

## ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

|             |              |            |               |              |           |
|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| <b>DATE</b> | 7 March 2022 | <b>TME</b> | 18:00 - 19:00 | <b>VENUE</b> | Via Jitsi |
|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|

### ATTENDANCE

| Council               | Role   |
|-----------------------|--|
| Chris Stewart         | President (Chair)  |
| Dr Daniel Cunnama     | Vice President (Incoming President)                              |
| Case Rijdsdijk        | Vice President (Outgoing President), Chair – Garden Route Centre |
| Dr Ian Glass          | Council Member   |
| Dr Pierre de Villiers | Council Member, Chair – Hermanus Centre                          |
| Adv AJ Nel            | Treasurer  |
| Lerika Cross          | Secretary  |
| Bosman Olivier        | Chair - Pretoria Centre  |
| Dr Christian Hettlage | Chair – Cape Centre, Web Master                                  |
| Alison Coulter        | Chair - Johannesburg Centre                                      |

### Appointees

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Bruce Dickson       | Cosmology Section Director                  |
| Chris de Coning     | ASSA Archiving, Historical Section Director |
| Dave Blane          | Double and Variable Stars Section Director  |
| Dr Claire Flanagan  | Convenor of Scholarships                    |
| Dr Sally MacFarlane | Communications Director                     |
| John Gill           | Web Manager                                 |

### Apologies (a) and Absentees

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Allen Versfeld       | Citizen Science Section Director             |
| Amith Rajpal (a)     | Chair - Durban Centre                        |
| Angus Burns          | Observing Section Director                   |
| Auke Slotegraaf (a)  | SGAS Editor                                  |
| Eddy Nijeboer (a)    | Membership Secretary                         |
| Kos Coronaios (a)    | Outreach, Media Liaison                      |
| Martin Heigan        | Imaging Section Director                     |
| Percy Jacobs (a)     | Photometry and Spectroscopy Section Director |
| Thinus van der Merwe | Chair - Bloemfontein Centre                  |

### ASSET (for distribution)

|            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| Tim Cooper | For ASSET Trustees |
|------------|--------------------|

Jitsi meeting link: <https://meet.jit.si/ASSAMeet>

Meeting recording:

<https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Apps/Jitsi%20Meet/Recordings/assameet%20on%202022-03-07%2016-56.mp4?role=personal>

|   | Agenda  | Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Welcome<br>Apology                            | C Stewart opened the 3 <sup>rd</sup> ASSA Council meeting for 2021/22, welcoming Council members.<br>Apologies received before & after meeting are noted in the attendance list.   |
| 2 | Previous<br>Minutes<br><br>Matters<br>arising | Minutes of meeting held 25 November 2021 were approved (C Stewart, P de Villiers).<br><br><b>Note:</b> Actions arising from previous minutes are <i>in italics</i> . Current actions are underlined.<br>Finance Sub-Committee (“FSC”) meetings are noted in italics ( <i>date FSC</i> ).   |
| 3 | ASSA<br>Comms                                 | <b>3. Communication</b><br><b>3.1 Communications document</b><br><u><i>Permanent item: latest version attached</i></u><br>Council approved the revival of the Comet, Asteroid and Meteor Observing Section (“CAM”) under the leadership of Tim Cooper, a specialist in this area. Chris Stewart expressed appreciation to Tim on behalf of Council for his willingness to revive the Section, with a vision for some exciting developments to increase amateur involvement in this dynamic area. |

