

SIGMA AGM– Friday 2nd June 2023

ITEM	SUBJECT	LEAD
1	Apologies Michael Reid, Bill Leslie, Graham and Penny Milton conveyed their apologies. Other Pete welcomed the Membership and Committee to the Meeting. Minutes of the last meeting. The minutes of the last AGM were approved as no comments had been received.	Pete
2	Matters Arising. No matters arising	All
3	Chairman's Report I think you will agree this has been a very successful year for Sigma once again. Back in September we had the BAA event which really put Sigma on the map within the wider world of astronomy. We had reports back from the BAA committee that it was one of the most successful and well attended meetings they have ever had. So big thank you goes out to everybody who helped organise and run that event. However, a special thank you to Richard Oakley, Ray Palmer and Malcolm Bradley who chauffeured the BAA representatives and guests to the Glen Grant distillery on the Sunday after the event. OUTREACH Our outreach has started to pick up again now, with two or three events happened within the last 12 months. Early last summer we held a Moray Astro meet solar observing afternoon and that was in Cooper Park. Which went well and got SIGMA's name out to the general public. Early in the Autumn we gave a presentation to the Mosstodloch Cub group, this was given by Ray, which aided them to achieve their astronomy badges. Early this year we gave a presentation at the Milnorduff Hall. Once again Ray gave his presentation showing some of his wonderful photos, Tm displayed his meteorites, and I gave them a tour of the night sky using Stellarium. As always it was too cloudy to do any observing, on both occasions. The George Fraser Memorial Lecture last month was a huge success. Once again, I believe we delivered it in a very professional looking way. Although there may not have been an overwhelming number of people viewing it on the night, the YouTube video has now had over 660 views within three weeks. So this means that SIGMA's online presence is certainly working as a good form of outreach.	Pete

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MEETINGS

I hope you will agree with me that we've had some fantastic speakers this past year. With our usual varied array of topics and subjects, presented in a professional but light hearted manner by all involved. We also held our first equipment workshop here in Lhanbryde which was very successful and enjoyable. I know many of our members learned something new to aid them with their enjoyment of observing the night sky. We shall of course be holding more of these I will try to cover different topics and subjects. So if any of you have any queries and questions about equipment or observing please do let me know and we'll try to arrange something that will benefit everybody.

DONATIONS

As you will be aware we now have all of the equipment that was donated to us by Helen Pollock. I must also give another thank you to Helen for this wonderful donation of not just telescopes but the 2.7 metre Pulsar Dome. The Dome was dismantled in April this year in a great team effort between Richard Oakley, Anne Burgess, Rob and Jackie Eddie, Helen and myself. So a big thank you to all for giving us a hand to get that job sorted. I think Helen is very happy to have a little bit of her garden back again that's for sure.

Not only did we bring back the Dome that day but we also brought back the 20 inch Dobsonian mirror, indeed handmade mirror which was ground down by Helen's late husband, Grant.

This will be a project for the future, a club project where we can all get together to create this mammoth telescope. That is once we can think of somewhere to locate it, so if anybody has any ideas or thoughts of where this could be kept please let me know.

The club also had donations of telescopes and photo-graphical equipment from Megan Argo from her late father's estate former Club member Stewart Argo. Many of you will remember Stewart, he was the Sigma treasurer and the chairman for a while a few years back. A very valued Sigma member with a wealth of knowledge and gave some wonderful talks to the club. And he will be sorely missed.

OBSERVING

Once again the weather's been pretty awful over the last observing season. There has been a few good evenings but usually when we have a full moon or high winds. However, now with the Sigma observing group (SOG) for short, being run by Rich Oakley Jackie and Robbie Eddie and partially by me we hope to get more observing done in the coming seasons.

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This should be made a little bit easier for you, once the Dome is erected. The plan will be for the Dome to be put up in my back garden in place of my existing observatory and you will be able to book time on it and to be able to use the Williams Optics telescope that will be erected within it.

This does not mean that we will no longer hold our usual observing events, when a group of us can get together and enjoy the night sky together. However, having the facility of the Dome will make it easier to do some observing and indeed some astrophotography. As I think this facility will be a great aid where we can come together and learn how to take images of astronomical objects. Whilst in are relatively comfortable and warmer area than in the middle of a field.

I also know that Ray has offered his observatory for you to visit and use so we now have two places where you can learn how to operate a well equipped observatory.

IN CONCLUSION

So, in conclusion I think Sigma is going from strength to strength which provides a superb educational facility which is held in a friendly and fun atmosphere. The membership is holding steady with new members seeming to join regularly and obviously on the flip side of that we do have some members that leave every year which is totally understandable owing to personal circumstances. However, on the whole the membership is holding constant but more about that from Mick in a while.

Going forward I'm sure that Sigma will carry on improving, with new and returning speakers. The list of which is growing all the time, we have a very successful platform which I see no reason to change. If something isn't broke don't fix it is my motto. Though we will endeavour to do more of these workshop type events in the future, to give you even more value to your membership fee.

