

# ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

<b>DATE</b>	17 Nov 2014	<b>TIME</b>	19:30 to 20:55	<b>VENUE</b>	Via Skype
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## ATTENDANCE

### Council

Council	Role
Matie Hoffman	President (Chair)
Ian Glass	Outgoing Vice-President
AJ Nel	Hon Treasurer
Chris Stewart	Council Member
Maciej Soltynski	Council Member
Lerika Cross	Hon Secretary
Thinus van der Merwe	Chair - Bloemfontein Centre
Peter Dormehl	Chair - Durban Centre
Frank Jacobs	Chair - ASSA Cape Centre
Jerome Jooste	Chair – ASSA Johannesburg Centre
Bosman Olivier	Chair –Pretoria Centre
Case Rijdsijk	Chair - Garden Route Centre, MNASSA Editor

### Appointees

Christian Hettlage	Web Master
Auke Slotegraaf	SGAS Editor, Deep Sky Section Director
Chris de Coning	ASSA Archiving, Astronomical History
Dave Blane	Shallow Sky Section Director

### Apologies (a) /Not Present

Pierre de Villiers	Vice-President, Chair - Hermanus Centre
Johan Smit (a)	Outreach and Dark Sky Section Director
Frikkie du Bruyn (a)	Cosmology Section Director
Allen Versveld (a)	Imaging Section Director
Kos Coronaios (a)	Observing Director

### ASSET

Tim Cooper (a)	For ASSET Trustees
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	Agenda	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
1	Welcome	M Hoffman welcomed everyone to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2014/15 Council meeting.
	Apologies	Apologies received are noted in the minutes.
2	Previous Minutes	M Hoffman asked and received acceptance of the Council minutes of meeting held 29 Sep 2014. (Proposed: C Rijdsijk, Seconded: M Soltynski)
	Agenda	The agenda items as proposed were accepted.
	Matters arising	Note: Actions arising from previous minutes are <i>in italics</i> . Actions are underlined
3	ASSA's Comms channels	<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p><b>3.1 ASSA Observing and Outreach</b></p> <p>The new initiative started by Tim Cooper (and which falls under the scope of the Shallow Sky) now called the ASSA NEO Watch, was tabled. Working group: Tim Cooper, Brian Fraser, Kos Coronaios, Dave Blane, Lerika Cross. Christian, Auke, Chris (Stewart) are assisting in getting the website and communication channels implemented. Council, Centre Chairs, MNASSA will receive info as soon as it has been finalised. The “initiative</p>

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	<p>is to help track the hundreds of near earth objects (NEOs) that need observation. These potentially hazardous asteroids need monitoring from the southern hemisphere and South Africa is ideally located to study these”.</p> <p><b>3.2 Sections: Dark Sky</b>  <i>(26 May 14) Group Membership of the IESSA was filed for on 20 May 2014.  (14 Jul 14) The communications to date was tabled. The annual subs R5000 is high. Council agreed that benefits of joining (still to be assessed) should be compared to this cost. L Cross reported that although emails have been exchanged, no suggested date yet from IESSA for a meeting and she will keep on following up.</i></p> <p>Update given by L Cross who briefly met with the President of the IESSA (Robert Henderson <a href="mailto:roberth.za@gmail.com">roberth.za@gmail.com</a> 083 960 3631) on 17 Nov:  Robert gave copy of “SANS 10389-3:2004 Ed 1 ISBN 978-0-626-2423306 South African National Standard: Exterior lighting Part3: Guide on the limitation of the effects of obtrusive light from outdoor lighting installation.” This could be asked for in electronic form from the SABS website <a href="http://www.sabs.co.za">www.sabs.co.za</a>. Discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There will not be a membership fee for ASSA at IESSA and vice versa;</li> <li>- Lacking is lighting legislation. Charter would be good</li> <li>- ASSA could explore contact with DarkSky Organisation - is expensive.</li> </ul> <p>M Hoffman noted that Bloemfontein Centre and Boyden Obs will put in a big effort next year around lighting pollution. He mentioned: AGA: Astronomy Geographic Advantage Bill and provided a copy (attached to these minutes)/</p> <p>C Rijdsdijk also noted that Peter Martinez (SAAO) would be a good person to contact in terms of the AGA bill.</p> <p><b>3.3 ASSA Publications - SGAS</b>  The update reported 10 Nov (Matie’s birthday) was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Struik to supply 300 books to ASSA at cost - now R16.68. Anything over this amount can be ordered at the retail price (R120) less 50%. Centres were asked for their SGAS numbers and delivery addresses and AJ Nel placing an order on Struik on 6 Nov. AJ also emailed invoices to the Centre Chairs for their portions of the SGAS order. R45 per issue;</li> <li>- Country Members: An email was sent by AJ to ask them to confirm they have paid annual subscription fees R55, or to pay and provide proof of payment and update delivery address; this is to enable ASSA to send out the SGAS copies.</li> </ul> <p>AJ noted that payments were made and shipment should commence within days. Country Members’ order was reduced from 180 to 150.</p> <p>Inclusion in the SGAS was discussed and agreed to. <u>A Slotegraaf and L Cross</u> to arrange.</p> <p>I Glass noted - on behalf of ASSET - that ASSET was interested in communicating to members (towards a goal to being ASSET closer to ASSA members) and perhaps the flyer can include into on ASSET and mention donation to ASSET. C Rijdsdijk and M Soltynski noted that if a donation to ASSET is included then donation to ASSA should also be noted. It was also suggested and agreed that ASSA website to be updated with donation information for ASSA and ASSET info (<u>I Glass and A Slotegraaf</u>). <u>L Cross and A Slotegraaf</u> to proceed with the information for the flyer and ASSET info to be included and to share it with Council before publishing.</p>

