

## **FLAMSTEED ASTRONOMY SOCIETY**

### **COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH AT THE YES OFFICES**

**Present:** Rebecca Bristow (NMM Head of Membership), Lin Potter (Chair), Mike Dryland (Vice Chair), Mike Dear, Roger Geeson, Peter Kitcherside, Deborah McGarvey, David Waugh, and Jane Bendall

**Apologies** were received from Linda Ransome

**Welcome:** the meeting welcomed Rebecca Bristow who is the new Head of Membership and will join us at our committee meetings from now on. We are delighted to see her and we wish her good luck in her new position.

1. **Matters arising** from the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The entry about pub and viewing evenings on Blackheath needs further clarification- essentially we hold either a viewing evening or a pub evening and do not try to combine the two. We are not dropping the pub evenings which are popular with our members unless they become impossible for insurance reasons. – see point 7 below.
2. **Memberships:** No definite figures whilst Rebecca is running the Members office single handed, but she has compiled a list of new members and we estimate that we probably have somewhere between 190-200 members. The lecture theatre holds 120 and has not been completely full yet, but the day is coming and when we have the full picture we must discuss soon.
3. **Labels and Register:** Normally there are sticky name labels to help people identify each other. When Rebecca has time we would be grateful for this system to be resumed. Rebecca also agreed to photocopy the attendance register for Jane.
4. **Effective Use of Volunteers** – Mike Dear has received very mixed feed back from his request about volunteers' experiences at the public EWTS; about half the responders felt it had been a worth while and enjoyable experience, but the other half felt there was no definite volunteer role and it was all rather a waste of time. Mike reported that there are very few volunteers for the last three sessions in March.

If we continue to volunteer – and the meeting felt we should - there are two areas to clarify:

- a. Overall organisation: there is no effective communication with the ROG beforehand.
- b. On the evening: there is no properly organised expectation of what the volunteers are actually to do, so it depends on the staff on duty, the astronomer, and also the volunteers themselves to carve something out “on the hoof”.

It was decided to arrange a meeting with Rob Edwards and Nick Babbs in September to discuss issuing guidelines for the roles of volunteers on these public evenings. The committee should also be proactive and create a plan to use volunteers effectively e.g. it may be that 12 sessions are too many to cover.

5. **Solar Viewing at the ROG:** Deborah reported that the solar viewing session on Sunday had been a great success. She had organised the event smoothly and without glitches and felt that both the participants from the Flamsteed and the public had enjoyed the afternoon. The committee thanked her for taking over this popular activity.

She and David will prepare simple guidelines for committee members to follow should she be unavailable and someone else wishes to call a session. It was also agreed she would send a quick google email to all members on Sunday mornings confirming or calling off the session.

6. **Training for 28" telescope:** Roger to arrange training session with Tony Sizer who is already in the museum on Saturdays.

7. **Outings and Visits:** None could be arranged until the vexed and difficult question of indemnity for committee members has been sorted out. This unfortunately will also apply to all events off museum premises such as viewing on Blackheath and pub evenings. Rebecca has been discussing the position with Chris Grey, the Museum's secretary and until we have a full ruling in writing we cannot proceed as we cannot risk being individually sued in the event of mishaps. We are volunteers and not museum staff and it may be that all future outings will have to be arranged by the Members' office. This will obviously have to be discussed when we have more information.

Therefore the visit to John Griffith's observatory is shelved for the time being.

8. **Any other Business:**

- a) **Book Licences:** Mike and Jane to meet with the Director of Finance and Head of Retail shortly to discuss the whole question of book signings and the museum licence – we shall keep the committee informed.
- b) **Fred Watson** may be in London from 6<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June. Jane will discuss a possible museum lecture with Marek Kukula (requested by Rosemary Gilbert). We are happy to give publicity and support but not organise or run the lecture as experience has taught us that summer lectures are not very popular with our members.

9. **Date of next meeting:** TBA