Thanks

I know that I'm going to forget to thank someone here, and I'll apologise now for that now. It's not that I'm not appreciative of you, but more that there's so many of you that have helped the club out in many ways over the last twelve months.

I'll start with the committee;

Secretary

Richard, - my right-hand man. Richard has been the club's secretary for the past four years and has done a superb job. He communicates with me and other committee members regularly to ensure that all the cogs that keeps the SIGMA machine running smoothly are correctly meshed. As with all the committee members we are all volunteers and have regular jobs. Richard also has many other

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committee rolls within other clubs all taking up his time. However, despite this he completes his secretarial tasks in a timely fashion. This includes but not exclusively, meeting and greeting the speakers, arranging their accommodation, preparing agendas and minute, and organising the meeting refreshments with his wife Glenis.

Treasurer

Stuart, also has been treasurer now for many years, I think this is his eighth or ninth year. He does a sterling job at controlling the clubs' finances with meticulous records, and a balance sheet that are correct to the penny every year. Like Richard, he too has many fingers in other committee pies.

Membership

For another year Mick has done a wonderful job of controlling the membership records. With reports of meeting stats coming out within hours of the meeting ending. He follows up on any membership enquiries ensuring we have a steady stream of new members joining.

Events

Similarly, Chris has done a stunning job arranging a variety of speakers and talks. Which really is no easy task to do and takes a lot of organisational skill. Especially with the limited spare time he has what with his job and other interest.

Website

Often, I get comments from people saying, what a wonderful and professional looking website SIGMA has. This is totally down to Helen's IT skills and knowledge. As the website is usually any potential new members first point of contact I believe this is an important part of the club.

As well as the website Helen in the lead in the new newsletter along with Rich's, Mick's and Tim's input I think we have a professional looking newsletter too.

She also keeps the SIGMA Flickr page updated with the photos you send in.

Ray and Kevin

Ray and Kevin are vital members of the committee too. Ray since joining the committee last year has been busy writing articles about the club for inclusion in Astronomy Now and The Sky at Night magazines. He arranged the outreach session at Milton Duff and gave a talk to the Mosstodloch cubs. Kevin is always a fantastic help, he's what we call the ideas man. At most committee meeting he always come out with some superb ideas that I'm sure none of us would have thought of. Additionally not forgetting the yearly quiz that he arranged in December, last year marked his 7th year of doing so. With that, he has decided to pass this responsibility on, Ray has stepped up to the mark and he will be your quiz master this year.

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Tim & Bill

Our club presidents Tim Schroder and Bill Leslie are a valuable asset for SIGMA. I know Bill would love to be more active within the club, but owing to family ties and health issues this is not possible. Though he does follow what is going on via emails, always responds with ideas and picks me up on any issues he feels needs attending to.

Tim as you know is very active during meetings and events and is just as active behind the scenes; helping and advising the committee.

I appreciate their input so very much, as it brings a wealth of knowledge and stability to the club.

Speakers

I must also thank all of the fantastic speakers we have had over the last 12 months and all those who have contributed their bits within the meetings. Howie for the superb intro he did at the GFML, Tim & Rich for the VOTs, Stuart for the Space News, Chris for the Zoom Q&A's and Mick for his night sky guides.

All these meeting don't just happen they take a lot of time, organising and planning. These meetings are as good as they are because of all your dedication and hard work and keeps SIGMA image looking professional.

Members

Finally, I have to thank you the members. After all it is all of you that that makes the meetings and events so vibrant and active. It is always so great to hear the atmosphere that we have here at our physical meetings. Indeed, sometimes it's very hard to get you to be quiet to start the second-half of the meeting, but that's fine it just goes to show that everyone's enjoying themselves. Which is the way I would like it to be.

So once again thank you all for turning up to the meetings and events and for supporting Sigma over the last 12 months and I look forward to more exciting times in the coming year.

Peter Sherman
Chairman,
Moray's Astronomy Club, SIGMA

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4. Membership Secretary Report

Mick

Mick noted that membership total for 2022 was 69 at the year end and was 58 to date in 2023

Item 6 - Membership Secretary's Report



2022 Membership Totals

Members in 2021	67
Notified as not renewing in 2022	2
Life Members	6
Free Membership (Auditor)	1
Free Membership (For 2022)	3
New Members in 2022	15
Members renewed for 2022	44
Total Membership 2022	69

Membership 2022

CHILD	0
CONCESSIONARY	35
ORDINARY	27
LIFE	6
FREE	1
STUDENT	0
Total Membership 2022	69

2023 Membership Totals

Members in 2022	69
Notified as not renewing in 2023	3
Life Members	7
Free Membership (Auditor)	1
Free Membership (For 2023)	0
New Members in 2023	8
Members renewed for 2023	42
Total Membership 2023	58

Membership 2023

CHILD	0
CONCESSIONARY	28
ORDINARY	22
LIFE	7
FREE	1
STUDENT	0
Total Membership 2023	58

