

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the British Astronomical Association held on 2022 October 26 on line and at the Institute of Physics

The President, David Arditto, welcomed everyone to the AGM of the 132nd Session. He reminded members that minutes of the 131st AGM held on 2021 October 23 had been displayed for inspection on the website and invited members to comment. None was made and, following a vote from those present, the minutes were passed. He then invited the Treasurer, Dr King, to present a summary of the accounts, adding that this was the last service Dr King would perform as Treasurer as he is standing down to be replaced by Mr Graham Winstanley.

Geoff King, Treasurer, told the meeting that a summary of the accounts was printed in the October Journal and that the full version is available on request and on the website. Dr King reported a successful financial year with reserves increasing by £70,000 to a total of £1,689,000 in cash and tangibles. Income without investments is relatively unchanged at £136,000 while expenditure increased by about £40,000 to £234,000, mostly due to website development, this leading to an operational deficit of £121,500, an increase of about £39,000 compared with last year. These figures tallied with the forecasts made at the start of the year. Dr King added that the BAA is a charity intended to support astronomy and making a profit is not an aim; he is not therefore unduly concerned about the operational loss. Investment gains amounted to £165,000 and bequests amounted to £22,700. Tangible assets are valued at £12,600, about half the value of last year, owing to instrument sales. The financial view is thus very healthy and, for a charity of our size, the level of reserves could be viewed as bordering on the too large. Dr King forecast that the operational deficit of £121,500 will decline substantially over the year. In response to a question from the floor, Dr King said that the value of our investments was lower than last year and had declined by £95,000 since March though recovery now appeared to be underway. The President thanked Dr King for his service to the BAA saying we had been lucky to have such a competent, patient and helpful person in charge of the accounts, and proposed a vote of thanks. The meeting responded with a round of applause.

Dr Arditto then began the annual review of the 2021/2022 Session. There have been 36 deaths of members, most notably Mr Ron Arbour, former Vice-president, Director of the Astrophotography Section, founder of the Deep Sky Section and Commission for Dark Skies, respected telescope engineer and discoverer of supernovae. The Association also lost Mr Ken Medway, prolific solar observer, former Solar Section Director and winner of the Steavenson Memorial award. Dr Arditto also noted the recent death of Queen Elizabeth II and asked for a minutes silence in remembrance of all three.

Last year's AGM was notable for being the first meeting in London since lockdown, at which Mr Alan Lorrain had given his Presidential address on observing artificial satellites. We maintain a good relationship with the IOP, but problems with the building forced a closure so that the Christmas meeting had to relocate to the Royal Society of Medicine and that for January to the London Irish Centre. Dr Arditto had presented the Sir Patrick Moore Prize to Howard Parkin and Mary McIntyre. Dale Holt and Alexandra Hart were also presented with awards, won during lockdown. March and May meetings returned to the IOP with lectures from Jacqueline Mitton and Martin Lewis. In May, Mike Foulkes presented the George Alcock Memorial Lecture. After a gap of two years, Ann Davies and Alan Dowdell gave their usual expert management to April's Winchester Weekend. The Alfred Curtis Memorial Lecture was given by Dr Steven Wilkins. The one-day meeting in Leeds was held in conjunction with Leeds AS, also delayed by two years. In April, Dr Arditto attended the unveiling of an English Heritage plaque commemorating the residence of Walter and Annie Maunder. At the May Council meeting Clyde Foster was awarded the Steavenson Memorial Award and Dominic Ford was awarded the Horace Dall Medal and Gift for his work on the website. The June summer meeting took place in Nottingham in cooperation with Nottingham AS at which Andrew Robertson was presented with his Sir Patrick Moore Prize, won in 2021. The final meeting was held in Elgin at which Lyn Smith was presented with her Walter Goodacre Medal, won last session. Hazel Collett and her husband Graham put in great efforts to organise the meetings and she has announced her decision to stand down as Meetings Secretary next October. Members gave their appreciation with a round of applause.

One feature of lockdowns was the introduction of webinars: it was decided to continue with these with a wide range of topics covered; all are available on the BAA YouTube channel. The website has migrated to the Word Press platform and went live in March, with work from Emily Bick, John Chuter, Dominic Ford, Callum Potter, SciAnsell Ltd. and Andy Wilson. After a few teething troubles it is a great improvement on the old website.

In April 2022, the BAA moved out of Burlington House, ending an 80 year relationship and thanks are due to the Office Administrator Maddy Davey for her help in achieving this. Staff now work from home and a PO Box is available for correspondence.

The valuable archive is now transferred to a more suitable climate-controlled location; work is underway to digitise the items and some are already available through the website or by arrangement with the archivists. Most of the instrument collection has been sold, though a few of historic interest are retained. Unfortunately, the action against the former Curator of Instruments continues as many of the instruments are unaccounted for.

There has been one change to the Section Directors: Paul Hearn replaces John Cook as Director of the Radio Astronomy Section and thanks are due to John. There was one change to the Board of Trustees as Lyn Smith resigned in January, replaced by Tim Parsons. Thanks are due to the Board and Council. Graham Winstanley takes over as Treasurer and Marie-Louise Archer has left Council under the three-year rule but remains active as Journal Advertising Manager. Editor, Philip Jennings, fully maintains the standards of the Journal, assisted by Jeremy Shears as Papers' Secretary. Thanks are also due to Computing Section Director, Steve Harvey, and team for their work in producing the Handbook, now in its 102nd year.

Membership at the end of September was 2559, a 2% reduction on the same point in 2021. Dr Arditti is concerned to preserve the long-term viability of the Association and to this extent, the Strategy Group, chaired by the President, has presented its recommendations to Council. The actions suggested should help the Association to prosper and respond to members' needs. In response to a comment from the floor, Dr Arditti concluded his review with an acknowledgement of the breadth of work covered by Newsletter Editor and Events Coordinator, Janice McClean, which was recognised with a round of applause. Another member pointed out, in respect of the Strategy Group work, the need to recognise that some BAA members are most interested in theoretical, as opposed to observational, subjects, and should be catered to, too.

Bill Tarver, Business Secretary, announced the results of the ballot for the 2022/2023 session. The ballot again had two components: paper returns and the online system created by CIVICA (formerly the Electoral Reform Services). Combined results were as follows:

President:	David Arditti	457
Vice President:	Alan Lorrain	<i>ex officio</i>
Treasurer:	Graham Winstanley	448
Business Secretary:	William Tarver	435
Papers Secretary:	Jeremy Shears	464
Meetings Secretary:	Hazel Collett	447

Five elected **Trustees:**

Ann Davies	391
Richard McKim	389
Janice McClean	395
Geoff King	281
Tim Parsons	265

Three elected to **Council:**

David Boyd	431
Alexandra Hart	390
Marc Stokes	358

Total valid votes	74 paper, 424 on-line = 498
Invalid/spoilt/blank	= 14

Bill Tarver thanked the scrutineers, Ms M. Davey, Ms J. Palmer and Mrs J. Rickard. He also thanked Mr Andy Wilson for managing the on-line ballot.

Following some routine meetings announcements Dr Arditti opened the 132nd Session.