




MEXBOROUGH & SWINTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Annual Report & Statement of Accounts

For the year to 31 March 2019

Available online

 msas.org.uk/annual-reports/2019



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Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2019

The trustees of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society are pleased to present their report and accounts for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Achievements and Performance

The Year in 5 Numbers

11	53	346	10	£ 31,288
Community Access and Outreach Events	Society meetings	Members of the public served	Guest Speakers	Expenditure on Project Aquarius

Meeting Programme

The meeting programme was as ever a core activity of the society in the year to 31 March 2019 with a total of 53 meetings being provided, of these 10 were delivered by our guest speakers with the remainder given by members of the society. Total attendance over the year was 766 members and 103 non-members.

We would like to place on record our sincere thanks to our members who give so generously of their time to provide such a busy and varied programme and to our guest speakers, Dr Ed Daw, Professor Philippa Browning, Dr Susan Cartwright, David Benoit, Vik Dhillon, James Swinscoe, Dr Gareth Few, Paul Money, and Dr Roger Cooper, who are good enough to share their time, knowledge and passion with us.

Community Access & Outreach Programmes

Our Outreach programme provided fewer events in the year to 31 March 2019 than in previous years, firstly we decided not to run any solar observing events at RSPB Old Moor in part due to our focus over the summer months on Project Aquarius building works at the observatory and due to a decline in public support. Sadly, two planned evening events at RSPB Old Moor were cancelled: one event planned for 17 November 2018 only attracted 3 bookings and the second event planned for 16 March 2019 also suffered from poor bookings and adverse weather conditions.

There were no events at Thrybergh Country Park in the year, however we did return to Clifton Park for *Planets in the Park VIII* on 9 February 2019. The event was fortunate to enjoy clear skies for a few hours and our visitors made great use of the 4 telescopes we provided, our members were also happy to help several visitors setup and use their own telescopes. We also provided *Stellarium* presentations indoors and ran our book stall which sold £21 of stock. In all 60 members of the public attended the event. We extend our thanks to our members and the volunteers at Friends of Clifton Park for their continued support.

Our Community Access Programme at the observatory was again curtailed due to the project Aquarius building work; despite this limitation 9 events were provided through the year with 126 members of the public attending.

40th Anniversary Astrocon

The year to 31 March 2019 marked the society's 40th year promoting astronomy and its associated sciences, one of the highlights of our year of celebration was the *Astrocon* which took place on 27 October 2018 at Swinton Masonic Hall. Although bookings had initially been a little slow in the end 74 delegates booked to attend the event of which 57 were non-members. Sadly, the event did not attract younger visitors which is a disappointment.

The day began with Paul D'Silva welcoming our visitors and members before giving a history of the society which was well received, other speakers planned for the event were Dr Sue Cartwright with a talk of *Supernovae*, Peter Rea - *Mars - A Guided Tour of the Tharsis Region*, Rod Hine on the life and work of *George Ellery Hale and The Golden Age of USA Astronomy*, Albert Zijlstra - *Planetary Nebulae*, Roger Cooper - *Skylark*, with the day rounded off by Tony Morris giving a talk on *Astro Imaging*.

Unfortunately, things didn't quite go to plan! Our first guest speaker, Dr Sue Cartwright, failed to appear, at first, we blamed the trains but discovered later that it was a diary mix-up. Thankfully, Peter Rea stepped in and began his talk a little earlier than planned and then continued with one of the longest and most detailed Q&A sessions we have heard. Our sincere thanks to Peter for stepping in

to help and to all our speakers who ensured the event was both informative and enjoyable. We must also note our thanks to Sarah Woodhouse who provide excellent refreshments through the day and to our members who assisted in the preparation and running of the day.

Oxford Visit

Another highlight of our 40th anniversary celebrations was a society trip to Oxford on a visit to the Radcliffe Observatory and the Oxford Museum of the History of Science. The day was hosted by our patron and Honorary President Dr Allan Chapman. Allan took us through the origins of the observatory and how it was used, pointing out unusual features and its place in the history of the university. In the afternoon Allan took up the story of the instruments from the observatory at the museum before taking us through some of the grislier exhibits telling the story of medical research at Oxford.

Images show the Radcliffe Observatory and a quadrant in the museum.



