



March 17, 2020

Dear Members,

As you will be aware, the coronavirus pandemic has developed very quickly and UK Government guidance continues to evolve at a fast pace. At Golders Green Synagogue, we have already taken some important decisions to protect the health and wellbeing of the whole community.

We are now at the stage where further measures have become necessary. Based on guidance from the UK Government, the United Synagogue and our own expert advisory group that we established earlier this month, we have decided to take the following steps.

- The daily minyan will cease until further notice. The last service will be this evening, Tuesday March 17 at 19:30. If members need to come subsequently to pick up belongings, an appointment should be arranged via the Shul office.
- All Shabbat and Yom Tov services will be suspended until further notice, with no services this coming Shabbat and thereafter. The rabbinic and executive teams strongly advise you to daven at home, alone, and not attend other services or organise private minyanim under any circumstances. Our rabbis will also be davening at home, alone, until it becomes safe to gather in groups.
- All in-person educational and social activities will cease until further notice. This includes shiurim, youth programmes, family events and any other programme that involves people getting together in small or large groups.
- The Shul office will remain open for now. In the event it has to close, administrative services will continue to be offered remotely. The office email is office@ggshul.org.uk and phone 020 8455 2460.

We are very much aware that these are unprecedented measures. However, based on expert advice, we have taken the view that they are now necessary to protect our community.

We are proud that the community is set to continue offering a breadth of provision in spite of the current challenges. In fact, this crisis provides an extraordinary opportunity for us to reach out to one another and provide the support that is so desperately needed in these difficult times.

Many members will already be aware of the new support services that are being set up for those having to self isolate. We are fortunate to have an army of volunteers

ready to help, so please contact Rachel Clark (clark.racheld@gmail.com) if you need support. Elderly and vulnerable members will soon receive pre-Pesach support as usual and should use this opportunity to ask for more help if needed – these efforts will be coordinated by Susan Freiberger (susan.freiberger@gmail.com).

We are also delighted to announce that we are working to bring as many educational, spiritual and social programmes to you in a virtual format. In this digital age, we are fortunately able to bring congregants together and deliver shiurim, halachic guidance and much more on virtual channels. Please watch out for further details about this exciting initiative in the coming days. If you are concerned that you may have technological difficulties in accessing these programmes, please contact the Shul office (office@ggshul.org.uk) or Joel Clark (joel@joelsclark.com) and technical support will be arranged.

All members will receive their pre-Pesach mailing in the coming days. Due to the fast evolving situation, many of the programmes and services listed will now be subject to change, but further guidance on Pesach will follow in the coming days. We will also be working on guidance for simchas, funerals and shivas that may occur during this period and will issue this as soon as we can. As always, Rabbi Belovski can be reached by email (rabbi@ggshul.org.uk) or phone (07932 669195) for any halachic queries.

We are aware that these changes will have a considerable effect on the life of our community, but have no doubt that it will only make us stronger. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the advisory team that has given invaluable support in making these difficult but critical decisions – Benny Chain, Dina Kaufman, Daniel Hochhauser, Benedict Roth and Daniel Goldhill.

Finally, to kick off this interim transition to virtual programming, we are delighted to share a message from Rabbi Belovski, delivered on the brand new GGS youtube channel – [click here](#) to watch it.

With warmest wishes,

Naomi Verber, chair
Rabbi Dr Harvey Belovski, senior rabbi
Joel Clark, vice chair
Adam Berlin, financial representative