

ROSLISTON ASTRONOMY GROUP
(Reg. Charity Number 1175118)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
for the period - 1st January, 2021 to 31st December, 2021

Aims and Purposes

Rosliston Astronomy Group, abbreviated to RAG for ease of reference, is an amateur Astronomy Group with a membership of around sixty, and with a small, but very enthusiastic and active, Junior Members' section. Although RAG is a relatively new Charity, having been granted status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in October 2017, as a Club the group has been in existence since October 1999. Throughout this time we have been committed to delivering an 'outreach' programme for all age ranges of the General Public, promoting the advancement of education in both the theory and practice of Astronomy.

Our regular Meetings are based at Rosliston Forestry Centre, in South Derbyshire, on the border with Staffordshire, and our membership and the members of the public attending our regular Meetings and one off events are mainly drawn from the surrounding areas of South Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire and adjacent sections of the West Midlands, with occasional visitors from wider afield.

Objectives and Activities

As a CIO our objectives are twofold:

- i) promoting, in general, scientific topics, by providing facilities for active participation particularly, but not exclusively, in astronomical observation, and
- (ii) assisting Rosliston Forestry Centre in their educational programme for members of the general public, by providing guidance, practical activities, and information on all matters relating to astronomy in its many aspects.

RAG continues to be committed to enabling as many people as possible to experience the 'Wow' factor when they observe the wonders of the night sky, a galaxy, a solar flare or sunspot, at first hand. We believe in encouraging lifelong learning, and helping everyone to appreciate the value of having a knowledge of Astronomy, to whatever level, and its place in the world around them.

As was the case in 2020, the year 2021 has been very difficult for RAG. Like most other organisations, the implications triggered by the procedures put in place by the Government in its management of the Covid-19 pandemic have continued to prove extremely challenging. As in other years, it was RAG's intention to continue to assist Rosliston Forestry Centre in their weekend Science Days, providing the Astronomy element, including Solar observation, active radio astronomy, and examples and explanations of deep sky astrophotography. Our members were also hoping to provide the Astronomy element at Rosliston Forestry Centre's two 'Night Watch' Events. The extended period of 'lockdown' involving restrictions on holding meetings indoors, and the restrictions on the numbers of people able to meet as a group outdoors once such

meetings were again allowed part way through the year, resulted in much of this planning being either cancelled completely or changed in its method of delivery.

Every 'outreach' event offered by RAG involves a number of Members, providing a range of activities for members of the public to take part in. These activities are free, and accessible to everyone. Members are 'on hand', both inside and out, to provide guidance, encouragement, further explanation, provide background knowledge, and extend the public awareness of the wonders of Astronomy generally.

This year providing practical experiences in observing Solar activity, and/or the night sky were not possible given the restrictions on close proximity and the sharing of equipment. Not all RAG links to the public had to be stopped, however. In May 2021 the Rosliston Environmental Team hosted a 'Night Watch' event, engaging the Public 'online' using Microsoft Teams. RAG contributed to this event.

Later in the year, once restrictions were eased, a second 'Night Watch' event was held, this time on site. RAG contributed by providing Talks and telescope exhibits, but were unable to 'share' equipment for practical observing, for safety and social distancing reasons.

In addition, during the year, RAG's 'outreach' support for specific community groups was also able to continue, but 'online' and so within Government guidelines, although this provision was limited. RAG engaged with three Cub-Scout groups, 'online' via 'Zoom', to facilitate them being able to achieve their Astronomy Badges.

Towards the end of the year, once restrictions for holding indoor meetings had eased, RAG was able to host a Scout Group for their Astronomy Badges, which included use of the Observatory.

In normal circumstances, in addition to our 'one-off' outreach events, RAG holds a regular series of general meetings through the year, twice every month, Mid-Month and End of Month. These meetings are open to everyone, members and non-members, and are publicised on the RAG website Calendar, Facebook, by Rosliston Forestry Centre's Environmental Education Team, the Rosliston Forestry Centre's website and Centre Information booklets, specific Leaflets at the Centre, and in the Local 'What's On'.

