

SIGMA AGM MEETING Minutes – Friday 6th June 2025 @ 20.00, Alves
CELEBRATING 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF SIGMA

ITEM	SUBJECT
1	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Pete welcomed the Membership and Committee to the Meeting. Chris Stradling and Stuart Brooks attending online.</p>
2	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Jackie Eadie, Jean Stocks, Malcolm Bradley, Mike Reid, Bill Leslie</p>
3	<p>QUORUM</p> <p>With 70 members currently, the number attending members exceeded the required quorum.</p>
4	<p>Minutes of AGM dated 7th June 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the last AGM were approved as no comments had been received.</p>
5	<p>Events Co-ordinator Report</p> <p><i>Chris is stepping down as Events Co-ordinator at this AGM. He expressed his appreciation for the comments in the latest monthly newsletter by the Chair. He also expressed the service that the outgoing Chair had given SIGMA.</i></p> <p>Outline programme for 2025: July – Jackie Eadie ‘Moonstruck’ Aug – Prof Lyndsay Fletcher MBE ‘Solar Atmosphere’ Sept – Holly Andrews ‘Stellar Evolution of Massive Stars’ Oct – GFML – Dame Prof Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Companion of Honour - ‘Bursts, Bangs and Things That Go Bump in the Night’ Nov – Alexander MacKinnon ‘Touching the Sun’ Dec – Annual Xmas Quiz & Raffle</p> <p>Outline proposed programme for 2026 (provisional dates/speakers): January - equipment night and the observing if the weather's suitable AGM and solar observing Christmas quiz again in December. Nine speakers confirmed for 2026: Ray Palmer from AIGMA is doing February Rich Oakley again SIGMA is March. Oscar Gonzalez from the STFC – April Graeme Young from Dundee - May. Catherine Heyman - Astronomer Royal for Scotland - October Ken McTaggart, HAS - November Maartin de Vries, David Patterson, and Mike Reus Newland</p> <p>For 2027, we've got Paul Abel. Now, he was hoping to speak to us this year. He's had a few personal issues, but I have messaged him possibly to do the GFML in 2027. Sandra Brantingham, former member of SIGMA has agreed to be a standby speaker this year in case one of our 2026 speakers is unable but has also agreed again to go for 2026. Charles Cockell is not available this year again has agreed to be pencilled in for 2027. Rita Tajiro from St. Andrews - agreed to be kept on the database and possible 2027, and she has recommended Roberta also from St. Andrews possibly as an option for 2027. Hopefully Tim will also give us</p>

	<p>a talk in 2027.</p> <p><i>Chris also stated that he will hand over the role of Event Co-ordinator to Rob Eadie.</i></p>
6	<p>Presentation of Gift to Chris</p> <p>Pete thanked Chris for his 7 years as Events Co-ordinator and presented him with a gift from the club members - a beautiful painting of a Lancaster Bomber in action to tie in with his RAF role and astronomy interest.</p>
7	<p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>I think you will agree that this year has been another, you know, fantastic sort of successful year for SIGMA. We reached this milestone the year of the club's 25th anniversary and it's truly amazing and it is testament to everybody who has been involved in the club over the years. Members, committee members, visiting speakers alike.</p> <p>There have been a wonderful array of speakers. I say thanks to Chris for his hard work for that, with talks covering many subjects with well attended and enthusiastic meetings. This year has also seen the sort of continuation of the astro workshops which have proved very very popular - a superb way of us all sharing our knowledge between each other. It's been a fantastic knowledge base.</p> <p>Many of our monthly speakers over the last 12 months have been from club members and that's going to continue - Ray and Richard in particular. I must thank them for the work they do putting these talks together. It's not easy to put a talk together believe me. By using the members as speakers at the monthly meetings it means that if the weather's bad and it prevents us from having a meeting, we do not have to cancel a visiting speaker. It also does help to keep the club's cost down a little bit as well. Funnily enough, the most highly attended meetings so far have been the ones that have been produced by the SIGMA speakers.</p> <p>Another asset to the club this year has been the observatory. It's been used for live streams of both deep sky and solar objects. Not only has there been online events for SIGMA members but also we have public events including taking part in the National Astronomy Week program which was one of the joint live streams covered by myself and Ray from his observatory in in his in his back garden.</p> <p>Outreach</p> <p>Over the last 12 months, SIGMA has visited many clubs and institutions as part of the outreach program. The RAF Lossiemouth Friends and Family Day - which we are there again tomorrow, Kinloss Cubs, UHI Moray Freshers to name a few. This will continue into next.</p> <p>We also held an observing night for the Historic Wheels Club, which was really well received and many of letters of thanks and appreciation from those who attended the night observing. Luckily enough the sky was clear!</p> <p>Observing</p> <p>This last observing season the weather has been pretty bad overall. There have been a few good evenings but as usual it's been a full moon or high winds, meaning there's been little opportunity for all to get out.</p> <p>We can only hope that 2025-2026 season will be better. Being able to do the live streams is</p>

