



ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DATE	22 April 2024	TME	17:00 – 17:40	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
Case Rijsdijk	Council Member, Chair – Garden Route Centre
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Dr Christian Hettlage	Chair – Cape Centre, Web Master
Debbie Abel	Chair – Durban Centre

Appointees

Chris de Coning	ASSA Archiving, Historical Director
Colon Steyn	Observing – Deep & Shallow Sky, Director
Dr Claire Flanagan	Convenor of Scholarships
Dave Blane	Double & Variable Star Director & Photometry & Spectroscopy Director (Acting)
Jacques van Delft	Solar Director
Dr Pierre de Villiers	Outreach Director
Tim Cooper	Comet, Asteroid, Meteor (CAM) Director

Apologies (a) and Absentees

Adv AJ Nel (a)	Treasurer
Andre Bruton	Membership Secretary
Alison Coulter	Proxy for Johannesburg Centre
Auke Slotegraaf	SGAS Editor
Dr Ian Glass (a)	Council Member
Johan Smit	Chair - Pretoria Centre
John Gill (a)	Web Manager
Carmel Ives	Chair - Johannesburg Centre
Martin Heigan (a)	Imaging Director, Communications Coordinator
Prof Matie Hoffman	Chair - Bloemfontein Centre

Audio recording of the Jitsi Meet: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HY5GRry-pqkoR7Abve513B-2s6UaIHMJ/view>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
1	<p>Welcome, Present, Apologies, Proxies received Daniel Cunnama opened the 3rd ASSA Council meeting for 2023/24, welcoming Council members. Apologies received before & after meeting are noted under Attendance.</p> <p>Daniel welcomed Colin, the incoming Observing Director, and thanked him for his willingness to support the Observing Section. Colin responded that he “greatly honoured”.</p>
2	<p>Previous Minutes of Meetings and Agenda 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 <u>Council folder</u> in the ASSA Cloud:</p> <p>Minutes of Council meeting held <u>11 March 2024</u> were approved.</p>
3	<p>3. Communication 3.1 Communications document (<i>Permanent item</i>) Main updates to the Communications document latest draft <u>11 April 2024</u>, as noted in the agenda, were noted.</p> <p>3.2 Communicating with members 3.2.1 ASSAVIP <i>(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.</i> <u>Daniel recommended to keep this item open until the ASSA mail list has been implemented (ref 3.2.3).</u></p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<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. (11 Mar) Auke created top menu item, <u>Join Us</u> on website, which would lead visitor to start engagement with ASSA. Auke was unable to edit /create a new Form and called on <u>Christian</u> /SAAO IT to make changes requested. Christian informed that SAAO IT recommended to resolve the Join Us and Captcha issues, a plug-in Updraft is needed for migrating the website to a WordPress single-site set-up at the SAAO. Christian confirmed the plug in/migration will have no implications of the site ASSA website URL. Daniel reconfirmed the requirement is 100% necessary. No objections were received and the request for the expense of 190 USD for Updraft once off license fee will be finalised by the <u>FSC</u>.</i></p> <p>Jacques asked if the website will be able to track stats such as the visitor count to the site . <u>Christian</u> confirmed that he can arrange Google Analytics to be set up by SAAO IT.</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. (11 Mar) Daniel said it would be good to have the process implemented for next year's sign up starting in July. Council noted the <u>proposal for implementing an ASSA Member List</u> sent to Council on 5 April. Bloemfontein and Durban Centres have already informed support for the proposed process and Daniel reminded that at the recent Centres' meeting, Johannesburg Centres also supported it. Case informed that the Garden Route Centre members did not support the process and the Centre Chair will remain responsible for forwarding relevant emails to the Centre's members. <u>Lerika</u> to follow up with <u>Christian</u> (Cape Centre) and <u>Andre</u> (Country Membership). Implementation will now be progressed.</i></p> <p>3.3 Website An item outstanding since closure of the website review: reactivating the "Search" function (<u>Christian</u>) Christian asked for clarity of the requirement (<u>Lerika</u>).</p> <p>3.4 ASSA Cloud repository <i>(11 Mar) Centres to inform Chris de C that they've implemented a process to upload data to their cloud space. <u>Chris de C</u> informed he will check which Centres has accessed their space and will then start contacting the Centres in couple of weeks and will work with them to get all onboard with placing their data in the cloud.</i></p> <p>3.5 Mutual beneficial relationships Lerika noted Chris Middleton (a previous active ASSA Director and recipient of President's Award 2006) who relocated to Plettenberg Bay, started the Plettenburg Bay Astronomy Club in April.</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. (11 Mar) Daniel of press releas https://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/sa-shoots-stars-astro-tourism-strategy Daniel informed there is no further update, the process is still with Cabinet and at this point there is no funding available for the Astro Tourism strategy.</i></p>
4	<p>4. Outreach 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 (19 Feb '24) Daniel stressed Outreach is a key cornerstone of ASSA, an objective stated in ASSA's constitution. Daniel proposed the Flyer as an outreach tool. This will raise profile of ASSA, attract new members, and support his goal to grow the community. (11 Mar) 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. Council was asked to note the proposal "<u>ASSA Flyer Guidelines 240409</u>" sent to Council on 9 April. Daniel encouraged everyone to download the Flyer from the Outreach page https://assa.saao.ac.za/outreach/ and print and make it available at publics events.</i></p> <p>The guidelines suggested that an Astrophotography Challenge is held each year which will have the winning photo/s on the Flyer for the next year. Daniel proposed that if no objections are received the initiative should proceed. (<u>Martin</u>, , <u>Chris S</u>, <u>Lerika</u>)</p> <p>Jacques request of if the Flyer can be displayed on a Director's social media platform, was applauded with</p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<p>Yes! Let it Fly!</p> <p>4.2 Sky Guide as an Outreach tool <i>(11Mar) 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. Council Members to prepare some options of how they can use the Sky Guide in support of Outreach. AJ to share the latest Sky Guide pricing discounts for bulk purchases. Ian said he has some 2023 Sky Guides available and anyone interested may contact him. (All)</i> For everyone to understand the implications of purchasing the Sky Guide in bulk, the latest bulk purchase pricing from AJ is awaited (AJ)</p> <p>Initiatives of how to use the Flyer as an Outreach tool will be taken further via email (Lerika) – and suggested included in the Comms doc for safe keeping.