

Croydon Astronomical Society

Amounts in £

Income and Expenditure for

Year to 31-Mar-26

Year to 31-Mar-25

<u>Income</u>	<u>Notes</u>		
Donations and Legacies	1	2,273	3,755
CAF Donate		436	1,305
Grey Box (cash + contactless)		1,294	1,027
Observatory (cash + contactless)		300	636
Other Donations and Legacies		-	50
Gift Aid and Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme		243	737
Charitable Activities	2	631	860
Group Visit Donations		488	757
External Talk Donations		-	-
Refreshments		143	103
Other		-	-
Investment Income		112	124
Bank Interest		112	124
Other Income		-	-
Total Income		3,016	4,738
Expenditure			
Talks			
Room Hire	3	(1,122)	(972)
Speakers' Expenses		(275)	(139)
Cost of Refreshments		(74)	(52)
Computer and technology		-	(548)
Other		-	-
		<u>(1,471)</u>	<u>(1,711)</u>
Kenley Observatory Maintenance & Costs			
Observatory Buildings		(19)	(20)
Observatory Equipment	4	(614)	-
Electricity	5	(173)	(210)
Non-Domestic Rates	6	(94)	(75)
Other		(30)	-
		<u>(930)</u>	<u>(305)</u>
Other costs			
Website, Email & Videoconferencing	7	(66)	(283)
Public and Products Liability Insurance	8	(113)	(151)
Membership Fees - FAS & SAGAS		(75)	(15)
Bank Charges	9	(32)	(70)
Miscellaneous		-	-
		<u>(286)</u>	<u>(519)</u>
Total Expenditure		(2,687)	(2,535)
Surplus / (Deficit) of Income over Expenditure		330	2,203
Accumulated Fund as at		31-Mar-26	31-Mar-25
Carried Forward	10	<u>13,322</u>	<u>12,992</u>
Represented by:			
Cash at Bank and in Hand		13,347	13,017
Deduct: Deposits for Keys to Observatory		(25)	(25)
Accumulated Fund		<u>13,322</u>	<u>12,992</u>

NB:- Columns may not add due to rounding.



CROYDON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31st MARCH 2026

1. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

REGISTRATION NUMBER:	1187803
LEGAL FORM:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) formed under the Charities Act 2011 (the "Act").
CHARITY TRUSTEES (COMMITTEE):	8 as at the date of this report (see section 2).
GOVERNING DOCUMENT:	Constitution dated 7th Feb 2020 as amended on 5th June 2021.
OBJECTS:	<p>To advance education in the science of astronomy and related subjects for the public benefit in Croydon and the surrounding area by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) encouraging a popular interest in astronomy and allied subjects;b) helping beginners, irrespective of their age, to acquire a knowledge of astronomy and allied subjects; andc) providing facilities for practical work and active participation in astronomical observation.
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:	68 as of 31st March 2026 (for the membership year to 31 st August 2026).
BANKER:	NatWest / Charities Aid Foundation / SumUp.
WEBSITE:	https://croydonastro.org.uk

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

The society meets for talks about astronomy (and related subjects) approximately every two weeks during school term time at a venue located close to (and with good transport links to) central Croydon.

As an ancillary activity, the society maintains the self-built Norman Fisher Observatory in a relatively dark sky location on Kenley historic aerodrome. The observatory is primarily used for outreach and is open to the public every Saturday evening from September to April provided the sky is clear and sufficient society volunteers are available. For larger scale public events (such as watching the Perseids meteor shower) the society uses the public perimeter track around Kenley airfield. Information about such outreach events is posted on the society's Facebook page and website. Visiting groups (youth organisations, schools, U3A etc) are welcomed by prior arrangement at the observatory on weekday evenings for a nominal minimum donation.

The observatory is also available for use by members of the society (with appropriate training). However, members who are interested in observing or astrophotography generally prefer to use their own equipment at home.

The croydonastro Forum (hosted on Google Groups) has been set up by members of the society to allow current and previous members to discuss various aspects of astronomy and astrophotography. It should be noted that a few members of the Forum have never been a member of the Society.

The society is unusual amongst astronomical societies in that it does not charge a membership fee, nor a fee to attend talks or to attend a public opening of the observatory. The society is funded by donations from its members and visitors.

The society is a member of the Federation of Astronomical Societies (FAS) and the Southern Area Group of Astronomical Societies (SAGAS).

