

ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE	27 January 2020	TME	19:30 to 20:30	VENUE	Via Skype
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ATTENDANCE

Council

Role	
Chris Stewart	President (Chair)
Case Rijdsdijk	Vice President, Chair – Garden Route Centre, Communications, Ed Board
Dr Ian Glass	Council Member
Clyde Foster	Council Member
Adv AJ Nel	Treasurer
Wilmi Nel	Membership Secretary
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Piet Strauss	Chair - Durban Centre
Marius Reitz	Chair - Cape Centre

Appointees

John Gill	Web Manager
Dave Blane	Double and Variable Stars Section Director
Allen Versfeld	Citizen Science Section Director

Skype connection issues

Bruce Dickson	Cosmology and Astrophysics Section Director
Douglas Bullis	Deep Sky Section Director

Apologies (a) /Absent

Dr Pierre de Villiers (a)	Council Member
Dr Pieter Kotze (a)	Council Member
Bosman Olivier (a)	Chair –Pretoria Centre
Carmel Ives (a)	Chair – Johannesburg Centre
Percy Jacobs (a)	Photometry and Spectroscopy Section Director
Auke Slotegraaf	SGAS Editor
Dr Claire Flanagan (a)	Convenor of Scholarships
Martin Heigan (a)	Imaging Section Director
Chris de Coning	ASSA Archiving
Dr Christian Hettlage (a)	Web Master
Kos Coronaios (a)	Observing Director
Prof Matie Hoffman	Chair - Bloemfontein Centre

ASSET (for distribution)

Tim Cooper	For ASSET Trustees
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	Agenda	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
1	Welcome Apology	<p>C Stewart welcomed everyone to the 2nd ASSA Council meeting for 2019/20 year. Apologies received are noted in Attendance list, above.</p> <p>Centre Chairs to please take note: C Stewart kindly asked that if a Centre Chair is not able to attend the Council meeting, that they kindly appoint a “delegate / proxy” to attend the meeting.</p> <p>Note to All: Although the process of getting people on the skype call improved compared to the meeting of 27 November 2019, there were still people who were not able to connect, i.e</p>

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	Douglas Bullis, Bruce Dickson. Further improvements need to be considered (<u>L Cross</u>)
2 Previous Minutes Agenda Matters arising	<p>Minutes of Council meeting held 27 November 2019 (which was attached to agenda) were approved, no comments were received before/ at the meeting.</p> <p>Note: Actions arising from previous minutes are <i>in italics</i>. Current actions are underlined. The Finance Sub-Committee meeting scheduled for 23 January 2020 was cancelled and no outcomes from that meeting were thus included in these minutes.</p>
3 ASSA Comms	<p>Communication</p> <p>3.1 Communication Channels <i>(27 Nov) C Stewart noted ASSA channels may have to change as Yahoo Groups recently proposed changes and undertook to move these to .io</i></p> <p>C Stewart reported 2 new ASSA mail lists, i.e. ASSA_Info.io and ASSA_discussion.io were created and members on the Yahoo Groups were asked to please join the new lists. A reminder to be sent to members of Yahoo Groups. (<u>C Stewart</u>)</p> <p>J Gill updated the changes to the 2 .io groups on the website. The changes to these comms channels should also be included in the Introductory Note to new Country Members and upon renewal as part of informing of the comms channels, etc. <u>W Nel /AJ Nel</u>)</p> <p><u>D Blane</u> noted excitement around the dimming of Betelgeuse and offered to share updates with the ASSA_Discussion .io group. From the www: “inexplicably, without rhyme or reason, Betelgeuse has gotten fainter and fainter, dropping from the rank of 10th brightest star to the unremarkable 30th position — and falling”.</p> <p>3.2 Communications document <i>Permanent item: the latest version of the Comms doc attached</i> No changes discussed.</p> <p>3.3 Website</p> <p>3.3.1 Issue with the Captcha <i>(27 Nov 19) The issue has been brought to the attention of SAAO WebManager, <u>Christian Hettlage</u> and asked if Wordpress automatically upgrades and if the upgrade costs money. If required, SAAO (<u>C Hettlage</u>) may send invoice to AJ Nel for processing.</i></p> <p>The issue has been resolved with the removal of the Captcha form. Feedback still awaited from <u>C Hettlage</u> (as Captcha increases security?)</p> <p>3.3.2 Redundant email addresses <i>(27 Nov 19) J Gill was asked to check / refresh email addresses on the website, e.g., B Olivier is no longer membership secretary. It was agreed that <u>Auke and John Gill</u> will work with SAAO on fixing the email addresses.</i></p> <p>J Gill reported that he has done updates on the website. <u>Anyone</u> to contact J Gill if any issue is still picked up. The item is considered closed, for now.</p> <p>3.3.3 Refreshing the Director’s and Centre pages <i>(27 Nov 19) <u>Section Directors and Centres</u> to work with J Gill to update their data</i></p>

