

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of SAstroS held on

Thursday 17th June 2021 at 5.00 pm

In the Board Room at the Island Hall

Present: Annie Dachinger (AD) (Chairman/Starfleet Commander), Reg Guille (RG) (Secretary) Wendy Guille (WG), Jan Guy (JG), Susan Synnott (SS), Tony Ventress (AV), Jeremy La Trobe-Bateman (JTLB), Juergen Blankenagel (JB), Philipp Teutsch (PT), Anthony Beaumont (AB) and Aga Wajszczuk (AW)..

Apologies: Richard Axton, Jo Birch, Oliver Dachinger, Katie Hamon, David Synnott, Lucy Belfield, Shakira Christodoulou, Sue Daly and Puffin Tylour,

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 14th August 2020:
There were no corrections proposed to the Minutes, the Minutes were approved.

2. Matters Arising from the previous AGM Minutes. AD raised the issue of the entrance path to the observatory which having been partially repaired last year still left a section of track with deep ruts. It was noted that AB paid for the work last year. After some discussion it was agreed that JTLB would approach Kevin Adams to have the path levelled and topped with hard core. It was also agreed that we would ask Adrian Guille to extend his path cutting to include the first field's path, after Kevin Adams had done the levelling etc. SAstroS to pay for the further levelling.

3. Chairman's Address: Firstly, I would like to welcome you all and thank you for attending. It is good to be able to come together without masks, hand sanitiser and social distancing. How lucky we are in so many ways. Secondly may I congratulate Dr Richard Axton, our Deputy Chairman, on his award of the MBE in Her Majesty's birthday honours. Unfortunately, Richard is unable to join us today. This is a special year for the Society who ten years ago formed SAstroS on the suggestion of one of the inspectors who assessed Sark for the International Dark Skies Association award. Once the award was confirmed we got a handful of people together to form a new body to promote the wonders of Sark's night sky to fellow islanders and the rest of the world, in which we became one of a select number of areas to receive the accolade of Dark Sky Island/Community. We each paid the sum of £10 to legitimise our membership and from that meagre beginning we have made great strides. I am going to run those ten years past you very quickly.... There have been: 2 planetarium experiences, one in 2011 and one in 2015 (Sark Trek)- both enjoyed by young and old; 15 or more Starfest events with guest speakers giving talks as various as the geography of the Moon, discovering planets beyond our solar system, exploring Mars, the history of the telescope, is it possible that alien lifeforms exist, plus wonderful evenings learning the magic in the dark sky landscape with guest astronomers – including Professor Andrew Coates from the Mallard Space Sciences Laboratory , Professor Chris Lintott (Sky at Night presenter), Bob Bower FRAS, David Le Conte (ex-NASA and dear departed friend) - to name but a few. Jumble Sales, Quiz nights, Masked Balls, film shows, dinners and many other fundraising activities After some 2 years we had enough saved to afford a second-hand 8" Meade telescope which we dragged out of storage on good nights to entertain visitors and island residents with the desire to understand what they were viewing. After another 2.5 years we had sourced a family company who built observatories to their customers' requirements. The

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Sark Observatory was duly built in a field on one of the highest points of the island. At last the telescope had a permanent home. To date we have retained the original 'scope (Endeavour) but replaced it on the column with a better go-to Meade donated by Paul Fellows, who not only gave us the equipment but his expertise in getting it up and running. In the last few years there have been many visitors to the Observatory where our current guides – Richard Axton, Reg Guille, Josephine Birch – have entertained and educated and given up their evenings to ensure what, to some, is a dream come true. Enya the singer/composer released an album inspired by Sark (thereby bringing a few Japanese fans to the island) and this year Guernsey post have issued a set of 6 stamps commemorating Sark's Dark Skies (by photographers Sue Daly and Ben Fiori). Small plug here, the stamps are available to purchase at our Post Office/Gallery Stores. We even have a star named after us – SarkStarIDA in the Corona Borealis. We owe many thanks to our membership, to all those who supported us over the ten years with gifts, donations, and spare time, to the visitors from far and wide who have put money in our donation box at the observatory, to fellow astronomers and all the brilliant guests who have gladly come here to give talks, and especially to the inspirational sky of this wonderful island. And again, to you, who have come here today, we thank you and hope you will continue to be members – or consider joining if you are new.