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The people attending the meetings were noted as follows:

Item 6 – Membership Secretary's Report



Monthly Meeting Attendance

Month	Comments	Sigma Members	Guests (incl Speaker)	Total Guests	Total
Jul-22	Exploring Cosmic Dawn with the James Webb Space Telescope Prof. Jim Dunlop, Royal Observatory Edinburgh	18	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 0 0 0 0 7	7	25
Aug-22	Synchronized Swinging: The (simplified) Story of Polaritons. Dr Kristin Arnardottir, University of St Andrews	18	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 0 0 0 0 3	3	21
Sep-22	A Billion Years Of Stargazing, Dr Michael Petersen, Royal Observatory Edinburgh	21	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 0 3 2 0 7	12	33
Oct-22	The Life of a Planetary System, Dr Tom Wilson, University of St Andrews	23	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 0 0 0 0 13	13	36
Nov-22	How to Run a Space Telescope, Dr Neill Reid, Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI)	33	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 0 7 2 0 21	30	63
Dec-22	Christmas Quiz & Raffle	23	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 0 0 0 0 2	2	25
Jan-23	ZOOM - Against The Odds: A Patagonian Eclipse, Mike Frost, Coventry and Warwickshire Astronomy Society	18	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 2 2 3 0 5	12	39
Feb-23	ZOOM - Einstein's Universe: The Dawn, and Exciting Future, of Gravitational-Wave Astronomy, Prof. Martin Hendry, University of Glasgow	34	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 2 4 3 0 10	19	53
Mar-23	ZOOM - What Makes a Planet Habitable. Patrick Barth, University of St Andrews and the Institute for Space Research in Graz, Austria	26	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 1 3 2 0 3	9	35
Apr-23	The Sloan Digital Sky Survey, Dr Anne-Marie Weijmans, University of St Andrews	32	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 0 0 0 0 3	3	35
May-23	Apollo 13: Beyond The Headlines, Prof Nigel Bannister, Space Park, Leicester	24	HAS AAS CAG NRAS Other 2 1 2 0 21	26	50

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5 Budgets and Accounts.

Stuart

Stuart noted that 2022 had been a year of high expenditure with the total expenditure figure being £2000 higher than the figure for 2021. The principle expense headings being speaker costs £405, refreshments £277, website £364, and capital expenditure (laptop) £488, tumblers £353 and Zoom £528. The laptop expenditure is spread over several years and the tumbler costs two years. Considerable effort is now going into limiting forward costs. However, Stuart suggested that both an increase in membership rates and ending of concessionary rates would do much to reverse the decline in balances.

Anne Burgess had audited the 2022 accounts.

5(a) Membership Fees

It was recommended to change membership rates for 2024 to:

Ordinary - £24 to £28

Concessionary - Cancelled

Student - £12 to £14

Child – Free

6. Club Programme 2023 Programme Update and 2024 Events

Chris

Chris outlined the program of talks for the remainder of 2023 and for 2024. He noted that the remainder of the 2023 was in place with Dr Ray Palmer (SIGMA) had agreeing to do the November talk, with Rich and Pete agreeing to do presentations in 2024. the early 2024 program consisting of Andy Green, Prof Brad Gibson and March Prof Ian Robson. The remainder of 2023 would consist of; July an equipment evening, August John Davies, September Brian Kelly and October Gordon Mackie

7. Resolutions

A23.1 To accept the Minutes of the AGM 2022: Mick O'Donnell proposed this resolution and it was

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seconded by Ray Palmer, 36 for, none against

A23.2 To Accept the Accounts for 2022: Donna Williamson proposed this resolution and it was seconded by John Straiton, 35 for, none against, abstain 1

A23.3 To Increase Membership Rates for 2024 to £28: Ray Palmer proposed this resolution and it was seconded by Kevin Stocks, 36 for, 1 against

A23.4 To Remove the Concessionary Membership Rate: Jean Stocks proposed this resolution and it was seconded by Stuart Brooks 33 for, 3 against.

A23.5 To appoint Peter Sherman as Chairman: Chris Stradling proposed this resolution and it was seconded by Helen Williamson 36 for.

A23.6 To appoint Richard Oakley as Secretary: Tim Schroder proposed this resolution and it was seconded by Stuart Brooks 35 for, 1 abstain.

A23.7 To appoint Stuart Brooks as Treasurer: Rich Oakley proposed this resolution and it was seconded by Kevin Stocks 35 for, 1 abstain.

A23.8 To appoint Helen Williamson, Michael O'Donnell, Chris Stradling and Kevin Stocks as Committee Members; Tim Schroder proposed this resolution and it was seconded by Jean Stocks 36 for, none against

8 AOB & Comments

There were no issues raised under AOB.

Tim Schroder (President), addressing the meeting Additionally Tim thanked the Committee for working together and making the meetings enjoyable and business like, finally he thanked the members for keenly supporting the group.

9. The AGM finished at 20.30