



**Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009**  
**South Downs Planetarium Chichester**

**Chairing Society:**  
**Hampshire Astronomical Group**

Graham Bryant, Chairman of Hampshire AG, opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance, which were:

1. Attendance:

12 societies were in attendance which comprised of the following:

<b>SAGAS members</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>
Ashford AS	Butcher	Monika
Brighton & Hove AS	Gibson	Eric
Brighton & Hove AS	Wade	John
Cody AS	Aler	Pat
Cody AS	Aler	Phil
Crawley AS	Morrison	Neil
Crawley AS	Swift	Jim
Eastbourne AS	Brackenborough	Keith
Farnham AS	Campbell-Burns	Peter
Farnham AS	Price	John
Foredown Tower Astronomers		
Guildford AS	Axtell	John
Hampshire AG	Gorman	Robin
Hampshire AG	Bryant	Graham
Hampshire AG	Croucher	Christine
South Downs AS	Whittington	John
South Downs AS	Whittington	Jan
Vectis AS	Flux	Richard
Wessex AS	Fradgley	James
Worthing Astronomers	Young	Janet
Worthing Astronomers	Halls	Brian
Worthing Astronomers	Sutton	Doc

2. Apologies:

Apologies were received from the following societies:

Wealden AS  
Croydon AS  
East Sussex AS  
Wadhurst AS

In addition John Murrell sent his apologies due to illness.

3. Society Reports:

Graham Bryant requested that as notes of the attending societies had been previously circulated, the society representative did not need to read verbatim their report but simply offer a précis of their report. This was duly done except by Hampshire AG who had not previously circulated their report.

Hampshire showed an image of a Mr James, who recently reached his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, looking through the telescope he had donated to the Hampshire Astronomical Group.

John Axtell of Guildford AS showed some images of their recent successful 'Great Look Up' event with University of Surrey.

One of the themes from the society feedback was the level of membership. Some societies reported inexplicable decreases in membership whilst others reported static or increased membership.

Society officer changes were also highlighted during the society reports.

The South Downs AS brought to the attention of those present that their Christmas lecture will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> December in Kingsham High School and members of other societies are welcome to attend at the modest cost of £2.00 per head.

Reports attached for completeness of minutes.

4. Review of IYA2009

John Axtell led the discussion regarding the IYA events. John asked if there had been any learning points societies could identify from their activities over the past year.

The themes discussed included accessibility of societies to members of the public and press, reliability of promised attendance at functions and the use of the SAGAS road show display boards.

John showed some statistics of the frequency of use of the SAGAS road-show display boards by societies in the SAGAS area. It was agreed that the use of the display boards had been significant and very useful to those societies who had made use of them.

John gave an update of the information which is on the display boards which can be used by societies and the information which we would require a society to display (listings of SAGAS societies).

#### 5. Report back From FAS & Convention

Keith Brackenborough gave a report on the recent FAS Cambridge convention and EGM held on the 7<sup>th</sup> March.

Keith mentioned the attendance of SAGAS societies on a county by county breakdown across the SAGAS area. The implication was there was opportunity for SAGAS societies to be better represented, especially as SAGAS is the largest 'area' in the Federation. Some counties in the SAGAS area (Hampshire) did not send any representatives.

Keith then gave an update on the current finances of the Federation. He stated that there is a little over £44,000 in the accounts and that the Federation wishes to maintain 2 years running costs in the account. A breakdown of the cost of membership was reiterated which is as follows:

£28.50 – societies with less than 21 members  
£45.50 – societies with 21- 45 members  
£57.00 – societies with over 46 members

Keith also updated those present at the meeting on the proposed alteration of the FAS 'subscriptions year'. In future the year will start in April instead of Sept. This will also better align with the Public Liability Insurance (PLI). The net effect of this is that societies will not be required to pay in September of this year, but next year and get an extra 6 months free membership. Societies will be invited to pay in March for both their membership and PLI. The PLI premium from FAS will be due June 2010

Keith mentioned the importance of ensuring payment is made on time as any late payment (especially for the PLI) incurs a significant additional cost of £80 per late society as they will need to be added to the Insurance after the premium has been paid. The cost of the PLI, which gives societies £5m public liability, costs the Federation £4190.

A question was raised from the floor (Doc Sutton) regarding the possibility of the Federation reverting back to two conventions, one in the South and one in the north which used to occur but was stopped due to the cost of staging two conventions per year. It was also suggested that if a convention was located in the south of England, the attendance may be higher. Keith stated he would take this matter back to the Council for their consideration.

