

## **Minutes of Newbury Astronomical Society Committee meeting - 7 November 2018**

### **Apologies**

Kath Nurse, Steve Knight, Chris Douglas, Mark Gray

### **Minutes of last meeting**

No comments or corrections

### **Matters arising**

Thatcham festival, and the event at the council offices, went well.

BAA Membership – George has received the society BAA Journal and the 2019 handbook. He will bring them along to the next meeting.

The stargazing event at Fawley was very successful. Unfortunately, we didn't have the resources to take any photos. We should take photos of events to showcase on the website, but we need to ensure we get permission to use any photos that might identify children or young people.

Posting notes of the main meetings on the website is working.

AP: George to mention the website at meetings to make sure members are aware of new content.

Steve H has contacted the Penny Post to ask them to include a link to our meetings in the email they send out with their publication.

AP: George will provide some comments in reply to the enquiry from Ramsbury Press.

### **Review of last meetings**

Both the last main meetings have gone smoothly – and members enjoyed the talks.

### **Beginners**

The October meeting featuring the Webb telescope went well - the infrared camera and astroboost equipment were popular. Feedback on the Lego telescope toys is that they may be a bit disappointing for children. We should give items like this as 'prizes' for answering questions or completing tasks rather than just leave them out for people to pick up.

We need to make sure there are plenty of activities for the beginners after tea/coffee. The telescope equipment at the next meeting should provide plenty to do. If we have a clear evening we can do stargazing – the variable star demo that we used at New Scientist Live is another activity we can use.

AP: Nicky to make sure beginners know what's happening after the talks finish.

### **Next main meeting – 7 December 2018**

Juno at Jupiter – the speaker is travelling from Leicester, so if traffic is bad we may need to swap the sessions and have the second half first.

### **Main meeting – 4 January 2019**

This will be the members evening – subject '60 years in Space'. Need to publicise to members & get volunteers to do talks.

Richard, Steve K & Chris H will do talks - & Mark Grey has memorabilia that he may be able to bring.

## **Next beginners**

Subject is 10 easy eyepieces (and telescopes) – the idea is to explain how other astro equipment works and what it is useful for. Also bring along a selection of telescopes and equipment to demo after the break.

Subjects to be covered:

- Brief introduction to how a telescope works (10 minutes) – Steve H
- Finders – ordinary & red dot (plus diagonals)?
- Barlow lenses – Chris H
- Using eyepieces (& binoculars) with spectacles – Jonathan
- Eyepieces – George

Presentations need to be 15 minutes or less, so we have plenty of time to look at the equipment after tea. Ann has RAS diaries & almanacs for sale – she will let Nicky have these.

## **Forthcoming events**

### Greenham Common control tower

Tony and Steve H have visited the tower & talked to one of the trustees. It seems to be a good location with café, toilets & car parking. They are keen for us to book regular sessions - charging from £20 per session.

A trained volunteer will need to be on-site during the sessions to open the tower & lock up afterwards - but they can train society members to do this. Training is free & lasts about 2 hours. Tony, George & Steve H volunteered to be trained in the tower operation.

Suggested activities we could hold at the tower included:

- Telescope/imaging workshops
- Public stargazing events
- Badge evenings for brownie/cub/scout groups etc.
- Newbury AS meteorcam on control tower for local schools?

Concern was raised that it might be difficult to find volunteers to run 3 meetings per month, however there's minimal financial risk to trialling it for a few months to see if it works. Events to be advertised in the tower café & on our website.

It was agreed we will book 3 or 4 monthly trial sessions from January 2019 onwards. The first event to be a telescope workshop.

AP: Tony to book dates and organise the training.

### RAL events

Cubs & Brownies – Friday 30 November 2018. This will take place in the new visitor centre at RAL, with observing in the adjacent car park if clear. Half a dozen volunteers are needed – Chris will email out the details & ask people to confirm if they can help out.

RAL stargazing – Friday 25 January 2019. As above – Chris will send out details & a request for volunteers nearer the time. We may need more people if they want us to run a telescope clinic.

### Observing & astrophoto workshop.

Those interested will meet at Val's house in Hampstead Marshall on Wednesday 5 December whatever the weather. It's hoped that Steve K will demo astrophotography using a DSLR & George will do the same for astrophotography using a telescope.

A future session could concentrate on stacking & processing photos. This could be held at the Greenham Common control tower venue if suitable.

#### Other stargazing events

Hampstead Marshall village hall – Thursday 10 January 2019; 17.00 – 18.00 start.

Wilcot village hall – Saturday 9 February 2019

Burbage village hall – Saturday 9 March 2019

NB: All these events will include the astroboost equipment as well as stargazing if clear.

#### **Membership review & publicity**

The Society has 71 members as at the start of November (77 by this time last year). There were 49 attendees at the last main meeting. The last beginners' meeting also had 49 attendees.

The Society gets good publicity from its outreach activities e.g. Thatcham Festival, and talks to other societies & organisations.

NWN has still not responded to Tony's suggestion of a monthly astronomy article. However, we still have regular articles in 3 other local publications & occasional radio interviews – so we are reaching people through traditional media as well as our on-line presence.

#### **Finance**

The Society account is in the black. We have recently replaced all our major items of equipment for meetings except the laptop, so no major expenditure is forecast.

Max. forecast expenditure on Greenham tower meetings in next 6 months is £100 – although hopefully these should be self-funding.

Our account with Amazon Smile has been set up and we should receive a small amount of income from this source. We need to advertise it on the website & mention it at meetings. We could also include it on the membership card next year.

#### **AOB**

##### Christmas meal

Kath needs menu choices & payment by the next beginners meeting (21 November).

Drinks can be ordered in advance to avoid having to queue. There will be no problems with the parking. David will pick up Allan & Rachel.

##### Tea/coffee at main meetings

More help is still needed in the kitchen – and helpers should be acknowledged at meetings. A volunteer from the committee should co-ordinate the break at each meeting to make sure there are enough people helping. Alan offered to do the next meeting.

##### Finishing time

Main meetings need to be finished & the car park cleared by 22.00, otherwise the hall gets complains from the residents.

##### SAGAS meeting

Richard & Nicky will represent the Society at the quarterly SAGAS meeting on Saturday 10 November. Nicky will speak to Graham Bryant about the help for Societies promised by FAS.

##### Finder for Society Meade

Steve H would like a straight through finder for the telescope. Chris H provided one which he had and Peter has it at home where he keeps the Society Meade. Peter uses the straight through one sometimes.

AP: Peter will take both finders to the meetings.

#### Society logo

Design was discussed. Ann has a contact who could put together something for use on the website/posters/handouts etc.

AP: Ann to get quote to smarten up Society logo.

#### **Date for next committee meeting**

Next meeting will be on Tuesday 15 January 2019.