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|--------|--|
|        | <p><i>For the record, background to this item is included below in the minutes.</i></p> <p><b>3.2 Other Astronomical Societies / Affiliations</b></p> <p><b>3.2.1 African Astronomical Society (“AfAS”)</b><br/> <a href="https://www.africanastronomicalsociety.org">https://www.africanastronomicalsociety.org</a><br/> <u>Permanent item</u></p> <p><b>3.2.2 Botswana Astronomical Society (“BAS”)</b><br/> <i>(14 Oct) Gihan Ilangakoon at the BAS is providing useful resources to the ASSAVIP group and Council will consider formalising contact in due course.</i></p> <p><b>3.3 Dark Sky</b><br/> <i>(25 Nov) Communication commenced to unpack a strategy and approach on how best to approach the challenges of a Dark Sky initiative. <u>L Cross</u> to facilitate communications.</i><br/> A discussion document was prepared and considered by a Volunteer Group on 15 Feb and 3 main activities to start with were agreed. The discussion document (attached) is now closed and these 3 activities now needs to be progressed and input from <u>everyone</u> would be much appreciated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <u>D Cunnama</u> to lead a <u>proposal from ASSA to the AstroTourism Strategy Group</u>. Daniel reminded that ASSA’s input to their draft Strategy is required by 11 March. The draft Strategy to be circulated to all requesting input to Daniel by 11<sup>th</sup> (<u>L Cross</u>).</li> <li>2) <u>C Stewart</u> will lead establishment of a <u>formal data repository</u> of relevant information/facts to help visitors to ASSA website. It will at least include current applicable legislation and to whom to address matters in government.</li> <li>3) “<u>Measure and monitor artificial light at night</u>” is an initiative started in 2017 by the Centre of Astronomical Heritage (“CfAH”), Auke as key originator but stopped due to lack of funding. C Stewart, Auke, L Cross had a discussion on if /how this could be progressed within ASSA with support from Auke. <u>L Cross</u> to facilitate further progress.</li> </ol> <p><b>3.4 2018 ASSA Symposium Presentation</b><br/> <i>(15 Feb) Auke appealed for help with 26 videos recorded at 2018 ASSA Symposium. To edit into YouTube, place on ASSA YouTube Channel. Alison Coulter kindly offered assistance..</i><br/> Alison reported that progress has been made but not yet completed – many thanks, Alison.</p> <p><b>3.5 ASSA Cloud repository</b><br/> Council agreed to explore options for a suitable cloud-based repository which will hold ASSA historical information. Chris de Coning has for over 20 years been collecting material about Astronomy in Southern Africa, and also specifically ASSA. He is currently using space kindly made available by Daniel at the SAAO:<br/> <a href="https://cloudcape.sao.ac.za/index.php/s/E2DaGH9t86ZbfGj">https://cloudcape.sao.ac.za/index.php/s/E2DaGH9t86ZbfGj</a></p> <p>AJ noted that he has a Google account and willing to process the acquisition depending on the options. The data structure, data transfer, access methods to be unpacked. (<u>AJ, C Stewart, J Gill, C de Coning, L Cross</u>).</p> <p><b>3.6 ASSA Special Project – Global Meteor Network Project</b><br/> Council discussed and fully supported the proposal for a Special Project within the scope of the Comet, Asteroid and Meteor Section which will now be revived by Tim Cooper.<br/> <i>Project detail is attached: Participation of ASSA in the global Meteor ASPIRE project</i></p> <p>A Working Group will be established within the scope of the Section and a call sent for volunteers who will meet to agree the way forward. (<u>C Stewart, T Cooper, L Cross</u>)</p> |
| 4      | <p><b>4. ASSA Publications</b></p> <p><b>4.1 SGAS</b></p> <p><b>4.1.1 An e-version</b></p>   |

