

## ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Page 1 of 8

<b>DATE</b>	7 Feb 2012	<b>TIME</b>	19:30 to 20:50	<b>VENUE</b>	Via Skype
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### ATTENDANCE

Present	Role
I Glass	President (Chair)
Matie Hoffman	Vice President and Chair – Bloemfontein Centre
Adv AJ Nel	Treasurer
Maciej Soltynski	Council Member, Convenor of Scholarship Committee
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
Case Rijdsijk	Chair - Garden Route Centre, MNASSA Editor

### Apologies (a) and not present

Auke Slotegraaf (a)	Sky Guide Editor
John Richards (a)	Vice Chair – Cape Centre
John Saunders (a)	Chair - Hermanus Centre
Logan Govender	Chair - Durban Centre

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

	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
1	Welcome	<p>I Glass welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.</p> <p>L Cross noted that apologies will be recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>(John Richards wanted to join the Skype session and sent a mail to L Cross before the meeting with the Skype contact but this was only seen after the meeting.)</p>
2	Previous Minutes Matters arising	<p>2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2011 were accepted without amendments.</p> <p>2.2 Matters arising from previous meeting are noted <i>in italics</i> in the minutes below.</p>
3	Council 2011/ 12	<p><b>Section Director Guidelines</b></p> <p>3.1 (3.1) <i>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.</i></p> <p>L Cross discussed with <u>A Slotegraaf</u> who agreed to do a draft. (Refer to the input received and listed at the end of minutes of 15 Nov 2011)</p>
4	Financial Statements	<p><b>Previous financial statements &amp; audits</b></p> <p>4.1 The financials for 2010/11 is still with the Auditors and they have yet to ask M Poll to sign these off. (<u>R Glass</u>)</p> <p>4.2 The 2011/12 year closes end June 2012. <u>AJ Nel</u> will communicate to R Glass, the Auditor, regarding auditing of same.</p>

	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
		<p><b>Account balances</b>  4.3 Scholarship Account (savings) as at Nov 2011 (last statement): just under a R 100 000; Current account: ~ R 160 000.  <u>AJ Nel</u> offered to present a proposal at the next meeting for possible change to amount kept in current account and improved return on savings in savings account.</p> <p><b>ASSET</b>  4.4 (4.3) A letter was drafted by M Soltynski and sent by I Glass to ASSET and reply received from T Cooper - the correspondence are listed in the attachment to the minutes of 15 November 2011 in which ASSET (T.Cooper) undertakes to being to conclusion:  “ 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.”</p> <p>Response from ASSET dated 8 Dec 2011 was tabled – attached to these minutes.  Council did not consider that the response put matters to rest regarding ASSET.  AJ Nel noted that it was not clear from the ASSET Notarial Deed of Trust what the reason for ASSET existence is; <u>AJ Nel</u> offered to put some of his views in a mail to <u>I Glass and M Soltynski</u> who will respond to T Cooper on his response.  AJ Nel also suggested that the Master of the High Court be cc'd.</p> <p>4.5 Copying ASSA Council minutes to the ASSET Trustees:  P Cramb verbally requested from L Cross that ASSET Trustees should be copied on the minutes of the ASSA Council meetings. Council considered this request and agreed that this will not be agreed to. It is proposed that the correspondence to be compiled by <u>I Glass and M Soltynski</u> also include the Council response to the request from P Cramb.</p> <p><b>Scholarships</b>  4.6 Scholarships: M Soltynski requested Council approval to add another amount to the R100k amount that has been ring-fenced for scholarships: R20k was suggested and approved</p> <p>AJ Nel noted that the previous Scholarship payments were taken from the current account instead of the savings account.</p> <p><b>Registration as Non-Profit</b>  4.7 <u>AJ Nel</u> offered to draft a proposal to Council for registration of the ASSA entity as a Non-Profit Organisation.</p>
5	Membership	<p><b>New Members:</b>  5.1 P Booth advised 24 new members applied for membership – these were accepted as ASSA members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mr Shuaib Akoojee 454 Johann Straus St, Christoburg, Pretoria 0183</li> <li>2. Mr Robert Gordon Anderson PO Box 107, Homeleigh, East London 5212</li> <li>3. Mr Raymond Appiah-Baiden 6 Warren St, Grahamstown 6139</li> <li>4. Mr Alex Bernatzky Rhodes University, PO Box 94, Grahamstown 6140</li> <li>5. Mr James Michael Carkeek 11 Mkhula Rd, Westville, Durban 3629</li> <li>6. Mr Gregory Carter 17A African St, Grahamstown 6139</li> <li>7. Mr Simon Lincoln Goddard 22 Southey St, Grahamstown 6139</li> <li>8. Mr Stuart Honour 17A African St, Grahamstown 6139</li> <li>9. Mr Kieran Richard Hunt 20 Cullen Bowles House, Rhodes University, Grahamstown 6139</li> <li>10. Mr Yuvan Jugessur Piet Retief House, Rhodes University, Grahamstown 6139</li> <li>11. Mr St. John Benedict Kleinbooi 3 Caldicott St, Grahamstown 6139</li> <li>12. Mr Kyle John Lloyd 16 Vaarlandswilg, Richards Bay 3900</li> </ol>

