



# The Association for Science and Discovery Centres 2009 AGM Minutes

Date: 10 September, 2009

Venue: Surrey University, British Science Festival

Attendees	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nick Winterbotham</li> <li>▪ Penny Fidler</li> <li>▪ Mat Hickman</li> <li>▪ Chris Godden</li> <li>▪ Leigh-Ann Stradeski</li> <li>▪ Heather Mayfield</li> <li>▪ Vicky Brightman</li> <li>▪ Goery Delacote</li> <li>▪ Phil Winfield</li> <li>▪ Robin Hoyle</li> <li>▪ Anne Finnie</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ John Gagg</li> <li>▪ Astrid Mascher</li> <li>▪ Antonia Spanos</li> <li>▪ Linda Conlan</li> <li>▪ Paul Stephenson</li> <li>▪ Eva Watson-Graham</li> <li>▪ Matthew Beck</li> <li>▪ Ian Simmons</li> <li>▪ Ian Griffin</li> <li>▪ Steve Pizzey</li> </ul>
ASDC Executive	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Penny Fidler</li> <li>▪ Mat Hickman</li> <li>▪ Chris Godden</li> </ul>	

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<b>Welcome from the chairman, Dr Nick Winterbotham</b>	
The chairman welcomed members and highlighted the historic nature of this, the first AGM as ASDC. NW then introduced the ASDC CEO Dr Penny Fidler and the ASDC Special Projects Manager, Dr Mat Hickman.	
<b>Chairman's Report; Dr Nick Winterbotham</b>	
<b>Nick reported on three main areas:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The new relationship with Europe</li> <li>2. Advocacy with the UK Government</li> <li>3. The BIS –commissioned report by Frontier Economics on impact of science centres</li> </ol>	
<b>The new relationship with Europe</b> PF and NW have had productive conversations with Ecsite, including discussions about ASDC's desire for a joint membership. PF and NW met with the Ecsite chair in Milan in June. The changes in membership invoicing will be from Jan 2010. ASDC is keen to promote membership to both ASDC and ECSITE (Europe).	
<b>The BIS –commissioned report by Frontier Economics on impact of science centres (by PF and NW)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ASDC are disappointed by the report, both in its poor methodology and its unscientific conclusions</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Our members across the sector are very disappointed with this poor research. BIS's funding could have been far better spent</li> <li>▪ We have expressed this to the civil servants but not publicly commented on how weak and lacking rigour the research was</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Advocacy with the UK Government</b></p> <p>Science Minister Ian Pearson with whom we were speaking has been moved from DIUS to the Treasury. Lord Drayson, the new science minister, has visited some of our centres and is supportive. PF and NW recently met with his civil servants. Discussions on-going.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Government is not looking to fund science centres (at least not through BIS) and therefore not interested in funding ASDC. This is not an acceptable position.</li> <li>▪ What they want is an Impact measurement:</li> <li>▪ 'Holy Grail' of what we're interested in</li> <li>▪ What we provide is inspiration. 'Learning is not the filling of a bucket, it is the lighting of a fire'</li> <li>▪ We cannot measure how many scientists we make, and other Gov funded initiatives don't do this either</li> <li>▪ Asked them to be more collegiate &amp; engage us with next CSR</li> <li>▪ They're interested in results of 'Science for All' and recognise our position in the learning agenda</li> </ul>	
<p><b>CEO's report by Dr Penny Fidler</b></p>	
<p>Summary of progress in the last year; ASDC has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Become a legal entity</li> <li>▪ Gained charitable status</li> <li>▪ Established an office in Bristol</li> <li>▪ Set up HR, finance &amp; IT systems &amp; member database</li> <li>▪ Appointed administrator and maternity cover staff</li> <li>▪ Charity set-up costs were kept to minimum with no legal costs thanks to the work of Keith Lawrey, from the Foundation for Science and Technology.</li> </ul>	
<p>Consultations with members show 5 things that people want us to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Play a strategic role in Govt. lobbying to secure long-term support for UK centres</li> <li>▪ Share knowledge &amp; opportunities within the sector</li> <li>▪ Bring people together to network</li> <li>▪ Run specialist meetings</li> <li>▪ Run collaborative projects</li> </ul>	
<p>PF also provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summary of conversations with Government and BIS (included above)</li> <li>▪ Summary of member events throughout the year</li> <li>▪ Summary of membership (see below for discussion)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Finance Report: Delivered by ASDC non-executive finance director Chris Godden</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Significant change since last AGM; from 1<sup>st</sup> April ASDC became separate company by guarantee, and then a charity</li> <li>▪ First annual accounts will be March 2010</li> <li>▪ We wish to thank John Gagg and the British Science Association for all their help</li> <li>▪ Big change, previously all money going through British Science Association, now ASDC deals with all its own finance.</li> <li>▪ £217,620 transferred to ASDC from British Science Association</li> <li>▪ As of end of July, reserves are at £204,000.</li> <li>▪ Over last 2 years there has been a net outgoing of funds</li> <li>▪ We're not breaking even &amp; cash reserves are starting to reduce. (Predicted around £150k by end of March 2010)</li> <li>▪ Long term is uncertain and we need to move towards a more sustainable model – still in</li> </ul>	

