



The Yizraelite – No 2239 Date: 9.1.26

Kibbutz Yizrael

Reut's Editorial: The newsletter always combines the material and the spiritual aspects of our kibbutz. This week that combination is especially evident: at the beginning of the issue, we cover the team that operates our dairy. They went out to demonstrate against the reform being planned by the Minister of Finance for the Israeli dairy industry; and at the end of the issue, we feature an article from the culture and literature supplement of **Haaretz**, including several pieces published in honour of the 90th birthday of **Patchi, Professor Abraham Shapira**, one of the great spiritual giants of the State of Israel.

Thank you to the Good Samaritans – Yisrael and Ora Mor

Thank you to the members, the construction team, and the Veterans Committee who came to our aid on Friday evening following the flooding of our home due to the heavy rain that fell that night. The rain and the pumping continued until the early hours of the morning — full credit to you for your responsiveness and help. Ora and Yisrael Mor.

Update from the Secretary

Tamar Oosterhoff, daughter of Yael Ben Shitrit, will be staying on the kibbutz for several months as a temporary resident. Tamar will be living in an apartment in the eastern housing area. Limor Griman



Upcoming Community Management Committee Meeting

Sunday, 11.01.26, at 17:30, in the meeting room

Agenda:

1. Payments by new members to the nursing care fund
2. Accompanying candidates towards the membership vote
3. Distribution of profit bonus to the young generation
4. Kitchen Renovation Plan



Summary of a Joint Meeting of the Management Committee and Community Management - 04.01.26

Participants:

Erez Peleg, Talia Arad, Yifat Segal, Yishai Levi, Kineret Govrin, Maor Parsai, Noga Harpaz, Naomi Amit, Shlomo Levi, Tami Penn, Uri Gilad, Eviatar Assaf, Elad Ilan, Doron Kagan, Idan Zilas, Inbal Pezaro, Jeremy Perling, Limor Griman.

Agenda:

Approval of the Community Budget for 2026:

- a. Operating budget
- b. Investment budget
- c. Credit framework

1. Review of 2025

During 2025, after it became clear that the full amount from the profit distribution key would not be received, a decision was made to update and cut the budget. The total cut amounted to approximately NIS 2.5 million: NIS 0.5 million from the operating budget and an additional NIS 2 million from the investment funds. Despite the cuts, the year is expected to conclude with a surplus of about NIS 700,000.

The main factors contributing to the money not spent in the 2025 budget were tight managerial oversight and a shortage of manpower in almost all branches, which had a particularly significant impact on education and early childhood services.

Items that exceeded the budget significantly were the personal budget (approximately NIS 350,000, due to changes that were difficult to anticipate) and the vehicle branch (approximately NIS 170,000, due to a sharp increase in insurance costs and lower-than-expected revenues).

2. Operating Budget 2026

The total community budget for 2026 is balanced and planned at NIS 52,312,000.

The new budget is higher by NIS 2.5 million compared with the actual execution in 2025. This increase is mainly due to:

- a. Planning for fully staffed positions:** The 2026 budget was planned on the basis of full staffing levels, in contrast to the 2025 execution, which suffered from under-staffing. Prolonged operation with insufficient staffing harms the level of service provided to the community and leads to high employee burnout, which, if not addressed, may further exacerbate the situation.
- b. Fixed costs:** Increases that are not dependent on the community, such as taxes (municipal tax, National Insurance), sewage levies, and price increases in various areas.
- c. Rising food prices:** The food branch has been particularly affected by significant price increases, with food costs rising by approximately 7–8%, compared with general inflation of 2.4%. The 2026 plan budgets for this increase, alongside planning for full staffing levels. Significant difficulties were presented regarding the ability to achieve further savings or cuts in the food branch.
The branch expects to increase its revenues with the arrival of regional council employees working on the kibbutz, but this has not yet been reflected in the plan.
- d. Gardening and maintenance branch:** The increase in the gardening budget stems from the assumption of two new responsibilities: landscaping the industrial zone and maintaining the rugby field, which were previously carried out by contractors.
- e. Increase in the personal budget:** A 2.5% increase in personal budgets and the planned growth in the number of members (including new absorption).

Community revenue sources include an increase of nearly NIS 2 million in community income, mainly from employment income (NIS 950,000) and allowances.

Members requested that, when presenting the budget, the percentage change from the 2026 plan compared with the 2025 execution forecast also be presented.

3. Investments and Infrastructure

The total investments submitted for approval amount to NIS 16,075,000:

- **Housing:** The majority of the budget (approximately NIS 15.5 million) is allocated to housing investments, primarily to complete Phase B of the Rugby Neighbourhood. The total project is expected to be completed at approximately NIS 39.5 million.
- **Public buildings:** The plan includes renovation of temporary apartments (NIS 650,000) and an investment of NIS 370,000 to reinforce the kitchen's electrical system, to prevent collapse of the steam system and enable a transition to electrical systems. It was proposed to expand the scope of the kitchen renovation in accordance with the fund's ability to finance it.

Members of the Management Committee requested that the entire renovation project be presented as a multi-year project within the investment plan.

4. Credit Framework

The maximum recommended credit framework for approval was set at NIS 36 million by the end of 2026, of which approximately NIS 33 million is related to the housing project. A question was raised regarding the need to establish clear financial criteria (covenants) that would determine when additional construction phases could begin. It was stated that it would not be appropriate to set criteria in advance and that it would be preferable to examine the full range of needs and possibilities at the relevant time. Members of the Management Committee requested to continue the discussion on this issue at a Management Committee meeting.

Members requested that the Economic Council also be presented with the community's outstanding loans and a forecast through 2028.