really good - it's a saver really because even if we only get a few hours of clear sky, we can open up the observatory and live stream out. We can all sit in the warm rather than stand out in the cold.

So, please do carry on coming along to live streams if you can. It may not always be very busy on the live stream as if it is clear night, you may be out with your own telescope.

Charitable Status

As you're aware, the club is applying to become a charity. The committee is being led by Kevin with help from Helen. They have been working hard with the application process and the amendments needed to the constitution for the application to proceed further. That's all included in in the resolutions tonight.

There are many benefits of becoming a charity such as being able to advertise the club with local businesses. Some businesses don't let you put a little ad up saying we got observing sessions unless you're a charity. So that helps. It also allows us to apply grants should we need them in the future. It also allows us discounts on some of the services we use, Google being one of them. This means membership rates can be kept as low as possible. We will continue to provide updates on the application as it progresses.

Venue

In October we moved here to Alves, which has proven more than suitable for our needs and eliminate all the problems that we and issues that we were having at Lhanbryde.

Conclusion

In conclusion I think SIGMA is going from strength to strength and this is because of you members making the meetings so vibrant and interactive and making it a very welcome environment for new and existing members and speakers alike. SIGMA is still proving to be a club which provides a superb educational facility which is held in a friendly and fun atmosphere with a fantastic array of speakers and talks which were organized by Chris, our outgoing Events Co-ordinator. This will be continued when Rob takes over.

The membership is holding steady with new members seem to be joining on a regular basis. Obviously on the flip side, we always have some members that leave every year, but it's totally understandable due to personal circumstances. But overall, the membership is growing, but more than that, Mick said he's got a big momentum at the minute. He's never seen it so so active in membership, not just renewals but new members joining at this time of the year. Financially, the club is in good health thanks to Stuart's meticulous book-keeping and planning by the committee.

Having pulled back some of the losses and expenses we sort of experienced during the early years of the 2020s - we all know what happened there. The club is back in a better state than it was 2 years ago - the reason we were sort of losing a bit because we couldn't have the raffles and tea donations. There is quite a bit of revenue comes in from that. So please keep putting your money in the pot.

How SIGMA presents itself within the astronomy world appears to be highly recognised, both within professional astronomy circles and the media too. Hugh Hudson reported to us how highly SIGMA is held with many of his colleagues, for how the visiting speakers are treated and looked after when they come to visit us.

We also seem to be the first choice for the media, having been contacted by BBC Radio Scotland to do a piece on astronomy. Tim completed a fantastic interview promoting the club and amateur astronomy alike. He did this jointly alongside the Astronomer Royal for Scotland, Catherine Heymans.

The BBC made their inquiry to us via the SIGMA website which seems to be high in the search on Google these days. The club website looks very professional and eye catching which is important as it's usually as I say the first point of contact for anyone trying to make inquiries of the club.

The website is mainly updated by Helen which is no easy task and one that Helen does superbly.

Going forward, I'm sure that SIGMA will improve as it moves into the next 25 years with new and returning speakers - the list of which is growing all the time.

Thanks

I know I'm going to miss someone here. I always do - I apologize for that now.

So, as you're aware, I am standing down as Chair as of today. I want to thank all the all of the past and present committee members and members alike for all that you have done to help me and support over the years, which has made my job much easier, and I'm sure you'll continue to do the same for Ray during his tenure.

Secretary - Richard, my right-hand man. Richard has been the club secretary now for the past six years and has done a superb job. He communicates with me and the other committee members regularly to ensure that all the cogs that keep the SIGMA wheel running.

