

## ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

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<b>DATE</b>	15 Nov 11	<b>TIME</b>	19:30 to 20:20	<b>VENUE</b>	Via Skype
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### ATTENDANCE

<b>Present</b>	<b>Role</b>
I Glass	President (Chair)
Chris Stewart	Council Member
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Pat Booth	Membership Secretary
Johan Smit	Chair – ASSA Pretoria Centre
Christian Hettlage	Web Master
Gary Els	Chair – ASSA Johannesburg Centre

### Apologies (a) and not present

Adv AJ Nel (a)	Treasurer
Auke Slotegraaf (a)	Sky Guide Editor
Case Rijdsdijk (a)	Chair - Garden Route Centre, MNASSA Editor
Maciej Soltynski (a)	Council Member, Convenor of Scholarship Committee
Matie Hoffman (a)	Vice President and Chair – Bloemfontein Centre
John Richards (a)	Vice Chair – Cape Centre
John Saunders (a)	Chair - Hermanus Centre
Logan Govender (a)	Chair - Durban Centre

**NOTE:** Names responsible for progressing actions are underlined and items from previous minutes are in italics

	<b>Agenda Points</b>	<b>Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)</b>
1	Welcome	I Glass welcomed everyone and opened the meeting and L Cross noted that apologies will be recorded in the minutes
2	Previous Minutes Matters arising	2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 Oct 2011 were accepted. 2.2 Matters arising from previous meeting are noted <i>in italics</i> in the minutes below.
3	Council 2011/ 12	<p>3.1 <i>Section Directors: It was agreed that <u>L Cross</u> should write to the existing Section Directors and ask for a list of general activities that they can recommend be performed by Directors and these can be used as guidelines for the new Directors.</i></p> <p>The Council discussed and agreed that <u>L Cross</u> should discuss with - and ask - <u>A Slotegraaf</u> if he would be prepared to start off a draft for discussion on “Guidelines for new Section Directors” focusing on Observing Sections. Other Sections Directors would also be drawn into the draft to contribute in due course.</p> <p>The key input received from L Cross’ writing to the Section Directors is listed at the end of the minutes.</p> <p>3.2 Council and Council appointments 2012: <u>L Cross</u> to send the latest updates to C Hettlage to place on the website.</p>

	<b>Agenda Points</b>	<b>Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)</b>
4	Financial Statements	<p><b>Previous financial statements &amp; audits:</b></p> <p>4.1 L Cross received from C Turk – and scanned in and passed on – the audited 2009/10 financials and C Hettlage placed on website.</p> <p>4.2 <u>AJ Nel</u> to advise the status of the 2010/11 financials</p> <p><b>ASSET:</b></p> <p>4.3 4.7 <i>ASSET: ASSA needs to understand this entity and its relationship with ASSA: it was agreed that <u>I Glass and M Soltynski</u> will draft a note from the President to the ASSET Trustees (T Cooper, P Cramb and MA Gray) to ask if they feel any duties towards ASSA (and maybe even if any assistance can be provided?)</i></p> <p>A letter was drafted by M G Soltynski and sent by I Glass to ASSET and reply received from T Cooper - the correspondence are listed in the attachment to the minutes.</p>
5	Membership	<p>5.1 <b>New Members</b> : P Booth was not in a position to give a list of the new members – she need the financial statements from AJ Nel in order to find new members and renewal information. <u>P Booth</u> will write a note to AJ Nel to ask for the statements to be sent on a regular basis (say monthly)</p> <p>5.2 <b>SGAS to the Country Members:</b> <u>P Booth</u> will send SGAS copies to Country Members</p> <p>5.3 <b>Hon Member: Sky &amp; Telescope renewals:</b> <u>P Booth and L Cross</u> (who ordered some of the S&amp;T for Hon Members living overseas) will work together to find out which are to be renewed.</p>
6	Scholarships	<p><b>Scholarship report</b></p> <p>6.1 M Soltynski submitted an update to council before the meeting: SAAO (Sivuyile Manxoyi) have committed to make available R6 000 for three SAAO-ASSA Scholarships for 2012.</p> <p>6.3 Closing date for bursary applications: According to the checklist attached to the minutes January 15<sup>th</sup> is Scholarship application dead line. M Soltynski mail before the meeting stated: “ we are dependant to some extent on matric results, and on universities being open at the beginning of the year (for students to finalise courses and cost etc). So let us say 31 January. But there is no real closing date, as people can apply anytime, and if there is money available, they will be considered.” <b>Council</b> to include this in the review of amendments to the Constitution</p> <p>6.2 M Soltynski also confirmed (before the meeting) that the Scholarship reporting year now runs for the 12 months ending June 30 as most of the work happens in Jan / Feb /Mar and becomes public soon after. The Checklist attached to minutes reads that June 30<sup>th</sup> is the proposed closing date for receipt of report from Scholarships Convenor to cover the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012.</p>
7	Editorial Board Matters - Sky Guide	<p><b>SGAS to Centres</b></p> <p>7.1 AJ Nel placed order with Struik and most of the Centres has received and distributed to members.</p> <p>7.2 <b>Council</b> was advised that A Slotegraaf asked that he would appreciate feedback on the SGAS 2012.</p> <p>G Els and J Smit – who have already seen the edition – voiced their congratulations and were very complimentary.</p>
8	Editorial Board Matters	<p><b>MNASSA matters</b></p> <p>8.1 Nothing specific to report</p>

