

**SAGAS QUARTERLY MEETING**  
**16th April 2011**  
**Held at the South Downs Planetarium**  
**Chairing Society: Worthing Astronomers**

**Item 1 Introduction & Welcome**

Phil Alner, Acting SAGAS Chairman, Cody AS, opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. He introduced Jan Young and Brian Halls of Worthing Astronomers who were the chairing society for the meeting.

Brian Halls ran through the required safety procedures in the event them being required.

**Item 1.2 Societies Present**

Crawley AS  
Cody AS  
Eastbourne AS  
Edenbridge AS  
Foredown Tower Astronomers  
Guildford AS  
Hampshire Astronomical Group  
Hants Astro  
Horsham Astronomical Group  
Worthing Astronomers

**Item 1.2 Apologies For Absence**

John Murrel Croydon AS  
John Axtell, Guildford AS  
George Hurrion, Foredown Tower Astronomers  
Danny Thomas, Farnham AS  
Peter Campbell-Burns, Farnham AS  
Richard Flux, Vectis  
Jan & John Whittington, South Downs AS  
James Fradgley Wessex AS  
Bob Mizon Wessex AS

The SAGAS attendance was low in numbers due the meeting clashing with the BAA Lunar Section Meeting and the BAA Winchester Weekend.

**Item 2 Minutes of the January 2011 Meeting and Matters Arising**

Brian Halls gave thanks to Wessex AS for chairing the January meeting.

He also mentioned that it was Jan *Young* not Jan *Halls* as stated in the minutes that had been thanked by George Hurrion of Foredown Tower Astronomers for her efforts as the previous editor of SAGAS Offline.

Danny Thomas, Farnham AS, was not the chairman as stated, that was Peter Campbell-Burns.

The Lunar Globe, which had been mentioned as missing, had been found safe at the Planetarium.

Society Reports - new guidelines had been circulated but few reports received. David Inmann, Foredown Tower Astronomers, noted that they had contained more comments from John Murrell, SAGAS Webmaster, Croydon AS, than actual details from societies.

Phil Alner explained that the former Society Reports were cumbersome and long and the committee wanted items of interest to other Societies rather than just general chit chat.

**Item 2.1 Committee Reports**

Phil Alner took over the meeting at this point and mentioned that there had been a Committee Meeting prior to the meeting. He read out a communication giving the reasons and objectives as why SAGAS

had appointed a committee.

There followed a hearty exchange of views, between the Chair (Worthing Astronomers), the SAGAS committee, Hants Astro and Hampshire AG concerning matters arising from the numerous committee resignations of October and recent emails to and from committee member(s).

Keith Brackenborough closed the debate by commenting that the differences of opinion of all those involved clearly showed a passionate caring about the future of SAGAS and at that it was agreed by all in attendance that a line should be drawn under this, leave the past behind and move forward.

### **Item 3 Society Reports**

Keith Brackenborough, Eastbourne AS, commented that continual Society Reports are not necessary as they are often repetitive and contain irrelevant information. Phil Alner explained that it was one of the failures of the old system which made the reports much too long which doing things in the new way should avoid.

Keith also commented that they have had a rise of membership due to the Stargazer's Live event - and most importantly, youngsters . Phil Alner commented that the recent series of programmes by Brian Cox have raised the profile of Astronomy to the public with which everyone in the hall concurred.

Hants Astro also agreed that they too have had a rise in membership, but in their case it has been an increase of female members - perhaps a so called Brian Cox factor!

David Inmann spoke on behalf of Wadhurst AS who have had a new member join, very worried about 2012 being the 'end of the world'. David asked if this should be a point that should be covered by societies to teach the public to the contrary. Phil Alner stated that Cody AS have also come across a similar occurrence.

It was decided that each SAGAS Society should approach this subject if raised by a member in a suitable manner!

Tony Questa announced that his society, Guildford AS, now have charitable status which is a big advantage for them and recommended it to societies who could benefit from this financially and have not yet done so. One of the first things that Guildford learnt about from other societies upon their joining SAGAS, was to apply for a Lottery Grant which they did with success.

Worthing Astronomical Society have become another group to join SAGAS.

### **Item 4 FAS**

Keith Brackenborough as the SAGAS FAS representative, attended the FAS meeting on March 5th, 2011 and reported the following:

Concerns that SAGAS as a large group does not support FAS events enough. More SAGAS societies could attend the FAS Convention/AGM in October and have asked SAGAS for more support and help with advertising the event.

Paper and electronic Newsletters are being continued to be issued side by side because more society members get to see the paper copy as not all representatives pass on the electronic copy to their members. Phil Alner said that Cody AS normally end up with a huge pile of paper copies left over!

The present rate of subscriptions are to be held over until 2012 and the early renewal system used this year will be repeated.

The FAS has also requested patience for the receipts for subscriptions to be received and remind members that they are a voluntary organisation and it all takes time!

The next FAS Meeting is to be held on 14th October 2011 at Cambridge. There is talk that the meeting in 2012 will be held in Manchester possibly at Jodrell Bank, which makes it somewhat difficult for the more southern members such as those who belong to SAGAS societies.

Phil Alner proposed that as 2013 sees the 40th anniversary of SAGAS a joint SAGAS/FAS event might

be considered.

Keith ended his report by reminding everyone present that he is the SAGAS representative to the FAS and through him anyone can raise questions/points that can be put to the FAS council.

Tony Questa raised the question of the FAS Insurance and asked if the question of what and what was not covered had been resolved. Keith said he believed that it was just the Public Liability and members of societies that were covered.

Tony passed comment that Society telescopes were not covered, but Keith said it was impossible because of so many differences in equipment and it was something that the FAS did not wish to be come involved in. Details of the Insurance policy can be found on the FAS website.

Keith added that the societies with the larger membership will still pay more than those with fewer members.

Phil Alner asked those present, if anyone objected to material submitted to SAGAS Offline being passed to the editor of the FAS Newsletter, which the committee have agreed to which those present concurred with.

David Inmann reminded Keith on behalf of George Hurron also of Foredown Tower Astronomers, that the promised FAS document relating to Children and Vulnerable Adults still had not been produced.

#### ***Item 5 Isle Of Wight Star Party***

Since no one from Vectis As was present, as an attendee of the event, Tony Questa gave a short report.

It was the 4th 'Terrific Star Party' and was recommended as it was more interesting than the Kelling Heath event. The site the site being the most southern point of the UK also an uninterrupted and dark view right down to the south horizon which makes it worthwhile attending just for that. This year general observers and imagers were given separate areas. There is a discount for the ferry and it feels like a holiday because you have to cross the sea to get there!

#### ***Item 6 SAGAS Summer Meeting***

Anthony Clarke from Horsham Astronomical Group produced a provisional flyer for members to take with them for the day on **Sunday** 3rd July 2011 being held at Christ's Hospital. The prices are £10 for SAGAS members and £12 for non-SAGAS members.

Two members of Horsham AG, Peter Edwards and Alan Smith, will each be giving a talk.

#### ***Item 7 AGM - See Separate Report***

#### ***Item 8 Any Other Business***

No Any Other Business.

#### ***Item 9 Dates & Time Of Next Meeting***

Saturday 14th October 2011 at the South Downs Planetarium is the date that has been booked but is subject to change because of clashing with the FAS Convention/AGM in Cambridge. Members will be informed about any change of dates when they become available.

SAGAS Committee member, Phil Alner, closed the meeting of Saturday 16th April 2011.