
Wednesday 24th February 2021

Present:- Mike Kirkham (MK) Chair, Richard Young (RY), James Dale (JD), Phil Leigh (PL), Nigel Osborne (NO), Joan Brame (JB), Peter Bruce (PB), Lesley Bird (LB), Peter Corbett(PC) Linda Harper (notetaker).

1. Welcome and apologies

MK welcomed all.

2. Notes from last meeting

No notes available.

3. Finance

JD updated on current position. There has been little in the way of transactions on the account.

As on 4th Jan 2021:-

General Acc- £931.32 of which £190.70 restricted funds. £870 available.
£45 from Coffee Pot still to be paid in.

Restoration Acc- £113.57 remains after payment to Solicitors for work done on licence agreement. Project currently on hold.

No anticipated income/outgoings for either acc.

Discussion followed on how to proceed once we are able to recommence meetings. 2 possible options regarding membership subs-

- i) Keep membership year Jan-Jan and charge pro-rata rate for remainder of this year,
- ii) Change membership year completely and start from when meetings restart.

Once we know more about when meetings may be able to resume this will be discussed further.

JD mentioned that he had received subscription for this year from 1 member.

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JD also still to get necessary paperwork from bank in order to transfer the Treasurer role to PC, he will do this when possible, MK thanked him for continuing in the role during this time and PC for taking on the role.

4. Online/ Programme planning

RY and PL working on this. RY suggested repeating some of the older presentations he has given having reworked them.

Next online meeting due 3/3/21 – PL has reworked his presentation on Radio Astronomy and is happy to present this. RY will follow on 2 weeks later with a presentation on The Sun.

RY has revamped his Podcast starting March 21, this will include the usual content but will pick a Constellation and describe how to find it, along with what is nearby for people to look for such as Messier clusters. (Starting with Cancer as there are no specific bright stars within this constellation to make identifying it easy.)

Thought to be given to a programme for when we recommence meetings, this is unlikely to be until May/June time so the skies will be light and observing not possible. NO suggested an evening using the Scopes and getting used to setting them up so members are used to this once observing possible.

Another area to look at is presentations aimed at younger members of the group, although not many at present there have been enquiries from potential new members who have children who are interested in Astronomy.

A point was made that there have been some good presentations recently and that there should be some way that these can be put onto website for members to access, however whilst this works for the slide presentations it is harder for the accompanying presenter notes to be added, more thought needed on this.

5. What's up with 'Whats app'

Discussion followed on whether we continue to use 'Whats App' in view of the changes to the terms and conditions that have been brought in.

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All present agreed WhatsApp group a good asset to members.

An option would be to change to Signal, another free platform which claims not to collect personal data.

Show of hands – Do we keep 'WhatsApp' Yes to keep 6, No/or no Vote 4. Majority vote at present to keep.

However this will be reviewed when we see if members choose to stay with the group or leave, it will then be reassessed.

MK to prepare e-mail to go out to members informing them of this decision and to give the opportunity for comment. (MK)

6. PLI – Insurance

Currently lapsed but as no meetings being held then not a problem. JD has been in contact with insurers and policy is in place for when meetings recommence, will just need to be paid.

NO asked about insurance for contents at Whepstead, the Telescopes, Lap-top, Projector etc, was this still covered? JD will look at insurance again possibly to get contents cover in place. (JD)

7. Government roadmap/Whepstead

Unknown at present when we are likely to be able to resume meetings, earliest possible would seem to be May 17th but more likely June 21st when all restrictions are lifted. Will be guided by Whepstead committee.

MK will contact Secretary at Whepstead (Di) for update and check with her that all previous conditions are still in place regarding rent, availability etc. (MK)

Risk Assessment will need review.

All agreed it will be good to be able to give members some idea of when we may be able to restart meetings.

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8. AOB

Future income, MK advised work on basis that we are unlikely to get any income from outside events this year. Whitsun Fayre maybe cancelled or unlikely to go ahead in a format where we would have our usual display, however there is a chance that we may be asked to be involved at the Food and Drink Fayre on August Bank Holiday if this goes ahead.

Once restrictions lifted it is possible that the National Trust will contact again for events.

NO asked if it was likely that the October Star Party will go ahead, unknown at present, decision will come from council. (Thought to be unlikely though).

PB said that if all happy he is preparing a short edition of the Extra Celstial around the recent Mars Perseverance landing. All agreed good idea and go ahead.

Action Plan			
Page/Item	Action	Action by	Status
24/2/21 P2	MK to prepare e-mail for members re 'WhatsApp' and the decision to continue to use.	MK	New
24/2/21 P3	JD to review insurance and if necessary get contents cover for equipment at Whepstead.	JD	New
24/2/21 P3	MK to make contact with Di (sec at Whepstead) for update and to ensure all in place for resuming when allowed	MK	New

