




MEXBOROUGH & SWINTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Annual Report & Statement of Accounts

For the year to March 31st 2016

Available online

 msas.org.uk/annual-reports/2016



Annual Report for the year ended March 31 st 2016	1
Achievements and Performance	1
The Year in 5 Numbers	1
Meeting Programme	1
Community Access & Outreach Programmes	1
BBC Stargazing Live.....	2
Messenger	2
J.A. Jones Hooper Observatory.....	2
Observatory Improvement and Extension Feasibility Study.....	3
Land Purchase	4
Membership	4
Accommodation.....	4
Financial Review.....	4
Financial Performance	4
Income.....	4
Expenditure	5
Gifts and Support in Kind	6
Funds Materially in Deficit	6
Major Risks	6
Financial Management and Reserves Policies	7
Accounts for the Year ended March 31 st 2016	8
Receipts & Payments Account.....	8
Statement of Assets and Liabilities	8
Notes to the Accounts	10
Reference and Administrative Details	11
Charity Name	11
Charity Number	11
Principal Address.....	11
Charity Trustees as of March 31 st 2016.....	11
Other Charity Trustees in the year to March 31 st 2016.....	11
Patrons as of March 31 st 2016.....	11
Advisors	11
Structure, Governance, and Management	12
Governing Document and Constitution	12
Trustee Selection and Management	12
Related Organisations	12
Objectives and Activities.....	12
Charitable Objects	12
Public Benefit Statement.....	13
Summary of Main Activities	13

Annual Report for the year ended March 31st 2016

The trustees of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period April 1st 2015 to March 31st 2016.

Achievements and Performance

The Year in 5 Numbers

45	55	983	16	£2,268
Community Access and Outreach Events	Society meetings	Members of the public served	Guest Speakers	Surplus for the year

Meeting Programme

The society's weekly meeting programme is a core activity which contributes greatly to the success enjoyed by the society. In the year to March 31st 2016 a total of 55 meetings were held with the inclusion of special evening to accommodate the travel needs of some of our guest speakers.

Total attendance across the meeting programme was 1,048 members and 157 visitors.

Our guest speakers are always a highlight of the programme and this year has been no exception. We place on record our thanks to our guest speakers in the year to March 31st: Carlton Baugh, Dr Allan Chapman, Dr Richard Parker, Dr Stuart Muldrew, Dr. Matthew Malek, Dr. R Mike L Evans, Dr. Susan Cartwright, Gary Poyner, John D Timmins, Julian Onions, Paul Crowther, Paul Money, Prof. Roger Eccleston, and Steve Bowden.

Combined guest and member speakers have delivered an informative and varied programme covering a wide range of topics in astronomy and its associated sciences. The society is grateful to all our speakers who continue to deliver a packed and excellent programme.

Community Access & Outreach Programmes

The society's Community Access and Outreach programmes are vital tools in our work to promote astronomy and its associated sciences to a wider public and provide a showcase for the society's work. The programmes also play a key role in recruiting new members to the society.

Our Outreach Programme for the year to March 31st 2016 has been very busy, with 15 events held attracting 475 visitors.

In recent years we have been running several events with the nearby RSPB Old Moor reserve and this year was no exception. RSPB Old Moor hosted six events; three solar observing sessions on 14th June, 12th July, and 16th August 2015 and three evening events on 17th October 2015, 16th January 2016, and 19th March 2016. The evening events were very successful attracting 30, 106, and 99 visitors respectively.

For the March 19th event we had 3 telescopes, 20x80 binoculars and our high quality displays with lots of free information sheets and leaflets for the public to take away and read. Leanne told us that the day was a total sell-out with some enquiries having to be refused. We provided observing opportunities together with the display and visual presentation of "Our Neighbours in the Solar System" and fully active display via "Stellarium".

Two events were hosted by Thrybergh Country Park, a solar observing day on 28th June 2015 and "A Night under the Stars" on 19th September, the latter event attracting 28 visitors.