	<b>Agenda Points</b>	<b>Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)</b>
		<p>13. Mr Ben Marais Rhodes University, PO Box 94, Grahamstown 6140</p> <p>14. Ms Consliah Tebogo Masebe B7 New House, Rhodes University, Grahamstown 6139</p> <p>15. Ms Asanda Siphokazi Menta Margret Smith House, Rhodes University, Grahamstown 6139</p> <p>16. Mr Selokwane Thabang Morake 413A Mojalefa St, Naledi, Soweto 1868</p> <p>17. Ms Megan Marie Mulcahy Olive Schreiner House, Rhodes University, Grahamstown 6139</p> <p>18. Ms Aimee-Jade Smith Olive Schreiner House, Rhodes University, Grahamstown 6139</p> <p>19. Ms Martha Soteniades 2 Benson Place, Northcliff Ext 12, Johannesburg 2195</p> <p>20. Mr Gregory Woolf 49 Rutland Rd, Parkwood, Johannesburg 2193</p> <p>21. Rhodes Astronomical Society Rhodes University, PO Box 94, Grahamstown 6140</p> <p>22. Dr Dieter Willasch 17 Rembrandt Rd, Somerset West, 7130</p> <p>23. Mr Sabake Mahlangu PO Box 12962, Mowbray 7705</p> <p>24. Mr Kenneth Brian Nevill PO Box 4199, Witbeek 1729</p> <p><b>Membership</b></p> <p>5.2 Total number of ASSA Members: 159 including the 13 Hon Members (2 vacant).</p> <p><b>Hon Members and Sky&amp; Telescope renewals:</b></p> <p>5.3 P Booth sent out a questionnaire to all Hon Members to ask salient questions about the manner in which they receive/or not receive the magazine.</p> <p>Council discussed and agreed that all Hon Members will be asked to subscribe themselves to the magazine and submit refund to the Membership Secretary and the Hon Treasurer.</p> <p><u>P Booth</u> to draft a short note to this effect to all Hon Members to advise them that they are entitled to the magazine subscription but they must apply for the subscription and then claim back a refund. (Give them the URL of the website and email address to contact if there are issues about the subscription: Sky Circ Service <a href="mailto:SkyCircService@skyandtelescope.com">SkyCircService@skyandtelescope.com</a> )</p>
6	Scholarships	<p><b>Scholarship report</b></p> <p>6.1 Maciej Soltynski advised on the progress of the 3 scholarship holders in 2011, and was disappointed to advise, that, despite advertising the 4 scholarships to ASSA members and on AstroNet, only one application for 2012 had been received.</p> <p>It was discussed and M Soltynski confirmed that late applications and will be considered in 2012.</p> <p>For information to pass on regarding the Scholarships available look at: <a href="http://assa.saao.ac.za/html/25_scholarship.html">http://assa.saao.ac.za/html/25_scholarship.html</a> and the downloadable pdf file that contains full details.</p> <p>6.2 There was support from Council to increase the amount for scholarships annually.</p> <p>6.3 M Soltynski provided a Scholarship report after the meeting for inclusion in the next MNASSA to C Rijdsijk.</p>
7	Editorial Board Matters - Sky Guide	<p><b>SGAS – Editor 2013</b></p> <p>7.1 Council were all in agreement to request A Slotegraaf to remain Editor for 2013 and to offer the proposed increase to him. <u>I Glass</u> will in the first instance contact A Slotegraaf to advise him of the Council decision and confirm his willingness to remain as Editor.</p> <p>7.2 <u>AJ Nel</u> will distribute the existing contract to Council members and allow amendments to</p>