Observatory & Instruments

The year has seen the observatory equipment returned from storage and refitted into the observatory after the Project Aquarius building work had been completed. The re-install went without any major issues.

Whist the building was being re-wired the opportunity arose to tidy up the computer cabling both upstairs and downstairs. Several cables had to be extended as the control cabinet had been moved to a more convenient location in the new control room. The troublesome USB keyboard and mouse in the dome were replaced by serial devices after feedback from our members. A small Ethernet switch has been fitted into the control cabinet this will allow flexibility connecting to various pieces of equipment in the future.

The observatory meeting room now has a networked projector for all members and visitors to use. Our thanks to Kris Hudson-Lee for his efforts installing and setting it up. In addition, a Rotel audio amplifier was donated by Andrew Kirton-Vaughan for the meeting room sound system.

As part of Project Aquarius (see below) a new camera was purchased from 365 Astronomy. The camera is a ZWO ASI 071MC Pro. This is a 16-megapixel cooled colour camera that has the capability of doing long exposures for deep sky and high frame rates for planetary astrophotography. The feedback so far has been very positive.

The Observatory electronic alarm key fobs have proved successful and will allow better access management to the observatory.

The external groundwork has not been completed as of the date of this report and as such it presents a trip hazard in places and the external pier is out of commission due to the uneven path to it. Preventative measures have been put in place. Efforts are ongoing to get the ground work completed as soon as possible.

With the added complexity of the observatory electricity and water usage have come under scrutiny requiring all members to ensure everything is powered down as appropriate.

Project Aquarius

For many years the society has been aware that the lack of space and toilet facilities at the J A Jones Observatory has been a major drawback of the facility. Members and the public have been unwilling to visit the observatory and use the equipment because the nearest toilet was over a mile and a half away. In 2014 the society determined to resolve the situation by extending the ground floor of the observatory and refurbish it to include a much larger presentation room, control room and disabled toilet. The total cost of the project was projected as £ 31,288 and after securing matched funding from the National Lottery Big Fund and the Mrs Audrey May Hampshire Lowe Memorial Fund, via the South Yorkshire Community Foundation, building work started on the 1 May 2018.

Throughout the summer members of the society worked alongside contractors to complete the work before the ambitious completion date of the 1 October 2018. Due to extremely good weather the work proceeded quickly with foundations, internal walls, floor and roof joists going in very quickly. However, good progress was overtaken by a national brick shortage and the discovery that the floor joists in the original building had sagged. The former led to a three-week delay in completing the outer wall of the extension and the inability to match the bricks with the original brickwork. Our thanks are extended to our brick layer whose advice and skill at matching the new walls into the old has produced a pleasing completed building. The latter problem was tackled by members of the society taking advantage of the floor joists being exposed and installing a steel beam to support the floor joists before jacking it into place to remove the sagging.

Work to bring water onto the site proved tricky as the original plan to lay the water pipe 220m along Lee Brook Lane by mole boring was made impossible by the amount of buried rubble. Thankfully the contractors were able to excavate a trench using a mini-digger to install the water supply. The same contractor installed the septic tank after having to dig a pit some 4 meters deep on the fence boundary.

With the sub-roof installed the honour of breaking through from old to new was left to our observatory curator, after this the 'old' layout of the observatory disappeared quickly. Before floors were completed it was decided to install a time capsule to record how the society looked in our 40th year. The roof was completed with the installation of a fibre glass roof, surprisingly delayed because of rain, bringing much relief as the building was now water proof.

Work continued throughout September but unfortunately the 1 October completion date was missed. After re-focussing our efforts, the observatory was reopened for members on the 1 November, the society having a member's viewing evening on the 2 November 2018. On the 18 November the society restarted the Outreach Programme with a visit from the 18th Hoyland (Barnsley) Cubs.

At this late stage in the project we were delighted to receive sponsorship for a new camera from the West Riding Masonic Charities Limited. With the charity's backing we have been able to purchase a ZWO ASI07MC Pro one-shot colour deep sky imaging camera. This will not only enhance the society's ability to take images but also allow users unable to reach the dome the opportunity to view images live from the telescopes.

Project Aquarius will be completed by levelling and reseeding the observatory grounds. In addition, remaining building materials need to be removed from the site.