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	<p>J Gill reported that not all the <u>Directors / Centres</u> have yet responded to the request to update their pages. He noted that the page selling 2nd hand telescopes was most popular and visited often. This item to remain open, for now.</p> <p>3.4 Other Astronomical Societies in Southern Africa</p> <p>3.4.1 Botswana Group <i>(27 Nov 19) The meeting agreed with AJ's proposal to send ASB (Harold Hester), 5 SGAS as gesture of goodwill.</i></p> <p>Update to be provided by <u>AJ Nel</u></p> <p>3.4.2 Namibian group <i>(3 July 19) Potential contact is Namibia Scientific Society, Sonia Enke at the Observatory in Windhoek, listed as an ASSA Member with a tel of +264 61 238982 http://www.namscience.com.na/contact.htm</i> <i>(27 Nov 19) C Foster will visit in December and will see if contact can be made. Prof Roelofse enquired if he can get a SGAS - C Foster and AJ to liaise.</i></p> <p>AJ Nel reported that the SGAS request from Prof Roelofse was resolved. C Foster reported that he had an excellent 6 500km trip through Namibia and will consider offering content for MNASSA.</p>
4	<p>Publications</p> <p>4. ASSA Publications</p> <p>4.1 SGAS 2019 <i>(27 Nov 19) Ian Glass informed that he has leftover 2019 SGAS, ~ 200 copies which are at the SAAO Archives section.</i></p> <p>Appreciation was extended for the copies already received by P de Villiers and L Cross. <u>M Reitz</u> noted that ASSA Cape Centre will be happy to accept some leftover 2019 SGAS and so did <u>P Straus</u> from ASSA Durban as these can be distributed to schools etc; they will contact Ian Glass.</p> <p>Sincere thanks were expressed to Ian for all his effort. Item proposed to be closed.</p> <p>4.2 SGAS 2021</p> <p>4.2.1 Delivery AJ Nel noted that there were several non-delivery notices received from Country Members and Hon Members and the extra book deliveries could /will cut into ASSA profit. C Foster, ASSA Durban and Cape Centres (ASSA Pretoria and ASSA Johannesburg) reported copies received in good time.</p> <p>Delivery method options for 2021 were discussed e.g. registered mail (R25 to post). An assessment of options to be reviewed at the <u>next FSC meeting</u> and a final decision presented to Council.</p> <p>4.2.2 SGAS 2021 prize Need to be considered in time for the AGM and any subsequent impact on the Country Member subs (<u>FSC</u> to consider)</p> <p>4.3 MNASSA</p>

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	<p>C Rijdsdijk noted his sincere thanks to Ian Glass for helping with recent edition.</p> <p>4.4 Nightfall <i>(27 Nov 19) D Bullis informed Nightfall will be on hold - will advise when ready to take task.</i></p> <p>Unfortunately, D Bullis could not be connected via skype but provided an update after the meeting – read his thoughts at the end of the minutes and respond directly back to him. (<u>All</u>).</p>
5	<p>5. Scholarships <i>(27 Nov 19) ASSA to continue with the ASSA and Cooke scholarships for 2020 - amount will remain at R20 000 per scholarship.</i></p> <p>Deadline is 1 Feb and C Flanagan advised all on track. AJ Nel request a timeline for payment to be provided by <u>C Flanagan</u>.</p>
6	<p>6. ASSA Country Membership</p> <p>6.1 Country Membership 2020 <i>(27 Nov 19) AJ Nel confirmed that a welcome note is sent to all new members/renewals. Nothing reported.</i></p> <p>6.2 Align all Hon Member Lists <i>(27 Nov 19) J Gill asked if <u>C de Coning</u> can please sign off that the website site http://assa.saao.ac.za/about/awards/honorary-members/ is correct.</i></p> <p>C de Coning replied after the meeting that he “worked on the list of honorary members on the ASSA website. Dr Heyman was still given as an honorary member, but he died in 2005 so I removed him from the current list. On the list of past honorary members, I added Forbes, Stoy, P Smits and J Mattei. To my knowledge it is now updated and correct.”</p>
7	<p>7 Governance</p> <p>7.1 Refresh communication with Centres <i>(26 June FSC) The FSC agreed to drafting a letter to Centre Chairs to refresh duties of Centres to continue/ remain within ASSA as a Centre to facilitate / support the society.</i> <i>(27 Nov 19) AJ Nel kindly offered to start a draft for consideration by the FSC.</i></p> <p>The draft Letter to the Centres - with the intent to guide the contribution from Centres - is still outstanding (AJ Nel). The letter was intended to encourage participation. It was agreed that it would be excellent to enjoy broader participation from Centres such as Bloemfontein.</p> <p>AJ Nel and C Foster plan to visit Bloemfontein Centre and will discuss how interaction and broader participation can be arranged.</p> <p>7.2 Register ASSA for tax under a VDP (Voluntary ...) Application <i>(3 July) sent a request to CTF Services further to request from Ronnie Glass (ASSA’s Independent Compiler) regarding ASSA to: ”register the Society for tax under a VDP application”.</i> <i>(27 Nov 19) Proposal by CTF Services (see below the agenda) was accepted: “bold highlighted portions seem to be missing from the constitution”. FSC proposed amendments be processed and submitted for Council approval and if approved ratified</i></p>

