

## ASSA AGM 2023 MINUTES

<b>DATE</b>	2 Aug 2023	<b>TIME</b>	17.00 to 18:30	<b>VENUE</b>	Virtual via Jitsi
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### Attendance

#### ASSA Council

Derek Duckitt	AGM Host, Hermanus Centre Chair
Dr Daniel Cunnama	President
Chris Stewart	Vice President (Outgoing)
Dr Pierre de Villiers	Vice President (Incoming)
Case Rijdsdijk	Council member, MNASSA Editor
Adv AJ Nel	Treasurer
Lerika Cross	Secretary

#### ASSA Appointees

Tim Cooper	Comet, Asteroid, Meteor Section Director
Chris de Coning	Archivist, ASSA History Director
Auke Slotegraaf	SGAS Editor
Dave Blane	Double and Variable Stars Section Director
Martin Heigan	Communications Coordinator, Astrophotography Section Director
Dr Christian Hettlage	SAAO Website Liaison, Cape Centre Chair
Jacques van Delft	Solar Section Director

#### ASSA Centre and Country Members

Brendon Fairhurst	Proxy for Johannesburg Centre Chair
Yolanda Combrink	Country Member
Peter Dunsby	Cape Centre Member
Andre Bruton	Garden Route Centre Member

#### Apologies

Angus Burns	Observing Director
Dr Ian Glass	Council Member
Carmel Yves	Johannesburg Centre Chair
Johan Smit	Pretoria Centre Chair
Debbie Abel	Durban Centre Chair
Dr Claire Flanagan	Convenor of Scholarships
John Gill	Web Manager
Eddy Nijeboer	Membership Secretary

#### Note:

The supporting documentation is underlined in the minutes and are available on the ASSA website page:  
<https://assa.saa.ac.za/about/council-and-officers/agm-reports/>

Recording of the meeting:

Part 1: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MtqZjcKEOSRZChKffPig3HCFTnUjs06E/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MtqZjcKEOSRZChKffPig3HCFTnUjs06E/view?usp=drive_link)

Part 2: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D5g\\_u60I6jU66uhf0rfyaQlwGZbDsFLW/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D5g_u60I6jU66uhf0rfyaQlwGZbDsFLW/view?usp=drive_link)

	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions
1	Welcome	Derek Duckitt, Hermanus Centre Chair and the new Incoming Vice President, fulfilled the role of Chair for the AGM. Derek welcomed everyone in attendance and opened the meeting.  Apologies received are recorded above in the Attendance list.
2	Minutes	The <u>minutes of the previous AGM</u> meeting held 22 August 2022 were accepted.

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		(Proposed by Chris Stewart, seconded by AJ Nel )
3	Report on Council	<p><b>3. President’s Report on Council</b></p> <p>Pierre de Villiers, the Vice President, started proceedings by commenting that having perused the reports posted on the website in prep of the AGM, to him these reflect an image of a competent and effective society covering a wide range of activities.</p> <p>Daniel Cunnama echoed Pierre’s comment and thanked all Council members for their contributions over the past year.</p> <p>Daniel proceeded with his <u>Report on Council</u> summarising highlights from the <u>Reports submitted by the Directors</u> of the various special interest groups.</p> <p>Key actions arising from comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sponsorships of competitions such as the ASSA/Optolong “Big 5” Astrophotography Challenge make a difference, e.g., attract new members. (Council to consider)</li> <li>- The ASSA Cloud Archive, which is intended for important historic information from Centres, Directors and Council, is not yet up to date. Generic email addresses are preferable. (Chris de Coning to follow up with everyone involved)</li> <li>- Case Rijdsdijk and Derek Duckett to discuss the communication channel changes put into effect for the Cosmology Section. (Case, Derek)</li> <li>- Timeous notification to be sent to all possible contributors to MNASSA such as Centre Chairs and Directors on due dates for input to MNASSA. (Case Rijdsdijk)</li> <li>- Daniel proposed, and the meeting agreed, that a discussion session be held to unpack options to improve communication channels among members within their scope of interest. Some options, noted during the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how to engage in using automated networks of telescopes generating huge amount of data which can be used for instance for analysis of variable stars.</li> <li>- support of the training started for MeerKAT's Citizen Science project on which a youtube video was shared to the ASSAVIP group.</li> </ul> (Council to discuss) </li> <li>- A call to be put out for an Observing Director and a Photometry and Spectroscopy Director further to Angus Burns and Percy Jakobs notifying they would like to step down. (Council)</li> <li>- Daniel, noting that there has been a drop in total membership from 541 in 2021 to 473 in 2022, asked that focus is given this year to use opportunities on increasing membership. (Council)</li> </ul> <p>Daniel ended his Report on Council thanking all Council members for their wide range of contributions the past year including the external entities supporting ASSA such as the Scholarship Committee, Editorial Board and the SAAO IT team.</p> <p>The full transcript of the <u>President’s Report on Council</u> as well as all the <u>Directors’ Reports</u> are available on the website.</p>
4	Financials	<b>4. Financials</b>