Wentworth Castle also featured in our programme again, but sadly the event on 21st November was poorly advertised by the venue and only 15 visitors attended. A further event planned for 26th February was cancelled.

We are delighted to report that a first event was held at Boston Castle on 23rd January 2016 and it seems likely that we will be invited to return in future. The event included "Our Neighbours in the Solar System" presentation and "Stellarium" display, as well as displays of meteorites and Georgian astronomical instruments. Although the weather was bad on the night the view over Sheffield at night proved very popular.

Finally, Planets in the Park V saw the society return to Clifton Park working with the Friends of Clifton Park to provide an observing event on 20th February 2016.

The society wishes to place on record its appreciation of our partner organisations, their staff and volunteers who work so closely with us to promote and deliver our Outreach programme; we very much look forward to building our relationship in the year ahead.

The Community Access Programme at the J.A.Jones Hooper Observatory saw a total of 30 events and visitor attendance totalled 351.

Neither of these programmes would be possible without our volunteers who staff them, we place on record our gratitude to them for their sustained contribution.

BBC Stargazing Live

BBC Stargazing Live returned to the nation's television screens in January 2016, the latest series focussed on Major Tim Peake's mission to the International Space Station.

Once again the BBC changed its criteria for Partner Events but this year to the good. Their acceptance criteria were much easier to achieve which resulted in 11 of our "Stargazing Live" events being published on their website. The events include two Community Access events at the Observatory; an outreach event in partnership with the RSPB, and 8 meetings including a "Back to Basics" event.

Unfortunately the BBC did not supply any publicity or handout materials this year as they had in earlier years.

Messenger

The society published 11 issues of its monthly newsletter during the year, with the months of December 2015 and January 2016 being combined in to a single edition. The Messenger is edited by Roy Gunson and we are grateful to Roy for this.

J.A. Jones Hooper Observatory

This year has seen the observatory used nearly on a weekly basis with the Imaging Group using it on 38 separate occasions either actually imaging or as space for image processing meetings. In addition to this there have been a number of members using the observatory telescopes and grounds for their own imaging or observing projects. There have also been a large number of visitors to the observatory so the general cleaning and upkeep demand has been high this year.

This year has seen a number of enhancements to the observatory equipment and also a number of equipment failures.

The electronic focuser system installed on the C14 has once again proved to be unreliable with a number of reports that it has not been working correctly. A number of tests of the focuser in-situ and removed for inspection indicated that the focuser was not at fault. The issue was eventually traced to damaged wiring inside the Paramount, this is the second time this has happened. There is a possibility that the cold and damp climate at the observatory is hardening the cables and they are breaking when the Paramount is slewing around the sky. A new external cable has been provided and has been successfully used.

The shutters had proved to be reliable now that the top shutter drive and belt has been upgraded. A kit of components is ready to upgrade the lower shutter during the summer of 2016. Thanks must go to Mr Mark Walton for his ongoing assistance and use of his machine shop.

There has been an isolated incident where the shutter power supply cable was incorrectly connected together before one of the observing sessions, this caused minor damage to the connectors and supply relays. The connector was manufactured to stop contact misalignment but a more robust connector will be sourced and fitted to make sure this issue cannot happen again.

The new ladders purchased last year have proved to be a worthwhile purchase.

A larger capacity 12 volt battery for the shutter drives has been installed and is providing ample power.

The observatory lobby has been repainted to good effect by a small group of members; the grounds have been kept tidy and well-trimmed by the usual volunteers and this stood us in good stead for site visits regarding the observatory extension.

The top of the shutters have been re-painted but are already showing signs of rust and will have to be cleaned and inspected during the summer months. The north facing side of the observatory dome is looking very dirty with a layer of green algae that needs cleaning off during the coming months.

This year has seen two sets of Observatory keys returned as one member has had an extended period of poor health and one member has retired to the south of Spain where he will carry on his observing from a darker site. Neither member asked for the return of the deposit for the keys.

