

HERTFORD ASTRONOMY GROUP

Minutes of 10th Annual General Meeting Wednesday 9th May 2018 at 20.00

Fairway Suite, Panshanger Golf Complex, Old Hens Lane, Welwyn-Garden-City

1. Apologies for absence:

1.1 Apologies have been received from Brendan Wathelet, Margaret Brown & Peter Jenkins.

2. To receive and approve the minutes of the 9th Annual General Meeting held at Panshanger Golf Complex on 10th May 2017:

2.1 The minutes were accepted by the Members as a true and accurate record of that meeting. Proposed by Jerry Stone, seconded by Roger Clark.

3. Matters arising from the minutes:

3.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Chairman's Report for 2017-18:

4.1 Chairman, Alan Willison, read his report. Points mentioned included the following:

4.2 The club continues to flourish and grow in both numbers of members and events in which we are participating. We have had a very full year of talks and activities in a variety of locations around the county. The Society's main activities are of course our monthly meetings, held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from September to June.

4.3 With regard to the programme, this has been very successful - the evidence being the fact that we have had around 70 people or more at all of the meetings. We naturally assume that this has been down to our visiting speakers, who have covered a range of topics on astronomy and space exploration. Jerry intends to continue this in next year's programme, which will lead up to the 50th anniversary of the first men on the Moon.

4.4 Other popular events have been the two "My Telescope Doesn't Work Sessions" last October and February. We are planning a daytime session on 17 June for Solar Observation at the Wheathampstead Cricket Club. We also aim to be at the Wheathampstead village day on Sunday 8th July for another Solar observing session.

4.5 We are planning a major public observing event on the evening of Friday, 27 July when there will be a total eclipse of the Moon. We expect the event to be held here and we will have a number of telescopes for visitors to watch the eclipse. We also hope to project an image of the eclipse onto a large white sheet, so that everyone can watch the progress of the eclipse.

4.6 Our other outreach activities include helping at the open evenings at the university's observatory at Bayfordbury. We provide additional telescopes and help visitors look around the night sky. We also set up a display indoors, and we now also offer a fun interactive quiz using the equipment that the club has obtained. We have also used the quiz as part of the programme we have presented to local scouts.

4.7 We also set up publicity displays at the university at the main site at College Lane in Hatfield, when the Institute of Physics holds their evening lectures.

4.8 We thank Jerry for arranging these talks and also for acting as host to the speakers meeting them sometimes up to 2 hours prior to a meeting to ensure that they are fed and watered and most importantly – here.

HERTFORD ASTRONOMY GROUP

4.9 The astrophotography section, HAGAS, has also been holding regular meetings that have focused on the practical aspects of this field revealing much of the night sky that is invisible to the naked eye. These meetings have taken place at the Stanborough Club in Hoddesdon & in some of the members' homes.

We are grateful to Martin Weston who has been managing this for the year. Martin is leaving us to take up residence in Spain to run a business for astro photographers & we wish him well with this venture. Denis O'Shea, who started the group, has offered to manage its running for the meantime. The club purchased a new camera and some outstanding pictures have been taken with it. Have a word with either Steve Heliczer or Denis if you would like to have a go.

4.10 As the club keeps growing so does the administration. Tony Challoner has done a fantastic job of creating and developing a management system using a barcode scanner that enables us to check in more efficiently. It also helps us monitor the people at the meetings whether they are members, visitors, juniors etc. I am aware that there have been many hours spent on this process and we are very fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated person in charge of this. The number of members has grown to 117, which is sign that we are hopefully doing a good job.

4.11 As regards equipment, as discussed last year we have disposed of some of the club's equipment that was not being used. We have purchased some tabards to help identify ourselves when on outreach projects and the interactive quiz equipment. All of these are being used regularly and are proving to be good buys. Steve Heliczer is our Equipment Officer so if you would like to borrow any of the gear then please see him. I look after the quiz equipment and tabards so see me if you would like to use any of them.

4.12 Thank you to our Treasurer Anne Godwin who will give her report shortly.

4.13 Thank you also to Simon Poley for acting as secretary. He prepares agendas and minutes for our committee members and distributes these as necessary. Simon also deals with any other correspondence that is not covered elsewhere. We are indebted to him for keeping us on the right track throughout the year.

