



On Politicisation and New London Synagogue April 2026

The three guiding principles in considering the politicisation of New London are as follows;

- i) The Synagogue has both charitable and pastoral obligations to abstain from inappropriate politicisation.

It's vital to ensure that the community is and is seen to be a place that supports and celebrates a diversity of views on political matters.

Civil legal advice can be found [here](#).

It would be entirely inappropriate for the Synagogue, or its professional or religious leadership, to suggest, or be seen to suggest, a party-political allegiance. It would be very unusual for the Synagogue to explicitly critique a politician. An exception would be if the politician had behaved in a way that was clearly antisemitic and/or put the Jewish community at risk. Such criticism should be voiced only following a conversation with governance.

- ii) The Synagogue has a role to play in broader society and in representing the interests of this Jewish community or Judaism more broadly.

It is appropriate to pray for the government – a prayer drawn from a Biblical imperative – and to engage positively with those providing local or national political leadership, such as Ministers, local Mayors, Ward Councillors or MPs. In the run-up to an election, it might be appropriate for the Synagogue to support or advertise a local hustling, but it would be unlikely that the Synagogue would wish to host such an event on its own premises.

It is appropriate to engage politically in areas of clear Jewish concern such as Shechitah or antisemitism. It could be appropriate to engage on issues around Israel, but this must be handled sensitively and should be done in such a way as to avoid, as much as possible, party politics. Where an engagement with Israeli political issues might impact directly on issues that relate to the aims of the Synagogue, such as status, access to religious sites and similar, it would be appropriate to engage politically. It is appropriate for the Synagogue to support a specific WZO electoral slate.

It may be appropriate for Synagogue leadership to engage with political issues that connect to centrally held Jewish values and concerns, even if these concerns are not exclusively Jewish. Engagement in these areas requires careful balancing. Opportunities for error exist, but New London should never become a place scared into silence rather than engage in difficult issues.

For example, the oft-repeated Biblical instruction to 'love the stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt' is a verse about the treatment of refugees. Other issues which fall into this categorisation include discussions around medical ethics, genocide, care for the vulnerable and maintenance of civil society.



Engaging in these matters must be handled with sensitivity and subject to governance discussion. Care must be taken that the political engagement is grounded in our religious understanding of these issues and is not ad hominem or crude. Direct reference to political party-specific policies should be very rare. It is also important to acknowledge that a broad range of opinions exists in the Jewish tradition and even among NLS membership on almost any issue.

The amount of this kind of political engagement should be held in balance, the Synagogue is not a political campaign organisation.

The Rabbis of the community shall have some latitude to participate in local and national debate around these kinds of political issues (such as signing letters for publication) but should do so after careful reflection and in consultation with line-management. They should avoid participation, even if claiming they are acting in a 'personal capacity only,' if their participation might jeopardise principle i) above.

- iii) We are aware of politicians, from across a very broad political spectrum, who may wish to show support for the Jewish community, especially in testing times. This is support we are grateful for, deserve and need. But there is a point, on the other side of welcoming this kind of support, where we might appropriately have a concern that an engagement with the Synagogue may be used for self-interest, rather than as genuinely supportive of us.

Any politician wishing to attend a service in a personal capacity would normally be warmly welcomed.

In terms of representational support, it would be appropriate for the Synagogue to invite and welcome local representative political leadership, such as the local MP.

It may be appropriate to decline a visit if Synagogue leadership, exercising its governance responsibilities, felt either that a visit risked overly politicising the Synagogue's efforts to be politically neutral or that the potential visitor's presence posed a threat to the harmonious well-being of the community. This would usually only be the case if Synagogue leadership felt a proposed visit was primarily motivated by motives other than supporting the community and/or that the politician represented it had expressed extreme views that sat outside the broad realm of acceptable political debate, for example permitting hate-speech, racism or similar.

It would be inappropriate for the Synagogue to allow its premises to be used for an event which was clearly party-political in nature.

For Yearly Reconsideration



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