



Salford Astronomical Society

Charity No: 1197817

Trustees' Annual Report 2023

Including the Directors' Report

& Statement of Financial Activity

for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

Salford Astronomical Society

& Trustees Annual Report for 2023

Financial Period reporting from 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2023

1. Introduction

1.1 Charitable Objects

The charity's charitable objects, as set out in its governing document.

To promote and advance the education of the public in the theory and practice of Astronomy and related subjects by:

- (A) encouraging the public interest in Astronomy
- (B) And/or circulating current Astronomical information
- (C) And/or further the education and knowledge of the public and of its members, by providing facilities for the active promotion and participation in observational Astronomy.

The Society has also created a set of core values and a vision and mission statement

Core values for the Salford Astronomical Society are:-

Sharing and Support	We aim to share good practice, and support everyone to fulfil their own potential. We foster innovation and welcome ideas through the sharing of skills and knowledge. We aim to engage with everyone who wishes to develop their skills and knowledge in the areas of science, ICT and astronomy
Teaching and Learning	We foster and create a supportive environment, where our members are encouraged to participate and engage in lectures, learning activities and self development
Accountability	We are transparent and take ownership of our work. Our members and trustees work to support each other and raise the profile of Salford Astronomical Society, its work with the community and the observatory. We welcome new members, and listen to their needs and areas of development
Respect	We respect the environment and world in which we operate. Our members and trustees hold themselves to the highest of ethical standards, and respect the diversity of people. We care about the world in which we live, our members and trustees are committed to listen and engage, and respect the views of others

OUR MISSION

Is to share our skills and knowledge, and to foster engagement and curiosity of other amateur astronomers, who share an understanding and appreciation of astronomy

OUR VISION

Salford Astronomical Society envisions a world where people of all ages can come together as one, to share and appreciate the wonders of the universe equally, and provide accessibility to all people regardless of age, gender, background, ethnicity, disability and economic status

1.2 Overview (Executive Summary)

Salford Astronomical Society (also known as The Society and Salford Astro) is an open and inclusive society, respectful of the views and beliefs of others, with the aim to be a source of inspiration, knowledge and learning, and to provide a positive benefit for the local community. We strive to develop relationships with other organisations with similar interests and objectives, both locally and further afield.

(SORP ref - Para 1.17 and 1.19)

1.3 Governance and Management

Governing Document

Salford Astronomical Society is a CIO – Association. Registered with the Charity Commission on 07 Feb 2022, under the Charity Number 1197817. It is governed by Charitable Constitution and is controlled and managed by elected Trustees. The Trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or financial benefits.

(SORP ref - Para 1.25)

Organisational Structure

The Trustees meet together monthly at the Observatory and have key responsibilities for all decisions taken in the running of the Observatory and any activities provided by The Society. It is planned that additional sub-committees will be set up once a Volunteer Programme has been set up and finalised. The sub-committee will report directly to the Trustees. At the last AGM it was agreed that a range of working groups would be set up to support key areas of work that have been developed over the past year.

(SORP ref - Para 1.25)

Recruitment and Selection of Trustees

The existing Trustees are responsible for the recruitment and selection of new Trustees, these could be existing members of The Society. In selecting new Trustees The Society seeks to identify people who show an interest in the long-term aims and development of The Society. That new Trustees can bring engagement and ideas, and be willing to volunteer into broader community work and bring new skills and knowledge to the Society and its members.

Potential Trustees are invited to attend Trustees' meetings as observers, and are given more information about the Charity, its aims and objectives, and if Trustees are in agreement, then they are proposed as a new Trustee at the next Trustees' Meeting. This process will allow fair and non-judgmental consideration of a person's eligibility, personal competence, specialist skills and knowledge. New policies and procedures have been written with clear guidance on the recruitment of new trustees.

(SORP ref - Para 1.25)

Induction and Training of Trustees

Upon appointment, new Trustees are introduced to their new role, and provided with copies of the Society's Constitution Document, and its aims and objectives. The new Trustee will be given the opportunity to read over policies and procedures that are in place, and will be required to sign that these have been read and understood. Copies of up to date Policies and Procedures are available both electronically and in hard copy, and print outs are available upon request. The Trustee(s) will be provided with a "New Trustee Handbook". The new handbook is still to be finalised by Trustees before full circulation.

