

ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE	23 Feb 2016	TIME	19:30 to 21:03	VENUE	Via Skype
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ATTENDANCE

Council	Role
Dr Pierre de Villiers	President (Chair)
Case Rijdsdijk	Vice President, Garden Route Centre Chair, MNASSA Editor
Dr Ian Glass	Council Member
Adv AJ Nel	Treasurer
Chris Stewart	Council Member
Bosman Olivier	Membership Secretary
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Peter Dormehl	Chair - Durban Centre
Eddy Nijeboer	Chair - Cape Centre
Jerome Jooste	Chair – Johannesburg Centre

Appointees

Auke Slotegraaf	SGAS Editor, Deep Sky Section Director
James Smith	Web Manager

Connection issues

Johan Smit	Chair –Pretoria Centre, Outreach and Dark Sky Section Director
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Apologies (a) /Absent

Prof Matie Hoffman (a)	Vice President, Chair - Bloemfontein Centre
Steve de Vos (a)	Acting Chair - Midlands Centre
Chris de Coning (a)	ASSA Archiving, Astronomical History
Allen Versfeld (a)	Imaging Section Director
Kos Coronaios (a)	Observing Director
Claire Flanagan (a)	Convenor of Scholarships
Frikkie du Bruyn (a)	Chair - Midlands Centre, Cosmology Section Director
Dave Blane (a)	Shallow Sky Section Director
Dr Christian Hettlage	Web Master

ASSET

Tim Cooper (a)	For ASSET Trustees
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	Agenda	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
1	Welcome	P de Villiers welcomed everyone to the 3 rd ASSA Council meeting for 2015/16 year.
	Apologies	Apologies received are noted in the minutes.
2	Previous Minutes	Council accepted the minutes of the meeting held 24 November 2015 (Proposed by C Rijdsdijk, seconded by C Stewart).
	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	3 ASSA Communication 3.1 General <i>(22 Sep) Centre Chairs to provide dates of Centre monthly meetings. Centre Chairs and Section Directors to provide an update of their activities.</i> All reports received have been included in one document which is attached to the minutes.

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	<p>P de Villiers noted that the Southern Star Party has proved to him how effective Star Parties are to stimulate interest in astronomy. Some of the attendees (i.a. from George, Stilbaai) have agreed to start observing groups which could be seen as embryo astronomy clubs/centres. Council should encourage holding of Star Parties.</p> <p>3.2 AstroPhotography Award Certificate Council was informed that Section Director A Versfeld reminded L Cross that the Award to Clyde Foster (in Centurion area) - as noted in his report for the AGM - was not yet processed. This was produced and sent to Clyde.</p> <p>3.3 Outreach</p> <p>3.3.1 SKA Outreach (24 Nov) <i>P de Villiers offered to send email to L Raynard on an initiative for educational outreach (workshop to enrich the DOE curriculum).</i> P de Villiers noted that there has been progress: a date has been set with the circuit manager for four workshops for science teachers and a trial run with 600 Gr 6 learners. If successful it could be repeated. <u>P de Villiers</u> will inform on progress in due course.</p> <p>3.3.2 ASSA President visits to Centres Further to the intent given by P de Villiers in September 2015 to visit all Centres and Council members and Appointees, with the view to get a clear understanding of the Society's operations, he reported that he recently visited ASSA Cape Centre. He further informed of his intent to visit the Gauteng Centres and Appointees in early March and would like to apply for Council funding support of R10 000 max for expenses incurred in this regard not covered by himself .</p> <p>The funding was supported by Council (proposed C Stewart, seconded C Rijsdijk) subject to the finalisation of the funding for special projects as per item 7.3</p> <p>3.4 ASSA Publications - SGAS SGAS to Hon Members: It was noted for the minutes that AJ Nel confirmed after the meeting held on 24 November 2015 that ASSA currently does pay for the SGAS to Hon Members.</p> <p>3.5 ASSA Publications – MNASSA and/or Editorial Board</p> <p>3.5.1 Book reviews: <u>C Rijsdijk</u> said he will follow up with the Book Review Editor and also consider extending the reach for contributions on Book Reviews. He also again noted with great appreciation I Glass' contribution in production of MNASSA.</p> <p>3.5.2 Content for MNASSA: C Rijsdijk again re-iterated that content on any ASSA event - such as the recent Southern Star Party - would be very much appreciated.</p> <p>3.5.3 Distribution: It was also noted again that MNASSA distribution is mainly via email notification. It was asked if the notification from W Koorts is sent to ASSA_Info and ASSA_Discussion mail lists (Confirmed after the meeting by L Cross: yes, he does send to both lists).</p> <p>C Rijsdijk, also noted that there are 6 publications per year, and the latest edition would thus be available for download at start of every 2nd month. This information could be placed on the website to inform visitors of when they could access the website http://assa.sao.ac.za/about/publications/mnassa/ and/or http://www.mnassa.org.za/ and to get the latest edition.</p>