In 2020, immediately Government restrictions were implemented across the country Trustees had acted to find a way to engage members, and to maintain activity within the Club. They decided to encourage members to adopt Microsoft Teams as a means to promote Meetings, and for Trustees to be able to 'meet' to carry out their duties in strategic management. RAG was recognised as a Charity by Teams, and was allocated an account enabling unrestricted 'meeting time' without financial outlay.

The Trustees are proud to report that these 'online' Mid Month, End of Month Meetings, Astrophotography, and Trustee Meetings have continued in 2021, with no meetings during the year being cancelled.

To further engage our Members during 'online' only meetings, our programme of Guest Speakers was able to be increased, providing one Speaker 'online' each month, with minimal financial impact overall.

The Trustees commend the Membership for their willingness to adopt online meetings, which for some was a challenge in the first instance. The data protection element has continued to be maintained by all meetings being instigated by the Membership Secretary, as a single source for personal details.

As the year progressed and restrictions on holding meetings outdoors were eased, RAG reinstated an 'outdoor only' Observing Meeting in June and July, implementing the 'Rule of Six' with all the required procedures.

Once restrictions on holding meetings 'indoors' were eased Trustees met, and agreed that General and Astrophotography Special Interest Group meetings could be reinstated in September, but with limited numbers, spaced seating, own refreshments, etc. They also assessed the available 'space' in the Observatory, and decided to limit adult numbers for a meeting, etc. to eight at any one time, and ten for children. Trustees, too, returned to meeting 'in person', and held their Committee Meeting in September at The Peter Bolas Observatory.

The easing of restrictions enabled RAG to introduce a number of 'firsts', most notably of these being the annual flagship event, The Peter Bolas Lecture held in October. Instead of its usual Lecture format, Trustees agreed to hold the first RAG Barbeque - this was an 'outdoor only' event enabling Members still wary of 'indoor' meetings to attend. It was a great success, leading to plans for a repeat during the summer of 2022.

Another 'first' was the provision of bespoke 'Stargazing Experiences' - private events for specific groups of the public. These were as a response to requests made, to provide a 'gift experience' for a birthday, anniversary, or just to gain awareness of Astronomy.

Trustees decided that as these are bespoke events, private to each group the event should carry a small charge, which would go directly into the Observatory Fund within the Accounts. The first of these took place in October, with others booked for 2022.

Achievements and Performance

RAG's 'Outreach' Programme is well established, and well received, reaching in excess of 500 members of the public, across the full age range during 2019 i.e. the last time we were able to assess over a full year of public events. Having due regard to the Charity Commission's documents on 'public benefit', Trustees have continued their initiative begun in 2018, and have spent time analysing and discussing future events and activities, monitoring the effects of the pandemic on the work of the Charity, and with particular emphasis on identifying effective evaluation and added value, and how this could be maintained during the period of restriction, and towards the end of 2021 involving 'in person' meetings and 'online'.

In more detail - the Trustees are extremely proud of the way RAG has functioned throughout 2021.

Although the arrival of the pandemic and all the consequences that this imposed across the country in 2020, and which continued to halt the majority of RAG's planned programme for 2021, the Trustees are particularly proud to report that, although different, the restrictions did not prevent RAG continuing a programme of meetings online for its members, and to a limited extent links were continued with other agencies.

Regarding Membership, this year as in 2020, RAG maintained a number of potential new members by inviting them to join our 'online' meetings.

Even though RAG has been unable to function fully for the second consecutive year, the Trustees are proud to report that there have been a number of specific achievements.

Some of these are detailed in other parts of this Report, but are itemised here to report their overall significance.

During 2021 we have achieved the following:

April - the launch of the new Website

June /July - the reinstatement and management of outside Group Observing sessions, following Government guidelines for safe practice.

September - the reinstatement and management of 'indoor' meetings, following Government guidelines for safe practice.

