

**Notes from a Flamsteed Astronomy Society Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014 in Mycenae House at 7.00 p.m.**

Present: Malcolm Porter (Chairman), Grey Litley (Vice Chairman), Mike Meynell (Vice Chairman), Andy Sawers, Christina Chester, Clive Inglis, Mike Dryland, Nick Phillips, Roger Geeson, Rupert Smith, Sumitra Sri Bhashyam and Tej Dyal.

Apologies: Asra Jilani, Brian Blake and Lin Potter.

1. New and Co-Opted Committee Members:

Malcolm welcomed the new committee members: Andy Sawers, Clive Inglis and Tej Dyal.

Asra Jilani, Lin Potter, Mike Dryland and Sumitra Sri Bhashyam were co-opted onto the committee.

2. Matters Arising:

Membership Renewals and the Booking System

Some members either do not have membership cards, or have a card that doesn't work. Malcolm and Mike M agreed to raise this with the membership manager, Chris Hill, at their next meeting.

Flamsteed Star Camp

Mike M agreed to get the contact details of the Elmley Nature Reserve on the Isle of Sheppey from Lin. Lin knows the owner of this site and they would be very happy to accommodate the Flamsteed for a potential star camp.

Imaging Workshops

Rupert informed the committee that the first imaging workshop of the season would be a practical session on Blackheath during October. This would cover basic DSLR imaging using stand-alone tripods and then move on to mounting cameras on telescopes.

Membership of the BAA

Mike M has applied for membership of the BAA on behalf of the society.

IAU Name Exo-Worlds Contest

Christina has registered our interest in this contest with the IAU.

### 3. Committee Roles and Responsibilities:

Mike M presented a list of all of the roles currently performed by committee members. Mike M asked that all committee members seriously consider taking a more active role in the society. To that end, each of the roles was presented and volunteers were requested to fulfil that role.

The roles of the office holders of the society (Chair and two Vice-Chair positions, currently performed by Malcolm Porter, Grey Lipley and Mike Meynell) were not discussed, as they are elected positions, having been agreed by society members at the AGM in September.

Committee roles and the appointed volunteers are shown in the following table:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Performed by</b>
Chair	Acts as the embodiment of the FAS for all external matters. Takes the chair at all meetings of the FAS and committee at which he/she is present.	Malcolm Porter
Vice-Chair	Assumes the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unable to attend. Focusing on internal affairs (administration, lecture bookings, observing evening coordination and the website, etc).	Mike Meynell
Vice-Chair	Assumes the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unable to attend. Focusing on external affairs such as liaison with the ROG, solar viewing and radio astronomy, as well as media liaison.	Grey Lipley
Committee Secretary	Takes & publishes minutes and issues notices of meetings and agendas for committee and general meetings. Receives nominations for committee membership and proposals for resolutions. Organises elections for committee membership.	Andy Sawers
Programme Secretary	Agreeing the lecture topics, approaching potential lecturers, and booking lecturers for each lecture date.	Brian Blake
Programme Administrator	Responsible for agreeing lecture dates, booking the lecture theatre, lining up museum resource to support on the evening, lining up volunteers to provide refreshments on the evening,	Christina Chester

<b>Role</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Performed by</b>
	contacting the lecturer to find out technology requirements, agreeing on meeting arrangements with the lecturer on the evening of the event (including lining up tours and/or dinner), sending thank-you note to the lecturer, administering any expense or fee reimbursements for the lecturer.	
Membership Secretary	Works with the NMM Members Office to answer enquiries, resolve subscription issues, welcome new members, and track membership numbers and meeting attendance.	Clive Inglis
Web Editor	Organises hosting etc for the FAS website. Arranges design of the website as agreed with the committee. Coordinates provision, editing and upload of reports, articles, photographs and updates.	Mike Meynell with assistance from Christina Chester.
Forum Moderators	Moderates the Flamsteed online forum. Ensures that no abusive messages are posted. Splits discussion topics where necessary.	Andy Sawers and Mike Meynell.
Social Media Coordinator	Organises social media accounts as agreed with the committee (Twitter, Facebook, SMS, LinkedIn, etc). Proposes & coordinates contributions.	Christina Chester
Social Organisers	Provide refreshments and catering at meetings and events as required.	Roger Geeson and Peter Kitcherside.
Radio Astronomy Group Organiser	Organises and runs meetings of the Radio Astronomy Group.	Grey Lipley with assistance from Clive Inglis.
History of Astronomy Group Organiser	Organises and runs meetings of the History of Astronomy Group.	Mike Dryland
Observing and Imaging Group Organiser	Organises and runs meetings of the Observing and Imaging Group. Plan, schedule and arrange observing events. Ensure provision of equipment and qualified leaders at	Rupert Smith

<b>Role</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Performed by</b>
	each session. Coordinate announcements, SMS, and web postings etc.	
Observing and Imaging Coordinator	Organises and coordinates specific observing events (e.g. Romney observing) where bookings need to be taken and travel arrangements made. Organises society and public workshops at the ROG and elsewhere (telescope / imaging workshops).	Nick Phillips
Observing and Imaging Assistants	Assists with the organisation of meetings of the Observing and Imaging Group. Helps with the provision of equipment and assists in the running of the sessions.	Tej Dyal, Grey Libley and Clive Inglis.
Pub Evenings Organiser	Organises and hosts monthly pub evenings.	Brian Evans
Solar Viewing Events Organiser	Organises and runs solar viewing sessions.	Nick Phillips with assistance from Grey Libley and Rupert Smith.
Solar Viewing Events Assistants	Assists with the organisation of solar viewing sessions.	Roger Geeson, Andy Sawers, Tej Dyal plus solar volunteers.
Great Equatorial Telescope Viewing Events Organiser	Organises and runs the Flamsteed viewing events with the Great Equatorial Telescope.	Nick Phillips

In order to comply with museum requirements to have an approved museum volunteer running our observing events, it was agreed to propose Rupert Smith and Clive Inglis to the museum as official volunteers for solar viewing.

