



## ASDC AGM Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 10.30am

Venue: Glasgow Science Centre, 50 Pacific Quay, Glasgow G51 1EA

<b>AGM Panel Presenting</b>		
Shaaron Leverment	CEO	ASDC
Stephen Breslin	ASDC Chair of trustees, CEO of	Glasgow Science Centre
Hermione Cockburn	ASDC trustee/honorary secretary & Scientific Director	Dynamic Earth
<b>Present</b>		
Victoria Denoon	ASDC trustee & Head of Visitor Experience	W5 Science and Discovery Centre
Bryan Snelling	ASDC trustee & CEO	Aberdeen Science Centre
Chas Bishop	ASDC trustee & CEO	National Space Centre
Donna Speed	ASDC deputy chair & CEO	We The Curious
Jo Quinton Tulloch	ASDC trustee & Director	National Science & Media Museum
Jennifer Shufflebotham	Learning & Access Manager	ThinkTank
James Summers	Head of Projects	Techniquist
Chris Dunford	Head of Sustainable Futures	We The Curious
Andrew Farrer	Head of Programmes and Delivery	Cambridge Science Centre
Mark Bishop	CEO	Dynamic Earth
Toby Watley	Director of Collections	ThinkTank
Robin Hoyle	Director of Science	Glasgow Science Centre
Emily Fisk	Centre Manager	Science Oxford
Alice Mills	Co-Founder/Director	Exeter Science Centre
Natalie Whitehead	Co-Founder/Director	Exeter Science Centre
Abi Ashton	Public Engagement Manager	STFC
Vicky Hull	Office and Projects Administrator	ASDC
<b>Apologies</b>		
Bryan Davies	Trustee	Catalyst Science Discovery Centre
Linda Conlon	CEO	International Centre for Life
Tudor Gwynn	Operations and Projects Director	Eureka!
Scot Owen	ASDC Treasurer and Director of	Xplore! Science Centre
Bridget Holligan	Director of Education and Engagement	Science Oxford
Jenni Chambers	Head of Public Engagement and Skills	STFC
Chris Godden	Financial Director	Blenheim Accounting / ASDC

<b>Welcome</b>
Stephen Breslin welcomed everyone and expressed his thanks for their time. Acknowledgement was given to the ASDC team for all their hard work and achievements over the last year considering their limited capacity, and he expressed thanks to Shaaron in particular for a smooth transition with her taking on the role of Chief Executive.
<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b>
These were accepted without any comments or objections.
<b>CEO Report</b>
Shaaron Leverment reported that the current membership is very strong with the largest subscription to date of 44 members including new members: Dark Space Planetarium, National Stone Centre and Oriel Science.

There is also a new membership level called Associate Members which is for commercial organisations that wish to support ASDC and gain visibility within the membership. There are currently 5 members of staff within the team.

ASDC vision, mission and values still stand. The team have continued to support the membership with online and in-person events including CEO & senior leader breakfast meetings, members forums, ambassador meetings, staff wellbeing meetings. The Ambassador network has strengthened providing a greater reach within membership. There has been increased engagement through digital platforms such as LinkedIn, the newsletter, and portals such as the accessibility website. Projects have been chosen to align with vision, mission and values and these included: EYU4, Project Inspire, Destination Space, Operation Earth, Equity @ Ecsite. All projects during 2021-2022 completed at March 2023. For the full CEO report, please download [here](#).

Shaaron then spoke about a number of projects that started April 2022 for early reflections, such as Project Lightyear which started in March/April 2022. Project Lightyear was the first time ASDC has worked with Disney. Whilst it was a successful project which over-succeeded in its target reach through the membership, feedback from members has been varied. Some members shared that teams found brand restrictions were stressful to work to under short timelines. It was also felt that the funding provided from Disney to the centres did not reflect the value of work involved.

Stephen Breslin commented that the membership should also reflect on the vision, mission and values as well as future priorities, as it is critical that they resonate with the whole membership. These can be put in writing to the ASDC Team.

#### **Future priorities**

Shaaron Leverment presented findings from a survey on what ASDC members value from the membership. In order from the top, these were: networking opportunities, resilience meetings/ongoing connection, being part of national projects, opportunities for CPD, lobbying and the annual conference. 89.5% felt that ASDC did support them in their own mission.