Reference to the 2025 surplus (NIS 700,000):

It was proposed to use the surplus to return funds to the investment funds, in order to reduce the need for new loans in 2026. The specific proposal is to return approximately NIS 240,000 to the Infrastructure Fund (to cover a loan) and the remaining balance to the Housing Fund. In addition, the need was raised to return the amount to the "safety cushion" against the deficit approved in the 2024 operating budget (approximately NIS 1.3 million).

With regard to manpower and staffing shortages across the various branches, a proposal was raised to examine a model of member and volunteer work on Fridays as a partial solution to the shortage and as a means of creating savings.

Decisions

The Management Committee approved, without opposition, a recommendation to the Economic Council to approve the following three items:

1. Approval of the community operating budget (NIS 52,312,000).
2. Approval of the investment programme (NIS 16,075,000).
3. Approval of a credit framework for the community (NIS 36,000,000).

Submitted by: Limor Griman



Summary of the Economic Council Meeting - 05.01.26

Chair: Uri Gilad

Secretary: Idan Zilas

Participants: 22 council members

Agenda

4. Lease Agreement with the Gilboa Regional Council

The Gilboa Regional Council is interested in leasing the former Maytronics buildings (approximately 2,300–2,400 sqm of office space) for a period of three years, with an option for an additional three years. This follows the Regional Council's decision to vacate its current offices while awaiting construction of a new building at Mevo'ot Gilboa.

The rental fees are similar to those previously paid by Maytronics. Required adaptations (separation of systems, construction of toilets, and physical separation) will be financed partly by the kibbutz and partly by Maytronics and the Regional Council. The Council is expected to fund the construction of a parking lot in the western part of the industrial zone for use by Council employees and visitors.

The daily entry of approximately 150 Council employees on the kibbutz presents significant potential for additional ancillary income from service branches (food, maintenance, laundry).

2. Review of Agricultural Performance in 2025 and Work Plan and Budget for 2026

Agriculture is expected to conclude 2025 with a profit of NIS 4.7 million, an improvement of NIS 1.2 million above plan. The main contribution (over NIS 4 million before allocation of general overheads) comes from the dairy branch, which showed impressive growth following the merger with the Maoz Haim dairy.

The 2026 plan forecasts an agricultural profit of NIS 5.5 million, reflecting further improvement in the dairy, improvements in orchards (olives and almonds), and the entry of “Milobar” as a renter in the poultry houses.

Crop Branch

The field crops branch is expected to finish 2025 with a profit of approximately NIS 1.2 million, both in the 2025 forecast and in the 2026 plan, before allocation of general overheads. There has been a reduction of 250 dunams in field crop area, from 4,800 dunams, in favour of new orchards such as bananas, olives, and carobs.

Losses in 2025 were mainly caused by onion cultivation due to low market prices despite good yields. The almond orchard was reduced from nearly 1,000 dunams to 460 dunams and ended 2025 with a loss of NIS 230,000 due to frost. The olive branch is expected to reach a profit of NIS 160,000 in 2026, partly due to the addition of a new 80-dunam orchard and continued private sales within the kibbutz.

Investments and New Projects

- **Bananas:** A partnership agreement was signed with “Doctor Banana” for planting a 116-dunam plantation. The project is intended to diversify risk and introduce an intensive crop providing steady cash flow for most of the year. The partner brings expertise, while the partnership pays land-use fees (NIS 800 per dunam) and participates in labour and water costs. During the establishment phase, the agricultural corporation does not invest capital. Concerns were raised about the imbalance between the partner (who markets the produce) and the kibbutz (which grows it), but it was noted that banana sales to the partner are regulated by the agreement and that there is a relatively convenient exit clause after two to three years.
- **Carob and Olives:** During 2026, planting is planned for 160 dunams of carob and 150 dunams of olives. Investment in these projects (NIS 1.4 million out of a total expected NIS 1.7 million investment in the crop branch in 2026) is based on the use of existing water infrastructure, resulting in significant savings in establishment costs.

Transfer of Profits from Agriculture (Dividend)

Cash flow from ongoing agricultural operations in 2025 is expected to be NIS 6 million. After financing investments (approximately NIS 4 million) and loan repayments (NIS 700,000), a free balance of NIS 1.5 million remains. The decision of the Agricultural Corporation is to transfer 50 per cent, amounting to NIS 750,000, to Holdings. The exact dividend amount will be determined after finalising the Agricultural Corporation’s 2025 financial statements.

This issue sparked debate: some argued that a higher amount could be transferred, while others noted that no profits had been distributed at all in the past four years. It

was also stated that limiting the transfer reflects the need to strengthen the agricultural sector's financial resilience and reduce debt.

5. Review of Holdings Company Forecast for 2025 and Work Plan and Budget for 2026

The Holdings Company is expected to record a profit from ongoing operations of NIS 9.7 million in both 2025 and the 2026 forecast. The most significant factor is the absence of a dividend from Maytronics in 2025, with no dividend budgeted for 2026. Ongoing cash flow for Holdings (including depreciation) stands at NIS 16 million in both years.

Cash Flow Situation and Use of Funds

- **2025:** The entire NIS 16 million of operating cash flow was used for investments, including completion of payment for the Kapro transaction. In addition, NIS 10 million was repaid to reduce outstanding loans, and NIS 20 million in profits was transferred to the kibbutz. To finance this, the Holdings Company drew on existing reserves totalling NIS 30 million (Business Fund). It was argued that the transfer of NIS 20 million was made despite a cash flow loss of NIS 10 million that year, contrary to kibbutz decisions. The matter was reported and approved by the Economic Council in September 2025.
- **2026 (Plan):** Of the NIS 16 million in cash flow, NIS 9 million will be transferred to the kibbutz as profits, and the remaining NIS 6 million will be allocated to loan repayments. Almost no investments are planned for Holdings this year (approximately NIS 0.5 million).

