

ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE	21 Feb 2017	TIME	19:30 to 20:30	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
Adv AJ Nel	Treasurer
Chris Stewart	Council Member
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Mike Hadlow	Chair - Durban Centre
Peter Dormehl	Previous Chair - Durban Centre
Eddy Nijeboer	Chair - Cape Centre

Appointees

Dave Blane	Double and Variable Stars Section Director
Chris de Coning	ASSA Archiving, Astronomical History
Percy Jacobs	Spectroscopy and Photometry Section Director
Clyde Foster	Shallow Sky Section Director

Skype connection issues

Bosman Olivier	Membership Secretary
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Apologies (a) /Absent

Prof Matie Hoffman	Vice President, Chair - Bloemfontein Centre
Dr Ian Glass (a)	Council Member
Auke Slotegraaf (a)	SGAS Editor, Deep Sky Section Director
Dr Claire Flanagan(a)	Convenor of Scholarships
Allen Versfeld (a)	Imaging Section Director
Kos Coronaios (a)	Observing Director
Frikkie du Bruyn (a)	Cosmology Section Director
Dr Christian Hettlage (a)	Web Master
James Smith (a)	Web Manager
Jerome Jooste	Chair – Johannesburg Centre
Johan Smit	Chair –Pretoria Centre, Outreach and Dark Sky Section Director
Steffan Devos	Acting Chair - Midlands Centre

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 2016/17 year.
	Apologies	Apologies received are noted in the minutes.
2	Previous Minutes	Council accepted the minutes of the meeting held 1 December 2016 (Proposed by C Stewart, seconded by C Rijdsdijk).
	Agenda	The agenda items as proposed were accepted.
	Matters arising	Note: actions arising from previous minutes are <i>in italics</i> . Actions are underlined Outcomes from the Finance Sub-Committee meeting held 15 Feb 2017 are included and denoted (<i>15 Feb FSC</i>).
3	ASSA Comms	<p>3 ASSA Communication</p> <p>3.1 Communication with Country Members and Clubs outside Centres</p> <p>P de Villiers informed that all communications he sent out to entities outside ASSA were very positively received for which he was extremely grateful.</p> <p>He noted that clubs such as WRAC, Groot Brak and Groups such as OOG do not request subscriptions but Council agreed that there is no mandate from the Constitution that Centres have subscriptions. (<u>AJ Nel</u> to just finally confirm this is the case in the Constitution).</p>

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	<p>It was discussed how to include entities outside ASSA in communication. It was agreed that if such entities choose to share information then ASSA will record such information as the intent is to have all Southern Africa astronomical related activities recorded. There could be distinction made in the reporting which is ASSA and non-ASSA.</p> <p>3.2 Reports and Astronomy Activity Summary The reports which were received from the Centre Chairs and Directors and included as attachments to the minutes. P de Villiers said that when reading through the reports received one cannot but be impressed by the dedication and commitment by so many amateurs with activities around the country.</p> <p>As previously agreed, <u>C Stewart</u> will in due course combine incoming reports - be it in the Excel or MsWord formats. The format and wide publication of the information to be discussed with <u>P de Villiers</u>, <u>C Stewart</u>, <u>L Cross</u></p> <p>C Foster expressed his support and enthusiasm to P de Villiers for his philosophy/concept of reporting and he was congratulated by C Stewart on the quality of his report.</p> <p>3.3 Council communication The role of Section Director - ASSA Archiving, Astronomical History still requires some update and <u>C de Coning</u> was asked to consider and provide to <u>L Cross</u> (resend request).</p> <p>3.4 ASSA Publications - SGAS 2017 C de Coning sent a request/reminder that he needs 3 copies of 2016 and 2017. This has slipped through the cracks. <u>B Olivier</u> is addressing this at present and will inform if there is a problem.</p> <p>3.5 ASSA Publications – MNASSA and/or Editorial Board C Rijdsdijk reported that the latest issue is being processed now.</p> <p>3.6 Historical Section C Rijdsdijk informed that he can get all the records of the PE Peoples Observatory Society from Nielen Schafer and asked C de Coning if it would be appropriate to have these records in the ASSA archives. C de Coning confirmed, absolutely. The Society was never been part of ASSA but it can be stored in proper archival storage. <u>C Rijdsdijk</u> will get the documents to C de Coning as it seems ASSA Archive is best place to store it.</p> <p>3.7 Websites It was suggested that the session with <u>P de Villiers</u>, <u>C Stewart</u>, <u>L Cross</u> (ref 3.2 includes a review of the website.</p> <p>3.8 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.</i> <i>(1 Dec) P de Villiers reported that he will follow up with M Hoffman and if no outcome by the next meeting, the item will be closed.</i> It was agreed that this item be closed.</p> <p>3.9 Essays <i>(28 June) ASSA mission is to encourage and support enjoyment of astronomy, observing and outreach. It was proposed that a call be put out for essays.</i> <i>(6 Oct) It was discussed that worthy essays could be included on the website and MNASSA.</i> <i>(1 Dec) The matter of how - and to whom - to get the message out to encourage submission of essays for possible publication on website and MNASSA. And also who will decide what will be published.</i> <i>Options discussed include:</i> - <i>Inform members via Centre newsletters</i> - <i>Stimulate interest via other communication means</i> <i>Content to attract interest should be placed on the website and C Rijdsdijk was asked to draft content for consideration.</i></p>

