to the premises. Rachel Baigel to lead on making a recommendation to the Leadership Team.
- f. All couples who name a baby in our shul should be offered the opportunity to have the mother's name included in the announcement of the name.
- g. Women are often absent from regular shiurim but are drawn to more occasional events. Launch learning opportunities that are attractive to women in the community.

## **7. MANY FAMILIES HAVE SMACHOT ON THE HORIZON**

- a. Clarity is required regarding what is possible for bar and bat mitzvahs to do on the day itself. Guidelines to be produced as to what opportunities are available.
- b. We need to produce a work-product demonstrating that Alei Tzion is capable of hosting large smachot.
- c. Member of the community to be tasked with producing a "Simcha Guide" setting out what Alei Tzion can offer for smachot so that people have confidence that Alei Tzion can host Smachot successfully.

## **8. WORK ACTIVELY WITH LSJS, MIZRACHI, THE MIDRASHA, THE BEIS AND OTHERS TO CREATE A CAMPUS OF MODERN ORTHODOX TORAH LEARNING AND ZIONIST ACTIVITY:**

- a. Alei Tzion should be working actively with LSJS, Mizrachi, the Midrasha, the Beis and others to put on events, maximise the potential of the campus and generally pool resources.
- b. Gan Talpiot based at Ner has closed. Does this present an opportunity to open a Hebrew Speaking gan on the LSJS campus, with priority being given to Alei Tzion members?
- c. Degel should be restored (potentially in conjunction with Mizrachi and/or LSJS and/or the Beis and/or the Midrasha) in hard copy but also potentially as an ongoing blog for members.
- d. The website should be used to act as platform for debate on Modern Orthodox issues. Put Alei Tzion at the vanguard of contemporary halachic debate globally. Inviting opinions from both the left and the right.

## **9. RABBINIC LEADERSHIP**

- a. In Rabbi Roselaar, Alei Tzion have a Rav who boasts exceptional skills in scholarship and pastoral care. We wish to acknowledge how fortunate we as a

Kehilla are to have him as our Rabbinic leader and look forward to working with Rabbi Roselaar to deliver the objectives set out in this roadmap.

- b. As part of that effort to encourage more widespread grassroots involvement and participation, we want to work closely and collaboratively with the Rav with the understanding that the Rav's voice will be an important viewpoint at the table in developing strategy and shaping the future of Alei Tzion. The Rav will continue to have full support from the Leadership Team regarding all halachic matters.
- c. We recognise that that the Rav has felt under-supported for many years and members of the Leadership Team will be tasked with liaising with the Rav on a weekly basis and acting as an interface between him and rest of the Kehilla.
- d. We will ensure that a regular independent appraisal process is followed which will garner the feedback of the Leadership Team and wider kehilla to ensure that the Rav has the opportunity to develop and react quickly to the needs of all members.
- e. The Rav should be incentivised to grow the Kehilla (e.g. successful fundraising efforts, attracting new members).

## 10. SOCIAL

- a. We will continue to ensure that Alei Tzion offers something for everyone within a wide range of social events for all ages which aim to drive community cohesion and a sense of belonging to Alei Tzion. We recognise that, whilst every event does not necessarily have to cater to every demographic, every member, and prospective member, of the community should feel that there are plenty of events that appeal over the course of a year.
- b. There will be a strong focus on families and, responding to the Strategic Review, a particular drive to retain families as their children get older, noting that families tend to migrate less than singles in the long-term.
- c. There will also be a particular focus on attracting Singles back to Alei Tzion and specific events will be held to achieve that.
- d. First night selichot: plenty of existing options in the community – we need to do something different. Bring in external musicians and/or individuals from within the Kehilla who are able to play instruments?
- e. Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalyim at Alei Tzion need to be reinstated as major dates in the diary of the wider kehilla. Whilst there is no intention to compete with the Kinloss event on Yom Ha'atzmaut, we as a community should determine what events we can put on that will mark the day in an appropriate and existing way, whilst recognising those events already attended by members.
- f. Consider the creation of a "flagship event" for which Alei Tzion is known (akin to Purim night at Saatchi)

- i. Musical Simchat Bet hashoeva?
  - ii. Simchat Torah to be made bigger still (BBQ?).
- g. Away Shabbaton for the Kehilla.
- h. Horim VeYeladim.
- i. We want Alei Tzion to be the place where everyone knows you get an invitation and are looked after – we will set up a Chessed team dedicated to making Alei Tzion the most welcoming and caring community in Hendon.
- j. Establish a close link with London Jewish student organisations including Hillel, Chaplaincy, UJS to enable Alei Tzion to host students over Shabbat

## 11. CHESSED

- a. Community hosts a Shabbat morning at Clore Manor in the Summer.
- b. Chevra Kaddisha has been a noteworthy success story: What else can we as a community be doing to contribute to the wider community?
- c. Invite Kisharon to participate in daytime Hakafot at Alei Tzion on Simchat Torah.
- d. Consider innovative ways to use the AT Gemach.

