



ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE	11 March 2024	TME	17:00 – 18:00	VENUE	Via Jitsi Meet
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ATTENDANCE

Council	Role
Dr Daniel Cunnama	President (Chair)
Chris Stewart	Vice President
Derek Duckitt	Vice President, Chair – Hermanus Centre, Cosmology Director
Adv AJ Nel	Treasurer
Case Rijdsdijk	Council Member, Chair – Garden Route Centre
Dr Ian Glass	Council Member
Andre Bruton	Membership Secretary
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Alison Coulter	Proxi for Johannesburg Centre
Dr Christian Hettlage	Chair – Cape Centre, Web Master
Debbie Abel	Chair – Durban Centre
Johan Smit	Chair - Pretoria Centre

Appointees

Dave Blane	Double & Variable Star & Photometry & Spectroscopy Director (Acting)
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Apologies (a) and Absentees

Auke Slotegraaf (a)	SGAS Editor
Dr Pierre de Villiers (a)	Outreach Director
Dr Claire Flanagan (a)	Convenor of Scholarships
Jacques van Delft (a)	Solar Director
Tim Cooper (a)	Comet, Asteroid, Meteor (CAM) Director
John Gill (a)	Web Manager
Chris de Coning (a)	ASSA Archiving, Historical Director
Carmel Ives (a)	Chair - Johannesburg Centre
Martin Heigan	Imaging Director, Communications Coordinator
Prof Matie Hoffman	Chair - Bloemfontein Centre

Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)	
1	<p>Welcome, Present, Apologies, Proxies received Daniel Cunnama opened the 2nd ASSA Council meeting for 2023/24, welcoming Council members. Apologies received before & after meeting are noted under Attendance.</p>
2	<p>Previous Minutes of Meetings and Agenda Minutes of Council meeting held 23 October 2023, and the Outcomes and Proposed Actions from ASSA Centres meeting held 19 February 2024, were approved. (Proposed by AJ Nel, Seconded by Case Rijdsdijk)</p> <p>To note: Outcomes and actions arising from previous minutes/Council discussions are in <i>italics</i>, actions are underlined. All files related to this meeting are available in the ASSA Cloud: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CxafcuzydgbAYrPYLzpuI-hcLw7Fs22?usp=drive_link</p>
3	<p>3. Communication 3.1 Communications document (<i>Permanent item</i>) Latest draft is stored on the ASSA Cloud. Send queries/ updates to Lerika.</p> <p>3.2 Communicating with members 3.2.1 ASSAVIP (19 Feb '24) Daniel said in the absence of a mail list comprising all ASSA members the ASSAVIP group is the best option for bulk communication to all ASSA members. He appealed to Centres to forward relevant info from ASSAVIP to their members using their own internal channels. Daniel recapped the good progress made at the productive Centres Meeting on 19 February when Centres supported his goal to work toward a mail list comprising all ASSA Members. <u>Centres</u> to inform how they process relevant mails received from ASSAVIP group to their members and <u>Lerika</u> to</p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<p>consolidate replies.</p> <p>3.2.2 Join Us top menu item on website <i>(19 Feb '24) Daniel explained that he would like a streamlined interface for people to join ASSA via the website. As part of the website review Auke created a top menu item, <u>Join Us</u> on the website, which would lead a visitor to start engagement with ASSA. Council noted the update from Auke before the meeting that he was unable to edit /create a new Form and called on <u>Christian</u> /SAAO IT assistance to make the changes requested by Daniel. This item will be progressed as part of Sending email to all Members, item 3.2.3 and Website Review, item 3.3</i></p> <p>3.2.3 Sending email to all Members <i>(19 Feb '24) Daniel requested and received Centres' support to establish a single mail list to enable him to communicate key requests /information to all ASSA members, e.g. notification of the AGM. No objections from members were received towards initiating the process towards establishing a single mail list of ASSA members by formalising a <u>Volunteer Group</u> to draft overall requirements and technical specifications. Requirements extracted from previous meetings were noted in the agenda and must be considered including. The ASSA Jhb membership file (in Access) that Carmel forwarded to Daniel will also be considered.</i></p> <p>Volunteers thus far include Christian, Chris S, AJ, Lerika, Carmel (from May). <u>Centres</u> are asked if they can consider proxies to join the Group. Daniel said it would be good to have the process implemented in time for next year's sign up starting in July.</p> <p>3.2.4 WhatsApp groups Council noted the two current WhatsApp groups by ASSA Directors who are the Admins: · Chris Stewart runs a group for ATMers who have signed up to Jhb ATM class. · Jacques van Delft runs Solar Observing group which was added to the website page for Solar Section. It was agreed that this item be closed until committed volunteers are found to start other WhatsApp groups.</p> <p>3.3 Website review Council took note of Auke's report, submitted before the meeting, closing the website review which was initiated at the Oct '23 Council meeting and which he kindly led from 15 December.</p> <p>Auke's report on the review: " With the help of Chris S, Lerika, John Gill, Derek Duckitt and Edward Duckitt, the website was reviewed and modified and is now in a condition requiring only routine maintenance.</p> <p>The major changes include (1) editing the main menu items, (2) changing the layout of the homepage, (3) re-organising dated material, (4) adding an Outreach main page, and (5) configuring Google Analytics. As part of (3) above, routine maintenance will include ensuring that content does not appear "stale" or out of date. This will be done by moving links to ephemeral content from a "current" space (e.g. "New Alerts", "Latest newsletters") to a section lower down on a page (e.g. "Past Alerts", "Previous newsletters."). This ensures that the actual content does not go missing (404 Not Found) as only the link to the content is changed. Change (5) - correctly configuring Google Analytics - was done by Edward Duckitt. John will now be able to see which pages are viewed most frequently, identify missing links, etc.</p> <p>Two matters are outstanding: reactivating the "Search" function and creating a "Join ASSA" Form (request to Christian Hettlage, 2024 Feb 16 - see 3.2.2 above).</p> <p>I'd like to thank everyone involved in the process for their assistance and wish John well with the always-important task of keeping ASSA's face to the world brightly polished."