

ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE	28 June 2016	TIME	19:30 to 20:53	VENUE	Via Skype
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ATTENDANCE

Council

Council	Role
Dr Pierre de Villiers	President (Chair)
Case Rijdsdijk	Vice President, Garden Route Centre Chair, MNASSA Editor
Chris Stewart	Council Member
Bosman Olivier	Membership Secretary
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Peter Dormehl	Chair - Durban Centre
Eddy Nijeboer	Chair - Cape Centre

Appointees

Dr Claire Flanagan (a)	Convenor of Scholarships
Auke Slotegraaf	SGAS Editor, Deep Sky Section Director
Allen Versfeld	Imaging Section Director (connection/sound issues)

Connection issues with Skype

Dr Ian Glass	Council Member
Dave Blane	Shallow Sky Section Director

Apologies (a) /Absent

Prof Matie Hoffman	Vice President, Chair - Bloemfontein Centre
Adv AJ Nel (a)	Treasurer
Johan Smit	Chair –Pretoria Centre, Outreach and Dark Sky Section Director
James Smith (a)	Web Manager
Steve de Vos	Acting Chair - Midlands Centre
Chris de Coning (a)	ASSA Archiving, Astronomical History
Jerome Jooste (a)	Chair – Johannesburg Centre
Kos Coronaios (a)	Observing Director
Frikkie du Bruyn (a)	Cosmology Section Director
Dr Christian Hettlage (a)	Web Master

ASSET

Tim Cooper (a)	For ASSET Trustees
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	Agenda	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
1	Welcome Apologies	P de Villiers welcomed everyone to the 5 th ASSA Council meeting for 2015/16 year. Apologies received are noted in the minutes. Note: some attendees had problems connecting to Skype call; next meeting should note and resolved the issues.
2	Previous Minutes Agenda Matters arising	Council accepted the minutes of the meeting held 27 April 2016 (Proposed by P de Villiers, seconded by C Rijdsdijk). The agenda items as proposed were accepted. Note: Actions arising from previous minutes are <i>in italics</i> . Actions are underlined
3	Eclipse 1/9/16 ASSA Project	ASSA Project: Eclipse 1 September This was noted as an ASSA Project. Separate Skype Sessions are held with members and appointees that are keen to contribute. The outcomes are emailed to everyone to allow information sharing and voluntary contributions to be made. Next Skype meeting is scheduled for 30 June.