At the last AGM, new trustees were elected in a fair and unbiased manner, and in accordance with the Charity Commission guidelines.

(SORP ref - Para 1.25)

Risk Management

The Society has a designated Safeguarding Officer, who is fully compliant and holds an up to date enhanced DBS on the "Update Service". The Trustees have assessed the risk of Health and Safety and Safeguarding, and these are updated regularly at Trustees meetings.

A risk matrix has been developed and measures taken for any mitigation of risk. The Trustees are satisfied that systems and protocols are in place for risk to health and safety; and insurances and safety measures are in place for new Trustees, members and visitors to the Observatory.

Appropriate monitoring of DBS checks of Trustees, members and in place and are reviewed regularly, including any updates to policies and procedures, as well as appropriate training by the local authority Safeguarding Team. Volunteer and Trustee DBS checks will be carried out by Salford CVS.

2. Activities & Main Achievements

2.1 Outputs & Outcomes

What has been the focus of our work and Charity over the past 2 years

In 2022/2023 the focus has been on the recruitment of new trustees to help the Society to move forward with its vision. Another key area was the work for the installation of the new cabin/classroom, planning permission was a long process with planning permission needing to be sought from Salford City Council to order to make major changes to the internal and external building, as well as the permission to be granted more land in order for the cabin/classroom to be sited.

In 2022 to 2023 the main focus has been two fold, firstly to install and commission the new computer Go-To System on the 18.5 inch Newtonian telescope in the observatory. This has taken a considerable amount of time and effort, as the system that was previously installed was fraught with problems. The problems were due to the fact that we were trying to retrofit a modern very accurate system onto a telescope that was built in around 1930.

The Go-To System is now working as intended and the next step is to add a custom controller to the telescope, that will enable it to be used for astrophotography using modern high sensitivity cameras, and the associated Autoguiding and plate solving that is necessary for such a system. This will enable users of the observatory following a short amount of training to use the telescope for both fun astrophotography and to get involved in pro-am collaborations.

Secondly the focus of The Society has been to raise the funds and get planning permission for a new classroom and toilet facilities to enable The Society to carry out and deliver outreach work in astronomy, astrophotography and astrophysics. Including practical astrophotography classes aimed at teaching members of the society, as well as the wider community within Salford.

Our other main objective is to deliver classes to the hardest to reach groups within our community and society, and to work with other 3rd sector and community groups to bring astronomy, astrophotography and astrophysics to everyone. These subjects and hobbies are some of the most expensive to have, and our work is to build upon what we have already started within the community with the Scouts, Cubs and Guides Groups, as well as delivering free classes to a varied age range of learners.

What are our aims for the future for the Observatory

Our aims and objectives are to grow and develop our observatory into a venue that is open to the public free of charge, at various times during the week and weekend, and open at times where the night sky can be observed in a safe and engaging environment. The Trustees are going to create a strategic plan of action for the next 5 years, and with new Trustees on board who have experience within the 3rd Sector and bid writing, the aim is to apply for grants and funds to develop a range of courses, learning and free training. Our long term aim is to develop a Volunteer Programme, with volunteers working alongside members and Trustees to open the Observatory at varied times throughout the week and weekends.

2.2 Policies on Grant-Making and/or Social Investments

The charity does not make any grants, or make social or programme-related investments at present.

(SORP ref - Para 1.38)

2.3 The Roles & Contributions of Volunteers

The Society at present does not operate or offer volunteering. However, the long term aim is to develop a new Volunteer Programme, so that the Observatory can be open more often, at variable times during the week, to a wider range of members of the public, to offer a greater range of courses and introduce more people and local residents to astronomy and star gazing.