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	<p>I Glass confirmed that there are still some 12 - 14 persons who he still provides with printed copies of the publication.</p> <p>3.5.4 P de Villiers encouraged <u>Centre Chairs</u> to inform their members of how to obtain MNASSA and its distribution. ASSA Country members could be encouraged to join any of these mail lists. (<u>B Olivier</u>)</p> <p>3.6 Website</p> <p>3.6.1. Secondhand equipment (24 Nov) <u>C Stewart</u> raised the matter of the public wanting to advertise 2nd hand equipment and suggested such adverts be best suited for the FaceBook page. This item was discussion again and the decision made to have these items also on the ASSA website on http://assa.sao.ac.za/how-to-observe/equipment/second-hand-equipment/ (<u>J Smith</u>)</p> <p>3.6.2 Dated information on the website It was reported that someone made a comment that some information on ASSA website information is dated (eg outreach). <u>L Cross</u> offered to have a telecom with the contributors to the website and see if contributions to the site can be kept current where necessary or else removed.</p> <p>3.7 Dark Sky benchmark initiative (13 July) <u>M Hoffman</u> reported that he and <u>Auke</u> are preparing a plan - for possible submission to the NRF - on process for establishing benchmark for measuring light. <u>A Slotegraaf</u> offered to follow up with M Hoffman.</p>
4	<p>Scholarships</p> <p>Scholarships 2015</p> <p>4.1 HartRAO -ASSA Scholarships x 3 and ASSA Scholarship x1</p> <p>C Flanagan submitted her report before the meeting. Highlights: All current (2015) scholarship-holders obtained good results last year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASSA: Brandon du Preez 2nd year BSc - HartRAO: Michael Sarkis 3rd year BSc completed BSc - HartRAO: Jeremy Smith 3rd year electrical and computer engineering - HartRAO: Verlon Etsebeth 3rd year BSc (part-time) <p>ASSA is responsible for the administration of four scholarships this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 x ASSA scholarship, value R17,500 - 3 x HartRAO / ASSA scholarships, value R16,000 each <p>The availability of the scholarships was advertised on a large number of platforms and she noted her appreciation to Christian Hettlage who was extremely helpful making a technical fix to the ASSA Scholarships web-page, in order to “share” it better.</p> <p>Twenty-one applications had been received by the cut-off date of 1 February 2016. A report summarising fourteen valid applications was circulated to the committee (Marion West, Andrew Grey, Ian Glass, Maciej Soltynski) on 17 February.</p>
5	<p>Membership</p> <p>Membership</p> <p>5.1 Membership report and number of members per Centre:</p> <p><u>B Olivier</u> volunteered to follow up with the Centre Chairs before each meeting to get their membership numbers. As the membership changes throughout the year <u>B Olivier</u> also offered to check with each Centre if their lists are accessible on their websites and if the number of members can be retrieved in such a way.</p>

