

ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

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DATE	18 Mar 2013	TIME	19:40 to 20.23	VENUE	Via Skype
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ATTENDANCE

Present	Role
Ian Glass	President (Chair)
Matie Hoffman	Vice President, Chair – Bloemfontein Centre
Chris Stewart	Council Member
Pat Booth	Membership Secretary
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Christian Hettlage	Web Master
Auke Slotegraaf	Sky Guide Editor
Lia Labuschagne	Chair – ASSA Cape Centre
Bosman Olivier	Chair – ASSA Pretoria Centre

Apologies (a) Not Present

AJ Nel (a)	Treasurer
Maciej Soltynski (a)	Council Member, Convenor of Scholarship Committee
Case Rijdsdijk (a)	Chair - Garden Route Centre, MNASSA Editor
Pierre de Villiers (a)	Chair - Hermanus Centre
Gary Els	Chair – ASSA Johannesburg Centre
Logan Govender	Chair - Durban Centre

NOTE: Names responsible for progressing actions are underlined and matters arising are *in italics*

	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
1	Welcome	<p>The meeting started a little late to allow everyone to be connected via Skype.</p> <p>I Glass welcomed everyone present. Apologies were received from M Soltynski, P de Villiers and AJ Nel (who all provided update notes to be tabled at the meeting) and Case Rijdsdijk. No apologies were received from G Els and L Govender.</p> <p>Council formally welcomed Pierre de Villiers as the new Chair of the Hermanus Centre.</p>
2	Minutes /Matters arising	<p>Previous Minutes of Meetings</p> <p>2.1 Minutes of meeting on 24 Jan 2013: B Olivier asked that his comment recorded under point 12 General be removed. M Hoffman pointed out that the date was recorded as 2012. The revised minutes is attached to these minutes.</p> <p>2.2 B Olivier asked what constitutes a quorum. (Extract from Constitution 10.1: it is 50%).</p> <p>2.3 Matters arising from previous meeting are noted in <i>italics</i> in the agenda and in minutes.</p>
3	Financial Matters	<p>Financial Matters</p> <p>3.1 ASSA registering as non-profit organisation</p> <p><i>The Society will early in the 2012/2013 financial year become a registered non-profit organisation.</i></p> <p>AJ Nel reported that the results on the application for a non-profit was according to the Department of Social Development forwarded to the ASSA postal address on 13 February. C Hettlage reported that ASSA received a letter saying that the application for registration has been received by Dept. <u>I Glass</u> kindly offered to forward the letter</p>

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		to AJ Nel.
	Financial Matters	<p>3.2 Investment of ASSA Funds - 2013 <i>25 Sep 12: Agreed: approx fifty percent of the funds in the current business account as well as all funds in the two investment accounts may be transferred to a central investment account - the annual interest earned to be used to settle the bursaries.</i> <i>27 Nov 2012 agreed: Council agreed with the principle of one investment account.</i> <i>24 Jan 2013: AJ Nel contacted the SBSA branch in Pinelands with a request to combine the 3 ASSA accounts for purposes of ease of admin and secure maximum interest.</i></p> <p><u>AJ Nel</u> reported that Standard Bank has forwarded to him the documentation to combine the accounts and he will finalise during the next month.</p>
	Financial Matters	<p>3.3 Process for applying for ASSA funds <i>24 Jan 13: Policy document was sent out and comments received. AJ Nel to amend the proposal and send to Council and advise on the total amount of monies that would be available for consideration throughout the year.</i></p> <p>AJ Nel updated the Proposal (filename 2013-02-05 ASSA Funds Distribution Policy) and it was circulated to Council on 10 March (with the minutes of the meeting of 24 Jan).</p>
	Financial Matters	<p>3.4 ASSET <i>24 Jan 13: AJ Nel sent a note to ASSET and proposed to ASSET that they transfer the ASSET funds to ASSA and close ASSET</i></p> <p>No response has been received from <u>ASSET</u>.</p>
	Financial Matters - Auditing	<p>3.5 Auditing of 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 <i>2010/2011 and 2011/2012 years are still to be audited;</i> <i>24 Jan 13: AJ Nel to provide the required information to R Glass .</i></p> <p><u>AJ Nel</u> advised that the Financials was sent off to the Auditor R Glass on 14 March.</p>
	Financial Matters	<p>3.6 Payments by Centres and ASSA for SGAS 2013 <i>24 Jan 13: AJ Nel advised that he still is awaiting payment from Durban Centre and will send L Govender a reminder.</i></p> <p><u>AJ Nel</u> to just confirm if payment has been received from Durban Centre.</p> <p>I Glass offered to write a note to Durban Centre on the issue of SGAS 2013 pricing. (This was done on 18 Mar - extract: "Our agreement with Struik was that our own members should be able to receive the Guide at cost to the Society. The idea is that we get a certain number at the actual (very low) printing cost and pay for more at the wholesale cost and then average according to the number of members who wanted to have them. However, we understood that the Durban Centre was making members pay R100 each for them (Is this correct?). We would prefer that Durban members get the same rate as other ASSA centre members.")</p>
	Financial Matters	<p>3.7 ASSA Symposium – financial leftovers <i>24 Jan 13: I Glass advised Garth Hampshire that the Oxford cheque of 350 pounds should be forwarded to the ASSA national treasurer.</i></p> <p>I Glass and L Labuschagne expressed confidence that the payment has been processed.</p>
4	Membership matters	<p>4.1 New Members and Membership numbers P Booth reported: Country members 146 incl Hons; New members: None</p>
5	Scholarships	<p>Scholarships 5.1 M Soltynski advised that the Scholarships Committee (comprising Ian Glass, Maciej Soltynski, Glass, Andrew Gray and Sivuyile Manxoyi (SAAO)) have awarded the following:</p> <p>1) ASSA Scholarship 2013 of R24 000: Emma Platts 3rd year BSc UCT (plans three majors: in physics - already complete - astrophysics and applied maths)</p>