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		<p><b>3.3 ASSA Publications – MNASSA and/or Editorial Board</b>  Council noted and extended thanks to C Rijdsdijk, I Glass and W Koorts for the October edition. Next issue planned for Dec at this stage. I Glass asked - if possible - to have content to him before 10 Dec.</p>
4	Scholarships	<p><b>Scholarships</b>  <b>4.1 SAAO-ASSA Scholarships</b>  <i>(14 July 14) M Soltynski advised Council that SAAO has advised him “no money available for the 3 SAAO-ASSA scholarships for 205 (The amount for 2014 was 3 x R12K=R36000). This is due to DST budget cuts.</i>  <i>(29 Sep) M Soltynski met with Ted Williams (Director SAAO) to revisit the situation, but with no positive result. He corresponded with Prof Nithaya Chetty (Deputy CEO Astronomy at the NRF) asking for financial support with no positive result. He tried with the SKA and corresponded with Kim de Boer of the SKA who advised that her directors decided not to allocate funds for ASSA managed scholarships.</i>  <i>M Soltynski contacted Prof Chetty who manages the Astronomy Advisory Council - the Council has the brief to overlook astronomy in South Africa - who suggested a request is sent to the Chair of the Council. M Soltynski sent a request on 29 Sep to Renée Kraan Korteweg (the current Chair and Head of Astronomy UCT) and this request would be considered at their next meeting on 9 Oct.</i></p> <p>M Soltynski noted again the successful replacement of the 3 ASSA SAAO scholarships with 3 HartRAO scholarships thanks to Prof Chetty (NRF) who put him in touch with Prof Ludwig Combrinck of HartRAO who agreed that HartRAO will offer funding for 2015 of R42 000. All scholarships have been advertised on the website <a href="http://assa.sao.ac.za/about/scholarships/">http://assa.sao.ac.za/about/scholarships/</a> and via email to SAA Astronomers mail list. Someone from HartRAO will be appointed to the ASSA Scholarships Committee and the scholarship winners will be offered vac work at HartRAO.  He noted that Prof Chetty mentioned possibly making provision in the NRF budget in future for these scholarships.  When asked by M Hoffman about the outlook for support from other entities, M Soltynski said that he does not expect any support in future from SKA or SAAO; but it is possible that either HartRAO will continue or the NRF will take over funding of the scholarship programme in future.</p> <p><b>4.2 Scholarship request to ASSET:</b>  <i>(29 Sep) M Soltynski proposed that rather than suggesting a sum to ASSET, M Hoffman is asked to do a follow-up note to ASSET and ask if ASSET would like to offer any funding of ASSA scholarships.</i></p> <p>The note sent by ASSET to Council before the meeting (for an extract refer item 8 below) was highlighted by M Hoffman and I Glass also noted that it is the intent of the Trustees to meet early in 2015 when T Cooper plans to visit Cape Town.</p> <p><u>M Hoffman</u> agreed that he would write a follow-up note to ASSET - and refer to the previous note sent by himself to ASSET.</p> <p>M Soltynski noted that the issue of ASSET has been dragging on for some 4 years.</p> <p>(Note: it is proposed to place all ASSET related items in future agendas under the item dedicated to ASSET - at present item 8)</p>

