

Flamsteed Astronomy Society
Committee Meeting – Tuesday 8th June 2021 at 7pm via Zoom
Notes to meeting

Present:

Andy Sawers (Chair)
Helen Edwards (Vice chair)
Poly Philippou (Secretary)
Adrian Challinor
Tej Dyal
Simon Hurst
Asra Jilani
Grey Liple
Bobby Manoo
Mike Meynell
Nick Phillips
Malcolm Porter

Apologies:

Barry Cassels
Roger Geeson
Clive Inglis

Andy opened the meeting by highlighting that we have run some 30 events since September, in the last 9 months. This includes talks, socials, the AGM, night sky videos, news videos etc. This is a tremendous achievement.

1. Matters arising from the last committee meeting on 23rd February 2021

Andy mentioned that he sent an email just before the meeting regarding the various sub-groups for certain tasks, and requesting us all to respond with our availability so that we can kick off these sub-groups.

Eddie Yeadon tributes – ACTION: Andy (lead), Malcolm, Simon and Clive to meet soon to progress the tribute and memorial lecture discussed previously.

Budget update – Andy reported that there has been no update on budgets from Chloe, which is fine so long as there are no surprises later! Also, Andy has followed up with Zoom regarding possible discounts as a non-profit organisation, but unfortunately there are no such discounts available for us.

Plans for events – It was agreed that the joint event with Havering AS in June with Dr Don Lincoln went very well, the huge effort was well worth it and we now have a well-documented process for such events.

Lecture planning for this and next season – Since the last committee meeting, there has been a meeting to progress lecture planning and Helen is working on securing speakers from September for the next season. Plans for September and October will be challenging because of the uncertainties particularly for our lecturers and university arrangements. For the summer programme we are of course dependent on the government's decision regarding easing on 21st June and what the RMG decide in terms of events and safety. Andy has responded to Emily at the Observatory with a preliminary response confirming that broadly speaking we are happy to support solar viewing events, and there has been much email discussion on the precautionary measures to be taken. It was agreed that, apart from the potential solar viewing events, we would take the usual break from other events for the summer, for July and August, to give everyone a break and as there is likely to be a large dropout rate in attendance with the good weather and the easing of restrictions on outdoor social gatherings.

Plans for other events – Poly reported that Janice McClean has confirmed that New Scientist have recently decided that there will be no New Scientist Live event this year, either at Excel or online. **ACTION:** Bobby, Andy and Tej will meet separately soon to discuss the virtual pub quiz. We have had the online planetarium event by the ROG astronomers, we have the fireside chat coming up soon, and the ROG are live streaming the partial solar eclipse on Thursday. Helen met with Patricia Skelton at the Museum on Zoom regarding ThinkSpace lectures and what the programme is and if they can promote us in return for us promoting the programme. The main target audience is secondary school students, and may appeal to our young members, 16- and 17-year-olds. **ACTION:** Helen to follow up as part of the outreach subgroup.

AOB – Regarding the use of WhatsApp and alternatives such as Signal, Telegram and Discord, Barry and Adrian have done some work on this. As all options have their pros and cons and as the WhatsApp T&Cs changes do not apply to users in the UK as we have GDPR, it was agreed that we would stay with WhatsApp.

2. Review of Vision 2021 actions

These actions are tracked separately in a detailed plan compiled by Bobby, following previous committee discussions.

3. Covid and observing (solar and Blackheath, public and members events)

This has been largely covered by the above discussions. We are very much in the hands of the Government and the Observatory's decisions. Blackheath viewing does not start until September/October. Romney observing events are later than that in October/November – February/March. Helen confirmed that Martin Male has said he is agreeable to doing these sessions when regulations allow. It was agreed we would wait until later in the summer before we earmark dates with Martin. Similarly, we will wait until September to plan the dates for GET events for next season.

4. Updating the website

It was agreed in principle that the website needs modernizing, restructuring, with an updated look and feel. The current website is based on WordPress which is slow and a bit old fashioned. Mike emphasized that we need to decide what it is we want to do with the website. Items discussed were: what is our strategic view, what are we trying to achieve, do we want to make it fast, do we want it to look better, what is it for, what is our target audience, who do we want to go after, what is expected by users now after the pandemic, we want to be shifting to a forward-looking focus rather than what we have done and providing events report, will it include a library of videos etc as discussed above? **ACTION:** Adrian (lead), Nick, Poly, Simon, Bobby, Tej, Mike to progress the strategy for the website, starting with what it is for.

5. What to do with the Dobsonian telescope

A Dobsonian telescope was donated to the Flamsteed last year, which Adrian has been storing for us. Bobby agreed he could store this in the interim. **ACTION:** Bobby and Adrian to get in touch outside the meeting to arrange pickup and storage. There was some discussion about what we should do with this, and it was agreed we could email the members, offering it to whichever member would like it.

6. Any other business

It was agreed our next committee meeting will be on 6th September and the AGM will be on 9th September. Both these meetings will be online. [Since the meeting Poly has sent a placeholder invite to committee members].

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Minutes issued 16/06/21