Observatory Improvement and Extension Feasibility Study

In our Annual Report to March 31st 2015 we reported that a group had been established to evaluate options for a possible extension of the observatory. The group continued its work throughout the summer with the added impetus from the executive committee that the group should report and a decision by the whole society be made on whether to proceed with an extension by October 2015.

The stated remit of the group was to consider enhancing the facilities at the observatory that it included:-

1. Toilet – with disabled access.
2. Small kitchen area –sink, kettle, microwave, hot and cold running water.
3. Space for at least 6 members to use computers in comfort.
4. Space for a large table to study star maps (up to A2).
5. Larger presentation space for 10 people and 2 presenters.

In addition the group also identified two options for investigation

1. A maximum 5m X 5m extension.
2. A zero extension, rearranging the current use of space.

In late August the group had decided to recommend a 5m x 5m extension to the ground floor and requested a Special General Meeting to present its report and recommendation. In addition the SGM would allow all members of the society to vote on the project.

The SGM took place on 1st October 2015, 27 members of the society attended and the resolution to proceed with extension once all permissions had been granted and the money raised was passed overwhelmingly.

The society would like to take this opportunity to thank all members who participated in the Feasibility Study for their hard work and good humour throughout the process.

At the October 2016 Committee Meeting it was decided to proceed with the mandate given by the society's membership to seek the appropriate permission, raise funds and implement the work at the observatory. The committee deemed that all members should be able to contribute to the project and Mr Paul D'Silva was persuaded to chair the group responsible. All society members are invited to all meetings and the first meeting took place on the 28th October 2015. The group has since met regularly.

The extension project was quickly given the name Project Aquarius (named after the constellation of the water bearer). The group has already organised planning permission and has created designs and costings. It is currently negotiating easements (permission to access land) from the local land owner, the Fitzwilliam Estates, to allow the laying of a water pipe. Also the group is in contact with the 106th Field Squadron Royal Engineers who are eager to help us with the work. The society would like to thank the Royal Engineers for their support.

Fund raising remains the difficult as the project does not seem to easily fit into any category but the group continues to submit applications and the society as a whole continues fund raising efforts with talks and visits to other groups.

Current costings for the project are between £18,000 and £40,000 depending on the water supply. If the project is forced to lay a water pipe down the main road the cost will be at the higher limit.

Land Purchase

Whilst discussing Project Aquarius with Yorkshire Water Services Ltd., owners of the land on which the observatory is situated, the possibility of the society buying that land was raised. The trustees feel that if this purchase is possible it will greatly enhance the security of the observatory in the long-term and negotiations are progressing with Yorkshire Water Services Ltd. at the date of this report.

Membership

At March 31st 2016 membership of the society was 46; the society has accepted 6 new members in the year and we extend a warm welcome to them.

Accommodation

In our report for the year ended March 31st 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.). A number of alternatives have been investigated but none, to date, has offered quality, dedicated alternative accommodation.

Representatives of the society attended the Annual General Meeting of Swinton Bottom Club Ltd. in March 2015, the clubs accounts were in equal measure alarming and depressing. The trustees are urgently considering options for relocation, including emergency measures should the worst happen leaving the society homeless with little or no notice.

Financial Review

Financial Performance

Financial performance in the year to March 31st 2016 has been broadly consistent with the trustee's forecasts and expectations; a surplus of income over expenditure of £2,268 was achieved for the year compared to £3,595 in the year to March 31st 2015.

The year ended with a general (and sole) fund balance of £26,059 (compared £23,790 for the same date last year). Detailed accounts can be found on page 8.

Income

Income receipts for the year totalled £7,766 – an apparent decrease of £197 (2.5%); however the year to March 31st 2015 included a back-dated Gift Aid claim settlement income of £1,751.

The society's income is generally healthy and remains consistent with previous performance, Figure 1 illustrates the comparison of income in the current and previous years.