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		<p>As there was no update to give it was agreed to remove this item from the agenda until someone raises it again.</p> <p>3.10 Upcoming Annular Eclipse 26 February 2017 The preliminary effort was co-ordinated by K Coronaios. M Hadlow and D Blane reported that a number of activities were planned around the eclipse. All dependent on the weather!</p>
4	Scholarships	<p>4. Scholarships (HartRAO -ASSA Scholarships x 3 and ASSA Scholarship x1) <i>(1 Dec) AJ Nel confirmed that R19 000 will be made available for ASSA Scholarship (which is for 2nd and 3rd and possible Honours' year)</i> The application deadline for applications was 1 Feb. C Flanagan submitted report: nineteen applicants, still busy with a first-pass selection round, then need to send the qualifying applicants details to the committee for selection.</p> <p>4.2 Cooke Scholarship: donation from PE Peoples Observatory Society <i>(6 Oct) The donation of R300 000 for scholarship purposes which was addressed to C Rijdsdijk by the PE Peoples Observatory Society was lauded. Cooke Scholarship is to be named the Cooke Scholarship and will be first awarded in 2018</i> Funds: On 8 November 2016, R 31 621.23 and on 6 December 2016, R 270 461.82 - thus R302 083.05 was deposited in the Business Account 07 619 050 1 (AJN estimated that 71.29% of the total monthly interest earned on the account will be allocated to the Cooke Scholarship). The capital is not to be eroded. Income to be ring fenced from other ASSA funds. The amount and income from the investment must be accounted for separately and reported on separately. <u>AJ Nel</u> and CTF Services to finalise and confirm procedures are in place.</p> <p>Council was appreciative of <u>C Rijdsdijk</u>'s offer to draft a formal letter obo ASSA to the PE Peoples Observatory Society for all their hard work and gracious donation.</p> <p><u>Advertising Cooke Scholarship</u>: It is understood that there are no conditions associated to the donation such as aimed for 2nd and 3rd year students. It was not discussed when to place information for the Cooke Scholarship on the appropriate ASSA website page and also in MNASSA in due course (<u>C Flanagan, C Rijdsdijk</u>)</p> <p>P de Villiers suggested it is given a high profile at AGM. Specifics to still be confirmed but could include handing over all the records to Historical Section and perhaps a certificate of appreciation.</p>
5	Member ship	<p>5.1 Membership No update was submitted and no item discussed.</p>
6	Gover nance	<p>6 Governance</p> <p>6.1 Amendments to the ASSA Constitution - Independent Compiler The revised Constitution to include the amendment to include "An Independent Compiler" was placed on the website by J Smith. Item was closed.</p> <p>6.2 Amendments to the ASSA Constitution It was noted that the final draft of the updated Constitution as amended to be provided by <u>AJ Nel</u> and will be circulated to Council soonest with a request for final approval by <u>Council</u>.</p> <p>6.3 New Award: Overbeek Award <i>(6 Oct) Council noted the motivation of a new ASSA award by the ASSA Award Sub-Committee (comprising the President and Vice Presidents) for the new Overbeek Award.</i> <i>The first two nominees motivated and agreed to: Berto Monard and Andre van Staden.</i> <i>(1 Dec) C Rijdsdijk requested Council to give consideration to adding a financial award to the Award.</i> <i>P de Villiers noted that perhaps an accompanying medal would be appropriate.</i> The key outcome of meeting held 6 Feb 2017 was noted: The Overbeek Medal will be placed on par with the Gill Medal but with the focus: "observational astronomy published in a recognised</p>

