

Menorah Lighting in Essex

Wednesday 25th December
1st Night of Chanukah
Loughton - 5pm

Saturday 28th December
4th Night of Chanukah
Gants Hill - 7.30pm
Followed by Party at Chabad

Sunday 29th December
5th Night of Chanukah
Buckhurst Hill - 5pm
Followed by Party at Chabad
Epping - Party 3pm / Lighting 5pm

Monday 30th December
6th Night of Chanukah
Chigwell - 6pm
Ongar - Soft Play 4pm / Lighting 5.30pm
Havering - 6pm

Tuesday 31st December
7th Night of Chanukah
Barkingside - 6pm

Wednesday 1st January
8th Night of Chanukah
Woodford - 4pm
Followed by Party at Shul

By Esmerelda Weatherwax

To Romford for the lighting of the menorah candles on the sixth night of Chanukah. The Chabad organisation has a programme of lighting candles across North East London and Essex since the 25th. We chose to go to the one outside Havering Town Hall in Romford (one of the former villages or towns that now make up the London Borough of Havering).

Last year there was a bit of a fuss as the council got nervous about potential trouble but local 'encouragement' soon persuaded them that their fears had to be overcome and [all went smoothly on the night.](#)

This year the fuss was in Epping (far end of the Central Line) where some felt the same about moving the menorah from its previous quiet position where it had been [vandalised](#). A bigger sturdier menorah needed a site away from trees and well lit. The council [eventually agreed to a site](#) in the High Street near Marks and Spencers and it was lit a few days ago.

We arrived just as the Chabad vehicle with its mobile Menorah drew up.



There was already a small crowd, music was playing and young men and women of the Community Security Trust (CST) were greeting arrivals and keeping an eye on us.

At 6pm prompt the ceremony began conducted by Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin in attendance with the Mayor of Havering, one of the borough's Anglican parish priests and Andrew Rosindell the MP for Romford.

Rabbi Sufrin made a very moving speech referring to the 100+ hostages still held in Gaza. He said, Only light can drive out darkness, here in Romford tonight we are a light unto the

nations. There are 15,000 Menorah candles throughout the world. When we look at the ones in important places such as in Trafalgar Square, or the huge one in Manhattan, they are incomplete without the local menorah here in Romford and the other places of Essex.

Andrew Rosindell spoke of free speech and freedom of religion and the Judeo-Christian foundations of our country.

The way the Romford menorah works (as I remembered from last year) is that each branch of the small one is lit by a real flame and burns gas; that then triggers the linked branch of the big one which is electric. The mayor was invited to light the first and others of the community came up in turn to light the gas burner with what I can only describe as a blow torch on a stick. I thought it looked terrifying. But it worked.



As each branch was lit the Rabbi and the congregation of Romford Synagogue sang blessings (a service card was passed round with the words in Hebrew and phonetic Latin script) and songs some of which were in English.

*I have a little dreidel, I made it out of clay,
And when it's dry and ready, Then dreidel, I shall play.*

Then at the end Rabbi Sufrin invited everyone to turn our mobile phones on and bring lights to the last song.



There was a general invitation to walk to the Synagogue for refreshments and the ceremony concluded.



I said the blow torch onna stick looked terrifying?
This is how they were lit on Christmas night in Loughton. My

husband said he was sorry to miss that. But we were otherwise engaged.

Menorah lighting ceremony in Loughton, Essex. This is why I love Chabad 📷 pic.twitter.com/zzU0IOXMpG

– 📷📷 (@cbdoilbuzz) [December 30, 2024](#)

Photographs E Weatherwax and her husband Essex December 2024