JG offered to send the Chairman's address to the media, suitably adapted. This offer was accepted.

4. Secretary's Report: Since our AGM in August last year, we have been coping with lock downs and some poor viewing weather. However, we did plan a small Event for the 18th & 19th September. On the Saturday to look for our named star in the Corona Borealis, we had a successful viewing. Then on the Sunday we set up the Meade with a solar filter to observe the sun for a couple of hours in the morning and again in the afternoon.

During the period after the AGM until 31 December Richard, Jo and I between us took 31 observatory visits, there were no visits between 1 Jan and 2 April then from that date to now we have taken a further 15 visits. In total we took 236 stargazers which come out to an average of 5 per visit.

This year the society had to register with the Data Protection Commissioner which I did 27th January, this now must be done on an annual basis. As we are a Not-for-Profit Organisation (NPO) there is no fee.. The observatory insurance was paid and there was no increase from last years' premium.

Thanks to Annie the Facebook aspect of our website seems to have regular posts and some of the photographs posted are superb, thank you for that Annie. Our web page is run by John Hunt, at no cost to us, and it continues to be available for articles from members.

5. Treasurer's Report and approval of the Accounts: The report was presented by RG in the absence of JB. The email of JB read - I'm afraid I'm struggling to use the accounting system right now to make an annual report, (can't find a comfortable way to do it) BUT I have a statement! As soon as I can, I will circulate a report. I'm really sorry.

On 7th June, the bank balance was £5,997.47

We have outstanding bills for:

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£37 John Hunt for printing

£46 Jo Birch for household delivery

£57.48 Adrian Guille for mowing

The observatory has taken £238 since January and there was a generous donation from a new member (Michael Steindler) of £110. There may be some in the box, but I can't get there yet.

We also have 3 new members, Michael Steindler, Jurgen Blankenagel and Sarah Smith.

Have a good meeting and look forward to any minutes.

RG asked that as accounts had not been able to be presented, due to the Treasurer being indisposed, he proposed that the accounts be presented to the Committee for approval. This was agreed to by those present. JB was wished a speedy recovery from her broken ankle.

The new members at the meeting were also welcomed, Philipp Teutsch, Juergen Blankenagel, Anthony Beaumont and Aga Wajszczuk.

6. AOB:

a. **10th Anniversary Celebrations.** AD proposed that a birthday style celebration be organized for a Saturday in September. This idea was generally supported. SS suggested that an invitation be extended to our fellow societies in Guernsey and Alderney, this was agreed to. It was agreed to set up a 'birthday party group' of AD, RG, JG, AV and PT who would meet on Wednesday 30th June at the hall to work up plans. AD said that she had spoken with DJ Silver Fox to run the music and that the event would take place in and around the hall. Likely dates for the party were suggested by JG as 13 or 17 September which would give good visibility for any stargazing associated with the party.

b. **IDA Report for 2021.** In the absence of JB it was agreed that the annual report would be compiled and JB was requested to write the report again. RG said that the recent Dark Skies mailshot was aimed at this years' report.

c. **Recruiting new members.** Efforts should continue to attract new members but this year there had been an encouraging influx of new members.

The meeting closed at 5.50 pm.



After Notes: After the meeting closed but before members left RG showed the Junior Membership Card, an initiative from the 2020 AGM, and said that cards had been presented to some of the Sark school children this year and that this would continue.

Prior to the meeting commencing AD had shown the First Day Cover "Dark Sky" Stamps that had been issued by Guernsey Post and featured three photographs of Sue Daly's work.

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