

Flamsteed Astronomy Society
Committee Meeting – Monday 6th September 2021 at 7pm via Zoom
Notes to meeting

Present:

Andy Sawers (Chair)
Helen Edwards (Vice chair)
Poly Philippou (Secretary)
Barry Cassels
Tej Dyal
Simon Hurst
Asra Jilani
Grey Libley
Bobby Manoo
Mike Meynell
Malcolm Porter

Apologies:

Adrian Challinor
Roger Geeson
Clive Inglis
Nick Phillips

1. Matters arising from the last committee meeting on 8th June 2021

Eddie Yeadon tributes – Malcolm, Bobby and Andy have discussed this. Andy suggested and it was agreed we would badge the October lecture, which is the anniversary month of Eddie's passing, as a one-off commemoration. **ACTION:** Andy will ask Mike Dryland if he could do a short talk about Eddie and what he did for Flamsteed, perhaps as a prerecorded video if he cannot attend the lecture. If Mike is unable to do this, then Lynn or Jane are alternatives.

Budget update – Andy and Helen had discussions with Chloe Shepherd a couple of weeks ago. She reported there is a second revision underway on budgets, and nothing has come to light which affects Flamsteed.

Covid and observing (solar and Blackheath, public and members events) – There have been a number of problems at ROG in terms of access, the two main gates where we normally set up for solar viewing are closed and the only gate open is by the bins, and they are having serious visitor experience staffing issues, with pingdemic issues having affected them significantly such that they sometimes did not have the minimum number of staff required to open.

What to do with the Dobsonian telescope – This has now been gifted to a local South London School and this will be mentioned as an achievement at the AGM.

2. Review of Vision 2021 actions

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

3. Covid restrictions and events including observing (Solar, Blackheath, Romney)

For main lectures, physical capacity at the lecture theatre is still restricted to 38, about a third of full capacity, and so given our attendee numbers face-to-face is not a viable option for us. There is a meeting soon where we will assess the technology to run meetings in person and stream simultaneously. In the meantime, we will continue on Zoom. History of Astronomy sessions will also continue on Zoom at least until the end of this year and this will be reviewed further then. There are no plans to restart observing sessions imminently. Mike is monitoring the situation with other societies and events, and reported that 80% of societies are staying online currently for their lectures, and no other society has started observing session yet, though most such events do not start until October anyway. Regarding streaming observing sessions there is still concern as to the quality of this type of technology and it was still felt that the fun of these sessions was being there face-to-face looking through a telescope for real!

4. Covid statement for website

ACTION: Poly to move the covid statement on the About Us page to the top of the Home page.

5. Preparations for AGM on 9th September

Andy thanked those who attended the AGM practice run, running through the script and running order for the polls and link to Vimeo. Andy is working on his script and slides. Membership is now at 416 members (up 1 from last year), but lapsed members have gone up from 5 to 25 roughly. **ACTION:** Andy to raise and confirm with Tessa this lapsed figure and reasons. **ACTION:** Andy to remind people at AGM re renewing their memberships by direct debit. It was agreed Andy would explain the financial position to members at the AGM. There will be another run though / test of the scripts for the polls and link to Vimeo.

6. Update on the new website

Mike gave an update in Adrian's absence. The draft new website has been made available to the committee to review. The new site is built on WIX. Mike shared his screen and walked us through some of the features. Mike is still working on updates based on feedback received so far. Mike estimates he is about 90% done. We are likely to need one more meeting to review feedback and updates before launching. Andy also has some feedback which he will send through to Mike, and gave some initial feedback that the images are big and so we cannot get much text on a page, but Mike explained that this is due to the templates and site design and not easily amended. Mike is still working out archiving options, to determine which URL we will use and how we will manage the migration. Videos are all on website now, with a separate option for password protected videos for Flamsteed members only. This new website is cheaper to run than the current site and so is a significant saving. At the AGM Andy will mention that we are working on the new website but will not give any date for launch.

7. Collaboration with Isles of Scilly Observatory

Bobby walked us through his proposal, which has already been circulated for review and includes three options - (1) Set up a live stream tour for Flamsteed members of the COSMOS observatory, (2) Organise a visit for Flamsteed members to COSMOS and include an astrophotography workshop, (3) Invite them to visit us including a main lecture and observatory tour, probably for next year when covid restrictions allow. There was general agreement that all options are a good idea and should be progressed. There was some discussion about the potentially high costs associated with travel and accommodation with the trip to Scilly, option 2, and this may limit the number of people who would register. **ACTION:** Bobby will reach out to COSMOS to progress option 1, and Tej, Grey and Mike will help. **ACTION:** Bobby will put out feelers for option 2, and Helen will help with working out costs for this. Option 3 will be progressed later pending covid restrictions lifting.

8. AOB

Helen raised the question about live observing events at Romney, though these do not normally start until October/November. **ACTION:** Helen to put Martin Male "on hold" until we can make a decision.

Bobby, Andy and Tej are working on the option of a virtual pub quiz, this action carried forward to the next meeting.

All are happy with the way Poly sends out invites, documentation and links for these meetings. **ACTION:** Bobby let Poly know if any changes required.

9. Next meeting

We agreed the next meeting will be shortly after the October lecture, either later that week or the week after that lecture. **ACTION:** Poly to send a poll to agree a date for this next meeting.

This being Andy's last meeting as chair for 5 years, Andy closed the meeting with thank yous for the committee's work, and all returned their thanks for Andy's work and commitment during his time as chair.

With no further business, the meeting closed at 21:05.

Minutes issued 10/09/21