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	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	- MNASSA	
9	Website	<p>9.1 <i>Website Review: Council to commence a review and set a task team. <u>L Cross</u> to draft an outline document to guide the process.</i></p> <p><u>L Cross</u> offered to contact <u>A Slotegraaf</u> if he would assist in proposing some requirements/guidelines for an ASSA Website that can be taken further. (<u>L Cross</u> spoke to <u>A Slotegraaf</u> and he agreed to start off a document that can be circulated for comment)</p> <p>9.2 <i>Calendar of events: To be kept on the website. Use the dates in the SGAS for starters</i></p> <p><u>C Hettlage</u> also look at the Checklist of date attached to the minutes for key dates that would be of interest to the public and to report progress in due course.</p>
10	Historical Section	<p>10.1 <b>ASSA Archives to UCT Archive:</b> <i>C de Coning to give update and list issues.</i> No progress to report.</p> <p>10.2 <b>Photographic Glass Plates archives from the Republic Observatory:</b> G Els raised a new item regarding these plates that were retrieved by ASSA Johannesburg from the CSIR when the CSIR were cleaning out their archives. <b>G Els</b> to draft a note on the request he would like to put to Council. In the meantime I Glass has offered to ask if there were professional astronomers who were interested in contributing input and advice on the future of these plates.</p>
11	Gill Medal	<p><b>More Gill Medals:</b> 11.1 C Stewart obtained a latest quote for 6 medals - see the attachment to the minutes. AJ Nel has placed the order and production was started.</p> <p><u>C Stewart</u> will collect these in due course and then a plan must be made to get these to the SAAO for safekeeping.</p>
12	Other Awards	<p>12.1 <b>Long Service Award:</b> <i><u>L Cross</u> has award and contacted B Fraser.</i> L Cross reported that she handed the award to B Fraser.</p> <p>12.2 <b>Honorary Membership – ASSA Auditor:</b> I Glass reported that the Hon Membership letter was handed to R Glass at the ASSA Cape Centre meeting.</p>
13	ASSA Symposium 2012	<p><b>ASSA Symposium 2012:</b> 13.1 J Richards sent an update before the meeting advising that the next ASSA Symposium will be hosted by the Cape Centre in October 2012. The Cape Centre Committee has established a Local Organising Committee (LOC) at its last meeting. If anyone is interested in being part of the LOC (volunteers are very welcome), please let <u>C Hettlage</u> know.</p>
14	Checklist for Council	<p><b>Check list for Council</b> 14.1 <i>Key activities due by when to assist Council from year to year</i> M Poll kindly provided Council with a list – see attachment to the minutes.</p>
15	Constitution leftovers	<p><b>New ASSA Constitution: List of items left over or arising from the Constitution change</b> 16.1 <i>M Poll offered to start off a list. L Cross to will keep in touch with M Poll on this.</i></p> <p>M Poll kindly produced two documents: <u>2011 10 07 Clause Summary.doc</u> and <u>2011 09 20 Constitution amendments.doc</u></p> <p>I Glass proposed and L Cross and C Stewart supported the proposal that the Constitution sub-committee starts the review in January 2012. <u>L Cross</u> to advise M Poll and extend Council's appreciation for his effort.</p>
16	General	<p>16.1 <b>Midlands Centre Close-down:</b> J de Bruyn requested Council to decide on how to dispose of the approximately R2,300 in the</p>