The success of the project is down to the hard work of members of the society, not only during the construction but also in the planning and fund-raising phases. We are also grateful to our contractors whose knowledge, skills and generosity have made the project practicable.

Messenger

11 issues of the society newsletter were issued through the year.

Accommodation

In our report for the year ended 31 March 2013 we identified as a major risk the long-term future of our accommodation at Swinton Working Men's Club which is owned and operated by Swinton Bottom Club Ltd. (SBC Ltd) Several alternatives have been investigated but none, to date, has offered quality, dedicated alternative accommodation. The trustees invite suggestions for alternative accommodation from all members and urge them to keep a keen lookout for possible venues.

Financial Review

Financial Performance

Detailed accounts can be found on page 7.

Income

Figure 1 compares general fund income in the year to 31 March 2019 with the previous year.

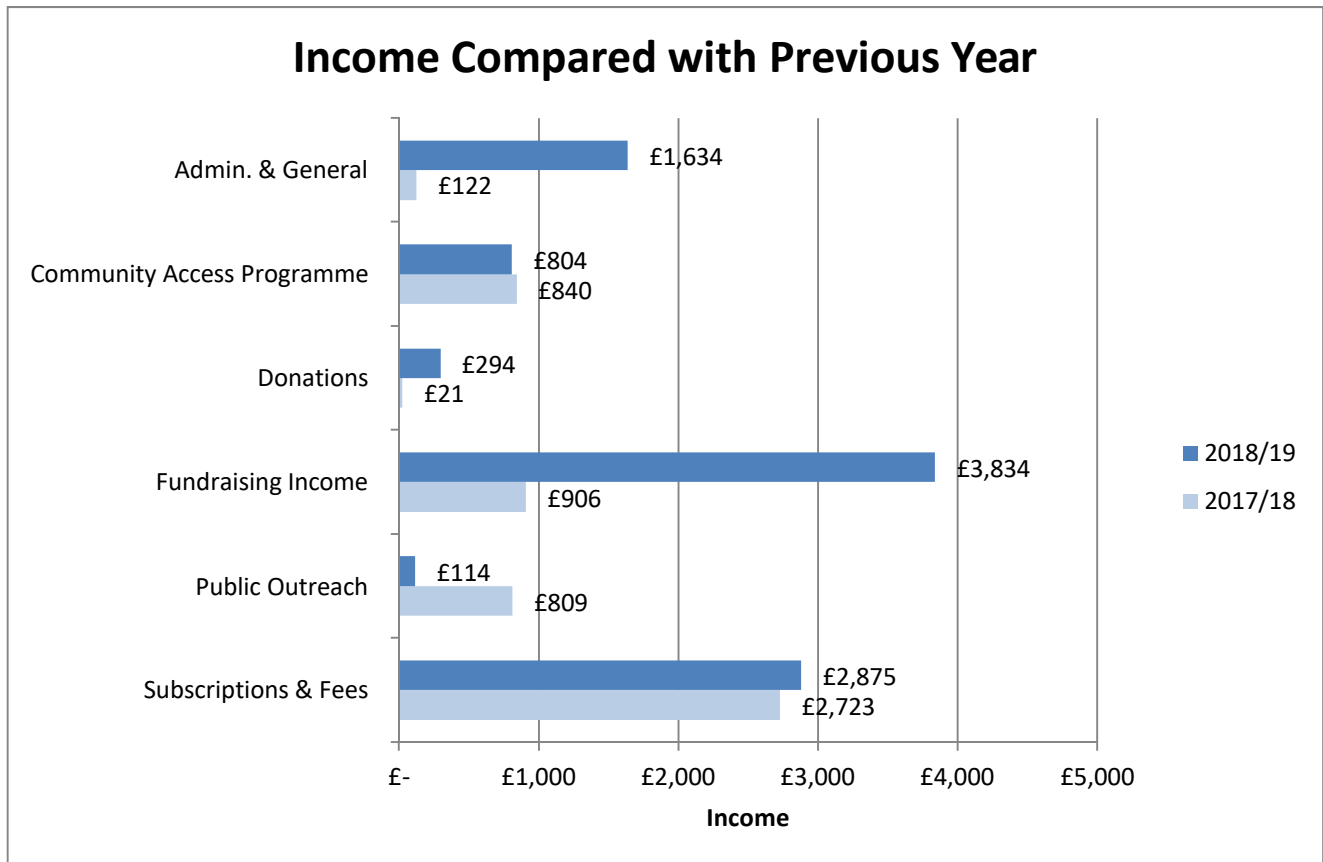


Figure 1 Comparison of General Fund Income with Previous Year

On first inspection income under the heading of Administration and General appears to have increased significantly, however much of the increase is due to a short-term cash loan of £1,500 made to the society by our Treasurer to ensure Project Aquarius invoices could be paid, this was due to a change in process affecting and delaying transfers between the Virgin Charity and current accounts. This income is offset by a repayment of £1,500 under the same heading of expenditure. Once the loan is excluded the figure is comparable to the previous year and is due to interest received on the Virgin Charity Account.

The Community Access programme income is broadly consistent with the previous year (£804 rather than £840), this is encouraging as fewer events were provided due to the building work at the observatory.

Public Outreach income shows a marked decrease from £809 to £114 however as we noted above there were far fewer public outreach events in the year to 31 March 2019.

Fundraising income again shows a marked increase however a little more analysis is required to fully assess this. A significant proportion - £2,012 - was monies collected from members for the Malham Observing Weekend which is offset by an equal expenditure. Similarly, members payments for the Solstice Dinner (£763) are offset by a slightly greater expenditure of £880 as the society paid for the meals of our guests. When these amounts are excluded Fundraising Income is a little higher at £1,059 than the £906 for the previous year.

Subscriptions and Fees income shows a headline increase of £152 to £2,875 however this includes the first of several years backlog of Gift Aid claims (for the year ended 31 March 2014) which resulted in an additional £474 of income. The remaining backlog will be processed in the coming year and it is anticipated that yield approximately £1,900 of additional income. The society's year-end and Gift Aid

claim processes have been revised to ensure future claims will be made at the end of each financial year. At the date of this report a claim has been submitted for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Expenditure

General fund expenditure for the year totalled £23,424 – significantly more than the previous year (£3,280) and this is illustrated in Figure 2. It should be noted however that a significant increase in expenditure is due to our fund matching of Project Aquarius.

