

FLAMSTEED ASTRONOMY SOCIETY

NOTES FROM A COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7TH MARCH AT 7.15 P.M. IN THE ASHBURNHAM ARMS

Present: Eddie Yeadon (Chairman), Mike Dryland, David Barnewell, Ian McDowell and Jane Bendall

Apologies: Lin Potter, Nicki Bearcroft and Pat Wainwright

Matters arising: Mike's suggestion of having telescopes in the courtyard for the public to use during the Evening with the Stars events had not been acted upon, apart from an email to Tony Sizer. It was agreed that someone from the observing group might be prepared to take the lead and canvas for volunteers. Ian will discuss this with David Waugh and if a suitable person is found we will action this on 21st and 22nd March. Many of our members have not had an opportunity to see the Flamsteed telescope yet.

Jane to issue another email about the viewing evenings on 21 and 22nd of this month, stressing that it is March not April.

FAS Constitution

Eddie tabled the following proposed committee structure to be incorporated into the new constitution. After discussion it was agreed that the committee would consist of six elected members who would between them undertake the following roles.

Chairman Acts as the embodiment of the Society for all external matters. He/she will take the Chair at all meeting of the Society and the Committee.

Deputy Chairman Assumes the duties of the Chairman at all meeting of the Committee and the Society, when the Chairman is unable to attend.

Programme Secretary Sets up the programme of lectures and events, covering all outside correspondence as agreed by the Committee.

Committee Secretary Takes Minutes and issues notices for Committee meetings and General meetings

Social Organiser Makes all arrangements for catering/refreshments at monthly meetings and social events.

Publicity Secretary Looks after the Society web site and all Internet matters.

A representative of the Association, nominated by the Council of the Association.

Administration Assistant: This is a joint appointment between FAS and NMM.

This person will be responsible for all interface matters with Friends and the NMM. Such as booking rooms, arrangements for Stewarding, use of museum facilities etc. if necessary mailing notices and correspondence with Members, covering the roles of Membership Secretary and Treasurer.

It was further agreed that these are separate roles but don't have to be occupied by separate people. At present, Jane is covering the roles of Programme Secretary, Committee Secretary, Social Organiser and Society/Museum Nominee.

The Administrative Assistant is a requirement by Polly, and she must be involved in drawing up the job specification as well as the appointment procedures. This position does not have to be a member of FAS and need not necessarily have voting rights on the Committee. That said, the Committee hoped that the person would be strongly encouraged to attend Committee meetings.

It was agreed to keep the present arrangement whereby the committee elects the chairperson from amongst committee members.

Eddie will discuss our proposals with Polly Lerner shortly.

Financial situation and FAS Donations

FAS will have a surplus of at least £1,784 at the end of March. The Committee have already agreed to donate £1,000 to the Universal Appeal. This intention was announced during the AGM in October.

Several members have been very interested in upgrading and improving the performance of the 28" telescope. It was agreed, after prolonged discussion, that the first step would be to arrange a meeting with Gloria Clifton, Robert Massey and any other member of staff Gloria nominates, to discuss what, if anything, they would like to acquire for the telescope. Depending on costs, we might be in a position to go ahead with a donation in the autumn or to earmark money for major improvements in the future. It is difficult to make any decisions until we know exactly what ROG staff are interested in doing, but we will table the many, various and helpful suggestions made by our members.

David Barnewell will draw up criteria, setting out parameters for the use of any FAS donations for the telescope.

Keith Jones has devised a plan for a radio telescope, which could be inexpensive and interesting to build. The committee were pleased to support the idea with the proviso that someone must be prepared to organise a group and decide where to build the telescope and where to store it when it is completed. In other words an interested FAS member would have to be prepared to take the lead, as the committee is fully committed already. FAS funds would be available for components etc.

Programming: Jane tabled the programme for next autumn and will continue planning, keeping the committee informed by email throughout.
Star Lecture 2006: Jane will try Sir Martin Rees, Adam Hart Davies or Lisa Jardine.

Training on 28" telescope: Several people had been to both Monday afternoon sessions with Robert Massey and as a result Mike Iveson and Peter Kitcherside have volunteered to help Graham Dolan with public viewing during science week Robert has been asked for weekend dates so he can start training those members who cannot come on weekdays. At least two training sessions are necessary to fully train volunteers.

Star Lecture: Arrangements in hand: Lin Potter and Eddie Yeadon will entertain Professor Brown and his guest at the Novotel, meeting there at 5.30 p.m. Nicki and Chris Munro will deal with the e-tickets and member's new badges and Jane will oversee refreshments. Well over 70 tickets have been either allocated or sold.

Publicity: The committee congratulated Mike for his determination and tenacity in finally getting approval for his poster design, which now meets the criteria set out by the museum. . Polly Lerner had been most helpful as an intermediary throughout. Mike has now put up a poster in the telescope dome. It was suggested that we put a few leaflets into local libraries and other suitable sites.

No new members had been recruited despite volunteer's best efforts at Astrofest. Membership stands at 72 and there are very few enquiries at present.

It was agreed to revisit this at our next meeting and arrange publicity aimed at a local audience through such publications as The Guide, Meridian and News Shopper, ready for next autumn.

Flamsteed Telescope: Mike now has the telescope. David Barnewell, David Woodford and Mike will get together to align the finder and collimate the telescope. It was agreed to put a hard copy of the manual in the telescope box.

Coronado telescope: There is a full rota of volunteers for every day of science week, although the long-range weather forecast is very patchy.

Eddie reported that there are 20 dry cells in the box as a back up for the battery. He has modified the telescope's clutch and will install it on Friday afternoon.

Horizons: To mark "Einstein year" Eddie will write an article about the life and work of Einstein for the next edition. As there is nothing "in the bag" David volunteered to write an article about the Cassini mission to Saturn.

Any Other Business

- a. **Observing sites:** Ian reported that, very disappointingly, the proposed dark field site at Red Libberts golf club had fallen through. The observing group are scouring the area round Kemsing for suitable sites, Peter Kitcherside is investigating other golf courses in North Kent.

Date of Next Meeting:

Probably June. To be arranged nearer the time.