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4	ASSA's Comms	<p>4 ASSA Communication</p> <p>4.1 Centre Chairs and Section Director reports The reports from <u>Centre Chairs and Section Directors</u> are required by end July as input to the AGM.</p> <p>4.2 ASSA President communications</p> <p>4.2.1 Visits to Centres P de Villiers said he still intended to visit Garden Route and Bloemfontein Centres.</p> <p>4.2.2 Letter to Centre Chairs and Section Directors <i>(27 April) P de Villiers agreed to send a note to Centre Chairs to ask for their support in contributing content to the MNASSA publication, inform their members on how to obtain MNASSA via the ASSA website and notification via the mail list...ask that Centre websites should have a link to the ASSA Website and the MNASSA website.</i> The Letter was sent on 29 May and is attached to the minutes for the record.</p> <p>4.3 Review of ASSA Communications document An updated version of the document is attached to the minutes and includes proposed responsibilities for Centre Chairs (based on current knowledge and Letter from President). P de Villiers asked that the document be reviewed by all <u>Council Members and Appointees</u>. He proposed a separate Skype session be arranged to finalise the document before the AGM (<u>L Cross</u>).</p> <p>4.4 SKA Outreach It was agreed to remove the item from the agenda. Progress will be reported as and when necessary.</p> <p>4.5 ASSA Publications - SGAS</p> <p>4.5.1 Editor Contract 2017 <i>(27 April) A Slotegraaf confirmed that his agreement with ASSA for SGAS 2017 was not yet formalised. P de Villiers asked <u>AJ Nel</u> (in absentia) to finalise.</i> A Slotegraaf informed that the Editor's contract has been finalised.</p> <p>4.6 ASSA Publications – MNASSA and/or Editorial Board C Rijdsijk reported that the June edition is due soon. He also informed that the final edition of the year will focus on private observatories and he will send out a request to gather information.q</p> <p>4.7 Website review It was reported that a Skype call was held 18 May with website contributors and the key outcomes were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- to confirm that <u>Section Directors</u> should keep their pages active and current on the website;- A formal review of the ASSA website to be done annually in June and this was included in the ASSA checklist of ASSA;- An email request was sent to ASSA Mail lists on 22 May inviting input. No responses have been received by L Cross by the closing date 10 June. <p><u>A Versfeld</u> kindly agreed to do a review of the whole website as an independent and report his findings for updating/improvement in due course. It was also noted that the Eclipse project will also rejuvenate some pages.</p> <p>J Smith sent a note before the meeting: “ note that - in response to a request from Allen, the analytics on the website were made more easy to access. The <u>editors</u> of the various</p>
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		<p>pages/Sections might like to use this information. There is now a button at the top of the page called "Analytics"."</p> <p>4.8 Dark Sky benchmark initiative <i>(13 July) M Hoffman reported that he and Auke are preparing a plan - for possible submission to the NRF - on process for establishing benchmark for measuring light. P de Villiers offered to take up this item with M Hoffman when visiting the Bloemfontein Centre and to then recommend if this item should remain on the agenda.</i></p> <p>4.9 SKA Phase 1 meeting (for information) This item is recorded as information: An invite was received from the Department of Environmental Affairs to attend a meeting at the CSIR on 6 July. The note below was agreed with P de Villiers and C Rijsdijk.</p> <p><i>Dear CSIR SEA team, Many thanks to the invitation. The Council of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa ("ASSA") has considered the brief provided for the Special Advisory Committee for the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the SKA Phase 1 Project. From the information received, the ASSA Council does not see it being able to make specific contributions to the SKA Project at this stage. To perhaps clarify this view, included below are the key objectives of the ASSA society for general information. If acceptable to the SKA Project, ASSA would appreciate being kept informed in whichever way the Project sees appropriate; and the email address for such communication can remain secretary@assa.saa.ac.za</i></p>
5	Scholarships	<p>5 Scholarships (HartRAO -ASSA Scholarships x 3 and ASSA Scholarship x1) C Flanagan reported that all scholarship monies have been allocated and she will update the website. It was confirmed that monies will be made available for next year's scholarships. <u>AJ Nel</u> is to propose the funds that will be made available. The deadline for applications is 1 Feb 2017.</p>
6	Membership	<p>6 Membership Membership report and number of members per Centre: B Olivier reported that current ASSA membership is approx 300. He also noted that he has not yet received replies from all the Centres after his appeal for membership numbers and will follow-up with the <u>Centre Chairs</u>. He also noted that he has ~ 50 sky guides left over and a small number of new applications and proposed that ASSA give the new applicants each a copy of the 2015/16 Sky Guide and in due course the 2016/17 Sky Guide edition. Council approved this proposal.</p>
7	Governance	<p>7 Governance 7.1 All Centre Constitutions <i>(27 April) Council discussed and agreed that <u>all Centres</u> make available to C de Coning a paper copy of their Constitutions for him to place in the ASSA Archive. (C de Coning to advise Chairs how he would prefer to receive such a paper copy).</i> This request was included in Letter from the President. <u>P de Villiers</u> offered to ask C de Coning if he has received Constitution copies/replies from Centres.</p> <p>7.2 Centre AGMs <i>(27 April) Centre AGM's must be completed by late July.</i></p>

