



## NEWS RELEASE

**8 August 2007**

**For immediate release**

### **JCoSS wins planning consent - Welcomed across the community**

JCoSS, the Jewish Community Secondary School, won overwhelming planning consent at a meeting of Barnet Council's environment and planning committee at Hendon Town Hall on 8th August 2007, attended by over 100 JCoSS supporters. JCoSS is now set to become the first Jewish secondary school in the UK to welcome, on an equal basis, Jews of all backgrounds, beliefs and abilities.

The school, to be sited off Westbrook Crescent, East Barnet, will open in Sept 2010, and will grow to provide places for 1310 students, aged from 11-18. This will include a 50 place Special Unit for children with severe and complex disabilities in partnership with Norwood.

Addressing the meeting on JCoSS's behalf, Trustee Marc Herman, said:

"This is an incredibly exciting moment for all who have believed in and fought for JCoSS over the past six years. We are hugely humbled by the support we have received from politicians of all parties, all sections of the Jewish community and local residents. We know some concerns remain and we look forward to working with our neighbours in a positive spirit to do what we can to address them."

Applauding Barnet's decision, President of the Board of Deputies, Henry Grunwald, said:

"This is a hugely important project for the Jewish community. JCoSS will add a new dimension of choice for Jewish parents in their children's education. Barnet made the right decision."

Project backer, Gerald Ronson, who is heading up the design and build stage of the project, added:

“By focusing on excellence JCoSS will lead parents who want to send their children to a first rate school to rediscover their Jewish roots and draw them back into our community. What better way to reach out to those who might otherwise be lost to Judaism than through education and through their children?”

“This is a massive outreach project for the Jewish community with substantial Government funding,” he concluded.

Also welcoming the approval, Richard Desmond, President of Norwood, said:

“JCoSS’s Special Unit will provide for the first time the opportunity for children with severe and complex disabilities to travel to and from school with their siblings. By re-locating the existing residential Annie Lawson School in Berkshire to the heart of the Jewish community, it will also enable many children with special needs to live at home for the first time.”

Norwood funder, Trevor Pears of the Pears Foundation, said:

"Our Foundation is delighted that the long planned new special school to be co-located with JCoSS has taken another step forward to becoming a reality. This partnership with Norwood will ensure that children with special educational needs will have the best possible facilities. Without doubt the inclusive vision of this project, bringing children of all abilities together, is an additional and exciting element."

Mick Davis, Chair of the UJIA, added:

"It is my profound belief that Jewish education is fundamental to ensuring the growth and vibrancy of the Jewish People and the continuity of our tradition. JCoSS is an important element in ensuring that every section of the community is served, providing choice and access for all to a quality and meaningful educational experience."

In a letter of support to the planning committee, local MP, Theresa Villiers, wrote:

“I believe the school will make an excellent addition to the borough’s educational facilities and give an important new choice to parents in Barnet.”

Messages of support have also flooded in from all sections of the community from Orthodox to Liberal. Rabbi Tony Bayfield, Head of the Reform Movement, Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism and Michael Burman, the Chair of the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues have all sent congratulations on behalf of their organisations.

JCoSS is set to receive around £36 million in public funding from central government, with the community expected to fund additional costs. Michael Phillips, the JCoSS Trust Chair who spearheaded the setting up of Immanuel College, and Gerald Ronson will lead the fundraising effort.

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Computer generated images available on request

### ***Notes to Editors***

JCoSS’s aim is academic excellence, religious and ethical commitment and inclusivity. It will be the only Jewish secondary school in the UK to welcome on an equal basis Jews of all backgrounds, beliefs and - in partnership with Norwood - abilities. It will offer first class, state-of-the art facilities, in a specially constructed building. It will be outward looking, encouraging students to learn about other cultures and religions. It will use the national curriculum to teach students about their Judaism, while preparing them to play a full part in the world outside as proud, confident Jews, and ambassadors for our faith and values. It will include within it a co-located Special Unit for children with profound and severe disabilities. For the first time, it will enable brothers and sisters to go to school together and for some - by bringing Norwood’s facilities closer to home - it will enable them to live together too.

The Pears Foundation are long standing supporters of Norwood and have made a £2m donation towards the new special school.

For further information please see <http://www.jcoss.org>