



HIGHLANDS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Unaudited Statement of Receipts and Payments

28 February 2017

Charity Number: SC037209

Office Bearers and Advisors

Scottish charity number SC037209

Trustees (and members of the committee)

Paul Jenkins	Chairman	(from April 2016)
Rhona Fraser	Secretary	
Ronnie Fraser	Treasurer	
Arthur Milnes	Vice Chairman	(from April 2016)
Pat Escott		
Gerry Gaitens		(ex-officio - Observatory Manager)
Pauline Macrae		
James Hitchmough		
Eric Tottman-Trayner		(until September 2016)
Antony McEwan		(from May 2016)
Sharon Lloyd		(from April 2016)

Independent Examiner

Neil Johnstone FCCA
26 Leys Drive
Inverness
IV2 3JA

Bankers

Bank of Scotland
2-6 Eastgate
Inverness
IV2 3NA

Contact Address

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Trustees' Annual Report

The trustees present their report and receipts and payments account for the year ended 28 February 2017.

Origins

The Society was formed in 1993 as the Inverness Astronomical Society, merging the next year with the Moray Astronomical Society to form the present society. A formal constitution was drafted in 1996.

Governing Document

The Society is a charitable unincorporated society, and the purposes and administration arrangements are set out in our constitution.

Objects

The Highlands Astronomical Society aims to promote and extend the awareness of, and interest in, all branches of astronomy and cosmology. We host educational, practical and social activities in the Highlands of Scotland, within a friendly and stimulating environment, accessible to all ages and levels of knowledge.

The Society seeks to achieve its aims through a varied programme of meetings, activities and events, including talks, exhibitions, observing sessions open to the public and social events. The Highlands Astronomical Society also aims to contribute worthwhile observational data to national and international astronomical organisations.

Astronomy is one of the few remaining sciences where valuable contributions and discoveries are still being made by amateurs. These facts are recognised and actively encouraged by professional astronomers and scientists.

Trustees

The trustees during the year were as listed on page 2. Where shown, some also held the title 'Office Bearer'. Any new appointments as trustee are made following approaches to suitably qualified people, who then agree to accept appointment. New trustees are given the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator's booklet 'Guidance for Charity Trustees' to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities, and are asked to sign as having read it.

The Office Bearers are appointed or reappointed by the members at our annual general meeting which is held in April each year. Committee members are appointed by the Office Bearers when required. The trustees do not receive any remuneration for their services.

We have in use a child protection policy that reflects current Scottish legislation. New trustees are given the link to our policy to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities, and are asked to sign as having read it.

Risk Management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the trust, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate such risks.

Reserves

The Society aims to have unrestricted funds at any one time of at least £1,500.

The JSL Observatory

The JSL Observatory houses a fully computerised Meade 14" catadioptric telescope within a Pulsar 9 foot dome. The main telescope supports an 80mm refracting telescope suitable for astro-photography. The adjacent observing station has disabled facilities including a lavatory, and electronic equipment to allow the remote viewing of telescope images on computer screens. It also houses the Society's library, and has room to allow us to hold small meetings. We also have a computerised EQ3 mount which is useful when hosting visitors at the observatory, offering alternate views using our smaller telescopes, a Skywatcher MAK90, a 6" Smith-Newtonian and a 3" refractor telescope. We can also offer five pairs of 10 x 50 binoculars which are available for loan to society members and visitors. We have a 12-inch Dobsonian telescope, which is too large to lend out, and a Lunt solar telescope, which is too precious to lend out. We are most grateful to the National Trust for Scotland for allowing us to locate the observatory on their property at the Culloden Battlefield. Because of the light pollution from a nearby Inn, we have erected screens to shield the main telescope from the glare.

We give advice on buying and setting up telescopes to members and the public.

We have established an automated telephone contact list for use in alerting our members when phenomena such as aurorae or noctilucent cloud become visible in our skies.

The Society maintains a website at www.spacegazer.com.

Activities and Achievement

Interest in the society has been increasing since the opening of the observatory in 2008. We publish monthly articles in the Inverness Courier, and we take part in the BBC's "Stargazing Live" initiatives. We often receive requests for visits to the observatory from organisations such as the local cub scouts and girl guides. Visits by local schools are also arranged, as astronomy features in the curriculum. This year the observatory been visited by schools on three occasions, by special interest groups twice and by youth groups five times.