Throughout 2021 - that RAG has successfully continued to function as a Society when many other similar Organisations have 'shut down temporarily, or closed permanently. and that no scheduled RAG meetings have been cancelled, but have taken place either online or in person once permitted later in the year.

Now the Observatory building has been completed, it comprises the Observatory Dome housing the two main telescopes; storage facilities; and a Warm Room that could seat 20-25 people, or 8-10 wheelchair users, in a safe environment with all its advantages, able to observe as a group using an interactive screen linked to the main scope in the Dome. However, responding to the pandemic, with due regard to maintaining a safe environment for everyone, the Trustees have carried out a Risk Assessment which has required these proposed numbers to be reduced to less than half.

In practise, as the Government ban on indoor meetings continued for much of 2021 all meetings and events involving communal interaction 'in person' had to be cancelled for most of the year. Implications of this has meant that actual use of The Peter Bolas Observatory for the purposes for which it was built have had to be put 'on hold' throughout 2021, apart from basic awareness tours for limited numbers towards the end of the year.

The completion of the build in its entirety in 2020 marked the completion of Phase One of the Observatory Project. With storage facilities now available, Phase Two is to fund and purchase a bank of Telescopes plus accessories, to be used as 'training' Scopes, both on and off site, to facilitate 'hands on' practical experience for the various community groups. During 2021 Bids have been submitted to various grant awarding bodies. To date these have proved unsuccessful.

Volunteers

The Trustees would like to thank all the members of Rosliston Astronomy Group for the level of commitment they have continued to demonstrate this year. Every event that RAG holds for the public benefit depends on members' voluntary attendance, and willingness to share both their knowledge and their personal equipment with members of the Public of all ages. Although this has only been possible for the last three months of the year, support has always been readily available.

In addition, the Trustees would like to thank the Members for their continued support for the fundraising activities undertaken by RAG to help fund the Observatory Project. Their willingness to make small donations on a regular basis during Club Meetings also plays an important part in maintaining the Observatory Fund. This year opportunities for this

has been put on hold. For the majority of the year there were no indoor meetings, and since these have been reinstated the emphasis has been for Members to return and benefit by the camaraderie the Club generates.

As RAG had no opportunity for monetary input until September, and then for only three Mid-Month Meetings and two End of Month Meetings, Trustees are extremely grateful to the Membership for their generous response to the second RAG Christmas Appeal made because of the lack of funding throughout the year. The first Appeal was made last year. This year the Christmas Appeal raised £480 up to the end of December 2021 through numerous donations.

Financial Review

A detailed analysis of the financial transactions carried out during the year can be found in the Financial Statement and its accompanying Notes.

This year, as in 2020, the focus of financial awareness to support the key objectives of the Charity, for the public benefit, namely by

- ii) maintaining the ongoing functions and activities of the Charity, and
 - iii) investing in the future outcome of a successful build
- have been seriously curtailed.

As the law has prevented RAG holding public meetings of any kind until September, for the majority of the year our outreach duties have had to be put 'on hold', other than the 'online' provision previously described. RAG contributed to the reinstated 'Night Watch' Event hosted by the Rosliston Environmental Team in October, but this was provided voluntarily by Members and had no cost to the Club. Our one 'outreach' activity that did incur costs was the Scout evening in October.

Consequently there has been very little activity in the Community Account, with the majority of spend being directly related to the Observatory, and annual background expenditure e.g. Buildings Insurance for the Observatory, and Public Liability Insurance. Trustees have needed to redirect their attention to ensuring RAG has been able to remain a viable organisation during the period of inactivity during the pandemic.

RAG uses two Accounts - a Business Community Account and an Active Saver Account. The Business Community Account holds predominantly unrestricted funds catering for the day to day transactions. This year unrestricted receipts totalled £1497.50 and unrestricted expenditure £ 601.78.

The Active Saver Account holds monies accumulated from successful bids to various Grant Awarding bodies, and formal Donations made by external sources. All the funds held in this Account are designated monies. Some Grants, and donations have been received with 'open' targets but still within the capital build requirement, and others have been for specific stages of the build or items of equipment.

