

**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF  
ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2011 AT  
10.30 A.M. IN THE CASSINI ROOM, ARMAGH PLANETARIUM**

Present: His Grace, The Most Reverend A.E.T. Harper (Chairman), Dr F. Byrne, Mr E. Donnelly, Professor A. Hibbert, Dr M. McKay, Professor R. Oudmaijer, Professor T. Ray and Mrs P. Wilson

Apologies: Mr B. Hannam, Archdeacon R. Hoey, Mr A. Peoples and Mr M Cory (DCAL)

In attendance: Professor M. Bailey, Dr T. Mason, Mr J. Copeland and Dr G. Ramsay (Item 8)

**1. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Members declared no conflicts of interest.

**2. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2011**

- 2.1. Mrs Wilson asked that the draft Minutes at 4.12 be changed to include a new subsection (c) Repointing work to the steps at the front of the main entrance was deemed to be unsatisfactory and the issue should be raised with CPD.
- 2.2. Mrs Wilson asked that the draft minutes at Section 7 should include a new section to reflect that Professor Bailey had advised that the Chairman of the Ulster History Circle (UHC), Mr Chris Spurr, had approached him with a request to discuss the possibility of attaching a blue plaque to one of the Observatory buildings to celebrate the achievements of the Observatory's third Director, Dr Thomas Romney Robinson. Also that extensive discussion took place on the merits of attaching a blue plaque on an Observatory building and Professor Bailey undertook to correspond with Management Committee members on the matter and provide a summary report for the next meeting of the Management Committee.
- 2.3. Dr McKay asked that 7.2 of the draft minutes be changed to reflect that Dr McKay had only suggested that Mr Canete be asked to visit the Observatory and Planetarium.
- 2.4. With these changes the minutes of the meeting of 17 June 2011 were approved by members and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Professor Bailey, Dr Mason and Mr Copeland referred to the following matters:

- 3.1. Minute 3.1.1 – the personnel matter is dealt with in the report of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and in Dr Mason's interim report.
- 3.2. Minute 3.3.4 – the status of the Sharp clock. The issue remains under investigation and is dealt with in the Observatory Director's interim report.
- 3.3. Minute 3.3.5 – the issue of whether the equal pay compensatory sum applies to Observatory and Planetarium staff remains unresolved and is dealt with in the Observatory Director's interim report.
- 3.4. Minute 3.3.8 – the Observatory main building is dealt with in the Observatory Director's interim report.
- 3.5. Minute 7.1 – Professor Bailey was asked to make further enquiries concerning the need to maintain the meridian markers in a good state of repair.
- 3.6. Minute 7.2 – Professor Ray asked that the corporation and Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) co-ordinate with each other to arrange a visit by Mr Cañete.
- 3.7. Minute 7.3 – Dr Mason provided a verbal update on the CCEA's use of Planetarium materials in the June 2011 GCSE English Language paper.

# MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM

17 NOVEMBER 2011

PAGE 2

## 4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- 4.1. The Chairman advised that Professor Dufton had submitted his resignation as the Queen's University Belfast nominee on the Management Committee with effect from 28 October 2011. Professor Bailey had contacted QUB to ask for a replacement nominee.
- 4.2. The Chairman asked that a letter of thanks be sent to Professor Dufton expressing the Committee's appreciation for his services to the corporation.

## 5. DIRECTORS' INTERIM REPORTS

Professor Bailey referred to the following matters in his interim report:

- 5.1. Key Performance Indicators – Details of the Observatory's Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and trends in various performance indicators for past years are detailed in the Report.
- 5.2. Armagh Robotic Telescope – Trinity College Dublin student Niall McGlynn is carrying out a final-year evaluation research project that involves measuring the light curves for at least two variable stars using the Robotic Telescope.
- 5.3. DCAL Grant for Financial Year 2011/2012 – Following the announced draft budget, the corporation was awarded a total of £1,953k resource funding for 2011/2012 and zero capital funding. For 2011/2012 the breakdown of non-cash costs between the two sides of the organization is estimated as £275k for the Planetarium (corresponding to Depreciation costs of £231k and Pension costs of £44k) and £200k for the Observatory (corresponding to Depreciation costs of £119k and Pension costs of £81k). The Directors agreed that the remaining revenue (i.e. cash) budget should be split so that the Planetarium receives £463k and the Observatory £1,015k - this is close to the historic split between the two sides of the organization. DCAL had also provided an uplift of £30k in the corporation's non-cash budget as a result of the 2011 June monitoring round. The Observatory also was awarded an uplift of £37k from the 2011 October monitoring round. The funding will be used to strengthen the Observatory's primary research function, carrying out urgent conservation on damaged and deteriorating books, buildings maintenance and the development of the Observatory's Science in the Community programme.
- 5.4. Staff and Staff Movements – (a) Ms Elizabeth (Libby) McKearney began work in 2011 September in her role as EU-UNAWAVE Project Manager, (b) The Chair of the Collaborative Provision Group in QUB has awarded all the senior astronomers Recognized Teacher status for a five-year period from 2011 September, (c) Dr Gavin Ramsay has come to the end of his three-year tenure as Chair of the UK WHT/INT Time Allocation Panel and has been appointed Chairman of the STFC Panel for the Allocation of Telescope Time (PATT), (d) Dr Stefano Bagnulo is now part of the Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes (ING) Time Allocation Group (TAG), (e) Ms Alison Neve, having passed her final Accounting Technicians Ireland (ATI) examinations has become a member of that Institute, (f) The current Lindsay Scholar, PhD Student Ms Gráinne Costigan has successfully applied for a visiting position to study at the European Southern Observatory Headquarters in Garching, Germany for the period 2011 December 1 to 2012 November 30, (g) PhD student Tom Barclay, registered at University College London, has submitted his PhD, (h) Lawrence Young (Joint Administrator) and Geoff Coxhead (Computer Software and Hardware Support Engineer) have both retired from the corporation, (i) Four of the five students recruited for entry to the PhD programme started in 2011 Autumn. One student unfortunately failed to achieve the necessary qualifications to start the programme.
- 5.5. Research, Conferences, Training, Grants, Environmental Studies and Meteorology
  - 5.5.1. Advances in Astronomy and Astrophysics – (a) Main Belt Asteroids in Resonance with Ceres and Vesta – Apostolos Christou reports that the co-orbital resonance, otherwise known as 1/1 mean-motion resonance, is a ubiquitous feature, which in the case of our solar system can be used as a tracer of its past evolution, (b) In an on-going collaboration, Apostolos Christou and Paul Wiegert (University of Western Ontario, Canada), have searched for main-belt asteroids in the 1/1 resonance with the dwarf planet (1) Ceres or the large main-belt asteroid (4) Vesta.

**MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND  
PLANETARIUM  
17 NOVEMBER 2011  
PAGE 3**

- 5.5.2. Discovery of a Strange New Planetary System – Gavin Ramsay reports that he is part of a team of astronomers, that has found evidence which suggests the existence of an extraordinary planetary system. Two giant planets appear to be revolving at some distance around a compact, interacting stellar binary known as UZ For, which comprises two small stars orbiting very closely one about the other. If confirmed, this would be an example of a very strange new planetary system, give the nature of the stellar pair.
- 5.5.3. Chemical Peculiarities of the Herbig Ae and Be Stars – Stefano Bagnulo reports the results of recent work completed by Colin Folsom and others concerning the chemical composition of a sample of Herbig Ae and Be stars, the pre-main-sequence progenitors of A and B stars.
- 5.5.4. Short-Period Variable Stars in the Kepler Field – Gavin Ramsay reports that in 2011 July he began a new programme to identify short-period variable objects in the Kepler field by taking a series of short-exposure images in different parts of the field.
- 5.5.5. Discovery of a Solitary Superstar – Jorick Vink reports the discovery of a very massive star in apparent isolation from any nearby cluster, which raises interesting questions regarding its origin. The Letter, published in *Astronomy and Astrophysics*, is led by Armagh PhD student Joachim Bestenlehner, and is part of the VLT Tarantula Survey. The Observatory team used FLAMES to analyse the star's light and found that it is about three million times brighter than the Sun.
- 5.5.6. Detection of Schumann Resonances – The project led by Apostolos Christou and Research Technician James Finnegan to build and develop a portable instrument for recording Extremely Low-Frequency (ELF) radio waves has successfully detected and recorded the Earth's so-called Schumann resonances. It is believed that this is the first time such low-frequency radio features have been detected from the island of Ireland.
- 5.5.7. International Collaboration – (a) Jorick Vink reports the recent acceptance of a Letter in the *Journal of Astronomy and Astrophysics* with Jose Groh, Max-Planck Institute for Radioastronomy, Germany, concerning the intriguing spectra of Luminous Blue Variables and their implications for supernova research. He also reports the publication of nine other papers by him and his group during the first half of 2011, (b) Stefano Bagnulo reports that he has been assigned as Co-Convenor for the 2012 EGU General Assembly session on polarimetry and will take part in a meeting in Brussels in 2011 November. He will also present an invited review and other contributions at the AGU meeting in San Francisco in 2011 December.
- 5.5.8. Conferences – ASGI Meeting – Gerry Doyle and Simon Jeffery together with Neil Trappe, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, organized a highly successful autumn ASGI meeting at Armagh Planetarium on 2011 September 5. Approximately 30 staff and students from institutions across the island of Ireland attended this biannual meeting. The organisers and the ASGI thank staff in the Planetarium for their help in facilitating arrangements for the meeting.
- 5.5.9. Fraud Awareness Training – DCAL had advised that all staff and students in the corporation should attend a Fraud Awareness training sessions before 31 March 2011. The Joint Administrator is seeking to identify a suitable time early in 2012 when this training might take place.
- 5.5.10. Visitors – Professor Bailey detailed the steady flow of research visitors who have attended the Observatory to collaborate with staff on joint research projects.
- 5.5.11. Grants – (a) Gerry Doyle has led the application to the STFC for the Observatory's first STFC Consolidated Grant, (b) Gavin Ramsay's application for £21k funding for travel to remote STFC approved telescopes via the Panel for Allocation of Telescope Time (PATT) has been successful. The travel grant runs from 2011 October to 2013 September and is a 15% increase over the previous grant.
- 5.5.12. Isotopic Studies – The main point of contact in the QUB study of the Isotopic Composition of Rainwater has relocated to Canada. Observatory staff will continue

**MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND  
PLANETARIUM  
17 NOVEMBER 2011  
PAGE 4**

to collect samples as long as practically possible, as the data are of fundamental value for research into the sources of precipitation in Northern Ireland and for PhD students at the QUB School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering.

- 5.5.13. Exceptionally Wet 2011 October – Measurements of precipitation by Shane Kelly and others during 2011 October have shown that this month was the second wettest October since the Observatory's records of daily rainfall began in 1838. The three wettest Octobers are now 1870 (193.8mm), 2011 (182.5mm) and 2002 (158.1mm).
- 5.6. Museum, Library, Archives and Donations
  - 5.6.1. Archives – (a) The Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies (DIAS) has provided 24 packets of the Carte du Ciel. This complements the Observatory's own collection of material based on this early sky survey, (b) As a result of the Observatory's involvement in the BBC2 television programme "Great British Railway Journeys", and specifically Thomas Romney Robinson's opposition to the encroachment of any railway line within 700 yards of the Observatory, the local railway historian Mr Desmond Fitzgerald allowed the Observatory to make and hold a copy of his manuscript "The Armagh Railways", and (c) As a further result of the Observatory's involvement in this programme, it was discovered that the large pen and watercolour manuscript plan showing the position of the Observatory and Armagh Railway Station required repair and conservation. The manuscript has also been photographed to provide a more accessible digital image of the piece.
  - 5.6.2. Historic Instruments – The loan of the Six-Inch reflector by Thomas Short, London, 1768/1769, to the National Maritime Museum in early 2012 has progressed with all components of the telescope catalogued and photographed by Thirza Mulder.
  - 5.6.3. Scanning and Digitization – The Director provided details of items scanned and digitized during 2011.
  - 5.6.4. Collaborative Conservation Work with Armagh Public Library – The Observatory has continued its collaboration with the Armagh Public Library, sharing the expertise of the Library's archivist. A particularly valuable initiative has been the project to improve the conservation and collection management of the Observatory's oldest (pre-1917) library and archives collection. This has led to the identification of items that are in urgent need of conservation. The Observatory and Armagh Public Library are also continuing to explore possible sources of funding to continue with this joint work and to extend it to include the museum and historic scientific instruments collection.
  - 5.6.5. Documentation and Conservation Work – (a) Since 2011 April the archivist has begun editing records from more recent materials in order to guarantee that the information available to public and staff through the Omeka online collections catalogue and the Observatory's website is complete, and (b) In co-operation with the Observatory's System Manager, the archivist has worked towards the goal of integrating digital reproductions of archival material into the Omeka online collections and has made efforts to simplify the resulting Omeka catalogue by simplifying the search functionality.
  - 5.6.6. Sharp Clock – The Observatory Director presented a brief update on the status of his investigation into the Sharp Clock.
- 5.7. Science in the Community, Buildings, Grounds and Astropark
  - 5.7.1. School Work Experience and Summer Programme – (a) The Director provided details of numerous students who worked in the Observatory through the school work experience and summer programme, and (b) Staff at the Observatory, led by Simon Jeffery, continued to support the Nuffield Sentinus programme during 2011, supervising four students on advanced research projects associated with the Nuffield STEM Bursary Scheme.
  - 5.7.2. Faulkes Telescope – David Asher reports that the Observatory's Faulkes Telescope programme in collaboration with secondary schools had continued, using observing time kindly provided by the Faulkes Telescope Project (Cardiff) and the Las Cumbres Observatory Global Telescope Network.

**MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND  
PLANETARIUM  
17 NOVEMBER 2011  
PAGE 5**

- 5.7.3. Lifetime Opportunities – (a) The Librarian, John McFarland, continues to support a young adult with complex needs for four hours per week on library and archive duties and (b) It is hoped that the Observatory will be able to support a further student on this programme later in the year.
- 5.7.4. Universe Awareness (UNAWA) – (a) The EU-UNAWA Project Manager, Libby McKearney, organised the first public event under this programme around International Observe the Moon Night (InOMN) and the predicted Draconid Meteor Outburst on 2011 October 8. The night also happened to fall within World Space Week (2011 October 4–10), and (b) The second EU-UNAWA event, the first teacher training workshop provided by the Observatory under this programme took place on 2011 October 18. Twelve teachers from schools in the SELB area came to the Observatory for a full day’s introduction to astronomy and training aimed at the primary-level “World Around Us” element of the curriculum using the facilities of the Observatory, the Planetarium and the Observatory Grounds, Astropark and Human Orrery.
- 5.7.5. From Earth To The Universe (FETTU) – The posters created by Miruna Popescu as part of the 2009 International Year of Astronomy Cornerstone project, FETTU, remain available for public use.
- 5.7.6. Public Lectures, Special Events – (a) Observatory staff organized a special event to observe the predicted outburst of the Draconid meteors on 2011 October 2011. Unfortunately, with totally cloudy skies and drizzle it was impossible to observe the meteors or even catch a glimpse of Jupiter or the Moon, and (b) Geert Barentsen observed the Draconid meteors using the Liverpool Telescope in La Palma and obtained a number of striking images of bright fireballs and their associated ionized trains.
- 5.7.7. Group Visits and Guided Tours – Observatory staff continue to host a wide range of group visits and guided tours. During the past three months, these have included (a) a visit by 25 students and community leaders from Toestrup, Germany and the Darkley Community Association, Co. Armagh on 2011 July 21, (b) A tour by students from the Lisburn branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) on 2011 July 29, and (c) Approximately 110 people visiting the Observatory as part of European Heritage Open Days (EHOD) on 2011 September 10.
- 5.7.8. Observatory Buildings, Grounds and Astropark – The Director reported on (a) specialist advice and repairs on broken historic window panes, handles and locks, (b) the work on the main Observatory driveway by SELB, and (c) the Ulster History Circle proposals to erect a plaque to celebrate the achievements of the Observatory’s third director, Dr Thomas Romney Robinson. It was agreed not to erect a blue plaque on any of the Observatory’s historic buildings at this time.
- 5.7.9. Press Releases and Media Coverage and Correspondence – (a) A total of approximately 22 press releases have been issued to 2011 September 30, (b) a total of approximately 217 identified media citations were recorded in the same period, and (c) a total of approximately 132 enquiries from members of the public have been dealt with in the same period by John McFarland.
- 5.7.10. Other Outreach Activities – (a) The Irish Astronomical Association (IAA) held its annual midsummer BBQ at the Observatory on 2011 June 25, (b) A CBBC crew visited the Observatory to record a sequence of short clips about astronomy for the series “All Over the Place” to be broadcast in early 2012, (c) Aisling O’Beirn (Associate Lecturer, UU) completed a very successful exhibition “Quantum Questions for Dummies”, (d) Science Ambassador Amir Ahmad was invited to be a member of the judging panel at the annual Sentinus Young Innovators Science Fair at the Odyssey Arena on 2011 June 14, (e) Apostolos Christou delivered two talks at the fifth Pan-Hellenic Meeting of Amateur Astronomers in Fillipaiioi Greece on 2011 July 30, (f) John McFarland hosted a visit and was interviewed on 2011 August 31 by Talkback Thames Television as part of the BBC series “Great British Railways”. The presenter, Michael Portillo, was filmed in the Observatory. The programme is

due to be broadcast in early 2012, (g) The Observatory agreed that JLE Dreyer's "An Historical Account of Armagh Observatory" could be translated into Ukrainian, (h) Following the annual British Association of Planetaria conference held in Liverpool during 2011 September, the Observatory has been approached by several mobile planetarium operations for copies of the near-Earth object animation on its website, and (i) The work undertaken by Miruna Popescu in collaboration with Armagh Planetarium and Blackrock Castle Observatory and funded by DSE was awarded the title of the best Gaming App in the Appys 2011 competition; the iPhone App is called "Space Brains".