	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
		<p>2) SAAO-ASSA Scholarships 2013: Three scholarships at R10 000 each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yusri Dollie 1st year BSc UCT - Jaco Brink 3rd year BSc UNISA - Izak van der Westhuizen 3rd year BSc UFS <p>5.2 AJ Nel advised that he has already paid the individuals scholarship recipients but he is still waiting for a larger EFT limit from Standard Bank in order to pay the Universities. The limit is currently R 20 000.00 and have to pay R 55 000.00.</p>
6	Section Directors	<p>Section Directors</p> <p>6.1 Comets, Asteroids, Meteor (“CAM”) Section</p> <p>L Cross reported that she has received an email from Tim Cooper in which he submits his resignation as Section Director of the Comets, Asteroids and Comets Section. (Email is attached to the minutes.)</p> <p>Council voiced their high regards of Tim’s dedication to ASSA and the Section over many years and their sadness on his resignation.</p> <p>A number of suggestions on how to encourage observing in the country were noted (and also expressed in emails after the meeting). I Glass undertook to write an email to Tim (this was done on 18 March) to express the joint Council’s views. Tim will remain on as Section Director until <u>Council</u> find an alternate Section Director to appoint in his place.</p> <p>6.2 Section Director Guidelines</p> <p><i>Refer to the input received and listed at the end of minutes of 15 Nov 2011.</i></p> <p><i>24 Jan 13: A Slotegraaf reported that his discussion with T Cooper is ongoing.</i></p> <p><u>A Slotegraaf</u> had discussions with T Cooper on a new observing strategy; he undertook to send <u>L Cross</u> the notes who offered to facilitate communication among all the Section Directors to progress the matter and as well as the fall-out of the CAM Section Director resignation</p>
7	Website	<p>Website Review</p> <p><i>Website Review: The website is also dependent on the ASSA Section review and should be seen in tandem. 24 Jan 13: C Hettlage intends to have a draft new website up by mid-Feb.</i></p> <p><u>C Hettlage</u> reported that he plans to progress the new ASSA website during the holidays which will co-incide with introduction of new SAAO website.</p>
8	Historical Section	<p>ASSA Archives to UCT Archive</p> <p>I Glass noted that C Rijdsdijk has received many items from the Jan Hers estate and this were taken to Cape Town and will be placed with the ASSA archives – it includes interesting material on when Sutherland was formed.</p>
9	Editorial Board Matters - MNASSA	<p>MNASSA</p> <p><i>24 Jan 13: attendees concurred that the MNASSA website home should be on the SAAO server and be integral part of the ASSA website. After meeting from I Glass: “I suggest that the existing mnassa.org site be retained for a year with a message saying that the enquiry is being forwarded to the new site and that the old one will be closed down at the end of 2013. The editor and Willie Koorts need to be told of this.”</i></p> <p>Council agreed that the MNASSA website will be retained and a link to the MNASSA site will be placed on the ASSA page (<u>C Hettlage</u>) - the ASSA Page will be the main link given out as reference as the point of contact for MNASSA (<u>C Rijdsdijk</u> to note and also advise W Koorts).</p>
10	Editorial Board Matters - SGAS 2013	<p>SGAS 2014</p> <p><i>24 Jan 13: <u>AJ Nel</u> will arrange for a contract to be presented to A Slotegraaf.</i></p> <p>10.1 Editor Contract: <u>AJ Nel</u> to progress the contract to A Slotegraaf</p>