This year, although applied for, no Grants have been received - see above regarding Phase Two.

This year designated receipts totalled £ 856.65. Designated expenditure totalled £ 301.72

This Account also includes identified monies 'ring-fenced' for use as the 'Observatory Fund'. These are raised in small amounts, sourced by the on-going donations at

Meetings, and fundraising activities, by Members. This year this amount totalled £ 376.65, with £ 34.85 of this donated specifically by Members.

This year's reduced expenditure in the Active Saver Account was expected as the majority of the monies have been held in this Account for the specific purpose of funding the construction of, and equipping, the Observatory. As the build has progressed and reached completion monies have been released accordingly. Following 'handover' in April 2019, the remaining monies have been used to fund materials required for final fittings, decoration, and security. In addition, as the building has become ready to install them, we have purchased specific items of equipment identified by designated Grants e.g. the interactive screen. Consequently, totals reduced significantly in 2019 in readiness for the Grand Opening of The Peter Bolas Observatory in March 2020.

Activity in the Account in 2021 has been even more reduced as restrictions for most of the year prevented any working parties meeting at the Observatory with the resultant lack of expenditure on materials, etc.

A major factor in the reduced amount of Bank Account activity generally during 2020 and continued through 2021 has been the lack of income received since March 2020 caused by the extended period of Government restrictions nationally, and RAG's inability to hold meetings other than 'online' via Microsoft Teams. Similarly, expenditure has also been reduced.

As part of their strategic duties Trustees have reviewed this situation in light of the potential for 'online' meetings to continue in the future, and the decision has been taken that should this be the case 'online' meetings would carry an entrance fee, as for attendance at 'indoor' meetings. This is planned for implementation in January 2022.

Reserves Policy

RAG has a policy for the unrestricted element of the Business Community Account, whenever possible, to maintain a balance of £500, as a minimum. This is to cover emergencies should they arise from time to time. This year this was achieved throughout the year.

There is no such expectation in the Active Saver Account as the monies held in this Account have been sourced from various grants, awards and identified donations to fund specific aspects of the Observatory Project and its maintenance, and, therefore, 100% of these monies are for designated targets.

Structure, Governance and Management

Rosliston Astronomy Group is a 'micro' Charity, managed by six Trustees drawn from, and elected by, the RAG Membership. RAG is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) that gained Charity status on 11th October, 2017, and is governed by a Constitution, which is reviewed annually.

Prior to them taking up their roles, and during the first few months in office, new Trustees take note of various guidance documents produced by the Charity Commission, setting out their roles and responsibilities, namely guidance on overall duties (CC3), financial management (CC8, CC12), fundraising (CC20), guidance on Safeguarding, and documents setting out guidance on understanding the Public Benefit requirement. This is not a finite list, and Trustee 'training' is ongoing.

The Trustees form the overarching tier of management. However, as described at the outset of this Report, although RAG has been a Charity only since October 2017, we have existed as an amateur Astronomy Group (Club) for twenty two years. Consequently, the original Club element has an established Committee that manages the day to day actions of the Group. This Committee comprises a Chair and Vice-Chair, a Secretary, Treasurer, Equipment Manager, Technical Manager, Membership Secretary, Events Co-ordinator, Welfare Officer (that incorporates Safeguarding), a Website Manager, a Training Officer, and an Observatory Manager.

As reported in previous Annual Reports, to enable this Committee to continue to manage the day to day running, and the individual post holders to carry out their roles efficiently, as one of their first duties in 2017, the Trustees produced a 'Delegation of Powers' document setting out the roles and responsibilities delegated to the Committee. One of these delegated powers refers to the Committee being able to take decisions on the sale or purchase of items up to the value of £100. Amounts above £100 need to be referred to the Trustees for agreement.