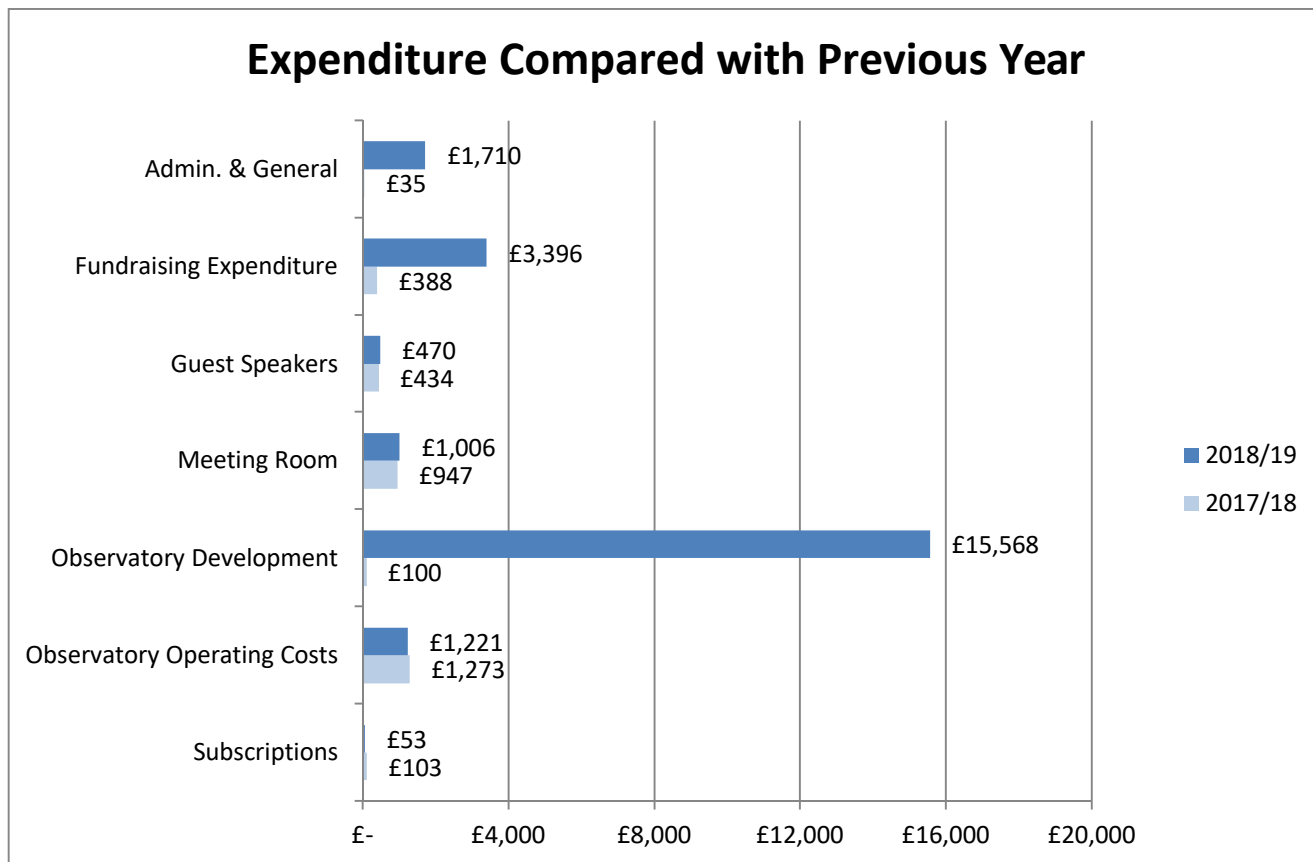


Figure 2 Comparison of General Fund Expenditure with Previous Year

Admin & General expenditure shows a significant increase but as noted in the income review above £1,500 of this was due to a short-term interest free loan made to the society due to delays in transferring funds from investment to current account. A further source of increase is some £175 spent of an upgrade and rewrite of the society website.

Fundraising expenditure likewise shows a notable increase which is offset by fundraising income as noted above.

Guest Speaker expenses show an 8.3% increase year-on-year to £470 but this still represents great value for money.

The major component of Meeting Room expenditure is room rent of £900 per annum, which is unchanged. A slight increase in the year to 31 March 2019 was due to a computer upgrade to improve our audio-visual and presentation facilities.

Observatory Development expenditure really cannot be compared to the previous year as the main delivery phase of Project Aquarius was undertaken in the year 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, the total project cost was £31,288 of which £15,961 was met from restricted funds in the form of grants made by National Lottery Awards for All, Mrs Audrey May Hampshire Lowe Memorial Fund, and West Riding Masonic Charities. A further £15,327 was contributed from our unrestricted funds as well as a £288 transfer to the restricted fund to give that a zero balance at project completion. Several issues with the existing observatory and site were discovered during the Project Aquarius works and rectifying these accounted for the remaining unrestricted expenditure.

Observatory Operating costs are broadly consistent year-on-year at £1,221 compared with £1,273 – however the effect of Project Aquarius on operating costs is not known at the date of this report as the extension has only been open a few months.