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	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
		<p>bank account which was maintained after the former Midlands Centre was closed down. The report submitted is in the attachment.</p> <p>Council discussed and decided to advise that it was acceptable to Council that the money could be paid over to the Durban Centre as proposed.</p> <p><b>16.2 Award to J (Jannie) Smit:</b>                      B Fraser proposed that Jannie Smit's efforts be acknowledged by Council as Jannie received a special acknowledgment from the American Association of Variable Star Observers at its 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in 2011. It was discussed and decided that the most appropriate action would be for a letter of appreciation to be written to him from the President. (I Glass drafted the letter – see attached – and L Cross is to ask J (Johan) Smit to hand to him or to advise a postal address as he is member of ASSA Pretoria)</p>
17	Closure  Next Meeting	<p>I Glass thanked everyone for their contribution and closed the meeting at 20.20</p> <p><b>Next meetings (to be diarised and confirmed over time: 7 Feb 2012, 27 Mar 2012, 1 May 2012, 26 June 2012 AGM: 1 August</b>                      Start time 19:30 via Skype (except AGM)</p>

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chair: I Glass

### Attachments to minutes

#### Minutes Item 3.1

Comment from Sections Directors in response to mail from L Cross asking for guidance for new Section Directors:

From Tim Cooper: My opinion is that the whole structure of ASSA observing sections needs council review, expectations and standards set, requirements for directors defined, and activities reported on. There is no longer a culture of observing in ASSA and submitting observations to sections. The reasons need to be debated.

- From Frikkie De Bruyn:
1. Compile a data base of the members including email addresses;
  2. I approached Google to create a specialized science group, email <http://groups.google.com/support?hl=en> . This is to enable the director (or any member of the section) to send contributions to the email address that Google will provide and Google will distribute the contribution to all members including the director.
  3. Only ASSA members are allowed as members of the section. If I received an application from someone outside ASSA, I approach Council for consideration.
  4. No personal matters may be discussed via emails to the group.
  5. Members of the Cosmology Section are not all familiar with scientific formulae/terminology. To enable all members to benefit from contributions non-technical language is used as far as possible. A link to the scientific paper is usually provided for those who wish to read it.
  6. Lastly, there is of course the annual report after the end of the year submitted to yourself.

From Auke Slotegraaf: I'm keenly interested in being part of a discussion. When/if this discussion bears fruit. I further agree with Tim's plan: "My opinion is that the whole structure of ASSA observing sections needs council review, expectations and standards set, requirements for directors defined, and activities reported on." Perhaps we could arrange a date for a meeting to discuss the "culture of observing"?

#### Minutes Item 4.3: ASSET

Letter to ASSET Trustees:

**Tim Cooper**  
**Peter Cramb**  
**Andrew Gray**

**Cliff Turk (Secretary)**

Dear ASSET Trustees

We are writing to you at the request of the Council of ASSA.

Council is concerned that there has been little if any contact between ASSA and ASSET over the last few years.

Though ASSET is an independent entity and completely entitled to follow its own policies, we believe that the funds under their administration derive from donations over many years from ASSA members.

