



HIGHLANDS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Unaudited Statement of Receipts and Payments

28 February 2019

Charity Number: SC037209

Trustees (and members of the committee)

Paul Jenkins	Chairman
Rhona Fraser	Secretary
Andrew Brough	Treasurer
Arthur Milnes	Vice Chairman
Sharon Lloyd	Membership Secretary
Pat Escott	
Gerry Gaitens	(ex officio – Observatory Manager)
James Hitchmough	
Pauline Macrae	
Antony McEwan	
Eric Walker	

Independent Examiner

Neil Johnstone
26 Leys Drive
Inverness
IV2 3JA

Bankers

Bank of Scotland
2-6 Eastgate
Inverness
IV2 3NA

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Trustees' Annual Report

The trustees present their report and receipts and payments account for the year ended 28 February 2019.

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** which allows the remote viewing of telescope images. The adjacent observing station has disabled facilities including a lavatory and a laptop with a large wall mounted screen which is used to view telescope images remotely. It also houses the Society's library, and has room to allow us to hold small groups. We have a computerised EQ3 mount for use on our smaller telescopes, a **Skywatcher MAK90**, a **6" Smith-Newtonian** and a **4" Vixen refractor telescope**. These offer alternate views from smaller telescopes. We also have an **8 inch Vixen Schmidt – Cassegrain**, a **5 inch Meade ETX** and a **6 inch Celestron**. All the above six telescopes were donated. We can also offer 4 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 however 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 of the public.

Activities and Achievement

We meet once a month in the Smithton-Culloden Free Church. 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, astrophotography, or beginners' basic astronomy. The Youngstars sessions are led by Pauline Macrae and Trina Shaddock.

Interest in the society has been increasing since the opening of the observatory in 2008. 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 and special interest groups once each 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. This year we have also tried to include some lunar sessions as well. 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. 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!

In September we participated in Highland Council's 'Doors Open' initiative, at the same time celebrating our observatory's 10 year anniversary. 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 275 individual visitors to our dome.

We continue to campaign for dark skies. Actions have included speaking to Highland Councillors and seeking support from Scottish Astronomical Societies. We are a 'community consultant' to Highland Council.

Website & Social Media

Our website continues to be the main 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 a Facebook account which is frequently updated, by committee members, with astronomical news and events. It has attracted 378 (as of Feb 2019) registered users.

Social media links are as follows:-

- **Website:** www.spacegazer.com
- **Facebook & Messenger:** Highlands Astronomical Society
- **Instagram:** highlands.astro
- **Flickr:** HAS Spacegazer

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 to attend meetings.

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.

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

External Educational Activities

We give talks to local societies and organisations promoting astronomy, our society and its facilities. This year we gave talks to eight schools and lectured to six 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, had a number of activities for children and distributed literature regarding the activities of the Society.

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 2018 some attended the Orkney International Science Festival where one of our members delivered a lecture and compiled and delivered a Tour of the Skyrán Moon. We advertised the new Hebridean Dark Skies Festival in February 2019.

Fund-raising Activities and grants

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 £366 over the year. We received a grant of £517 from Lifescan to purchase a DSLR camera and star analyser for spectroscopy for use at the observatory. As a result we have set up an 'Astrophotography' Group.

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 62. We have discussed at length at Committee ways of increasing our membership.

In preparation for the AGM we asked the membership to complete a questionnaire to ensure the society was serving the needs and interests of our members as well as is possible. Generally the satisfaction level was high to very high.

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. We have offered advice to Aberdeen Astronomical Society re. their new observatory and acted in an advisory role to the Cabrach and Tomintoul Dark Sky Site.

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). Andrew Brough, our Treasurer, is working away from home and we have organised new arrangements to deal with this.

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 Andy, Pat, Rhona, 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 Porteous, Christine Clifford, Linda Moncur, Trina Shaddock, Donald Boyd and Stella McKenzie. Again this is very gratefully acknowledged and remembered.

Financial results

The society has a reduced liquidity compared to previous years; however it has maintained a satisfactory level of reserves throughout the year.

Due to lower membership numbers than last year, less income generated from fundraising activities and an increased spend on equipment, the latter due in part to a commitment to spend as condition of receiving a grant, our reserves are below our target of £1500. Total cash reserves of the society at the end of the year stood at £646.15. Notable is our failure for various reasons to claim Gift Aid for this and the previous financial year. This claim is presently in process and once received will boost our cash reserves by some £690.

The above does not include the assets owned by the Society, which have a current value of approximately £81,000.

On behalf of the trustees

Paul Jenkins, Chairman

Date: 7 May 2019

Rhona Fraser, Secretary

Date: 7 May 2019

Examiner's report

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the
trustees/members of Highlands Astronomical Society

Registered charity
number SC037209

On the accounts of the
charity for the period

Period start date				Period end date		
Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
01	03	2018	to	28	02	2019

Set out on pages 9 to 11

Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and 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) 2005 Act 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.

Signed:

Name: Neil Johnstone

Date:

7 May 2019

Address: 26 Leys Drive
Inverness
IV2 3JA

Highlands Astronomical Society – unrestricted funds

Statement of Receipts and Payments

for the year ended **28 February 2019**

	2019	2018
Income	£	£
Membership Subscriptions	1,282	1,560
Grant Aid for Equipment	517	0
Gift Aid Refund (including interest)	0	0
Donations (note 5)	257	338
Fundraising	127	169
Outreach Income (Courier mostly)	275	300
Raffle	366	503
Bank Interest	0	0
Sundry Income	365	211
HAS Events and Outings	0	575
Total Receipts	3,189	3,656
Expenses	£	£
Venue Costs	870	860
Public Liability Insurance - HC	540	481
Observatory Ground Rent	158	142
Observatory Maintenance	0	109
Observatory Electricity	160	191
Observatory Comms	443	347
Observatory Equipment	307	422
Grant Aided Equipment	572	0
Speaker Expenses	1,133	537
Secretarial	0	20
Outreach Costs (Youngstars & Obs Visits)	0	65
Sundry Costs	111	0
HAS Events And Outings	0	859
Total Expenditure	4,294	4,033
Net (Expenditure)Receipts for the period	(1,105)	(377)
Fund Balance brought forward	1,751	2,128
Fund Balance carried forward	646	1,751

Highlands Astronomical Society

Statement of Balances

As at 28-Feb-19

	2019 £	2018 £
Cash at Bank and on hand		
Cash at Bank	591	1,696
Cash on hand	55	55
Closing Balances	<u>646</u>	<u>1,751</u>
Reserves		
Unrestricted Funds	646	1,751
Closing Balances	<u>646</u>	<u>1,751</u>
Assets		
Observatory at Estimated Market Value	64,000	64,000
Astronomical equipment at estimated market value	17,000	17,000
Computing equipment at estimated market value	250	250
Unclaimed Gift Aid at year-end	690	374
	<u>81,940</u>	<u>81,624</u>

Approved on behalf of the Trustees and authorised for issue on

7 May 2019

Andrew Brough, Treasurer

Paul Jenkins, Chairman

Notes to the accounts

for the year ended **28 February 2019**

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

	2019	2018
	£	£
Miscellaneous donations	257	338
Total	257	338