

NEWCASTLE REFORM SYNAGOGUE JOINS THE ECO SYNAGOGUE SCHEME

EcoSynagogue and the Board of Deputies have developed a series of projects to sponsor climate change initiatives to “make a difference” both ahead and beyond this month’s COP26 conference in Glasgow. Synagogues from within the Reform Movement are among 40 communities who have signed up so far. NRS is pleased to have joined this initiative, promoting environmental sustainability and engagement across the synagogue and the wider community. It is a cross communal project, supported by leaders of the Orthodox, Reform, Masorti and Liberal communities.

Our first task is to complete an environmental audit which has five sections, including Management, Lifestyle, Prayer and Teaching etc. The audit can be completed to Bronze, Silver or Gold level. We are hopeful we could achieve Bronze with a little effort, and would like to work towards Silver. National Eco-Shabbat on 5th– 6th November, coincided with Northern Chagigah where Northern Reform Synagogues met for a weekend of prayer, study, activity and song across the generations. Chagigah ran relevant sessions on the environment as part of the programme.

At NRS we have formed an Environmental Impact Team to drive the project forward, providing support and information to enable everyone to participate. We have met online with the national organisation and attended sessions with the Israeli Ministry of the Environment and an environmental interfaith session from COP26. We

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have produced our draft of our environmental policy which will help to guide our activities and have been looking at the Lifestyle section of the Audit because **we can all make small changes in our lives to contribute to a greener, sustainable future.** Here are a few actions we would like to start with: Interest groups for different topics:- Would you like to join a group to share ideas on environmentally friendly gardening? Plant based cookery? Sustainable transport? Reducing waste? The Impact Team is seeking to involve members of all generations to help us lead on these and many more environmentally sustainable ideas. Contact info@newcastlereformsynagogue.co.uk or nrs.ecosynagogue@gmail.com if you would like to be involved.

A resource pack from Eco-Synagogue is now bursting with ideas and resources, please take a look here.

They are very inspired by a collaboration with Jamie Geller, Israeli-American food writer and celebrity chef who has created an alternative vegan menu for all our favourite Shabbat foods. There is vegan wine, tips on setting up and cleaning up in an eco-friendly way.

What can you do to make a difference??

NRS Environmental Impact Team

NEWCASTLE REFORM SYNAGOGUE MITZVAH DAY 2021 AND THE SOCIAL ACTION GROUP

Mitzvah Day is the UK’s largest faith-led day of social action. Led by synagogue communities, we come together to make a difference by introducing people to social action via the support of local charities.

A Mitzvah, literally, is a commandment in Jewish law. However, it is often used to mean a good deed or an act of kindness, which is an integral part of Jewish life and is the basis for Mitzvah Day.

This year we are asking our community to consider making a standing order – however small the amount – to the five charities NRS supports. These are WERS, The Hub, Action Foundation, the Comfrey Project and People’s Kitchen.

Over recent years NRS has formed close connections with the charities who have been so very grateful for the help provided via the generosity of synagogue

members, particularly from the recent Kol Nidre Appeal.

In addition to asking members to consider making a standing order, we are also making our usual collection of toiletries and this year, of outer winter clothing in the form of gloves, scarves, socks.

We will open NRS synagogue doors on the morning of November 21st between 10.00am and 12.00noon. The Social Action Group members will receive donations at the door, sort them and take them to the charities.

Should you wish to set up a standing order, a form and further information will be included in the next NRS Newsletter.

The Social Action Group thanks you for your ongoing support to a very deprived and needy group of asylum seekers and refugees. It is going to be a hard winter for them.