

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of SAstroS held on

Tuesday 30th April 2019 at 5.30 pm

In the Toplis Room at the Island Hall

Present: Annie Dachinger (Chairman/Starfleet Commander), Richard Axton (RA) (Deputy Chairman), Reg Guille (RG) (Secretary) Jo Birch (JB) (Treasurer), Wendy Guille (WG), Jan Guy (JG), Kaye Char (KC), Lucy Belfield (LB), Jeremy La Trobe-Bateman (JTB) and Howard Petrie (HP).

Apologies: David Synnott, Oliver Dachinger, Katie Hamon, Arthur Rolfe, Susan Synnott

The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking members for their support and understanding to her and Oliver over the past year and was delighted to be back in Sark recuperating amongst us.

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 18th June 2018:

There were no corrections proposed to the Minutes. The Minutes were approved.

2. Matters Arising from the previous AGM Minutes. RG mentioned that the Data Protection Privacy Notice and the Data Protection Consent documents had been completed and that copies of both documents were available to take away, several members completed the consent forms after the meeting. RA reported that the entrance by the teachers' houses still needed to be levelled, some discussion took place and it is hoped that work on that will happen soon. AD reminded the meeting that we should be able to provide access for the physically less able persons.

3. Chairman's Address: AD said that as she had been out of circulation for a while, she would hand over to the Deputy Chairman (RA). RA said that a vacuum cleaner had been purchased at under budget and was proving its worth. The joint article by him and JB in the current edition of *Sark Life*, reviewing use of the observatory, had been well received. Repairs had been made to ease the sliding roof where the timber has swollen, and rusted hinges on the heavy flap had been replaced by brass ones. He urged that care be taken when opening and closing the observatory. He thanked Paul Fellows for donating the second Meade LX200 and described teething problems in setting it up so that its Go-to tracking system works. He recommended using Two-star alignment and checking the Time reading every month or so. The scope can also be used manually. He reiterated his suggestion (by email earlier in the year) that the scope be named 'Fellows'. He thanked JTB for his help in installing the new scope.

The access paths through the field have been mowed and cut by Adrian & Olivia with admirable care and regularity. It was hoped the arrangement would continue happily following the birth of their daughter last Monday. Congratulations were expressed by those present. In conclusion RA encouraged members to try to recruit friends, particularly youngsters. He felt that the observatory was underused by the Sark-based members and encouraged members to use the facilities.

Chairman: sarkannie@outlook.com Deputy Chairman: raxton@guernsey.net

Secretary: regguille@cwgsy.net Treasurer: jo.birch@cwgsy.net

4. Secretary's Report: Since our AGM in June last year we hosted Robin Catchpole, who gave a talk in the Board Room on the evening of Friday 20 July and this was followed by our usual Fish & Chip Supper, then an Observatory session led by Robin. He had been due to attend the sheep racing the following day but a change in his schedule to get to Jersey meant that he had to leave on the early boat.

The next event that we were able to participate in was organised by Kaye Char for a week of talks at the sanctuary and observing sessions from the North East of the island at Shenanigans, with the two guest astronomers being Ian Morison and Robin Scagell. I enjoyed several good viewing experiences with Ian and Robin, both at night and observing the sun during the day. He thanked Kaye Char for her efforts in setting that week up.

Once October had passed there was very little viewing with visitors at the observatory and a quiet winter was had. The main event being the installation of a replacement Meade 10" telescope, organised for us by Paul Fellows, with Richard doing all the organising from this end, this scope has working electronics. The old scope 'Endeavour' will now be used on a tripod.

The Facebook aspect of our website seems to have regular posts and some of the amateur photographs posted are superb, thank you for that Annie.

5. Treasurer's Report and approval of the Accounts: JB reported that for the period July 2018 to April 2019 income had been £1,194.00 and Expenditure £761.21; this leaves a Balance of £4453.37. The largest part of the income derived from donations made at the observatory by visitors, a sum of £989.00. JB handed out several copies of the accounts and asked for any comments. The accounts were approved.

JB said that several members had paid their subscriptions for this year and she would be happy to take subscription monies after the meeting closed. There being a total membership of 27, as at today.

6. AOB:

a. **New Installed Telescope.** RA spoke further on the telescope, picking up from where Matters Arising had finished. He suggested that Paul Fellows should be invited to visit us again to see the 'Fellows' scope in action and to recommend practical improvements. This was supported. It is the intention that the other telescope 'Endeavour' will be used on the tripod, which currently lacks a retaining bolt (in use with the Fellows scope). JLT offered to obtain or make a suitable replacement.

b. **Autumn Starfest.** No decisions were taken on holding an Autumn Starfest, but AD suggested that we should mark the 50th Anniversary of Man's landing on the Moon on Saturday 20th July. It is hoped to show the film of that event, followed by a meal and then observing the moon and looking for the Sea of Tranquillity, the landing site. This would be an open event and was an opportunity to encourage youngsters to connect with the moon. The committee will put a programme together in due course.

AD also suggested that we might invite some astronomers to Sark in early September and she mentioned Chris Lintott, Maggie Aderin-Pocock, presenters of the Sky at Night programme

and possibly Bob Bowers, a good friend and visitor to the observatory. AD would inform us of how she gets on and further arrangements would then be made.

c. **Upgrading the ‘warm room’ and disposing of surplus gear.** RA introduced the subject and it was agreed that JTB and RA would make an inventory of surplus equipment to be disposed of. It was suggested that we auction, sell or otherwise dispose of the surplus equipment. It was suggested that we first try to sell on Classified Sark. AD said that she could put the items on the site and see how a sale went. Once the surplus equipment had been cleared it was recommended by RA that we make improvements to the warm room, such as bench seating with locker storage, connecting the telescope to a pc and screen in the warm room thereby making much better use of the facility. Whilst no specific approval was given the recommendation was well supported. It was suggested by JB that a replacement for the angle-poise lamp be made with a low wattage spot lamp to illuminate the desk, visitors book etc. this was supported.

d. **Star watching guides.** It was proposed and agreed that 2019 literature, charts etc. be purchased and various members, JB, LB & RA, offered to obtain suitable items for the warm room. RG requested younger members to come forward to help RA, JB and RG with hosting visitors to the observatory.

e. **Guernsey and the IDA.** AD reported that she had been approached by the Guernsey Astromancy Group which was seeking assistance for the processes required to get Dark Sky Status for the western parishes of Guernsey, around their observatory. AD had given them assistance. Members raised some doubts as to the likelihood of such an application but the general feeling that was a matter for the IDA. Alderney had also solicited our help, but nothing further had been heard about an application for Dark Sky status from them.

f. **Outside lighting.** JB reported that the Mermaid Tavern were redoing the frontage of their building and that she had spoken with them about having dark-sky-friendly lighting, as Sark needs to maintain its dark sky status, she offered to keep an eye on progress. Whilst on the subject it was noted that work was taking place in the next-door field (Clos à Jaon) where the Yurt application had been made last year. No one had seen an application to the DCC for whatever is going on. Members expressed their concerns over the lighting implications so close to the observatory.

g. **Camera.** AD reminded members that she still had the camera donated by her son, Oliver and which was for use in taking astronomical pictures of the night skies. Some of the necessary adaptors are held in the observatory and it needs an enthusiast to take this forward.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm.