Public Benefit

Committee members confirm that they have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

1 Activities During the Financial Year

Talks Programme

During the financial year ended 31st March 2026 the public talks took place on Friday evenings at Shirley Methodist Church.

During the year the society held 20 meetings (including the Annual General Meeting). Average attendance was 22.9 persons (up from 20.8 the year before).

Outreach at the Norman Fisher Observatory and Kenley airfield

After a promising start in September we found that the weather prevented us from opening the observatory at all for over three months. But when we were able to open we had a good number of visitors (though thankfully not a totally unmanageable number) and we received many warm messages on Facebook and Google showing appreciation. For example, one visitor wrote:

We attended the Saturday night stargazing event hosted by the Croydon Astronomical Society and had a memorable experience. The volunteers were incredibly kind and welcoming, even to us as first-time visitors with our family. Thank you so much.

We had the chance to observe the Andromeda Galaxy, Saturn, and the moon just as it was rising. They also showed us fascinating slides of various galaxies in the universe, which added an educational aspect to the evening.

While the beautiful night sky was a highlight, it was the warmth of the volunteers that made the experience special and heartwarming. Highly recommended for anyone interested in astronomy or simply looking for a peaceful and inspiring evening under the stars.

And another wrote:

Really friendly and welcoming organisers. Their passion for astronomy is infectious. They're very knowledgeable and can guide those who are beginners but also engage those who know more in deeper conversation. Were kid-friendly too, we will definitely be returning as my husband has joined their membership

We were very grateful that more Society members gave up their Saturday evenings to join us in managing these openings.

We had a dedicated solar observing day in August and we opened for Open House festival. We also hosted a meteor watch on the airfield for the Perseid meteor shower.

Our pre-booked group visits continued where we showed a group of visitors (often children but sometime adult groups) around the observatory and let the visitors use our telescope (weather permitting). If we are unable to demonstrate practical observing these groups are given a presentation on celestial objects that we can see. These group visits can be adapted to the particular needs of visiting group, for example for scouting badges or sixth form studies. Unlike our Saturday public openings, a good number of these visits

did coincide with clear skies. As we charge a nominal fee for these visits we are grateful for the income they generated.

2. COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEERS

The society's Committee can have up to ten charity trustees.

- All Committee members (apart from the offices of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) retire at every AGM.
- Those holding the offices of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are required to retire at every second AGM, with the Chair and Treasurer retiring in the same year and the Secretary in the alternate year.
- Retiring trustees are immediately eligible for re-election.

Committee Members during the period 1st April 2025 to the date of this Trustees' Report

Name	Role as at the date of this report	Committee as at 1 st April 2024	New Joiners - Date Joined Committee	Date Left Committee	Committee as at the date of this report
Stefan Blakemore	Chair & Membership Secretary	•			•
Graham Cluer	Secretary & Outreach	•			•
Roy Easto	Treasurer & Vice Chair		May 25		•
Tony Roberts	Programme secretary	•			•
Christopher Entwistle		•			•
Laura Quayle		•			•
Carolyn Raishbrook		•			•
Paul Stenning		•			•
Colin Weightman		•		May 25	
TOTAL		10		2	8

No charity trustee was paid during the period (other than for out-of-pocket expenses).

3 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Basis of Accounting

- The society has elected to prepare accounts on a 'receipts and payments' basis.
- The 'Accumulated Fund' represents the cash at bank and in-hand adjusted for observatory key deposit liabilities and for significant accruals or prepayments (if any).

Accounts Examiner

- It is our practice to ask a member of the society (the 'CAS Accounts Examiner') to examine the society's accounting records and confirm to the Committee that nothing has come to their attention that would cause them to believe in any material respect that accounting records were not kept in accordance with Section 130 of the Act, or that the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

Financial Review

We present on page 6 income and expenditure accounts for the year to 31st March 2026:

- During the period the society received income of £3,016 and incurred £2,687 in expenditure, giving an overall surplus of £330.
- As of 31st March 2025, the Accumulated Fund stood at £13,322 (after deduction of observatory key deposits of £25 which are repayable by the society on the return of the keys).
- Explanatory notes to the accounts are set out on pages 7-9.