## 6. SAGAS Accounts & Treasurer's Report

Brian Halls provided an update to the SAGAS accounts. Currently there are 23 paid up member societies and we have £386 in the account. It was suggested that we give consideration of holding 1 year planetarium booking fees in the account as a buffer.

## 7. SAGAS Newsletter

Janet Young provided an update on the recent newsletter. Janet was pleased that she was able to offer a bumper edition, but apologised for mentioning 'Merry Christmas' so early, but stated the next issue was not due until January.

Janet requested that she receive copies of society newsletters and magazines so she can pull from those the activities of the societies in the SAGAS area for inclusion in the future newsletters. To date she had only received one newsletter and that was from Vectis AS. Janet stated that there had been a hiccup in placing past copies of the Newsletter on the website, but this has now been rectified and all past copies are available.

Janet also mentioned the speakers list which she is compiling for the benefit of SAGAS societies. Again Janet requested details of members of SAGAS societies who are able and willing to lecture as well as details of visiting speakers. Janet reported that at the moment there are approximately 40 speakers on the list.

## 8. Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

Graham Bryant distributed a SAGAS briefing paper (attached to these minutes) and stated that he had looked into this matter as the new legislation is going to affect some or all societies in the SAGAS area. Graham further mentioned that there is still much confusion as to what constitutes activities which would be covered by the ISA regulations.

It is clear that if societies have members who are under the age of 18yrs, then this activity is definitely covered and the 'child' would require the accompaniment of their parent, or a responsible member(s) to be ISA vetted. The ISA define a child as someone who is under 18years of age.

Graham gave some examples of what activity is 'regulated' and the frequency of that activity is covered by ISA regulations. Graham stated he will seek to draw from societies their concerns and seek clarification from the ISA on SAGAS's behalf and feedback to SAGAS

Graham requested that if societies could e-mail him their queries by end November 2009 (contact details below) he would then seek clarification and send out the reply to all SAGAS societies once he had received a reply.

Graham Bryant is contactable on:  
[graham.g.bryant@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.g.bryant@btinternet.com) or  
[graham.bryant@hantsastro.org.uk](mailto:graham.bryant@hantsastro.org.uk)

#### 9. Society 'Contactability'

Graham raised the question of how easy is it for either a member of the public or the press to make contact with a society. It was also acknowledged that some societies do have all their contact details readily available. However, Graham stated that he is raising this issue as the press from Southampton had contacted him as they were unable to get any response from the Southampton Societies when the local press wanted a report/comment.

The SAGAS website was used by the reporter and sought out Hampshire AG as the next nearest and Hampshire Astronomical Group was able to provide the requested information. Graham stated that whilst Hampshire AG were happy to do this, they did not want to be seen as treading on other society toes and therefore questions how easily accessible societies make themselves.

Graham asked that societies review their contact details and think if you were a member of the public or a reporter who wanted some information, how would they get in touch?

#### 10. Intech Societies Event

John Axtell reported that he had been in contact with Jenny Shipway of the Intech Planetarium who had enquired about supporting local astronomical societies with an astronomy day. This would be for local society astronomers and not for members of the public.

The likely programme, as discussed by the SAGAS committee would be a local respected amateur, a lecturer or two from academia and a planetarium show. The programme was likely to run from 10 or 11am until about 4pm. The date is fixed and will be the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2009. There is a cafeteria on site where lunch can be purchased.

John asked whether this format was acceptable and those present agreed it was. It was also acknowledged that this event was likely to favour those in the west of the region. John agreed to speak to Jenny and pursue this event.

Societies were encouraged to advertise to their members and support this event.

#### 11. Herstmonceux 2009/2010

John Axtell gave a report thanking those local societies who had staffed the SAGAS display. John also showed images of the Herstmonceux weekend. It was generally accepted at the meeting today of those who attended, that the

geodesic society tent venue was far from ideal as there were not many visitors by virtue of it being hidden behind the main concourse building.

Some discussion took place on what needs to be done to entice the members of the public to the tables and displays who do visit the dome. It was agreed that taking tables away from the front of the display was important and not 'hiding' behind a computer and not to be sat down 'stony faced with arms folded' were also important.

John also stated that few societies had provided Keith Brackenborough with information on their society and reminded those present that this is one of the functions of SAGAS (to advertise on their behalf) but needed the support of those societies if this was going to be successful.

It was agreed that discussion would need to be had with the Herstmonceux Centre on next year's venue and our attendance.

