

# Croydon Astronomical Society

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Friday 8th May 2009

### 1. Attendance Record

The members present for the AGM 2009/10 is listed in the attendance register, and also noted below:

Committee members: Paul Harper, Ray Bailey, Mike Ross, William Bottaci, Alan Drummond.

Apologies: Steve Sumner.

CAS members: Roy Aldridge, Peter Brown, Dave Burfoot, Peter Clarke, Roger Coole, Gary Jones, Konrad Malin-Smith, Stephen Morris, Norman Peachman, Kevin Phillips, Joy Tapping, Bernard Winchester.

### 2. Minutes and Reports

Copies of the minutes and reports were given to all attendees.

### 3. Approval of the minutes of the AGM on 8th May 2008

The minutes were read and approved. Acceptance proposed by Konrad Malin-Smith, and seconded by Roy Aldridge.

### 4. Treasurer's Report

Mike Ross presented the accounts for the period 2008/09, which shows that donations fell from 2008 to 2009, but there were two significant increases; government Gift Aid of £843.98, and a generous donation from Barry Cheasley of £500 (which was used to purchase a projector for the clubhouse at the Kenley observatory). Thanks was given to Paul Harper for arranging the many visits to Kenley observatory.

Various questions were asked, with a summary below:

Bernard Winchester queried the style of the accounts, with regards to differentiating between Income and Capital items. The Chairman explained that the Charity Commission rules state charities receiving less than £10,000 do not need to show these separately.

Norman Peachman enquired as to whether the society would benefit school children attending the regular meetings at the Royal Russell School. The Chairman explained that there are complications with Health & Safety regulations and possibly with Child Protection Laws.

Little or no interest is paid by banks to current accounts, only to deposit accounts; consequently Mike Ross suggested monitoring the amount of money held in the current account and move whatever can be regarded as surplus into the deposit account.

Regarding the RRS meetings, the recording of data to show any possible correlation of income to the presented talk has been setup by the membership secretary.

Roy Easto audited the financial accounts.

### 5. Approval of the Accounts

Approval was proposed by Roger Coole and seconded by John Murrell.

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for all his hard work over the last 11 years.

## **6. Observatory Report**

Steve Sumner was not able to be present this evening, so his report was read by the Chairman, Paul Harper, who presented his report of work carried out during the year. Various questions were asked, with a summary below:

The dome shutters do not perform as they used to and are being looked at;

The clubhouse needs a new door;

The clubhouse roof felt was replaced a year ago by David Burfoot;

A vote of thanks was proposed for both Steve Sumner and David Burfoot for all their work in the last year, and particularly for Steve for the Health & Safety report and compiling the list of defects.

## **7. Group Visits Report**

The Chairman, Paul Harper, read out his report for the work carried out on group visits during the year. He thanked the volunteers who attended and made these visits possible, stating that four volunteers were required for each visit. Paul was acknowledged and thanked for the record number of visitors.

## **8. Astronomer's Report**

Ray Bailey presented only a very brief report as he felt that the report is best compiled after the Exhibition meeting, when he can see what the members have produced.

Despite the poor summer there were some notable observations, such as comets McNaught and Lulin. For the Lunarwatch on the 28th March the weather cleared and 25 non-members turned up as well as the Croydon Guardian newspaper photographer, and a film was also shown in the clubhouse.

## **9. Chairman's report**

Paul Harper addressed the meeting outlining the work carried out by himself and the committee. He resurrected the Altair newsletter, which is being published every month (with Vivienne Marshall now taking over the editorship).

In particular he thanked Mike Ross for his 11 years as treasurer.

Paul is standing down as chairman this year so that he can replace Mike Ross as treasurer.

A vote of thanks was proposed for Paul for all his work in the last year (proposed by Mike Ross and seconded by Kevin Phillips).

## **10. Membership Report**

William Bottaci read out the membership details, the summary of which is:

55 signed up members to date, and 3 life members;

Retention was highlighted as important, as many visitors only attend for one or two meetings.