Income Sources and Key Issues

Holdings income is derived mainly from income-producing real estate and from subsidiary companies (approximately NIS 4 million from each pillar).

- **Income-Producing Real Estate:** Revenues of NIS 14 million, of which NIS 12.2 million come from Maytronics. This figure is expected to change with the entry of the Regional Council.
- **Subsidiary Companies:** Income is generated from a range of companies (Teldor, Kapro, Tamuz, Ma'agan Eden, Netzer, Tnuva).
- **Dor Alon Fuel Station:** A discussion took place regarding the planned investment in expanding the Dor Alon fuel station, an investment previously approved. It was asked whether the viability of this investment could be reconsidered, as it limits the transfer of profits from the fuel station to the kibbutz.

Concerns were raised regarding certain companies that are unable to cover the interest on their acquisition loans (debt of approximately NIS 40 million). Holdings representatives stated that they are working to improve the situation of these companies and are considering additional steps to enhance the cash flow reaching the kibbutz.

Debt

Total Holdings debt at the end of 2025 stood at approximately NIS 100 million (NIS 42 million from company acquisitions and NIS 58 million from real estate investments). The plan is to reduce debt to NIS 94 million by the end of 2026 through repayments of approximately NIS 6 million. Average interest stands at approximately 6 per cent.

A discussion was held regarding the authority of the Economic Council to change decisions made by the boards of subsidiary companies, such as halting investments in favour of increasing dividends. Some members argued that, as owner of the corporations, the kibbutz should demand higher profit transfers to meet community needs. Others cautioned against intervention by the Economic Council in decisions of the Agriculture and Holdings boards, warning that this could harm the companies' financial stability.

The overall message conveyed to Holdings management, despite approval of the budget, was that the owners (the community/kibbutz) currently require more cash, and that consideration should be given to deferring certain future investments in order to increase cash flow transfers.

Voting Decisions of the Economic Council

1. Approval of the Yizrael Holdings budget for 2026: approved by a majority of 17 in favour, 2 against, and 2 abstentions.
2. Approval of the Yizrael Holdings credit framework for 2026 up to NIS 100 million: approved by a majority of 19 in favour, none opposed, and 2 abstentions.
3. Approval of Brit Pikuch as auditor of Yizrael Holdings for 2026: 21 in favour.

Reported by: Limor Griman

The so-called “Reform” of the Dairy Industry. Saar Matalon



The dairy reform being led by Finance Minister **Bezalel Smotrich** will open Israel's dairy sector to free imports and abolish the quota system that has regulated production and imports until now. Lowering import taxes on dairy products will allow unlimited entry of imported milk.

At first, prices may fall, but as has already happened in the past, prices are expected to rise over time and may even become higher than they were before the reform. This occurred, for example, following the fish import reform.

Beyond the long-term harm to consumers, around 400 small dairies in the periphery and border regions are expected to close.

This would lead to further shrinkage of the population that settles and sustains the border areas and agricultural regions. The reform gravely harms Israeli agriculture, creates dependence on foreign produce instead of a secure and independent food anchor, and undermines the food security of Israel's residents.



Dairy farmers and agricultural workers from across the country are mobilising against this destructive reform. Last Monday, a large demonstration took place at junctions throughout the country. The Yizrael dairy workers took part in the protests



Justifiably crying over spilt milk



Summary of Community Executive Committee Meeting -

28.12.25

Present:

Erez Peleg, Talia Arad, Yifat Segal, Yishai Levi, Maor Parsai, Naomi Amit, Shlomo Levi, Tami Penn, Tamir Blass, Limor Griman

Agenda

1. Information and miscellaneous matters

Members of the Community Executive Committee raised the need to discuss cases of divorce between members and to examine whether there is a need to create a formal procedure that would consolidate all issues related to this matter. Such a procedure would also need to address the fact that, under the Kibbutz Charter and its decisions, in every case of a divorce agreement between members, the kibbutz is a party to the agreement and must be involved in shaping its terms.

2. Rights and obligations for Members on reserve Military Duty service

Background:

Until October 2023, Yizrael had an arrangement under which a reserve soldier received a daily allowance (per diem) for each day of reserve service. Following the “Iron Swords” war, the state began, in 2024, distributing support and recognition grants to reserve soldiers.

In May 2024, the Community Executive Committee held several discussions on the matter and decided that the reserve duty grants would be transferred directly to the serving members, and that those members would not receive a per diem for those reserve days.

Now, in light of the ongoing state of war as defined by the state, there is a need to regulate the arrangement going forward as well, in order to provide both reserve soldiers and office-holders with a clear framework.

The discussion regarding the reserve service arrangement focused mainly on determining the guiding principle of the kibbutz, as a cooperative society, with respect to compensation for reserve soldiers.

The idea underlying the proposed arrangement is to continue transferring the grants directly to the reserve soldiers, while at the same time cancelling the per diem and

transferring responsibility for financing their day-to-day needs during reserve service.
(*Note: the sentence is not entirely clear — to whom the responsibility is transferred.*)

It should be emphasised that several types of compensation are received in relation to reserve service days:

1. Salary paid by the National Insurance Institute, which will continue to be transferred to the kibbutz in order to supplement work income.
2. Various reimbursements — travel expenses, emotional therapy, and more.
3. Grants intended for additional support and recognition.

Points raised in the discussion:

- Reliance on the state: the kibbutz should “go with the state” and rely on it to provide reserve soldiers with everything they need, from emotional therapy to recreation, thereby relieving the kibbutz of the need to budget for or deal with per diem payments and various reimbursements.
- Conversely, the view was expressed that in a cooperative kibbutz, financial grants and benefits given to members for reserve service should be transferred to the kibbutz, and the member should receive what is due to them through the kibbutz budget, as was practiced in the past.
- Concern was expressed regarding lack of control: if the state decides tomorrow to stop grants or reduce them, the kibbutz would have to step in and provide a supplement. Therefore, it was agreed that it is important to define the validity period of the arrangement, so that it will be re-examined if the grants provided by the state change in a substantial way.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a vote was held on the proposed arrangement with the adjustments and changes.