## 12. AOB

SAGAS Website:

Monika Butcher stated that the current SAGAS website lacked appeal and that there were items on the site which had passed and were still advertised as future events (Nightlife event 4<sup>th</sup> July).

Monika further stated that if we are asking societies to look at their contactability then maybe we ought to look at our own website alongside this.

Members from Farnham AS stated that their site had been recently upgraded by a professional web designer and that anything posted will be available to be Google listed within two minutes. Their site has been listed as one of the best web sites in a review by the magazine *Astronomy Now*.

AGM

Graham reminded those present that the January meeting would also include the AGM and that John Axtell will be stepping down as secretary of SAGAS due to commitments elsewhere. Graham thanked John for his work as secretary and stated to those present we would need to look to for a new Secretary.

## 13. Dates of next Meeting

The dates of the forthcoming SAGAS meetings are as follows.

16 January – Chaired by Farnham AS  
10 April – Chaired by Vectis AS  
10<sup>th</sup> July Summer event – hosted by Guildford AS  
16 October - Charing Soc. TBC

The formal section of the meeting was closed at 16.30hrs

Following refreshments, Dr Robin Gorman gave a presentation in the Planetarium dome entitled '*Our Vital Moon*'.

Meeting Closed at 17.30hrs.

Thanks offered to the South Downs Planetarium volunteers for their assistance and hospitality.

Minutes:

Graham Bryant

17<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Foredown Tower added as attending and Society Reports removed to separate file John Murrell 1/11/09.

## SAGAS

### WHY

Output from Bichard Report, following Soham murders. Recommendations led to Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act and the creation of Independent Safeguarding Authority and improvements to existing vetting and barring arrangements - incl. :

- Integrating some existing lists (List 99 and POCA (Childrens))
- Making decisions independently (via the ISA, not Govt. ministers)
- Introducing continuous monitoring
- Using information from a wide range of sources to decide on barring someone from Scheme (Police, Health etc.)

### WHAT

Two main types of activity require an individual to be vetted :

#### **1) Regulated Activity**

Any activity which involves contact with children (under 18yrs) or vulnerable adults - paid or voluntary. E.g.

- Any activity of a specified nature which involves contact with children or vulnerable adults frequently (once a month or more), intensively (3 or more days in a 30 day period) and/or overnight.
- Any activity allowing contact with children or vulnerable adults that is in a specified place frequently or intensively.
- Fostering and childcare.
- Any activity that involves people in certain defined positions of responsibility.
- It will be a criminal offence for an employer to allow a barred person, or a person who is not yet registered with the ISA, to work for any length of time in any regulated activity.

#### **2) Controlled Activity**

- Frequent (once a month or more) or intensive (3 more days in a 30 day period) support work in general health settings, the NHS and further education settings.
- People working for specified organisations with *frequent access to sensitive records about children and vulnerable adults*.
- Support work in adult social care settings.
- An employer *can* permit a barred person to work in a controlled activity as long as safeguards are put in place.

### NB

ISA check will only show if a person is ISA-registered (ie. the ISA has found no known reason why the applicant should not work with children or vulnerable adults). It **does not** check for malpractice or all criminal convictions, and therefore registration with the ISA does not guarantee that a person has *no* criminal history.

A supplementary CRB check provides a fuller picture of a person's criminal history and allows employers to make informed decisions as to whether that person is suitable for a particular role or position.

An individual's *initial* registration will include both an ISA check and a CRB check.

### **WHEN**

New volunteers to Societies who come under above activities will need to have registered with the ISA from 26 July 2010.

Phased approach for *existing* Society volunteers over several years from January 2011 where they meet the criteria for frequent or intensive contact.

### **HOW**

Individual completes registration form and form is sent from Societies once identity validation has taken place. Once a volunteer is registered they will receive a credit card-style pin number.

The individual can take this card from employer to employer without re-registering.

Subsequent employers will be able to check the person's ISA status online free of charge, by validating their identity (face-to-face) and checking the individuals certificate details on-line.

The employer will then need to use its discretion (in some cases this will be driven by governing bodies) about whether to request a supplementary CRB check to ensure the person has not received any criminal convictions since getting their ISA certificate. (See **NB** note on Page 1)

Through continuous monitoring by the ISA, if new information becomes known about an individual the ISA will review its original decision not to bar. Where an employer has already checked on an employee's status with the ISA, that employer will be notified automatically if the employee's status changes.

### **COST**

One-off cost of £28, in addition to the £36 CRB disclosure fee, i.e. £64 in total. Volunteers will not have to pay.

Graham Bryant  
Chairman SAGAS  
October 2009