

Minutes of the 2020 ASDC AGM

Friday 23rd October 2020
Online Meeting held by Zoom
11.00am – 1pm

Present		
Name	Job Title	Organisation
Ben Ward (Chair)	ASDC Chairman	CEO of Winchester Science Centre
Scot Owen	ASDC Treasurer	Centre Manager of Xplore!
Dr Penny Fidler	ASDC CEO	ASDC
Abi Ashton	Space and Physics Project Manager	ASDC
Cait Campbell	Executive Assistant & Project Associate	ASDC
Chris Godden	Director	Blenheim Chartered Accountants
Bryan Davies	Trustee	Catalyst Science Discovery Centre
Tudor Gwynn	Operations and Project Director	Eureka! The National Children's Museum
Stephen Breslin	CEO	Glasgow Science Centre
Linda Conlon	Chief Executive	International Centre for Life
Jo Quinton-Tulloch	Director	National Science and Media Museum
Chas Bishop	CEO	National Space Centre
Alice Robinson	Deputy Executive Chair	NERC
Bridget Holligan	Director of Education and Engagement	Science Oxford
Stephen Pizzey	CEO	Science Projects/Observatory
Dave Poulton	General Manager	The Look Out Discovery Centre
Donna Speed	Chief Executive	We The Curious
Karen Davies	Head of Learning and Resources	Science Museum Group

Welcome, Ben Ward (ASDC Chair)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ASDC Chair, Ben Ward (CEO of Winchester Science Centre) welcomed all members to the AGM and thanked them for joining. Ben acknowledged that these are busy times for many and that it's unusual to have our first Zoom AGM when we hoped to be face-to-face in Glasgow 	
Approval of minutes of last meeting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approval of the board minutes from the previous AGM in November 2019 was invited by Ben No objections were raised Proposed by Bryan and seconded by Karen. Minutes approved. 	
Chair's report, Ben Ward	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ben discussed the importance of Science Centres and the fact that the science and engagement has never been more relevant than during the current crises which impacts the whole world. ASDC as a member organisation has the purpose to help protect the future of Science Centres and in March when centres had to close, this purpose became suddenly more urgent. Ben discussed ASDC's Coronavirus calls which were organised from early March and praised them as an opportunity for the sector to pull together, share best practice and share ideas across the network. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben noted how valuable these have been, as a support group as well as a place of updates and practical resource • Ben spoke about being proud of how the sector has pulled together this year and saw this as a genuine positive of this crisis. • He also reflected on the fragility this crisis has shown in the sector and the opportunity it provides for reflection. • Ben acknowledged the hard work the staff at ASDC have been doing and thanked them for this. • He finished with thanking his fellow trustees for their support and dedication and the ASDC membership for their continuing engagement and the excellent work they do. 	
CEO's summary report of the year, Dr Penny Fidler (ASDC CEO)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ASDC CEO, Dr Penny Fidler introduced her summary by expressing that engaging and involving the public with science has never been more important than in the face of our dual crises of Covid and Climate. • Penny introduced the ASDC vision and mission and spoke of the enormous role Science Centres have to play in tackling these challenges. • The roles of ASDC and activities over the 2019-2020 financial year were outlined as below: <p><u>Support for the Sector and Advocacy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last year (pre-Covid) 25 million people engaged in-person across the ASDC network, this makes the network incredibly powerful • Science centres, museums and discovery centres have been particularly affected by Covid-19 • From early March, ASDC held weekly calls for the network in response to the Coronavirus crisis. Early calls talked about how centres were preparing and calls went on to discuss closures and financial planning. • ASDC led weekly sector wide knowledge exchange sessions through the Coronavirus Calls, undertook large data gathering exercises on 3 occasions to provide data about the sector for press and lobbying and brought the sector together to talk with their MPs, as well as an online and press campaign. • The £30 million Inspiring Science Fund secured by ASDC has twelve beneficiary centres, with many capital projects nearing completion. <p>Noted that the projects below are where ASDC derives 95% of its funding from and are reported on for the financial year covered by the AGM of 2019 - 20</p> <p><u>Current Funded ASDC National STEM Programmes</u></p> <p>Destination Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination Space is working with 13 centres across the UK. ASDC selected and trained these centres in Moon Landing activities (which were delivered last year) and in activities and content around UK Spaceports and Launchers, Satellite Applications, James Webb Space Telescope and ExoMars Mission • ASDC built a portal, Moon50, to host events and resources celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Moon Landing • Exciting years for space exploration and we are training centres with latest content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next year it's likely that the first satellites will be sent into space from new UK spaceports. ○ ExoMars is set to launch in 2022 ○ The James Webb Space Telescope is scheduled for launch in autumn 2021 • Spaceports in Communities is probably the most affected of ASDC programmes by Covid-19. It aims to reach rural and remote communities across Scotland and UK near potential spaceports. <p>Three other ASDC Diversity and Inclusion Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Your Universe, Phase 4, works with families in the 40% most deprived regions of the UK. It highlights the importance of equitable partnership and has produced new evaluation tools. 	