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|        | <p><i>(25 Nov) Penguin Random House: “no PDF version... digital team does an e-book, but it’s not distributed through us”.</i><br/>                     The link where the ebook version can be purchased for R130<br/> <a href="https://www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/book/sky-guide-africa-south-2022/9781775847649">https://www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/book/sky-guide-africa-south-2022/9781775847649</a><br/>                     distributed via Amazon, etc.<br/>                     The item is now closed.</p> <p><b>4.1.2 SGAS 2022 Distribution</b><br/>                     Provided by Eddy after the meeting:<br/>                     Sky Guides sent/resent: 117<br/>                     Some were resent via Paxi as members could not pick them up in time, others had incorrect physical / postal addresses and were resent via SAPO.</p> <p><b>4.1.3 SGAS 2023</b><br/> <i>(14 Oct) Council to confirm appointment of SGAS 2023 Editor and open negotiations with Struik.</i><br/>                     An increase of 4.5% for the SGAS 2023 Editor, was proposed by AJ and accepted by C Stewart and D Cunnama. (<u>AJ</u>)</p> <p><b>4.2 MNASSA</b><br/> <i>(25 Nov) Update and reminder: the guidelines and deadlines for MNASSA for Centenary are included in the ASSA 100 List.</i><br/>                     C Rijdsdijk reminded Centres to prepare / submit their histories</p> <p><b>4.3 Southern Skies</b><br/>                     No update available in absence of Angus.</p> |
| 5      | <p><b>Scholarships</b></p> <p><b>5. Scholarships</b><br/> <i>Permanent item: The ASSA and Cooke Scholarships for 2022 is R25 000 each.</i><br/> <i>(25 Nov) Claire informed the page for the bursaries is up to date</i><br/> <a href="https://assa.sao.ac.za/about/scholarships/">https://assa.sao.ac.za/about/scholarships/</a><br/> <i>advertising will commence a bit later during the year, after exams are finalised, and she will share with Council in due course (C Flanagan)</i><br/>                     Claire reported that 11 applications were received, 2 are foreigners (Mauritius, Swaziland) both studying in South Africa. Claire requested Council’s approval that the foreigners may also be eligible. AJ compiled guidelines for recruiting and allocation of bursars some time back and volunteer to review and share these in light of ASSA’s name quoting Southern Africa. (<u>AJ, C Flanagan</u>).</p>   |
| 6      | <p><b>Membership</b></p> <p><b>6. Membership</b><br/> <b>6.1 Country Membership 2022</b><br/>                     Provided by Eddy after the meeting:<br/>                     Total number of Country Members: 98 (plus 13 Hon Members)</p> <p><b>6.2 Honorary Membership</b><br/> <i>Permanent item: ASSA has 13 Hon Members. Max 15</i><br/> <a href="http://assa.sao.ac.za/about/awards/honorary-members/">http://assa.sao.ac.za/about/awards/honorary-members/</a></p>   |
| 7      | <p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>7. Governance</b><br/> <b>7.1 Register ASSA for tax under a VDP (Voluntary ...) Application</b><br/> <i>(27 Nov 19) Proposal by CTF Services (below the agenda) was accepted: “bold highlighted portions seem to be missing from the constitution”. AJ Nel undertook to compile a draft update to the Constitution and if approved ratified at the next AGM.</i><br/> <i>(21 Sep) AJ Nel confirmed that the draft amendments to the Constitution was sent to CTFS for sign off before presenting to Council and finalising the document.</i><br/> <i>(21 July) 2020 and 2021 financials will be submitted in support of tax registration.</i><br/>                     AJ noted that he updated the Constitution and will share with the FSC. (<u>AJ</u>)<br/>                     The CTFS audit has been completed.</p>  |

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|----|----------------|---|
|    |                | <p><b>7.2 Checklist</b><br/>Reminder: 31 Mar Closing date for nominations for: Honorary Members and Awards</p>  |
| 8  | Financial      | <p><b>8. Financial Matters</b><br/> <b>8.1 2020 Financials</b><br/> <i>(25 Nov) Status was not available on the review / audit/ sign off by the Independent Compiler (Peter Carlisle) of the 2020 Financials. (AJ Nel)</i><br/>                     AJ reported that the financials have been completed but sign off is still pending and he has a proposal to submit to the FSC regarding costs (<u>AJ</u>)</p> <p><b>8.2 Budget 2021</b><br/> <i>(25 Nov) AJ Nel to provide an estimate to be available for the Centenary Symposium.</i><br/>                     AJ confirmed the max fund allocation for Centenary activities and any other allocation, is R20k.</p>  |
| 9  | ASSET          | <p><b>9. ASSET</b><br/><i>(Permanent item)</i></p>  |
| 10 | ASSA Centenary | <p><b>10. ASSA Centenary, Friday 1 July 2022</b><br/>                     Members worked through the latest ASSA 100 List and items updated.<br/> <u>Council</u> is asked to review the updated ASSA 100 List and to please keep Lerika informed of updates to share with all.</p>  |
| 11 | IAU 2024       | <p><b>11. IAU 2024</b><br/> <i>Permanent note: <a href="https://astronomy2024capetown.org/">https://astronomy2024capetown.org/</a></i><br/>                     Requests were received by D Cunnama and C. Rijdsdijk from Kevin Govender and Vanessa McBride on behalf of the organising committee of IAU GA 2024 for assistance from ASSA for the “implementation of the Vision Document for the 2024 IAU General Assembly”.<br/> <i>Refer to mail content below the minutes.</i><br/>                     Daniel asked <u>all members</u> to please forward any and all ideas for contribution to him to forward to the organising committee.<br/>                     Suggestions noted include outreach projects, guided tours.</p> |
| 12 | General        | <p><b>12. General items</b><br/>                     No item raised.</p>  |
| 13 | Closure        | <p>C Stewart thanked attendees for their contribution. The meeting closed 19:00</p> <p>Proposed next Council meetings 2022 : 20 June, AGM 3 August<br/>                     Centre monthly meetings: Hermanus Centre: 3rd Monday. Cape Centre and Jhb Centres: 2nd Wednesday. Durban Centre: 2nd Wednesday. Committee meetings: 4th Wednesday</p>   |