Finally, Subscriptions show a marked decrease to £53 from £103 – this is due to Swinton Bottom Club membership having been paid in advance in the previous year.

Gifts and Support in Kind

In assessing the finances and assets of the society it must be noted that many members and trustees give a great deal of support in kind. Many purchases are made and the payment never claimed back; for example, printing and postage costs, stall fees at events, and web hosting have all been paid for by members but the cost not claimed despite such a claim being perfectly legitimate.

Members also give generously of their time; without the many hours given to preparing and delivering talks, running community access and outreach events, and managing the society its growth and success could not be achieved.

The trustees wish to place on record their recognition of and gratitude for these contributions.

Funds Materially in Deficit

As at 31 March 2019 the Society had no funds in material deficit.

Major Risks

In our Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014 we identified a single major risk relating to our accommodation at Swinton Bottom Club Ltd. It must be recognized that Swinton Bottom Club Ltd. is operating in a very difficult market and the ongoing use of our rented accommodation must continue to be considered a major risk to the society. We noted earlier the very real risk of an unsustainable rise in our operating costs in the short-to-medium term if temporary accommodation had to be rented.

Financial Management and Reserves Policies

The Society has a Financial Management Policy which meets the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the Charity Commission guidelines “Internal Financial Controls for Charities” and “Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (Revised 2005)”.

