



# South Downs Astronomical Society

President:

Founder: Geoffrey Buss

## SDAS AGM 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025 – 21.00 Chichester Planetarium

Present:

John Whittington – Trustee  
Trevor Pitt - outgoing Chair and Chair of AGM  
Roger Burgess - outgoing Webmaster  
Peter Burt - outgoing Observing and Outreach Manager  
Maddie Johns – outgoing Treasurer  
Mark Ford MF– outgoing Committee Member  
Barry Redman – outgoing Attendance Officer  
Cheryll Pitt – outgoing Secretary

Members present including those named above

The meeting was quorate and commenced at 21.00

- **Welcome**  
The Chair welcomed all present explaining that to date, Trustees normally chaired this AGM, but given the lack of input from three out of the four of these, John Whittington excluded, it was time to reorganise matters to suit the current membership format.
- **Apologies for absence**  
John Green - Trustee  
John Mason - Trustee
- **Minutes of the previous meeting**  
The Draft Minutes had been circulated to the Trustees for comment straight after the last AGM. Nil were received and the Minutes were then upload to the SDAS website for all to see.
- **Matters arising**  
No Matters Arising.
- **Outgoing Chair's Report**  
The Chair thanked the Members for their enthusiasm and the various members of the Committee for their hard work and his full report is below (attached).

There have been a few changes to the society this year, but nothing of significance.

We held three committee meeting via Zoom during the course of the year, the minutes are always uploaded to the Website if you wish to see them. We intend to continue with the Zoom format for cttee meetings.

5 January AGM 21 May 25 September delayed from 30<sup>th</sup> August and 13 December.



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Topics discussed ranged from application for lottery funding to buy a SMART telescope, change of Website from hosting under the Planetarium to the status of the Trustees. All minutes are added to the website if you wish to see them.

## Talks

Monthly talks are the main return for the members joining the society and we have had a good selection of topics this year.

Local astronomers have been particularly well received and we have had new topics to listen to.

As ever, finding speakers is "hard work" and we rely on both personal visits and Zoom based talks as best we can.

After tea talks have not been well supported this year and I can recall only few occasions when I was supported. I am happy to continue with my What is up as long as you are happy to hear it. If not.....what else would you like to hear?

As ever, if you have something of interest to present, we would be very happy to hear it. Topics could be anything astronomy related:

- a. Your latest piece of astronomy kit
- b. You latest image(s)
- c. How you process you images, how you overcome issues.
- d. A short talk on a visit you made some where etc.

But please let me know in good time.

## Thanks

First of all, I would like to say thank you to the members of the society, some here tonight, for your continued support and making the society work.

By way of thanks I would like to say a big thank you to all the committee members this year, to Maddy for keeping all the accounts so well, to Cheryll as secretary and meetings organiser doing a great job, to Barry for his welcoming smile to all attending the meetings ( sadly this is his last), to Peter for his enthusiasm as observing coordinator and in particular to Roger for his sterling support of the society, his monthly Newsletters alone takes a lot of work and for his maintenance of the website that changed host during the course of the year. Hidden within the society is Willie, opening and closing of the Planetarium for us each month and clearing up afterwards. Finally, thanks to Janet and John for their continuing efforts with the teas.

## Membership

Membership has remained static this year and we ended with just over 60 on our books with around 40% on average attending. We are a little concerned by the lack of new members and new visitors rarely convert into new members. Membership fees have been increased this year as our other costs have also increased.

## Outreach and Observing



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To comply with our charitable status we must undertake some outreach, but such outreach is in the hands of the UK's chief meteorologist and (paid) outreach events held in conjunction with the RSPB failed to get any clear weather. Even the solar day was clouded out. Observing sessions also have failed to materialise and we need to rethink this going forward. The last successful one was attended by only three and it would have been sensible to have cancelled that one owing to the sky transparency.

One event we held in March was in Chichester trying to attract new members and raise awareness of the society. The old display boards needed a bit of a dusting, but it was reasonably well supported by passers by, but not by society members. Looking at the Cock Nebula was the star attraction.

In summary, I would just like to remind members that the committee is there to support the society and represent your views. If you want to see something different or would like to make changes you really need to let us know or join us on the committee and we do have a spare slot!

## **Online presence**

Currently the society uses its website to promote and advertise activities to the public as well as a Facebook page for members / non-members. All talks now have a synopsis added to the website so you can see what is coming up.

Both the website and the Facebook page are managed by Roger, but we could also have a Whatsapp group for members only as the Facebook group appears to be unable to attract new members to the society.

Currently the Facebook page has increased by 20 subscribers this year– few of whom are members of the society, but it's not very active.