As with all the committee members, we are all volunteers and have regular jobs. Well, most of us do - some of them are retired.

Rich also has many other fingers in many other pies with other committees. You won't believe the work he's done to get all the clubs/committees he's involved with into the RAF base tomorrow.

But despite this, he completes his secretarial tasks in a timely fashion. This includes, but not exclusively, meeting and greeting the speakers, arranging accommodation and meals, preparing agendas and meetings and minutes, also organizing refreshments with Glenis and many other members - I want to thank you for that as well.

Treasurer - Stuart. You've been doing it for many years now. Stuart does a sterling job controlling the finances with meticulous records and the balance sheet that is correct to a penny every year. Like Richard he also has many fingers in other committee pies. Not forgetting the Space News he puts on for us in in the summer times as well, so Stuart thank you very much.

Membership - Mick. For another year Mick has done a wonderful job patrolling membership records, which he reports the stats coming out within hours of the meeting finishing. By the time we got home, the stats are normally in our email box saying how many members have been at each meeting and any new joiners we've had. He follows up on any membership inquiries, ensuring we have a steady stream of new members joining. With

Helen's help, Mick designed a new online membership form which is making joining SIGMA much easier. And once again, not forgetting the monthly Sky at Night you do for us every month in the winter and also out in the newsletter. Once again, I do that and I know that's no easy job.

Events - Chris. I know we thanked you already, but we'll just make this official. Thank you very much for everything you've done over the years arranging all these speakers and like I say having 2027 nearly organized is absolutely phenomenal. There's no other word for it. So, Chris thank you so very very much especially with all the limited spare time you have you know flying around on airplanes.

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

As well as the website **Helen** is the lead in a newsletter along with Rich, Mick, and Tim's input. And I think we have a professional looking newsletter as well. It's no easy job putting all this together. And she also takes care of the Flickr page as well. And not just that, she's now doing the clothes.

Ray. Since joining the committee three years ago, he's been busy writing articles for the club for inclusion in Astronomy Now and the Sky At Night magazine. This year he's actually had an image published in Astronomy Now. And you'll know that he's an accomplished astro imager who has shared his skills in the workshops and is always happy to advise members on their image inquiries, me included. And let's not forget the wonderful Christmas quiz he puts together for us as well.

Kevin. Always does a fantastic job within the community. I know I've said it before, but he's what we call the ideas man. At most committee meetings, he always comes up with something superb ideas. We've been talking about something for 15 - 20 minutes and he goes, "What about this?". You know, that's a good idea. His input towards the committee is absolutely superb. He's the lead on this charity application too.

Tim and Bill - our club Presidents - Tim Schroder and Bill Leslie. They've done a fantastic job. They are a fantastic asset for SIGMA. Unfortunately, due to family ties and health issues, Bill is stepping down as President. I would therefore like take this opportunity to officially thank him for what he has done for the club. Not just during time as President, but over the many many years that he has been a member and a committee member of SIGMA. I'm sure the club wouldn't be where it is today without his knowledge and input.

Tim, as you know, is very active during the meetings and all the events. His introduction of the Teatime Teaser. He's very very active behind the scenes as well and always giving us a little bit of nudge here and there and keeping us on the straight and narrow.

I appreciate all the input he gives. He brings a wealth of knowledge and a certain type of sort of stability to the club

Committee members. Thank you all very much for everything you do, both present, future, and past. Donna, thank you for when you're on the committee with me. Your input is very much appreciated.

Speakers. I would like to thank the speakers as well - we've had some fantastic speakers over the last 12 months. There's no doubt about it.

With other club members, visiting speakers and SIGMA members - all those who contribute their bits within the meetings as well - these meetings don't just happen, it takes a lot of time to organize and get them planned. These meetings are as good as they are because of all the dedication and hard work behind the scenes and keep SIGMA's image looking professional.

So finally, I'd like to thank all you members. After all, all of you make the meetings what they are. So vibrant and active. I would say it is always so great to hear the atmosphere like it was tonight. You know buzzing, the sort of buzzing atmosphere at all the meetings we have. Indeed. Sometimes it's hard to get you back in for the second half and get us going again. But that doesn't matter, it is part of the club and that's what we are and it's great. So once again thank you all very much for turning up to the meeting and the events and for supporting SIGMA over the last 12 months, and the last 25 years, and I look forward to more exciting times in the coming years. So, thank you all and with that I will end my report.