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		<p>astronomical journal “. P de Villiers initiated effort with Pagliari in Cape Town for making of the medals. Council approved an amount for the medals and die of not exceeding R30 000.</p> <p>P de Villiers thanked I Glass for his support.</p>
7	Financial Matters	<p>7 Financial Matters</p> <p>7.1 2015/16 financials</p> <p>The 2015/16 financials were received from Ronnie Glass and was considered and reviewed by the Finance Sub Committee on 15 Feb 2017.</p> <p>AJ Nel raised a couple of queries regarding allocation of certain items and these have been forwarded to <u>CTF Services</u>. (The Accountant at CTF Services who normally look after ASSA accounts has left and the new staff member will start in March).</p> <p>Council agreed that once Treasurer is happy with the financials from CTF Services it will again be forwarded to Ronnie Glass and the process of signature as sign off will commence. (<u>AJ Nel</u>)</p> <p>7.2 2017/18 financials</p> <p>Return on the investment on Business Account: AJ reported that interest rate just below 9% per annum for the ~ R800 000 in fixed deposits.</p> <p>The current account with ~ R175 000 will be sufficient to cater for general ASSA expenses and income for 2017.</p> <p><u>AJ</u> offered to draft list of indicator of expenses over the year for Council to keep in touch and for Financial Sub-Committee to review from time to time.</p> <p>7.3 Finalising the three signatories on ASSA accounts and combine investment account</p> <p>AJ Nel confirmed that the signatories to the ASSA Accounts were finalised - and this item is closed.</p> <p>7.4 Special Projects</p> <p><i>(2 Nov FSC) Special Projects: AJ Nel confirmed that the budget for the year is not to exceed ~ R20 000 which will include items for outreach. The period for this expense would be from 1 March 2017 to end Feb 2018. The outcome from the proposals will be available by end February 2017.</i></p> <p><i>(1 Dec) It was noted that the previous submission by the ASSA Historical Section will be included in the assessment.</i></p> <p>Further to the note sent out as a formal reminder from ASSA President to Council and Appointees on 6 Feb noting to please submit such requests with full motivation spelling out the benefits for the Society to the Treasurer before the Council Meeting, it was reported that no requests were received. The item will be taken further by the <u>Financial Sub-Committee</u> at their next meeting.</p> <p>7.5 Proxima project</p> <p>C Rijsdijk reported that he would like to complete this project and the one item outstanding is the plinth and plaque at the Johannesburg Observatory. He has been in touch with J Jooste but has not had a response on the status. In the absence of J Jooste at the meeting, D Blane reported that ASSA Jhb made a plaque but it needs to have NRF added on it seeing it resides on their property. D Blane kindly offered to follow up with <u>J Jooste</u> and ask that the outcome be communicated to C Rijsdijk to allow him to close the project.</p>
8	ASSA Symposium	<p>8 ASSA Symposium 2018 at SAAO March 2018</p> <p>Council formally approval the proposal received from C Rijsdijk for the Symposium - attached to the minutes.</p> <p>Update from C Rijsdijk:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 11th ASSA Symposium at SAAO March 2018 2 Theme: Amateur Astronomy in the Digital Data Age – how Amateurs can do real Science 3 LOC: Ian Glass, Auke Slotegraaf and Case Rijsdijk - had one meeting 4 SAAO Auditorium SAAPO - booked <p>Financials: <u>C Rijsdijk</u> will keep Council informed of funding requirements and this will be managed at the Financial Sub-Committee.</p> <p>E Nijeboer asked if ASSA Cape Centre will be involved and C Rijsdijk reported that now that Council has approved the event, ASSA Cape Centre will be included in the LOC. (<u>C Rijsdijk</u>)</p>

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		C Foster asked about the structure around the symposium and C Risjdijk informed that there will be invites sent in due course to ask for volunteer speakers. C de Coning noted that past Symposium detail (still in progress and being updated) can be found on the ASSA Historical Section Archives site.
9	ASSA Endowment Trust	9 ASSET Council was asked to note the update received from T Cooper. ‘‘Messrs Turk and Cramb paid a visit to the Master’s office on 27 January 2017. Apparently due to there being no water in the building there was no-one to receive them and they were turned away. Subsequently they met with Ronnie Glass, and through his office an email has been sent to the Assistant Master of the relevant department. The Master’s office responded that they need to locate the relevant file before advising us further, but that this may take some time. We will continue our efforts to achieve a resolution in this matter and advise you as and when we make progress’’.
10	Awards and Hon Members	Awards and Hon Members - nominations Reminder to be sent to all about the due date of 31 March. P de Villiers noted that he sent some guidance regarding awards in his email on 6 Feb and the ASSA website is also a good source for information.
11	Checklist	11 Checklist review 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 1 st Wed Aug. 21 business days before 1 st Wed in Aug: Deadline for members to receive notice 1 Oct Appointment/Negotiations with SGAS Editor for next edition. Open negotiations with Struik
12	General	12 General items 12.1 KBO Occultation: C Foster reported that he and 12 to 15 amateurs in the country have been approached by SAAO regarding ProAm collaboration project involving the New Horizons spacecraft. C Risjdijk noted that the call from SAAO to amateurs was reported in the latest MNASSA: ‘‘The New Horizons spacecraft has been funded for an extended mission. They have identified a Kuiper Belt Object, KBO, by which there can be a close flyby on 01 January 2019. The target in question is known as 2014MU69. Obviously, between now and the flyby, everyone is interested in getting as much information as possible about this KBO. This is likely the one chance in our lifetimes to explore the outer Solar System in situ!’’
13	Next meeting	P de Villiers thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 20:30 Next skype meetings for 2017, all at 19:30: 23 May, 25 July, AGM 2 August (Venue to be decided)

Minutes Approved: _____ Date: _____

Attachments:

Refer 3.2: Reports received: Shallow Sky report, Report from Durban Centre, Instrumentation Section Report, Cosmology Annual Report, GRASSA Activities, ASSA Jhb Activities, Hermanus Activities

Refer 9:

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Proposal for an ASSA Symposium Feb 2017.docx
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