According to an article in the October 1996 MNASSA about ASSET, "its audited accounts will be tabled at the Society's AGM every year". We are disturbed that this has not been happening.

As Council understands that ASSET was established to support ASSA, Council would like to normalise this situation so as to have a clear understanding of our mutual roles, hopefully for the benefit of both ASSA members and astronomy in Southern Africa. Council is keen to find out how this can be accomplished, and to learn how ASSET sees its relationship with ASSA in the future.

Council would like to suggest that some portion of ASSET funds be made available on a regular basis to ASSA so as to support mutually agreed projects, such as, for example, scholarships related to astronomy. It seems pointless to leave the money completely idle.

With the above in mind, we suggest that the Trustees of ASSET consider meeting via Skype or otherwise with Council to find a way forward.

We look forward to your reply

Yours sincerely

Ian S Glass (President ASSA)  
Maciej Soltynski (Council Member, Scholarships)

**Reply from Tim Cooper:**

On Wed, Nov 16, 2011 at 4:33 PM, Tim Cooper <[tpcoope@mweb.co.za](mailto:tpcoope@mweb.co.za)> wrote:

Dear Ian

On behalf of all the trustees and secretary of ASSA Trust (ASSET) we thank you for your mail and have taken note of ASSA Council's comments.

As trustees we are aware that there has been a paucity of correspondence with Council for a while, which is mainly as a result of personal circumstances, not because the current trustees have any other agendas. In this regard we have been endeavoring for some months to bring these matters up to date, and continue to do so.

As trustees we are all acutely aware of our responsibilities in terms of the established Notarial Deed of Trust, and the fact that, as you state in your mail, ASSET is an independent entity. Therefore, rather than convening a skype meeting with Council, we respectfully request you allow the trustees time to see the current discussions they are engaged in to a logical conclusion. This will include fully audited financial statements, a clear statement of the terms of reference for ASSET and published procedures to be followed to apply for funds from the trust.

Once this is done, and if funds are required for specific projects, they can be applied for according to the defined procedure and evaluated by the trustees in an open manner.

I give you the assurance that we as trustees also want to resolve the above issues as soon as practicable and will provide feedback on our progress.

I welcome any comments Council may have.

Regards  
Tim Cooper

### **Minutes Item 11.1**

*GRC MINT MANUFACTURING cc* TEL: + 27 11 873-5090 email : glenn@grcmint.co.za, website : <http://www.grcmint.co.za>

### **QUOTATION**

#### Item 1

Make use of existing obverse and reverse dies No Charge

#### Item 32

- a) Supply material, melt, cast ,roll and manufacture blanks and mint 50mm medallions with plain/ milled edge as per above dies in:

- |                                                                 |                |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| i. Fine silver. 99.9% purity                                    |                |              |
| These silver medallions will have a mass of one ounce (31grams) | R 1278.00 each |              |
| i. Nickel Plated                                                |                | R 85.00 each |

#### Item 4

Quantity: This quotation is based on a minimum quantity of 6 (six ) pieces.

#### Item 5

Packaging: Up to 38mm

- |                                                                    |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| a) Clear acrylic capsule                                           | R 12.50 each  |
| b) Chamois leather pouch                                           | R 9.90 each   |
| c) Vinyl clad, hinged lid, presentation box with red flock insert. | R 59.00 each  |
| d) Hard wood hinged lid, presentation box with red flock insert.   | R 225.00 each |

Note: Your company logo can be foiled or screen-printed on the lid or inside of the lid or on a chamois

#### Item 6

Delivery

- a) Delivery time: Three to four weeks from receipt of your official order and final confirmation of approved artwork.

- b) Delivery of goods

A nominal delivery charge of R150 applies to all deliveries within the Pretoria, Witwatersrand area. Courier costs outside of this area are for your account and will be quoted separately.

#### Item 7

Quality: These medallions will be standard un-circulated/ proof-like quality.

