



ASDC AGM Meeting Minutes

10.30am Thursday 28th September 2023

Venue: W5 Science and Discovery Centre, 2 Queens Quay, Belfast BT3 9QQ

AGM Panel Presenting		
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
Present		
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
Tudor Gwynn	ASDC Trustee & Operations and Projects Director	Eureka!
Jenni Chambers	ASDC Trustee & Head of Public Engagement and Skills	STFC
Scot Owen	ASDC Treasurer and Director of	Xplore! Science Centre
Bridget Holligan	ASDC Trustee & Director of Education and Engagement	Science Oxford
Sheila Kanani	ASDC Trustee & Outreach and Diversity Officer	Royal Astronomical Society
Laurence Butler	Museum Manager	Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum
John Bull	Chief Executive Officer	Cambridge Science Centre
Andrew Kensley	Head of Education and Outreach and Training	Science Oxford
Michael Burton	Director	Armagh Observatory and Planetarium
Hannah Matterson	Operations and Marketing Director	Kielder Observatory
Roddy Skinner	Carbon Manager	We The Curious
Megan Sanders	Enabler	Eureka Science + Discovery
Samantha Jones	Belonging Manager	We The Curious
Eleanor MacDonald	Astronomer & Science Communicator	Kielder Observatory
Andrew Farrer	Head of Programmes and Delivery	Cambridge Science Centre
Mark Bishop	CEO	Dynamic Earth
Natalie Whitehead	Co-Founder/Director	Exeter Science Centre
Cait Campbell	Project Manager	ASDC
Vicky Hull	Business Manager	ASDC

Apologies		
Donna Speed	ASDC Trustee Deputy Chair & CEO	We The Curious
Jo Quinton Tulloch	ASDC Trustee & Director	National Science & Media Museum
Savita Willmott	ASDC Trustee & Chief Executive	The Natural History Consortium
Hassan Joudi	ASDC Trustee & Chartered Engineer	WSP
Linda Conlon	ASDC Trustee & CEO	International Centre for Life
Chris Godden	Financial Director	Blenheim Accounting / ASDC

Welcome

Stephen Breslin welcomed attendees and thanked them for weathering Storm Agnes. All trustees present were introduced and Victoria Denoon was thanked for hosting the meeting at W5.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting held at Glasgow Science Centre on Wednesday 28th September 2022 were accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting without any comments or objections.

CEO Report

Shaaron Leverment presented on the CEO report circulated in advance which laid out the vision mission and goals built upon from the last AGM. ASDC membership is strong and growing along with Associate Members and National Partners who are an important part of that growth. The same staff structure is in place with a slight amendment to the job roles. Project Director Kierann Shah resigned in July 2023.

ASDC Articles were amended in 2022 to allow diversification of the board and three new trustees were appointed in December 2022 at the Extraordinary General Meeting. These were Savita Willmott, Hassan Joudi and Sheila Kanani.

Projects update

Cait Campbell presented an update of ASDC projects over the previous year. These included Disney Lightyear, EYU4 Legacy, STFC Valuing Inclusion, Bold Futures, Mindsets + Missions, Destination Space Interim and Our World From Space. This included the announcement of the successful grantees for Mindsets + Missions which included 4 science centres, Wonderseekers, Dynamic Earth, Xplore! And Kielder Observatory.

Decarbonisation group

Roddy Skinner (Carbon Manager at We The Curious) presented. The Decarbonisation Group is jointly run by himself and Cait Campbell (ASDC Sustainability Manager). It began in 2022 driven by Chris Dunford (Head of Sustainable Futures at We The Curious) with an aim to bring members together, pool knowledge and resources, share challenges and successes etc. The focus is on the operations side of running large buildings, including how to measure impact including impact on building exhibits; setting targets and working on hitting those targets.

Recordings and information on all sessions held so far are available and can be accessed through contacting the ASDC team. Approximately half the membership have joined the Group so far and it would be hugely beneficial to improve and retain attendance. ASDC are committed to continuing the group and asked for feedback on how they can make it more relevant for members.

Future priorities

Shaaron Leverment reported. A membership survey is being designed and will be launched towards the end of 2023 to gain a full understanding of members, their business models and challenges. The survey will allow ASDC to assist the membership with future goal setting and share insights.

ASDC aimed to achieve a more suitable balance of core:project funding to allow for ASDC growth (e.g. 40% core funding 2024-2025). Currently shifted we have reached 20% with some strands (e.g.

sector CPD, being less profitable). The team continue to look at other ways to grow membership including commercial opportunities and diversification of the membership. ASDC is also working to achieve more significant strands of core funding from charities and foundations.

Shaaron thanked Stephen Breslin (Chief Executive at Glasgow Science Centre) and Victoria Denoon (Head of W5) for hosting ASDCs largest conferences to date in 2022 and 2023. She also reported that 2024 may be on a smaller scale.

Chas Bishop asked what ASDC felt its formal role is, in terms of membership shared challenges such as aging buildings and estates. Can ASDC help with identifying any incentive schemes which could be collectively taken advantage of by the membership. As so many centres are in different situations, it is not an issue for all members and therefore is it appropriate for ASDC to spend resource on this issue? Stephen recommended this topic be added to the agenda for a meeting of the Board of Trustees. Shaaron stated that the forthcoming survey will find shared challenges such as this, but that this topic should also be covered at the CEO meeting in April 2024.

Annual accounts

Scot Owen presented his final report as Treasurer before Tudor Gwynn takes on the role. The total income of £543,376 is up from last year and expenditure is slightly down. Subscriptions are a very positive point in the income streams. Project income fluctuates year to year. Expenditure often has the biggest change through the changing cost of provision of services. Reserves are up overall but unrestricted reserves are slightly down on the previous year. Scot offered his thanks to Corrigan Associates who undertake the independent examination of the accounts and Chris Godden for his financial direction and support of ASDC. He also thanked Shaaron and the team for keeping costs under control and for an improved financial position to the previous year. The board recommend that the accounts are accepted, and 13 hands were raised in the vote for a large majority approval.

Stephen thanked Scot for his trustee support over last 10 years with extra thanks for being treasurer more recently. He also thanked Linda Conlon who was not present. She has been Chair of the Board in the past and served many terms since ASDC began.

Trustee elections

Hermione Cockburn reported. Two trustees were standing for re-election and two were stepping down, Linda Conlon and Scot Owen and this left three positions available. With key trustees leaving this year it was recognised that specific roles would need to be recruited to ensure a balanced board that reflected the membership. This included the need for Welsh representative, individuals from small centre and/or museum representation. Therefore, there was no large scale external recruitment for trustees, and a pre-selection from membership applications had taken place. Three new trustees, recommended by the Board, presented for an acceptance vote at the AGM.

Re-election: Bridget Holligan presented her declaration in-person and Jo Quinton Tulloch provided a pre-recorded declaration and they received a large majority vote to remain in post.

Election of new trustees: Gareth McTiffin provided a pre-recorded declaration. Laurence Butler and John Bull attended in-person, and both presented their declarations. Each candidate received a large majority vote from members present and were accepted into post.

Close of meeting

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