This Trustees' Report and Accounts was approved by Committee on 12th May 2026

Signed:

Stefan Blakemore, Chair

Roy Easto, Treasurer

Notes to the accounts

Note 1 – Donations and Legacies Income

Donations and legacies income is, in substance, a gift made to the society on a voluntary basis, and which does not provide any significant benefit to the donor in return for their payment other than the knowledge that the society must use the gift to further its purposes.

This includes online donations made through the CAF Donate system (a system set up by Charities Aid Foundation to process donations subject to Gift Aid), 'Grey Box' cash and contactless donations at the society's talks, and the observatory cash boxes and contactless donations.

This income category also includes tax refunds from HMRC under the Gift Aid and Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS).

An extra amount of roughly £350 for donations made in this year was claimed on the next financial year.

Note 2 – Charitable Activities Income

Charitable activities income is earned from the supply of goods or services under contractual arrangements for the charitable purposes of the charity.

This includes group visits to the observatory where the society sets a minimum required donation amount and also donations for talks given externally (if any).

Also included in this category is income earned from refreshments provided at the society's meetings.

Note 3 – Room hire for meetings

We pay £51 for the hire of the hall for each meeting so we hope to raise at least this amount after other expenses.

Note 4 – Observatory Equipment

This year we bought a new pillar for the Alan Treayes dome at a cost of £200 which gives more room for working around the telescope. We also bought a SkyWatcher Solar Quest tracking mount for £364 and 400 pairs of solar glasses for use in eclipses or solar days (£50).

Note 5 – Electricity

We switched to a tariff with no standing charge in November which will save us over a hundred pounds a year.

Note 6 – Non-Domestic Rates – Norman Fisher Observatory (NFO)

The Non-Domestic Rating Act 2023 (NDRA) introduced a new duty to ratepayers to provide the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) with information about themselves and their business, and also about their property to allow the VOA to establish an accurate rateable value.

In May 2024 the rateable value of the NFO was re-assessed at £1,725.

At a rateable value of £1,725 the annual business rates cost for the year to 31st March 2026 would have been £172 (0.499 small business rates multiplier less charitable relief of 80%). However transitional arrangements to moderate the speed of any increase in non-domestic rates have reduced the amount payable for the year to £94.

The NDRA has also reduced the period between valuations to three years (previously five), and so the next revaluation of the NFO took place in April 2026 and the rateable value has been increased to £1,925.

Note 7 – Website, Email and Video Conferencing

This year the expense is just for Microsoft licenses. The website (Wix) is paid up to November 2027, the society's internet domain name *croydonastro.org.uk* will need payment in October 2026.

Note 8 – Insurance

The society has put in place £10 million public liability insurance (PLI) through the Federation of Astronomy Societies (FAS) Insurance scheme.

Committee has concluded that it is not possible to obtain insurance on the NFO buildings or contents at the NFO at an affordable cost.

Note 9 – Bank Charges

Bank charges mainly relate to the costs of using the CAF Donate system.

Note 10 – Accumulated Fund / Reserves Policy

Committee is required to retain only those cash reserves that are appropriate to the society's needs and ambitions. However, in reviewing the amount of the reserves to be retained, Committee's aim is to ensure

the society will be able to continue to fulfil its charitable objectives even if there is a temporary shortfall in donation income or if unexpected expenditure arises.

A significant item of expense (and Committee time) is the ongoing maintenance of the self-built Norman Fisher Observatory. The observatory is located within a small fenced-in site within the RAF Kenley historic aerodrome with access provided by the London Loop long distance footpath which runs directly through the society's land. The observatory consists of a brick-built building with a fibreglass dome which was constructed in 1979 to house the society's then self-built 18-inch telescope, and a substantial self-built felt-roofed wooden clubhouse which was constructed and then extended in the 1990s. Additionally, there is a small commercially made fibreglass dome (the Alan Treayes Dome) which is believed to be of a similar date to the clubhouse.

The site is in an elevated and exposed position. The buildings are likely to require substantial future maintenance.

Although the observatory and clubhouse were originally self-built, some items of ongoing building maintenance may need to be done professionally. The substantial costs of professional maintenance, the limited number of members who now use the facilities, and the shortage of volunteers to run outreach events at the Observatory need to be balanced against the society's other priorities, its limited income and Committee time. At some stage Committee may conclude that it is appropriate to reduce the size of the observatory facilities, and funds will be required to make this adjustment.