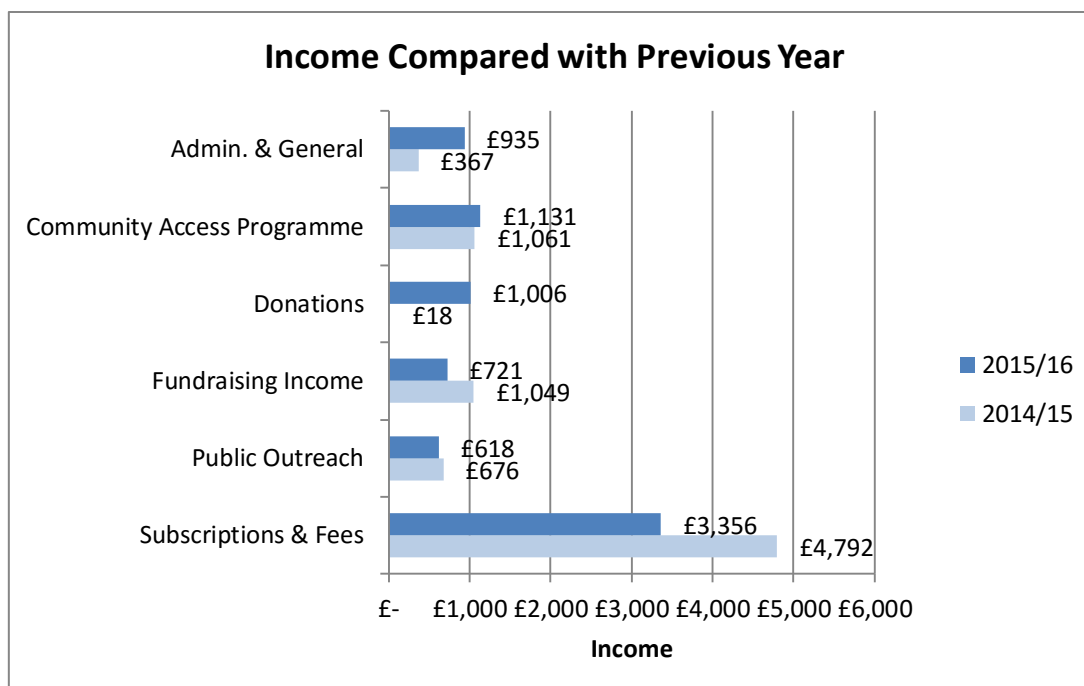


Figure 1 Comparison of Income with Previous Year

Administrative & General (12% of income) has increased largely due to the sale of surplus assets (the 18" mirror from the old telescope was sold for £750). Excluding this sale would result in a drop in Administrative & General income which is due to lower interest rates paid on the Virgin Charity and NatWest Savings accounts.

The Community Access Programme at the J.A. Jones Hooper Observatory has generated 15% income, totalling of £1,131. This is some 6.6% more than in the previous year (£1,061). This can be attributed to a hugely successful programme which has proved incredibly popular with the public. A greater number of events have been provided due to increased availability of volunteers able to staff events.

Our Public Outreach activities accounted for 8% of income at £618 compared to £676 for the previous year.

Fundraising Income (9% of total income) for the year to March 31st 2016 was £721 (£1,049). Commissions from Amazon and EasyFundraising have been lower this year and raffle and book sales income has also decreased.

Finally, our primary source of income, Subscriptions and Fees (43% of income) shows a headline decrease of £1,436 to £3,356 for the year. This is largely due to the inclusion in the year to March 31st 2015 of a Gift Aid claim for the period April 1st 2010 to March 31st 2013 which resulted in a one-off income of £1,751.

Excluding Gift Aid income Subscriptions and Fees income has fallen by £315.

As we will be shown in the review of expenditure the goal of covering core operating costs from subscription income has been met for the year to March 31st 2016.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year totalled £5,497 – an increase of a little over 25% on the previous year (£4,368) and this is illustrated in the following graph. Again the category-by-category analysis which follows will demonstrate that when one-off expenditure is excluded expenditure is well managed and controlled.