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	<p>He reported that the number of Country Members is in region of 90 country members. He also confirmed that the ASSA Membership list is kept updated on the 1 drive which is accessible by those who have access to the 1drive including CTF Services for their purposes.</p>
6 Governance	<p>Governance</p> <p>6.1 Midlands Centre P de Villiers sent a letter of acceptance to the Centre on 21 February and confirmed that communications have been established with the Centre. He also indicated that he will be visiting the Centre.</p> <p>6.2 All Centre Constitutions: <i>(24 Nov) Centre Chairs to still provide their Centre Constitutions: <u>Cape Centre, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Durban</u></i> Hermanus and Midlands Centre Constitutions and Cape Centre Rules have been received by L Cross. It was agreed that if a Centre has its Constitution on its website, <u>Centre Chair</u> to send the link to J Smith who will include link on the ASSA website. And if a Centre has no website, the <u>Centre Chair</u> to send their Constitution or Rules (it was noted that there are pro forma Rules in the ASSA Constitution that can be used) to J Smith.</p> <p>6.3 Request from Namibia <i>(24 Nov) <u>L Cross</u> to inform that the Council would be delighted to join efforts with the group in Namibia and will await further suggestions from them.</i> L Cross wrote note to M Backes on 16 December. The item can be closed but he contact kept in mind.</p> <p>6.4 Request of possibly making Great Brak a Centre <i>(24 Nov), Council agreed that 7 members would be minimum number required to constitute a Centre and to leave it up to M Gray to come back to ASSA. (<u>L Cross</u> replied to M Gray)</i> It was agreed to close this item further information is received</p>
7 Financial Matters	<p>7. Financial Matters</p> <p>7.1 To-do list for 2016</p> <p>7.1.1 SGAS 2017 Council accepted the proposal by AJ Nel of R55 price for SGAS 2017. The possible new package for producing the content was discussed but it was decided to stretch the current for another year.</p> <p><u>AJ Nel</u> confirmed that the remuneration for the SGAS 2017 editor should be finalised as well as the contact.</p> <p>7.1.2 Combine investment accounts <i>Items outstanding from the Management Letter for 2013/14 year</i> AJ Nel confirmed that these items may be closed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - statements for 5 years for the 2nd market link account were received in 3rd Q 2015 and sent to CTF Services to record in the books of account. - Monthly statements are now being obtained <p>To do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to the investment accounts to be achieved - Combine the accounts into one investment account and retaining approx. R 100K in the current account <p>7.1.3 Register for SARS (Voluntary Disclosure)</p>

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	<p><i>Item outstanding from the Management Letter for 2013/14 year</i></p> <p>Register a VDP-voluntary disclosure programme application - to cover the past 3 years as a minimum. AJ Nel proposed CTF Services do this task and Council agreed. <u>AJ Nel</u> to process a formal request to CTF Services and ask if they are willing to do the VDP and at what cost.</p> <p>7.1.4 Ensure a fixed-cost benefit to Hon Members <i>(24 Nov) AJ Nel suggested before the meeting that Council rethink the strategy of annual benefits to Hon Members for next year, as it represent a substantial amount.</i></p> <p>The current benefits to Hon Members are: free SGAS, free subscription to the Sky and Telescope or the equivalent value in cash payment equivalent of the Rand value of the subscription as at the time of the AGM, this year the payment was R800. Total expense for 15 Hon Members R12 000.</p> <p>AJ Nel proposed at the meeting in November 2015 that the benefit should rather be a fixed annual financial contribution and tabled a proposal of R500 book gift voucher from Amazon or another internet based company. The voucher would be drawn by AJ Nel as Treasurer and emailed to the Hon Members as and when their current annual benefit is due.</p> <p>A notice is to be sent by <u>L Cross</u> to all Hon Members advising of the changed benefit.</p> <p>7.1.5 Finalise 2015/2016 financials. <i>(22 Sep) The annual financials from CTF Services forwarded to Council and R Glass on 23 September.</i></p> <p>The audited 2014/2015 financial statements have been finalised and received from R Glass. These were attached to the Agenda for prior consideration by Council and are also attached to the minutes. Council, having considered the Financial Statements for the period ending 30 June 2015, resolved to formally approve the financials and <u>L Cross</u> to facilitate the signing of the documents by: M Hoffman and AJ Nel (as President and Treasurer) and C Stewart, L Cross, B Olivier and inform R Glass. (The resolution documents have been signed since the meeting and are included in the attachments).</p> <p>7.1.5 Finalise 3 signatories on accounts <i>Transferring the 3 accounts to the new signatories (AJ Nel, I Glass, B Olivier)</i></p> <p>This item has been outstanding since July 2015 despite many attempts by the 3 proposed signatories for the 3 accounts to progress the matter with SBSA Pinelands. Council approved the proposal by AJ Nel to consider moving the 3 accounts to Gauteng where most of the Council members are and approved the 3 signatories as: Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Secretary. <u>AJ Nel</u> to provide his preference for a bank and branch in Johannesburg. <u>L Cross</u> to draft the resolution for signature by President.</p> <p>7.2 Items accepted to close</p> <p><i>7.2.1 Confirmation was requested by R Glass that the current account is now recorded in the name of the Society. (AJ Nel)</i> AJ Nel confirmed that this was confirmed with R Glass in March 2015. Item closed</p> <p><i>7.2.2 Quarterly financial statements (commencing from 30 September 2014) to be sent to RG</i> AJ Nel confirmed that this process is being followed. Item closed</p> <p><i>7.2.3. Audited financials 2011 - 2014</i></p>

