

March 1 2013

Celebrating your centre nationally and strategically

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you as the ASDC Chairman to let you know that, following extensive discussion both at Board level and at last year's AGM, the Board of ASDC has decided that it is essential we increase our membership fee. Please understand this is not a decision we have taken lightly and I outline our reasoning below.

The increase for 2013 is essential to sustain ASDC in what is a very challenging financial environment. It will allow us to continue to offer and improve our services to you by securing a critical portion of our core funding from the membership. It is the firm opinion of your Board that the higher fee better reflects the value of the services that we offer to our membership. While undoubtedly significant (and also unprecedented), it is your Board's collective opinion that ASDC still offers excellent value and we hope you will support the organisation by renewing promptly.

ASDC brings together thousands of professionals working in the UK's science and discovery centres, science museums, environment centres, universities and related organisations.

- We have awarded over 80 grants to our members and paid for travel for hundreds of staff from centres across the UK to come together for training funded through ASDC's national strategic projects. We have advocated on behalf of the whole sector with Government and lobbied for informal science learning in general including advising Parliament and speaking at their events and compiling sector-wide research.
- The 2012 ASDC Annual Conference, hosted by the National Space Centre, was attended by staff from major science engagement organisations from across the UK with speakers ranging from Parliamentarians to the European Space Agency. **The 2013 ASDC conference** will be even bigger and better, and is at the **Science Museum in London on Thursday 26 September**.
- In January 2013 we held the **ASDC Education Conference** hosted by The Centre for Life in Newcastle which attracted professionals and speakers from across the UK acting as a knowledge exchange for the sector with discussions continuing on the vibrant new online group. This conference was followed by the **2013 ASDC Marketing Conference** in early February hosted by Glasgow Science Centre, where a national promotion of science centres and museums was discussed and agreed, along with top speakers from across the sector. Discussions continue on the ASDC members only forum on matters of commercial opportunities, how to make the most of gift aid and maximising subsidiary operations.
- ASDC have also set up a series of 2013 **Leadership Conference Calls** for members to exchange commercial knowledge and opportunities to improve visitor numbers, schools engagement and increase revenue from commercial opportunities. The details of these are of course on our website. This is the tip of the iceberg and there are plenty of other activities on-going.

The Challenges faced by ASDC

Last year, ASDC's total income from membership fees was £22,320. We receive no other core funding from Government or elsewhere, and continue operations by bidding for subject-specific national strategic projects which deliver the ASDC mission of 'Bringing together the ASDC membership to play a strategic role in the nation's engagement with science'. To deliver these national projects, ASDC has a staff of 2.6. The CEO Dr Penny Fidler, Dr Michaela Livingstone the Special Projects manager and Maddy Foard the projects associate (0.6).

Our membership is organisational meaning that one single annual fee entitles all members of an organisation to participate in all events and meetings, to apply for ASDC grants and projects and to have access to our information and training. We are the only UK sector organisation bringing together the leading UK science engagement organisations who collectively engage 20 million adults and children each year in a lively hands-on way with the wonders of science.

The time has come that we now need to increase our membership fees to cover some of our main operations such as lobbying, advising and events. Like many of you, we are a charity so we do understand how vigilant you all are on items of expenditure and this is a decision the ASDC Board of Trustees has taken with considerable care. The increase was also proposed by a member at the AGM last September and voted on and approved there.

In discussion with members, we have delayed the membership billing until April 1 to fit in the new financial year (and also gives members 3 months free this year, Jan-March).

It is fundamental to ASDC's future that the external perception of our sector is a robust force to be reckoned with involving a more systematic and professional sharing of experience and best practice nationwide.

The details of the new fees are on the right. For clarity, large centres that previously paid £475, will now pay £950. Smaller centres that previously paid £350, will now pay £525.

University Departments will pay £350.

2013 ASDC membership fees

The membership year will now run from April 1 2013 – March 31 2014

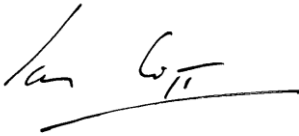
Membership fees will increase now then be frozen until 2015. This year you will get 15 months for the price of 12

2013 Membership fees will be:

- 1. Major UK Science and Discovery Centres and National Museums with turnover above £1.5 million: £950 per year**
- 2. Smaller Science Centres and museums with turnover under £1.5 million: £525**
- 3. University Departments: £350 (per department)**

Although this increase in fees is regrettable I am sure that you will agree that the financial and organisational benefits that ASDC brings to your business and the sector are still excellent value. We look forward to working with you in this coming year as an energetic member of ASDC and will continue to celebrate your work with colleagues across the UK through ASDC. Do feel free to call me, any of the ASDC trustees or Dr Penny Fidler if you would like to discuss any of these changes. Membership renewals will automatically be sent out in March for your attention

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Griffin', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Ian Griffin, Chairman of ASDC