

# ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

<b>DATE</b>	26 May 2014	<b>TIME</b>	19:30 to 20.30	<b>VENUE</b>	Via Skype
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## ATTENDANCE

<b>Council</b>	<b>Role</b>
Matie Hoffman	President (Chair)
Pierre de Villiers	Vice-President, Chair - Hermanus Centre
Ian Glass	Outgoing Vice-President
AJ Nel	Hon Treasurer
Lerika Cross	Hon Secretary
Pat Booth	Membership Secretary
Chris Stewart	Council Member
Maciej Soltynski	Council Member
Bosman Olivier	Chair –Pretoria Centre
Case Rijdsdijk	Chair - Garden Route Centre, MNASSA Editor
Lia Labuschagne	Chair - ASSA Cape Centre
<b>Appointees</b>	
Christian Hettlage	Web Master
Chris de Coning	ASSA Archivist, Director -Astronomy History
Allen Versveld	Director - AstroPhotography
<b>ASSET</b>	
Tim Cooper	for ASSET Trustees

## Apologies (a) Not Present

Peter Dormehl (a)	Chair - Durban Centre
Gary Els	Chair – ASSA Johannesburg Centre

	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)</b>
1	Welcome Apologies	M Hoffman welcomed everyone to the 4 <sup>th</sup> 2013/14 Council meeting. Apologies received are noted in the minutes.
2	Previous Minutes Agenda  Matters arising	The minutes of the meeting held 24 March 2014 were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting (C Stewart, AJ Nel). The agenda was accepted.  Matters arising from previous meeting are in <i>italics</i> in the minutes, actions underlined.
3	ASSA's Comms channels	<p>Communication</p> <p>3.1. Website and Communications <i>(10 Feb) M Hoffman asked the Centre Chairs and Section Directors to give a short report back on how they have spread the word and contributed the new ASSA communication channels. Distribute their comments to Council.</i></p> <p>Feedback received from some Centre Chairs &amp; Section Directors is listed below the minutes. P de Villiers said he sent emails out twice to their members and advised that no real positive response was received. M Hoffman said Bloemfontein Centre didn't receive any negative response.</p> <p>The number of people in the ASSA mail groups: ASSA_Info: 76 members ASSA_Discussion: 43 members</p> <p>3.2 Sections: ASSA Observing and Outreach <i>(24 March) The draft will be revised following further discussions and input from anyone interest in responding.</i></p> <p>L Cross said that more work is required to deliver on the intent in the document but</p>