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		<p>(24 Nov) (After the meeting: 2 paper copies of the audited financials have been received from the Auditor Ronnie Glass - it was sent to the ASSA address and I Glass forwarded to <u>L Cross</u> who will deliver a copy to CTF Services and send a copy to AJ Nel)</p> <p>One paper copy was delivered to CTF Services and the other copy is with L Cross. Item closed.</p> <p>7.3 Funding for special projects</p> <p>AJ Nel proposed that 75% of net income could be deployed for special projects that are accepted by Council. All proposals to be submitted for Council attention by 10 March for consideration before the next Council meeting in April.</p> <p>Some proposals already received (to be formally submitted):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President visits to Centres (R10 000 max) - “Big 5 of the African Sky” (submitted in 2015 by A Slotegraaf) - Oral Histories Project (submitted by C de Coning obo A Slotegraaf) - In terms of Oral Histories, C Rijdsijk offered to put through a proposal to the NRF to also capture Indigenous Star Stories.
8	ASSA Endowment Trust	<p>ASSET</p> <p>(24 Nov) Summary of actions from the ASSET Trustee meeting held 25 June 2015</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make members more aware of the Trust and hopefully generate more donations. 2. ASSET should concentrate on assisting with one-off or abnormal projects until income increases. 3. Possible changes to the Trust Deed should be considered 4. Grants: a guide to assist applicants, including the process involved and criteria for fund allocation. <p>Our immediate priority will be how to secure future funding, and maximise income from the capital reserves in ASSET. Trustees will meet in Cape Town annually, immediately preceding the AGM, to generate the ASSET report for submission to the AGM.</p> <p>Comments to the above from the Council meeting, which the Trustees will discuss further.</p> <p>Council took note of ASSET’s response reported at 24 November and will await further communication from ASSET. <u>L Cross</u> to formally relay Council’s acknowledgment of the report to T Cooper.</p>
9	General	<p>Checklist review</p> <p>Deadlines before next meeting on 26 April were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 31 Mar Closing date for nominations for: <u>Honorary Members and Awards</u> - 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
10	Closure Next meeting	<p>Next meeting: The next meetings for the 2015/16 year All at 19:30 via Skype 26 April, 28 June, 3 August (AGM)</p> <p>Closed at 21:04</p>

Minutes Approved: _____ Date: _____

Attachments:

All reports submitted for the meeting held 23 Feb 2016

Financial Statements ending 30 June 2015

Financial Statements ending 30 June 2015: Acceptance Signed

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ASSA special focus areas

Section	Director	Area	ASSA
Shallow Sky	D Blane	ASSA Website	C Hettlage James Smith
Deep Sky	A Slotegraaf	Scholarships	C Flanagan
Cosmology and Astrophysics	F de Bruyn	ASSA Observing	K Coronaios
Southern African Astronomy History	C de Coning	ASSA Communications	C Rijsdijk
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 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 1st Wed 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

END