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

### Attachments in support of minutes:

#### In support of item 3.1:

#### Proposal to revive the Comet, Asteroid and Meteor Observing Section of ASSA

During last year we held some discussions around the reshaping of ASSA observing sections, which inter-alia resulted in the dissolving of the Shallow Sky Section, and the creation of a wider Observing Section. I raised some comments about the future of scientific astronomical observation and the historical legacy of the observing sections within ASSA, and that we needed to preserve that legacy into the future.

During those discussions I was specifically asked if I would consider reviving the Comet, Asteroid and Meteor Section, which I ran as Director between 1993 and 2013, after which it was absorbed into the wider Shallow Sky Section, and to which I acted as a Specialist. I have given that some thought.

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The fact remains that interest globally is increasing in matters relating to comets, asteroids and meteors, particularly with regard to potentially hazardous bodies. The recent apparition of comet C/2021 A1 (Leonard) created much interest, and I am presently writing up an account of the observations and scientific study of ASSA images of that comet for MNASSA; a large body of work which I hope to complete shortly. In addition we participated in the location and recovery of meteorites from asteroid 2018 LA, and we monitor meteors as part of the CAMS network. But ASSA needs to keep up with this growth.

With this in mind, it might perhaps be prudent to revive Comet, Asteroid and Meteors as a Section, dedicated to the scientific study of these bodies, rather than operate as a Specialist within the Observing Section. There is of course a precedent, in that Double and Variable Stars still operates as a stand-alone Section.

By no means do I wish this proposal to be seen as undermining or replacing the current Observing Section, of which Angus Burns is the designated Director. On the contrary, I have enormous respect for what Angus is doing, and I would welcome the opportunity for the two Sections to cooperate so that we ensure we reach both casual and specialist observers in the field.

Please can you discuss on Council, and I await your comments,  
Tim Cooper

**In support of item 3.3:** Dark Sky Discussion v9

**In support of item 3.6:** Participation of ASSA in the global Meteor ASPIRE project

**In support of item 7.1**

### **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**
- 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.

**In support of item 10:** ASSA 100 220311

**In support of item 11:**

Dear Daniel (and your colleagues at ASSA)

I hope this email finds you well.

As we move towards implementation of the Vision Document for the 2024 IAU General Assembly, we would like to discuss with you potential actions that you/your organisations could lead (or may already be leading) or provide advice on. Based on input from the African Astronomical Community the specific actions suggested for your organisation to lead or support are listed below (there may also be other actions in the vision document that you may want to lead - we would obviously welcome that)

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- Identify active amateur astronomy groups across the continent and nurture a network in the build-up to 2024.
- Skills from this community should be tapped into for professional observation (e.g. through AAVSO and such), education, public outreach and development.
- Provide support for new or very small amateur astronomy groups
- Encourage the growth of the amateur astronomer community and any other potential astro-tourism stakeholders, not just for external tourism, but internally as well.

We do understand that some of these activities may require funding or volunteer support. The IAU GA organising committee has some seed funding which could be put towards this (the exact mechanism of distributing these funds will soon be finalised) and we can potentially assist in the call for volunteers if you/your organisation are prepared to supervise them.

We look forward to hearing your feedback or advice on the above potential actions (e.g. are you willing to lead all/some of them, or what would you need from us to help make them happen?). We will be happy to have a brief chat by voice if that would be easier.

Regards

Kevin and Vanessa

On behalf of the organising committee of IAU GA 2024

[www.astronomy2024.org](http://www.astronomy2024.org)

### 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      | 1 <sup>st</sup> Wed Aug. 21 business days before 1 <sup>st</sup> 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**