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		<p>there is no further progress to report at this time.</p> <p>3.3 Sections: Dark Sky  <i>The meeting agreed the proposal from C Stewart that ASSA becomes a Group Member of the IESSA (Illumination Engineering Society of South Africa) which will place ASSA in a position to educate their members about light pollution and influence their direction. (refer <a href="http://www.iessa.org.za/node/13">http://www.iessa.org.za/node/13</a>). This was unanimously agreed and J Smit (Dark Sky) C Stewart and L Cross were tasked to take this action forward.</i>  L Cross informed Council that Group Membership was filed for on 20 May (and having heard nothing, forwarded application it again to Chantale Ziman on 12 June). It was agreed that once Group Membership has been approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council must find out what IESSA scope / effort is in terms of what they have in place to keep skies darker, e.g., light specs, statutory regulations;</li> <li>- Council should agree on what message ASSA would like to put to IESSA;</li> <li>- As proposed by M Soltinsky: also advise Prof Chetty (who runs the Astronomy Desk at the NRF) of the existence of the IESSA and what Group Membership entails. <u>L Cross</u> offered to send a draft to M Hoffman to consider for circulation to Council before sending to Prof Chetty, once substance for content was obtained.</li> </ul> <p>3.4 ASSA Publications - SGAS  3.4.1 (10 Feb) <u>AJ Nel</u> to confirm if all invoices were sent and paid by Centres and to process the contract for the SGAS Editor 2015.  AJ Nel confirmed that all invoices to Centres were paid.  The deadline was 30 April for agreement with Struik of the printing schedule for the following SGAS.  AJ Nel proposed – and Council had no objection to – an increase of 10% of the SGAS Editor’s contract. <u>AJ Nel</u> will proceed to process the contract.</p>
4	Scholarships	Scholarships M Soltynski reported that he has approached SAAO for SAAO-ASSA scholarships, Sivuyile Manxoyi – who took over from Kevin Govender - for next year.
5	Membership	Membership 5.1 Membership: P Booth reported: 118 Country members incl Hons New members: MR D COETZEE ,4 HOEPER STR, REEBOK GROOT BRAK REVIER DR LPD DE WET, PO BOX 283, PERSEQUOR PARK MS LS LUNOW, PO BOX 1245, LITTLE BRAK RIVER  5.2 Increasing Country Membership - <u>in abeyance</u> until there is substance to report by any Council Member (12 Sep) (5.4) <i>Proposals to increase ASSA’s “country member” base: from outside SA borders and inside RSA borders. Council to think on specifics -a 2014 Objective.</i> M Hoffman proposed that whenever/wherever there is an opportunity in any forum, effort should be advertise country membership. ( <u>All</u> )
6	Outreach	ASSA Outreach / SAASTA (18 Nov) (7.1) <i>A session held 11 Nov - to discuss the draft long term strategy for Education/Outreach/Science and Mathematics Awareness sent to SAASTA mail list Astronet by K Govender - prepared a draft reply and Council agreed that it may be sent by M Hoffman to K Govender.</i> (10 Feb) <u>L Cross</u> undertook to resend the draft to <u>M Hoffman</u> . M Hoffman reported that the draft was sent. Item closed.

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7	Governance	<p>Governance</p> <p>7.1 Constitution</p> <p><i>(10 Feb) AJ Nel confirmed that Council can accept that all processes were followed and that the Constitution - as published on the website with some minor grammar changes - can now be considered as accepted and final by Council. <u>AJ Nel</u> will send the final version to Council for sign off.</i></p> <p>AJ Nel reported that the version on the website is the final version. As it is in pdf form it was considered secure enough by Council not to have a version that is password protected. Item closed</p>
8	Financial Matters	<p>8. Financial Matters</p> <p>8.1 Auditing of 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13 financials</p> <p><i>(12 Sep) (4.1) AJ Nel advised the meeting that the Financials for the year 2010/2011, 2011/2012 and 2012/13 were forwarded to the ASSA Auditor, R Glass – 7 August – currently under “audit”.</i></p> <p><i>(18 Nov) (4.1) <u>AJ Nel</u> advised that R Glass advised before the meeting that he will try and finalise audit of all three financial years before the end of December and he will follow-up again before mid-Dec.</i></p> <p><i>(31 Mar) Bookkeeping services: the meeting of 31 March 2014 agreed that further to the mail from L Cross to Council dated 27 March 09.10pm a max of R5 000 may be incurred by Council to finalise the bookkeeping required to allow sign off of the audits for the last 3 years and to make a recommendation of how best to proceed to get painless audits in future.</i></p> <p><u>AJ Nel</u> reported that CTF Services (Rudolf Strydom) sent a revised set of financial documentation, as well as a report including progress, suggestions and requirements on 25 May. He said that at first glance he considered the work done to be very useful and will raise any further queries with CTF Services before finalising the documents back to the Auditor which he expects to be by end June.</p> <p>Some recommendations made by CTF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a central electronic repository, such as Google drive or Dropbox, to keep electronic versions of all bank statements and documents, as well as emails containing approvals for expenses from committee members, if applicable. This will ensure an easily transferable and searchable filing system;</li> <li>- Annually (or more often), request a qualified bookkeeper or accountant to compile a trial balance in preparation for the audit.</li> </ul> <p>8.2 Two signatories to withdraw funds and increasing the withdrawal limit</p> <p><i>(18 Nov) Council agreed to increase the once off internet payment limit to R50 000 (from R20 000) and to add M Hoffman as a secondary authorised person)</i></p> <p><i>(10 Feb) AJN reported that M Hoffman was added as signatory. <u>AJ Nel</u> to confirm this item can be closed.</i></p> <p>M Hoffman and AJ Nel reported that the item may be closed.</p> <p>8.3 ASSA registering as non-profit organisation</p> <p><i>(10 Feb) AJ Nel confirmed that this item can now be progressed if the ASSA Constitution is finalised albeit it still needs to be signed.</i></p> <p>AJ Nel advised that he has submitted request for an NPO.</p> <p>8.4 Request for funding from A Slotegraaf.</p> <p>The request - below - was leftover for the next meeting to allow more time to discuss/consider. But initial comments were that request 1 is reasonable; 2 and 3 were</p>