Figure 2 below shows expenditure for the current year compared with the previous year.

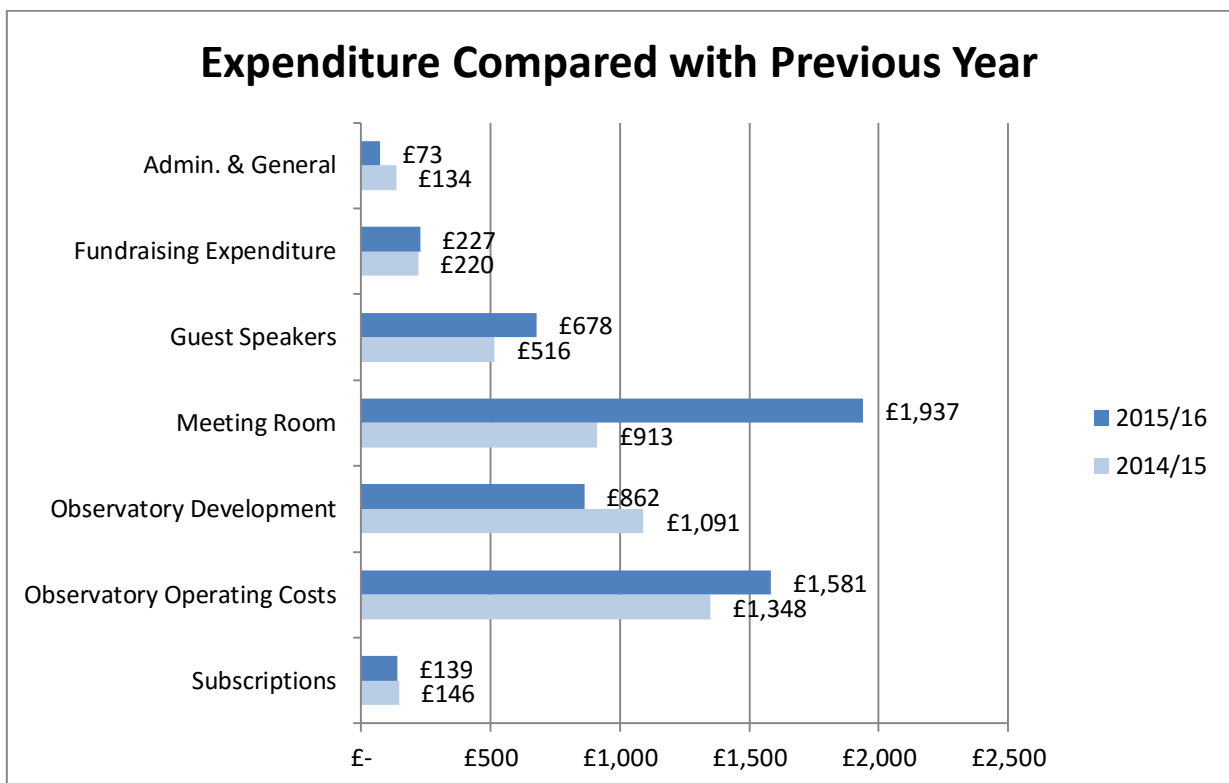


Figure 2 Comparison of Expenditure with Previous Year

Administrative & General expenditure (1% of total) for the year to March 31st 2016 was £73 compared to £134 for the previous year. The previous year however includes a one-off purchase of solar viewers for partial solar eclipse events at £50.

Meeting Room expenditure (35%) has increased to £1,937 compared with £913 to March 31st 2015. The current year however includes a one-off purchase of a new video projector at £1,037.

Observatory Operating Expenditure has risen by £233 from £1,348 as of March 31st 2015 to £1,581 at the date of this report. Regular expenditure in this area includes land rent, Rotherham MBC non-domestic rates, telephone and electricity supply. The increase is mainly due to increased electricity costs.

