

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of SAstroS held on

Thursday 12th May 2022 at 6.00 pm

In the Board Room at the Island Hall

Present: Annie Dachinger (AD) (Chairman/Starfleet Commander), Reg Guille (RG) (Secretary), Jo Birch (JB) (Treasurer) Susan Synnott (SS), Tony Ventress (AV), Juergen Blankenagel (JB), Lucy Belfield (LB), Steve Lord (SL).

Apologies: Jan Guy (JG), Oliver Dachinger, Katie Hamon, David Synnott, Jolie Booth, Harry Rauser, George Torode and Wendy Guille.

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 17th June 2021:

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

2. Matters Arising from the previous AGM Minutes. AD raised the issue of the entrance path to the observatory, and proposed thanks to Anthony Beaumont (AB) on getting a super job done. This was supported by those present.

3. Chairman's Address:

Thank you for attending this Annual General Meeting.

The last year has been a reasonably quiet one for SAstroS with Covid-19 affecting both visitor numbers and gatherings, although we managed a successful 10th birthday celebration in the Island Hall and made some new friends. We have done extremely well with our call for observatory guides having 5-6 new members willing to take on night visitations to the observatory, and I give my personal thanks to all of them in the hope they will continue to love the experience of entertaining tourists, exploring the Universe and learning astronomy. We have been able to purchase super new eyepieces for the telescope and are grateful for the help provided by Phil Teutsch, now a resident and very eminent astronomer. We have also bought a nifty gadget to measure the darkness of our night sky so we can keep an eye out for pollution from unwanted lighting, There was great sadness, however, with the loss of Dr Richard Axton after many years of supporting the Society in so many ways. He will be greatly missed.

I now come to the hard bit, so if I get a bit emotional I hope you will forgive me.

On Friday last week we had a short but beautiful small ceremony to name the Observatory 'the Dachinger observatory, after which we wined and dined in the Hall. It was a happy occasion and one which I will never forget. I have enjoyed the enormous privilege of chairing our wonderful Society for the past ten years. Together we have put on Starfests, raised money in all sorts of ways, invited some amazing guests to Sark, entertained lots of visitors and committed ourselves to the original undertaking suggested by the International Dark Sky Association to promote Sark as a dark sky destination to the world. Everything SAstroS has achieved has been a joint effort and has yielded great rewards, the Observatory not the least of them. There comes a time, alas, when change has to happen. It is with a heavy heart I am submitting my resignation from the Chair of SAstroS as from tonight. If it were to be possible I would continue but my lease here on Sark expires at the beginning of next year and my son, who has a debilitating illness, will be needing me in London.

Chairman: **Vacant**: Secretary: regguille@cwgsy.net Treasurer: jo.birch@cwgsy.net

I am so very proud of you, the membership, for all the support and unfailing friendship over the last years. How can I thank you enough? It isn't possible. I believe I am leaving SAstroS in good hands for the future, we have a strong and growing membership, bright young people joining, excellent guides and an Observatory which earns enough to support our activities, so we never have to do another Jumble Sale again! We are known as a Dark Sky destination in really far-flung places, from USA to Australia, Japan and St Helena, And although I am giving up the Chair, I will remain a member as long as I have breath, I promise I will always be available to assist the new Chairman to the best of my ability and if at all possible I will return to Sark as a tourist in the future.

As your Starfleet Commander, I hereby sign off. Reg, the comm is yours.

RG thanked Annie for her years of inspirational leadership and said that a General Meeting of Members would need to be called to elect a new Chair.

4. Secretary's Report: We held our 10th Birthday celebrations in September, thank you to the organisers and helpers. During the period between AGMs there have been a total of 341 observatory visitors. There were very few visits between 1 Jan and end March this year with two booking only, then from that date to now we have taken a further 35 visitors. The visit total comes out to an average of seven per visit.

We again registered with the Data Protection Commissioner which I did 9th January. As we are a Not-for-Profit Organisation (NPO) there is no fee.. The observatory insurance was paid and there was a small increase from last years' premium.

The Facebook aspect of our website seems to have regular posts and some of the photographs posted are superb, thank you for that Annie. John Hunt runs our web page, at a very small cost to us, and it continues to be available for articles from members.

I would like to thank all those who attended the Observatory Naming by Annie last week and the supper at the Hall afterwards, a most enjoyable occasion. Thanks to Christopher Beaumont for making up the name board.

The Observatory Guides of Anthony, Aga, Caragh, Jolie, Harry and Chris are doing a grand job, assisted occasionally by Jo and me.

We must thank Anthony for getting the new path sorted out for us, a vast improvement and Annie got her buggy there nice and easily last week.

5. Treasurer's Report and approval of the Accounts: The Financial Report was handed out and explained by the Treasurer

On 12th May, the bank balance was £6,222.92 This gave an increase of income over expenditure over the year of £204.27. This increase is despite over £600.00 of equipment purchases.

The observatory has taken £1426.00 in donations for stargazing, between June last year and the closing date in May.

We also have two new members with Marizel Fourie and Steve Lord, joining us having just moved to Sark,.

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6. AOB:

a.. **IDA Report for 2022** JB agreed to again produce the report and this year can provide Dark Sky reading from our new darkness monitor. Readings are consistently good.

b.. **2022 Starfest.** AD proposed that we have a small Starfest in August, which she would organise with help from members. Bob Bower would be the guest speaker and the dates proposed were 19 – 21 August. LB offered a voucher she had won to stay at Linda Williams at Clos Princess Guest House. This was gratefully accepted.

It was hoped that astrophotography could be a subject for the weekend.

c. **Lunar Eclipse.** AD gave details of the Lunar Eclipse that is to happen in the early hours of Monday morning of the 15th March.

d. **Weather Proofing of Observatory.** AB had offered, with help from other members, to weather proof the Observatory which has been in situ since September 2015. Materials to be sourced from the Gallery Stores and paid for from funds..

e. **Access through Le Vieux Clos.** Access through Le Vieux Clos should be discouraged, it is up for sale, the observatory field has been ploughed right up to the edge and we have a good entrance from the road by the Church cemetery.

f. **New Projects.** SL put forward some ideas for support and or interest from members, as follows:

1). Learning how to use and automate the Meade with the goal of imaging Neptune using modern techniques.

2) Detecting known exoplanets using light curve data obtained from the observatory, with a stretch goal of conducting exoplanet surveys of sky areas not covered elsewhere.

3) Building a 21cm interferometer to detect the Hydrogen line of the Milky Way. If successful, upgrading to either a dual-interferometer array or motorised satellite dish for quasar detection.

After Note: SL emailed SAstroS members after the meeting concluded, to give more details of the projects.

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 6.55pm.

The meeting closed at 5.50 pm.