(SORP ref - Para 1.38)

2.4 How the Public Have Benefitted

There have been many changes within the Society, with interest from members of the public, including young people who have benefited from the knowledge and expertise of our members and Trustees. This has included over the Winter month visits from the Scouts Cubs and Guides across the City of Salford and wider areas, who have benefitted from talks and basic introduction to astronomy, with pre-arranged tours of the observatory and the telescope. We plan to develop this and aim to reach out to a wider audience across the Greater Manchester Region

2.5 Achievements and Performance (Meeting Targets)

TARGETS	ACHIEVEMENTS
Funding for new classroom, kitchen and bathroom extension	Funding has been secured from Booth Charities, and the ground work has taken place, in preparation for the footings and preparation for the Classroom to be erected.
Engage with Scouts and Guide Groups	The Society has continued to engage with more with the Scouts, Cubs and Guides Groups, word of mouth has meant that we have seen an increase during the Winter months for visits to the Observatory for educational learning.
To engage with more of the residents of Salford using a range of social media	We have been more active in our social media platforms, with our members posting many of their own pictures and photos with their own equipment, encouraging others to ask and enquire about visiting the Observatory.
Engaging with DwarfLab	We are continuing with our engagement with DWARFLAB, who have shown interest in working with The Society on future projects; especially the new Dwarf3 smart telescope

2.6 Looking Ahead

The Society has been granted planning permission for the erection of a classroom with bathroom facilities, this has provided the Society to make plans in the year 2024/2025 for additional activities aimed at diverse groups of children and young adults. Our vision and mission is to create a plan of action where we can build upon the work that we have started with the Scouts, Cubs and Guides Groups. Our Trustees will scope and plan a 5 Year Vision for the growth and opportunities of the Observatory, and plan to develop its own Volunteer Programme to deliver a wider range of learning programmes.

2.7 Administration Information

Salford Astronomical Society is situated on a green area of land owned by Salford City Council, and a "Pepper Corn" Rent agreement is in place. The address is Chaseley Rd, Salford, M6 7DZ. The agreement has been a long standing agreement since the Observatory was erected and opened in 1971. Salford City Council have agreed that the Observatory is an asset to the community, and local Councillors' and MP's have shown interest in the future vision and plans for expansion. The Members fully maintain the building, the dome and the telescope free of charge.

3. Financial Review

3.1 Financial Position – Salford Astronomical Society

The Society has an open and transparent policy and therefore this Report will include financial statement from year since the registration with the Charity Commission. A full breakdown for each financial year is available and have been accepted by the Board of Trustees as True.

Review of the financial position of the charity

2019 – the status of the account was opened for The Society, new banking

2020 – The Society's status was "Not for Profit- 3rd Sector"

2021 – The Society's status was "Not for Profit- 3rd Sector"

2022 -The Society was registered as a Charity

2023 – First year as a registered Charity and Commissioner's report due 31st October 2023

2024 – not due until 2025

3.1.1 Record of Accounts for January 2023 to December 2023

In			
Membership		£	395.00
Weekly Subs		£	584.81
Donations/SumUp		£	485.65
Events	Eventbrite	£	63.00
	Eventbrite	£	3.00
	Xmas Float	£	250.00
	Lecture	£	14.00
	Lecture	£	65.44
Scouts		£	270.00
Misc	Cheque	£	80.00
	Cheque	£	800.00
	Cheque	£	219.58
	EDF Refund	£	188.53
Total		£	3,419.01

Out			
Purchases	Planning	£	298.00
	Cabin Deposit	£	1,125.00
	Lecture	£	100.00
	Room Hire	£	100.00
Insurance (FAS)		£	52.00
Electric		£	576.21
Internet & Phone		£	389.24
Misc		£	120.00
Total		£	2,760.45

3.2 Details of Any Funds Materially in Deficit

The Charity has no funds which are materially in deficit. See accounting section.

3.3 Policy on Reserves

The Society has a Reserve Policy in place that is relevant to the size of the Society and has been ratified by the Board of Trustees, the Policy will be updated as deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees and The Society's Director.

"This policy will seek to ensure financial sustainability of The Society for the long-term. In setting the policy, the Board of Trustees has referenced CC19 Charities and Reserves, issued by the Charity Commission. In setting the parameters for the Reserves Policy, the Board of Trustees has considered the following".

- *If reserves are too low, The Charity risks insolvency and its charitable purpose will be put at risk.*
- *If reserves are too high, money will be tied up unnecessarily, thus limiting The Society's achievement of its purpose and jeopardising its ability to raise future funds.*

3.4 Going Concern

There are currently no going concerns about that Charity that need to be notified

3.5 Principal Sources of Funding

The Society does not receive any direct funding, and the main source of funding is from Donations from visitors to the Observatory, or funds or grants that have been successful through bid writing. Members also pay weekly subscriptions. Funds are also received from events and talks at the observatory. The Society applies for additional funding through grants and bids, to support its basic running costs, and will continue in this manner by applying for bids and funding from a range of sources.