Vote results:

In favour – 7

Against – 1

Abstained – 2

Decision:

The Community Executive Committee approved the reserve service arrangement
(Appears below)

Limor Griman

Arrangement for Reservists on Kibbutz Yizrael

Purpose of the Arrangement

The kibbutz encourages its members to take an active part in reserve military service, out of responsibility and concern for the security of the state.

Since 07.10.23, the State of Israel has been in a state of war, affecting the nature of reserve service, the reservist and their family, and consequently also changing the support provided to reservists and their families by the defence system.

The purpose of this document is to regulate the rights and obligations relating to reserve service of a kibbutz member.

This arrangement will remain in force as long as there is no material change in the conditions of reserve service and in the reward policies of the defence system. A distinction is made between National Insurance payments for reserve days served, which constitute salary replacement for the reservist's work, and reserve grants given as recognition and support for the reservist and their family.

This arrangement also applies to candidates for membership. Wherever the term "member" appears, it also refers to a candidate.

The arrangement is written in the masculine form for convenience only and applies equally to female reservists.

Details of the Arrangement

1. Work

a. Daily Pay

The National Insurance Institute is required to provide salary replacement to every reservist according to their wage rate in the three months preceding the service. This payment will be transferred in full directly to the kibbutz treasury, as follows:

- **Outside Workers** – the member submits the reserve service form (3010) to their employer, who claims the salary replacement from National Insurance. The amount received is transferred to the employer, and the member receives it in their payslip as usual. There is therefore no reduction in the salary transferred to the kibbutz.
- **Community worker or kibbutz corporation worker** – the member submits the reserve service form (3010) to the accounts department, which claims the salary replacement from National Insurance. The payment is transferred directly to the kibbutz treasury.

b. Working Hours

- Each day of reserve service, including weekends and holidays, is counted as eight

working hours, equivalent to a regular working day, and is included in the member's monthly hours accumulation.

- **Outside Workers** – the member provides the reserve service confirmation to the employer and receives the corresponding workdays or hours. In addition, the member reports to the kibbutz work registrar, who records the additional reserve days, including weekends and holidays.
- **Community employee or kibbutz corporation employee** – the employee submits the reserve service confirmation to the kibbutz work registrar, who records the reserve days as working hours in the member's personal file.

2. Rights

a. Duty Shifts

- A kibbutz member called up for an extended period of reserve service is responsible for informing the duty coordinator in advance and will not be scheduled for duty shifts during that period.
- If the serving member has a child below fourth grade, their spouse will also not be scheduled for duty shifts during the member's reserve service.
- A kibbutz member who has completed a continuous reserve service period of one month or more will not be scheduled for duty shifts during the first two weeks after release.

b. Vehicle

- A kibbutz member who wishes to take a vehicle from the communal pool for reserve service may do so only with the approval of the Vehicle Committee coordinator.
- The member bears the cost of vehicle use in the same way as for any private journey, in light of receiving travel reimbursements from the army for reserve service days.

c. Babysitting

- A family requiring babysitting services due to one parent's reserve service may submit an organised request to the secretary, who will assist in locating and arranging a babysitter for the required period.
- The cost of the babysitting service is borne by the member.

d. Per Diem Allowance

The member is not entitled to receive a per diem allowance from the kibbutz for days of reserve service.

e. Emotional Support

A member requiring emotional or psychological assistance for themselves or for family members is invited to contact the relevant bodies on the kibbutz for guidance and support.

The member must first exhaust the assistance provided by the state in the field of mental health for themselves and their family members. Requests for reimbursement from the Health and Welfare Cluster may be submitted only after personal entitlements granted by the state have been fully utilised, and in accordance with the health reimbursement procedure.

f. Reserve Grants

- A reserve grant is a payment made by the state to the reservist and is not defined as salary replacement.
- Grants vary from time to time and are subject to state decisions.
- Most grants are influenced by the number of reserve days served, the role, and the posting of the reservist.
- All reserve grants received in connection with the service are credited to the member.
- Grants that include travel reimbursements and family or babysitting grants constitute a credit to the member for travel expenses and childcare costs incurred during reserve service.
- Receipt of grants: unlike salary replacement paid via National Insurance upon submission of the reserve service confirmation form (3010), reserve grants are transferred directly to the bank account entered in the reservist's profile on the reserve service website.

The member has two options for receiving the grant:

- a. Entering the kibbutz bank account details on the reserve service website. In this case, the member is responsible for tracking the grants received and requesting them from the accounts department, which will credit the amount to the member's personal budget.
- b. Entering the member's personal bank account details on the reserve service website, in which case the grant is transferred directly to the member.

Injuries During Service

The kibbutz will support and accompany a member injured during reserve service through the Health and Welfare Cluster, in accordance with the health procedure.

Approval

Approved by the Community Management Committee

Approval date: 28.12.25



From the Desk of the Community Manager



Survey on the Level of Use of the Food Branch Resource

The survey examining the level of use of the Food Branch resource was completed about two weeks ago. 197 questionnaires were filled in, out of a potential 240. At this stage, the data are being processed and analysed in order to draw conclusions and present recommendations to the Community Management.

We are aware of the technological limitation that allowed more than one questionnaire to be completed per family. We took this into account, based on the belief that even if this occurred, its impact on the results would be marginal. I hope we will be able to complete the data analysis by the end of the month.