We continue to encourage members to submit their astrophotography to Roger for inclusion on the website as well as Facebook pages.

## **Trustees**

Reference to the Charity commission's website reveals that we have lost one Trustee this year. John Letheren was listed, but resigned ages ago and was not aware of his presence. He was finally removed in December. I mentioned last year that I would "sort out" the Trustee status and have met with inactivity throughout the year. This has prevented us from applying for Lottery funding for one and the Trustees are not all meeting the requirements laid down as Trustees by the Charity Commission for another. However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel and action does need to be taken.

## **Summary**

As you can see there has been a lot of hard work put in by our committee members to keep the society running and to find innovative ways for us to continue to provide members with education talks and presentations as well as providing outreach and support.



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We can only do this with the continued support of you our members and the commitment of our committee members. As such we continue to appeal to members to consider joining our very friendly and supportive committee – the time commitment can be as much or as little as you like but please feel free to speak to any committee member to find out more. If you prefer not to join the committee then supporting other outreach is just as important.

I look forward to working with you all through 2025.

Trevor

- **Outgoing Treasurer's Report**



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The outgoing Treasurer gave the audited annual financial report as per below:

Accounts for the year ending 30 November 2024									
	RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS				
Source		2023/24	2022/23		Source		2023/24	2022/23	
Subscriptions		1015.00	956.00		Speakers		249.00	95.00	
Visitors		114.00	57.00		FAS & PLI		83.00	62.00	
Raffle		305.00	259.00		SAGAS		15.00	15.00	
Donations		83.00	166.00		Hall Hire		700.00	700.00	
Book sales		50.00	27.00		Internet		86.72	209.00	
Telescope sale		50.00			Stamps		148.50	136.00	
Refreshments		100.00	90.00		Leaflets			215.00	
Bank Interest		35.77	14.91		Other		44.00	0.00	
Totals		1752.77	1569.91		Totals		1326.22	1432.00	



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					Excess Receipts over payments	426.55	137.91	
<b>BANK BALANCES</b>								
	01/12/2024		30/11/2023		Excess Receipts / Payments			
<b>Current A/C</b>	2155.20		1764.42			390.78		
<b>Deposit A/C</b>	2455.62		2419.85			35.77		
<b>Totals</b>	4610.82		4184.27			426.55		
					Audited	16 December 2024	Trevor Pitt	



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- **Proposals for the Committee for 2024 and election of the same.**

	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
Trevor Pitt - outgoing Chair	Peter Burt	Martin Thomas
Roger Burgess - outgoing Webmaster	Ray Sharman	Peter Burt
Peter Burt – outgoing Observing/Outreach	Cheryll Pitt	Stuart Rea
Maddie Johns –outgoing Treasurer	Mark Ford	Peter Burt
Mark Ford MF–outgoing Committee Mem.	Peter Burt	Cheryll Pitt
Martin Pickard -Attendance Officer	Barry Redman	Peter Burt
Cheryll Pitt –outgoing Secretary	Peter Burt	Martin Thomas

- **Appointment of Trustees**

John Whittington (Trustee) stated that from the date of the current AGM he no longer wished to be a Trustee.

The Chair stated that in accordance with the Constitution the Committee proposed two Trustees and a third Trustee was proposed at the AGM as John Whittington had resigned. The Members of SDAS voted that they accepted the Committee's proposals:

	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
John Mason (existing Trustee)	Cheryll Pitt	Trevor Pitt
Roger Burgess	Cheryll Pitt	Trevor Pitt
David Sammons	Martin Thomas	Cheryll Pitt

- **Purchase of SMART telescope**

The Chair asked if the Members wished to buy a SMART telescope for loan to Members and Outreach as had been discussed at the last Committee Meeting. The Chair wished to apply for lottery funding to buy a more expensive SMART scope.

None of the Members dissented but there was no great enthusiasm either. In view of this the Committee will discuss this expenditure again. Janet Whittington remarked that other sources of funding could be explored.

John Whittington mentioned that SDAS owned telescopes that were stored at the planetarium. The Chair responded that owing to a lack of space the storage of SDAS owned telescopes at the planetarium had been withdrawn and these scopes had no know record of ownership. Consequently the owned scopes had already been dealt with by the Committee.

An extract from the December 2023 Committee Meeting Minutes that were uploaded to the website is below which gives details of these telescopes and their disposal after consideration by the Committee.

- **AOB**



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Janet Whittington stated that she would no longer be organising refreshments from Easter. She had been doing this for 20 years. A volunteer is now required.

- **Date of next meeting: 9/1/26 at 19.30 in the same venue (note that this is not the first Friday of January).**
- **Meeting closed at 22.00**