## 12. SHABBAT

- a. Consider involvement of the IJDS Bnot Sheirut on Shabbat mornings in children's activities. Corollary would be avoiding bothering parents that want to daven, hosting children services that are "in tune" with the kehilla and attracting IJDS families back to Alei Tzion (but not to the exclusion of attracting families from other schools).
- b. Review the Kiddush offering: current offering is unhealthy and dated.
- c. Rav's drasha topic to be subject to nomination every Shabbat Mevarachin.
- d. Seudah shlishit – with more guest speakers and debates. The ruach of Tuggy's Shul's Seudah Shlishit is highly successful and should be considered as a model (recognising the differences between the two communities).
- e. Choral service twice per year.
- f. Reinstitute the Hashkama minyan (if necessary, consider paying for baalei kria).
- g. Member of committee tasked with proactively identifying individuals for Shabbat hospitality.

- h. Identify that the main shul is a 'sanctuary' and should be treated with the appropriate kavod. Encourage greater control of children's behaviour within the room; talking to be discouraged during leining and active davening; doors to be monitored to ensure we are as welcoming as possible whilst mindful of the tephilla or speaker. Time on site should be spent participating in or in aid of services.
- i. Introduce a source based shiur following Kiddush

### **13. FORMATION OF A MEMBERSHIP TASKFORCE INCORPORATING INDIVIDUALS FROM DIFFERENT STRANDS OF THE KEHILLA**

- a. As part of a strategy to boost numbers significantly over the next 2 years, urgent work is required to arrest dwindling membership.
- b. Specific targets need to be set as to the number of members we wish to attract.
- c. Membership committee will be tasked with actively identifying prospective families and individuals we want to attract to Alei Tzion.
- d. Consider potential affiliation with Bnei Akiva or local primary schools (e.g. Independent Jewish Day School, Hasmo Primary et al) (for CRP purposes) – Raisel Freedman to explore further.
- e. As we target new members, we need to ensure that those who visit are received warmly.
- f. The Rav to approach Roshei Yeshivot and Seminaries to "sell" Alei Tzion as the place where returnees from yeshivot/seminaries should gravitate towards.
- g. Alei Tzion to host Ellul seminar for returning yeshiva/sem students.

### **14. WEEKDAY MINYANIM**

- a. The running of minyanim for every prayer service is an essential part of a being a shul rather than just a minyan.
- b. Weekday minyanim are currently poorly attended by Alei Tzion members, and are reliant on locals to make sure that services are quorate. Greater effort should be made to link these regular attendees to the shul either via associate/friends of membership or approaching for regular donations to the shul.
- c. The feeling of ownership of these services needs to pass back to members.
- d. Being self-sufficient for minyanim will allow greater flexibility regarding speakers appropriate for the shul.
- e. A process to be put in place for unlocking/locking the building when LSJS are not providing security.

## 15. POSITIONING OURSELVES AS A STRONG MODERN ORTHODOX COMMUNITY WITHIN THE WIDER NORTH WEST LONDON JEWISH COMMUNITY

- a. We should look for opportunities/events that represent our Hashkafa organised by other organisations and consider joining forces to both our benefit – e.g Mizrahi Day of inspiration, Kinloss Yom Haatzmaut event.
- b. We should consider more joint endeavours with other similarly minded communities such as RCAM, Ner Yisrael and Magen Avot for both social and educational events, where bigger crowds are needed/desired.

## D. HOW ARE WE GOING TO MEASURE SUCCESS?

### 1. AS A LEADERSHIP TEAM, WE WILL AGREE AND SET OURSELVES SMART OBJECTIVES WHICH WILL BE SHARED WITH THE WIDER KEHILLA AND TO WHICH WE WILL BE HELD TO ACCOUNT, INCLUDING:

- a. Increase in membership;
- b. Increased attendance at minyanim, shiurim and events;
- c. Action in relation to Premises (see above); and
- d. Increased proportion of the membership taking on active leadership roles.