

Happy Hanukkah from Havering

To Romford Town Hall for the lighting of Havering's first Hanukkah menorah.

There was a bit of a hiccup when the leader of the council Ray Morgon panicked and fearful for public safety decided that the [candles would not be publicly lit.](#) He's a decent man and I think the wickedness parading in central London every weekend spooked him. Meetings with the local Jewish Community and representations from local residents (and the MPs) reassured him and he soon changed his mind. He mentioned that decision tonight and while not actually admitting he was wrong, he did say he was very glad that it is now taking place.

The history of the outdoor menorahs in East London and Essex is that the Chabad Lubavitch Centres of NE London and Essex were responsible for erecting the first at Gants Hill in Redbridge 40 years ago. This in Havering is the 10th.



Present included the Mayor of Havering, the MP for Romford, the Deputy Lieutenant for Havering, Rabbi Southerland of Romford Synagogue, Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin, executive director of Chabad North London & Essex, the Vicar of Romford Parish Church and other members of the council. [International Chabad News](#) describes the attendance as “an unusually large and festive crowd” I think even more people would have attended had it not been a stormy afternoon.



Various people lit the candles of the smaller menorah which was gas fired, and that remotely fired each candle flame of the larger electric menorah. Rabbi Sufrin insisted that the father and son team of engineers who made the menorah light one of the candles and he made a point of thanking the electricians and groundsmen of the council who installed it outside the Town Hall. The base is permanent and will be used again in the future.



Points of interest from the speeches:

Light is proof against darkness, because into every life, with its up and downs darkness may fall, and we are living in dark times.

From the MP – the Judeo-Christian heritage is an important base of our culture and our tradition of freedom or religion, freedom of speech and freedom to be an individual.



Songs were sung in English and Hebrew and we left at the end to the sound of the Dreidel Song.

On the Town Hall grounds (the original suggestion was one of the roundabouts on the ring road, not the best of ideas!) it should be safe.



Photographs E Weatherwax and husband Essex December 2023

A report from the local news website, [The Havering Daily](#) with photographs of the refreshments at Romford Synagogue afterwards.