

Cleveland and Darlington Astronomical Society  
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on Sunday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 19:42.  
Venue: 48 Linden Road, West Cornforth, Ferryhill, DL17 9NR

Present: Jürgen Schmolli in the Chair (JS), Rod Cuff (RC), Peter Hanna (PH), Ian Morris (IM), David Lewis (DL), Ian Riach (IR). Sue Barnes (SB), Ed Restall (ER).

Apologies: Neil Haggath (NH), Julia Goudge (JG), Malcolm Bannister (MB).

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks and matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting of 2013 Jan 20

The chairman opened the meeting at 19:30 BST.

The minutes of the last meeting were formally accepted.

Ordinary-meeting minutes are currently not being published (nor written). They are not essential, just "nice to have". Realistically they are not going to happen.

Deferred to the next committee meeting to discuss this issue with JG.

Committee meetings are being published and distributed with TRANSIT, but some recent ones may have been overlooked.

ACTION (RC): to review his records to see which sets of minutes have not yet been sent out, and to send out the 2013 Jan 20 meeting minutes approved here.

The committee meeting minutes have to be put online on the web page.

ACTION (RC): Approach Don Martin to ensure that the minutes will make it to the web site.

2. Treasurer's report

The current balance is £2432.79.

Paid out:	£71.28	Don Martin (web hosting)
	£150.00	SBC (6 months' rent)
	£36.64	TRANSIT postage
	£48.00	FAS membership (early payment discount)
	£40.00	Speaker expenses

24 adults, 3 families are currently lapsed members.

ACTION (SB): Send reminder emails out to lapsed members.

Joined in 2013: 10 adults and 2 families

Left: 1 adult

Deceased: 1 adult

SB reported that Neill Haggath has asked to book the parish hall for the quiz in October.

ACTION (SB): Look contact up at parish hall notice board and book venue.

SB also said that the home page still mentions Keith Johnson along with JS in the paragraphs on astrophotography. Also the telescope details (dome) need updating, and the membership fee and occasional visitor fee need to be included. Photographs of new committee members are required. 2012 minutes need to be uploaded.

ACTION (IM, IR, MB): Provide photographs for the web site to SB.

ACTION (ER): Update telescope details.  
ACTION (SB): Update or include fee notes.  
ACTION (JS): Meeting minutes updates – email Don Martin.

### 3. Planetarium and public observing, CaDAS observing

Craig Willows of SBC clarified that planetarium access for events is not possible without ER, even for SBC employees.

PH: Planetarium was built as a joint venture between CaDAS and SBC. Why can one group dictate to the other? [Comment of Neil Haggath when reading these minutes: It might also be worth mentioning here that CaDAS members did much of the work in building it - in their spare time and unpaid.]

ER explained that CaDAS was not properly constituted at that time. Also, former CaDAS members were not dealing properly with SBC. So there is a historical reason for the current blockage by SBC.

IM said that the building is rather small and should be not a big issue for SBC. On the other side, why do we stay in this relationship when we could go somewhere else?

Also PH argued that the ambience of the venue is tremendous. However, are we ever allowed to use it in an efficient way?

PH stressed the point that there are no direct costs for SBC involved when CaDAS is using the building. However, the problem is that currently there is no access without ER.

ER reminded us that the observatory access agreement document has still to be written. There is also no reason why CaDAS could not organise public observing sessions. Currently there is a planetarium observing event with CaDAS volunteers every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday between 21:00 and 22:30.

PH mentioned that a backup activity would be required for CaDAS observing sessions on cloudy nights. Hence the planetarium would still be useful.

With no planetarium access, CaDAS still can hold public observing events as long as at least one CRB-checked key holder is at the scene. Public Liability Insurance from the Federation of Astronomical Societies is now in place as well.

ACTION (ER, JS): Create observatory access memorandum of understanding.

ACTION (IM): Announce at the next meeting (April 12) that interested parties may stay after the talk to be shown how to set up their scope.

### 4. Situation of speakers

Neill Haggath organizes our speakers. Currently there is no shortage visible.

IM suggests improving the quality of speakers in January and February because folks turn up with the expectation of seeing something. Practical things such as what to see with binoculars should be prioritized for this time of the year. Maybe the AGM should be moved to the summer months. For a long time the AGM was in May. This decision could be made in an Extraordinary General Meeting during an ordinary meeting night (with at least two weeks' notice).

PH also suggests producing a questionnaire about what CaDAS members want in terms of meetings and Transit contents, whether they want to retain the members' night etc.

ACTION (PH): Create questionnaire for members.

ACTION (JS): Approach Neil Haggath about the potential AGM month change.

#### 5. Comms & Info secretary / Transit editor vacancy

RC reported that nobody had volunteered. Andy Fleming could potentially assist in the future; he is very happy to edit the occasional issue but not yet as a permanent venture.

Fewer articles have been submitted in recent months. Rob Peeling is sadly no longer able to write a monthly Skylights article, and no one else has stepped into the breach.

ACTION (JS): Emphasise to members at our next meeting that their inputs are welcome.

ACTION (PH): Add TRANSIT feedback into questionnaire.

RC has found various external sources for articles as a backup. He is willing to edit TRANSIT until the next AGM, but then would like to retire from this task.

#### 6. CaDAS trips

The trip to Kielder happened despite the bad weather, which put several attendees off.

SB felt that the trip was very good. PH mentioned that an article could be written for TRANSIT.

18 people signed up, but only 6 turned up.

Maybe organizing another non-weather-dependent destination could prove if just the weather was to blame for the low turnout. IR commented that transport may have been an issue, as no bus was organized.

#### 7. Astrophotography workshop

With Keith not in the society any more, JS suggests having an event that focuses on a camera on a tripod and some basics in a presentation, followed by data reduction basics.

ACTION (JS): Work out a one-evening event and find a venue for it.

ACTION (PH): Include items on astrophotography workshop demand in the questionnaire.

ACTION (JS): Get list of interested people for workshop from Keith.

#### 8. Any other business

- What to do to keep interested potential new members after surges of public interest e.g. by Brian Cox. This has been discussed already in agenda point 4 (speaker situation).
- Active CaDAS members should more proactively show they are open to helping newcomers.
- RC has observed through Facebook that Sunderland AS is very active. They go out observing a lot, either amongst themselves or publicly. ER mentions that it is down to himself and Keith Johnson to operate the Facebook site. More CaDAS members are required to contribute to the Facebook site.
- ACTION (ALL): Stand up tomorrow (April 12) in the meeting to show their faces to new members, followed by JS mentioning that we are open for chats either after the talk in the planetarium or in the pub.
- Changes to the constitution have to be written down as amendments.  
ACTION (ER, JS): Check for necessary constitution changes and implement them.
- ER wonders if the solar observing event in August is worthwhile continuing, as volunteer numbers are low. Last year we had 8 telescopes but not many volunteers.  
ACTION (JS): Announce in April 12 meeting that volunteers are required for the afternoon of the last Sunday in August, which is August 25<sup>th</sup>.

- PH passed on Neil Haggath's idea about T-Shirts etc with a CaDAS logo.  
ACTION (PH): Include this issue in the questionnaire.

End of meeting: 22:24 BST.

This is version 2, produced 2013 May 01 by jsc (includes corrective inputs of other committee members).