The General Fund is unrestricted and is used for the day-to-day operation of the Society. The Project Aquarius restricted fund had a zero balance at 31 March 2019 and will be closed as of that date.

Reserves are held without any exposure to the stock market.

The Society operates with an unrestricted reserve at a level set by the trustees; currently this is £5,000 which equated to approximately 24 months running costs. The reserve is held to allow the Society to offset fluctuations in income receipts and to provide for contingencies.

At 31 March 2019, the General Fund had a balance £18,907 (compared to £33,064 at the same date last year).

Whilst the current unrestricted fund level is above the reserve we feel it is prudent in the current economic climate; maintaining a substantial reserve will better allow the Society to meet the funding challenges which the wider economic situation may impose. We are also mindful that the long-term future of Swinton Bottom Club Ltd. is difficult to guarantee and must be prepared to seek alternative accommodation, possibly at short notice.

The core operating costs of the society in the year to 31 March 2019 were some £2,384 (once one-off items are excluded) of which 93.3% is met by subscription income (excluding Gift Aid) - or a little less than 78% if guest speaker expenditure is included (bringing operating costs to a total of £2,854). For comparison when Gift Aid and visitor fees are included the percentage met by subscription income is 121% and 101% respectively.

Approved and adopted by a meeting of the Executive Committee on 19 June 2019 and signed on their behalf,



Leslie H. Marsden FRAS
Chairman

Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2019

Receipts & Payments Account

	Unrestricted Funds to nearest £	Restricted Funds to nearest £	Total Funds to nearest £	Last Year to nearest £
Receipts				
Admin. & General	1,634	6,200	7,834	9,883
Community Access Programme	804	-	804	840
Donations	294	-	294	21
Fundraising Income	3,834	-	3,834	906
Public Outreach	114	-	114	809
Subscriptions & Fees	2,875	-	2,875	2,723
Total Receipts	9,555	6,200	15,182	15,182
Payments				
Admin. & General	1,710	-	1,710	35
Fundraising Expenditure	3,396	-	3,396	388
Guest Speakers	470	-	470	434
Meeting Room	1,006	-	1,006	947
Observatory Development	15,568	16,249	31,817	100
Observatory Operating Costs	1,221	-	1,221	1,273
Subscriptions	53	-	53	103
Total Payments	23,424	16,249	39,673	3,280
Net of receipts/(payments)	(13,869)	(10,049)	(23,918)	11,902
Transfers between funds	(288)	288	-	-
Cash funds last year end	33,064	9,761	42,825	23,790
Cash funds this year end	18,907	-	18,907	42,825

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Cash Assets

	Unrestricted Funds to nearest £	Restricted Funds to nearest £	Total Funds to nearest £
NatWest Current	5,291	-	5,291
<i>Add: Cheques not cleared at bank</i>	510	-	510
NatWest Savings (Closed)	-	-	-
NatWest Transfer Account	-	-	-
Virgin Charity Account	13,526	-	13,526
Petty Cash	90	-	90
PayPal	-	-	-
Total Cash Funds	19,417	-	19,417