Pete Sherman
Chair

8

Membership Secretary's Report

Monthly Meeting Attendance					
Month	Members Attendance	Guests	Total Attendees	% of Members Attended	Comments
05-Jul-24	21 (of 64)	1	22	33%	Equipment Night/Solar Observing – (Public evening, not all attendees accounted for)
02-Aug-24	22 (of 64)	0	22	34%	Navigating the Night Sky. Pete Sherman, SIGMA
06-Sep-24	16 (of 64)	6	22	25%	SunSketcher: How Round is the Sun? Dr. Hugh Hudson, University of Glasgow
04-Oct-24	28 (of 69)	4	32	41%	Weird Stars. Pauline Macrae, HAS
01-Nov-24	33 (of 70)	4	38	47%	Exploring small planets with TESS, HARPS-N and CHEOPS. Prof. Andrew Cameron, Univ. of St Andrews
06-Dec-24	25 (of 75)	2	27	33%	Christmas Quiz & Raffle
10-Jan-25	20 (of 56)	10	30	36%	ONLINE Stream: Jupiter, Sky at Night, Moon, Mars (replacing Equipment Night)
01-Feb-25	18 (of 67)	10	28	27%	Observing & Equipment Night (Rescheduled from 10 Jan 25 due to weather)
07-Feb-25	30 (of 67)	9	39	45%	Light – The Eternal Messenger of The Stars – An Overview of Stellar Spectroscopy. Dr Ray Palmer, SIGMA

07-Mar-25	29 (of 68)	6	35	43%	The Yorkshire Man, The Astronomer and the King. Rich Oakley, SIGMA
04-Apr-25	30 (of 69)	5	35	43%	Detecting and characterising planets around other stars. Ken Rice, Royal Observatory Edinburgh
02-May-25	35 (of 73)	1	36	48%	Beginning Deep Sky Observing Callum Potter, BAA (Deep Sky Section)

The above table gives the monthly attendance of (paid-up) members and guests.

It was a disappointed to see the low figures for Hugh Hudson's talk. It was a great talk as always with Hugh and I didn't think we had so few on the evening. It was the worst attendance figure in 2024.

The next lowest figure was for the re-scheduled equipment night which we can probably discount as a one-off with it being cancelled due to weather and also due to the quick decision to reschedule so soon, perhaps not giving enough notice.

You'll notice that in January the membership total drops due to awaiting membership renewals in the early months of the new year. This continues to be a small issue with me having to chase people who don't renew even after numerous notifications from myself and also in the monthly newsletters.

Membership figures

AGM 2023 Membership Totals	
<i>Members at end of 2022</i>	69
<i>Notified as not renewing in 2023</i>	3
Total not renewed for 2024	18
Free Membership (Auditor)	7
Free Membership (For 2023)	1
New Members in 2023	0
New Members in 2023	8
Members renewed for 2023	42
Total Membership at AGM 2023	58

AGM 2024 Membership Totals	
<i>Members at end of 2023</i>	63
<i>Notified as not renewing in 2024</i>	5
Total not renewed for 2024	13
Life Members	8
Free Membership (Auditor)	1
Free Membership (For 2024)	0
New Members in 2024	13
Members renewed for 2024	42
Total Membership at AGM 2024	64

AGM 2025 Membership Totals	
<i>Members in 2024</i>	74
<i>Notified as not renewing in 2025</i>	5
Total not renewed for 2025	13
Life Members	8
Free Membership (Auditor)	1
Free Membership (For 2025)	0
New Members in 2025	12
Members renewed for 2025	52
Total Membership AGM 2025	73

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

Membership 2024	
UNDER 16	0
UNDER 18	1
ORDINARY	54
LIFE	8
FREE	1
STUDENT	0
Total Members 2024	64

Membership 2025	
UNDER 16	4
UNDER 18	0
ORDINARY	59
LIFE	8
FREE	1
STUDENT	1
Total Members 2025	73

Shown here are the figures for the last 3 years. As we can see by the highlighted figure at the bottom of the tables, we are continuing to slowly grow in numbers.

