

ASSA AGM 2025 MINUTES

DATE	11 Aug 2025	TIME	17.00 to 17:58	VENUE	Virtual via Jitsi Meet
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Attendance

ASSA Council

John Lindsay-Smith	AGM Host, Johannesburg Centre Chair
Prof Matie Hoffman	Vice President (Incoming), ASSA Bloemfontein Centre Chair
Dr Daniel Cunnama	Vice President (Outgoing)
Derek Duckitt	President
Chris Stewart	Instrumentation Section Director
Dr Ian Glass	Council Member
Adv AJ Nel	Treasurer
Lerika Cross	Secretary

ASSA Appointees

Auke Slotegraaf	SGAS Editor
Chris de Coning	Archivist, ASSA History Director
Dave Blane	Double and Variable Stars Section Director
Martin Heigan	Astrophotography Section Director
Dr Christian Hettlage	SAAO IT Liaison, ASSA Web Manager
Dr Pierre de Villiers	Outreach Director
Jacques van Delft	Solar Section Director
Clyde Foster	Planetary Section Director
Colin Steyn	Observing Director
John Gill	Web Master

ASSA Centre and Country Members

Johan Smit	Pretoria Centre Chair
Willem Brazelle	Cape Centre Chair
Mike Hadlow	Durban Centre Chair
Analize Jooste	Country Member
Ab Vonkeman	Hermanus Centre
Liam McDermott	Country Member
Gerald de Beer	Membership unknown
Roven Bandara	Membership unknown
Mark Cherkowt	Membership unknown

Apologies (a) /Not present

Tim Cooper (a)	Comet, Asteroid, Meteor Section Director
Prof Peter Dunsby (a)	Council Member
José Campos (a)	Honorary Member
Maciej Soltynski (a)	Honorary Member
Coenie van der Merwe (a)	Country Member
M Fynn (a)	Membership unknown
Andre Bruton	Membership Secretary
Dr Claire Flanagan	Convenor of Scholarships

Note:

Links to supporting documentation are underlined.

The links are to the [AGM webpage](#) or the [ASSA AGM 2025 folder in the Cloud](#)

[Recording of the meeting](#) runs for a duration of 1:13:39.

Time taken per agenda item is noted below next to item heading.

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	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions
1	Welcome	<p>John Lindsay-Smith – Johannesburg Centre Chair - fulfilling the role of AGM Host, welcomed everyone in attendance and opened the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received were noted and are listed above under Attendance.</p>
2	Previous Minutes	<p>The minutes of the previous AGM meeting - held 26 August 2024 - were accepted. (Proposed by Chris Stewart, seconded by AJ Nel)</p>
3	Report on Council	<p>3. President's Report on Council (1:00 – 18:43)</p> <p>Derek extended his gratitude to Council, Section Directors, Centre committees, and all members whose voluntary dedication continues to drive the ASSA mission forward.</p> <p>Derek proceeded with the Report on Council.</p> <p>He said this year has seen significant progress across ASSA Sections, from groundbreaking observations to innovative outreach initiatives and proceeded to highlight key accomplishments.</p> <p>He reminded that all reports are available on the ASSA webpage and the AGM Folder in the ASSA Cloud.</p> <p>Looking ahead, he listed areas for focus in the coming ASSA year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scholarships: Improve applicant quality through targeted outreach to universities. 2. Engagement: Boost attendance at Cosmology sessions via broader promotion. 3. Double Stars: Encourage visual observations through member incentives. 4. Spectroscopy: Recruit leaders to revive amateur spectroscopy efforts. 5. Archives: Digitize more historical documents to preserve ASSA's legacy. <p>Derek said he is profoundly grateful for the collective effort that has made ASSA a beacon of astronomical excellence. He said the Sections' achievements - from promoting astronomy to inspiring future amateur and professional astronomers - underscore the Society's vitality.</p> <p>In conclusion, he said he is looking forward to his second year as President and pledged his continued support. Together, ASSA will keep pushing boundaries in education, observation, and outreach.</p> <p>No questions were raised and John thanked Derek for his report.</p>
4	Financials	<p>4. Financials Report 2024/25 (20:44 to 33.40)</p> <p>The Treasurer, AJ Nel, presented the Financial Report.</p> <p>He reported that it was not a bad year.</p> <p>ASSA financials have not been in the red for the last 2 years and he does not envisage going into the red thanks to the Glacier investments.</p> <p>Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Income derived from most sources remained stable. - Sanlam Glacier continued steady growth despite withdraws during the past two years. - Expenses in general on par with 2024, bar for non-payment of scholarships in 2024. - No major expenses are foreseen for the 2024 to 2025 financial year.