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5	Membership	<p><b>Membership</b>  <b>5.1 Membership Secretary:</b>  Update reported to Council on 10 Nov: AJ Nel created a database of members which he used to generate emails to Country Members to confirm/provide proof of payment of annual membership. The members list is on <a href="http://1drv.ms/1ALTW">http://1drv.ms/1ALTW</a> accessible by Council members. L Cross and B Olivier are available to assist AJ where required.</p> <p>In answer to query from M Hoffman, AJ Nel said that he believe the member database that he created from the member list forwarded by the Symposium team is about 85% up to date. He noted the students from Rhodes University have not renewed membership.</p> <p>Council confirmed, <u>L Cross</u> to ask for the Centres' AGM minutes and also the number of members per Centre.</p>
6	Governance	<p><b>Governance</b>  <b>6.1 Certificates and Awards: Hon Members</b>  <i>(29 Sep ) Council to note acceptance of the proposal sent on 17 July : Council agreed that <u>L Cross</u> should formalise the outcome by sending formal notes to the Hon Members which should be used to in support of the process to claim from Treasurer.</i></p> <p>L Cross confirmed that notes were sent to all Hon Members about the resolution at the meeting of 29 Sep 2014 that they may take up equivalent option to that of Sky&amp;Telescope subscription as reported in the minutes of that meeting. AJ noted that 2 Hon Members (M Solynski and A Slotegraaf) have taken up the new offer already and he confirmed that he is keeping record of which option is taken up by Hon Members. Item closed.</p>
7	Financial Matters	<p><b>Financial Matters</b>  <b>7.1 ASSA Bookkeeping Services and Audits</b>  <i>(29 Sep) Council considered and accepted the proposal to retain the services of CTF Services for ASSA bookkeeping. Financial implications: R300 per month. Plus the acquisition or monthly rental (~ R165pm) of an online accounting package.</i>  <i>The key actions arising are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>L Cross to inform the Auditor of Council's decision (this was done on 30 Sep);</i></li> <li>- <i>AJ to submit the 2013/14 financials to CTF Services;</i></li> <li>- <i>For <u>AJ and CTF Services</u> to agree on which online accounting package to use for ASSA books;</i></li> <li>- <i>For <u>CTF Services</u> to get the financials for 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 to R Glass, the Auditor.</i></li> </ul> <p>AJ Nel confirmed that the audit process by R Glass' company started on 10 Nov. CTF Services provided the auditor with a prepared Trial Balance and Income statement / Balance Sheet for ASSA for the period ended 30 Jun 2014 (these were done for the previous 3 years). He noted that focus is on memberships which the auditors construe as income and would like clarity on what each person is contributing towards subscription vs donation. Focus at present is also on Market Link accounts; these accounts have not been used for 15 years. He receives some 7 to 8 queries a day.  (Note: current repository is <a href="http://1drv.ms/1ALTWww">http://1drv.ms/1ALTWww</a>)</p> <p><b>7.2 Change of address for market link account</b>  <i>(29 Sep) AJ does not have access to the market link account from Standard Bank - he only has access to the business accounts. Access would have to be arranged when all the old</i></p>

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		<p><i>and new signatories are at the same location (to sign documents at the bank). This has been an issue as the 3 previous signatories are in Cape Town - he will look at who these signatories are. <u>AJ</u> offered to try and make contact when next in the Cape Town area. Awaiting a session with all current signatories in Cape Town and AJ et all to get new set of signatories.</i></p> <p><b>7.3 ASSA registering as non-profit organisation</b>  <i>(26 May) AJ Nel advised that he has submitted request for an NPO. AJ Nel sent emails to <u>Council members</u> to ask for their personal information to be included in the application.</i></p> <p><b>7.4 New item: Suggested for an annual budget to the Council Appointees:</b>            Council discussed a motivation by A Slotegraaf (distributed to Council before the meeting) and which he summarised the main points at the request of M Hoffman:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If observing is an important part of what ASSA does, then in order to make it happen ASSA needs to spend money;</li> <li>• Suggestion in order to drive observing is to say: instead of telling people involved in observing that potentially there is money available, ASSA needs to be pro-active to rather say this is the amount of money available to you, go off and do things.</li> </ul> <p>The meeting discussed the proposal and the key points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If one spends money, one needs to look at ROI, eg if one has funds for the year, what was brought in to ASSA by the funding? (AJ);</li> <li>• Council will not be able to make a decision without having an idea of what type of items and what type of amounts are being considered (M Hoffman);</li> <li>• People need to give indication of what type of items they have in mind and what the cost will entail; spending should be associated with some plan and contribute to the core objectives of the Society (M Hoffman);.</li> <li>• Without knowing how much money is available, the reality is that nothing happens. Implicit support is good, but pro-active support is much better (A Slotegraaf);</li> <li>• If funding is going to be spent on aspects such as observing, then stuff should be published on MNASSA, eg return on investment. MNASSA seldom get reports from Sections ( C Rijsdijk).</li> <li>• An amount can be allocated to all sections by taking an amount available and dividing by the number of sections to get an average which can be refined once the input has come from the various parties ( M Hoffman);</li> <li>• Current process is that anyone can apply for funding/recovery of expenses from Council;</li> <li>• Need to differentiate between money spender vs money earner;</li> <li>• Anyone on Council - or Appointees - who envisages doing anything for ASSA and in the process will incur expenses/cost to be covered by ASSA may apply for funding (AJ)</li> </ul> <p>Council agreed that a working group should discuss this further and come back to Council with a proposal; group comprises: <u>AJ Nel, A Slotegraaf, D Blane, L Cross</u></p>
8	ASSA Endowment Trust	<p><b>ASSET</b>            Note from T Cooper on 17 Nov - distributed to Council: “We have debated the two items (4.2 - “Scholarship request” to ASSET and 8 - “ASSET”) in the last minutes over the last couple of days. There are still some issues that we need to work through amongst the</p>