It should be noted that the premium for the society's main insurance policy (£804) is reported as an observatory expense as historically this was the case; the current policy replaced an earlier building and contents only policy for the observatory and the attribution has been retained for comparison purposes. The current policy covers a wider range of charitable activities and employers and public liability; however the premium is not broken down by our provider.

Subscription expenditure (3% of total) for the year has decreased very slightly from £146 to £139.

The expenditure categories above form the core operating costs of the society, if one-off expenses are excluded the non-discretionary spend is around £2,694, or 49% of total expenditure, which is comfortably met by subscription and fees income of £3,356. In the year to March 31st 2016 core operating costs equated to 80% of subscription income.

Guest Speaker expenses account for have risen by 31.4% from £516 to £678 in the year to March 31st 2016; this will be due to some extent to increasing rail ticket and fuel prices. The expenditure is however still a modest component of overall expenditure (12%) and our guest speakers add great value and diversity to our meeting programme.

Observatory Development expenditure for the year to March 31st 2016 was £862 (29% of total) compared to £1,091 for the previous year due to fewer one-off purchases being made.

The society benefits greatly from members and supporters who work on our development projects on a voluntary basis which further help reduce costs.

Fundraising Expenditure (4% of total) shows little change year-on-year at £227 for the year to March 31st 2016 compared to £220 for 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.

We undertook an analysis of the time which trustees and members give to the society to support our Community Access and Outreach programmes, preparing and delivering presentations, and on trustee and officer duties. The total exceeds 4,500 hours which equates to £30,150 at National Minimum Wage rates of October 2015 of £6.70 per hour. The value of this time to the Society is, of course, much greater.

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

Funds Materially in Deficit

As at March 31st 2016 the Society had no funds in material deficit.

Major Risks

In our Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended March 31st 2014 we identified a single major risk relating to our accommodation at Swinton Bottom Club. The club had been reporting year-on-year losses which cannot be sustained indefinitely. We are gravely concerned that the latest

set of accounts available from Swinton Bottom Club show a loss; it must be recognized that Swinton Bottom Club Ltd. are operating in a very difficult market and accommodation must therefore continue to be considered a major risk to the society.

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 New Horizons restricted fund was closed on March 31st 2012 as we reported in our Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of that date; the society is currently operating with no restricted funds. The New Horizons restricted fund is included in this report only to allow comparison with previous years.

The Society operates with an unrestricted reserve at a level set by the trustees; currently this is £4,500 which equated to approximately 18 months running costs. The reserve is held to allow the Society to offset fluctuations in income receipts and to provide for contingencies.

Reserves are held without any exposure to the stock market.

At March 31st 2016 the General Fund had a balance £26,059 (compared to £23,790 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 also note that securing external funding is becoming increasingly difficult as sponsors and grant making bodies are forced to address their own funding issues. We are also mindful that the long-term future of Swinton Bottom Club Ltd. is difficult to guarantee and that we must be prepared to seek alternative accommodation, possibly at short notice, should our current venue cease to be available.

We have also attained our long standing goal of member subscriptions meeting core operating costs, something we have been working towards for a number of years. No increase in subscription rates is to take place in the year commencing April 1st 2016 and the finance sub-committee are recommending that subscription rates are held for the year commencing April 1st 2017.

Approved and adopted by a meeting of the Executive Committee on May 11th 2016 and signed on their behalf,



