**Woodford Forest United Synagogue**

**Community Profile**

Woodford Forest United Synagogue was formed in January 2015 by the amalgamation of two synagogues, Waltham Forest Hebrew Congregation and Wanstead and Woodford United Synagogue.

The local area is suburban although Epping Forest is on our doorstep as is Hainault Forest and Fairlop Waters.

The synagogue is situated in North East London with excellent road and underground transport links. We are in Zone 4 of the London Underground Central Line for central London, with many buses going to Gants Hill, Loughton or Tottenham. There are excellent road links with the A406 and M11 very close by. The journey to Golders Green is only 20 minutes (North Circular permitting) and access to the M25 is an even shorter journey, with links to Rainham, Waltham Abbey, Cheshunt and Bushey Cemeteries.

The neighbourhood can best be described as residential “leafy suburbs”. There is a varied housing stock spanning a wide price range, encompassing affordable housing as well as substantial houses nearby. The housing stock is being renewed by redevelopment of existing detached houses, together with conversions and new builds to provide blocks of luxury apartments.

Woodford is surrounded by natural woodland with conservation status, and has a range of nearby parks and open spaces together with many popular golf clubs and health / leisure clubs.

The area is supplied with a Jewish State Secondary and Primary school and several good secular secondary schools.

Visitors are always struck by the warmth of the congregations and the welcome they receive. WFUS has a community drawn from all parts of Woodford and surrounding areas. When it comes to Halacha or politics, there is no average member – we welcome debate and discussion and all we look for is tolerance, education, and good food.

We expect our Rabbi and Rebbetzen to help foster the growth of the new community and look with us to the future, which rests with young families, students and young professionals.

We are looking for a Rabbinic couple or Rabbi to inspire our congregants, tolerate our differences, and reach out to those Jews (male and female, young and old) who have yet to experience how joining our community can enrich their Jewish lives. It is incumbent on all of us to bring Jews together and to welcome all, even those who participate infrequently.

We want to enthuse, and to communicate to all Jews the joys of Judaism and Jewish Culture.

The ethos of the Community is traditional US, with a warm, welcoming and caring atmosphere. We strive to be intelligent, thoughtful and innovative. In addition to the usual *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* services, we run morning *minyanim* on all weekday mornings as well as evening services twice a week. The natural style for our services is of relaxed decorum. Although there is a small group who can assist we look to the Community Rabbi to leyen and to lead most services. We are looking to revitalize our children’s and youth services

The Community has a strong social support group, Community Cares, which looks after communal welfare. We want adult education to be a particular strength, with regular themed lecture series organised by the Rabbi and members. In partnership with other local communities we have been involved with pre Pesach and Rosh Hashana programmes

The Synagogue building is seen by members as a key focus for their religious, educational, social and charitable events. It was purpose-built in 1954 on one floor, with gardens and a car park. The ground floor comprises a foyer and cloakrooms, *Shul*, and offices for the Synagogue Administrator and Rabbi. A two storey extension was added in 1970, the ground floor comprises versatile rooms with a Beit Hamedresh and others that can be used for meetings/education. The first floor has four classrooms and a three bedroom residential apartment.

**Neighbouring Communities**

Chigwell, Redbridge & Ilford United Synagogues, Ilford Federation, Buckhurst Hill and Ilford Chabad communities are all about 15 minutes away by car.

 A *Mikva* is available in Gants Hill and the local Chevra Kadisha draws its members form all the local communities.