</p> <p>Daniel extended his appreciation to Auke for all his hard work and to all the contributors.</p> <p>Actions post the review</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reactivating the "Search" function (<u>Christian</u>) Creating a "Join ASSA" Form with detail as requested by Daniel (<u>Christian</u>) All <u>Centres</u> and <u>Directors</u> to review their pages on the website and advise John of changes As ASSA's key outreach project at present, Tim's GMN project is noted at the top of the Outreach page. Tim provided input for consideration and updating the page (<u>John</u>) <p>3.4 ASSA Cloud repository (<i>sub renewal due in June</i>) <u>Centres</u> to inform Chris de C that they've implemented a process to upload data to their allocated cloud space.</p> <p><u>Council</u> to note the update from Chris de C before the meeting that he uploaded Council minutes both on: - the website - https://assa.sao.ac.za/sections/history/assa-archive/assa-council-2020/ (only minutes)</p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<p>- on Cloud Archive under Archive of ASSA >> Council of ASSA>> Meetings>> 2001-born digital which has all Council minutes and supporting documents, and which are for Council's eyes only.</p> <p>Daniel commented that he viewed the file Chris shared before the meeting and found it very interesting and informative. Chris transcribed ASSA minutes, "every decision council made is in this document and by using the search function the decisions could be found".</p> <p>3.5 Mutual beneficial relationships 3.5.1 ASSA free Country Membership CTFS – free membership <i>(23 Oct) Council agreed to offer Rudolf Strydom Gratis Country Membership as the main contact at ASSA's accounting company, CTFS ... and dealing with ASSA financials since 2014.</i> Council noted that Rudolf Strydom has been onboarded as Gratis Country Member and received his SG. Item now closed.</p> <p>3.6 Dark Sky 3.6.1 Astro Tourism <i>(4 Oct) DSI Astro Tourism Strategy Plan: final plan to be presented following which funding will be known. Funding is likely to be dependent on ASSA being registered as a PBO.</i> Daniel informed that there was a press release out last week with an update. Taken off the web: https://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/sa-shoots-stars-astro-tourism-strategy</p>
4	<p>4. Outreach <i>(19 Feb '24) Daniel stressed Outreach is a key cornerstone of ASSA, an objective stated in ASSA's constitution.</i> Council noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pierre as the Outreach Director offered to "act as facilitator to collect, collate and share all input received". - Outreach was raised to a top menu item on website, https://assa.sao.ac.za/outreach/ - The Agenda now has a separate Outreach item to cover items of general interest. <p>4.1 Pamphlet/Flyer <i>(23 Oct) Flyer to be downloadable from website, to print (A4 or A5, back-to-back) as handouts at events</i> <i>(19 Feb '24) Daniel proposed the Flyer as an outreach tool. This will raise the profile of ASSA, attract new members, and support his goal to grow the community.</i> Further to Daniel obtaining the quote to spruce up the draft Flyer and its approval by the FSC, the Flyer is now available in pdf (attached) and pptx versions. It is currently on <u>Contact Us</u> page, linked to <u>Membership</u> page.</p> <p><u>Council members</u> to provide input on how they would like to deploy the Flyer on the website/Centres' sites, etc. A summary to be done and shared with Council for sign off and included in the Comms document. (<u>Lerika</u>)</p> <p>4.2 Sharing Outreach content 4.2.1 Proposals to include in Comms document Council noted the proposals below for inclusion in the Roles noted in the Comms document (<u>Lerika</u>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) ASSA Members to share outreach activities with Outreach Director who will decide how the information will be shared. Centre Chairs and Directors are requested to report any Outreach planned, or in progress, as part of their input to Council meetings to the Outreach Director. b) The Outreach page may include links to other outreach activities/social media. c) Centres are encouraged to post their outreach activities/materials to their Centre websites, ideally under a separate Outreach menu item, and to inform the Outreach Director of the links. <p>Derek informed Hermanus Centre added an Outreach page to the site (https://www.hermanusastronomy.co.za/).</p> <p>4.2.2 Sky Guide as an Outreach tool Daniel again noted the importance of getting the Sky Guide out there and use it as a tool to attract members and suggested a discussion at the next meeting to share some ideas. <u>Council Members</u> to prepare some options of how they can use the Sky Guide in support of Outreach.</p> <p>Debbie asked about the cost of buying SGAS in bulk. <u>AJ</u> to share the latest Sky Guide pricing discounts for bulk purchases. It was acknowledged that no one is allowed to "sell on" the Sky Guide.