

SUMMER 2024

The magazine of Jewish Blind & Disabled

THE KEY

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FROM OUR CEO



'THIS SUMMER MARKS MY 5TH ANNIVERSARY AT JEWISH BLIND & DISABLED. FIVE YEARS IN AND I STILL FEEL PRIVILEGED TO BE LEADING THIS WONDERFUL CHARITY.'

However much I love (and I do) this role, the past five years has not been all sunshine and roses.

Covid was the first of the challenges. The team worked tirelessly to keep tenants safe and protected during the first few months. We then began to hear cries for help from Jewish people living with physical disabilities or vision impairment. Up until Covid, many of these people were managing living in their own home in the community. When the pandemic hit, they realised they could no longer cope living alone. I personally found some of those calls so distressing, we simply didn't have the flats available to help everyone who needed us.

As we emerged from the pandemic, for the first time in JBD's history our waiting list for housing and support began to feel uncomfortably long. Looking back, we didn't predict the next waves that followed.

As war broke out in Ukraine, the JBD Trustees met, and we agreed that we would open our doors to Jewish Ukrainians needing accessible accommodation. The following day I read an article in The Telegraph that brought me to tears. A holocaust survivor along with her disabled daughter had fled Ukraine. I reached out to the family and within 48 hours we handed them the keys to a temporary home. They were extremely grateful and we were able to provide housing for two further families.

There is no single reason for the continued increased demand for our services. It is a multitude of factors that have come together in a short period of time.

We have seen a surge in applications from disabled people living in unsuitable private rented housing where landlords are resistant for them to make adaptations that are needed to retain their independence and safety.

We have housed people discharged from hospital into care homes as their home is no longer suitable for their needs and people who have come to us directly from NHS rehab due to strokes or amputations unable to return to their old home. We have housed people living in social housing, trapped in their home, as the only way out is via the stairs and which they are no longer able to manage. Local authority waiting lists for accessible housing in some boroughs is over a decade. And finally, we are an ageing community and are increasingly providing housing for members of our community who have age related disability or sight loss.

People on our waiting list often have no where else to turn. Whilst they are waiting, we do what we can to support them to stay safe in their current property but for many this can only touch the surface. We can neither address all the barriers in their current home nor can we provide them with the peace of mind that goes hand in hand with our 24/7 house managers in our buildings or the supportive micro-Jewish communities that our tenants benefit from.

'WE HAVE AMBITIOUS PLANS. NECESSARY PLANS. PLANS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU CAN ENABLE.'

Nothing we do is possible without the support of generous individuals & families from across the community. Thank you.

Finally, I am indebted to the JBD Presidents, Chair and Trustees for their commitment and support and to our dedicated and caring 60 strong workforce. Any credit for this wonderful organisation should go to each and every one of them. Thank you for your unwavering support.

Working together I am confident the next five years will deliver the housing and support Jewish people with physical disabilities and / or vision impairment need and deserve.

Lisa Wimborne
Chief Executive

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Myrna's Story

Myrna moved into Jewish Blind & Disabled's Frances & Dick James Court with her now late husband Tony in April 2010, after he underwent surgery and became a double amputee.



'THANK YOU TO JBD FOR HELPING ME TO OVERCOME ALL OF THESE CHALLENGES'

"Tony became diabetic and after a long struggle, surgery was the only way to save him. We managed to cope, but it soon became clear that our present accommodation was unsuitable for his needs and a change was necessary. The landlord wasn't at all interested in making any changes which would suit our needs.

We'd heard about Jewish Blind & Disabled through my sister-in-law and her friend, both JBD volunteers, and they suggested we

should get in touch. I called and was straightaway pleasantly surprised.

We visited Frances & Dick James Court in the February and had moved in by mid-April. Everything fell into place very quickly and we were offered a ground floor wheelchair accessible flat.

This place is a little piece of heaven. Life became so much easier to manage and Frances & Dick James Court became our home. Because of all the amenities in the building, such as electric

lifts, the ground-floor flat overlooking the garden, a suitably equipped kitchen for wheelchair users, and a wet room with built-in shower, Tony was able to manage well and began to recover some of his independence.

He was fitted with prosthetic limbs and began treatment in the renal department at Edgware Hospital. He had weekly sessions of dialysis and slowly his health improved. What also helped was the support and guidance we

'I HAVE NOW BEEN A TENANT FOR OVER 13 YEARS AND IT'S PROVED TO BE BLOODY MARVELLOUS!'

received from management and tenants in the building and I would like to say a big thank you for their advice.

