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Cardiff Astronomical Society/Cymdeithas Seryddol Caerdydd

Minutes of the annual general meeting

Held at 19:30 28th April 2022

Via Zoom link

Present

Phill Wallace (PW), Greg Titley (GT), Robert Biss (BB), Ann Bennett (AB), Roy Blunt (RB), Nick Pollock (NP), Theresa Cooper (TC), Jane Clark (JC), Katherine Compton (KC) with 23 members of the society.

1. Apologies for absence

Two members sent their apologies to the Trustees.

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting

PW asked all the attendees to approve the minutes for the AGM held on 23rd April 2021.

PW advised to ensure a clear vote was conducted that attendees are to use the 'raise hands' function on Zoom. At the vote there were 30 votes in favour to approve the

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minutes with no objections & two abstentions. PW requested that the AGM minutes should be set as approved.

GT to change 2021 AGM minutes status to approved & ask KC to update the society website.

3. Matters arising from 2021 AGM

PW indicated no further matters arising for discussion. GT confirmed no further matters arising from the 2020 AGM. PW asked the attendees if anyone wished to raise an issue. None were recorded.

No further action.

4. Presentation of annual report 2021

PW advised that a copy of the annual return for the society was circulated with the agenda & AGM notice. PW indicated that the return had been submitted to the Charity Commission. OW proceeded to give an overview of the document rather than read it out entirely. PW advised that the report was drafted by himself & RB drafted the financial accounts.

PW confirmed that at the end of the financial year 2021 the membership of the society was 233 members. This comprised off 194 adult/junior members & 39 family subscriptions. PW stated that the society membership subscriptions remain stable despite the difficulties surrounding covid. PW further stated that the Trustees met twice in the reporting period & the committee met 4 times. PW reminded the membership that the operational aspect of the society is delegated to the committee.

PW highlighted that the society is still running its fortnightly talks program via Zoom. However, the society was hoping to return to in person talks in the near future. PW stated that he hoped in person talks could resume in September 2022. PW also stated that the society held 22 fortnightly talks. These were conducted via Zoom which enabled the society to obtain guest speakers from further afield to include guest speakers from CALTech & Ireland.

PW passed on the Trustees thanks to Edward Cooper for operating the Zoom hosting throughout the year.

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PW advised that public engagement through the reporting period was limited due to Covid restrictions. However, the society was able to contribute to the Science festival and the science & vision event. These were held virtually with success.

PW also advised that the society hosted along with Bristol & Bath Astronomical societies a webinar on extreme stellar environments. PW stated that the three societies may seek to repeat the event in 2022.

PW reminded the society that the observatory had not been used by the membership or the public throughout 2021. However, the site had been visited regularly by the committee & the Trustees to ensure the site is good order.

PW stated that JC had recently taken on the role of observatory manager. JC will be taking an active role to ensure the site is used more often and explore the development of courses at the site.

PW highlighted that during 2021 the library was inaccessible as this is located at Cardiff University and due to the restrictions access was not possible.

PW reminded the society of the contribution it makes to the UKMON and that our coordinator Edward Cooper is planning an upgrade to our infrastructure.

Furthermore, PW advised that the society maintains our website with our webmaster Kath Crompton fulfilling this role.

PW asked the membership whether there were any questions about the narrative element of the report.

No questions were raised.

RB advised that prior to the meeting the statement of accounts along with a Treasurer's report had been issued. RB advised will summarize the financial position of the society.

RB advised that the societies financial summary for the year were not typical due to lack of in person meetings. RB stated that the main source of income was obtained from members subscriptions. A gift aid payment of £328.00 was also received. A further £63.00 were obtained from the amazon smile scheme. RB thanked the members who had signed up to the scheme.

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RB reported that the main costing to the society for the reporting period was the Trustee insurance. RB stated that the other main costings were for webhosting and the Zoom license as speaker expenses were minimal due to the use of Zoom.

RB advised that the society made a surplus of £1341.00. At the end of the reporting period the total cash at bank amount to the society was £10,509.00.

RB highlighted that the societies financial outlook remained positive. However, the financial year 2022 in terms of budgeting would be difficult to forecast due to the ongoing covid 19 pandemic. RB wanted to give thanks to our external examiner Phil Smith for his work in auditing the financial report.

RB asked the membership if there were any questions about the year end accounts for 2021.

No questions were raised.