	Agenda	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
9	ASSA Symposium	<p>Trustees before reaching consensus for which we request Council's indulgence, but Ian is aware of the current status of discussions. Our most critical issue going forwards, now that we have created the platform for growth, is securing an income stream for ASSET into the future to enable us to allocate funding, advertising ASSET and its functions, and funding those applications following the rebranding exercise which are in the interest of that remit."</p> <p><b>ASSA Symposium:</b>  <i>(29 Sep) ASSA Symposium in Durban was cancelled and comments and suggestions were posed by Council to be considered for any future event. No specific next step agreed at this time.</i></p> <p>The meeting was asked to refer to the email sent to Council from M Hoffman - extract below - for a proposed symposium scheduled to be held at DUT in June 2015:</p> <p>Information received from Logan Govender (ASSA Durban Centre) on a newly proposed symposium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizers: <i>DUT, UKZN in collaboration with ASSA Durban with possible involvement from ASSA National;</i></li> <li>• Venue: DUT</li> <li>• Proposed dates: One and a half days in June 2015 (two nights' accommodation recommended) (The dates of the SAIP conference: 28 June to 3 July 2015)</li> <li>• Target group: Professional astronomers, especially from DUT and UKZN; Members of ASSA</li> <li>• Theme(s): Still to be decided by ASSA Durban Committee</li> <li>• Invited Speakers: Speakers from DUT/UKZN and any other interested party</li> <li>• Parallel sessions?: No. Venue does not allow for that</li> <li>• Intended number of talks / posters: as many 40 minute talks as can be comfortably slotted into the available time, allowing for lunch and tea breaks</li> <li>• Estimated registration fee: Approximately R425.00</li> <li>• This initiative follows after the Durban Centre has been contacted by Prof. Ahmed C Bawa, Vice-Chancellor and Principal: Durban University of Technology. The expectation is that there will be significant participation from DUT and UKZN staff.</li> </ul> <p>M Hoffman added that there were a number of options, e.g. an ASSA (National) symposium, a joint ASSA/DUT symposium, a symposium supported by ASSA members.</p> <p>Key points raised by attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who in the ASSA is organising it? P Dormehl confirmed it would be ASSA Durban Centre in collaboration with DUT;</li> <li>• P Dormehl clarified the point that ASSA Durban (as with the arrangements for the cancelled event) is not asking for funding support. He acknowledged that there could be an issue bringing in the name of DUT.</li> <li>• Is it an ASSA or DUT symposium?</li> <li>• ASSA National cannot play a leading role as they do not have the relationship with DUT;</li> <li>• What about the working group agreed last meeting?</li> <li>• Prof Bawa wanted to see the symposium go ahead;</li> <li>• DUT involvement in Astronomy: would be important to strengthen ties with the academic community:</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASSA to sponsor ASSA members to symposium? This should be included in the symposium cost.</li> <li>• I Glass noted it would be important for a Symposium to have guaranteed list of interesting speakers to attract attendees to event;</li> </ul> <p>AJ Nel proposed - and the meeting agreed - that Council should vote on options via email. This will ensure inclusivity of everyone on Council. The key issue to vote on is if ASSA is to be named as part of the event title seeing as it reads in the above proposal, DUT, UKZN is the primary organisers.</p> <p><u>M Hoffman</u> agreed to formulate the options and take further with P Dormehl before requesting <u>L Cross</u> to arrange for the voting process with AJ's help.</p> <p>Possible options to vote on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ASSA National Symposium delegated to ASSA Durban in collaboration with DUT;</li> <li>• ASSA Durban initiative but with moral and individual support from ASSA National.</li> </ul>
10	General	<p><b>General</b></p> <p>10.1 IAU Directory for World Astronomy: NameExoWorlds contest:  <a href="http://www.iau.org/news/pressreleases/detail/iau1406/">http://www.iau.org/news/pressreleases/detail/iau1406/</a>                      Council was happy that C Rijdsdijk may register ASSA for the contest on their website.</p>
11	Closure and Next meeting	<p>M Hoffman closed the meeting at 20:55                      Next Meetings: 16 February, 19 May, 20 July 2015 at 19:30 via Skype.                      AGM 5 August 2015 maybe at Bloemfontein</p>

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

**Attachments to the minutes:** AGA: Astronomy Geographic Advantage Bill

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**ASSA special focus areas**

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

## ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

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

**END**