

ROSLISTON ASTRONOMY GROUP
(Reg. Charity Number 1175118)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
for the period - 1st January, 2023 to 31st December, 2023

Aims and Purposes

Rosliston Astronomy Group, abbreviated to RAG for ease of reference, is an amateur Astronomy Group with a membership of around seventy five, 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.

This year RAG has been able to continue our support assisting 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 have also voluntarily provided the Astronomy element at Rosliston Forestry Centre's two 'Night Watch' Events.

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.

In addition, during the year, RAG's 'outreach' support for specific community groups was also able to continue. RAG engaged with two Beaver Groups, two Cub-Scout groups and a Scout Group to facilitate them being able to achieve their Astronomy Badges. RAG also continued to work with an Explorer Scout Group. Members of RAG gave evening presentations to one WI Group, and in October two Members presented an Astronomy theme to Home Educated children during Rosliston Environment Education Team's 'Schools' Science Week'. The year concluded with, at the beginning of November, four Members providing an Astronomy evening for sixty Year Five primary children from a school in Nottinghamshire. This was the second event for this school during 2023, the first being in February, and both being rebooked events following their successful visit in 2022.

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'.

Achievements and Performance

The Trustees have continued to assess the effectiveness and range of RAG's 'Outreach' Programme for specific and general public events involving the whole age range. Our Programme is well established, and well received, and has again reached in excess of 1000 members of the general public during the year.

Having due regard to the Charity Commission's documents on 'public benefit', Trustees have continued to spend 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 what the impact is of holding all our Meetings as 'hybrid', being 'in person' in the room, and 'online'.

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.

In more detail - the Trustees are extremely proud of the way RAG has functioned throughout 2023. The positive approach taken by the Trustees in 2020 and 2021 ensured RAG's programme of meetings were maintained, and, indeed, built on by the introduction of the Astrophotography Special Interest Group (SIG). This was achieved by the introduction of holding 'online' meetings via Microsoft Teams.

This has been built on and increased in 2023 with all meetings being both 'online' and held 'in person' at RFC. This includes all General meetings mentioned above, and the Astrophotography Special Interest Group meetings that are held monthly.

The introduction of the new website in 2021 has been a great success, and RAG has received a major increase in interest, and contact from the general public and potential new members.

Trustees receive regular updates on website usage at their meetings.

In practice, Membership this year has increased significantly, building on the trend set in 2022.

The Trustees are proud to report that there have been a number of specific achievements this year. Some of these are detailed in other parts of this Report, but are itemised here to report their overall significance.

During 2023 we have achieved the following:

- January - the continuation of the the provision of bespoke 'Stargazing Experiences' - private events for specific groups of the public, begun in October 2021, ongoing and available throughout the year.
- April - held a successful 'Observatory Open Day' and general Observing event, supporting Rosliston Forestry Centre's Science Discovery Day. This included staging an 'Exhibition' of Astrophotography Images 'donated by members in the Astrophotography SIG, with a twofold purpose:
- to publicise the work of RAG
 - to create a potential 'sales' outlet, to contribute to the Phase 2 fundraising for the bank of telescopes.
- July - held a successful 'Astronomy Evening' as part of Rosliston Forestry Centre's Night World Event. This included visual observing opportunities for the general public facilitated by RAG volunteers, and two sessions offering a Talk about Astronomy in general.
- September - celebrated the achievement of our youngest Junior Member, being shortlisted in the international Junior Astrophotographer of the Year Competition 2023 - and his image of the Crescent Moon being part of the Astrophotographer of the Year Exhibition at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, and included in its 2023 Year Book. Over 5,000 entries from 64 countries took part in whole competition.
- October - held a successful 'Observatory Open Day' and general Observing event, supporting Rosliston Forestry Centre's Science Discovery Day.

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 2023 Bids have been submitted to various grant awarding bodies. To date these have proved unsuccessful.

Following the pandemic many of these grant awarding bodies adapted their eligibility criteria to encompass supporting the various community initiatives for recovery post pandemic. As external funding is currently difficult to obtain, the Trustees have supported the suggestion by the Astrophotography SIG, to use some of their images to create a source of 'sales' to contribute to the Phase Two fundraising for the bank of Telescopes. This is a long term project that will raise money, with all sales going to the Phase Two fund once the initial monetary outlay for printing and mounting has been repaid. Sales this year have totalled £100.

Monies have been received from other external sources, namely £425 from the sale of old equipment, and £410 comprising donations from various 'outreach' groups and from bespoke 'Stargazing Experiences'.

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 their knowledge, expertise as an astronomer, and their personal equipment with members of the Public of all ages. Their support has always readily been 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 these small donations totalled £155.04.

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, 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
- has been actively maintained.

Consequently there has been increased 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.

A significant financial outlay in 2023 has been the purchase of an EQ8 Mount for the Observatory Dome. This is a major achievement for RAG, as previously Trustees have been appreciative of the generosity of a Member loaning a suitable Mount while funds were accumulated to enable such a purchase.

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 £3359.50 and unrestricted expenditure £1309.58.

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. Previously, 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, as was the case last year, although applied for, no Grants have been received - see above regarding Phase Two.

This year designated receipts totalled £1280.04. Designated expenditure totalled £1670.06.

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 £345.04 donated specifically by Members. The remaining amount included sales of Astrophotography images, and the sale of old equipment.

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. Activity in the Account in 2021 was reduced even more as restrictions for most of the year prevented any working parties meeting at the Observatory with the resultant lack of expenditure on materials, etc. Working Parties resumed in 2022, and have continued in 2023, with the emphasis on external ground maintenance, weeding and grass cutting, etc. and work on the Observatory Dome focussing on improving the shutter functions. Consequently, as the work has been labour intensive with little or no cost for materials, then the AS Account has not been very active.