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		<p>Chris Stewart proposed the Financial Report was accepted, Pierre de Villiers seconded the proposal.</p> <p>Listed in the minutes for the record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Membership fees: Subs for 2025/26 – Entrance fee: R50; Membership July - June: R150 Subs for 2026/27 – Annual fee to increase: Entrance fee: R50; Membership July - June: R175 - Independent Compiler, Peter Carlisle of CTFS, to remain Independent Compiler for ASSA. Note: his Auditing business is independent of the normal bookkeeping and tax work done by CTF services for the ASSA.
5	ASSET	<p>5. ASSA Endowment Trust (34.20 – 35:58) Trustees: Ian Glass, Tim Cooper, Peter Cramb. Acting secretary: Peter Cramb.</p> <p>Tim Cooper submitted the <u>ASSET Trustees' Report</u> but was not able to attend the AGM. The Report was read out by Derek.</p> <p>Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Financial Statements for year ending February 2025 are being completed. - Chartac Advisory Services (Pty) Ltd., continue to act as independent compilers. - A decision whether Peter Cramb will continue as Acting Secretary will be taken in due course. - The Trust Deed of ASSET was amended to reflect the Trust's future direction, and a Deed of Amendment dated 26 November 2024 was filed by the Master of the Western Cape High Court; - Application has been made to SARS for registration as a Public Benefit Organisation. <p>The future directions of the Trust will be communicated in due course. No question was raised.</p>
6	Awards	<p>6. ASSA Awards (36.52 to 43.47) Derek proceeded with announcing the annual Awards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AJ Nel received Honorary Membership <i>in recognition for his long-term significant and meticulous legal and financial contributions to the ASSA</i> - Willie Koorts received a President's Award <i>for his many original, varied and invaluable long-term contributions in support of the Society's aims, notably Astronomy History research, outreach activities, aluminising services & MNASSA</i> - Chris Stewart received a Long Service Award <i>in appreciation for 49 years of ASSA membership and serving ASSA with great distinction and dedication, making many valuable contributions toward furthering ASSA Objectives</i> - Dave Rick received an Instrumentation Director's Award <i>in recognition of his decades-long support of the ATM class for having built 6 telescopes given to youths to promote interest in astronomy</i> - Angus Burns received a Comet, Asteroid & Meteor Section Director's Award <i>in cknowledgment of his imaging comets C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS) and C/2024</i>

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		<p>G3 (ATLAS) which is of a high standard and support the Section's objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leeuwenboschfontein Observatory Partners received an Outreach Director's Award <i>for conceptualising, constructing and diligently operating the LBF Observatory as a significant stimulus of Astronomy in the Western Cape</i> - John Gill received an Observing Certificate <i>in recognition of his work in studying and recording Lacaille's Catalogue of Southern Deep-Sky Objects</i> <p>Attendees applauded the award recipients. Derek concluded by again congratulating all awardees and said that the R800 honorarium associated with an award can be claimed by contacting the Treasurer, AJ Nel.</p>
7	Astrophoto Challenge 2025 Winners	<p>7. Astrophoto Challenge 2025 winners (44.11 – 53:26) John handed over to Martin Heigan, the Imaging Director, who proceeded to announce the winners of the 2025 Astrophoto Challenge.</p> <p>Introductory highlights noted by Martin at the start of his presentation of the results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He reiterated many thanks for the great prizes sponsored by Celestron via G&L Agencies; - And noted it was really great to see higher standard astrophotography compared to 2 years ago. The high quality imaging - using modest to very advanced equipment - is making it difficult to judge the images; - There were 14 contestants and 36 entries. <p>Martin proceeded to announce the winners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3rd prize: Celestron Skymaster 15x70 Binocular valued @ R6 600 Gerald de Beer for his image of NGC 6334 - 2nd prize: Celestron Starsense Explorer DX130 AZ valued @ R12 900 Mark Chertkow for his image of NGC 6727 - 1st prize: Celestron 91519 Advanced VX EQ Mount valued @ R38000 Peter Dunsby for his image of the Southern Pinwheel Galaxy <p>He then announced the surprise bonus to all entrants, offered by Rapid Studio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 free photographic print of their chosen competition image, printed on premium wetlab photo paper; - 35% discount on any additional RapidStudio products. <p>Martin closed his announcement saying that after the formal closure of the AGM there will be an informal session showing / discussion all the entries received.</p> <p>John extended his thanks to Martin and also to all participants.</p>
8	Office Bearers 2025/26	<p>8. ASSA Office Bearers 2025/26 (53:52 - 54:56) Derek presented the list of ASSA Council and Appointees for the new ASSA year. The list is also on the Council webpage. Feedback is still awaited from some Centres on incoming Centre Chairs and Committees.</p> <p>Derek extended a warm welcome to the new Council Member, Prof Peter Dunsby, who</p>

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		stepped into the role vacated by Case Rijdsdijk. In closure Derek thanked all the office bearers for their dedicated help to ASSA.
9	General	9. General (55:00 – 59:37) Willie Koorts asked about origin of Colin Steyn’s Sterland Observatory and said that there is a “ Sterland Stargazing ” in Sutherland and the name “sterland” could create confusion. Colin gave the background to the private observatory on his farm and noted the building took from May 2023 to July 2024, it is not a for profit entity and seeing “it is the perfect place to look at stars” decided to call it “Sterland”.
9	Closure	Derek extended sincere thanks to John Gill for posting all the AGM items on the webpage so promptly. In closing, from his side, he thanked John for hosting the AGM. John replied that he found hosting the AGM a very rewarding experience. He ended formal proceedings and reminded attendees of the informal session on the Astrophoto entrees after a short break. John thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 17:58
	Next Council meeting	The Council meetings for the year will be confirmed in due course.
	After the AGM	Astrophoto Challenge 2025 – slideshow and discussion (59: 38 – 1:13:40) Chris Stewart, Instrumentation Director, and Martin Heigan, Imaging Director, both Astrophoto Challenge Judges, led the comments on the entries received as presented in the slide show of all entries received.

Attachments to the minutes:

- Refer item 2: [ASSA AGM Minutes 240826 v2](#)
- Refer item 3: [Report on Council](#)
- Refer Item 4: [Financial Report](#)
- Refer Item 6: [ASSET Trustees’ Report](#)
- Refer Item 7: [2025 Astrophoto Challenge Results](#)
- Refer Item 8: [ASSA Council and Appointees](#)