4.14 Our committee members Leon Gevertz, Danny Emmett, Denis O'Shea & Terry Creasy must be mentioned for their attendance at so many events. They offer support to the many events taking part throughout the year as well as offering huge amounts of common sense to the committee meetings held throughout the year.

4.15 Frank Ferguson, who was chairman before me and also a founder member of the club, keeps in touch and reads our newsletters. Frank hasn't been well this year but has made a good recovery and wishes us continued success.

4.16 We have been pleased with the meeting venue that has been able to accommodate us comfortably throughout the year. Now under the management of Tewinbury Farm, the View as it is now known is upgrading lots of areas of the site. We are pleased that we can continue here next year at the same rates as this year and thank them for their continued support.

4.17 Finally, we thank you, the membership, without whose support the club would not exist. Your attendance at meetings and outside events is very much appreciated and the fact that our numbers are so strong can hopefully be interpreted as that we are doing something right.

4.18 Roger Clark proposed the adoption of the Chairman's Report which was seconded by George Studolski & approved unanimously.

5. Statement of Accounts – Treasurer's Report:

5.1 Treasurer, Anne Godwin, reported on the accounts for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. Points included the following:

5.2 *Income:* Balance of funds at start of year was £1,292.79. At the May 2017 AGM the Committee recommended keeping the membership fee at £20 (visitors £3.50 per meeting) for the 2017/18 year. Most subscriptions were collected during or before September 2017, with a steady trickle of new members

HERTFORD ASTRONOMY GROUP

through the rest of the year. Average number of visitors per meeting this year was 13, compared with 15 last year.

5.3 *Banking:* We continue to bank with HSBC, using online facilities (though not for membership subscriptions), chequebook and debit card.

5.4 *Expenditure:* The premises fee from Panshanger remained at £60 per meeting or £660 for 11 sessions in the year. The fee will remain unchanged for 2018/19. We also paid £96.75 for two My Telescope Doesn't Work sessions in the year & £17 for one HAGAS meeting. Speakers were paid an average of £47 (as compared with £58 last year). Seven speakers accepted the offer of a meal, at average cost £26. HAG re-joined the FAS, costing £28. FAS membership offers several advantages, including reduced rates for Public Liability Insurance, which HAG took out at a cost of £30. Advertising costs for the year were lower at £114.50 (as compared with £239.77 last year). Other purchases this year comprised a hand controller at cost of £99 & high visibility jackets costing £49.73. Our large mounted binoculars & stand were sold on Ebay for £103.00.

5.5 *Auditor:* The accounts have been audited by Roger Clark and grateful thanks are due to him.

5.6 *Closing balance:* Period ended with an increased balance of £1,949.22. We plan to keep at least £500 to allow for our insurance excess.

5.7 *Subscriptions for 2018/19:* Membership numbers have increased. It is proposed to keep subscription prices unchanged at £20 per year (pro-rata) for membership and £3.50 per meeting for visitors.

5.8 Denis O'Shea proposed that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Leon Gevertz seconded. The report was approved unanimously.

6. **Hon Auditor's Report:**

6.1 See 5.5

7. **Appointment of Officers and Members of the Management Committee 2018/19:**

7.1 The following nominations were proposed:

Officer	Nominee
Chairman	Alan Willison
Programme/outreach	Jerry Stone
Treasurer	Anne Godwin
Publicity/advertising	Jerry Stone
Membership	Tony Challoner
Secretary	Simon Poley
HAGAS	Denis O'Shea
Equipment	Steve Heliczer
General committee	Danny Emmett
General committee	Leon Gevertz
General committee	Terry Creasy

7.2 A block vote to accept all of the above was proposed by Roger Clark and seconded by George Studolski. The nominations were unanimously accepted.

HERTFORD ASTRONOMY GROUP

8. Appointment of the Hon Auditor for 2018/19:

8.1 Roger Clark said he was happy to continue in this role and this was approved unanimously.

9. Any other business

9.1 There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 20.28.

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