	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
		be proposed such as: to include the communication to advertisers; to propose an advertising fee to council to approve, etc before finalising the contract for signature with A Slotegraaf.
8	Editorial Board Matters - MNASSA	<p><b>MNASSA matters</b>            8.1 Hits on the MNASSA website can be obtained here:  <a href="http://www.saa.ac.za/awstats/awstats.pl?config=www.mnassa.org.za">http://www.saa.ac.za/awstats/awstats.pl?config=www.mnassa.org.za</a></p>
9	Website	<p><b>Website Review</b>            9.2 Website Review: <i>L Cross offered to contact A Slotegraaf if he would assist in proposing some requirements/guidelines for an ASSA Website that can be taken further.</i></p> <p>L Cross spoke to <u>A Slotegraaf</u> and he agreed to start off a document that can be circulated for comment.</p>
10	Historical Section	<p><b>ASSA Archives to UCT Archive</b>            10.1 ASSA Archives to UCT Archive: <i>C de Coning to give update and list issues.</i>            C de Coning provided this report by email:            “I am in the process of updating the archive and placing it on the web.            It is an immense amount of work and data. SAAO has approved for me to add this amount of data on their website. I had some problems with the web program, which has set me back somewhat. In the next month I should place about half the material of the new archive on the web. The physical books are now safely at the archive at UCT. They are indexing it and do what they do.”</p> <p><b>Photographic Glass Plates archives from the Republic Observatory:</b>            10.2 (10.2) <i>Photographic Glass Plates archives from the Republic Observatory: 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.</i></p> <p>The email sent by I Glass to <a href="mailto:saastronomers@saa.ac.za">saastronomers@saa.ac.za</a> is attached to the minutes – no feedback received. Key comments by G Els on this matter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storage is one aspect – need to find a home for the plates</li> <li>- Jhb Planetarium helped to scan the plates: C Flanagan had some students to start digitising the reference cards of each plate in order to create a cardex list of the plates</li> </ul> <p>I Glass noted that the Virtual Observatory comprises references to digitised material.            M Hoffman noted that “we should maybe learn from the effort of the Harvard Photographic Plate Scanning Project”.</p>
11	Gill Medal	<p><b>More Gill Medals:</b>            11.1 The additional medals have been minted and will be collected and given to I Glass (who will be visiting Gauteng) by <u>L Cross</u> or <u>C Stewart</u> for safekeeping at the SAAO.</p> <p>The dies will be kept at Gold Reef Mint; current contact is Candice Messias  <a href="mailto:candice@grcmint.co.za">candice@grcmint.co.za</a>.</p>
12	ASSA Symposium 2012	<p><b>ASSA Symposium 2012:</b>            12.1 C Hettlage reported that “The LOC for the ASSA Symposium has decided on a date: The symposium is going to be held on the 13th and 14th of October. So far, this date is provisional, as the SAAO has to agree that their auditorium may be used.”</p> <p><u>C Rijsdijk</u> offered to include a notice in MNASSA.</p> <p>12.2 Contribution from Council to the Symposium: Council could offer a float to ASSA CPT And also possibly sponsor key note speakers. <u>C Hettlage</u> will deliver the offers to the LOC</p> <p>12.3 Durban Centre has offered to host the Symposium 2014</p>

## ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Page 5 of 8

	<b>Agenda Points</b>	<b>Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)</b>
13	Checklist for Council	<p><b>Check list for Council</b>                      13.1 <i>Key activities due by when to assist Council from year to year</i>                      See attachment to the minutes.</p>
14	Constitution leftovers	<p><b>New ASSA Constitution: List of items left over or arising from the Constitution change</b>                      14.1 (16.1) <i>M Poll kindly produced two documents: 2011 10 07 Clause Summary.doc and 2011 09 20 Constitution amendments.doc</i></p> <p>L Cross to schedule Skype meeting with I Glass, M Poll, AJ Nel, C Stewart for before end Feb 2012 with the purpose to finalise any further changes to the Constitution</p>
15	General	<p><b>Award to J (Jannie) Smit:</b>                      15.1 (16.2) <i>Jannie Smit's efforts was acknowledged by a special acknowledgment from the American Association of Variable Star Observers at its 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in 2011.</i>                      A letter of appreciation from the President was handed to Johan Smit (Chair – ASSA Pta) on 11 Feb 2012</p> <p>15.2 M Hoffman will send the calendar for outreach activities by “Sterre en Planete” and this could perhaps be included in MNASSA</p>
16	Closure Next Meeting	<p>I Glass thanked everyone for their contribution and closed the meeting at 20.50</p> <p><b>Next meetings (to be diarised and confirmed over time:),</b>                      27 Mar 2012, 1 May 2012, 26 June 2012 AGM: 1 August                      Start time 19:30 via Skype (except AGM)</p>

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

### Minutes item: 4.4

#### **ASSA ENDOWMENT TRUST** (ASSET)

Secretary:  
 Tel: 021 531 5250  
 e: cliffturk@absamail.co.za

20 Nerine Avenue,  
 PINELANDS,  
 7405.

2011 December 8.

The President  
 Astronomical Society of Southern Africa  
 PO Box 9  
 OBSERVATORY  
 7935

Dear Mr President

We thank you for your emailed letter of 14 November and set out a little of the history of the Trust which was formed just over 34 years ago in 1977 and registered with the Master of the Supreme Court, Cape Town on 1977 July 6.

At the time ASSA had very poor finances and the idea for the Trust came from the operations of AAVSO in the USA which then obtained about 60% of its annual income from a similar trust.

## ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Page 6 of 8

Initially, the then Council showed no interest, but the Trustees went ahead with the idea anyway with the following objects in clause 3 of the Notarial Deed of Trust.

1. To establish a Fund by collecting and raising funds by gift, grant, settlement or bequest and by means of personal or written appeals, public meetings or otherwise.
2. To invest and re-invest the capital and income of the Fund as the Trustees shall deem fit and to use the income of such Fund to promote and further the interests of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa in the manner hereinafter set out.

The Trust Deed prohibits the Trustees from disposing of the capital of the Trust or any part of it, except as provided for winding up.

By 1980 December 31 the Trust capital had grown to only R 1011-59 and total income for the 3+ years was then R 86-24. Five years later at end 1985 the figures were R 3051-46 and R 1234-80. The annual income for 1985 was R412-27.

### Grants

In 1988 the first grant (R 200-00) was paid to ASSA. No grants made in 1989, but R 250-00 was paid to "Sterrewag" competition in 1990. This was a magazine competition for children. Grants of R 1000-00 were paid to ASSA in each of the years 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996. From 1997, the grants to ASSA were increased to R 1500-00 p.a. The Trust paid for a photograph of ASSA Presidents in 1998 (R200-00) and this was reproduced on the front cover of MNASSA. There was also a grant of R1000-00 to Natal Midlands Centre in 1999. Thus the total of grants paid up to 2000 December 31 was R11-650-00.