As part of our outreach activities, on two Fridays a month (those without moon-shine during the evening) we open the observatory for public viewing. These sessions are advertised on our website and are very popular. On the following Saturdays we hold member-and-guest sessions. During the summer, we hold Solar Saturdays (or Sundays) using our Lunt telescope to view the Sun in Hydrogen Alpha light, if it is visible. All visitors are offered an explanatory 'tour of the skies' using planetarium software, and a short talk referring to whatever is visible through our main (or other) telescope.

We have opened the observatory for several special events this year. In May there was a successful viewing of the Transit of Mercury. In September we participated in Highland Council's 'Doors Open' initiative and during the Christmas period we scheduled several extra early evening sessions during the school holidays.

In spite of persistent poor weather during this year, visitor numbers have risen to over 300 individual visitors to our dome.

In September, members were invited to Denis Buczinski's observatory near Tain to see his many telescopes and how he uses them.

We have also been campaigning for dark skies. Actions included speaking to local councillors, whom we have invited to visit the observatory, and seeking support from Scottish Astronomical Societies. We are now a 'community consultant' to Highland Council.

Internet and Website

The number of visitors to our website continues to increase. It is a contact point and information source for all. The broadband connection at the observatory allows updating of satellite, planet and comet locations and of weather reports. We have designated a committee member to keep the website up to date, and have reciprocal links with SIGMA, Moray Astronomical Club's website.

We have set up a Facebook account which is frequently updated, by a committee member, with astronomical news and events. It has attracted 165 registered users.

The Monthly Newsletter, 'Stargazey Pie'

This is written in a knowledgeable and enthusiastic way by Pauline Macrae and is sent by email or post to members and those who live too far away.

Inverness Courier Articles and the News Media

We submit articles to the Inverness Courier once a month. Regular contributors include Pauline Macrae, Richard Girdwood, Gordon McKenna, Pat Williams and Paul Jenkins. We encourage other members to contribute articles.

In May, during the Transit of Mercury, the Inverness Courier visited the observatory taking photographs and interviewing people. In September BBC Radio Scotland recorded an interview there with Dr. Melanie Windridge, who had been our speaker on Aurora and had attracted many extra new visitors to our monthly meeting.

An enquiry about meteor impacts on our Website by an independent TV company called Renegade Pictures turned into a visit by a film crew to the observatory on the 27 May. The interview they filmed at the JSL was included in a programme for Channel 4 in the series called "Walking through Time", transmitted in September.

Our meetings are now being advertised in 'Astronomy Now' and local advertising magazines each month.

External Educational Activities

We have given and continue with an ongoing programme of public lectures to local societies and organisations promoting astronomy, our society and its facilities. This year we have made visits on two occasions to talk to schools and on two occasions to talk to youth groups. We have lectured to three adult special interest groups.

In May, we took a stall at the Inverness Science Festival where we had a promotional and educational display of space and astronomy related items and we distributed literature regarding the activities of the Society.

We meet once a month in the Smithton-Culloden Free Church, and guests are very welcome at our meetings. We have been lucky enough to have had knowledgeable and informative guest speakers during the course of the year, and a number of members also gave excellent talks. Each talk is preceded by a children's group for 8 to 14 year olds ("Youngstars"), and is followed by a post-talk discussion and by break-out sessions on subjects such as equipment, constellations or beginners' basic astronomy. The Youngstars sessions are led by Pauline Macrae.

Once again some members were able to attend the annual 'Astrofest' in London where they heard the latest up-to-date astronomical information. In September some attended the Orkney International Science Festival. In November we held our annual dinner which was attended by 30 members and guests. This year we had a very knowledgeable and entertaining after-dinner speaker.

Fund-raising Activities

Pre-arranged visits and 'special events' at the observatory over the course of the year have gained us useful donations on each occasion. As usual Arthur Milnes has done a sterling job promoting our monthly raffle at the Society meetings, raising £461 over the year.

Membership

The Society's membership has dropped slightly this year. Members have joined and left as usual, but overall we reached a membership level of 76. We have discussed at length at Committee ideas to increase our membership.

Other Astronomical Societies

We have maintained close links with our fellow amateur astronomers at the adjacent societies, SIGMA in Moray and the Caithness Astronomy Group, and we maintain our 'twinning' relationship with the Dunedin astronomical society in New Zealand.

Governance

Monthly bank statements are scrutinised and initialled by the Chairman and the Secretary. The Society has three approved cheque signatories, with any two of the three to sign (as long as the cheque is not made out to one of them).

We have scrutinised the roles and responsibilities of trustees so that tasks are allocated as fairly as possible and have carried out long-term forward planning for major equipment replacement.

