



## Report of Meeting of Board of Deputies of British Jews - Held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022

The Board met in on-line session and President Marie Van Der Zyl reported on:-

- Her meeting with the Pope
- Her ongoing pressure on the BBC ref the Oxford Street Chanukah bus incident. Lawyers acting for the Board have submitted representations to Ofcom as the BBC's partial apology is considered inadequate

The BOD tweet regarding the visit of Israeli MK Smotrich. The tweet had been carefully considered and approved by the Honorary Officers and the Chief executive. One Deputy felt the "order him out" comment was too strong, but the President insisted that racism and homophobia was unacceptable and other MK's such as Yair Lapid were supportive of the Board's stance.

The Amnesty International stance on Israel. Jointly with the JLC, the Board had decided not to engage with AI as this would be seen as giving them legitimacy and would be a waste of time and "no good outcome" was possible as their entrenched anti-Israel stance had not been adjusted by previous efforts to engage with them. Some Deputies strongly supported this position, but others felt that given its high profile and worldwide coverage, AI should be engaged with.

Ukraine- some 60,000 Jews live in Kyiv and there are 4 Chief Rabbis in Ukraine. The president confirmed every support should be given and that efforts were best directed via World Jewish Relief.

Deputy Laurie Rosenberg urged that every shul be urged to adopt a policy for every Bar or Bat Mitzvah to be encouraged to adopt a Holocaust victim via the Yad Vashem UK twinning scheme. Each child would be associated with a child lost in the Holocaust and the deputy reported that in his own London community twin Bar mitzvah boys were twinned with Holocaust twins -only to discover that one had actually survived the War and shared their simcha!

Other Deputies reported on:-

Ongoing Antisemitism on campus at Manchester University. The president would liaise with UJC Chair Nina Freedman and visit the Vice Chancellor in Manchester. Problems at the LSE were also raised but the President said that inter faith groups there were working hard and effectively to counter antisemitism.

One deputy opined that the Board was too ready to take on a "conscience raising agenda" of a few (left wing) extremists at the expense of the silent majority of middle ground Deputies. The President welcomed all views in a "broad church" organisation such as the Board.

Scottish Deputies raised the worrying and persistent problem of antisemitism in Scotland and the apparent inability of the Glasgow Representative Committee and Scottish Jewish leadership to speak with a single authoritative voice. Professional leadership from the Board in London was urged by the President said she could not impose her will on the Scottish Representatives but would support their decisions

**If Any Magen Avot member wishes to bring an issue to the attention of the BOD he or she can do so at any time.**