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	<p><i>at the next AGM. <u>AJ Nel</u> undertook to compile a draft update to the Constitution with the changes included for consideration by Council.</i></p> <p>Update of Constitution. <u>AJ Nel</u> reported that he intended to meet soon with CTF Services to progress these items.</p>
8	<p>Financial</p> <p>Financial Matters</p> <p>8.1 Budget items 2019/20 <i>(27 Nov 19) AJ Nel noted that the budget is still in progress.</i></p> <p>The budget was received from AJ Nel and attached to the minutes. AJ Nel noted that it would good if AGM related travel costs this year could be reduced. It was proposed to have the AGM in Gauteng this year. <u>ASSA Johannesburg</u> was proposed and to be confirmed.</p> <p>8.2 SGAS Electronic Publication <i>(27 Nov 19) AJ Nel informed he spoke to Struik (Wendy) about an electronic publication and was advised that it is something they include depending on the volume.</i></p> <p><u>AJ Nel</u> informed that he needs to discuss with <u>Auke</u> - a proper proposal is required for an e-SGAS that can be presented to Struik.</p> <p>8.3 Financials 2019 The completed financial statements for 2019 was received from R Glass on 20 Dec 2019. These were noted by Council and the recommendation from the Chair that Council accepts these financial was supported by the meetings. These documents will now need to be formally signed by Committee delegates and returned to Ronnie Glass.</p> <p>8.4 Independent Compiler: Stepping down R Glass also informed that he will not be available to continue in the role of Independent Compiler and thus “resign effective from the 30 June 2019 year end.” Ronnie contribution to the ASSA has been really exceptional; for the record: in his own words: “I have acted for ASSA since the end of the 1970’s .. that’s 7 treasurers ago.”</p> <p>CTF Services was contacted and may step into this role - to be discussed and confirmed (<u>AJ Nel, L Cross</u>)</p>
9	<p>Astro Course</p> <p>9 Astronomy Course <i>(3 July) The meeting discussed and agreed that there is merit to embark on a project (27 Nov 19) FSC 19 Nov, P d Villiers offered to draft recommendation for Council’s consideration of how this item could be progressed.</i></p> <p>The proposal drafted by P de Villiers was provided in prep of the meeting and is attached to the minutes. In summary the main recommendation in the proposal is: “list the e-mail addresses of course material originators together with a list of the topics that is covered on the ASSA website. Anyone wishing to access this material for their own use (with or without modification) could then simply request a copy from the originator with motivation of its intended use.”</p> <p>The proposal was accepted in principle and the initial tasks agreed: <u>Anyone</u> who has compiled material which is considered to fall within the scope defined in the document – or is aware if free material - to provide title of content and short</p>