## **11. Statement on the members of the committee 2009/10**

Paul Harper read out the statements. Various questions were asked, with a summary below:

- At least five people are required for a quorum;

- As the constitution states that motions for the AGM have to be submitted in writing, supported by two other members, at least 2 weeks in advance of the AGM, the committee should mention if any have been received;
- An advantage of the £15 per society annual membership is that we get a discount on future events, such as Nightlife;
- The next SAGAS meeting, SAGAS 2009 Nightlife, is in Portsmouth on Saturday 4th July.
- A speaker list is with the FAS, which is not publicised;
- A speaker list is being prepared by SAGAS, which will help all societies plan their schedule of talks.

## **12. Appointment of Auditors for 2009/10**

Roy Easto was proposed by Konrad Malin-Smith and seconded by Bernard Winchester.

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End of AGM

## Open Forum

**There were two themes of discussion, and these are grouped below.**

### Membership retention

John Murrell: What plans are there to increase membership?

Norman Peachman: Increasing retention, by being friendlier to visitors.

Kevin Phillips: Making a welcome pack for visitors.

Joy Tapping: Make a welcome card and also hand out the current programme of talks.

Paul Harper: Is aware that Guildford AS has some ideas and he will liaise with them, particularly for a Chairman's introductory letter.

Konrad Malin-Smith: If science subjects are not well taught in schools then there will be a corresponding decrease of science based interest.

John Murrell: Has noticed that better advertised and detailed lectures and talks have been better attended.

Ray Bailey: It may be worthwhile to pay extra for some high profile speakers occasionally, to attract a greater number of visitors, maybe at least once a year, and early on in the year. Konrad Malin-Smith suggests Roger O'Brien.

Paul Harper: It is unfortunate that astronomical societies in the London area tend more towards 'armchair' astronomy, on account of the light pollution, which can affect visits and attendance at Kenley Observatory.

Ray Bailey: Regarding telescope ownership, notices that the present company at this AGM have telescopes, whereas they are lesser represented by the other members.

Paul Harper: It would be a good idea, as shown feasible by other astronomical societies, to have 'walk-ins' to a set up observation site, either in a park or even by a wide street or pedestrian only area, where the public can view some of the brighter objects through telescopes. This is even possible in daylight for the Sun.

Paul Harper: A form of 'Outreach' would extend interests to the public.

Mike Ross: Arrange to have one of our regular meetings at Braithwaite Hall, current location of Café Scientifique, to attract a wider audience.

Bernard Winchester: With his involvement in the Croydon branch of Café Scientifique, will be able to help advertise to that membership (and vice versa).

Joy Tapping: Regarding membership finance, could we consider an obligatory membership fee, payable at the beginning of the year, for the whole year? (This was considered at previous AGM's, would require a change in the constitution, and has so far deemed not to offer any advantage).

William Bottaci: Membership; increasing the number of members, and then holding on to these by converting these visitors to members. Consequently a membership pack should be produced, idea by Kevin Phillips, (consisting of: Introductory letter; Maps of locations, of RRS and Kenley; Lecture programme; A5 flyer; Membership form; Committee people, names and photo, Web site link). William and Kevin to liaise to produce.

William also suggests to the rest of the committee that they wear their identifying name badges, so the visitors know who to approach for information.

**Maintenance at Kenley Observatory**

Stephen Morris: What is the maintenance required at Kenley and the schedule for completing these?

Dave Burfoot - who performs much of the work - responded: The dome shutter doors cant, especially during damp weather, and can be stiff to open and close. Partly alleviated by pushing and pulling about half way up the shutters, but this is awkward. It is likely that the runners need lubricating, and an inspection is a good idea to see if there is any damage or wear and tear. Clubhouse door; does not close properly. Required not just for security but to keep the warm air in and prevent light shining out. Alan Treays dome building; dampness is creeping upwards into the observatory, which is also detrimental to the optics and metal work. Norman Peachman is in the trade and offers to have a look at the building.

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End of Open Forum