- Science Capital in Practice, as part of The Science Engagement Academy with the Science Museum Group is reaching 15 centres.
- ASDC is on the National Forum for Public Engagement with STEM which has representatives from all the major funders. ASDC is running an audience research programme with them, funded by UKRI to better understand our underserved audiences.

ASDC Climate and Environmental Programmes

- COP26 will be the huge environmental conference to be held in Glasgow in 2021.
- ASDC have been funded by the Scottish Government to create a Climate Hub website similar to the Moon50 website.
- Operation Earth 2 with NERC is underway. Contracts were signed just before lockdown and this programme aims to reach communities of those not engaged with the programme before.
- ASDC has worked with artist Luke Jerram on Earth and Moon artworks. The Moon reached more than 10 million people and was at Glastonbury and Strictly Come Dancing. We also created with Luke Jerram a Mars Artwork funded by UK Space Agency and STFC.

Summary 2019-2020

- The ASDC staff team is currently 4.2
- Excellent board of trustees
- Reserves at 31st March 2020 were £293,840
- Income was £512,000 and most of this is from projects
- Income from membership around £30,000

Other activities related to coronavirus

- In addition to the weekly sector wide knowledge exchange calls, and collating evidence and data from the sector of need and financial position, we also established the Science Centres for our Future campaign to call on government for more financial support of the sector as a result of the Coronavirus crisis and this has been a network-wide effort.
- In autumn, an open letter was written to the prime minister and signed by 150 of the leading lights of British science including Sir Venki Ramakrishnan, Major Tim Peake and Professor Lord Robert Winston.

Presentation and consideration of annual accounts for 2019/20, Chris Godden (ASDC Finance Director) and Scot Owen (ASDC Treasurer and Centre Manager of Xplore!)

- Please see full details are in the accompanying Annual Accounts.
- Chris Godden and Scot Owen presented the accounts for 2019-2020.
- Income for this financial year was £512,268 and expenditure was £530,681 (net deficit £18,413)
- Reserves were £293,840 which is lower than last year but still well above the agreed action level of £130,000.
- Income from membership (£30,880) dropped slightly from previous year though these remain largely stable around £30,000.
- The small amount for governance (£1,300) includes independent examination of accounts and formal processes.
- Reserves are relatively stable over the past few years with a large increase in 2015-16 and a small drop across the past 4 years.
- Ben thanked Chris and Scot for presenting these finances and asked that any questions regarding them be asked at the end.