5.8. Governance and Accountability

- 5.8.1. Risk Register and Quarterly Assurance Statement – The most recent versions of the Observatory's Risk Register and Quarterly Assurance Statement were reviewed by members.
- 5.8.2. Reducing Running Costs – The corporation has agreed to join a government tendering exercise with a view to reducing electricity costs.
- 5.8.3. Safeguarding Listed Buildings – The Observatory provided a response to a request from DCAL in 2011 August for information in respect of how the organization is currently complying with the UK-wide "Protocol for Care of the Government Historic Estate".
- 5.8.4. Equal Pay Claim – There remains an unresolved issue concerning whether the compensatory sum, backdated six years from January 2009 in the agreement on Equal Pay reached by the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Management and the Trade Union Side in December 2009, applies to Armagh Observatory staff on the same pay scales as those NICS staff covered by the agreement. The Department's view is that the lump-sum element does not apply to staff in Arms-Length Bodies (ALBs). NIPSA is pursuing the matter with a test case and the corporation has resubmitted the request for additional funding to the 2011 December monitoring round.
- 5.8.5. Insurance Survey – A risk advisor employed by the corporation's insurers, Ecclesiastical Insurance Company, visited the site in 2011 September and focused on the insurance company's view of the principal risks faced by the corporation. The report is due in 2011 November.
- 5.8.6. Internal Audit Programme 2011/2012 – ASM Accountants have completed their 2011/2012 internal audit programme and their report is expected in 2011 November.
- 5.8.7. Complaints and Positive Comments – The Observatory received one complaint referring to the poor state of the main driveway near the entrance to the Observatory Demesne. The Director responded to the effect that this part of the driveway was the responsibility of SELB. Coincidentally, improvements were in hand and carried out soon after the receipt of the complaint.
- 5.8.8. Freedom of Information – (a) The Observatory received one request for information under the Freedom of Information Act from Consumer Focus Post about the corporation's use of the Post Office Network, and (b) The corporation's finance Officers have also provided comprehensive information to DCAL on prompt payment of invoices.
- 5.8.9. Charity Commission for NI – There has been no movement on this issue since the last Management Committee meeting.
- 5.8.10. Changes in Employment and Related Legislation – Members were reminded that under the Agency Workers Regulations (NI) Order 2011, agency workers should have equal treatment in respect of basic working conditions and employment rights. As a result the Observatory will be obliged to correct an anomaly in its staffing profile that is where the position of Assistant Groundsman has been supplied from 2002 by a recruitment agency. A business case requesting approval to transfer the agency worker onto the Observatory payroll had been submitted to DCAL in early September 2011, and in subsequent correspondence the Department has indicated that it was content for the Observatory to implement this cost-neutral solution.

**MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND  
PLANETARIUM  
17 NOVEMBER 2011  
PAGE 7**

- 5.8.11. UK Border Agency Post-Licensing Compliance Visit – UKBA conducted an audit of the Observatory’s files in respect of foreign nationals employed by the Observatory on 2011 November 3. All information and evidence was available for UKBA officers to inspect with the exception of proof that the salary of one PDRA was paid by credit transfer into the employee’s bank account. This was a new requirement since the last post-licensing visit and was provided subsequently to the UKBA officers. UKBA officers also made several recommendations that will be addressed by the corporation. Both the Director and Joint Administrator would like to thank Aileen McKee for her care and attention to detail in all matters relating to the employment of migrant workers.
  - 5.8.12. Health and Safety Issues – (a) The Director reported that there has been one reportable accident since the last meeting of the Management Committee. A PhD student descending the lower stairs tripped and fell, injuring her leg. The Observatory’s response to the incident, the first of its kind in at least 20 years, has been to remind staff of the inherent danger of a spiral staircase where the steps narrow towards the central pillar, and to emphasize the importance of holding onto the bannister provided, and (b) A second familiarization to the Observatory visit by NI Fire and Rescue Service took place on 2011 August 11.
  - 5.8.13. Business Plan 2011/2012 – DCAL has accepted the Observatory 2011/2012 Business Plan subject to possible in-year review.
  - 5.8.14. Collaboration with Queen’s University Belfast – The agreement between the Observatory and QUB was due to end on 2011 November 30 and the Director has negotiated a new Memorandum of Agreement. A copy of the new agreement was provided and members were asked to give their consent for the Director to sign the document and affix the corporation’s official seal.
  - 5.8.15. Annual Report and Annual Accounts 2011/2011 – The Armagh Observatory and Planetarium Annual Report and Annual Accounts for 2010/2011 received an unqualified audit opinion from the Comptroller and Auditor General and were laid before the NI Assembly on 2011 October 26.
- 5.9. Consideration of Observatory Director’s Interim Report
- 5.9.1. Professor Hibbert proposed that the Management Committee ratify the Memorandum of Agreement between the Armagh Observatory and Queen’s University Belfast and approve the use of the corporation’s seal on this document. This proposal was seconded by Professor Ray and agreed by members.
  - 5.9.2. Members asked that Professor Bailey explore arrangements with QUB to allow QUB staff and accredited students to access online journals as part of their accreditation with QUB.
  - 5.9.3. Members extensively discussed the issue of the Sharp Clock and asked that Professor Bailey follow up various contacts and leads arising from his report and subsequent discussion.
  - 5.9.4. Members directed Mr Copeland to pursue the cost of repair to the damaged historic windows against the CPD contractor.
  - 5.9.5. Members extensively discussed the issue of the Ulster History Circle plaque and it was agreed not to erect a blue plaque on any of the Observatory historic buildings at this time.
  - 5.9.6. In relation to item 5.8.3 Mrs Wilson asked if the Observatory had a planned programme of maintenance and a quinquennial inspection. Professor Bailey undertook to liaise with Mrs Wilson on this matter.
  - 5.9.7. Members asked that a Job Description and grading proposal be submitted to the Employment Conditions and Remuneration Committee in respect of the Assistant Groundsman.

# MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM

17 NOVEMBER 2011

PAGE 8

Dr Mason referred to the following matters in his interim report:

- 5.10. Key Performance Indicators – Details of the Planetarium’s Key Performance Indicators (KPI) were detailed in the Director’s Report. Dr Mason was pleased to report that visitor numbers were holding up and if the current trend continued numbers would exceed the target by approximately 1,600.
- 5.11. Risk Register and Quarterly Assurance Statement – The most recent versions of the Planetarium’s Risk Register and Quarterly Assurance Statement were reviewed by members.
- 5.12. Marketing Activities – As part of the Planetarium’s plan to attract more visitors, staff have promoted visits over the Halloween period with a new set of fliers that were distributed widely. To save costs Planetarium staff did the leaflet distribution, and unaudited numbers suggest that the Halloween period had virtually the same numbers as last year (947 last year, cf. 1,089 this year). Ms Thompson, the Theatre Manager, organized this advertising work, along with another set of fliers promoting the Christmas period, and the repeat Stargazers Live event with the BBC in January 2012 while the Director was on sick leave. Samples of the fliers were provided to members
- 5.13. Planetarium Astronotes Blog and Twitter – The Planetarium’s Astronotes newsletter was converted to blog format at the end of September 2010. The printed version was phased out in December 2010. In the year to 30 September 2011 the following observations were made: (a) 168 blog posts were published, (b) 640 comments by readers to posts, (c) Linked to by numerous other astronomy, space and news blogs (including Universe Today, MSNBC, National Review), and (d) 237 subscribers. In addition the Planetarium’s Twitter site had gained 1,043 followers and made 3,127 tweets in the same period.
- 5.14. Overseas Outreach activities – Colleague Robert Hill reported that the Bangladesh UNOOSA (UN Office for Outer Space Affairs) and UNESCO mission was a great success with all the objectives set out being achieved. His report showed that the Planetarium supplied an air rocket kit for use in the science events in Bangladesh that attracted a total of 6,171 participants over a four-day period.
- 5.15. Digistar 4 Theatre Backups – Following older audit IT recommendations, Planetarium staff have instituted systematic backups of the Digistar 4’s hard disk drives (HDDs) are in place. The Director detailed how Theatre staff backed up using two sets of spared disks and their separate and safe storage. Planetarium staff would wish to follow best practice and have a third cloned backup set of disks. Therefore the Planetarium has submitted a request to DCAL for extra funding for these HDDs and other computer and projector spares to cushion the Planetarium against unscheduled downtime and fully meet visitor commitments.
- 5.16. New Shows, Workshops and Visitors
  - 5.16.1. The Planetarium will continue to produce new shows and workshops for our school visitors and has projects in hand that will make a big difference to special needs visitors. An application for funding from the STFC to increase this work has been made.
  - 5.16.2. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has been in touch and will be visiting again to Quality Assure work, making sure that we are still promoting literacy and numeracy in our programmes.
  - 5.16.3. (a) In late October 2011 the Planetarium was used to launch Maths Week Ireland with our colleagues from Waterford Institute of Technology, attended by the Minister for Education John O’Dowd, (b) The Secretary of State, Owen Patterson, visited the Planetarium on 22nd October 2011, and (c) A Gael Linn Committee meeting was convened at the Planetarium in late October 2011. They have further publicised our Irish language shows and some new bookings have come in as a consequence of this meeting.
- 5.17. Governance Matters
  - 5.17.1. Health and Safety – (a) Accident and near miss statistics and reports – There has been one accident in the last four months. In August a child accidentally ran into one of the railings in the exhibition area on the ground floor, the child sustained a burst nose; the parents were given an ice pack and some tissue to stop the bleeding. The child was fine after the bleeding had stopped, (b) Emergency Lights and Fire Points - All emergency lights and fire points in and around the building have had their six monthly check: these checks