As per previous years, we lose members and gain members as the year progresses. This year though, we had 10 more members renew their membership than in the previous 2 years. This is a good sign that we're doing things right and heading in the right direction. I think our ultimate aim on the membership front has to be in retaining members, as well as gaining new ones.

We also need to continue the use of a PA system so that everyone can hear what's going on. We also have our own system should we need to use it, containing the wireless microphones. I think this will help prevent members leaving the club due to something as basic as not hearing the talks, something which we can absolutely fix.

Of the 2024 members, a total of 13 haven't renewed their membership for this year. Again, only 5 of those informed us they wouldn't be renewing, for varying reasons such as poor health to moving away from the area.

On that note, we've also gained 12 new members to last year's 13 new members, and the numbers are up from 2024.

To summarize, in the last 6 months or so, we have had an excellent uptake of new members including one or two returning members which is fantastic. I remain optimistic that our Club will continue to grow.

Obviously, the more members we have, the better in terms of income, cost spread, social interaction and a pool for volunteers. Please get recruiting or invite any interested friends to come along to the next meeting.

9 **Treasurers Report**
The Accounts were shown to the members – and are available on request.
 The income last year was well above the previous year – due to increase in numbers and also on when members pay their fees, workshops, refreshments, raffle etc.

Expenditure slightly down thanks to local and club speakers.

Costs not increased. Thus, no increase in membership fees needed. We are in a good position to be applying to become a charity. Thanks to Anne for reviewing accounts.

10 **Resolutions**
 There are 11 resolutions to be voted on.
(Proposed Constitution can be found at the end of these minutes.)

30 voting	Proposer	Seconder	For	Against	Abstained	Passed
1. Accept 2024 AGM minutes	John	Jean	30	0	0	Yes
2. Accept Accounts	Mick	Tim	29	0	1	Yes
3. Maintain membership rates at 2025	Loman	Ray	30	0	0	Yes
4. Accept changes in Constitution	John	Mick	30	0	0	Yes
5. Appoint Ray Palmer as new Chairman	Tim	Stan	30	0	0	Yes
6. Approve Richard Oakley to continue as Secretary	Helen	Tim	29	0	1	Yes
7. Approve Stuart Brooks to continue as Treasurer	Tim	Kevin	30	0	0	Yes

	8. Appoint Rob Eadie as new Events Manager	Anne	Loman	30	0	0	Yes
	9. Approve Mick O'Donnell to continue as Membership Secretary	Kevin	Rob	30	0	0	Yes
	10. Appoint Pete Sherman as Observatory Manager – new post	Tim	John	29	0	0	Yes
	11. Confirm Kevin Stocks, Helen Williamson, Jackie Eadie and Shea Pickthall as Committee Members	John	John Sinclair	30	0	0	Yes
11	<p>NEW CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</p> <p>So, just a few words. Good evening everyone and it's with a great honour that I stand before you as your newly elected Chairman and I'm deeply grateful for the trust and confidence you've all placed in me. As I take on this role, I'm deeply aware of some very big shoes to fill. Our previous Chairman Pete has done an absolutely outstanding job, as we've said earlier, and his achievements have set an incredibly high bar for me. I'm going to elaborate on this in a minute. His leadership, commitment and dedication and sheer hard work have achieved so much of the success and development of this club, and I am committed to building on that success. And to do that, I'm honoured and privileged to have the support of a talented, experienced, and hardworking committee whom you've elected this evening. Also helping us out is our President, Tim Schroder, who comes along to the meetings to help us out and advise us in certain things, support and give us some ideas.</p> <p>Together we will continue to build on the successes and development of the club and to act in the interests and desires of you, the members - the most important thing. Please feel free to obviously speak to us about any concerns or wishes that you want us to develop.</p> <p>Back to Pete: Pete's been a member of SIGMA for almost 20 years. And he's been our Chairman for 6 years. As Chairman, achievements have been absolutely outstanding, exemplary, and crucial to the club. For example, during the pandemic he was responsible for not only ensuring the survival of the club through the use and introduction of remote sessions, but also its growth during what was a period of much social unrest and upheaval for everyone. He's also been instrumental in organizing and hosting external organizations, meetings and conferences in conjunction with SIGMA, for example, British Astronomy Association meeting in Elgin. He's also, as you know, been exemplary in organizing and managing outreach activities for various groups and clubs, organizing club and public observation activities, organizing, running and participating in skills workshop for the membership - mentoring and developing the skills for new and experienced member. He also manages and runs the club observatory and equipment, often involving live streaming to members and the public alike.</p> <p>We've got a little token of thanks from the club – a Chrystal Decanter, and life membership. So, thanks very much again for all your help and support.</p>						
12	<p>President's Reflections</p> <p>Tim thanked Pete for his excellent service and welcomed Ray as the new Chair, noting Ray's significant experience and his published astrophotography. He highlighted how fortunate the club is to have a strong, well-organised committee, with a varied and interesting programme of talks and other events which are planned up to two years ahead and regularly attracts returning speakers.</p> <p>Reflecting on SIGMA's 25-year history, Tim recalled its origin: a casual idea shared between the founding members after attending meetings of the Highlands Astronomical Society in</p>						