The Business Community Account had also had a significant reduction in activity during the period of restrictions caused by the pandemic. This led the Trustees, as part of their strategic duties, to review this situation in light of the potential for 'online' meetings to continue in the future, and the decision was taken in 2021 that should this be the case 'online' meetings would carry an entrance fee, as for attendance at 'indoor' meetings.

This decision has required all those taking part in meetings 'online', to use bank transfer to pay for each meeting attended.

This was implemented in January 2022, and has continued through 2023.

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 at the AGM in March.

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 since October 2017, we have existed as an amateur Astronomy Group (Club) for twenty four 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, they refer to a Trustees' document first produced in 2017. This is a 'Delegation of Powers' document setting out the roles and responsibilities delegated to the Committee by the Charity Trustees. 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. The Committee holds three Meetings a year. For administrative reasons each of these is scheduled to be held one month in advance of a Trustees' Meeting.

This year has required the Trustees to hold one meeting 'online' via Microsoft Teams, with specific agenda items, and two 'in person' meetings held at Rosliston Forestry Centre. The Treasurer reports both to the Committee and to the Trustees at each Meeting.

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 Holden 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 were held 'online' via Microsoft Teams. Since September 2021 when meetings held indoors were reinstated - all RAG meetings have been 'hybrid' in format, being held in person in the room at RFC, as well as 'online' via Microsoft Teams.

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.

The 2023 AGM was held both in the room and 'online' via Microsoft Teams, and took place on 31st March, 2023. At the Meeting the two Trustees stepping down from Office were Mr. Rob Leonard and Mr. Steve Holden. Both had been nominated to stand again, and had indicated a willingness to do so. As there were no other nominations Mr Leonard and Mr Holden 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

Date: 1/10/2024

Date: 1/10/2024

ROSLISTON ASTRONOMY GROUP (Reg. Charity Number 1175118)
Analysis of Accounts and Balance Sheet for Year ending 31st December, 2023

PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS ACCOUNTS:		Year 2023	
		B/fwd	£ 6293.18
RECEIPTS:	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	
Monthly Meetings (Entrance)	1569.50		
Annual Memberships	1790.00		
Internal Donations - Meetings(Obsy Fund)		155.04	
Internal Donations - Individuals(Obsy Fund)		190.00	
Major Grants		0.00	
Fundraising		100.00	
External / Outreach donations		410.00 (incl.Science Fest.)	
Miscellaneous		0.00	
Sale of Old Equipment		425.00	
	3359.50	1280.04	
Total Receipts:		4639.54	
EXPENDITURE:			
Speakers	185.00		
Zurich (Charities) Ins (Obsy+PLI)	221.63		
Observatory Build (Internal)		570.06 (incl. Lease)	
Website / Wi-Fi	302.56		
Refreshments	259.62		
Stationery/printing/etc.	139.78		
Other	100.00	1100.00 (EQ8)	
Miscellaneous	100.99		
	1309.58	1670.06	
Total Expenditure:		2979.60	
Total Receipts	4639.54		
Total Expenditure	2979.60		
		Profit for year: £ 1659.94	

Balance Sheet for Year ending 31st December, 2023

Balance at 31/12/2022	6293.18	Represented by:	
Profit for the Year	1659.94	1) Bank A/c Business Community.	4054.05
Interest	8.43	2) Bank A/c Active Saver	884.53
Balance at 31/12/2023	7961.55	3) Plus: Active Saver Interest	8.43
		4) Cash in Hand (a)	264.54
		Cash in Hand (b)	2750.00
		GRAND TOTAL: £ 7961.55	

Assets: (i) Various items of secondhand equipment to the approximate value of £2,500
(ii) Observatory Building

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS and BALANCE SHEET FOR 2023

Approved by the Trustees of Rosliston Astronomy Group.
They have been signed on behalf of the Trustees, and the RAG Membership, by:

Signature(1)



Mr Ed Mann - Chair of Trustees

Signature(2)



Mr Stephen Holden - Trustee

ROSLISTON ASTRONOMY GROUP
(Registered Charity Number 1175118)

Financial Statement for the Year ended 31st. December, 2023

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.
 - 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 Stage 2 - the purchase of a 'bank' of mobile telescopes for our Outreach work, no grants were received during 2023. Thus Stage 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, and the internal donations also will be transferred from the Business Community Account to the AS 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 2021, and throughout 2022, more volunteer hours were spent working on the shutter and camera set-ups. Maintenance work has continued in 2023, carried out by Members in a voluntary capacity.
 - 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. At this time the remaining funding was not sufficient to purchase a suitable Mount to be installed in the Dome to carry the two telescopes. RAG relied on an EQ6 Mount on loan from one of its Members.
This year, 2023, RAG has raised sufficient funding to purchase a more robust EQ8 Mount for £1,100 that, although secondhand, had not been previously used by the original owner. This purchase is recorded under 'Other' in Designated Expenditure.
 - 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 fifth payment to SDDC was made in October 2023.
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 four years the Club has been in existence, donated by Club members or their relatives, and by the General Public.
 - c) Currently, these items are being 'stored' by named members of the Committee, mainly by the Equipment Manager, who holds the definitive list, and within the Observatory.
 - 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 accepted, and formalised at their Meeting in February 2019.
- e) Sales of unsuitable items identified in the Audit have taken place in 2023 - identified as 'Sale of Old Equipment'.

RAG TAR 2023