

## COUNCIL REPORT

ASSA's Council is a creature of its Constitution, which both empowers it to "manage & control the affairs, property and funds of the Society" and obliges it to "frame an annual report on the activities of the Society during its year of office" and present this to the AGM. I am now initiating this process on behalf of Council.

Most importantly, it is a pleasure to confirm that all the Constitutional requirements applicable to Council's activities have been executed scrupulously. The quarterly meetings called for in the Constitution were conducted by Skype voice calls in October, December, February and June, while a preparatory pre-AGM meeting was cancelled for the simple reason that everything was under control and therefore a Council meeting was not necessary. Council meetings were attended by on average 9 Council members and 5 Appointees and were conducted very effectively within 90 minutes thanks to well-drafted Agendas and preparatory material from the Secretary and the efficient IT connection skills of Chris Stewart.

Another factor contributing to the efficiency of Council meetings was the practise of having pre-Council financial sub-committee meetings to consider all financial matters and make considered and concise recommendations to Council for approval.

As evidenced by the Financial Report ASSA's finances are sound, but subject to the usual constraint of too many worthwhile projects for which there simply isn't funding. The unbelievably frustrating saga regarding authorised signatories was sorted out and both ASSA and the Cooke Scholarship fund benefitted significantly from the higher interest returns that the combined funds could attract.

There were further refinements to the Communications document, which is an extremely important and useful summary of all Council members' and appointees' responsibilities and recommended methods of execution. Like any "live" document there will always be further improvements, but the rate of change has now nearly flattened out completely.

Upgrading the software required to prepare the Sky Guide Africa South for publication by Struik has been done. Together with MNASSA these two publications contribute significantly towards achieving ASSA's prime objective of "encouraging and stimulating the study enjoyment of Astronomy". Both are publications to be proud of and the hours of hard work required to ensure their publication is almost unheralded but most appreciated. Congratulations and Thank You to all involved.

There were a few minor amendments to the Constitution to provide for:

- An Independent Compiler instead of an Auditor for cost reasons;
- The ring-fencing of specific funds, such as the Cooke Scholarship fund;
- The Overbeek medal to be awarded to amateur astronomers whose work is published in a recognised Astronomy publication;
- The removal of contradictory clauses regarding Council voting procedures on medal nominations and
- To leave the decision regarding a Centre's membership fees to the sole discretion of its committee.

The revised Constitution has been published on the website.

In summary, Council is functioning well in execution of its Constitutional obligations. The rest of Council's report on the Society's activities over the past year will be delivered by the Specialist Section Directors and the Centre Chairs reports on the activities in their Centres will be published on the website to give a comprehensive overview of the Society's activities of the past year.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Pierre de Villiers

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