

Minutes of a SAstroS Meeting held on the 18th October 2016 at 6.30 pm in the Sunflower Café – Island Hall

Present: Annie Dachinger (Chair), Jo Birch (Acting Treasurer), Reg Guille, Mike Fawson, Richard Axton, Arthur Rolfe, Jan Guy, Katie Hamon, John Stevenson, Sue Guille

1. **Apologies:** Alex White, Tony Ventress, Wendy Guille, Molly Bull, Paul Armorgie, Mandy Grey

2. **Treasurer's Report:** Jo reported that we have a current total of £3641 in our account. Approx. £600 was collected in the Observatory, £273 donated by Tourism, £185 from Oliver Dachinger's concert, £10 from Dr Stevenson.

3. **Minutes of last meeting:** Accepted after one small spelling amendment.

4. Matters Arising:

a. Election of new Treasurer and Secretary. Jo Birch had already volunteered to become Treasurer and being proposed and seconded was duly elected; this also entails Membership Secretary. Reg Guille volunteered to become Secretary until the next AGM and having been proposed and seconded was elected. A vote of thanks was made to them both.

b. Roots Festival. We should have had a table and will book one at the next festival; moon walks were popular, 20 people on the Friday night who ought to have paid £5 a head – the organisers will reimburse this if they are able.

c. Steve Owens and his family were unable to come to Sark this summer as his wife's mother was taken ill.

d. The six white chairs will be retained at the Observatory.

e. Observatory Equipment. Richard tabled a paper listing suggestions for improving the Meade's performance. It was proposed and agreed that we should purchase a 40mm eyepiece 4000 series, superplssl 1.25 to achieve a wider field of vision through the 'scope. The purchase of filters for red, orange, yellow/green and polarising was proposed and agreed. The handset may need to be replaced: Richard has been in contact with a dealer who could supply a replacement. It was suggested he asks if we can see whether it works before committing to purchase. It was proposed and agreed that Richard purchase for the Society big binoculars on a trapezoid stand, from the list provided it was agreed that a pair of Bresser Spezial Astro 20x80 Porro prism binoculars be bought for the society. The items were generally agreed to be a good investment.

f. The Canon EOS camera is ready to be used, Annie has purchased a remote shutter control and a suitable eyepiece was discovered in the observatory.

g. The Starfest earlier this month was a success although we made no money. Bob Bower gave an excellent talk, lots of good advice and some splendid stargazing experience. Unfortunately, the Friday and Saturday evenings were cloudy and little observation of the

cosmos was achieved but those attending the two Observatory sessions were rewarded by some observation with Bob Bower's giving of expert advice; on both nights two visitors who had specifically come to Sark for the Starfest joined us and enjoyed the experience. Sunday at Annie's garden was lovely, with clear skies for observation. The children's session organised for the Saturday evening from 6.30 to 7.30 was not successful with limited attendance and no viewing opportunities for the ones who did arrive. It was agreed that more though must go into the next session for youngsters.

5. Any Other Business:

a. Richard said he had provided publicity for the Dark Skies by posing with the telescope to publicise a new dark chocolate from Caragh Chocolates.

b. We discussed the problem of keeping the surrounds mowed and agreed to contract this work out; Richard agreed to organise a contractor.

c. Visitor Observatory Sessions. Jo, Richard and Reg said they enjoyed showing people the Observatory and giving visitors a good chance to use our large telescope to observe the planets, distant galaxies and star clusters. The meeting felt that the burden should be lessened by inviting new members (perhaps people with telescopes or stargazing knowledge) to join the Society. Jo said she would ask Shakira to consider this offer. Jo will buy a Stargazing Almanac 2017 for the Observatory.

d. Those attending the meeting felt that we should involve the local children in our activities by having open evenings in the winter for families to visit the Observatory.

e. Next year's Starfest to be arranged at a time when there is no moonlight and the local children are on half-term holiday. A possible date would be the weekend Fri 20th to Sun 22nd October 2017.

6. **Date of Next Meeting:** To be arranged, probably early in early January 2017.

