
Wednesday 25th August 2021

Present:- Mike Kirkham (MK) Chair, Richard Young (RY), Nigel Osborne (NO), Peter Corbett(PC) Linda Harper (notetaker).

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies received from Phil Leigh, Joan Brame and Peter Bruce.

MK welcomed all in particular Peter C in his new role as Treasurer.

2. Previous Minutes

Agreed as accurate account.

3. Action

E-mail to Whepstead for confirmation previous rental agreement still in place. Complete

E-mail to members advising of resumption of meetings. Complete

Make contact with Mark P and Peter B re: Website. Ongoing

Access to Comm Centre to allow equipment check. Complete

NO contacting Cambs Uni re visit to Observatory – no response at present. Complete

4. Outgoing Committee Members – (James Dale and Lesley Bird)

Agreed that as James D has been with the AAA since early days as Treasurer all agreed that some recognition of this be made. Any thoughts and ideas to MK/LH

Lesley B has resigned from committee and also membership of AAA due to other commitments, MK has been in contact and thanked her for her work with committee.

5. Finance

PC gave an update on the current financial situation.

a) General Account: £596.93, Restoration Account: £137, Cash: £45.79

Payments pending include £118 for rent at Whepstead, Zoom fees, E-mail accounts, these will reduce available balance in general account to **£430** approx.

PC asked about the £100 set aside as restricted funds to pay for speakers etc, MK suggested and all agreed that due to limited funds this now be considered part of the overall balance in the general account.

PC to contact bank to request new Debit Cards for both accounts as previous ones cancelled following change of Treasurer details.

PC to identify how many fully paid up members will be needed to meet basic outgoings. (Action PC)

b) Discussion followed that new membership year will now run from 1/9/21- 31/8/22, fees will remain the same for this year but will be kept under review depending on membership numbers. Members will also be asked to complete a new membership form so details can be updated, it will also include ICE information which will be kept as papercopy and digitally via the drop-box accessible by committee members only. PC to contact Mark P for update to website. (Action PC)

Membership fees had been received from one member for the past year however due to no meetings and no participation on zoom meetings agreed that if this is queried by the member then the fee paid will role over for the new year.

c) Some issues were identified with the Agreement with Whepstead, PC will clarify these with Di, secretary/treasurer for Whepstead CC. (Action PC)

d) Zoom payments: currently paying £14pm, set up by MK and have been used for online meetings during lockdown. All agreed that these should now stop as meetings have resumed at Whepstead. MK will receive payments for these from general acc £43.

6. Next 12 months – the next steps

a) Membership – how do we rebuild/recruit new members? Potential new members who enquire via the website can be invited to come along to 2 free meetings as has been. Other ways to encourage new members identified as social media- facebook and twitter. MK suggested a short piece in the Bury Flyer. Agreed to take this slowly whilst members get used to attending meetings in person again, possibly at the end of October the meeting can be opened up to residents of Whepstead as had been previously suggested. (Members would be advised of this in advance).

b) Members programme – RY/NO to alternate as they have been doing on zoom meetings.

Suggested programme as follows, this will be subject to change as the opportunities for Observing improve as the nights get darker.

1st Sept- RY to recap on recent presentations on zoom, covering 6/12 up to Capricorn

15th Sept – NO to repeat his presentations on deep sky objects for same areas

29th Sept – RY Aquarius and beyond

13th October – NO deep sky objects for above

27th October – RY – Pisces. (Possibly open meeting for Whepstead residents so weather permitting may be spent observing)

c) Outreach / External and Internal Events

Following discussion agreed that it is likely to be 2022 before any external events are attended, looking ahead hopefully the Whitsun Fayre and Food and Drink Fayre will be the target.

If any member is approached for talk/presentation then it will be up to that individual if they wish to do so.

Star Party – not known what is likely to happen with these, hopefully they can be restarted at sometime in the future in some form as they were successful and well attended.

Agreed no commitment to attend events at present.

7. Suffolk Community Restart Fund- (Grant Application)

MK explained to the meeting that this is a new initiative to help clubs, associations etc get going again following opening up of society. There is a maximum grant award of £2500 available, all present agreed that an application should be made on behalf of the AAA.

Suggestions to be added to application included a second laptop and projector, additional power packs for the go-to telescopes, high definition camera with wi-fi capability.

MK will put together an application and submit it. (MK)

8. AGM

Although we are not required to hold AGM it was agreed that one should be scheduled into the new year and a suggestion made to hold one in March 2022. All agreed.

As Peter C has taken over the role of Treasurer it means that a new scrutineer will be required prior to the AGM – (James Dale could possibly be approached to carry out this role.)

9. Restoration Project – is it still viable? If so next steps

The project is currently halted, the solicitors who were working on the licence agreement have been paid for the work carried out so far.

General discussion followed as to how to proceed or if the whole project should be placed on hold permanently. Concerns were raised around the commitment of the Council, Bury Town Trust/ Bury Society to the project, how much do they believe in the project, would they wish to take it on and use the AAA for professional guidance?

RY also raised the issue of access to the Observatory even if completed due to having to deal with both the council and Sodexo to arrange said access, this could prove difficult.

MK to write to all committee members to gather further views as to how to proceed. (MK)

The present situation is that there are no further funds to proceed with licence agreement and funds that had been promised have caveat that they cannot be used to pay for this licence.

10. AOB

RY if a procedure could be put in place for dealing with enquiries from public such as requests for help setting up scopes. Possibly a request log could be started which could be monitored and acted on via drop-box. Needs all committee to have access to this, how to access to be checked with Mark P.

Refreshments at members meetings, agreed that small charge will be made of £1 to include hot/cold drink and biscuits. (It had been noticed at previous meetings that the request for a donation was not always met) Once refreshments start being available again JB/LH will deal with.

Action Plan			
Page/Item	Action	Action by	Status
19/5/21 P1	MK to e-mail Whepstead secretary to confirm agreed rental agreement still in place	MK	Complete

19/5/21 P2	MK to prepare e-mail to go out to members to update on planned resumption of meetings	MK	Complete
19/5/21 P3	MK to contact Mark P and Peter B regarding updating of website.	MK	Ongoing
19/5/21 P3	NO to contact Whepstead secretary for access to centre to carry out equipment check/inventory.	NO	Complete
19/5/21 P3	NO to contact Cambridge University Observatory for provisional date for visit.	NO	Complete
25/8/21 P2	PC to identify number of paid up members needed to meet basic outgoings for the year	PC	New
25/8/21 P2	PC to contact Mark P re Membership/Fee details for update to website	PC	New
25/8/21 P2	PC to clarify issues identified with rental agreement for Whepstead with Secretary/Treasurer.	PC	New
25/8/21 P4	MK to submit grant application to Restart Fund for additional equipment.	MK	New
25/8/21 P4	MK to write to committee members to gather thoughts on how to/if to proceed with Restoration project	MK	New