	<p>Inverness. The club grew from a small network of acquaintances—Richard Pearce, Mike Reuss-Newlands, Sye Murray and Tim — into a formal group. The official first meeting of SIGMA was held on 2 June 2000 at Gordonstoun School’s IT Centre. Promotion included newspaper adverts and flyers under the club’s original tagline “Moray’s Signpost to the Stars,”; the name SIGMA stands for “Special Interest Group Moray Astronomers”, with its lowercase logo chosen for stylistic reasons.</p> <p>Tim noted that SIGMA’s welcoming ethos has remained unchanged: it caters to all ages and levels of experience and expertise. Over 25 years, astronomy has transformed dramatically - from early exoplanet discoveries and use of manual cameras to advanced imaging systems and telescopes like the JWST. With over 5,000 known exoplanets today, Tim imagined what the next 25 years may bring. Confident in SIGMA’s strong leadership and committed members, he concluded by inviting everyone to enjoy the 25th-anniversary cake!</p> <p>Tim Schroder President</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There is no other business other than one thing, brought to our attention by Rich – a retirement gift for Bill.</p> <p>Bill's not here tonight, but we will get this bottle of whisky to him, as an appreciation of everything he's done over the years.</p> <p>When asked if there was any other business, numerous members called out CAKE.</p> <p>The AGM was then adjourned and members got to enjoy the 25th Anniversary cake.</p>

Revised Constitution for approval in resolution A25.4
Current constitution is available on the website
www.sigma-astro.co.uk

THE SIGMA CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

- 1.1. The name of the club is “SIGMA Moray’s Astronomy Club” hereafter known as SIGMA.

2. AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

- 2.1. SIGMA exists to promote the awareness of, interest in and enjoyment of astronomy through a variety of methods.
- 2.2. SIGMA seeks to achieve its aims within a friendly and stimulating environment through a varied programme of meetings, and activities. Additionally, this may include talks, exhibitions, trips to places of astronomical interest, expeditions, observational sessions, technical workshops, promotional and social events, hosting

educational, practical and social activities in the local area that are accessible to all ages and levels of knowledge.

