

The Open University Astronomy Club

MINUTES OF THE 2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2009

The AGM of the OU Astronomy Club was held at 9.30 p.m. in the Physics Seminar Room on the OU Walton Hall Campus. 18 Members were present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Barrie Jones and Tim Walker.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

These were circulated at the meeting, and were posted on the website for the whole year. These were approved. Proposer: John Walters, Seconder: Peter Hudson.

3. MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that this was the end of his second year in the post and pointed out that he may not be able to continue as chairman for the whole 2009/2010 session as his position at the university was uncertain because of budget cuts in the Physics department. He said that Andy Norton (the previous chairman) was willing to step in should he have to leave. He said the club enjoyed another successful year albeit a little quiet because of the problems with the telescope/observatory. The quality of speakers was very good, with several talks coming from university students and club members. He thanked Peter Hudson for his interesting and entertaining Sky Notes. He also thanked John and Sheridan for their hard work as club Treasurer and Secretary.

He also reported on the state of the observatory, noting that the structural problems were still there but not getting worse. The telescope had also been away for repairs and reconditioning and, after it has been collimated will be one of the best 16" telescopes in the country. He is anxious that the club makes serious use of the observatory and has at least one project in operation shortly.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer presented the annual accounts. Although the closing balance is less than last year this was largely because of unforeseen payments that were made to one of last year's speaker's expenses. The Treasurer recommended that the membership fees remain unchanged at £8 for OU Staff and £10 for non-OU Staff. Subscriptions are now due.

He reported that we did not spend any money on equipment during the year, neither did we apply for any grants this year.

6. SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary reported that there were 38 people on the Yahoo mailing list despite there being only 20 paid-up members. Once again he asked if it was the views of the members that non paid-up members should remain on the list. The consensus was that they should be left there.

The secretary confirmed that we are listed on the BAA website as an affiliated club/society, Diana Parsons and Peter Hudson volunteered to keep *Astronomy Now* and *Sky at Night* magazines' club/society pages up to date on the club's activities and meetings.

Action: Peter Hudson & Diana Parsons

The secretary reported that the new web site (<http://ouastro.co.uk>) was functioning well and asked if anyone was willing to assist in making it more interesting"

The Yahoo Group communication facility was proving very useful to members to enable them to exchange information.

7. REPORT BY THE OBSERVATORY WORKING GROUP

Jonti said the telescope did not come back from a full service until October and was now working very well. It still needs collimation. He suggested that next month's club night (April) should be devoted to using the observatory.

Peter Hudson will investigate high quality AVI cameras, and we will then apply for a grant to obtain this. There is also the possibility of an auto-guider being purchased but not out of club funds.

Daylight is still visible through the walls, but strain gauges show that the situation is not getting any worse!

As the area outside the observatory is likely to be turned into more car parking, several people have written to those responsible asking for serious consideration about the level of lighting.

In the coming year it has been proposed that the club uses the observatory for two main purposes:

1. General observation of interesting objects and events
2. A project that requires serious and repeated recording and measurement. An example proposed by Peter Hudson, was the monitoring of the Hubble Variable Nebula.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were re-elected:

Chairman: Dr Jonti Horner
Treasurer: Mr John Walters
Secretary: Mr Sheridan Williams

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Peter Hudson suggested that the club might like to purchase a superior webcam and will investigate the options.

Action: Peter Hudson

A question was asked how we were to avoid future clashes with Physics department talks. Jonti said that he had spoken to them and they will try and arrange for their talks to be on the second Tuesday of the month.

With the International Year of Astronomy now on us, it was asked if we were going to get involved with schools. The general opinion was that as astronomy is not now on the curriculum they would not be interested. A couple of members related their experiences of collaboration with schools and these were very negative.

There was no other business and the meeting was closed at 10:25pm.

I certify that this is a true record of the meeting as approved by the membership.

Chairman _____

Date 3 March 2009