	Agenda	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
		<p>not widely supported.</p> <p>1. <u>Catering: Deep-Sky talk - Amount requested: R 500</u>  Motivation: In September 2014, Dr Wolfgang Steinicke is visiting South Africa to deliver an address at the Symposium. He will also be in Cape Town and has agreed to give a special talk on behalf of the Section. It will be held at the SAAO (who have sponsored the use of the 1896 Building as the venue), and it would be fitting to offer snacks &amp; fruit juice before the talk. Our members and SAAO staff will be invited to attend.</p> <p>M Soltinsky commented that the venue is too small (about 30 people max) for this type of event, and there is no space to serve the requested snacks and drinks.</p> <p>2. <u>Graphic artist: Big Five project Amount requested: R 1000</u>  The Section is launching a "See the Big Five of the African Skies!" project, which will hopefully work to encourage folk to look at other things besides M42. (The Top-100 is perhaps a bit daunting.) A graphic artist is needed to come up with a logo and other branding material for the project. (The Editor of the SkyGuide has already kindly agreed to set aside a small space in the 2015 edition to promote this project.)</p> <p>3. <u>Lapel pins/bumper stickers: Big Five project - Amount requested: R 5000 (?)</u>  In support of the "Big 5" project, those who complete it can proudly show off their amazing new observing skills, either in the form of a bumper sticker/licence disk holder (those round ones that show you've been to the Kruger Park with your in-laws) and a (limited-edition) lapel pin (not unlike the ASSA member's lapel pins).</p> <p>8.5 Item in abeyance  8.4.1 <i>Investment of ASSA Funds - 2014</i>  (12 Sep)(4.3.3) <i>The item is on backburner in consequence of insufficient funds to justify the combination of the accounts (R 500 000.00 required).</i>  This item was requested to be removed from the agenda</p>
9	ASSA Endowment Trust	<p>ASSET  (24 Mar 2014) <i>M Hoffman to mail the final to the ASSET Trustees.</i>  ASSET advised on 2 April that Andrew Gray resigned as trustee and that Dr Ian Glass accepted ASSET's offer to become a trustee. As the ASSET Trust Deed stipulates that any such appointment being acceptable to ASSA Council, members were requested via email to respond to the appointment. ASSET was advised on 6 April that Council have given their overwhelming support for the Trustees' choice of appointing Dr Ian Glass as ASSET Trustee.</p> <p>M Hoffman sent email request to Trustees on 3 April (attached to minutes) to nominate a Trustee representative to next Council meeting and ASSET responded on 24 May that Tim Cooper was nominated to present ASSET at Council.</p> <p>The point raised by M Soltynski about the letter to ASSET referring to the SAAO-ASSA Scholarship whereas it should read ASSA Scholarship. He noted that ASSA, cannot offer any involvement to ASSET in the SAAO-ASSA Scholarships (there are three of them) without getting the SAAO (who fund the three SAAO-ASSA Scholarships) to agree to this.</p> <p>M Hoffman noted that the reference to the SAAO-ASSA Scholarships was meant to give the broader context of the scholarships but offered to send a correction to the mail.</p>