3. THE COMMITTEE

- 3.1. The affairs of SIGMA will be managed by a committee. Office bearers shall consist of: Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Events Manager and Observatory Manager. On occasion committee members may be co-opted to specific tasks as deemed necessary. The maximum size of the committee is 10 elected members.
- 3.2. The SIGMA committee shall normally meet every two months.
- 3.3. Each Office Bearer and co-opted committee member must report at each committee meeting all activities undertaken on behalf of the committee.
- 3.4. Members of the committee shall be elected in the General Meetings and shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting, when they shall be eligible for re-election.
 - 3.4.1. For any of the named Office Bearer posts in para 3.1, nominations for these posts must be submitted to the club secretary no later than 6 weeks before the AGM. If there are multiple nominations for any Office Bearer post, nominations should be accompanied by a short statement outlining why they should be considered for the role. If the vacancy occurs outwith the AGM cycle the committee are empowered to appoint a suitable person to these roles until the next AGM.
- 3.5. Any SIGMA member can advise the committee of their interest in joining the committee at any point and can be invited onto the committee by the chairman. These members will then advise the secretary of their willingness to officially stand for election at the next AGM (as per 3.6).
- 3.6. Members of SIGMA proposed for membership of the committee at General Meetings of the society shall be nominated by another member of SIGMA. All nominees must confirm their willingness to stand to the Secretary.
- 3.7. More than 50% of the members of the committee (rounded up) shall form a quorum.
- 3.8. If the Chairman is not present, the committee may elect a temporary Chairman for the committee meeting only.
- 3.9. The committee shall regulate its own business, except where otherwise specifically provided by the constitution or by any resolution passed at a General Meeting. Where a vote is tied the casting vote is held by the Chairman.
- 3.10. The committee is empowered to make subsidiary rules relating to the conduct of SIGMA, provided that such rules are consistent with the provisions and the spirit of the constitution, and any resolution passed in a General Meeting.
- 3.11. Any committee member who has failed to attend three consecutive committee meetings, or four committee meetings since election to office without justifiable reason shall be deemed to have resigned from the committee.

3.12. The club shall be empowered at a General Meeting to invite a person to hold the honorary position of President of the club. This position will normally be held for life but may be revoked at any time by a majority vote at a General Meeting or by the resignation/retirement of the individual. This is an advisory role enabling the holder to attend committee meetings and advise the chairman and has voting rights.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1. Application for membership of SIGMA shall be open to all interested individuals, parties and bodies. Persons under the age of 18 will not be charged subscriptions and will not be paid-up members. Any person over the age of 16 may apply for Ordinary or Student (paid-up) membership, though para 4.10 requirements for a parent/guardian must still be met. Any SIGMA member is entitled to bring a child/children to a SIGMA meeting or activity.

4.2. Membership shall be in three categories:

4.2.1. Ordinary Membership is for individuals over 18 who are not a student in full time education.

4.2.2. Student Membership is for individuals 18 and over who are in full time education.

4.2.3. Honorary Life Membership is for individuals elected by the committee in recognition of outstanding and dedicated service to SIGMA over a long period of time.

4.3. The committee shall have the right to refuse on reasonable grounds any application for membership (or application for other services provided by SIGMA) without explanation to the applicant.

4.4. The committee shall have the power, by a majority decision of the committee, to refuse or reject renewal of membership, or suspend or terminate the membership of any individual, party or affiliated body without notice or explanation upon proper cause being shown that such action is in the best interests of the club.

4.5. All registered members may attend and speak at all Ordinary and General meetings. Only paid-up members may vote. Each fully paid-up member has one vote. The Chairman will have a casting vote.

4.5.1. Paid-up members may cast their vote at General meetings in person, by proxy or by post using the forms and system provided by the committee for that purpose. All proxy or postal votes must be received by the deadlines set by the committee, which must be reasonable and achievable. Votes received after such deadlines shall be deemed invalid. Spoiled voting papers shall be deemed invalid but must be retained for inspection for one year from the date of General meeting.

4.6. The club may affiliate with or accept affiliation with other clubs/societies or organisations upon such terms as the committee may deem appropriate. As of February 2014, under a reciprocal arrangement SIGMA is affiliated with Highland Astronomical Society and North Ronaldsay Astronomy Group. Members may attend each other's monthly meetings and events. This affiliated membership is not to

include SIGMA online social media groups, such as WhatsApp and Spond. Only fully paid-up members will be allowed access to these groups.

- 4.7. Membership shall continue until either the member resigns, or the membership is terminated. A member shall be deemed to have resigned if the subscription is not paid within such a time of its becoming due as the committee may reasonably decide.
- 4.8. Members leaving the club for whatever reason must return all club property within two weeks of the termination of their membership.
- 4.9. Members borrowing SIGMA equipment must sign the Loan Register.
- 4.10. Under 16's must be accompanied to all SIGMA events and are not to be left alone unless that person is a parent/guardian or an adult authorised by the child's parent/guardian. The parent/guardian may appoint a proxy to attend meetings/events on their behalf, subject to the same rules. The proxy will not have any voting rights.
- 4.11. Children between 16–18 years of age can attend the regular monthly club meetings and workshops unaccompanied; these include any extra meetings which may be organised from time to time. Their parent/guardian is to ensure that they are provided with transport to/from all SIGMA events/meetings. For any other event as stated in 2.2, they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and that parent or guardian must be a fully paid-up member (or their proxy).