We Are Looking for a Security Coordinator

Yarden is due to finish her role as Security Coordinator after two years in the position. We are looking for the next Security Coordinator (man or woman), and it is very important to us that this be someone who lives on the kibbutz. In general, the working hours of the Security Coordinator are very flexible, so the role can be combined as a half-time position alongside another half-time job on the kibbutz.

If no suitable person is found from within the kibbutz, we will be forced to recruit a salaried Security Coordinator who does not live on the kibbutz. This would involve additional expenses, as well as reduced availability and effectiveness in carrying out the role.

The Community Budget for 2026

Community Management has completed the planning of the community budget for 2026, and the budget, which includes an investment programme, was approved by the Management Committee at a meeting held at the beginning of this week. The budget will be brought for approval to the Economic Council on Monday, 19.01.26.

The budget is presented as a balanced budget and addresses the various needs of the community, including a significant investment in housing in order to complete Phase B of the Rugby Neighbourhood.

To fund the investments, the community will need to take out additional loans in order to complete the financing sources. The less we consume from the ongoing budget, the

more we will be able to divert funds from current expenditure towards investments, thereby reducing the need to take out loans.

Since our behaviour and conduct as members and residents have a significant impact on community expenditure, I call on everyone to take personal responsibility and do whatever possible to avoid wasting resources and to reduce community expenses.

Licensing and Insurance Required for Electric Bicycles and Scooters

By law, electric bicycles and electric scooters are required to be licensed and insured with compulsory insurance. Members who own private electric bicycles or scooters on the kibbutz are required to pass a theory test and register online in the Ministry of Transport's "Mobility" system. The system issues a personal registration number for the installation of an identification plate on the vehicle. After that, a compulsory insurance policy must be taken out.

Please note that the Ministry of Transport treats these vehicles in the same way as any other motorised vehicle. Further details can be found on the Ministry of Transport website under Vehicle Licensing – Licensing of Electric Bicycles and Scooters.

That's all for now,
Erez Peleg

From the Desk of the Committee Appointments Committee

The Committee Appointments Committee issues a **call for nominations**, inviting members to submit their candidacy for the following committees:

- **Demography Cluster** – one representative
- **Housing Committee** – two representatives
- **Coordinator of the Young Generation Committee**
- **Coordinator of the Residents Committee**

Nominations may be submitted to any member of the committee **until 22.01.26**.

Kinneret Govrin, Albert Rosilio, Liran Penn, Navot Assaf, Dotan Savir, Shelly Edelstein, Hedva Sharabani

Update from the Noi (Gardners)



We have finally had Rainy days, and how blessed we are — winter has finally arrived.

December was a rainy month, a wonderful way to end the year.

The year 2025 passed for the branch as a “reserve duty year,” a year in which we focused mainly on maintaining the kibbutz grounds. Toward the end of the year, we managed to advance several projects, some of which will continue with us into 2026.

We consolidated irrigation systems in order to reduce the number of irrigation control heads and, as a result, reduce maintenance work in the future. We established new gardens at the dairy, between sheds 4–6, with the help of Navot Assaf, who assists us greatly in many ways and in additional projects. We are transplanting trees from the western parking area of Hod Housing to the Field Crops Park to enable the parking expansion project to move forward. Following the construction of a fence in the early childhood area, we are in the process of restoring and upgrading the landscaping there as well. You are warmly invited to visit any of these areas and see for yourselves.

Toward the end of the year, there were some changes in the branch’s workforce. Cnaan Dolinko completed the “soft landing” programme on the kibbutz and is moving on. Many thanks to Cnaan, who made a big contribution to the branch. He even managed to serve as a lifeguard at the pool in-between (this past summer).

Eden Armoza has joined us and we look forward to working with him, especially with the gardening genes that run in the family (Arnie Friedman, of blessed memory, Eden’s grandfather, served for many years as head of the Noi). (*No pressure – Ed*) Eden has entered the “soft landing” programme after returning from a long trip abroad.

In addition, the branch currently includes Rotem Agmon and Maron Levin, who consistently give far more than expected.

Einan Grosser (on reserve duty) and Yotam Assaf (on leave) are not officially working at the moment, but they are always willing to step in and help whenever they can. Thank you all — the kibbutz, the gardens, and I are deeply grateful for your work.

During winter, especially in rainy conditions, we try to work as much as possible in the gardens and grounds, but sometimes conditions do not allow it, and we use the time to maintain tools and the new compound.

At this time, we are focusing on strong pruning of shrubs, especially along paths and pavements throughout the kibbutz. Soon we will begin pruning young trees, with the aim of shaping them early on and thus reducing the need when the trees mature.

If you look around, you can see nature at its most beautiful — everything is green and flourishing, or trees are entering dormancy, with reds, yellows, and purples taking over and catching the eye.

The branch does not spray against weeds, and as a result we enjoy green, flowering carpets across the kibbutz. At the same time, seasonal plants may sometimes “interfere,” and therefore the mowing and cutting season will begin soon. We will make an effort to mow and cut in certain areas, while leaving other areas wilder, to provide shelter for small animals and insects and to allow plants we wish to preserve to mature and disperse their seeds, so that they will grow again next year. If there are problematic areas, you are always welcome to contact me and ask that we address them.

In 2026, we will of course strive to improve in every professional area.

We have an important ongoing project concerning trees: all trees on the kibbutz need to be numbered and catalogued, in order to monitor them and care for them in the best possible way.

We will continue to advance water management in the branch and improve irrigation efficiency.

The major project for 2026 will be the establishment of public landscaping in the Rugby Neighborhood. We are currently in the final stages of approving the planting plan.

We recommended using Kehilant for making gardening service requests, or to speak with me (Shachar) directly.