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		<p>T Cooper gave ASSET's acknowledgement and acceptance of the correction to the letter received..</p> <p>T Cooper recorded ASSET's willingness for ASSA and ASSET to work together as there has not been much communication in the recent past. The full report tabled is attached to the minutes.</p> <p>M Soltinsky asked for guidance on a couple of points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who to approach for an amount for ASSA Scholarships. T Cooper suggested that the request be sent to the ASSET Secretary C Turk;</li> <li>- Who would give an idea of how much to ask for scholarships. T Cooper suggested that an amount be proposed and ASSET would consider this against the constraints of ASSET's annual income stream.</li> </ul>
10	ASSA 2014 Symposium	<p>ASSA Symposium: 25 – 27 Sep 2014 (Hosts: Durban Centre)</p> <p>Report submitted by P Dormehl subsequent to the meeting:          "The Symposium is on track.          Venue, meals teas and evening events.          Suppliers are at the present time being approached.          Speakers, this seems to be a bit slow, it is not easy to understand why. Certainly there have been comments and questions as to the Theme. It would seem to me that maybe it raises very pertinent questions of the role and place of astronomy in South Africa) .          The web site is completely up and running.          (Link <a href="http://www.astronomydurban.co.za/Symposium.aspx">http://www.astronomydurban.co.za/Symposium.aspx</a> has been placed on the ASSA site)</p> <p>As for the Centre, after some years of little use of the telescope, we now have a roster of 4 teams to operate it, undoubtedly we will now be able to pursue our community's outreach program. "</p>
9	General	<p>General          Council's attention was pointed to the upcoming due dates in the checklist – see below the minutes. <u>L Cross</u> will send reminders.</p>
10	Next meeting	<p>M Hoffman closed the meeting at 20.30          Next meetings scheduled: 19.30 via Skype: 14 July          AGM 6 August in Bloemfontein (to be confirmed)</p>

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attachments to the minutes:**

- Letter to ASSET from M Hoffman
- ASSET Report presented by T Cooper

**Item: 3.1: Communication received from Chairs and Section Directors:**

From Section Director: Astrophotography

From: Allen Versfeld [mailto:[allen.versfeld@gmail.com](mailto:allen.versfeld@gmail.com)]

Subject: ASSA AP section report

Since it was requested some time back, here's a brief run-down on what I've done with the AP section.

- 1) Updated the section page on the ASSA website, and organised the gallery page.
- 2) Established an archive of user-submitted images on Flickr. Flickr is a free service which grants a full terabyte of storage space, and a set of tools to share and display those images. This has allowed me to

create indexes of images which are embedded in the Gallery page on the ASSA website which make it easy for visitors to find the specific images, or just to browse through them. This is still a work in progress, and the design will be tweaked according to feedback from visitors.

3) Established a mailing list for the section. Membership of the mailing list is currently at 12. Members are quite passive, not responding to official posts or making posts of their own. I will urge members to use the list to ask for advice, share their images and discuss astrophotography in general.

4) Began issuing challenges to astrophotographers, to capture specific events or subjects. These have had a good response - only failure was a target that was persistently clouded out for most of the country!

Future Plans / ideas:

1) Begin formally recognising member's achievements: Issue a certificate to those who successfully image whole of Deepsky section's Top 100 objects list, for example.

2) Run special imaging events - annual workshops similar to what Dale Liebenberg presented at the 2012 symposium, or dedicated imaging starparties where expert photographers can provide hands-on guidance to less experienced members. I'm wide open to suggestions on how to organise such an event, how often, which experts to invite, or whether there would be enough interest to make it worthwhile.