The RAG Committee reports to the Trustees. Meetings are minuted, and are then received by the Trustees at their next Meeting. In 2020, following 'lockdown' and the 'in person' element of the Club shut down, the Committee role became less active. Subsequent meetings were held as joint 'online' meetings with the Trustees to cover specific agenda items, using Microsoft Teams. Similarly, as there have only been five indoor Meetings towards the end of the year, and one outdoor BBQ, the Committee roles have not yet been fully restored, as the necessary decisions regarding Risk Assessments, etc. have been taken by the Trustees.

This year the Trustees have also needed their meetings to be in two formats. At the beginning, and for the majority of 2021, with the continuation of Government restrictions regarding 'indoor meetings', all Trustee meetings were held via Microsoft Teams. The Treasurer reports to the Trustees at each Meeting.

This year has required the Trustees to hold three meetings 'online' with specific agenda items. Trustees have also held one joint meeting with the RAG Committee.

For continuity purposes, the Constitution states that, wherever possible, two of the Trustees should also be members of the RAG Committee. This year this has been complied with, by both Mr Mann and Mr Rufo holding elected roles on the Committee.

Administrative Information

Rosliston Astronomy Group hold their Meetings at Rosliston Forestry Centre, Burton Road, Rosliston, South Derbyshire, DE12 8JX. However, RAG has no strategic 'base' at the Centre. The correspondence address for the Group is Cedar House, Burton Road, Streethay, Lichfield, Staffs, WS13 8LS.

During the period of Government restriction on public gatherings due to Covid-19, from March 2020 through 2021, meetings have been held 'online' via Microsoft Teams. Meetings held indoors were reinstated in September 2021.

The Charity is managed by six Trustees.

The Constitution sets out the Terms of Office for each of the Trustees on a rolling programme, with two Trustees being required to stand down each year at the AGM. Last

year as the Government restrictions for Covid-19 presented unprecedented challenges for RAG, for an unknown period of time, Trustees took the decision to keep the experienced Trustees in office in the interests of continuity. Consequently the programme for Trustee review was deferred until the AGM in March 2021.

The 2021 AGM was held 'online' via Microsoft Teams, and took place on 26th March, 2021. At the Meeting the two Trustees stepping down from Office were Mr. Ed Mann and Mr. Adam Cheetham. Both had been nominated to stand again, and had indicated a willingness to do so. As there were no other nominations Mr Mann and Mr Cheetham were re-elected unopposed for a further term of office.

The names of the Trustees who have managed the Charity for the period covered by the Annual Report, are:

Mr Edwin Mann - Chair
Mr Adam Cheetham
Mr Geoff Dryland
Mr Stephen Holden
Mr Robert Leonard
Mr Nicholas Rufo

The Trustees have approved this Annual Report.

Signed on behalf of the Charity Trustees for Rosliston Astronomy Group, by:

Signature:



Signature:



Name: Mr Edwin Mann
Position: Chair of Trustees

Name: Mr Stephen Holden
Position: Trustee

Mr Stephen Holden - Trustee

ROSLISTON ASTRONOMY GROUP
(Registered Charity Number 1175118)

Financial Statement for the Year ended 31st. December, 2021

Notes:

1. The financial statement has been prepared using the Receipts & Payments format. Rosliston Astronomy Group (RAG) is a small Charity, and is below the Charities Act's audit threshold.
2. RAG uses two Accounts, a Business Community Account, and an Active Saver Account.
 - a) The Business Community Account, functions like a Current Account, holding monies that are predominantly unrestricted and, therefore, cater for RAG's day to day transactions.

There is one amount of monies identified within this Account that is 'ring fenced' to form the Observatory Fund. These monies are accumulated on a day to day basis from small amounts gained through Members' donations at Meetings and Members' fundraising activities. Government restrictions to control the pandemic have prevented meetings 'in person' for most of the year, providing no forum for Member 'small donations'.
 - b) The Active Saver Account holds monies that are being accumulated from successful bids to Grant Awarding bodies that have been awarded for specific purposes, and larger donations made by external sources. The largest amount was for the capital build in general, and this reduced considerably in 2019 as the construction and the fitting out of the Observatory progressed. During the overall fundraising other smaller grants have been for specific aspects within the build e.g. purchase of the interactive screen. These can only be used for those purposes identified in the Grant and have been held until that stage in the construction has been reached and completed. These have now been used for the appropriate items.