Until the last hostage returns, and wishing success to us all,
On behalf of the Noi,
Shachar Levi

Summary of the Opening Meeting of the Safety Committee -

14.02.25 – Yaniv Lifshitz

Participants: Erez, Yaniv, Eli, Idit, Inbal Adler, Talia

Vehicle Movement and Parking on Kibbutz Paths

Mobility Scooters (Kalnoyot)

- Serve as “legs” for their users, therefore their use cannot be overly restricted.
- Use of kibbutz-owned vehicles requires training (Mobility Scooter Committee).
- Of approximately 50 vehicles, several are not kibbutz-owned, which makes it difficult to impose restrictions regarding drivers’ age and similar issues.

Club Cars

- Club cars are operational vehicles that require a driving licence and insurance (but not formal vehicle registration).
- There is no specific restriction on movement within the kibbutz.
- Parking in the Dining Hall Plaza is prohibited. In practice, some still park there (both branches and private users).

We reiterate and emphasise: the entrance plaza to the Dining Hall is intended for pedestrians and mobility scooter parking only. Movement of vehicles together with pedestrians creates a high risk of accidents, especially in winter when visibility is poor. Therefore, mobility scooters should be parked in the designated parking area whenever possible. Large vehicles beyond a mobility scooter, such as a Club Car or Mule, must not enter the Dining Hall Plaza and should be parked in the spaces near the Hut or the ramp.

On the Agenda

- Examination and implementation of a speed limit of 6 km/h only.
- Scheduling a site tour with Yaakov Levi to examine options for signage and additional solutions.

Additional Issues Raised

- Repair of potholes in the asphalt (subject to a limited quantity of material) in the coming weeks.
- Raising the handrail at the exit from the Dining Hall to 110 cm – by the end of December.
- Paving of muddy paths (following a request submitted by Noga Shapira) is not currently planned due to budget considerations.

We opened 2026 in style... Shelly Moshe Edelstein



Last Friday night (2.1.26) we gathered at the pub to celebrate the start of the new year.

From the younger generation to our veterans, we came together for dancing, treats, and the announcement of our People of the Year!



The Culture Team conducted the sparkling production, the pub team spoiled us with wonderful cocktails, Anton (yes, Anton from vehicle scheduling...) was the D.J., and on top of that, we enjoyed sweet food stalls.

The evening flowed between a lively, packed dance floor and relaxed conversation, under excellent patio heaters, with an added bonus of sweet calories.

The highlight of the night came under the guidance of Amir Beutler and Amir Darom, who revealed the winners of this year's People of the Year.

After a stormy week of voting, a special committee convened to count the votes and verify the integrity of the process, and the winners were announced!

So, for those who missed it, here they are:

Food Branch: Hanan and Maya Shaliv, always appreciative, kind, and supportive.

Vehicle Branch: Liron Lutyens, who always returns the vehicle on time, clean, and fuelled.

Clothing Branch: Yoni Brauman, who makes sure to throw in marked clothes only, unroll sleeves, and collect laundry on time.

Committees' Favourite: Yishai Levi, who leads countless committees and gets things moving.

Outstanding Duty Person: Shlomo Cohen Schwartz – no further words needed!

Outstanding Kehilat Moderator: Marnina Gross, who always responds kindly and keeps us all informed.

Best Neighbours: Miriam and Derek Davidson, because good alcohol and a shared safe room are truly an experience.

Dining Hall Enthusiasts: The Assaf family. Shakshuka, eggs, or soup – the main thing is meeting with love.

Want to be next year's winners?

The People of the Year 2026 competition is officially underway...

Don't ask what the kibbutz can do for you – ask what you can do for the kibbutz!

Thank you to everyone who came, smiled, danced, ate, and helped.
That's how you open a year on a kibbutz!

I wish us all a 2026 full of goodness and action, health and fulfilment, bright and better days.

Amen – may Ran Gvili return to us very soon!

Shelly Moshe Edelstein

Jezebel Writes to Rani Gvili– Tzafnat Mor

Rani, can you hear me? This is Jezebel.
We don't know each other, and we've never met. Our paths never crossed at any point, at least not in this life.
But know this, Rani: I think of you every day. You are there in Gaza, and we still haven't managed to bring you home.



You went out to defend us on that Black Saturday. Like so many good people, you rushed in without thinking twice, because the moment and the hour called for action, and you answered the call. You defended Kibbutz Alumim with your body. Since then, they call you "The Protector of Alumim." You fought to the very last bullet, until your strength was gone, giving everything, as they say.

But there was no one to protect you. The monsters took you, and since then you have been there, already 826 days and nights, and we still haven't brought you back.

You are no longer with us, yet I find myself wondering: if you could speak, what would you say?

They say only a few know where you are. There isn't enough space in the human body to contain this pain, especially for you and for your dear family. You know, Rani, they have been fighting for you from the very first moment, never giving up, even when it sometimes feels as if our "leaders" in high places have long since given up.

But we will not desert your family. Many good people support them, from near and far.

If you could speak, Rani, what would you say?

Rani, can you hear me? Jezebel is writing to you, thinking of you day and night, holding on to the hope that the State of Israel will do everything to bring you home. It's the

least that can be done for you.

Rani, maybe you can see how all of us here are waiting for you, because as long as you are there, all our hearts are there too.

Rani, can you hear me? We will bring you back. We will rise.

☀️ Did You Know? ☀️ Yitzhak Peleg

⌚ The average American spends about 5 years of life waiting in queues 😬

⚖️ In Washington there's 1 lawyer for every 19 people (talk about representation!)

🐨 Koalas are professional sleepers — up to 20 hours a day 😴

📺 The average person spends 12 full years of life watching TV 🍿



My Second Nature - Rotem Agmon

Small and Large

On the Friday preceding the New Year, I went out for a birdwatching round at the edge of what I define as my local patch. Yotam Assaf, who joined me, can attest that there was lively activity in the field, with many small songbirds—seed-eaters characterised by relatively short, thick bills (finches, greenfinches, chaffinches, bramblings, European goldfinches, Spanish sparrows and linnets).