Other Assets held for functional use

All assets shown belong to the Unrestricted (General) Fund

Observatory building and members' key sets.	54,600
Observatory Land (purchased 2017)	250
Paramount ME Robotic Telescope System	6,850
Takahashi TOA 130 wide-field telescope	3,710
Celestron C14 Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope	3,500
Focuser TCF-3 w/ Paramount Wiring Kit	1,400
Takahashi 50mm Eyepiece	355
Takahashi 2" Diagonal	300
Takahashi 2" Diagonal	300
2x Personal Computers	1,000
Data Projector – Observatory Use	799
Data Projector – Outreach Use	400
ZWO ASI 071MC Pro (16-megapixel cooled colour camera)	1,400
Solar Max Telescope (purchased June 2003)	
H-alpha filter	3,154
Williams Optics 80mm Zenithstar 2	648
Eyepiece set for Solar Max	246
Orion optics field tripod	289
GPDx Mount	695
Sky Sensor 2000	859
Dovetail plate and counterweight	54
Meeting Room (Rented) Contents	
Optoma EH415e Video Projector & accessories (purchased 2016)	1,037
Phillips Data Projector (purchased 2000)	3,500
Overhead projector (purchased 1996)	300
Kodak Slide Projector (purchased 1996)	1,300
Panasonic AG7350 SVHS video recorder (s/h price)	1,000
DVD Player	60
Amplifier	20
Furnishings (purchased 1999)	500
Library	
Books, DVDs, videos, CD-ROMs; all in good condition (items of varying age)	2,600
Telescope 76.2 1250mm + 3 eyepieces & tripod	100
Tasco Refractor Telescope (9TE-5)	50
Dell Remote control keyboard	30
Meade LXD 55F/U 5" Refractor Telescope	150
Canon EOS 350D Digital SLR Camera	200
Sale Items for Fundraising	
Books – assorted stock	220
Phil Turner Legacy	
Telescope – 14-inch Dobsonian	1,600
Telescope – 5" Celestron "Go to" Telescope	700
Telescope – Coronado PST 40mm	479
Telescope – Orion Optics 5" Reflecting Telescope	300
Binoculars – Helios	200
Assorted Eyepieces, filters and tripods (no item over £75)	450
	95,605

Notes to the Accounts

Restricted Funds

The society is currently operating with no restricted funds.

Trustees' Expenses

No expenses were paid to any of the Trustees during the year except to reimburse them for purchases made on behalf of the Society.

Trustees' Indemnity Insurance

No charitable funds have been used to purchase insurance to indemnify the Trustees against the consequences of any neglect or default on their part.

Accounting Policies

Section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 permits a charity to prepare a receipts and payments account and a statement of assets and liabilities where gross income in the financial year does not exceed £250,000, therefore receipts and payments accounts and a statement of assets and liabilities has been prepared and presented for the year ended 31 March 2018; this is consistent with previous years.

Bank Interest is included in the Admin & General category.

All Income, including grants and investment income is recorded when received.

All Expenditure is recorded when paid.

Gift aid reclaimable on donations is included in the amounts of income once received.

Basis of Valuations

Valuations have been provided for assets held for functional use; where possible the brand-new purchase price/replacement cost is given. If this is not readily available a second-hand purchase price is given.

Independent Scrutiny

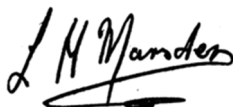
In the year ended 31 March 2018 gross income did not exceed £25,000 and therefore, in accordance with the sections 144 & 145 of the Charities Act 2011 no audit or independent examination is required, and no such scrutiny requirement is imposed by the Society's governing document.

Cheques not cleared at bank at 31 March 2018

At 31 March 2019, there was one (1) cheque, with a value of £510, issued by the society which had not been presented at the bank.

For comparison, at 31 March 2018 there was one (1) cheque with a value of £30 issued by the society which had not cleared at the bank.

Approved and adopted at a meeting of the Executive Committee on 19 June 2019 and signed on their behalf.



Leslie H. Marsden FRAS
Chairman

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name

The Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society which is also known as MSAS.

Charity Number

Registered Charity in England & Wales, N°.1064103

Principal Address

147 Queen Street
Swinton
Mexborough
South Yorkshire
S64 8NG

Charity Trustees as of 31 March 2019

Mr Leslie Holmes Marsden	<i>Chairman</i>
Mr Shaun O'Dell	<i>Secretary</i>
Mr Michael Kerry Collinson	<i>Treasurer</i>
Mr Roy Gunson	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Mr Paul D'Silva	<i>Fundraising Officer</i>
Mr Glenn Michael John Marsden	<i>IT Officer</i>
Mr Anthony John Morris	<i>Curator of Instruments & Observatory</i>
Mr Stephen Taylor	<i>Programme Co-ordinator</i>
Mr Andrew Kirton-Vaughn	<i>Observations Officer</i>
Mr Philip John Muffett	<i>Committee Member</i>

Patrons as of 31 March 2019

Dr Allan Chapman	<i>Patron & Honorary President</i>
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Advisors

Banking	National Westminster Bank PLC. Bank Street Mexborough South Yorkshire S64 9QE	Virgin Money Jubilee House Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 4PL
Insurance Broker and Underwriter	Access Insurance Services 50 Chapel View South Croydon Surrey CR2 7LF	Ansvar Insurance Company Ltd. Ansvar House St. Leonards Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN21 3UR

Structure, Governance, and Management

Governing Document and Constitution



The Society is an unincorporated association and is governed by a constitution adopted August 1996 and last amended 23 May 2013; this is available from our website at msas.org.uk/about/constitution-and-rules.