were carried out by Chubb on Thursday 3rd November 2011. Two emergency lights on the gangway outside were defective, and were replaced on the day by the Chubb engineer. Apart from the defective lights, everything else is in full working order, and (c) Fire Safety Drills - Frequent fire drill checks are conducted and records are filed. All fire points and alarms are in full working order. Management plans to have an unscheduled no warning evacuation test to make sure that staff are familiar with the escape plan.

- 5.17.2. Credit Card Fraud – The Corporate credit card of Planetarium Director was fraudulently used in August 2011 by unknown individuals. The matter was detected when Dr Mason was contacted by the Credit Card Department of Bank of Ireland on 7 August 2011, whilst on holiday, about suspicious purchases charged to the credit card. Dr Mason advised that these were fraudulent transactions and he asked that the credit card be suspended from that date. The credit card statement was received on 1 September 2011 and all fraudulent transactions were refunded on that date. The matter was reported to DCAL, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) (DCAL's internal auditor provider), NIAO, PwC and ASM Accountants on 7 September 2011 and managed as per the corporation's Fraud Policy.
- 5.17.3. Maintenance Issues – (a) The Planetarium has recently had an inspection of the lighting protection system, after inspection a few repairs were needed; these repairs were carried out and completed on Thursday 27th October 2011, (b) The Planetarium pool vehicle, normally used for outreach, has had its MOT and service at the beginning of October, (c) The drains and gutters around the Planetarium will be cleaned within the next week to remove all the accumulated fallen leaves and rubbish that has gathered in them over the autumn period. With the recent heavy rain we experienced a leak above the entrance to the Digital Theatre which was dealt with by HJ Martin within 48 hours, and (d) the annual PAT test of electrical equipment has been scheduled to take place at the beginning of January 2012.
- 5.17.4. Planetarium Coffee Shop – Planetarium management has recently taken over the running of the café, now re-designated as a coffee shop. Since then there have been no complaints about the café, in fact it has been remarked that it is good value for money. Two vending machines have been installed, one dispensing tea and coffee, and the other dispensing crisps and snacks. These machines have been welcomed by the many teachers that visited; before they were installed teachers were unable to get a cup of tea or coffee during the week.
- 5.17.5. Staffing Matters – (a) NIPSA intends to present an industrial tribunal case on behalf of its members who it thinks are due an equal pay compensation lump sum award, in line with what has happened with the NICS staff, (b) All members of staff at the Planetarium will be taking part in a Fraud Awareness Training session in the New Year (c) The staff member dismissed for gross misconduct is pursuing a case against the Planetarium through the Employment Tribunal. This case will be vigorously defended. The Engineering Employers Federation's lawyer on this matter advises the Planetarium. The date for the hearing has to be set, (d) The Director was off on sick leave for an extended period from the date of the last Accountability Meeting until 11 October 2011 He was hospitalised for a week and at the current date is still undergoing a number of medical investigations and tests so that the hospital doctors can pinpoint the source of his problem. In his absence the other staff covered for him and most things were dealt with as normal. The Director wishes to record his appreciation of their help and professionalism at this time, (e) Interviews to employ two new Education Support Officer (ESO) posts as soon as possible to replace the staff member who was dismissed and also another ESO who has resigned. We anticipate, from past experience that the earliest they will be able to start will be January 2012. They will then undergo induction training for most of January and will receive intensive training sessions on their roles and the work of the Planetarium with the Theatre Manager, Science Communicator and the Director. They will also take part in any teacher training sessions as they occur. They will be responsible for the schools' workshops and our new interactive shows for KS2 and KS3, and (f) As the Planetarium will soon be recruiting new staff it will be necessary to update existing

staff members' job titles and job descriptions as some of their roles have changed greatly since they were first employed. As part of the succession planning for the future the Planetarium requires a detailed assessment of existing staff roles, and job descriptions. This will also prepare for the Director's retirement, which is likely to occur within the next five-year period. Two new job descriptions and titles were summarized in appendices provided.