</p> <p>Ian said he has some 2023 Sky Guides available and anyone interested may contact him. (<u>All</u>)</p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<p>4.3 ASSA GMN Outreach Project (https://globalmeteornetwork.org/outreach/) <i>(7 Feb) Tim informed funding approval has been received.</i> <i>(8 May) 4 cameras have been built with Raspberry Pi, awaiting shipment to RSA</i> <i>(3 Jul) Tim reported 4 cameras where shipped.</i> <i>(23 Oct) Tim received the 4 cameras, and these are ready to go to 4 schools. He thanked Pierre for championing and engaging a primary and secondary school in the Western Cape. Tim has identified 2 schools close to him. Tim informed that the website of the Global Meteor Network Outreach Project is the main information resource, e.g., explains aims of the project, lists participants, partners, schools. As one of the partners, it displays the ASSA logo with link to ASSA website which will in due course be linked to a Project Page on the ASSA site. A Basic Astronomy online course will be downloadable from GMN website and Tim is currently developing the module on Meteor Astronomy. He will soon arrange a kick-off meeting with all those involved and interested.</i></p> <p><u>Council</u> noted the update from Tim before the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) The project is now known as the ASSA GMN Outreach Project. The global project has a website, with links to and from the ASSA website. e) The kick off meeting was held on 16 January, when Tim briefed the project team on the objectives for the project and an action plan for implementation was tabled. f) The two schools involved are Touwsrivier Primary School and Laingsburg High School. Site visits are complete and pointing directions for the cameras have been determined to maximise overlap. g) Two boxes have been pre-packed with the necessary equipment, one for each school. The boxes have been shipped to the Cape and images of the boxes and contents are on the project website as a news note. h) Handover to the schools is planned to go ahead shortly. Commissioning of the setups at the schools and connection to the global GMN network will follow. i) Tim has completed the tutorial module on meteor science. Mary McIntyre in the UK added the module on telescopes and optics. Mary and Tim added the module on navigating the night sky from both hemispheres. The three modules will be uploaded in the next week and can be downloaded from the project website. <p>Derek noted that Pierre, as the participating member on Tim's GMN Outreach Project, was at the Touwsrivier school where 2 cameras were installed.</p> <p>Daniel expressed ASSA sincere thanks to Tim and to Pierre for all their effort with this excellent project.</p> <p>4.4 Light pollution measuring <i>(7 Feb) Wim Filmalter's application to IDA Light Monitor Grant Program was successful.</i> <i>(8 May) Wim awaits feedback from Cape Nature/Anysberg when he could use it.</i> Wim to be asked if there is progress on this item (Lerika, Wim)</p> <p>4.5 Star Partys event at SANBI KZN-NBG in PMB https://www.sanbi.org/event_cat/kwazulu-natal/ Council noted the National Botanical Garden in PMB request to ASSA to support a Star Gazing Event in celebration of their 150 years anniversary. Angus Burns volunteered his support as well as Debbie /ASSA Durban and others, but funding for travel/ accommodation costs to be found. No date has been decided yet.</p> <p>Council agreed that the first step is to further investigate possible funding options including approaching Sally MacFarlane for possible funding and speaker options as part of IAU GA Outreach in August (item 5) (Lerika)</p> <p>It was also noted that PMB was home of the Natal Midlands Centre which was noted in the agenda item 9.3 as a potential option to revive.</p>
5	<p>5. 32nd IAU General Assembly: Cape Town 6 – 15 August 2024 https://astronomy2024.org/ <i>(23 Oct) Suggestions: possible 'goody' bag with 2024 Sky Guide and ASSA Flyer, an ASSA stand.</i> <i>(19 Feb '24) Daniel urged <u>Centres</u> to explore the website for info and opportunities that ASSA can contribute to (refer outreach page) and contact Sally MacFarlane, responsible for Outreach.</i> Daniel informed that 3000 abstracts from Astronomers were received –more than for the Korea and the Vienna event. He urged members to contact Sally MacFarlane responsible for Outreach.</p> <p>Daniel noted items to be included for an exhibition for African Institutes such as ASSA Poster, Sky Guides, Flyers. <u>Council members</u> to provide further ideas to Daniel in support of GA with associated cost detail.</p>
6	<p>6. ASSA Publications 6.1. SGAS SGAS 2024: Distribution</p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<p><u>AJ and Andre</u> offered to follow-up on outstanding orders/deliveries.</p> <p>Sky Guide Digital version This detail will be included in the Comms doc: When ASSA wants to purchase digital version, refer to the PRH options provided placed in the Comms doc. Digital version Contract is in Contracts folder in <u>ASSA Cloud</u>, “2013-11-14 ASSA Struik Adendum” :</p> <p>6.2 Other ASSA publications (<i>Permanent item for noting</i>) MNASSA: https://assa.sao.ac.za/publications/mnassa/ Published on the first day of every second month and articles are due one month before the publication date. Recent MNASSA February ‘24</p> <p>CAM Notes: https://assa.sao.ac.za/sections/comet-asteroid-meteor-section/ Published every quarter. Recent edition Jan- March ‘24</p> <p>Solar Bulletin: https://assa.sao.ac.za/sections/solar/ Published monthly. Recent edition January ‘24</p>