The Common Linnet shown here has a stable, breeding population in the northern parts of the country and in our area. The number of birds we saw suggests a wintering population: around 100 individuals enjoying the seeds of dried thistle flowerheads. I don't remember seeing these numbers of linnets in this area.



Every winter, in the fields south of Afula and near the Taanach Stream, one can see several large birds of prey, such as the Greater Spotted Eagle and the larger Eastern Imperial Eagle.

The young Eastern Imperial Eagle in the photo (Left) had just finished feeding on the remains of a Grey Crane, and the bulge in its neck indicates a crop full of food. An impressive raptor, with a wingspan of over two metres.

It is endangered.

For those who wish to watch them, the dirt tracks in the fields are passable for almost any vehicle—though it is advisable to wait for dry days. I am available by phone for questions or to share observations if you've seen something interesting in nature. Shabbat shalom, Rotem Agmon



International Duck Day

Saturday, 17.01.26 at 11:00,



International Duck Day.

Come and search for rubber ducklings around the kibbutz
and win prizes! 

Forward: In honour of Patchi's ninetieth birthday, which took place a few months ago, *Haaretz* devoted its final Culture and Literature supplement of 2025 to him. The supplement included several articles, among them a serial essay, parts of which will appear in forthcoming newsletters, written by Patchi himself. In the present newsletter we bring the article by Zohar Ofaz-Lipsky:

Abraham Shapira (Patchi) at Ninety

A Trailblazer of the Jewish Renewal Movement

Haaretz, 30.12.2025

“After every war / someone has to clean up. / Some kind of order / will not come about by itself,” wrote Wisława Szymborska (“The End and the Beginning,” translated from Polish by Rafi Weichert). The war has not ended; it is dragging on. The work of repair, mending and healing will continue for a long time. Someone has to clean up. Generation after generation, and its scars.

The Six-Day War ushered in a new era in Israeli society. For the first time it became possible to address the price paid by those who returned from war whole in body but not in spirit. On the one hand, Israelis celebrated the euphoria expressed in victory albums and a culture of generals; on the other hand, the collection *Siach Lohamim* (*Soldiers' Talk*) broke new ground in processing trauma. *Siach Lohamim* is a collection of conversations held in kibbutzim across the country, edited by **Amos Oz and Abraham Shapira (Patchi)**. Together with other colleagues, they set out on a journey, moving from kibbutz to kibbutz and holding intimate discussions with groups of combatants who had returned from the fighting. Alon Gan, who studied what might today be called the “talk trend” in his doctoral research, following the phenomenal success of *Siach Lohamim*, summarised the aims of the conversations that became the book: to touch the gap between the joy of victory and the silence of the fighters, to protest the euphoria, to draw out the silent, and to deal with feelings and emotions rather than with a description of events.

Siach Lohamim sold in hundreds of copies [according to Wikipedia, about 150,000 copies were sold], was translated into many languages, and in many respects became the voice of a generation. “The book was born, perhaps, out of the feeling that people are silent, but would like, or at least something within them would like, not to be silent,” wrote Oz fifty years later. In the editors’ afterword they pointed to the need to find meaning, to repair damaged relationships, and expressed the hope that conversation is an opening and liberating force: “It is our hope that a meeting of spirit with spirit, similar to that which prevailed in the conversations, will also take shape between the speakers in this collection and the reading public whom we now meet in writing.” The editors and their partners in the initiative and the eliciting of testimony

did not aim at direct political influence; they sought to bring about change in the realm of relationships, to affect a spiritual and ethical transformation.

Their avoidance of politics has roots in the encounter with Martin Buber, who saw Zionism as a return to the assumption of responsibility by the Jewish people not only for its own fate but also for the path of humanity, in the spirit of the biblical demand. The revolution must take place in the private domain, in the community (“the congregation,” in his terminology), in the people. This is a revolution of relationships, a renewal of the covenant as a response to the divine demand for moral action. In the final years of his life, Buber warned the young kibbutz members he met against political action, against the rush towards politics and ideology. He told them: “I have no principles; I have only direction and senses, action according to the situation” (“A Meeting between Buber and Young Members of Kibbutz Afikim and Kibbutz Yizrael,” edited by Abraham Shapira). Toward the end of his life, Buber expressed reconciliation with the reality of the establishment of the state and its political institutions, but continued to warn against making political action the be-all and end-all. That was not the revolution required. Faithful to his humanistic doctrine, Buber sought the redemption of the individual within the framework of the nation.

“I myself have no doctrine, only a pointing finger,” Shapira (Patchi) quoted Buber after the Second World War, when the dimensions of the tragedy became clear. He explained that, for Buber, there was no place for “instruction,” for a “liberating” turn away from the distress of personal decision-making. In such a crisis-ridden and confused time, one can only point to the “direction,” within which each individual will find his or her own personal path, make decisions, and realise “a destiny consonant with the root of his soul” (“Buber and His Place in Contemporary Jewish Culture”). This spirit is the spirit of *Siach Lohamim*, a document that gives voice to the individual searching for his way.

The group that edited *Siach Lohamim* and the journal *Shdemot* was a pioneer in opening the Jewish bookcase and led Jewish renewal within the kibbutz movement and its geographical and cultural surroundings. How did it come about that a group of young kibbutz members took such an unexpected direction? They, who had grown up in youth movements and in the system of communal children’s sleeping arrangements in the kibbutz — frameworks that gave little expression to the individual — became bearers of the message of intimate, circular dialogue. They, the sons and daughters of pioneers who had turned their backs on the sources and the religious character of Judaism, carved their way back to the study of ancient sources, from the Sages through Maimonides and the Middle Ages to modern Jewish thought. They, members of a generation characterised by a drive for military and economic excellence, became

people who devoted many years to study in and outside academia, people who led a renewal of Jewish culture and taught generations of students.

