

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of SAstroS held on

Friday 14th August 2020 at 4.00 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), Howard Petrie (HP), Susan Synnott and Tony Ventress.

Apologies: David Synnott, Oliver Dachinger, Katie Hamon and Lucy Belfield,

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 30th April 2018:

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

2. Matters Arising from the previous AGM Minutes. None.

3. Chairman's Address: I'd like to start by offering a warm welcome to those in attendance this afternoon, and an especial welcome to any new members (Nick Roberts). Our last AGM was way back in April last year but circumstances, with which we are all familiar, meant this meeting is a few months overdue. However, during the Coronavirus lock-down we had a chance to enjoy this peaceful and beautiful island, both by day and night, in unusual tranquillity. We are now nearly back to normal with lots of visitors from Guernsey, Alderney – and more recently – the Isle of Man. The Observatory has been open and back in business (first Observatory session was on the 5th July).

Tragically we have lost two good friends recently. On Tuesday 11th August we received the sad news that David le Conte had passed away. David had a distinguished career which included working for NASA. For 40 years he was the “the heart” of the Astronomy Section of the Society Guernesaise, a man of great experience and generosity. We will miss him very much and our thoughts are with his family and friends.

We also mourn the loss of Arthur Rolfe who became a member of SAstroS at its inception and supported the Society throughout. His son Jack became our youngest member at 11 years of age in those early days. Our condolences go out to Arthur's family and friends.

Last year we decided not to have an autumn Starfest because it was difficult to find a speaker. Instead we put on a summer event to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the first manned Moon landing. Bob Bower FRSA accepted an invitation to speak with pleasing alacrity and travelled from his home in Stranraer on Friday 21st July when we had a meal with him in the Hall then a short observatory session. On Saturday July 20th (the day Armstrong first stepped onto the lunar surface in 1969) Bob gave a fascinating talk about observing the Moon through centuries of human history. Two films were shown over the weekend (First Man and Apollo 13), the observatory was packed to the gills on the Saturday night evening, as people queued to see the place on the Sea of Tranquillity where the Eagle had landed. Because it was summer, we had several visitors on the island who joined us and who thoroughly enjoyed the events. I even made a mooncake with a marzipan astronaut on it....it was polished off in record time! Unfortunately, Bob was unable to stay for the Sunday because of travel difficulties and left in the morning. Many thanks to him for coming so far at short notice.

Chairman: sarkannie@outlook.com Deputy Chairman: raxton@guernsey.net
Secretary: regguille@cwgsy.net Treasurer: jo.birch@cwgsy.net

Before I hand over to our Secretary, I would like to say a big thankyou to the Society's executive officers who have covered for my numerous absences, been tremendously supportive and considerate. I will now hand over to Reg for his Report.

RA suggested that it would be appropriate to recognise David le Conte's passing by providing flowers, or other suitable commemoration, for David's funeral, from our Society. AD said that she was in contact with the Secretary of the Guernsey Society and through her the family and would abide by the family's wishes. The members present agreed to support whatever was deemed appropriate by the Executive.

RA reported the naming of a star **Sark Island 2011 IDA**, given to SAstroS on the occasion of his birthday in April by his grandchildren. The Star Registry number is 1565600 – a happy coincidence. By typing in the number members can navigate to our star in Corona Borealis. RA and RG agreed to work on a short article for our website.

4. Secretary's Report: RG apologised to the members present by saying that he had failed to write a report. However, having listened to the Chairman's Report all the points that he would have raised have been covered.

5. Treasurer's Report and approval of the Accounts: JB reported that for the period 01 May 2019 to 12 August 2020 income had been £2,477.60 and Expenditure £1,021.17; this leaves a Balance of £5,486.26 an increase over the period of £1,032.89. JB said that Wendy Kiernan, had checked them over this week. The accounts were approved on a show of hands.

6. Subscription: After some discussion it was agreed that the subscription rate would remain at £12 per year per person. The Treasurer (JB) requested that those members who had not yet paid their subscriptions due for this year, should do so to her as soon as possible and not later than the 31st August. After which date a new list of members would be produced.

RG suggested that the Sark school children, who by previous resolution are all junior non-paying members, be given a personalised junior membership card and this be developed by RG with our Website Manager (John Hunt) and distributed by the Head Teacher, Nick Roberts (a society member), at an appropriate time. This idea was supported. RA emphasised the need to enlist parental and school support to enable get them to join in activities.

7. AOB:

a. Equipment, maintenance and access update. RA reported that the main ruts into the field had now been filled in with hardcore but that there had been some queries over ownership. RG clarified that the entrance and the two field belong to Anthony Beaumont. RG agreed to contact him about the filling in of the smaller ruts leading into the second field in which out observatory stands. It was not felt that we needed any more equipment at this stage but that we would encourage use of the camera donated by Oliver Dachinger, but not on public viewing nights. AD said that we had all the fittings to use it. RA emphasised the need to protect the scope's inner gearing by locking it only finger tight.

b. **Upgrading the 'warm room' and disposing of surplus gear (from 2019 Minutes).** It was agreed that nothing had happened in the past 15 months about the 2019 decision to dispose of the surplus telescopes etc. and to renovate the warm room. It was agreed that most scopes and stands should be disposed of to better utilise the room. RG agreed to obtain a

more suitable tripod for the binoculars on his next trip to Guernsey (at the end of the month) and that when done the current tripod be returned to JB who had loaned it to us. Clearing the warm room would enable installation of locker seating, an idea that found favour last year. We still have cash in hand for this. It was agreed to discuss these matters with Jeremy La Trobe-Bateman.

c. **IDA Report for 2020.** JB said that she'd had contact from the IDA re the IDA Report/Pandemic situation recently; the Report is due on 1st October. She volunteered to draft a Report and circulate to the officers for comment prior to sending our Report to the IDA.

d. **Recruiting new members.** AD said that she had spoken with Sam & Raie Craft and Joel Armorgie about joining the Society and assisting as Observatory Guides; they had been invited to attend this meeting. RG said that he had spoken with Sam & Raie and they seemed keen to help while they remained on the Island; in their view the same went for Joel. To be followed up by us to try and get them involved, especially as guides.

e. **Young volunteers for stargazing sessions at the Observatory.** This was covered under d. above.

f. **Autumn event.** After some discussion it was agreed that an event should occur on the 18th and 19th September. The 18th being a Friday the event would start with supper at the hall for members and anyone else interested in joining us. This would be followed by an Observatory session and RG suggested that the focus be locating our Star using its coordinates and the 'go to' system.. On the Saturday daytime we could run sun watching sessions for the public, using the sun filter that was bought and used successfully last year for the transit of Mercury. Then in the evening a further Sark star finding session. A poster requires to be developed to be advertised widely. Jan Guy offered to get a Press release to Bailiwick media. After Note: No one was tasked to do this at the meeting?

g. **Return visit by Paul Fellows.** RA reported that Paul Fellows was keen to visit when free travel into Sark from the UK is possible. His expertise in maintaining the telescope that he gifted to us last year would be valuable. This idea was supported.

h. **Visit by Howard Parkin – Isle of Man.** AD had been contacted by Howard to say that he and his wife hoped to visit Sark during a stay in Guernsey and would like to meet us to chat about our Dark Skies. JB agreed to make contact. **After Note:** The visit is planned (day trip only) for the 19th (Wed) or 20th (Thurs) of August. When the day is confirmed AD, RA, JB & RG will meet up with them, our own diaries permitting.

The meeting closed at 5.09 pm.