Closing Remarks

Finally, the Chairman would like to express his sincere thanks to all of the Society Committee for their invaluable support. His job throughout the reporting year could not have been done without the support of Pat, Rhona, Ronnie, Gerry, Arthur, Sharon, Pauline, James, Eric and Antony. As well as the Committee, of course, he must also acknowledge the support of the members - particularly Marian, Christine, Pat Williams and Stella. Again this is very gratefully acknowledged and remembered.

Financial results

The Society has an increased liquidity and has maintained a satisfactory level of reserves throughout the year. All of the funds were unrestricted, and therefore free to use at the discretion of the Committee.

Subscriptions were raised this year, with the intention of maintaining a small surplus over our target reserves of £1500 and the net surplus for the year amounted to £179, against a deficit last year of £1194. The surplus is due, largely, to an underspend against forecast equipment costs. Total cash reserves of the Society at the end of the year stood at £2,128 (2016 - £1,949). This does not include the assets owned by the Society, which have a current value of approximately £83,000.

On behalf of the trustees

Paul Jenkins, Chairman

Date: 04 April 2017

Rhona Fraser, Secretary

Date: 04 April 2017

Independent Examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited Statement of Receipts and Payments of the Highlands Astronomical Society for the year ended 28 February 2017

In accordance with your instructions, I have examined the receipts and payments account of the Highlands Astronomical Society for the period ended 28 February 2017 which comprises the Statements of Receipts and Payments, the Statement of Balances and the related notes 1 to 5 from the accounting records and information and explanations you have given to me.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and independent examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10 (1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply.

It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44 (1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.█

Neil Johnstone FCCA
Independent Examiner
26 Leys Drive
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04 April 2017

Highlands Astronomical Society – unrestricted funds

Statement of Receipts and Payments

for the year ended **28 February 2017**

2017

2016

Income

£

£

Membership Subscriptions	1375	1264
Email Subscriptions	10	29
Gift Aid Refund (including interest)	341	315
Donations	332	130
Grant Aid for Equipment		0
Fundraising	187	213
Outreach Income (Courier mostly)	375	225
Raffle	461	474
Bank Interest	0	0
Sundry Income	338	530
HAS Events and Outings	690	925
Total Receipts	4110	4106

Expenses

£

£

Venue Costs	875	800
Public Liability Insurance - HC	476	479
Observatory Ground Rent	142	142
Observatory Maintenance	80	612
Observatory Electricity	156	154
Observatory Comms	268	320
Observatory Equipment**	45	579
Grant Aided Equipment	0	0
Speaker Expenses	968	947
Secretarial	62	141
Outreach Costs (Youngstars & Obs Vis-its)	20	87
Sundry Costs	50	66
HAS Events And Outings	790	973
Total Expenditure	3932	5300

Net Receipts for the period **179** **-1194**

Fund Balance brought forward 1949 3143

Fund Balance carried forward 2128 1949

Surplus or Deficit Against Budget **179** **-1194**

Highlands Astronomical Society

Statement of Balances

As at **28-Feb-17**

	2017	2016
Cash at Bank and on hand	£	£
Cash at Bank	2,073	1,895
Cash on hand	55	54
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Closing Balances	2,128	1,949
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Reserves		
Unrestricted Funds	2,128	1,949
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Closing Balances	2,128	1,949
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Assets		
	64,000	
Observatory at Estimated Market Value	0	63,000
	18,500	
Astronomical equipment at estimated market value	0	18,930
Computing equipment at estimated market value	480	540
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	82,980	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	82,980	82,470

Approved on behalf of the Trustees by the treasurer and authorised for issue on **04 April 2017**

Ronnie Fraser, Treasurer

Paul Jenkins, Chairman

Notes to the accounts

for the year ended **28 February 2017**

1. Accounting policies

Reserves

All funds are unrestricted funds which may be applied to any purposes as decided On by the trustees, so long as these are within the objects of the charity.

Income and expenditure

Income and expenditure is recognised at the time of receipt or payment.

2. Nature of funds

The Highlands Astronomical Society Fund is a general purpose fund into which all the ongoing income is placed and the operating costs of the Society are met.

3. Trustees' and other remuneration

No trustee receives any remuneration for their services. The Society has no paid employees.

4. Reserves

The Society has a policy of holding a reserve of £1,500 against unforeseen eventualities.

5. Donations and grant assistance received

	<i>2017</i>	<i>2016</i>
	£	£
Renegade Pictures	100	-
Miscellaneous donations	<u>232</u>	<u>130</u>
Total	<u><u>332</u></u>	<u><u>130</u></u>

