



South Downs Astronomical Society

President:

Founder: Geoffrey Buss

Minutes for SDAS committee meeting on Friday 20th October 2025 at 19.00 held on Zoom

Apologies for absence Mark Ford

PRESENT

Trevor Pitt (**Chair**)

Maddie Johns (**Treasurer-MJ**)

Peter Burt (**Outreach-PB**)

Roger Burgess (**Webmaster-RB**)

Martin Pickard (**Attendance Officer-MP**)

David Sammons (**Trustee-DS**)

Cheryll Pitt (**Secretary-CP**)

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes were approved.

ACTION: RB to upload the July meeting's minutes to the website.

2. PURCHASE OF TELESCOPE:

BACKGROUND AND PAST ACTION: **Chair** was to apply for 5K lottery funding to purchase a Celestron Origin smart scope and a SeeStar S50 telescope. The latter has been bought out of the reserves.

JULY 2025 UPDATE: Ongoing action to be put on hold whilst our Members' interest in the scopes we already have for loan is gauged. However, the **Chair** will do a dummy run with lottery application. Gary Critchlow currently has the solar scope and MF has the 365 loaned Dwarf 3 which will be returned in early September.

The **Chair** reported that Zoltan is setting up a scope in Chile which SDAS along with other local societies will be encouraged to use.

JULY 2025 ACTIONS: **Chair** to do CC dummy run with lottery fund application. **MF** to return Dwarf 3. **Chair** to get an update from Zoltan.

OCTOBER 2025 UPDATE: **Chair** did CC dummy run and found it very time consuming. Given the lack of Members' interest in borrowing the scopes SDAS has, this Action is closed. New Members have expressed interest in borrowing the SeeStar S50. The committee



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agreed that they need to come to 6 meetings prior to borrowing the scopes. **MF** returned the Dwarf and **Chair** returned it to Zoltan.

ACTION: **Chair** to contact Zoltan again to discuss if Members can use his telescope and/or data from the telescope in Chile.

3. OUTREACH AND EVENTS:

BACKGROUND: **JB** previously stated that she was thinking of booking a classroom at the University for a SDAS member(s) to use to give an astronomy talk. This was enthusiastically received and we need to make it happen.

PAST ACTIONS: **JB** to ascertain: interest at University, which topics, at what level etc. **JB** to report back and then a volunteer to talk can be nominated, **JB** can book the room and advertise the talk.

JULY 2025 UPDATE AND JULY ACTION: **JB** has not had time to speak to students to ask them to join. She suggested Tony Roberts to give a talk in the STEM suite. ACTION: **JB** will approach Governance.

OCTOBER 2025 UPDATE: **JB** has moved to Bristol and therefore all Actions involving her are closed.

JULY 2025 ACTION: **PB** to speak to Richard Austin to see if SDAS can arrange an event with Chichester Harbour.

ACTION: **PB** will investigate if the RSPB would be a suitable venue for Richard Austin.

The **Chair** reported that Portfield School have requested another STEM event on 25th February 2026.

4. GIFTAID:

PAST ACTION AND BACKGROUND: **MJ** to claim Gift Aid. Chair is willing to help get these data uploaded for last 4 years. Chair advised that the status of Gift Aid on subscriptions was being investigated by the Inland Revenue and many clubs are reporting claims being rejected.

ACTION: **MJ** will meet with **Chair** in mid-November to upload GiftAid.

5. MEMBERSHIP:

66 paid up Members to date. **MP** reported that 3 more are in the pipeline.

ACTION: **Chair** to put leaflets on front counter of Planetarium at **MP**'s suggestion.

6. RISK ASSESSMENTS:



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This is a Standing Agenda item. The front gate being closed is becoming a health hazard for the infirm as one Member left her car there and walked back to the Planetarium getting soaked in the process. **MP** suggests a notice on the gate.

ACTION: Chair to make a notice for the front gate and contact Sussex West Council.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT FROM MJ, 21ST MARCH-11TH JULY 2025:

RECEIPTS:

Raffles £52.00

Visitors £27.00

Bank Interest £8.24

TOTAL £87.24

PAYMENTS:

Website £24.00

SAGAS £15.00

Speakers £155.80

Total: £194.80

CURRENT ACCOUNT:

21st March £2020.94

11th July £1840.14

Net decrease: £180.80

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT:

21st March £2473.52

11th July £2481.74

Net increase: £8.22 (Interest)

Note Cash on hold has not been accounted for.

ACTION: CP will give MJ £40.00 from coffee etc funds at a suitable meeting.

8. SESSION FOR MEMBERS TO RECTIFY HARDWARE:



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BACKGROUND: **MP** suggested a session for SDAS members to sort out hardware issues. Perhaps after the main talk? **Chair** suggested a telescope workshop.

PAST ACTION: **Chair** to ask Members at next meeting.

JULY 2025 UPDATE AND JULY ACTION: **Chair** looked on Planetarium website and they do run sessions to rectify hardware issues. **ACTIONS:** **CDP** will remind **Chair** to ask Members if they want a similar session. **Chair** will collimate the Meade as Attila reported that the images weren't sharp.

ACTIONS: **Chair** will ask Members at AGM if they would like a workshop to learn about their own telescopes. **Chair** will draft a questionnaire at **MP**'s suggestion to be included with the Membership form to ask: do they own a telescope; do they do visual observing; do they do photography; what events are they interested in?

9. JULY 2025 AOB:

MJ: FAS not getting enough response from Members.

JULY 2025 ACTION: **Chair** to send out FAS Newsletter. CLOSED as complete.

MP: Shall we carry on with SeeStar 50 imaging? All agreed we should and uploading images to our website. Closed as now BAU.

MF: **JULY 2025 ACTION:** **MF** Will give a talk on meteorites in October. CLOSED as complete, talk popular-thanks MF.

PB: **JULY 2025 ACTION:** **PB** will remind Gary that he needs to pay a charge when he brings the solar scope to the RSPB event on August 26th. No cost levied as Gary is fixing the scope. It was agreed that a cost of a new filter (approximately £90) be approved and Gary should kindly go ahead.

ACTION: **PB** to inform Gary.

MP: **JULY 2025 ACTION:** **MP** will attend a webinar on Allyship run by FAS on August 2nd.

OCTOBER 2025 UPDATE: MP attended and found that it was useful in that he reported that we should be ready to welcome neurodivergent people and those that may have difficulty with reduced lighting etc. in talks. He suggested the committee wear name badges to engender a welcoming culture.

ACTION: **RB** to supply a name badge for **MP**.

OCTOBER 2025 AOB:



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- a. **MJ** cannot attend the November meeting.

ACTION: PB has offered to assist Jenny with raffle, thanks **PB**.

- b. **DS** stated he was grateful for us all giving time and effort, thanks **DS**.

- c. **Chair** outlined the AGM:

Chair opens meeting, committee resigns.

DS asks for proposers and seconders for all posts.

Voted in **Chair** runs meeting:

- Workshop?
- Subscriptions
- Chair's report
- Treasurer's report
- Meeting closed
- Main talk commences 20.00.

- d. **ACTION: Chair** to ask for a volunteer to audit the accounts at November meeting. **CP** to compile the previous Minutes and an Agenda for **Chair** to distribute, inform Mike Foulkes of start time of 20.00.

- e. **ACTION: PB** to bring Celestron Evolution Mount to next meeting in November.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20th February 2026 at 19.00 on Zoom.