#### Item 8

Prices quoted do not include V.A.T. and are valid for a period of 30 days.

Prices are based on today's price for gold and silver, and are subject to change according to the "London Metal Exchange" international precious metal price index (second fixing). The prices above are based on today's S.A Rand /United States dollars \$ rate.

#### Item 9

Ownership: The goods remain the property of "Gold Reef City Mint" and will pass to the client on full and final settlement of the account.

#### Item 10

Terms and conditions.

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- a) A deposit of 60 % is required with confirmation of your order. The balance is payable on delivery or collection of the goods.
- b) Precious metals  
To secure the price of the day for the silver and or gold, the costs of the material to be paid in full on confirmation of your order.

### Item 11

#### Dies

Dies that have been in use for a long period of time can be susceptible to cracking or breaking. Please be aware that, although the utmost care is taken when handling dies, should cracking or breaking occur during manufacturing, replacement of these dies will be for your account.

### Minutes Item 14

Proposed Checklist: all to remain with minutes – selected items will be placed on website

January 15<sup>th</sup> Scholarship application dead line. (**Date to be review by Council** at the recommendation of the Scholarship Convenor)

March 31<sup>st</sup> closing date for nominations for

Honorary Members (If constitution amendment approved)

Gill Medal

McIntyre Award (If constitution amendment approved)

Long Service Award

President's Award (If constitution amendment approved)

April 15<sup>th</sup> Deadline for Secretary to circulate to Council list of nominations for Awards and Honorary Membership.

Next Council meeting following April 15<sup>th</sup> consideration of names of nominees

April 30<sup>th</sup> Deadline for agreement with Struik of the printing schedule for the following year's edition of Sky Guide (*see 14.1 of Struik Agreement for the 2011 Edition:*

*14.1 The ASSA will be responsible for preparation and editing of text, sourcing of tables, maps and illustrations, and for all costs relating to final preparation of the Work to the print-ready PDF stage, and agrees to deliver to RHS the completed layout, from cover to cover, of the Work ready for printing on a date agreed to in writing by both parties not later than 30 April of each year. ASSA undertakes to deliver the 2011 edition on 12 September 2010. )*

June 1<sup>st</sup> Call for nominations for Council (If constitution amendment approved)

June 30<sup>th</sup> Closing date for nominations for Council (If constitution amendment approved)

June 30<sup>th</sup> Closing Date for receipt of Section reports.

June 30<sup>th</sup> Closing date for receipt of report from Scholarships Convenor

June 30<sup>th</sup> Closing date for submission of items for placing on the Agenda of the AGM

June 30<sup>th</sup> Financial year end

July 1<sup>st</sup> Honorary Members : submission of annual updated ASSA membership form

July 1<sup>st</sup> Country Members: Subscription renewal date

July 31<sup>st</sup> Closing date for ballot for Council nominations (If constitution amendment approved)

21 business days before the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in August:

Deadline for receipt by all members of ASSA of Agenda for AGM.

**(It may be easier if a date was specified so that this deadline is not a moveable feast. i.e choose a fixed date that will always be at least 21 business days before the first Wednesday in August.**

First Wednesday in August :Annual General Meeting

- September 30<sup>th</sup> (or other agreed date)  
Deadline for submission of PDF files to Struik for the following year's edition of SGAS
- October 1<sup>st</sup> Appointment of / Negotiations with Sky Guide Editor for following year's edition of SGAS  
Note: The relevant part of the current contract with the Editor of Sky Guide reads  
"For subsequent years the honorarium amount will be negotiated on submission of the current year's SGAS to the printers for production"
- October 1<sup>st</sup> Open negotiations with Struik concerning the printing, publication, distribution and financial arrangements for the following year's edition of SGAS.  
Note : one paragraph of relevance in the original contract with Struik is 14.1, but I cannot immediately find a paragraph about the annual renewal or review of the contract.