Introduction to the current Trustees of ASDC, Ben Ward (ASDC Chair)	
<p>Introductions to trustees present included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scot Owen, Centre Manager, Xplore!, formerly Techniquest Glyndwr • Chas Bishop, CEO, The National Space Centre • Stephen Breslin, Chief Executive, Glasgow Science Centre • Hermione Cockburn, Dynamic Earth • Bryan Davies, Catalyst Science and Discovery Centre • Karen Davies, Head of Learning Research and Resources, Science Museum Group • Tudor Gwynn, Operations and Projects Director, Eureka! The National Children’s Museum • Alison Robinson, Deputy Executive Chair, NERC • Donna Speed, Chief Executive, We The Curious • Ben Ward, CEO, Winchester Science Centre & Planetarium 	
Trustee Elections	
<p>Ben Ward introduced the trustees retiring by rotation and standing for re-election and invited them to introduce themselves and share their ambitions for the board and the sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda Conlon, Chief Executive, Centre for Life who noted that it has never been more necessary to have an engaged board than during this time of unprecedented crisis. In twenty years the sector has been unable to demonstrate our value so she is keen to stay on and be part of that. • Bridget Holligan, Director of Education and Engagement, Science Oxford who noted she has always loved Science and Discovery Centres which are unique environments and have a special place in our culture. She also referenced wanting to make sure that the value of Science Centres is properly recognised while making sure that small centres continue to be represented and heard within the network. • Ben Ward, CEO, Winchester Science Centre. Ben noted he took over the Chair from Chas a year ago and has enjoyed his time as chair despite not being the easiest of times. He suggested that the sector has a ‘fight on our hands’ and would like to stay on the board and see this journey through. <p>Ben introduced a new trustee standing for election:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Quinton-Tulloch, Director of National Science and Media Museum in Bradford. Jo noted she was keen to join the board to represent the Science Museum Group. She spoke about the importance of the work of Science Centres in the UK and her own interest in science. Jo is keen to join the board to work towards more diversity in the sector, looking at the colossal challenges because of the pandemic and retaining focus and purpose. <p>The following Trustees were re-elected to the ASDC board by a vote of the membership present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda Conlon • Bridget Holligan • Ben Ward • Jo Quinton-Tulloch was elected to the ASDC board for the first time. <p>Ben noted the following trustees who are standing down from their current positions and thanked them for their contributions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lauren Deere moved onto another role during the year and stepped down • Karen Davies is now stepping down from the board. Thank you for their wonderful service 	

<p>Members raising issues formally for discussion within the AGM</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donna asked what opportunities there are for centres for combine forces for buying power in order to save money. • Penny noted ASDC had a deal with an insurer for many years and renewable energy companies had been investigated for this previously. Suggested bringing together a group to discuss this. 	
<p>Donna, Tudor and Ben will meet to discuss opportunities to combine Buying Power of centres</p>	<p>Donna</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen asked about the strategic direction of ASDC though Covid-19 and beyond particularly as the engagement landscape shifts towards digital engagement and web things. • Ben agreed it was timely for a collective step back and reflection on strategy. • Penny raised the concern that that ASDC have been using staff resource to support Science Centres a lot during Covid as they had little access to public funds at this critical time, but supported museums much less. She raised the concern that there a future risk of ASDC becoming less relevant to Museums because of this. • ASDC have won a grant from Wellcome which will include grants for digital engagement. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Pizzey asked if travelling exhibitions might be somehow represented within ASDC. This aspect of many centres has been very affected this year. • Ben and Penny agreed this was an interesting consideration and worth follow up. 	
<p>Ben to send follow-up email about including Outreach within ASDC</p>	<p>Ben</p>
<p>Stephen Pizzey and ASDC to consider leading a session about this.</p>	<p>Stephen P.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chas raised the wider society response to Science Centres and the fact that they have been considered desirable rather than essential. Asked what we have learnt from recent interactions with stakeholders about why we are seen this way and how we could shift this perception. • Ben agreed this was a very important point which would be tackled in upcoming board meetings. 	<p>ASDC Board</p>
<p>Lessons learned and reflections on how to shift the perception of Science Centres to be raised at future board meetings.</p>	<p>Ben</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben asked whether there was an appetite for a digital national conference. • AGM discussed this and agreed that people get comfort and learning from coming together and sharing with others, particularly in current unsettled times. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben asked about people management through this challenging period, particularly referencing working practices and wellbeing. • Penny highlighted that large and increased workloads have impacted all ASDC staff well-being. She highlighted that in this current financial year ASDC has not had a drop in income. We are still delivering everything we were delivering pre-covid, with all the work that incurr. However we now have large additional workloads in 2 areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renegotiating every national STEM programme with funders and discussing options and opportunities with each science centres for every one of the 60 grant programmes we have running in partner Science centre. 2. Adding national lobbying and press, and national calls on top of the full ASDC project workload • She highlighted Donna led ASDC staff in a wellness session which is going to be followed up and ASDC are taking time to look at processes and procedures to streamline work. Where workload is more manageable there is more time to look after each other. 	
<p>Close of AGM Then followed an informal members discussion not recorded in the AGM minutes.</p>	