</p> <p>4.3 Recent Outreach activities Jacques informed via ASSAVIP of the outreach event at the University of Free State in Bloemfontein on 27 March to the Dept of Physics to first-year students on the complex connection between the Solar Activities and the Earth's Climate. He noted between 30 to 40 students and lecturers attended and good feedback was received – the report is available on Solar Section page.</p> <p>Jacques also informed he held an online solar observation class with 2 organisations in India attended by 52 students. He is writing a report on that which will be shared with ASSAVIP group and also be posted on the website.</p> <p>Daniel reminded everyone to send outreach activities to Council and to place it on the Centre or ASSA website.</p> <p>4.4 ASSA GMN Outreach Project (https://globalmeteonetwork.org/outreach/) The project is listed on the ASSA Outreach page and the latest status available at: https://globalmeteonetwork.org/outreach/2024/04/10/south-african-cameras-installations/</p> <p>The ASSA GMN Outreach Project initiated by Tim early 2023, and well supported by Pierre, has reached its implementation phase at the Touwsrivier Primary School and Laingsburg High School. Tim confirmed the schools' IT departments are still to connect the Raspberry Pi computers to the internet before commissioning can take place. Thereafter Tim will arrange an online intro lecture with the 2 schools as well as 2 schools in Hermanus and Gansbaai, to explain meteors and the importance of and how to include the topic in the curriculum.</p> <p>The link to the 3 components of the Astronomy Module which Tim contributed to, must still be posted on the Outreach page (John)</p> <p>The Astronomy module includes: 1. Introduction to Astronomy, 2. Introduction to optics and telescopes, 3. Navigating the night sky and 4. Meteor science. Module 2-4 completed by Mary McIntyre and Tim are now online. Tim volunteered to write the Intro to Astronomy tutorial in order to complete the Astronomy Module. The modules on Computer Science and GMN will be completed by other authors.</p> <p>The refund request of costs incurred thus far by Tim and Pierre was approved by the FSC and to be processed by AJ.</p> <p>4.5 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/Anyberg when he could use it.</i> Wim informed the project is still in abeyance for a while.</p> <p>4.6 Star Partys event at SANBI KZN-NBG in PMB https://www.sanbi.org/event_cat/kwazulu-natal/ <i>(11 Mar) The National Botanical Garden (NBG) in PMB requested ASSA to support a Star Gazing Event in celebration of their 150 years anniversary.</i> Lerika reported that the main contact, Mbuso Zondi, at the NBG in PMB is working on a motivation for funding and it is suggested that ASSA awaits the outcome from Mbuso's effort.</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 Centres to explore the website for info and opportunities that ASSA can contribute to (refer outreach page) and contact Sally MacFarlane, responsible for Outreach.</i> <i>(11 Mar) 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.</i></p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<p><i>Daniel noted items to be included for an exhibition for African Institutes such as ASSA Poster, Sky Guides, Flyers. Council members to provide further ideas to Daniel in support of GA with associated cost detail.</i></p> <p>Daniel reported that of the >3000 abstracts, 2300 were accepted and registrations for those are in progress. https://astronomy2024.org/iau-general-assembly-2024-sets-new-benchmark-with-over-3000-abstract-submissions/</p> <p>Abstracts will soon be available. The Programme is not yet online yet. Register at https://astronomy2024.org/registration/</p> <p>Daniel encouraged everyone if they have time during that period, to catch up on what is happening. There is still discussion on promoting ASSA via a possible a stand with other Africa Institutes.</p> <p>Daniel reiterated that if anyone wants to get involved in the outreach activities planned in prep of the GA, e.g., attract a speaker or host star gazing event, they can let Sally MacFarlane know.</p>
6	<p>6. ASSA Publications</p> <p>6.1. SGAS</p> <p>SGAS 2024: Distribution</p> <p><i>(11 Mar) AJ and Andre offered to follow-up on outstanding orders/deliveries.</i></p> <p>ASSA Bloemfontein Sky Guides have yet to be delivered and AJ is following up with PRH/Booksite. (After meeting: Jacques offered to collect the SGAS at the courier in Bloemfontein on 3 May)</p> <p>6.2 Other ASSA publications <i>(Permanent item for noting)</i></p> <p><u>MNASSA:</u> Recent edition was published 4 March '24 <u>CAM Notes:</u> Recent edition was published 29 March '24 <u>Solar Bulletin:</u> Recent edition was published 14 April '24</p>
7	<p>7. Scholarships</p> <p>7. 1 2024 Bursaries</p> <p><i>(11 Mar) Applications for ASSA Scholarship and Cooke Scholarship closed 16 February. Amount R25 000 ea.</i></p> <p>Claire reported the selection process is still in progress. There were 10 applicants, 4 were disqualified for incomplete applications. One of 4 Scholarships Committee members has not responded, and Claire suggested she uses the Convenor's casting vote. Claire proposed ASSA need another 2 people on the Committee and that ASSA possibly approach younger people to create a more active group. She also asked if ASSA could find someone who can take over as Convenor. <u>Daniel</u> offered to look into possible volunteers for joining the Committee.</p> <p><u>AJ</u> to 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</p> <p><i>(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.</i></p> <p><i>(23 Oct '23) Daniel 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</i></p> <p><i>(11 Mar) AJ has emails of past Bursars which he can supply.</i></p> <p><u>Claire</u> offered to send the contact list of past bursars to <u>Lerika</u> to share.</p>
8	<p>8. Membership</p> <p>8. .1 Country Membership <i>(13 Honorary Membership (max 15)</i></p> <p>Nothing to report.</p> <p>8.2 Hon Members</p> <p><i>(11 Mar) Contact has been re-established with Hon Mem Mike Begbie</i></p> <p><u>AJ</u> to offer a proposal of possibly paying Mike Begbie (who relocated to the UK) a Honorary Member honorarium for 2023/24 or 2024/25</p>
9	<p>9. Governance</p> <p>9.1 Register ASSA for tax under a VDP (Voluntary Disclosure Program) Application</p> <p><i>(7 Jul) CTFS to be asked on process PBO registration and to provide a quotation</i></p> <p><i>(7 Feb) CTFS kindly offered to not charge ASSA unless cost involved becomes substantial.</i></p> <p><i>(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.</i></p> <p>CTFS provided an update saying there has been no response from SARS and the delay has caused the application forms to become outdated and some forms have to be redone. CTFS has obtained a face-to-face session with Randburg SARS for 4 June and would like the new forms as soon as possible. <u>Lerika</u> to facilitate CTFS' request with <u>Daniel, Chris S, Pierre, and AJ.</u></p>