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		Item closed: was included in Letter from President
8	Financial Matters	<p>8 Financial Matters</p> <p>8.1 Register for SARS (Voluntary Disclosure) <i>Item outstanding from the Management Letter for 2013/14 year: Register a VDP-voluntary disclosure programme application - to cover the past 3 years as a minimum.</i> The Finance Sub-Committee meeting held 11 May 2016 discussed and agreed that ASSA will not continue with this action via CTF Services at this time. <u>Close item</u></p> <p>8.2 Financial Sub-Committee <i>(27 April) Meeting agreed that a Finance Sub Committee (comprising P de Villiers, AJ Nel, C Rijdsdijk, L Cross, B Olivier) be tasked</i> The Sub-Committee discussed matters on 11 May 2016 and the key outcomes recorded: AJ Nel confirmed the budget for the year is ~ R20 000.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Software for ASSA Main publications:</i> <u>A Slotegraaf</u> to advise the Sub-Committee what Struik requires from SGAS Editor in terms of SGAS content format. b) <i>Funding of Special Projects:</i> The one motivation already received ie Oral Histories Project (submitted by C de Coning obo A Slotegraaf) will not be decided now but await outcome of other aspects requiring funds and priorities i.e., a); c) <i>Honoraria - MNASSA Editor:</i> It was noted by AJ Nel that MNASSA (Monthly Notes of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa) being listed on the South African Journals site, www.sabinet.co.za, brings ASSA income. Such income could be considered for distribution to the MNASSA Editor and Team of contributors. <u>AJ Nel</u> to still inform the sub-committee of the final proposed amount; d) <i>SGAS Competition:</i> A Slotegraaf's analyses is attached below the minutes. A request to sponsor SGAS prize for 2017 have been sent to 3 commercial sponsors. <u>P de Villiers</u> also offered to follow up with the two commercial companies which have not yet replied. e) <i>Finalising the three signatories (Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Secretary) on ASSA accounts and combine investment accounts:</i> AJ Nel informed that the local bank requires the signed original of the Resolution for Account Transfer form. <u>AJ Nel</u> will contact J Smit who it is believed have the original document. <p><u>L Cross</u> to arrange a Finance Sub-Committee Skype call before the AGM.</p> <p>8.3 Recording Indigenous star stories <i>(27 April) C Rijdsdijk will draw up proposal for Council to look at and contribute before submitting to Prof Nithaya Chetty, NRF Dep CEO, Head of the Astronomy sub-Agency.</i> C Rijdsdijk reported it is in progress.</p> <p>8.4 Financial Audit - proposal from R Glass (ASSA Auditor) This communication was noted from R Glass on 4 May which was acknowledge and accepted in principle by the ASSA Treasurer, AJ Nel. “The costs of our conducting an annual audit are so much greater as contrasted to compiling the financial statements, together with an appropriate report thereon. Can you please consider amending the constitution at the next AGM : I propose instead of appointing auditors to conduct an annual audit... the clause be deleted and substituted with: “An Independent Compiler’s Report on the financial statements be prepared and submitted together with the financial statements , for the approval by members at the annual general meeting . The firm or individual engaged to prepare such a Report for the new financial year, be appointed at the annual general meeting. “ R Glass further commented on 5 May 2016: “ Doing away with the annual audit—it requires an amendment to the Constitution as I outlined. This means we no longer have to</p>

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		<p>report to our audit review authority (IRBA) and have the files possibly subject to inspection, in that we have complied with acceptable appropriate auditing standards. A lot of unnecessary time thus saved in file preparation and audit.”</p> <p>And on 25 May: “Herewith the new report we will issue as well as the committee's more detailed approval which will apply whether or not an audit is conducted. Remember it does not prevent the committee or members deciding that an audit is required for any year, rather than a compilers report.”</p> <p>Council considered this and accepted the proposal.</p> <p><u>AJ Nel</u> to amend the Constitution and also advise Council the process to formally approve the new version, e.g. does the membership need to agree or can it just be tabled and accepted at the AGM.</p> <p><u>L Cross</u> to invite R Glass to the AGM as soon as the date is known.</p>
9	ASSA Endowment Trust	<p>9 ASSET</p> <p>T Cooper informed before the meeting that ASSET will prepare a report for the AGM.</p> <p><u>L Cross</u> to inform him as soon as the AGM date has been confirmed.</p>
10	AGM	<p>10 AGM</p> <p>10.1 President’s Council Report</p> <p>The draft report from the President was tabled (attached to the minutes).</p> <p>P de Villiers formally thanked C Stewart for the enhancement he made to the ASSA Activity Barometer (attached to the minutes)</p> <p><u>P de Villiers</u> said he will communicate to the Centre Chairs and Section Directors and ask for their support in writing to contribute input to the Activity Barometer.</p> <p>10.2 Nominations</p> <p>10.2.1 ASSA Council</p> <p>It was noted that no nominations for Council has been received and these Council members were nominated and confirmed in their positions at the previous AGM: Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Secretary, and two Council members C Stewart and I Glass. <u>Centre Chairs</u> will be nominated at their AGMs which are due to be held before end July.</p> <p>10.2.2 Council Appointees</p> <p>L Cross confirmed that she wrote to all Appointees and asked if they would like to continue. All roles were accepted except for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASSA Outreach Officer. Kos Coronaios accepted a nomination by L Cross and seconded by A Slotegraaf; - Dark Sky Section Director. This role is still open. <u>P de Villiers</u> offered to put a call out to ASSA Centre Chairs and Section Directors for volunteers. A Slotegraaf noted that Carol Botha is quite passionate about the scope covered and may be available as a collaborator in this area. <p>10.3 Reports for AGM (Centre Chairs and Appointees reports received thus far)</p> <p>Already received: Scholarships, Instrumentation, Cosmology, Historical Section, Deep Sky, AstroPhotography, Shallow Sky. The reports still outstanding - other than from the Centre Chairs, are: Photometry and Spectroscopy, Observing, Outreach and Dark Sky.</p> <p>10.4 Awards 2016 and 2017</p> <p>The <u>Award Panel</u> (comprising the President and Vice- Presidents) will meet mid-July and manage the award process for the year to ensure fairness and impartiality.</p> <p>The award proposals receiving thus far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hon Member request has been received and will be assessed and processed by the