Later, we were provided with an electric wheelchair. We had six wonderful years together in the flat before Tony died in 2016.

I was Tony's carer and have now developed limited mobility but fortunately can still manage my life pretty well and use a pair of crutches to get about. I am still able to use public transport and cope with travelling well enough. Of course, after he died it became necessary to return the government mobility car but my Freedom Pass has been a lifeline. I am very well served by local buses and the tube is close by should I need it. I keep busy and have always been an active person.

There is an exercise class run by a volunteer held weekly in the lounge which I enjoy. On Sunday nights, I have become a movie-goer, and I attend the weekly film club in the lounge.

I seem to have what is known as "green fingers" and have made a small garden outside the flat where I have grown roses and clematises to name a few.

I'm actively involved in my shul and attend a weekly cultural shul meeting where we



have various speakers. They have recently installed an electrically-operated lift so all those members in need of further assistance and cannot manage the public staircase can feel fully included.

Thank you to JBD for helping me to overcome all of these challenges and enabling me to lead a fully active and independent life. I have now been a tenant for over 13 years and it's proved to be bloody marvellous!"

Ambitious building plans

EPHRAIM COURT

Construction continues apace at our newest development, Ephraim Court, in Mill Hill. This summer the building will be watertight, with brickwork, roofing and window fitting complete. New accessible and adaptable kitchens have been designed and are currently being ordered, and the final decisions on interior design are being made. The contractors are due to complete all work at the end of April 2025, following furnishing we will then be opening the doors in Summer 2025.



First fit of electrics in a corridor at Ephraim Court (Photos: Amy Darsa)



External of building as of June 2024

FAIRACRES

In March 2024, following a series of successful pre-application meetings, JBD submitted a planning application to the London Borough of Barnet to redevelop our oldest building, Fairacres, in East Finchley.



Artist impression of new entrance to Fairacres (Photo: Palmer Lunn)

Fairacres was built in the 1980's. The building requires significant modernisation to ensure it can meet the needs of today's tenants. The proposed scheme will both extend the current 29 one-bedroom apartments to ensure they are all wheelchair user dwellings and provide an additional 11 apartments - including 4 two-bedroom apartments for family units - to provide a total of 40 apartments.

We have a unique window of opportunity to move the current tenants from Fairacres to Ephraim Court whilst we undertake the redevelopment of their building.

With our waiting list as it currently stands, this has not been an easy decision. However, this is a unique opportunity to invest in our future by both modernising and expanding a current building. This project will transform an old site that requires significant works into a brand new, modern, fit for purpose development. We know that this is the sensible thing to do, for the long-term provision of our services.

This project will only proceed if we successfully secure both planning and the funding required. The project will cost an estimated £14m. To find out more about how you can support this project please contact Rachel Barres on **020 4548 8692** or email rachel@jbd.org

News from around JBD

THANKING OUR VOLUNTEERS

To mark National Volunteers Week, in June, we held a thank you dinner for some of our dedicated volunteers.

Our Chief Executive, Lisa Wimborne, and Chair, Marc Gordon, thanked all of our volunteers for the time and support they give in such a wide variety of roles, including befriending, organising social events and driving the minibus. Huge thank you also to our Trustees who give their time and expertise to us.



Volunteers Beverley, Elaine and Barbara

We are so appreciative of our volunteers all year round and are always looking for more to join us. If you are interested in volunteering with us, please email volunteer@jbd.org

MACCABI FUN RUN

This year, we had 23 people, run, walk or scoot for us at the Maccabi GB Community Fun Run.

Thank you to everyone who took part for Jewish Blind & Disabled, including some of our amazing tenants, and for raising just over £3,000.



Tenants Malcolm, Diana and Adam at the Maccabi Fun Run

ANNUAL 'FRIENDS OF JBD' GOLF DAY

Over 90 people joined us for our annual Golf Day at Hartsbourne Country Club. Huge thanks to Lloyd Botchin and the golf committee for their amazing support in organising the event.

This year the event raised over £37,000.



Broadening Horizons at our Tenant Conference

In May 2024, Jewish Blind & Disabled held its second tenant conference. Over 80 tenants from across our seven developments, along with staff came together for the event.

The conference was for tenants to share ideas, think about ways in which they can get involved within their own JBD community (and beyond), to have the opportunity to meet new people from different developments and hear more about initiatives in other buildings. Daniella Neifeld from the United Synagogue joined to give a workshop on accessibility in the community.