Although applied for, for Phase 2 - the purchase of a 'bank' of mobile telescopes for our Outreach work, no grants were received during 2021. As a result Phase 2 has not yet been achieved.
 - c) The Observatory Fund represents accumulated small donations and fundraising activities, carried out within RAG, and currently identified and held within the Business Community Account.

Now the main construction is complete it is the purpose of these monies to form a basis to fund the maintenance of the building, and for which further grants for specific issues, and items of equipment, will be applied for, and added. Such grants will be held in the Active Saver Account.
3. a) Currently, RAG has a small amount of equipment as assets.

In addition, for the public benefit, RAG's intentions have been realised - to build an Observatory with an attached Warm Room in which to present courses and meetings for various Community Groups, schools, scouts/guides, etc.; and the provision of storage facilities to be able to build up a bank of training equipment for 'hands on' experience.

RAG hosted the Grand Opening of The Peter Bolas Observatory on 14th March, 2020. This marked the culmination of a major fundraising initiative that began in 2014.

- b) Stage one fundraising targets were achieved, and Contractors began construction of the Observatory in November 2018. RAG took possession of the building on schedule in late Spring 2019 – 12th April, 2019. Since 'handover of the 'shell', RAG Members have given a significant amount of voluntary hours, carrying out various external works, and fitting out the internal areas comprising Dome, Warm Room, and storage facilities. Following the prolonged shutdown, once Covid restrictions were eased, in the latter quarter of the year, more volunteer hours have been spent working on the shutter and camera set-ups.
 - c) RAG agreed a contract with the Contractor for payment for the build to be on a Stage Payment basis. This was completed in April 2019.
 - d) RAG has an agreed Lease with South Derbyshire District Council (SDDC) for the land on which the building stands. This is being paid annually at a peppercorn rate of £1. The fourth payment to SDDC was made in October 2021.
4. a) Assets, recognised but not valued individually in the Statement of Accounts, have an approximate value of £2,500.
- b) These comprise items of secondhand equipment, namely various types of telescope and a selection of other smaller items of equipment that go with these telescopes. The items vary in condition and age. They have been acquired, 'ad hoc', over the period of twenty two years the Club has been in existence, donated by Club members or their relatives, and by the General Public.
 - c) Currently, until the Observatory had been completed, and subsequently, for the storage facilities to be made available/accessible following the easing of the Government restrictions, these items are being 'stored' by named members of the Committee, mainly by the Equipment Manager, who holds the definitive list.
 - d) As these items have not been 'selected' regarding their suitability for Training purposes, for use to provide 'hands on' experience in public groups, or as items suitably easy to set up to enable them to be used as 'Loan' items for members new to Astronomy – in 2018 the Trustees, having due regard to the public benefit, and to rationalise the situation, agreed the following:
 - i) to mandate the Equipment Manager to carry out an audit to identify items that are either to be retained, or that are surplus to requirement and need to be disposed of, and to receive the results of this audit at a future Trustees' Meeting. The results of this Audit were received by the Trustees at their Meeting in February 2019.
 - ii) to agree the disposal of the identified items, with due regard to RAG's Equipment Development Plan, and following the financial procedures as set out in the 'Delegation of Powers' for the RAG Committee i.e. delegated responsibilities for sales/purchases of items £100 and below.

- iii) to receive a Draft 'Policy for the Acceptance of Items of Equipment that are Offered as a Donation or Option to Purchase'. This Policy was received and accepted at their Meeting in February 2019.
- e) The Government restrictions in place to address the pandemic have deemed it necessary for further Sales of unsuitable items identified in the Audit to be put on hold, until a suitable window presents itself.
This situation has continued to the end of 2021.

RAG TAR 2021