150ᵗʰ Anniversary of the United Synagogues Act

Great Hall, Guildhall
Monday 29ᵗʰ November 2021
The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London
Alderman Vincent Keaveny

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome you to the Guildhall this evening.

To those of you who do not know me, I'm the 693ʳᵈ Lord Mayor of the City of London. The first Lord Mayor took office in 1189 which gives you a flavour of the City's rich history.

Yet the relationship between the City and the Jewish Community stretches back even further than the Mayoralty.

In 1066, when the first Jews arrived in England, it was the City that some of them chose to call home.

When you walk around the Square Mile, you will see this reflected in street names like Old Jewry or the church just next door to us here, St Lawrence Jewry.

The City is proud to house the only synagogue in the world to have held continuous worship for over three hundred years, dating back to 1701.

It was here that British Jews could first hold public office, becoming Sheriffs and Lord Mayors. Sir David Salomons, a leading figure fighting for the rights of Jews, was the first Jewish Sheriff and later Lord Mayor in 1855.

Our London Metropolitan Archives hold over 58 collections celebrating Jewish communal life dating all the way back to 1591. They even have the 1714 title deed for the Great Synagogue – an important centre of worship over hundreds of years.

The City continues to be a place for Jewish people to live, work and worship.

The City of London Corporation has always sought to bring together different communities, for the Square Mile to be a place

where people of all backgrounds can thrive and be part of an inclusive, diverse, and multi-faith City.

Tonight's event provides us with an opportunity to celebrate this deep history and further develop our relationships as we come together to mark the 150th anniversary of the United Synagogue.

And now, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Michael Goldstein, President of the United Synagogue and may I wish you all a happy Hanukkah.