Shapira was the one who identified the depth of the crisis and sought in Jewish sources a response to the abyss that had opened. He arrived with a garin to Kibbutz Yizrael and found a cultural and spiritual wasteland. He grew up in Haifa, carrying with him a Jewish legacy imparted by teachers such as Baruch Kurzweil and Yosef Schechter, as well as by his grandfather, who lived in their home and continued to observe a religious way of life. Patchi sought to study philosophy, and the condition set by the kibbutz was that he combines his studies at the Hebrew University with activity in the Kibbutz Movement.

He began his work in the movement's education department and decided to found a journal. As he felt his way forward, he received considerable support from his teachers at the Hebrew University, drew close to Buber, to Shmuel Hugo Bergman, Akiva Ernst Simon and Gershom Scholem, and the journal gradually took shape around the need to provide a spiritual and cultural response to young kibbutz members who had experienced a deep rupture. My father, Gad Ofaz, described it thus: "Shapira was the person who gathered us as one gathers 'abandoned eggs'." It was a work of locating individuals with a spiritual need and a yearning for meaning.

In founding the journal and the *Shdemot* circle, Patchi became the one who broke new ground for the Jewish renewal movement. Eight years after founding *Shdemot*, Patchi was ready for the next stage, and thus, when the fighting of the Six-Day War subsided, he set out with Amos Oz and other friends on a journey among the kibbutzim that yielded the collection *Siach Lohamim*.

The day after 7 October, a project of collecting testimonies began. Today it is cameras and online platforms that enable the gathering and dissemination of testimony; in the 1960s it was the reel-to-reel tape recorder that provided the technological infrastructure and made the recording and transcription of conversations possible. This is an extremely important step in processing trauma, as taught by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in their book *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, in which they wrote that the witness undergoes a process of healing from trauma through the very opportunity to tell his story and be heard.

Yet *Siach Lohamim* sought to be not only a collection presenting the testimonies of combatants; it sought to give the fighters a voice and to provide them with a listening and reading public. *Siach Lohamim* expressed scepticism towards the intoxication of victory and made space for the pain and difficulty carried back from the battlefield by those whose souls were scarred there. It was an act of renewing the covenant, in Buber's terms — a treatment of relationships, the establishment of dialogue. The

members of the *Shdemot* circle, founded by Patchi, among them Muki Tzur, Yariv Ben-Aharon, Avishai Grossman and others, were pioneers of Jewish communal renewal. Their enterprise is an educational and cultural endeavour that took place far from the limelight, yet Israeli identity cannot be understood without it.

Zohar Opaz-Lipsky





| Day and Date | Time | Activity |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Sunday 11.1.26 | 07:00 | Walk with Shlomit and Peter |
| | 16:00– 18:00 | International Dark Chocolate Day |
| ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Monday 12.1.26 | 08:00 | Pedicure with Limor Muallem |
| | 09:30 | Visit to “A World of Tea” |
| ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Tuesday 13.1.26 | 09:30 | Lecture and thinking games with Galia Shemi |
| ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Wednesday 14.1.26 | 09:30 | Blooming Nature with Hamutal |
| ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Thursday 15.1.26 | 10:00 | Film with Galia Shemi |
| | 10:00 | Open ceramics room, guided by Ziv Ben Bassat |
| | 17:15 | Chair-based exercise with Michal Shaanan |

ENGLISH IS FUN with Rahel

WORDS ABOUT WORDS: (continued)

Words are things; and a small drop of ink, falling like dew upon a thought, produces that which make thousands, perhaps millions, think. **LORD BYRON**

There is no material with which human beings work which has so much potential energy as words. **ERNEST ELMO CALKINGS**

Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know men.
CONFUCIUS

The whole end of speech is to be understood. CONFUCIUS

Language is the armory of the human mind; and at once contains the trophies of its past, and the weapons of its future conquests.

GIVING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO THE AMERICANS IS
LIKE GIVING SEX TO CHILDREN. THEY KNOW IT'S IMPORTANT, BUT
THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT.

As a vessel is known by its sound, whether it be cracked or not, men are proved by their speeches whether they be wise or foolish.

DEMOSTHENES

Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone. RALPH WALDO EMERSON

A man of words and not deeds is like a garden full of weeds.

ENGLISH PROVERB

The English language has far more lives than a cat. People have been murdering it for years. FARMER'S ALMANAC

Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it. ROBERT FROST

Thanks to words, we have been able to rise above the brutes; and thanks to words, we have often sunk to the level of demons.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

In his whole life man achieves nothing so great and so wonderful as what he achieved when he learned to talk.

If the art of conversation stood a little bit higher, we would have a lower birthrate.

I find vocabulary to be a great drawback.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR

When it comes to learning good English, most people are prone to be supine.

.....more next week

Credits:

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Disclaimer 1: The Edi-tor and translator does his best to provide an accurate reflection of the Hebrew Alon. Please be warned that it is not a direct translation. The original Hebrew text is the official version. This is of particular importance when it comes to decisions and procedures! Not all the material published in the Hebrew newsletter appears in "The Yizraelite". Considerations of length, readers' interest and the Edi-tor's ability to grapple with the subject matter, determine what is included.

Please take into account that we use AI when translating. We proofread and correct the texts but errors may be overlooked. Be warned!

Disclaimer 2: "English is Fun": At the request of the author, this column is not proofread or edited in any way. Content and format are at the discretion of the author.

Note: The readers are encouraged to submit for inclusion "letters to the editor", photos and material that does not appear in the Hebrew Alon.