Our Community Engagement Manager, Simone Mazin, said: “**The purpose of the conference was twofold; to continue to encourage tenants to take the lead on community engagement initiatives within their developments and across the whole organisation, as well as exploring opportunities in the local and wider community. The conference also gave tenants the opportunity to mix and socialise with each other – something that was a key success from last year’s conference.**”



JBD Tenant, Marion

One participant, a tenant from JBD’s Aztec House, commented: “**The conference was helpful because it allowed us to meet tenants from other buildings and share ideas. It gave me the incentive to return to organising events and I have encouraged other tenants to help and participate more. I have lots of future events planned and this has developed from the inspiration I took from the tenant conference.**”



Lisa Wimborne & Josie, JBD Tenant



JBD Tenants David, Paul and Jacqueline

Another tenant added; “I enjoyed sitting with people from other developments and discussing how their building operates in terms of community engagement compared to mine. I loved the social side of the day as it gave me a chance to reconnect with some old friends who I haven’t seen for years. I am looking forward to the next one.”

“IT WAS GREAT TO SEE SO MANY TENANTS COME TOGETHER TO SHARE AND DEVELOP IDEAS ABOUT THE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES IN THEIR OWN JBD BUILDING AND BEYOND.

Our tenant conference is one of several ways we ensure tenants voices are heard and they can play an active role being at the forefront of shaping their own unique supportive Jewish community here at JBD.”

—
Lisa Wimborne, Chief Executive



JBD Tenant, Maureen

Peer Support Groups

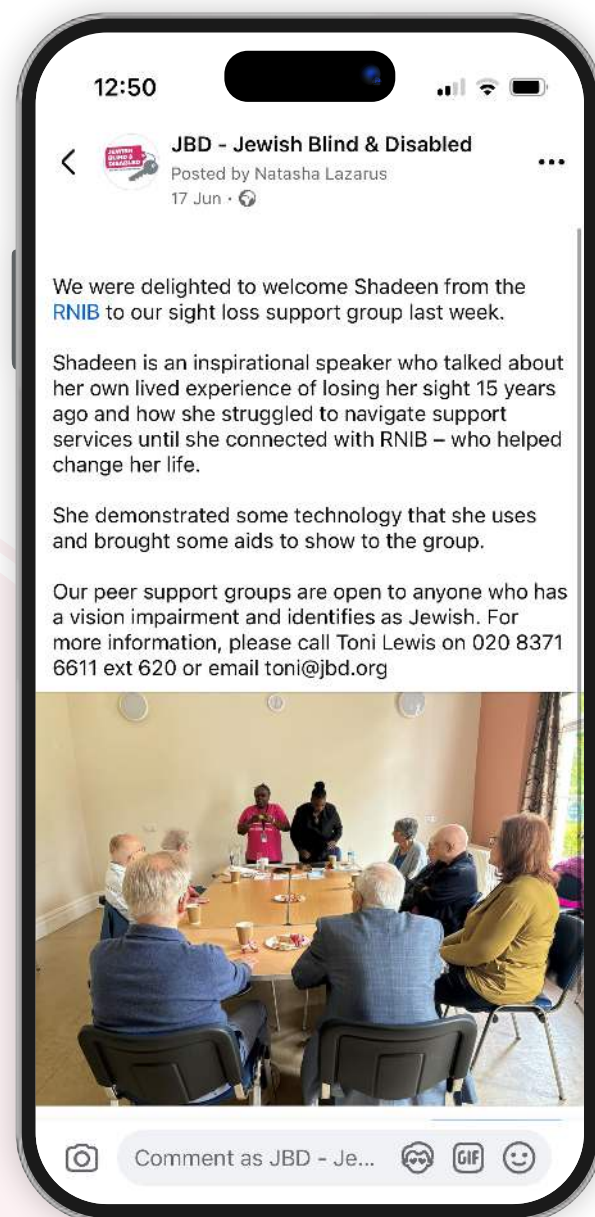
Earlier in the year, we launched two monthly support groups for Jewish people with sight loss in London and Hertfordshire. The groups have been running for three months, and in June, we had over 30 participants of mixed ages, with our youngest member being 26 years old.

Attendees from both groups have shared that they had never previously met others with lived experience of sight loss in a social setting, only in waiting rooms for eye appointments.

From our work, we know that people with sight loss often feel isolated and disconnected from the community. They rarely meet and talk to others with similar experiences and struggles. These meetings are designed for members to connect with new people, share advice, exchange ideas, and offer mutual support.