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		<p><b>4.1 Financial Report 2022/23</b>                      The Treasurer, AJ Nel, presented the <u>Financial Report</u>.                      Conclusions extracted from the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Income derived from most sources remained stable.</li> <li>· Sanlam Glacier continued a steady growth and the first withdrawal was done in 2022 to provide for the payment of bursaries.</li> <li>· Expenses in general was on par with 2022., bar for the Symposium sponsorship, which was projected in the 2022 report.</li> <li>· No major expenses are foreseen for the 2023 to 2024 financial year.</li> </ul> <p>No questions were raised and Daniel thanked AJ for his report.                      (Proposed to accept the Financial Report: Chris Stewart, Seconded: Case Rijdsdijk).</p> <p><b>4.2 Items not raised at AGM but noted for record:</b></p> <p>1) <b>Country Membership fees</b>                      An increase in the Country membership renewal fee for 2023/24 to R150 (which includes the 2024 Sky Guide delivery options of either via PAXI or PUDO) was approved by Council at the meeting of 3 July whilst the entry fee remains R50.</p> <p>2) <b>Independent Compiler:</b> Peter Carlisle of CTFS will remain Independent Compiler for ASSA. His Auditing business is independent of the normal bookkeeping and tax work done by CTF services for the ASSA.</p> <p>3) <b>The 2022 23 financials</b> are still being prepared by CTFS for sign off by Council</p>
5	ASSET	<p><b>5. ASSA Endowment Trust</b>                      Tim Cooper, a Trustee of ASSET tabled the <u>Trustees' Report</u>.                      Key points raised by Tim, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Trust is now fully up to date including all financial statements up to and including 2022 and that it can now transacted fully;</li> <li>- the Trustees are considering options to avail the Trust of tax exemptions, including becoming a Public Benefit Organisation;</li> <li>- the Trust dates back to 1977 and options are now being considered how best to modernise the Trust to best serve its mandate.</li> </ul> <p>Further to a query, Tim confirmed the Trust account amount is R173, 513.                      Daniel thanked Tim and the Trustees for their efforts.</p>
6	Awards	<p><b>6. ASSA Awards</b></p> <p><b>6.1 The “Big 5” Astrophotography Challenge sponsored by Optolong</b>                      The meeting enjoyed being shown the images which won the high-quality astrophotography filters from Optolong. The winners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yolanda Combrink – Southern Pleiades</li> <li>- Omega Centauri – Coenraad van der Merwe</li> <li>- Eta Carina – Peter Dunsby</li> <li>- Yolanda Combrink – The Coalsack Nebula</li> <li>- The Milky Way – Dawie Venter</li> </ul> <p>(Images at <a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/astrosocsa/albums/72177720309624806">https://www.flickr.com/photos/astrosocsa/albums/72177720309624806</a> )</p> <p>Daniel thanked Martin Heigan, the Director, and the Judges (Martin, Chris Stewart &amp; Angus Burns).</p>

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		<p><b>6.2 ASSA Awards</b> Daniel then proceeded to announce the annual awards agreed by the ASSA Awards Committee, comprising the ASSA President and Vice Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary.</p> <p><b>Long Service Award</b> Peter Cramb was awarded a Long Service Award “in appreciation for his many valuable contributions made to the furthering of ASSA interests for more than four decades”.</p> <p><b>Historical Director's Award</b> Dr Ian Glass was awarded a Director's Award by the Historical Section Director, Chris de Coning, for his “invaluable contributions made over a lifetime for the conservation of Astronomical Heritage”. Daniel and Case voiced their personal thanks to Ian for his ongoing support and contribution to the ASSA and astronomy in general.</p> <p><b>Gill Medal</b> Chris Stewart was awarded the Gill Medal for “his significant services and contributions towards Astronomy in Southern Africa covering a substantial and wide range of activities”. The <u>full transcript of the Gill Medal award</u> is attached to these minutes. Attendees all gave a big round of applause to Chris for receiving the well deserved Gill Medal.</p>
7	Office Bearers 2023/24	<p><b>7. ASSA Office Bearers 2023/ 24</b> Daniel thanked the members stepping down from their roles for their valued contribution,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pierre de Villiers as Incoming Vice President;</li> <li>- Eddy Nijeboer as Membership Secretary;</li> <li>- Percy Jacobs as Spectroscopy &amp; Photometry Director;</li> <li>- Angus Burns as Observing Director,</li> </ul> <p>and welcomed the members taking on new roles on Council,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Derek Duckitt as Incoming Vice President;</li> <li>- Andre Bruton as Membership Secretary;</li> <li>- Pierre de Villiers as Outreach Director;</li> <li>- Jacques van Delft as Solar Section Director.</li> </ul> <p>The <u>list of Council Members and Appointees</u> for 2023/4 is attached to the minutes.</p>
8	Presentation	<p><b>8. President Presentation</b> Daniel sketched the very positive outlook for astronomy in South Africa in the near term, noting that ASSA can be a pillar of support but also a driver of growth. He noted that the society need to adapt and evolve to remain current and can look forward to an exciting next year with the collective effort from both professional and amateur supporters as well as potential government support.</p> <p>The <u>full transcript of Daniel Cunnama’s presentation</u> is attached to the minutes.</p>
9	Closure	<p>In closure of the AGM the host Derek Duckitt thanked Dr Cunnama for his leadership and dedication to ASSA and noted that ASSA is very fortunate to have Daniel as President during the exciting times ahead. Derek thank everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 18:30</p>
10	Next	The Council meetings for the year will be confirmed in due course.

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	<b>Agenda Points</b>	<b>Discussions / Decisions / Actions</b>
	Council meeting	

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

Attachments to the minutes:

- Refer item 2: ASSA AGM Minutes 220822 v7
- Refer item 3: 2023 ASSA AGM President's Report on Council
- Refer Item 4: 2023-08-02 ASSA Financials Presentation
- Refer Item 5: ASSET Annual Report 2023
- Refer Item 6: 2023 ASSA Awards Only
- Refer Item 6.2: Gill Medal Award motivation
- Refer Item 7: ASSA Council and Appointees 2023 24 Final
- Refer Item 8: 2023 ASSA AGM President's Address