ASSA's finances came under a lot of pressure in the 1990s and the Treasurer from 1994 had to borrow funds from himself or a couple of other members on at least 3 occasions to keep the Society solvent at financial year ends. At the same time, a Bank Fixed Deposit for R8000-00 and a savings account holding about R1200-00 went "missing" which was not noticed by the auditors. These were fortunately both recovered some 18 months later. Careful planning by the Treasurer (Colin Gray) was essential and he always thought of the grants from the Trust as providing funds for the Honoraria paid to certain officials. When the honoraria were increased, the Trust obliged by improving the grant which was raised again in 2004 to R 2500-00 p.a.

Sadly, Colin Gray died in 2003 just as the Society's finances were improving with the revamp of the old Handbook becoming the Sky Guide and rapidly increasing income from sales. The Trust Secretary took on the job of ASSA Treasurer although he was already Business Manager responsible for sales and distribution of Sky Guide which was generating much more work at a great rate. In a year or so ASSA no longer needed grants as it built a huge surplus (including some R 90 000-00 in the Scholarship fund alone)

At this stage, the Trust Secretary/ASSA Treasurer/ASSA Business Manager started to experience health problems which were diagnosed as Prostate cancer in 2007 and entailed ongoing treatment. Something had to give and priority was given to ASSA work which only reduced with the appointment of a new Business Manager in 2009. In the meantime our Secretary was also getting behind in helping with the financial side of his son's business which was going through a tough time.

As Council is aware, all the ASSA accounts were made up to the end of the 2009/2010 financial year by 11 February 2011 when the last year's accounts were delivered to the Auditors. (See also last paragraph below.) The Trust Secretary then turned his attention to helping his son as much as possible. He is now able to work on the outstanding Trust annual accounts and hopes to catch up quite quickly.

At the end of June 2010, ASSA was holding some R2946-50 of donations to the Trust which have not yet been paid over, but conversely had not received any grants from the Trust since 2007. In the meantime, interest rates have dropped considerably and the Trust income from interest has dropped by R2815-00 in the last year alone. The Trustees will have to consider future grants in the light of the current reduced income as soon as all the figures are available.

The Trust Secretary (ex ASSA Treasurer) has not received completed ASSA accounts from the Auditor for 2009/10 for signing by then Council Members, but has obtained all the signatures on the 2008/09 accounts and returned them to the Auditor by hand. However, about three weeks ago he received a phone call from the Auditor's secretary asking for the fully signed 2008/09 accounts. He explained they had been delivered by hand to the reception desk some months earlier and was told a search would be instituted. He has heard nothing further.

We shall continue to serve ASSA to the best of our ability in terms of the Trust Deed.

Sincerely

M. A. L. Gray. Trustee

J. P. G. Cramb. Trustee

T. P. Cooper. Trustee

C. R. G. Turk. Secretary

**Minutes refer to Item 10.2:**

Dear Members of the SA Astronomical Community:

The CSIR who, till recently, stored the plate collections of the Union/Republic Observatory in their climate-controlled archive room on their campus in Pretoria, decided some time they would not keep them any more.

They are currently stored by a member of the Johannesburg Centre of ASSA, who feels they should be preserved for posterity but who cannot continue to do this indefinitely.

Why I am writing is to enquire if there is interest in the SA Astronomical Community in preserving them. There is obviously some cost and effort involved..

I do not know what precisely the collection includes, but there are probably plates from the Franklin-Adams camera (including the Union Observatory Charts) and from the Rockefeller twin astrograph. There are probably plates from their minor planet discovery programme, of comets etc.

To give some idea of the size of the collection, I give below part of a letter from Alec Jamieson to Mr Shadrack Mkansi of SAASTA

If you feel this is a worthwhile project and can offer any practical help, I urge you to contact Mr Alec Jamieson (email address above).

Regards

Ian Glass

(President of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa; Emeritus Astronomer at SAAO)

**Minutes Item 13.1**

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.