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	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
		<p>10.2 SGAS 2014 Cover Photograph: A Slotegraaf reported that Struik had their sales bosberaad. The cover photo need to be finalised in late July. It was discussed if it could be “advertised” among all members to submit their photos for consideration – <u>Centre Chairs</u> to send a message along these lines to their members: “Submit your astrophoto to SGAS 2014 Editor at auke@psychohistorian.org for consideration for the Sky Guide 2014 cover”.</p>
11	ASSA Constitution	<p>New ASSA Constitution: <i>24 Jan 2013: AJ Nel advised that the amended Constitution - with the revisions as proposed after its formal acceptance via the written voting process in 2011 – needs to be voted on again by members. The amended document, annotated with the changes, be presented to the Centre members by the Centre Chairs during their meetings and newsletters in February.</i></p> <p>L Cross reported that acceptance of the Constitution (and also some format corrections) has been received from the Garden Route, Cape and Hermanus Centres. Unless any written objections are received by 12 April <u>AJ Nel</u> will finalise the copy for publication on the website and final distribution.</p>
12	Next ASSA Symposium	<p>Next ASSA Symposium L Govender advised L Cross on 20 Jan 2013: “at a special meeting of the Durban Committee, members approved the motion to host the 2014 ASSA Symposium in Durban. We are in the process of forming a sub-committee to be responsible for this event...We welcome any advice and suggestions from Council as well as all previous hosts”.</p> <p>Council consider the request from ASSA Durban very positively and agreed that <u>L Cross</u> may advise ASSA Durban of the outcome.</p>
13	General	<p>General 13.1 M Hoffman gave an update on: - Planetarium project: on the progress of the Planetarium on Naval Hill which will be the first digital Planetarium in Sub Saharan Africa. - The Astronomy Fair, which will be hosted by the University of the Free State on 23 - 27 April on Bloemfontein Campus and 4 May on Qwaqwa Campus.</p> <p>13.2 Honorary Members and Awards: L Cross noted that the closing date for nominations for Honorary Members and Awards was 31 March. L Labuschagne proposed that Council considers Greg Roberts for a Gill Medal award. This was positively received by Council – <u>L Labuschagne</u> will talk to Greg to get information that can be used in the citation.</p>
14	Closure Next Meeting	<p>Next Meetings: 19.30 via Skype on the following proposed dates: The next meeting will be on 20 May. Further possible dates: 17 June, 15 July. AGM on 7 Aug</p>

Minutes Approved: _____ Date: _____

Attachments to minutes:

- 1) ASSA Minutes 130124 final 1.doc
- 2) **Resignation email from Tim Cooper to Lerika Cross**
Sent: 18 March 2013 01:03 PM

Hi Lerika

I have thought about various issues over the weekend, and I am sad to announce to you that after 20 years at the helm I have decided to stand down as Director of the Comet, Asteroid and Meteor Section of ASSA. The decision is not made lightly, and is the culmination of many months of deliberations, brought to a head by several recent issues.

I would like to elaborate on my thinking around reaching this decision.

Firstly, my functions as observing director have changed. Simply put, no-one is interested in observing any more, or if they do they don't want to submit their observations. You are aware of my previous comments by email dated 17 December 2010, as well as my comments to Chris de Coning made some years earlier and appended to that mail. Nothing has changed since I made those comments on the observing sections over two years ago, and in fact the status has gone further backwards. I no longer see the point in preparing section newsletters, to which no-one responds.

Secondly, without a stream of regular observations from dedicated observers, the role has become one of rapid response to the many and varied individuals wanting comment on everything from near earth asteroid approaches (like DA14) to bolides (Chelyabinsk last month and Cape most recently), including various requests for media interviews. With a very high demand on my time for my business as an industry consultant from paying customers, I am simply not able to devote the time to meeting these requests, which is just leading to frustration, including at home. I don't believe this is the intended function of the observing sections or its directors.

Pre-2008 (more than 5 years ago!) I suggested a dedicated ASSA workshop on observing. After numerous email exchanges it became clear that not everyone could agree on the goal, and so I retracted the offer. As a result, and after a meeting at a previous Scopex between yourself, Auke and myself, we agreed to set up an ASSA observing manual instead. I completed this after about 1 years hard work, and today it is complete, running to about 250 pages and sitting in my book cupboard. You had sight of this many moons ago. In retrospect, this was probably also a waste of time, because with no-one observing there is no audience to justify its publication.

Lastly, I sold my previous company in 2008, and after a period working for the new owners, decided to exit the business. I have since started my own new business, which has resulted in a number of local research initiatives, including with several universities, and international corporations. As you can imagine this is not without significant effort and long hours. As it needs to pay me a living it has to be my first priority, and does not allow me to spend the time I would like on running the Comet, Asteroid and Meteor Section, especially along the changed lines previously described.

So I'm sorry to say that the happenings (an non-happenings) of the past few years have just left me simply exasperated and exhausted, and I need a break.

I trust this clarifies my position. I will continue to disburse my duties until a new director is appointed, or up to the 2013 AGM, whichever occurs first.

Best regards
Tim

Checklist:

- 1 Feb Scholarship application dead line (changed 27 Jan 2013)
- 31 Mar Closing date for nominations for: Honorary Members and Awards
- 15 April Deadline for Secretary to send to Council list of nominations.
- 30 April Deadline for agreement with Struik of the printing schedule for the following SGAS
- 1 Jun Call for nominations for Council
- 30 Jun Closing date for nominations for Council, receipt of Section reports, for receipt of report from Scholarships Convenor, for submission of items for placing on the Agenda of the AGM, Financial year end
- 1 Jul Submission of annual updated ASSA membership form, Country Members: Subs renewal
- 31 Jul Closing date for ballot for Council nominations
- AGM 1st Wed in Aug. 21 business days before 1st Wed in Aug: Deadline for members to receive notice
- 1 Oct Appointment/Negotiations with SGAS Editor for next edition. Open negotiations with STRUIK