

MINUTES OF A COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FLAMSTEED ASTRONOMY SOCIETY HELD AT THE ASHBURNHAM ARMS AT 7.30 P.M. ON MONDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2005

Present: Lin Potter (Chair) Eddie Yeadon, Pat Wainwright, Eddie Yeadon, Mike Dryland, David Waugh and Jane Bendall

Apologies: David Barnewell and Nicki Bearcroft.

Matters arising from the meeting of Monday 4th July 2005

Publicity:

Meridian Magazine: Mike has sent the editor some FAS photographs to illustrate Jane's short article for publication in their next edition. Lin is to check progress and also further her idea that we might do a very short monthly slot about the sky at night. It was agreed that we have sufficient know-how within the society to provide this information e.g. Martin Male, Mike Iveson etc. The list of copy dates would be useful.

News Shopper: David Waugh has been interviewed by a journalist from the newspaper and again Mike had sent photographs, so we await developments.

Jane to copy emails from the **Federation of Astronomical Societies** to Mike re listing on their website. Mike has attempted to have a listing on the **BBC website** which is proving complicated and difficult.

Publicity Leaflets: Mike has already put leaflets in several local libraries and will bring some to the AGM for Lin for her school and for her friend's dental surgery. All other suggestions are very welcome as Mike can supply leaflets for suitable venues.

Jane will ask visitor services to put one up in the 28" dome.

We shall be sharing Monday evenings with the GCSE astronomy course from now on so they may prove a very useful recruiting ground.

Arrangements for AGM

So far there are six candidates for six vacancies. If other people come forward both Mike and Jane volunteered to be co-opted rather than directly elected. If there are more than eight candidates we will of course have to have an election – Jane might ask someone from the Friends office to attend to count the votes. It was agreed that new blood is always very welcome.

Jane will ask Polly who the Friend's Representative on the FAS is and whether this person is planning to attend the AGM.

In future we will only serve white wine because of the danger of staining the granite floor. We will also provide fruit juice.

Programme issues

Christmas Party. At Mike's suggestion it will be on the Neptune Court podium. Lin will ask her group to come and entertain us again. We will serve white wine and beer plus soft drinks and supermarket food!

We agreed that a quiz is great fun but this year Mike would like help in compiling the questions. It would not be as long as last year's quiz – perhaps 12 questions with a small prize. Jane will press Polly to invite Roy Clare as it would be a perfect occasion to present our donation to the Universal Appeal.

Book mart: The committee congratulated Mike on his excellent organization of last year's event. Mike will ask members for contributions of books after the AGM is over. We shall also invite the GCSE class to come. Jane will not be there but will make arrangements with the museum beforehand and Lin will take over the organization on the day. There was no interest last year in the idea of selling astronomical equipment. (Six tables needed).

Star Lecture No reply from Allan Chapman re the star lecture. It was agreed that Eddie should write to him giving a deadline for mid October as we need to get the date in the programme. There are other excellent candidates such as Carl Murray and Sir Arnold Wolfendale.

Member's talks: We will not need to schedule them into the programme until January. Suggestions included David Waugh speaking about astronomy for the blind, Keith Jones talking about radio telescopes plus Eddie who has several ideas up his sleeve. Committee members will continue to encourage people to consider a talk if an interesting topic comes up.

It was suggested that we should hold **members evenings** when people could speak about such topics as - what got them interested in astronomy in the first place - rather than always having visiting speakers. We had tried a **Brains Trust** several years ago but this had not been successful as the panel members conducted a rather formal session, but we could try again with a more relaxed format. We might also consider very informal discussion evenings with a visitor for those members who have very little astronomical knowledge and want to learn more without being overwhelmed by science.

Hare and Billet meetings:

It was decided to circulate dates well in advance to encourage more members to come along.

Monday 24th October.

No meetings in November (Mars viewings).

Monday 19th December.

Monday 23rd January.

Observing events

Partial eclipse of the sun. Details will be circulated soon.

We have 7 or 8 volunteers Jane will finalize arrangements with Robert Massey. It will probably be in the grounds of the NMM as deliveries of building supplies are expected at the ROG that morning.

Mars viewing: Jane will approach her contact and suggest that we use the dark field site on Friday 18th November and/or Thursday 24th November.

Training on hydrogen alpha and 28" telescopes: We agreed to leave scheduling more training until after the AGM. There is some confusion as to what use Robert wants to make of the 15/18 trained volunteers for the 28" telescope. A meeting with Robert is the best way forward to discuss our role in the *Evening with the Stars* programme. When the committee meets after the AGM we will look for a volunteer to take over the Coronado programme arrangements from Lesley Bound who is too busy to continue after the New Year.

Membership: service from the Friends office is very slow this year – Jane will update the committee as she receives more information. There appear to be teething problems with the new direct debit system – so far two members appear to have signed up to it.

Finance: Ditto, see remark above regarding sluggish service. We are sorting out the list of people who pay by bankers order but there is a new accountant in post which has slowed everything down, until she is more conversant with the system.

Any Other Business

Contributions to Friends magazine. Eddie has experienced enormous difficulties with the illustrations for his article on Einstein. He advised the meeting that the museum will only use their own photographs to avoid paying copyright fees. It was decided that we would continue to contribute to the magazine but we would either supply FAS pictures or leave the museum to sort out the illustrations from their own picture library. We shall ask Polly if she is interested in an article about our visit to Paris.

Astrofest: David felt that we had not maximized our opportunity to publicize the society on the NMM stand last year. It was agreed that we should discuss this with Robert Massey beforehand and try to secure a designated display area. Thanks to Mike we have excellent leaflets and posters which should attract interested people to the stand.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 20th October at **7.00 p.m.** in the Ashburnham Arms.