### The agreement with Struik for the 2011 Edition read

14.2 The ASSA will be responsible for preparation and editing of text, sourcing of tables, maps and illustrations, and for all costs relating to final preparation of the *Work* to the print-ready PDF stage, and agrees to deliver to *RHS* the completed layout, from cover to cover, of the *Work* ready for printing on a date agreed to in writing by both parties not later than 30 April of each year. ASSA undertakes to deliver the 2011 edition on 12 September 2010.

### The agreement with Struik for the 2012 Edition read:

#### DELIVERY OF PRINT READY PDFs

The ASSA undertakes to deliver the final files for checking on 29 August 2011 and the final PDFs for printing on 27 September 2011.

### Minutes Item 16.1

Dear Lerika,

Would you please submit the report below to Council for a decision on how to dispose of the approximately R2,300 in the bank account which was maintained after the the former Midlands Centre was closed down. Please refer to the report in this regard. There is a possibility that the money could be paid over to the Durban Centre.

Kind regards,  
Frikkie

----- Original Message -----

From: [D. Slatter](#)  
To: [Logan Govender](#)  
Cc: [Jake Alletson](#) ; [Alan Passmoor](#) ; [Frikkie de Bruyn](#)  
Sent: Monday, November 07, 2011 8:48 PM  
Subject: Former Midlands Astronomical Centre

Hullo Logan

We have a problem with the former Midlands Centre. As you know, we closed it down because the membership had got very small and the remaining members often did not turn out to the monthly evenings we arranged, nor were any prepared to stand on the committee when Jake, Alan and I wished to stand down after 5 or 6 years in the saddle.

After closing it, with the full knowledge of ASSA via Frikkie, we thought that we could continue to operate the Observatory between us, as a sort of club if you like, where we would open it for viewing on an as requested basis, preferably for a group of people. However, there has been virtually no demand for this either, partly I suppose because we have not really advertised it because we all have other things to do also. Alan, Jake and I spent several Saturday mornings doing up the Observatory but recently there have been a couple of break-ins, or attempted break-ins, including through the roof although nothing has been damaged or removed. So we have decided that we must get rid of the few contents of the Observatory and probably hand it over to the Girl Guides if they have a use for it, although we have not yet been in contact with them over this.



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Within the Observatory is the 12-inch reflector, and various books, magazines, old videos, star charts, etc. The 12-inch reflector was not acquired or built from any funds from ASSA so we do not need a view from ASSA upon disposing of it. We thought that we should offer it to yourselves if you are interested. And you are welcome to the books, etc. that I have mentioned. You will recall that we passed on to yourselves the books that we kept in the Girl Guide Hall. There are also some benches and chairs in the Observatory but these we will give to the Girl Guides.

There is also approx. R2300 in our bank account which we could pay to the Durban account, but this we will need approval for from ASSA. I will be sending an e-mail to Frikkie, telling him how much is in the account and asking him to contact ASSA for their view upon where it should be disposed of.

However, please let me know the Durban Centre's view upon acquiring the 12-inch reflector and also the other books, videos, etc

Best regards

Don

### Minutes Item 16.2

#### Letter to Jan Smit

ASSA c/o SAAO, PO Box 9, Observatory 7935

Mr Jan A. Smit  
1183 Dickenson Avenue  
Waverley  
Pretoria 0186  
Dear Jannie

The Council of ASSA would like to congratulate you on the special acknowledgment you have received from the American Association of Variable Star Observers at its 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in 2011, with the following citation:

"...in recognition of his [your] valuable contribution to the AAVSO International Database since 1986 of 19,027 visual observations of Southern Hemisphere variable stars; his contributions to minor planet occultation work; his mentoring of many younger observers in the art of variable star observing; and his public education efforts in introducing basic astronomy to the public during the open evenings and star parties at the Pretoria Centre of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa."

It is very good to see that such multi-faceted observing and outreach activity has been recognized internationally, providing an inspiration to us all.

Long may you continue in your endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Ian S. Glass (President, ASSA)

Lerika Cross (Secretary, ASSA)