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		<p>Award Panel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nominations received from Section Directors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Versfeld and A Slotegraaf both supported an award Observing Certificate from the Deep-Sky Section and the Astrophotography Section for observing notes and photographic record of the ASSA Top-100 Objects: - Shallow Sky Director: Dave Blane has submitted his nomination for a General Observing Certificate Award for the solar and sunspot observations made this past year. <p>It was noted that <u>P de Villiers</u> will again approach Centre Chairs to seriously consider nominations for awards. He mentioned that he will stress the ASSA mission to encourage and support enjoyment of astronomy, observing and outreach. There are a lot going on in the country and Centre Chairs are to give detail in their reports.</p> <p>It was proposed that a call be put out for essays. The best essay will be included in the SGAS and included in MNASSA. Once discussed by the <u>Award Panel</u> it can be advertised using the ASSA communication channels.</p> <p>10.5 AGM date and venue <u>P de Villiers</u> noted that based on the venues of the last 6 AGM's (2010 – Pretoria, 2011 - Pretoria, 2012 – SAAO CPT, 2013 SAAO CPT, 2014 – Jhb, 2015 SAAO CPT) it would be desirable to have this year's AGM at Pretoria or failing that, Johannesburg and he will speak with J Smit. The date should ideally be in the first week of August.</p>
11	General	<p>11 General No item of general nature was raised.</p>
12	Next meeting	<p>Next meeting: AGM. Date and Venue to be confirmed Closed at 20:53</p>

Minutes Approved: _____ Date: _____

Attachments:

Letter to Centre Chairs Section Directors and Appointees 160528
ASSA Communication 160622
ASSA COUNCIL REPORT 20160628 final
ASSA Activity Barometer 160627 final

Refer 8.2. d)

From A Slotegraaf:

Below is an overview of the entries received for the 2016 Sky Guide competition:

** Total entries: 58

- ASSA members 23 (40%)
- Non-ASSA mbr 35

** Got correct answer: 54 (93%)

Gave wrong answer: 4 (of which 3 are non-ASSA members)

- wrong answers: Centenary of General Relativity Theory; Venus & Neptune 29.5' apart; Comet 252P close to Earth (x2)

** When posted

2015 Nov 1, Dec 1

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2016 Jan 8, Feb 15 , Mar 27 (51%)

By hand 2

Illegible 3

** Postal codes

7xxx 18
6xxx 9
4xxx 9
1xxx 7
3xxx 4
0xxx 3
8xxx 3
2xxx 3
5xxx 1
9xxx 1

The binning of postal codes turns out to be useless; I thought the initial digit defined a general region, but it turns out there is significant overlap.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_postal_codes_in_South_Africa

P.S. Despite brows lifted by Certain Individuals, the question wasn't that odd, given that 93% got it right.

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 Rijdsijk
Dark Sky	TBA	ASSA Outreach	K Coronaios nominated
Imaging	A Versfeld	ASSA Archives	C de Coning
Instrumentation	C Stewart		

Checklist review (Include items from the Letter of the President and President's Report after AGM)

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; **Annual review of website**
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