5. SUBSCRIPTIONS

- 5.1. Subscriptions will be levied to cover the ordinary running costs of the club. Additional charges may be made to members for participation in particular activities or events organized by SIGMA, or for other services provided by the club.
- 5.2. Each member shall pay their first year's subscription, or fraction of, on submitting their application for membership and annually on 1st January thereafter.
- 5.3. Annual subscriptions are due 1st January each year.

6. ACCOUNTS

- 6.1. SIGMA's financial year shall be from 1st January to 31st December.
- 6.2. The assets of SIGMA shall be under the control of the committee. No responsibility for unauthorised expenditure will be accepted by the club.
- 6.3. All monies received by SIGMA shall either be placed to the credit of one or more bank accounts operated for the purpose in the name of SIGMA at such bank(s) as the committee may from time to time decide or shall otherwise be properly managed by the committee. All cheques and other instructions given to any such bank or relating to investments are to be signed by any two of four committee members authorised by the committee to do so.
- 6.4. The committee shall keep proper records of the accounts that shall be used to provide an annual Statement of Accounts that shall be independently inspected following the end of each financial year by any inspector independent of the committee.

7. INSURANCE

7.1. SIGMA shall take out all necessary insurances as required.

8. MEETINGS

8.1. ORDINARY MEETINGS

Ordinary meetings will normally be held at 7.30 pm on the first Friday of each month. Other meetings and events shall be held whenever possible.

8.2. GENERAL MEETINGS

Written notice of the agenda of all general meetings, whether Annual or Extraordinary, is to be sent to all paid-up members at least two weeks before the date of the meeting. 20% of the fully paid-up membership shall constitute a quorum at all General Meetings. Members wishing to submit items for the agenda of a general meeting should do so to the Secretary, in writing, at least one week before the meeting.

8.3. EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by the committee at any time, and shall be called without delay if more than one half of the fully paid-up members demand it.

8.4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall normally be held on the first Friday in June. The agenda is to include the minutes of the previous AGM and any EGMs held since then, the annual report presented by the committee, the reports of the Treasurer and of the checked accounts, the amounts of the annual subscription for the next twelve months, any proposed changes in the constitution or any rules, and any other pertinent business.

8.5. Voting for AGM's and EGM's can be done in person, by proxy forms and/or webinar (if made available). Proxy forms must be returned by post or other remote means, to the secretary by the date stated on the corresponding agenda.

9. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

9.1. This Constitution (with the exception of Clauses 9 and 10) may be revised, amended, or added to by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of the fully paid-up members of SIGMA present when voting at a General Meeting.

10. DISSOLUTION OF THE CLUB

10.1. The dissolution of SIGMA may be effected by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of the fully paid-up members of SIGMA present in person at an EGM convened for that purpose of which notice has been served on every then member of SIGMA at their last known address in the UK.

10.2. If a motion to dissolve SIGMA is carried by the required majority, SIGMA's surplus assets (if any) shall be donated to institutions or organizations which have aims similar to those of SIGMA and that have been selected for such purpose by a simple majority of the fully paid up members present at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting in 10.1.

11. GREEN LASER POINTERS

At all SIGMA events to minimise the risks posed by green laser pointers to people and wildlife on the ground and in the air the following rules apply:

- 11.1. Only members approved by the Committee may use green laser pointers at SIGMA events.
- 11.2. Laser power output is to be no more than 1mw, currently detailed under UK Government guidelines as Class 1 or 2 devices.
- 11.3. Green laser pointers are not to be used inside for presentations.

12. GDPR PRIVACY POLICY

The data provided to SIGMA by you will be held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation. Individuals can request removal of their data at any time by contacting the Membership Secretary (membership@sigma-astro.co.uk). Your contact details will be shared with the appointed committee members of SIGMA as required by them to perform their duties. No-one outside of SIGMA will have access to any information we hold about you. Data will be stored for two purposes only:

- 12.1. Communication with members about their membership and associated matters, and
- 12.2. To enable distribution of information about SIGMA activities, and any other related correspondence.

6th June 2025