3.6 Investments Policy & Objectives

The Society does not have any investments

3.7 Description of the Principal Risks Facing the Charity

Any risks that the Society faces are noted within separate policies and procedures.

A risk management policy is in place and is managed by the Trustees.

3.8 Remuneration of Trustees

All Trustees act in a voluntary capacity and receive no remuneration or other material benefits from their services to the Charity/The Society. Out-of-pocket expenses that are necessary and reasonably incurred by Trustees in promoting the purposes of the Charity are reimbursed at cost, and are noted down within annual accounts, for transparency.

3.9 Statutory Statements on Liabilities

The Trustees declare that:

- The charity has given no guarantees where potential liability under the guarantee is outstanding at the date of this statement
(eg: any outstanding/ongoing contract or legal undertaking to buy or provide specific services);

- The charity has no debt outstanding at the date of this statement which is owed by the CIO and which is secured by an express charge on any assets of the CIO (*eg*: a mortgage on property owned by the charity);

4. Reference and Administration Details

4.1 Charity Name & Registration

Name of the Charity: Salford Astronomical Society (also known as The Society, Salford Astro)

Charity No: 1197817

The Society is not Registered with HM Revenue & Customs, at present there are no paid staff members

4.2 Charity's Principal Address

Salford Astronomical Society, Chaseley Road, Salford, M6 7DZ

e-mail: hello@salfordastro.org.uk

website: <https://www.salfordastro.org.uk/>

4.3i Names of the Trustees Who Manage the Charity

Table of Trustees in Situ FROM AGM IN JULY 2024 – added for clarity for this report

<i>Name</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Resigned</i>	<i>Appointed by</i>
Lee Bowditch	Treasurer	24 February 2021		
Gareth Lever	Chair	24 February 2021		
Julie-Ann Fox	Secretary	31 July 2024		AGM & Trustees
Anthony O'Sullivan	Trustee	31 July 2024		AGM & Trustees
Michael John O'Brien	Director	31 July 2024		AGM & Trustees
Stephen Chandler	Trustee	31 July 2024		AGM & Trustees

4.3.ii *Table of Trustees who have resigned and removed from The Society*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Resigned</i>	<i>Appointed by</i>
Gary Yule	Chair	24 February 2021	3 December 2023	

4.4 Names of Advisors & Senior Members of Staff

Name	Role	Address
n/a	n/a	n/a

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4.5 Bank Account Details

The Society has a dedicated bank account with Lloyds Bank and is accountable for all accounts.

4.6 Independent Examiner

Not relevant at this present time, due to funding being below £25,000

5. Structure, Governance & Management

5.1 Type of Governing Document

Constitution

5.2 Charitable Objectives

The Society has policies and procedures in place that support its vision and mission objectives. The main objective is to bring Astronomy into every person's lives and to access this freely.

Astronomy and the equipment that is needed to enjoy this subject, is expensive, one of the key objectives of The Society is.

To promote and advance the education of the public in the theory and practice of Astronomy and related subjects by:

(A) encouraging the public interest in Astronomy

(B) And/or circulating current Astronomical information

(C) And/or further the education and knowledge of the public and of its members, by providing facilities for the active promotion and participation in observational Astronomy.

5.3 Statutory Declaration

The Trustees confirm that they have paid due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

5.4 Trustee Selection Methods

There must be at least 3 Charity Trustees independently elected for the Board. The maximum number of Trustees is 12, in accordance with The Society's Constitution, Trustees are appointed or re-appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the Charity Trustees. In appointing Trustees; due consideration is given to ensuring that the Trustees have, between them, the skills and experience necessary to manage The Charity/The Society effectively and in accordance with Charity Law.

5.5 Trustee Development

Going Forward, The Society will be creating and providing a detailed Trustee Pack, which will include a range of information about The Society, as well as planned training sessions around key areas, such as health and safety, safeguarding and risk assessment.