	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
	<p>9.2 Call for new Directors <i>(11 Mar) 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. Ian informed that one of MNASSA's Ed Board members, Vanessa Mc Bride is unlikely to continue her role. 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 requirements. For clarity the ASSA/Sabinet contract, file name: SA ePublications Agreement 2018 Publishers Astronomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) signed was provided to the Editorial Board.</i></p> <p>Daniel asked for members to submit ideas of who can be contacted for these roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Volunteer for Director: Photometry and Spectroscopy —Replacement for Vanessa McBride on MNASSA Ed Board · Volunteer to join MNASSA Ed Board <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> is asked to consider and submit proposals/nominations for Honorary Members and Awards in prep of AGM as soon as possible.</p>
10	<p>10 Financial Matters 10.1 2023/4 Financial Budget <i>11 Mar) AJ provided a Budget for 23/24 – up to end June '24. ASSA could potentially use ~ R25,497 . Cost submitted thus far:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASSA Flyer design (paid) - Costs incurred by Tim and Pierre for the GMN Project (in progress) - Updraft license fee for website migration (in progress) <p><u>Council</u> to consider any other items for consideration / processing before end June.</p> <p>10.2 Other financial item No other costs before end June were noted.</p>
11	<p>11. General items No general item raised.</p>
12	<p>Closure Daniel closed the meeting at 17:45 Next meeting Monday 24 June, 5pm, via https://meet.jit.si/ASSAMeet</p> <p>AGM is now scheduled for 26 August at 5pm.</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: [11 March 2024](#)
In support of item 3.1: [11 April 2024](#)
In support of item 3.2.3: [ASSA members mail implementation v5.doc](#)
In support of item 4.1: [ASSA Flyer Guidelines 240409](#)

All documents in support of the meeting including the agenda are accessible in ASSA Cloud :
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CxafcuydydgbAYrPYILzpuI-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	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
	Annual refresh of the Communications document after the AGM

END