The Society is run entirely by its members who pay an annual membership subscription and are not eligible for reimbursement of any out-of-pocket expenses. As of 31 March 2019, the Society had a membership of 34.

Trustee Selection and Management

The Society is managed by an Executive Committee which consists of all the appointed trustees. Several the trustees also hold offices within the society, for example the Curator of Instruments and Observatory. These officers are noted in the list of current trustees above.

The Executive Committee meets typically once per month.

At each meeting, the Treasurer presents the latest accounts, these are reviewed against budgets and forecasts; spending is discussed and approved. Officers may authorise some spending, between meetings, within set limits but must ensure such spending is reported at the next meeting.

The meetings also offer a forum to review recent activities within our programme and to plan forthcoming events. Correspondence and applications for membership received are considered; in addition, officers report on their areas of responsibility. Further *ad hoc* meetings are called if required, for example to plan and manage special events or projects.

The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts are approved by the trustees and then presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting.

Related Organisations

The Society is a member of the Federation of Astronomical Societies (FAS), a national body established to promote co-operation between astronomical societies and provide information and advice to its members; for further information, see the FAS website www.fedastro.org.uk/fas.

A trustee of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society, Shaun O'Dell, has in the year to 31 March 2019 served on the Council of the FAS; all FAS Council members are drawn from the Federation's member societies.

The Society made a subscription payment to the FAS of £25 in the year and purchased additional Public Liability Insurance, to cover events held away from the Observatory and meeting room, as part of a group scheme at a cost of £28.

The Society's meeting room is a rented room in the Swinton Bottom Club Ltd. (formerly Swinton Working Men's Club & Institute). It is a requirement our tenancy that all adult members of the society must be members of the Swinton Bottom Club, this is managed by the society. In addition, room rent was paid in the amount of £900.

Objectives and Activities

Charitable Objects

The object of the Society as set out in our Constitution is the advancement of education for the public benefit in astronomy and its associated sciences.

The Society aims to promote astronomy as a recreational activity for its own sake but also aims to promoted public awareness and understanding of science and the scientific method. A scientifically literate community is, in our view vital, in the modern world.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the Society in the year to 31 March 2019.

In evaluating public benefit, the trustees note that membership of the society is open to all who share an interest in astronomy and its associated sciences. Whilst we would encourage those with interest

to join our ranks we also strive to make our services and facilities available to non-members and ensure that restrictions placed on that availability are both necessary and reasonable. Our meeting programme for example is open to all whilst public access to the observatory or solar telescope is only available when supervised by the society; this is to protect both our assets and public safety. A society member, once suitably trained, may choose to use the observatory at any time.

Summary of Main Activities

The core activities of the Society are:

- Delivery of a weekly meeting programme covering a wide range of astronomical topics
- Developing and maintaining the J.A. Jones Hooper Observatory
- Offering a Community Access Programme at the observatory
- Providing an Outreach Programme within the local area
- Offering support and advice to the public on matters related to astronomy

Our philosophy is to offer access to all regardless of personal circumstances, race, gender, ability, or faith. The Society operates mainly in South Yorkshire however visitors from further afield are always welcome. The programme of weekly meetings is open to all, although disabled access to our meeting room is sadly limited.

Our Community Access Programme opens the J.A. Jones Hooper Observatory to give supervised access to the public and to organised groups such as schools, Scouts, and Round Table. Disabled access to the observatory is limited as the telescopes are on the first floor however we do have facilities to take portable instruments outside to visitors who are unable to access the building.

With our Outreach activities, we take solar telescopes out to fetes and galas or to public spaces such as country parks. In recent years, we have increasingly worked in partnership with other organisations and venues in our community, this helps us to reach a wider audience.

Fees are charged for these services, but these are kept at a low level, concession rates do not apply as the full fee is small and the administrative overheads of concession rates would be disproportionate.

Approved and adopted at a meeting of the Executive Committee on 19 June 2019 and signed on their behalf



Leslie H. Marsden FRAS
Chairman