RB advised the financial forecasting for 2022 solely depends on the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. If during 2022 the fortnightly talks remain solely online, then the society is likely to produce a budget surplus. However, if the talks program resumed in person, then a deficit is likely to be produced. RB summarized by stating that in terms of budget the society year end accounts for 2022 would break even.

RB advised he would be seeking re-election as Trustee for the current year [2022] & as society Treasurer but would look to step down from both roles at the 2023 AGM. RB welcomed any member to take on the role and would coach any volunteer.

RB asked the membership for any further questions.

No questions were raised.

PW gave thanks to RB for his contributions to the society over the years.

PW requested that two members propose that the report is approved. This was performed by Tim Wallace & Peter Bennett.

The report was approved by all with no objections or abstentions.

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5. Election of Trustees.

PW advised that the current Trustees were PW GT NP JC & RB. PW further advised all Trustees were seeking re-election.

PW stated as he was seeking re-election it would be improper to hold such an election.

TC then chaired the meeting.

TC reminded the membership that the Trustees & committee members are volunteers. Further, the Trustees also had the burden of the society liabilities. TC wished to give thanks to all the Trustees & committee members.

TC asked the membership to vote to re-elect all the Trustees. All members voted in favour with no objections or abstentions.

PW resumed chair of the meeting.

6. Election of committee officers.

PW reminded the membership that according to the society constitution as a charitable interest organisation, the Trustees must be re-elected each year. However, the committee is appointed by the Trustees to conduct the overall operation of the society. However, PW posed a vote for the approval of the committee by the members. The committee was constituted as stated above.

The vote was held to re-appoint the committee. The entire membership approved without objection or abstention.

7. Topics for discussion

PW reminded the membership that topics for discussion were needed to be submitted to the Trustees one week prior to the meeting.

No topics were submitted by the membership.

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PW stated that the Trustees raised the issue of the attempt to return to an in person format for the fortnightly talks program. PW advised that the use of Zoom does have some benefits, however, this was no substitute to in person talks. PW advised the members that the intention would be to return to in person talks as soon as possible. However, this would be dictated by the actions of Cardiff University.

PW stated that the intention would be to attempt in person talks possibly for June & July. However, this would depend on any conditions set by Cardiff University regarding Covid safety.

PW asked the members if there were any questions about this.

A member stated that they prefer the Zoom format as this mitigated the travel need to attend a presentation. Furthermore, there could be other benefits including saving costs & obtaining guest speakers from abroad. The member questioned whether it would be possible to consider hybrid talks where some members could view remotely.

PW advised that this had been considered. A number of considerations would need to be undertaken. These include IT hardware & wifi access. Furthermore, this would depend on the guest speakers as well. PW advised that some speakers may comfortably do talks remotely. PW further advised that the committee will still consider this format.

RB requested the members if they had access to the Cardiff University IT infrastructure as this would allow for easy wifi access.

None of the members were able to offer such support.

GT commented that some speakers may be concerned about the copyright of delivering a talk via Zoom. Some speakers may be concerned that the session could be recorded then uploaded to social media such as YouTube. GT advised that if the membership did want to pursue such a format, this could be looked into but does make organization of such talks more complicated.

TC commented that if a Zoom format is considered and that a speaker has travelled to Cardiff to deliver a presentation, the speaker may be disappointed to be put in front of a camera and a handful of persons. PW agreed with this observation. TC was also concerned with the potential reputational harm if speakers were disappointed with the format of the talk and the associated disadvantages in regards to engagement.

PW also highlighted that the society does not pay speaker appearance fees. Speakers attend and present in their own time. TC stated that the society is able to obtain high

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quality speakers based upon a reputation of excellent hospitality. This would then be difficult to achieve if a hybrid option is used.

PW advised that the topic would be explored further in the next committee meeting. However, the main focus would be to try and return to in person presentations at Cardiff University.

GT commented that in the developing the 2022 – 23 talks programme most presenters were assuming any requests made by the society was for an in person format.

No further comments or questions were raised.

8. Bill Sutherland Award.

PW reminded the members the nature of the award,

PW advised that the award could not be issued for the year 2021 as it has not been possible to organize any events that do not include committee members. Therefore the committee decided not to issue the award this year.

9. Any other business

PW invited the members for any questions.

A member requested whether the society would be able to make use of the observatory at Dyffryn gardens in the autumn. PW advised that the main issue would be whether the National Trust would allow the use of the Cory centre. PW advised that discussions with the National Trust are ongoing. TC also highlighted that works are also required on the observatory.

Meeting closed at 20:10

Minutes drawn by Greg Titley Secretary Cardiff Astronomical Society