One attendee commented: "I have never met anyone else who is living with Charles Bonnet Syndrome. This group has connected me with someone else who understands what I am experiencing, we have already arranged to meet up for coffee outside of the group".

Toni Lewis, JBD's Community Services Project Manager says: "We have a waiting list for our housing, and we also recognise that there are others in the community who do not want to live with JBD but would benefit from support. This is why JBD has decided to invest in developing our community support offering. The launch of our sight loss support groups follows the growth of our Independent Living Advisory Service, an occupational therapy led service.



NEW PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Charity No. 259480

Jewish Blind & Disabled are excited to announce our new monthly Peer Support Groups for people with visual impairments.

Borehamwood

The second Tuesday of each month
11.30am - 1.00pm

Finchley

The second Thursday of each month
11.30am - 1.00pm

Sessions are designed for meeting new people and sharing experiences of living with sight loss in a safe environment. Family members, friends or carers are welcome to join.

To join a session or find out more information, please contact Toni Lewis toni@jbd.org or 020 8371 6611 ext 620



Fundraising Update

As an independent charity that does not receive any government funding, it is only through our fundraising and the generous support from the community that we are able to continue to provide affordable housing and support.

SHARE YOUR CELEBRATION WITH JBD

If you have a celebration coming up, be it a milestone birthday, special anniversary or any other simcha, and do not wish to receive any gifts, why not consider asking your family and friends to make a donation to Jewish Blind & Disabled.

We will provide a personalised invite that you can send to friends and family and you will receive a commemorative certificate with names of all that have kindly donated.



FREE WILL WRITING SERVICE

As a Jewish Blind & Disabled supporter, you can now access a free Will writing service through our partnership with The National Free Wills Network, giving you the opportunity to make or update your Will conveniently and easily. Making a Will is the only way to ensure that the people and causes you care about are looked after and that your wishes are known.

There is no obligation to leave a gift in your Will to Jewish Blind & Disabled, however, a gift of any size will enable us to continue to deliver high quality housing and support for now and for years to come.

Legacies are a lifeline for us, accounting for over £1 in every £3 we raise. Without them we wouldn't be the organisation we are today. Going forward they will be vital to ensure we can transform more lives, by growing and developing to meet current and future need.

2024 JBD DINNER

Our annual dinner is being held on Tuesday 10th September at a North West London venue. It is our flagship fundraising event of the year, where we hope to raise over £250,000.

There are also a range of sponsorship opportunities available.



If you are interested in attending our dinner or sponsorship opportunities, to set up donations for your celebration or to find out more about the free Will writing service, please contact Rachel Barres on rachel@jbd.org or 020 4548 8692.

NEW MINIBUS

Our new minibus arrived at the end of July. The bus has been kindly donated by the Ephraim 1998 Charitable Trust in memory of Harry & Morris Ephraim.

Our minibus takes tenants on regular trips to local supermarkets and kosher shops. It is a real lifeline for many tenants who want to remain independent but may no longer be driving. Each year, there are over 300 trips to different shops, taking tenants from each of our developments.



Charity Employer of the Year

The Work Avenue Business Awards are prestigious community business awards, and the Charity Employer of the Year award was introduced this year to recognise the positive impact which charities play in providing stable, secure and supportive employment opportunities.

Jewish Blind & Disabled were honoured to be presented with the award at the recent Work Avenue Business Awards.

On collecting the award, our Chief Executive Lisa Wimborne said: "I pick this up not for myself, but for our amazing, dedicated 60-strong workforce, who do such an incredible job in a time of ever-growing demand for our services.



HR Assistant - Laurie Sherman, CEO - Lisa Wimborne, Head of HR - Yvonne Ellis

Our staff retention last year was over 95 per cent, and it is because of them that our charity is the organisation it is today, providing person-centred support services for the tenants that we house and people living in their own homes."

The Work Avenue Business Awards were launched in 2018 to honour businesses from across the community and around the country. This year, they received a record 110 nominations. Other nominees for the Charity Employer of the Year award included Jewish Care, Camp Simcha, Jewish Women's Aid and Hatzolah.

Speaking at the ceremony, the charity's CEO Debbie Lebrecht said: "For more than 18 years, Work Avenue has been committed to one overriding mission: empowering individuals to earn a living with dignity. Our finalists and winners represent the very best of our community, from a truly outstanding pool of contenders."

