

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of SAstroS held on**

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 5.30 pm**

**In the Toplis Room at the Island Hall**

Present: Richard Axton (RA) (Deputy Chairman), Reg Guille (RG) (Secretary) Jo Birch (JB) Treasurer, Wendy Guille (WG), Jan Guy (JG), Katie Hamon (KH), Antony Ventress (AV), Arthur Rolfe (AR) and Sue Guille (SG).

Apologies: Annie Dachinger (Chairman/Starfleet Commander), Alex White, Mandy Grey, Mike & Emma Fawson, Sue Daly, Susan Synnott and Jack Rolfe.

The Deputy Chairman asked that a message of support to Annie and Oliver Dachinger be recorded and that we hope to see them on Sark again soon.

### **1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016:**

There was one correction made to the Minutes at paragraph 3 line 5 delete the word 'Normande' and replace with 'Romande'. With that correction the Minutes were approved, proposed by JG and seconded by KH.

**2. Matters Arising from the previous AGM Minutes.** JB reported that the Roots Festival had made a donation to SAstroS of £125 for conducting an evening walk and observatory session in September 2016. The Festival have asked if SAstroS would do it again this year during 8/9 September. JB and JG were happy to do so again.

**3. Chairman's Address:** RA reported that the Observatory was in good order and with new flooring, laid by him and Sam La Trobe-Bateman. Equipment purchases since the last AGM had improved the viewing experience. However, despite several attempts to fix the electronics of Endeavour (10" Meade) the only sensible way to use the telescope is manually and that works well. The maintenance of the pathway had been contracted out and the first two cuts had taken place, with a first Invoice of £50 having been paid. Last year the observatory received some 195 visitors with most visitors making donations. However, it is a difficult area to control by the members taking sessions due to the darkness and people coming and going. It was suggested and agreed that a small red light or a very low wattage white light should be fitted into the warm room and this may help matters. The Tourism Office and Stock's Hotel should be asked to stress the minimum donation of £5.00 per person when bookings are made. KH suggested that a Notice to that effect should be put up in the warm room. Visitor numbers need to be controlled, as six is about the maximum that the observatory can take to keep people occupied with our limited resources, unless another telescope literate is there to help. It is hoped Members could be encouraged to develop their own expertise in star identification and use of the telescopes and binoculars (on stand) to try and improve the number of operators beyond the current three of RA, JB & RG. It was suggested by RG that we start having member only nights and recommended that the last Thursday in each month would be set aside for members to observe. This was supported and the first members only night will be on Thursday 27 April. (Please make a note for your diaries.) JG proposed a vote of thanks to RA, JB & RG for their efforts with visitors and which raised substantial funds.

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Secretary: [regguille@cwgsy.net](mailto:regguille@cwgsy.net) Treasurer: [jo.birch@cwgsy.net](mailto:jo.birch@cwgsy.net)

**4. Secretary's Report:** I was elected Secretary at the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> October last year and Jo was elected Treasurer, then on the 9<sup>th</sup> February, Richard was elected Deputy Chairman therefore I have not included any elections as part of this AGM. Since our last AGM we have held the Autumn Starfest with Bob Bower being the expert guest, the one real disappointment was the poor weather for the children's star watching and then for much of our own sessions.

Last year Sark almost lost its Dark Sky Status and only fancy footwork by Annie and Jo prevented a disaster, with Jo sending a report to the IDA in November covering the last 5 years of progress. The Dark Sky status does not belong to SAstroS but is Sark's, albeit we act as the guardians of the status.

Our open evening for the school children on the 19<sup>th</sup> March had to be called off due to cloudy conditions, as was the reserve day on the 26<sup>th</sup> March. We also had to cancel out first visitors who had asked for a session on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, again it was cloudy.

I sent to members the contact for a programme called Weekly Space Hangout (a chat room show - who had heard of us and contacted Annie), as far as I am aware no member took up the invitation to take part.

I will end by reminding members that we have provisionally set the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> October as our Autumn Starfest weekend for this year.

**5. Treasurer's Report and approval of the Accounts:** JB reported that for the period 9 June 2016 to 7 April 2017 Income was £1607.07, Expenditure was £1109.68 which, together with the Opening Balance of £2267.07 leaves a Closing Balance of £2764.46. These accounts can be called interim and have been checked by Wendy Kiernan and a full-year statement will be shown in early June. As can be seen there has been an excess of income over expenditure during that period. RA recommended that the accounts should not be approved but noted. This was supported by the members. A vote of thanks was made to JB for taking on the accounts.

6. AOB:

**a. Visit of Paul Fellows 18-21 April.** RA asked RG to go through the programme for Paul's visit and this was followed by a general discussion. Three more members put themselves forward for supper at the hall on the Wednesday evening which with Paul makes 10 persons. (Afternote: The hall has confirmed that with those numbers they will be open for meals on the 19<sup>th</sup>.) As supper follows the talk at 2.30 pm and viewing of the Sun with Paul thereafter which as it is the public day there may well be more people attending the hall. A public observatory session will start at about 9 pm. On the Thursday evening, there are five members booked into Le Vieux Clos for supper with Paul and this will be followed by a SAstroS session at the observatory from 9 pm. There will also be a SAstroS session on Tuesday (18<sup>th</sup>) from 9 pm.

**b. Subscriptions.** It was agreed that subscriptions would remain at £12 per person. JB agreed to write to all the known lapsed payers asking for subscriptions, with a cut-off date for payment after which membership will be removed for non-payers. If members wish to pay on line direct in to the SAstroS account please ensure that that a reference is given to identify the payee; otherwise cash or cheque to the Treasurer.

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c. **Observatory manning during holiday season.** A general discussion took place, during which it was pointed out that with only three members being on the roster to take observatory sessions there will be occasions when all three (RA, JB and RG) are unable to take a session or sessions due to personal commitments.

d. **Website.** RG informed the meeting that John Hunt had agreed to take over the website from Mandy Grey (who as many will know is leaving Sark at the end of the school summer term) at no cost to the society. RG agreed to ask John and Mandy to effect the change as soon as possible so that our website can be kept up to date with this year's forthcoming activities. John, asks members to be proactive in providing him with material to put on the website to keep it up to date.

e. **Members circulation list.** The inclusion of a list of members being attached to these minutes was discussed, this was agreed to be a good idea. RG had hoped to be able to do so for this meeting but suggested that this should await the finalising of the membership list after the cut-off date for payment of subscriptions. RG & JB would liaise over this and circulate the list when it was finalised. Please encourage more local members, especially younger adults, to join the society.

f. **Dark Skies Conference – Scotland (20-22 September).** RA gave an update on the conference's Magazine Listing of Dark Sky Places in Europe and was given the agreement to go ahead and ask for Sark to be included. Afternote: RA has sent the conference questionnaire back to the IDA. AR regretted that he was now unable to attend the conference, due to other commitments. The offer is still open to any member who might wish to attend, at their own expense, to represent Sark. RG pointed out that Sark Dark Skies did not belong to SAstroS, see Secretary's Report above, and that the Sark Government must take responsibility for the status and any associated funding albeit with SAstroS support. The meeting agreed that it would on this occasion make a small donation, if required, to the conference magazine.

g. **Wilderness Travel.** Members will have seen that Wilderness Travel have made enquiries to visit Sark in mid May 2018 with approximately 14 in the tour and wished to hold an observatory session. RG has informed them that we would only take 6/7 at a time and therefore they should plan for a two-night programme of observing.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm.

