

FLAMSTEED ASTRONOMY SOCIETY

Notes from a Committee Meeting held on Thursday 22nd November 2007 at Young Education Services, Greenwich at 7.15 p.m.

Present: Lin Potter (Chair), Mike Dryland, Mark Duwe, Roger Geeson, Peter Kitcherside, Pat Wainwright and Jane Bendall,

Apologies: There were no apologies for absence

3. Welcome to new committee members.

Lin welcomed Roger Geeson and Mark Duwe to the committee and thanked them for standing for office.

4. Matters arising from the committee meeting of 1st October 2007

Lin extended the committee's thanks to Mike Dryland for organizing and running such a successful Book Mart at the November meeting. The whole evening was very enjoyable and we had a good turn out of over 60 members. Tony Sizer had very generously donated the proceeds of his books to the society and Lin will thank him at the December meeting.

5. Committee roles:

Chairperson and Vice Chairperson: Lin Potter and Mike were unanimously re-elected as Chair and Vice Chair for another year. Lin suggested that from now on they would work closely in tandem, taking it in turns to present and front up meetings etc.

Volunteer co-coordinator: Pat has kindly agreed to move into this vacant slot from her role as viewing coordinator.

Equipment custodian: Roger Geeson has volunteered for this role.

Publicity and Website manager: Mike Dryland has agreed to continue this task for another year.

Programme secretary, Committee Secretary, Programme Secretary, Social organizer, at present this role will continue to be done by Jane. She also acts as the interface with the museum, with a great deal of input from Mike and Lin.

Observing coordinator: Mark Duwe agreed to undertake some limited responsibility for this difficult role.

5a. **Volunteer coordinator role:** the system whereby 24 to 48 hours notice is given depending on a good weather forecast for Solar viewing sessions is working well. The programme runs through out the year, probably peaking during Science Week in March. Roger agreed to back up Pat as if a session is called as it does imply a committee member's/ designated person's presence. Roger also agreed to weather-watch using metcheck, space weather etc. and to check the sun's activity as well as clear skies.

Rob Willett has volunteered to make a notice board for the solar viewing sessions.

5b. **Observing:** There are problems with this programme: If an event is arranged too long in advance we do not know whether the skies will be clear, if we wait until the last minute most people already have other commitments.

There are three possible sites and after much discussion it was decided:

Blackheath site: Convenient for travel and parking. Deep space viewing not possible because of sky glow, but still good for moon, planets, bright objects etc. It was decided to use Blackheath for ad hoc viewing in particular, and also to up-grade the Hare & Billet pub nights that we already schedule. Mark Duwe volunteered to lead this initiative and to organize a small group of volunteers to assist on a rota basis. People are sometimes reluctant to come forward as they feel that they are not knowledgeable enough. This would satisfy the undoubted demand for general observing sessions – giving 48 hours notice – depending on advanced weather forecasts- people to reply if they plan to attend.

Romney: we would revert to longer term commitment to dates with a decision being made in the late afternoon whether the session would go ahead or not.

Hazelwood: For special astronomical events such as meteor showers. It is necessary to give the owner some warning and there are problems with parking and carrying telescopes to the field. Jane will assist with these special dates. It can be a very successful venue with forward planning.

Mark volunteered to compile an **astronomical viewing calendar** throughout the year which could be posted on the website as an advance warning to members. He would program for automatic emails to be sent out to remind and alert people to viewing possibilities. Even if members decide not to join a formal FAS viewing session they could chose to look at the sky from their own back gardens etc.

6. **Events:**

Christmas party: It was agreed that food would come from M&S, which Jane would order in advance. Approximate timetable: 6.30 – 7.30: Shop coffee etc; – L/T at 7.30 with FAS business; 7.35 – 8.30 the lecture with questions; - after that the party would start. The party itself would be held on the podium. Jane will book until 10.00 p.m.

Pat and Mark agreed to act as barmen for the evening.

Jane to send out a security notice to all members giving them the control room number which they can ring if they arrive after the entrance gate has been shut at 19.45.

Evenings with the Stars: The November meetings had to be cancelled because of technical problems with the 28" – this coincided with bad weather. The evenings scheduled for 17/18 December should go ahead using the usual system of checking in early evening and sending out an email to those people who had booked to come. At present the museum is insisting that everyone parks/walks to the East Wing car park and catches the Road Train up to the observatory, which has resulted in certain scheduling problems. They have agreed to run the road train after our late session.

Star Lecture: It was agreed to wait and watch attendance numbers for the rest of the season before we decide whether it is worth billing one of our lecturers as a star lecture when members invite guests to the event. If we have a large enough audience it will be unnecessary to drum up support for a special lecture. In lieu of Brian May, Jane has contacted Colin Pillinger and asked if he would come in the spring to complete our lecture programme.

7. Visits

Blythe House: Jane to arrange a visit to the Science Museum reserve stores in late January.

Mullard Telescope visit: April best choice, Jane has contacted Robin Catchpole.

Membership and finance: Jane had met Helen Walton and Monika Turloe yesterday and they give her the names of 49 people who have rejoined/joined. It is noticeable how few new members we have gleaned so far from the large list of enquirers – Jane has queried this already and asked for a check on whether they have been officially approached to join. There is now about £1,000 in the budget although, as this year will not be typical, while we merge the two subscriptions into one rolling subscription, we are bound to have hiccups and some loss of revenue. There are a group of CGSE students who are not due to pay FAS subscriptions until October 2008. Jane will confirm this with the FM office.

8. Any Other business

a. No more word from Pearson Education, the Dears had agreed to cooperate in the video.

b. The lady from Metro has been foiled again by bad weather; she is now away until January. Mike shall try again in the New Year.

9. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 28th January 2008 – at 7.15 p.m. in the same venue.