period of change.	
<b>Discussion on membership fees</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We currently receive £7k for entire UK membership fees (70% of all membership fees still goes to Europe)</li> <li>▪ A few UK organisations pay £5k pa membership (e.g. Techniquet) – all of this goes to Europe</li> <li>▪ Separate invoicing will begin Jan 2010</li> <li>▪ LC: Now that we are an independent charity we need to consider how much our fees will be, and the split in the members that will not be able to afford both Ecsite and ASDC membership.</li> <li>▪ Board Working Group led by Phil Winfield recommending what the fees will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As low as possible to encourage membership of both us and Ecsite</li> <li>○ Approximately the same as the associate fee for Ecsite</li> <li>○ Considering 2 fees – one for smaller and one for larger centres</li> <li>○ Our goal is that 2010 will see a similar number of members</li> <li>○ We have proposed to Europe that our members remain as members of Ecsite and it is a joint membership. So that full members of Ecsite and ASDC would get 30% reduction – we don't want everyone paying substantially more.</li> <li>○ We're looking at £23/4k max in 2010 from our ASDC membership fees.</li> <li>○ Europe has 2 fees – associate and full.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>GD queried, if we are getting more, then will Ecsite get less? PF said we are asking for a joint membership with Ecsite. Currently to be a full member of Ecsite, Ecsite gets 70% of the full fee and ASDC 30%. If a UK centre wanted to be a member of both at associate level we anticipate they would have to pay both ASDC and Ecsite.</p> <p>Needs to go back to Ecsite Board – after our Board meeting and we publish our fees in Oct</p>	
<p>Fees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PF: Membership fees that allowed ASDC to be self-sustaining would be prohibitively high for UK centres</li> <li>▪ First we need to prove ourselves.</li> </ul>	
<p>Ecsite Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members asked who from the UK is on the Ecsite board. PF noted Sharon Ament from the Natural History Museum is on the Ecsite board (and no one from the ASDC board is on the Ecsite board).</li> </ul>	
<p>Question raised – what proportion of people join Ecsite-uk because they were part of Ecsite, and how many people joined because they were UK?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Essentially, everyone in the UK had been getting ASDC almost for free (When removing the administrative costs) Financially this is not sustainable</li> <li>▪ People want both – especially the larger centres</li> <li>▪ LC: time will tell but smaller centres will need to make a choice. A lot of people are members of Ecsite because of the conference. ASDC is valued for providing the networking opportunities, collaborative projects etc.</li> <li>▪ NW: Need to make sure we balance the books, and in the meantime look after our membership.</li> </ul>	
<p>GD expressed concern that Since ASDC has been created, it was created to allow us to be stronger but could have the opposite effect. The Frontier report said there is no way of getting any money because there is no measure of impact.</p>	
<p>PF: We are perceived as stronger by BIS. Now as a charity we are in a stronger position to get funds from companies and others. What we can do to make money is projects: delivery. But that competes with our centres</p>	
<b>Members Discussion on funding</b>	
<p>GD's noted: Govt saying no money, needs to be top of our agenda for next 3/4 cycles. He noted</p>	