Leslie H. Marsden FRAS
Chairman

Accounts for the Year ended March 31st 2016

Receipts & Payments Account

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Last Year
	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
Receipts				
Admin. & General	935	-	935	367
Community Access Programme	1,131	-	1,131	1,061
Donations	1,006	-	1,006	18
Fundraising Income	721	-	721	1,049
Public Outreach	618	-	618	676
Subscriptions & Fees	3,356	-	3,356	4,792
Total Receipts	7,766	-	7,766	7,963
Payments				
Admin. & General	73	-	73	134
Fundraising Expenditure	227	-	227	220
Guest Speakers	678	-	678	516
Meeting Room	1,937	-	1,937	913
Observatory Development	862	-	862	1,091
Observatory Operating Costs	1,581	-	1,581	1,348
Subscriptions	139	-	139	146
Total Payments	5,497	-	5,497	4,368
Net of receipts/(payments)	2,268	-	2,268	3,595
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Cash funds last year end	23,790	-	23,790	20,196
Cash funds this year end	26,059	-	26,059	23,790

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Cash Assets

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
NatWest Current	2,362	-	2,362
<i>Add: Cheques not cleared at bank</i>	-	-	-
NatWest Savings	3,601	-	3,601
NatWest Transfer Account	-	-	-
Virgin Charity Account	20,094	-	20,094
Petty Cash	2	-	2
PayPal	-	-	-
Total Cash Funds	26,059	-	26,059

Other Assets held for functional use

All assets shown belong to the Unrestricted (General) Fund

	Value
Building and contents including astronomical telescope and associated sundries insured value. Includes members' key sets.	55,300
Paramount ME Robotic Telescope System	6,850
Takahashi TOA 130 wide-field telescope	3,710
Celestron C14 Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope	3,500
Focusser 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
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	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	136
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
	94,571

Notes to the Accounts

Restricted Funds

The society closed its New Horizons restricted fund on March 31st 2012 and is currently operating with no restricted funds; they are included here for consistency and to simplify comparison with previous years.

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 March 31st 2016; 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

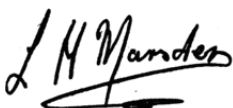
In the year ended March 31st 2016 gross income did not exceeded £25,000 and therefore, in accordance with the sections 144 & 145 of the Charities Act 2011 no audit or independent examination is required and no such scrutiny requirement is imposed by the Society's governing document.

Cheques not cleared at bank at 31st March 2016

At 31st March 2016 there were no cheques issued by the society which had not cleared at the bank.

For comparison, at 31st March 2015 there were no cheques issued by the society which had not cleared at the bank.

Approved and adopted by a meeting of the Executive Committee on May 11th 2016 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^o.1064103

Principal Address

147 Queen Street
Swinton
Mexborough
South Yorkshire
S64 8NG

Charity Trustees as of March 31st 2016

Mr Leslie Holmes Marsden	<i>Chairman</i>
Mr Shaun O'Dell	<i>Secretary</i>
Mr Michael John Waterfield	<i>Treasurer</i>
Mr Roy Gunson	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Mr Michael John Hall	<i>Librarian</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 Michael Kerry Collinson	<i>Committee Members</i>
Mr Michael Charles Scollan	
Mr Philip John Muffett	

Other Charity Trustees in the year to March 31st 2016

Mr Gary James Gawthroppe	<i>Did not seek re-election at the Annual General Meeting</i>
Mrs Joyce Mary Botterill	

Patrons as of March 31st 2016

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

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 May 23rd 2013; this is available at 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 March 31st 2016 the Society had a membership of 46.

Trustee Selection and Management

The Society is managed by an Executive Committee which consists of all the appointed trustees. A number of 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.

At each meeting the Treasurer presents the latest accounts and 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 - typically reports are made quarterly. 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.

The Society has also appointed a Finance sub-committee which meets on an *ad hoc* basis to advise on budget and financial management matters, the sub-committee is chaired by the treasurer, Michael Waterfield and its members are Shaun O'Dell, and Michael Collinson.

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 March 31st 2016 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 also 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 and subscription payments totalling £90 were made in the year, in addition room rent was paid in the amount of £900.

The J.A. Jones Hooper Observatory is built on land rented from Yorkshire Water Services Ltd. for an annual rent of £90.

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 March 31st 2015.

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 general 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 by a meeting of the Executive Committee on May 11th 2016 and signed on their behalf



Leslie H. Marsden FRAS

Chairman