

PARISH NEWSLETTER ANGERS JEWISH COMMUNITY

MP calls for vicar's resignation

HENDON South MP John Marshall has called for a vicar to resign after he suggested that plans for an eruv were only approved because of the government's reluctance to turn down requests from the Jewish community.

The MP said the Rev John Wainwright of All Saints' Church, off Lyndale Avenue, Childs Hill, should be transferred to another parish because his views on the eruv, a symbolic zone relaxing strict Sabbath laws for Orthodox Jews, were unChristian and anti-Semitic.

The MP said: "He should go to his bishop and ask to be transferred. Quite frankly, his views are unChristian and out of tune with those of his parishioners. It does seem to me that someone who holds anti-Semitic views should not seek to represent the church and still less should be a vicar in this part of London."

He found it offensive that the vicar had singled out the Jewish community and added: "We are all God's creatures whatever our religious faith."

Mr Wainwright insisted his remarks, made in a parish newsletter, had been misinterpreted and he was not implying the government was "beholden" to the Jewish community.

In the newsletter, the vicar wrote: "Because the Chief Rabbi spoke in favour of the proposal, it became inevitable the

by PAUL FRANCIS

go-ahead would be given simply because all governments are reluctant to turn down requests from this community." The newsletter, which has angered many of his Jewish parishioners, also said: "When and if the erection of an eruv takes place, Childs Hill will become part of the Jewish area of London."

On Sunday, Mr Wainwright, who spoke out at the public inquiry into the eruv last year, attempted to defuse the growing row by making a brief public statement in church.

He said he had the "highest regard" for the Jewish community and that he understood why the government had given the go-ahead for the eruv. His opposition was based on the eruv's aesthetic impact, not its "social implications", he added.

But this week, Mr Wainwright would not be drawn on whether he regretted the comments and said: "One should be able to say one is anti-eruv if one wants

to. The point I was making was not that the government was beholden to the Jewish community but because of the esteem in which it is held. An eruv will cause resentment...that is the tragedy of it."

The Bishop of Edmonton's office would not say if Mr Wainwright had been instructed to retract his remarks but issued a copy of the statement he made in church.

Parents win crossing for pupils

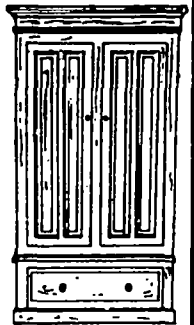
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