6 Director's Report



Salford Astronomical Society

Executive Director Report

Completed by: Gareth Lever

Date of completion: September 2023

Reporting Year: 2023

Charity Commission Reporting Period: 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023

Overview of Members/Staff/Volunteers

Total # of Volunteers: N/A

Total # of Volunteer Hours Worked: N/A

Total # of Members : 53

Total # of Staff N/A

Primary Focus Areas:

- Our main objective for members, was holding events supporting community groups to access our facility, these groups include Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Girl Guides and general public admissions.
- We are still continuing to reach out to schools to increase interest in accessing the Observatory and all we have to offer
- We are working on a 5 year plan for the expansion and growth of the Society, that will be developed by new Trustees and Board Members.
- We are continuing to seek funding for new equipment and telescopes to support with the courses and training that we plan to offer
- Member/volunteers to help support programs, raising awareness of the Society, for example, hosting open days and events and attending community stalls across the City.

Organisation Goals: Progress Report

The main objective is to bring Astronomy into every person's lives and to access this freely. To provide the equipment that is needed to enjoy this subject, is expensive, one of the key objectives of The Society is -

To promote and advance the education of the public in the theory and practice of Astronomy and related subjects by:

(A) encouraging the public interest in Astronomy

(B) And/or circulating current Astronomical information

(C) And/or further the education and knowledge of the public and of its members, by providing facilities for the active promotion and participation in observational Astronomy.

Community Outreach Efforts

Outreach Event

Purpose and/or Outcome

Friends of Buile Hill Park Easter fun day
Attended - April 2023

to broaden the communities knowledge of the Society and secure new members where possible

Asda Community Stall
Attended - May 2023

to broaden the communities knowledge of the Society and secure new members where possible

CERN Research Institute
From April 2023 ongoing

talks to access speakers to come and give lectures to members and non-members

Major Accomplishments

Our key accomplishments during this reporting period:

- Strengthened links with local schools and college
- s encouraging them to access the Observatory, with planned visits taking place.
- Talks/meeting with NASA Community Outreach efforts, successful meeting that we are hopeful to develop.
- Secured funding from ASDA Community Funds towards furniture for the planned extension, this includes resources and equipment.
- Being more connected and creating a partnership with Salford City Council and Councillors.
- Attended Jodrell Bank on an outing as a group to raise the profile of the Society.
- Planning permission has been applied to obtain an extension to the existing observatory, this will incorporate a classroom to further our links and build on accessibility, as we intend to include toilets, something that we are currently lacking.
- Christmas lecture was a success with Dr Alan Chapman, speaking via video conference link as our Honorary President. This was attended by more attendees than previous years but we would like to build on this going forward.
- Outreaching via social media and projects such as Buile Hill Community stall has increased footfall visitors to The Society on Wednesday evenings.

Challenges

Challenges The Society has faced and long term challenges:

- Recruiting more members, and encouraging more females members to join a very male dominated society and subject area
- Securing funding to move the society forward with up to date equipment and provide free courses in areas of STEM and astronomy
- Connecting with local Colleges to extend knowledge of our existence.
- Encourage more attendees to our lectures especially the Christmas lectures in the future
- Encouraging members to be active in volunteering and supporting projects.
- Liaising with Salford City Council has been challenging as we were acquiring land for the proposed extension. This has been considerable back and forth between The Society and Council with several surveys needing to be undertaken including tree surveys.
- To create working groups to support small focused projects for the Society
- Converting footfall visitors to become members of The Society, sustaining their engagement once they have shown an interest.

Board Engagement Objectives

Key objectives and aims from the Board for the next Strategic Planning Proposal

- Members to continue to support and engage with community groups such as Scouts, Cubs etc
- To encourage general admission visitors to the Observatory to become members, conversion rates, especially a younger generation and female members
- Form small Working Groups with a project lead to support general maintenance and cleaning of the building and surrounding green areas.
- Engaging with the Local MP and Local Councillors to raise our profile within the City of Salford.
- Outreach to astronomical companies, by attending Practical Astronomy Shows to identify how they can support our needs through discounts and opportunities.
- To create a 5-year Strategic Plan for growth and development of The Society, to reach a wider audience and engage with the hardest to reach groups, through community cohesion and connectivity.
- To apply for funding to meet the Society's key aims and objectives as within this report.

APPENDICES

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