#### 4. Flamsteed Book Market / Equipment Market:

In the past, the society used to run a regular book market, where members could sell their unwanted books. The museum ceased the continuation of this event, as it was viewed as “sales by private treaty” and therefore could not take place on museum grounds.

Now that we have the potential use of Mycenae House, this rule should not apply. Clearly, the event could not coincide with a Flamsteed lecture or other meeting, as it had in the past, but we could potentially organise a fair, which had other attractions available.

This could include equipment sales and stands explaining what the society offered (e.g. the special interest groups, etc).

The committee agreed that, in principle, this was a good idea and agreed that we would come up with a proposal on how an event may be structured for consideration at a future committee meeting. Mike M agreed to take this forward.

#### 5. Observing Events: Standen / Eastbrookend / Lewisham

Mike M explained that three different groups had approached the society recently, asking if we could get involved in various observing events.

Firstly, Mike M went through the proposal to run an Astronomy and Astrophotography evening at Standen, which is a National Trust property located to the south of East Grinstead, West Sussex. The proposed date of this event is Friday 28 November. They are keen to have the Flamsteed involved in running the event, with a proposed agenda of the following:

- Evening commencing at 7.30pm with a “What’s in the Night Sky Tonight?” presentation.
- If the skies are clear, move outside to use telescopes.
- At the same time, run an “Introduction to Astrophotography” presentation. If the skies are cloudy, everyone would stay indoors to watch this presentation, otherwise only those who are interested would stay and watch.
- After the astrophotography presentation, everyone moves outside if the skies are clear; otherwise the evening will end at this point.

The committee saw this as a good opportunity to get involved with a National Trust property. Clive, Mike M, Malcolm, Nick, Rupert and Tej agreed to be involved in helping at the event.

Mike M then explained the potential event at the Eastbrookend Country Park and Chase Nature Reserve in Dagenham. A newly appointed ranger for the country park has approached us regarding the possibility of holding an introduction to the night sky / astronomy event during the period 16-25 January 2015. They would like to target a range of nights, with “go/no-go” messages issued.

The committee recommended that we visit the site and also contact astronomy societies in the area of Dagenham and ask if they may also wish to be involved. Mike M agreed to contact the ranger regarding this.

Finally, we talked through a potential event in the Lewisham area during the February half-time next year. A production company are creating a free festival designed to appeal to all ages. They would like to arrange a stargazing event and have been in touch with

Marek Kukula at the ROG. We don't have any details of where the event is likely to take place.

The committee agreed that it was worthwhile continuing a conversation with the organisers in order to determine more details regarding the event, before making any firm commitments. Mike M and Grey agreed to take this forward. It was noted that the Lewisham event is currently planned at a time when preparations will be being made for BBC Stargazing Live, which is in March next year to coincide with the total solar eclipse (partial solar eclipse in London).

#### 6. Continuation of Text Messaging Service

The costs of the Flamsteed text messaging service have increased substantially, so Mike M asked if the committee wanted to continue with the service.

Mike M explained that the service was introduced for observing events in particular. We often need to make last-minute changes to plan, due to the vagaries of the British weather, and not all Flamsteed members have access to their personal e-mails or external websites during the working day.

The committee agreed that the service was still useful, despite the increase in cost. Mike M agreed to re-promote the service to members and to organise an extension of our subscription to this service. Mike M also agreed to research if there are cheaper services available.

#### 7. Any Other Business

##### Honorary Membership Guidelines

Malcolm took the committee through a proposed policy for determining how the committee should propose conferring honorary membership of the society in the future.

The Flamsteed committee can propose honorary membership to be awarded to an individual from time to time. The proposal is that honorary membership should be awarded to individuals in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the work of the society and/or making significant contribution to furthering the aims and goals of the society.

Malcolm took the committee through a set of eligibility rules and the process for agreeing honorary membership, along with the rights and limitations of honorary membership. He noted that the conferring of honorary membership has to be justified to RMG.

The committee agreed to review the proposal over the next few weeks, with a view to agreeing a set of guidelines at the next committee meeting.

## Digital Strategy

The committee had agreed previously to form a sub-committee to discuss the online presence of the Flamsteed and what we can do better in the future. This would include the design of the website and our use of social media, along with technology options and potential improvements.

Clive said that the Radio Astronomy Group will be collecting data and that the Digital Strategy sub-committee may want to include this as part of their deliberations.

Mike M agreed to set up a private forum where some initial proposals could be aired, prior to organising a face-to-face meeting with interested parties.

There was no other business and the meeting was closed at 8.45pm.