

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of SAstroS held on

Monday 18th June 2018 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), Arthur Rolfe (AR), Susan Synnott (SS), Kaye Char (KC), Lucy Belfield (LB) and Jeremy La Trobe-Bateman (JTB).

Apologies: Annie Dachinger (Chairman/Starfleet Commander), David Synnott, Hazel Fry, Oliver Dachinger, Howard Petrie and Richard Anderson.

The Deputy Chairman asked that a message of support to Annie and Oliver Dachinger be recorded and that it is hoped to see them on Sark when Annie's treatments are over.

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 10th April 2017:

There were no corrections proposed to the Minutes, the Minutes were approved and signed by RA.

2. Matters Arising from the previous AGM Minutes. JB reported that the Wilderness Travel Group did arrive as planned in May (booked in 2017) but that only two members of the group (both ladies) came to the Observatory.

3. Chairman's Address: RA said that he was concerned about our static membership and 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. RA reported that he and JB had calculated from the Visitors' Book and Log that over the past two years there had been over 800 visitors to the observatory. He had simplified the booking system and rewritten the Information given out at the Visitor Centre and was now on our website; it gives contact details for RA, JB and RG. RA suggested that members encourage Sark youngsters to come to the observatory and said he was confident that two of the new teachers would be very supportive. He reported some frustrating experiences with TV journalists and suggested that we should be firmer in future about setting our agenda and pointing out that dark skies do not make for convenient filming. JG proposed a vote of thanks to RA, JB & RG for their efforts with visitors and which raised substantial funds. RG asked for more members to come forward to help open the observatory for visitors.

4. Secretary's Report: Since our last AGM, the Autumn Starfest was held on the 29/30 September 2017; Professor David Hughes gave an interesting talk on art and astronomy on the Friday evening, followed by the usual fish and chip supper and practical star gazing for all-comers. We had supper at Vieux Clos on 30th followed by observatory session for members only. Over the winter we had very disappointing viewing conditions and many possible visits to the observatory had to be called off, and the same for this spring. Let us hope for better weather for the rest of this summer. The new website was successfully launched last year, and members can submit material via our site manager, John Hunt.

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RG noted that last year we approved spending on improving the access at the cemetery entrance by filling in the ruts with hardcore. This is yet to happen. It still needs to be done, as it is very rough going. RA said that the farmer has no objection but that suitable hard core was rarely available. He would try again to get it done.

5. Treasurer's Report and approval of the Accounts: JB reported that for the period April 2017 to June 2018 income had been £1,577.75 and Expenditure £818.67; this leaves a Balance of approximately £3,588. She proposed that Wendy Kiernan, who is away at present, should be asked to audit the accounts. RA proposed that in the meantime the figures be noted as interim accounts. This was agreed.

6. Subscription rate: After some discussion it was agreed that the subscription rate would remain at £12 per year per person. The Treasurer requested that those members who had not yet paid their subscriptions for this year, and which are now due, should do so to her as soon as possible.

7. AOB:

a. Data Protection. RG said that the society needed to be aware of the recent changes to Data Protection laws. After some short discussion it was agreed that RG would draft a Notice/Disclaimer for circulation to members. He encouraged the use of the Bcc address for multiple addressees.

b. Observatory matters. RA reported that the damage caused by incorrect use of opening and closing procedures had been repaired. The sticking sliding roof had also been adjusted by Sam La Trobe-Bateman and the roof was now sliding easily again. RA urged members using the observatory to use care and to check that bolts and latches are in the correct position for the operation before opening or closing the roof. Dust from shoes and spider webs need regular removal if the equipment is to be kept clean and he proposed purchase of a compact vacuum cleaner for the purpose. Members agreed to authorise expenditure of up to £100.

c. Kaye Char & Perseid Shower Event in August at Shenanigans. RA asked KC to tell the membership of the current plans for the week of the Perseid Showers. KC gave an outline of the event and showed a poster advertising the event and which had the support of the Chair (AD). The poster was displayed on the website and the event is sponsored by RAS (making business happen). Visiting Guest Speakers are Professor Ian Morison and Robin Scagell. RA asked whether this arrangement was part of a long-held plan for the Guernsey Astronomy Group to use our observatory at the same time. No-one knew. RA said he would inquire of David Le Conte and let members know. We will take care to dovetail the two programmes without clashes. RG encouraged members to support both events

d. Camp Site Development at Clos à Jaon near to the Observatory. JG gave an update; plans had been deferred until July, as the planning committee had requested more information from the applicant. After discussion it was agreed to wait until a planning decision had been made. RG said that if the application should be granted then SAstroS must be prepared to lodge an immediate appeal against the decision to the Planning Tribunal. Meanwhile the committee's secretary has assured JG that our letters of objection are being taken forward.

e. Visit by Robin Catchpole – Friday 20 July. RA gave an update on the visit with the arrival of Robin Catchpole (Astronomer at the Institute of Astronomy at Cambridge,

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previously Senior Astronomer at the Royal Observatory Greenwich) on the Friday from Guernsey and his departure to Jersey on the Saturday afternoon ferry. A talk in the Board Room (subject to be announced later) at 5.30 pm Friday evening would be followed by a Fish and Chip supper at the Hall and an observatory session conducted by our guest. He will be staying with RA. Saturday the 21st July is Sheep Racing Day. [Hall confirms that supper will be available, booking advisable.]

f. **Donation of a telescope.** JB reported that Rob Cottle has offered a telescope. It was agreed to accept the gift gratefully. It was noted that there is a danger the warm room will become cluttered with obsolete equipment. JTB offered to review the state of the various scopes that we have and to advise what should be done.

The meeting closed at 6.27 pm.