On request, Shaaron shared the areas identified where support was lacking, included improving support on how to get funding for under-represented audiences and 1-2-1 support on writing funding applications, some of which is out of capacity for ASDC.00

Shaaron presented slides to identify the strategic goals and the document can be found [here](#) or a copy requested by contacting [info@sciencecentres.org.uk](mailto:info@sciencecentres.org.uk).

One member queried how lobbying will be approached and what is the goal of that lobbying? Shaaron answered that recognition of science as part of culture and science centres as part of the national infrastructure that delivers to the strategic priorities of government would be the aim. The Chair agreed and said that getting recognition for the sector is key to avoid a recurrence of the lack of funding during the pandemic. A move from 'nice' to 'necessary' within government strategy is part of the goal.

The question was raised on how support can be given in the next wave of difficulties for science centres with increased overheads and it was acknowledged this was a collective responsibility, not just to be left with ASDC to address. However, Shaaron confirmed she is in conversation with Ben Spencer to broker a relationship with Michelle Donelan, now Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport to avoid exclusion of the sector from any future rounds of support funding.

Reflecting on the relationship with Government and any prospective pitch for core funding for ASDC, Chas Bishop suggested that a letter from the membership with multiple signatories might prove more impactful than a letter from ASDC with member letters of support.

#### **Decarbonisation group**

Chris Dunford from We The Curious presented this section. He is bringing together the membership to create a Decarbonisation Group which can work together and share experience, resource and knowledge to maximise achievement and wants the whole membership to participate. The aim of the group is to support those with targets to reach them (with less than 8 years to reach any 2030 targets for decarbonisation) alongside helping organisations understand how to measure carbon emissions across scope 1, 2 and 3, how

to set your target and how to hit that target. Members are encouraged to sign up to the group which can be done by contacting the ASDC team.

### **Annual Accounts**

Shaaron Leverment presented the report provided by the Finance Director (Chris Godden) who was unable to attend. Overall in 2020/21 ASDC spent more money than was received. However, subscriptions are at an all-time high. All reserves at March 2022 were unrestricted. However unrestricted reserves have reduced considerably and if these drop below £100k it will trigger an emergency meeting of the Trustees. The ASDC team are working hard on changing the funding model so that it can rely less on project funding and focus more on maintaining core activities. Ideally this will be 40% of total income, but this will take some time. This approach was approved by the Chair. Comments included that it was encouraging to see funders continue to return to work with ASDC to deliver projects, but to ensure that the reality of ASDC time is reflected within project funding proposals despite presidents that may have been set.

It was agreed that the membership should work together to help ASDC increase core funding through programmes such as the National partnership and associate membership.

Following an examination of the accounts it was confirmed that an audit was not legally required and all members present at the AGM accepted and approved the Financial Directors report and also accepted and approved that the accounts were correct and could be submitted.

### **Re-election of trustees**

Hermione Cockburn reported that the board can have up to 16 Trustees and that there are currently 13 Trustees on the Board. One trustee, Bryan Davies (Catalyst) has resigned. He has been on the Board since 2015 and Hermione thanked Bryan on behalf of the membership and Trustees for all his work and contribution during that time. Donna Speed (Deputy Chair) and Scot Owen (Treasurer) have both completed their current term and both requested to be put forward for re-election. It was noted that Scot has in fact reached the maximum term as laid out in the Articles but at the previous Board meeting it was agreed an additional year would be granted whilst a suitable replacement for Treasurer could be recruited.

Donna presented her declaration in person and Hermione read out Scot's declaration on his behalf and all 17 members present raised their hands for both trustees to remain in post.

Abi Ashton (STFC and formerly ASDC) noted that Donna's wellbeing support and commitment to the ASDC team during the pandemic was hugely appreciated.

Recruitment for the remaining trustee posts will now begin, with an aim to identify gaps in the skills matrix of existing trustees and an Extraordinary General Meeting which will be held on 7th December 2022 where presentations will be made and new trustees appointed. They will then be invited to attend their first Board meeting in January 2022.

### **Amended Articles**

The updated Articles presented have been changed to allow diversification of the Board of Trustees so that anyone who is keen and willing can apply, not just those within the ASDC membership. The wording has also been updated to modernise them. There were no objections from those present so the amended. Articles will be submitted to the Charities Commission.

### **Date of next meeting**

There is an Extraordinary General Meeting at 10.00am on 7<sup>th</sup> December which will be held online. The next Annual General Meeting will be held in September 2023 at the annual National Conference in Belfast (W5).

### **Close of meeting**

With no further business the meeting was brought to a close.