5.18. Consideration of Planetarium Director's Interim Report

5.18.1. Dr Mason undertook to carry out a review of Outreach costs and charges.

5.18.2. Job Descriptions and Revised Titles – Members discussed the proposed changes to the Job Titles of the Science Communicator and Digital Theatre Manager, and expressed concerns over contradictions in the role of the Digital Theatre Manager in deputising for Dr Mason, competition for the posts, usage of a "Director" title and a draft organisation structure presented. Members agreed that these matters should be referred to the Employment Conditions and Remuneration Committee.

**6. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Dr Byrne, Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) reported that the ARMC met on 28 October 2011 and highlighted the following matters:

- 6.1. Annual Report and Annual Accounts - As requested at the Management Committee meeting on 23 June 2011, Mr Copeland circulated the draft Annual Report and Annual Accounts to members of the Board of Governors for any comments. None was received. Minor presentational changes were made to the Annual Report and Annual Accounts and these were signed by the Directors on 22 August 2011 and delivered to DCAL on 27 September 2011. On 20 October 2011, the DCAL Permanent Secretary gave formal approval to Professor Bailey and Dr Mason for the Annual Report and Annual Accounts to be submitted to the Northern Ireland Assembly and they were laid before the Assembly on 26 October 2011.
- 6.2. Equal Pay Lump Sum Compensatory Payment - a Business Case would again be submitted to DCAL on the equal pay same lump sum compensatory payment afforded to NI Civil Service staff. NIPSA has advised its members that the matter is listed for hearing at County Court in January 2012.
- 6.3. A response is awaited from DFP and DCAL on the subsidised pension contributions issue. The corporation pays a portion of certain employees' contributions that may have HMRC implications and a potential breach of the NILGOSC pension scheme regulations.
- 6.4. Employee Dismissal - The claim for unfair dismissal by a Planetarium employee against the Governors of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium remains lodged with the Office of the Industrial Tribunals. A Case Management Discussion was held on 24 October 2011 to remove all but the Board of Governors of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium from the proceedings.
- 6.5. A request for additional non-cash funding to cover increased depreciation charges (£30,000) incurred in 2011/2012 was approved by DCAL.
- 6.6. Outstanding audit recommendations arising from the Internal Audit and External Audit programmes were fully considered by ARMC. Whilst the ARMC was satisfied with the assurances given and the management responses to the outstanding audit recommendations, ARMC members asked that the Management Committee accept that 2008/2009 audit recommendations have been or will be dealt with Directors and can be removed from outstanding audit recommendations.

**7. RATIFICATION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

- 7.1. **Ratification of Terms of Reference** – Members ratified the Terms of Reference of the corporation Employment Conditions and Remuneration Committee.
- 7.2. **Committee Membership** – It was agreed that the Vice Chairman, Professor Hibbert, Professor Ray and Mrs Wilson would be members of the committee.

**8. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH – DR GAVIN RAMSAY – TIME DOMAIN  
ASTROPHYSICS**

Dr Gavin Ramsay delivered a short presentation on the work of his research group entitled “Time Domain Astrophysics”. After questions the Chairman thanked Dr Ramsay for his presentation that was an opportunity to demonstrate to DCAL and other stakeholders the excellence of the Observatory’s research staff and their work.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1. Robinson Biennial Lecture – Members provided suggestions to Professor Bailey for the 2012 Robinson lecturer.
- 9.2. Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) – The Chairman reminded members of the strategic plan to attract funding for an Observatory Library and Archives building. Members discussed the issue of funding and potential sources and Mrs Wilson agreed to arrange a briefing visit for her and Professor Bailey to HLF.

**10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meetings will be on Thursday 9 February 2012 and Thursday 21 June 2012 both starting at 10.30 am. The meeting to coincide with the biennial Robinson Lecture will be held on the afternoon of Thursday 22 November 2012 commencing at 2.30 pm.

The meeting ended at 1.20 pm.

Signed as a true record of the Meeting

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His Grace, The Most Reverend A E T Harper OBE BA  
Chairman of the Management Committee  
Dated: 9 February 2012