7	<p>7. Scholarships 7.1 2024 Bursaries Applications for ASSA Scholarship and Cooke Scholarship closed 16 February. Amount is R25 000 ea. Claire informed 10 applications have been received.</p> <p>AJ said he will send Daniel the form to be completed for transferring funds for the upcoming bursaries (<u>AJ</u>)</p> <p>7.2 Communication with Students and Bursars (3 Jul’23) Previous Bursars who are still to graduate could also be offered the same as current bursars, ie category “B” and thus encourage them to stay in touch and contribute. (23 Oct ‘23) <u>Daniel</u> offered to draft note to previous bursars, encouraging them to join as Country/Centre members, offering them opportunity to contribute to ASSA and to stay in touch <u>AJ</u> has emails of past Bursars which he can supply.</p>
8	<p>8. Membership 8.1 Country Membership (13 Honorary Membership (max 15) No update available.</p> <p>8.2 Hon Members Contact has been re-established with Hon Member Mike Begbie who “has been in the UK for 11 years..” A digital version of the Sky Guide was sent to Mike. AJ noted that sending Mike the Hon Member honorarium is an option to follow up on (<u>AJ, LAC</u>)</p> <p>8.3 Standard Disclaimer (23 Oct) All Country and Centre Membership Applications forms / screens to have a standard disclaimer(<u>AJ</u>) This item to be added to the aspects to be considered by the Volunteer Group under item 3.3 (<u>Lerika</u>)</p>
9	<p>9 Governance 9.1 Register ASSA for tax under a VDP (Voluntary Disclosure Program) Application (7 Jul) CTFS to be asked on process PBO registration and to provide a quotation (7 Feb) CTFS kindly offered to not charge ASSA unless cost involved becomes substantial. (8 May) The 3 willing unconnected persons (Daniel, Chris S, Pierre with Pierre the SARS rep.) have completed forms required by CTFS. CTFS will now start the application process. CTFS ASSA application still in progress at the Government.</p> <p>9.2 Call for new Directors (19 Feb) Daniel asked for support from Centres to share a call for volunteers to join Council to fill vacant roles. Centres and Directors to consider how best to put out a call to their members/group for volunteers to lead or contribute to ASSA’s objectives within these areas: Observing, Shallow Sky, Deep Sky, Photometry and Spectroscopy, and to join the MNASSA Editorial Board.</p> <p>Ian informed that one of MNASSA’s Ed Board members, Vanessa Mc Bride is unlikely to continue her role as she has transferred to Paris, France. AJ noted that there is likely requirements for the MNASSA editorial board seeing it is a publication receiving funds from Sabinet and offered to look into their requirements. (<u>AJ</u>)</p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<p>9.3 Resurrect Natal Midlands Centre <i>(23 Oct) Volunteer required to assess feasibility. Retain until after first ASSA membership email from Daniel. In abeyance for now.</i></p> <p>9.4 Checklist review <u>Council</u> to note: 31 Mar Closing date for nominations for: Honorary Members and Awards</p>
10	<p>10 Financial Matters 10.1 2023/4 Financial Budget AJ provided a Budget for 23/24 – up to end June '24 - see attached. ASSA could potentially use ~ R25,497, for "projects" up to end June 2024. Items already committed to are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Flyer R1350 · Tim Cooper travel and accommodation for the CMN Project: R10 000 · Items in prep of the IAU General Assembly in August (item 5) <p>10.2 Financials 2022 23 year Financials were signed off by Daniel and AJ and forwarded to CTFS. Item is now closed.</p>
11	<p>11. General items No general item raised.</p>
12	<p>Closure The meeting closed at 6pm. Lerika to ask Daniel for possible dates to get meetings into his calendar including the AGM.</p> <p>Centre monthly meetings: Hermanus Centre: 3rd Monday. Jhb Centre: 2nd Wednesday. Durban Centre: 2nd Wednesday, committee meetings 4th Wednesday. Cape Centre: 4th Wednesday.</p>

Minutes Approved: _____ Date: _____

Attachments in support of minutes:

In support of item 2: ASSA Minutes 231023 v2 and Centres meeting 240219 outcomes v1
In support of item 3.4: ASSA Council Minutes History from CdC 240311
In support of item 8.1 BudgetReport Jul 23 to Jun 24
In support of item 4.1 ASSA flyer Jan 2024

All documents in support of the meeting including the agenda are accessible in ASSA Cloud :
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CxafcuzydgbAYrPYILzpuI-hcLw7Fs22?usp=drive_link

Checklist (covered under Governance item 9)

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
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 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
Annual refresh of the Communications document after the AGM

END