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	<p>summary paragraph and also who would benefit from the content, e.g Grade level. The material should ideally be in pdf format. The list can be forwarded to L Cross who will consolidate all input for further later categorisation and discussion.</p> <p>(Thoughts from C Stewart after the meeting for input by <u>All</u>: I propose we start an Education Section, that Pierre can direct? The goal would be to create and curate a body of information with associated supporting material for each level in the hierarchy. Other Sections can contribute according to their topics, with the Education Section incorporating their input into a cohesive body of work. Can invite people from the Centres (e.g. Gill Jacobs) to contribute and invite guidance/review on content from science educators like Claire. The publications team can guide on style and appearance for consistency. PDFs can be downloaded from the ASSA website, but maybe eventually someone like Struik / Jutas / Oxford University Press / etc. would be prepared to offer print-on-demand batches to educators. Apart from documentation, it could be possible to make video clips with animations, that educators could play to their students, perhaps distributed through an ASSA YouTube channel.”</p>
10	<p>ASSET</p> <p>Ian Glass – as an ASSET Trustee - informed the meeting that progress is being made.</p>
11	<p>11. 200th anniversary of Royal Observatory <i>(27 Nov 19) Is was discussed and agreed that ASSA does not have the capacity to support numerous events and that it would be best to concentrate ASSA’s energy to the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope in 2020 in support of the SAAO (“the national centre for optical and infrared astronomy in South Africa”) and the 120th year anniversary of the MacClean telescope. These celebrations are being organised by SAAO (Dr Daniel Cunnama, Science Engagement Astronomer, South African Astronomical Observatory).</i></p> <p>Ian Glass confirmed that the main dates for the event at the SAAO is 20 – 22 October. The contribution from ASSA – as individual members or from ASSA Centres – was discussed.</p> <p>M Reitz informed that Cape Centre will strongly support the SAAO programme including workshops and assisting with public outreach. P Strauss informed that ASSA Durban also has offerings to present.</p> <p><u>M Reitz (Cape Centre)</u> agreed to set up a meeting with Dr Cunama and inform Council of outcomes on requests that can be distributed to the rest of ASSA for input or information which can be placed on the website.</p> <p>No ASSA budget provision is available.</p>
12	<p>12. IAU 2024</p> <p><i>Permanent note: All input for the event be forwarded to Case Rijdsdijk for onward communication to the Organising Committee. https://astronomy2024capetown.org/</i></p>
13	<p>13. General items</p> <p>13.1 Previous symposium video <i>(27 Nov) Auke informed that he still has to make a video and audio recording. To make an hour of video and audio take 8hours of editing the videos. Raw footage (2 full days’ worth) is available if anyone would like to contact Auke to assist.</i></p>

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		<p><u>A Versfeld</u> offered to contact Auke to check what process he is following and if there is possibility for assistance. Is the task to mix the video with the presentation slides? Retain the item on the agenda, for now.</p>
14	Closure	<p>The next Council meetings via skype at 19:30. Council meetings 2020 Propose Mondays with the FSC the prior Wednesday 23 March, 11 May, 29 June AGM 5 August (to be hosted by either ASSA JHB or ASSA Pretoria)</p>

Minutes Approved: _____ Date: _____

Attachments in support of minutes:

ASSA Communication 191125

ASSA Budget Summary 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

Astronomy Education Options 191125

In support of item 4.4:

Nightfall, I'm in the middle stages of the book I'm doing for a publisher, but there's more time opening to get back to Nightfall. I'm wracking my brain trying to figure out a meaningful way to communicate the middle ground between "I saw it too" hobbyist forums and the professional A-J, A&A type lit. The question boils down to, "Do astronomy enthusiasts really care what those things are actually doing, or do they just want pretty views and Gee-Whiz factoids?" Nightfall removed the maths and jargon from the professional papers but kept the picture and summary results. That made for a nice theory but nobody was reading it (and that includes IceInSpace and Cloudy Nights readers because I posted links to the main issues and some articles there). Well OK, lick wounds and move on. My problem is, "Move on to what?" To this day I dunno what readers liked/didn't like about what they were presented with.

Thoughts?

In support of item 7.2

23.3.3 APPROVAL OF PBO

Section 30 which gives the Commissioner the right to approve a public benefit organisation for the purposes of the Act provides that the Commissioner will approve such an organisation if

- it complies with such conditions as the Minister may prescribe
- it has submitted to the Commissioner a copy of its constitution, will or other written instrument under which it has been established in terms of which it is:
 - required to have at least three unconnected persons to accept fiduciary responsibility
 - **prohibited from directly or indirectly distributing any funds to any person (otherwise than in the course of any public benefit activity) and is required to utilise its funds solely for the objects for which it has been established**
 - required on dissolution to transfer its assets to a section 30(3)(b)(iii) organisation (see below). In the case of a branch or agency of an association incorporated and tax exempt in another country, it can also distribute the assets of the organisation to any other person provided that those assets were acquired from a source outside the Republic
 - **is prohibited from receiving any donation which is revocable at the instance of the donor**
 - **required to submit to the Commissioner any amendments to its constitution**
- the Commissioner is satisfied that it is not knowingly party to a tax-avoidance scheme
- **it has not paid remuneration to any employee, office bearer, or member which is excessive**

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- it complies with reporting requirements determined by the Commissioner

Note that a PBO no longer has to be registered in terms of the Non-Profit Organisations Act (Act 71 of 1997) to qualify for tax exemption, but, the Director of Non-Profit Organisations as defined in that Act can request the Commissioner to withdraw the approval of any PBO if it has been convicted of any offence under the Act.

END

Checklist (covered under Governance item 7)

- 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 President and Vice President list of nominations
 - 30 April Deadline for agreement with Struik of the printing schedule for next SGAS
 - 1 June Call for nominations for Council; Annual review of website
 - 1 June New Country Membership fees to be agreed by 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 notice 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
- Annual refresh of the Communications document after the AGM

END