Allen Versfeld

From Section Director: Cosmology

From: Frikkie [mailto:debruyn1@telkomsa.net]

Subject: Re: ASSA Council Meeting of Minutes

As far as "outreach" is concerned I have advised I had an in depth interview with the local newspaper "The Witness". I have received many enquiries from the public (about 14) with more still coming in. I give advice to a learner who will study astronomy at university and answer queries from members of the public. Recently I questioned the accuracy of an article in the newspaper re an asteroid observed by skydivers in Scandinavia. This elicited a number of enquiries asking for more information.

Promote internal communication systems

To promote an interest in cosmology/astrophysics I write regular articles, send it to Auke, which are published by in the cosmology section. The articles are at a level which everyone can understand.

I am trying to re-establish the Midlands Centre with the help of two lecturers at the University in PMB. I must stress it is still in the beginning stages but I hope to attract students from the physics and maths departments. Will keep you informed when progress is made.

Frikkie

From: jfw de bruyn [mailto:debruyn1@telkomsa.net]

Subject: Re: ASSA Council minutes 10 Feb 2014

New ASSA website: I have written articles published in the cosmology section and published by Auke. Many thanks.

Outreach: An in depth article about my interest in cosmology and the Cosmology Section of ASSA was published in the local newspaper. This has resulted in many enquiries by members of the public which I have dealt with.

Frikkie de Bruyn

From Section Director: Instrumentation

From: STEWART, CHRIS (CHRIS) [mailto:chris.stewart@alcatel-lucent.com]

- Reviewed & provided feedback on the website during and after construction
- Initiated and moderate the ASSA FaceBook page
- Initiated and moderate the Telescope Making FaceBook page
- Moderate the mail lists (Maybe I set them up too? Don't remember)

- Publicised the channels by mail, FB & word of mouth
- Contributed links and suggestions for website, posted content on FB
- Biggest contribution to the Instrumentation side has been via Telescope Making FB page

Chris Stewart

From Section Director: Deep Sky Section

From: Auke [mailto:auke@psychohistorian.org]

Subject: Council feedback - item 2.1

I've been slack in using the channels to really promote the Deep-Sky Section, other than establishing a Yahoo Group (which has 6 members) and running a Whatsapp group (11 members; Cape Star Gazers). More to come!

Auke

### Shallow Sky Section report May 2014

1. Posted articles of interest including sitings, observations and observing challenges on the Shallow Sky web page encouraging participation by members and the public.
2. Maintained the Nova Cen 2013 web page keeping it up to date with the latest news and encouraging participation. I also contributed over 100 personal observations.
3. Maintained the Variable Star web page encouraging prospective observers to get involved.
4. Maintained the Double star web page contributing a monthly column, "Double Star of the Month", plus other articles of interest and encouraging the observation of double stars.
5. Posted articles on upcoming events and news on the ASSA FB page challenging would be observers to look at a variety of objects.

Dave Blane

Shallow Sky Director

### ASSA special focus areas

Section	Director	Area	ASSA
Shallow Sky	D Blane	Scholarships	M Soltynski
Deep Sky	A Slotegraaf	ASSA Observing	K Coronaios
Cosmology and Astrophysics	F de Bruyn	ASSA Communications	C Rijdsdijk
Southern African Astronomy History	C de Coning	ASSA Outreach	J Smit
Dark Sky	J Smit	ASSA Archives	C de Coning
Imaging	A Versfeld		
Instrumentation	C Stewart		

### Checklist:

- 1 Feb Scholarship application dead line
- 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, receipt of report from Scholarships Convenor, submission of items for placing on the Agenda of the AGM, Financial year end; Council to review appointment and roles of all Council Appointees including the Section Directors;
- 1 Jul Submission of annual updated ASSA membership form, Country Members: Subs renewal

## ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

- 31 Jul Closing date for ballot for Council nominations: **Centre AGMs to be concluded before the**  
**AGM;**
- AGM 1<sup>st</sup> Wed Aug. 21 business days before 1<sup>st</sup> Wed in Aug: Deadline for members to receive  
notice
- 1 Oct Appointment/Negotiations with SGAS Editor for next edition. Open negotiations with  
Struik