the position in the US where bail out money was not initially aimed at museums... they were able to change that & get some of the money channeled into the science museum sector.	
Matthew Beck: Govt. modernization fund aimed at 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector charities. Made an approach but was told they were ineligible. Spoke with MPs & this has gone to Angela Smith at the Cabinet Office. Everything we do helps our communities, therefore it is a potential source of funding. GD agreed that we should be making strong demands on this money. Matthew suggested: some money can be in terms of interest free loan.	
NW: Thanked GD and MB 'Nobody's as smart as all of us'. In terms of the board we need to take all the intelligence available and make science work for existing generations. Need to put our strength together.	
<b>Trustee Elections</b>	
In its previous guise Ecsite-uk had a board of elected committee members. For transparency and openness, each of these committee members is now standing for re-election to the ASDC board of trustees. There are 13 spaces available. In addition 2 new nominees were put forward; Dr Ian Griffin and Dr Robin Holgate.  Members appointed the following as Trustees of ASDC: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nick Winterbotham, Thinktank</li> <li>2. Peter Trevitt, Techniquest</li> <li>3. Goery Delacote, At-Bristol</li> <li>4. Heather Mayfield, Science Museum</li> <li>5. Ian Griffin, Science Oxford</li> <li>6. Leigh-Ann Stradeski, Eureka! The National Children's Museum</li> <li>7. Phil Winfield, Intech</li> <li>8. Robin Holgate, MOSI</li> <li>9. Robin Hoyle, Glasgow Science Centre</li> <li>10. Vicky Brightman, The Horniman Museum</li> <li>11. Anne Finnie, Independent Consultant</li> <li>12. Judith Harvey, W5</li> <li>13. Sean Gaffaney, Independent Consultant</li> </ol> Dr Penny Fidler is the company secretary	
NW offered congratulations to those who have joined the Board for this 1 <sup>st</sup> time. Everything to play for at this point – we've made ourselves into a charity and a body & there's no doubt about the energy & enthusiasm we have, and the need for what science centres and museums do.	
LC requested that those standing for election must in future be present at the AGM.	
<b>ASDC Brand &amp; Logo Discussion</b>	
The ASDC team are currently developing the new logo for ASDC and defining the brand personality. Comments were sought from members. Comments noted as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The brand needs to be strong, usable &amp; memorable. Needs to be welcoming &amp; professional.</li> <li>▪ We have added 'UK' as part of our discussion with Europe to make our remit clear (PF).</li> <li>▪ GD noted that logo must be readable in black &amp; white. PF – all things to do with accessibility will be addressed.</li> <li>▪ Options were presented with members voting for Logo's no.'s 6 &amp; 11 This will shape the final ASDC logo</li> </ul>	
<b>VAT</b>	
Matthew Beck noted centres are in for a difficult time ... VAT will go back up in 2010 with chance of further increases. The Deep did a report on VAT – if we can get it down to 5% that would be very helpful & our best scope for getting something out of it.	
PF has spoken to a variety of members on the VAT question and there are a variety of differing viewpoints from members, e.g. related to VAT on capital build. PF will share VAT paper from The	

Deep & people from centres can comment individually.	
<b>AOB</b>	
GD suggested possible route to reinvigorate the rediscover approach, try to bring investment from the foundation line. Convince big players in the funding field, and Government to come up with several years program of reinvesting in science centres, emphasising the investment not the functioning – we need this investment money and should be advocating for it. GD believes it is important to try this again.	
Idea of reinvestment supported by LC – a proposal that’s not relying on Government Member noted: many small centres feel that it’s beyond them putting in applications. Sharing & best practice needs to be encouraged.	
<b>Agenda items to take to the ASDC Board Meeting that afternoon</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Electing a chairperson</li> <li>▪ Attendance at AGMs of potential candidates</li> <li>▪ Making sustainability the no. 1 priority</li> <li>▪ VAT, Gift Aid and economic position</li> <li>▪ Rediscover revisited</li> </ul>	