

Stargazing Grants

Grant application and information

Deadline for Applications 21 February 2012
www.sciencecentres.org.uk/projects/stargazing

The UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC), in partnership with the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) is offering small grants of £1,500 to science and discovery centres to facilitate stargazing events and activities across the UK.

The grants are specifically to enable ASDC members to work together with their local 'Dark Sky Discovery' teams, for example by bringing activities to their Stargazing Events, or to run events with them at your centres or via outreach.

The 'Dark Sky Discovery' Project

Launched in October 2011, Dark Sky Discovery (DSD) is a pioneering new national and regional partnership of astronomy and environmental organisations led by the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC). The partnership leader is Dan Hillier based at STFC's Royal Observatory Edinburgh Visitor Centre.

This recently launched network brings together national and local astronomy groups with community groups, open space organisations and schools to help people of all ages explore and enjoy the night sky. The partnership is very keen to work with Science and Discovery Centres, museums and their multitude of planetaria, and ASDC is therefore offering these stargazing grants.

Whilst a very dark sky is preferable, lots of urban areas are still great for stargazing, and it can even be done in the day time to observe the sun...

For more information about the Dark Sky Discovery project, visit www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk

Goal of these Stargazing grants

These grants are a partnership between STFC and ASDC, with the specific goal of **'Supporting the Dark Sky Discovery project across the UK by creating local and regional partnerships between the science and discovery centres and Dark Sky Discovery partners to maximise the opportunities for the UK public to engage with the stars'**.

Clearly there is a great deal of overlap with the indoors and outdoors activities already going on in science and discovery centres and their planetaria across the UK. These grants are to enable you to join up with those running outdoor astronomy events and see how you can complement one another.

In particular ASDC members could bring considerable expertise in delivering engaging astronomy-related hands-on activities and events, as well as relationships with diverse audiences to supplement the astronomical equipment and expertise that is already within the Dark Sky Discovery partnerships.

What activities can the grants be used for?

For this programme ASDC members around the UK can apply for small grants of £1,500 to pay for staff time, travel or any other costs to enable them either:

1. To partner with the Dark Sky Discovery groups to run stargazing events and activities at science centres or via outreach. Activities might, for example, include star parties, meet the astronomer, telescope workshops, sidewalk stargazing, working with girl guides and scout groups, planetaria shows and other activities bringing in research astronomers and amateur astronomers from the Dark Sky Discovery group.
2. Or, to assist with established Dark Sky Discovery events. This might for example include bringing your public engagement expertise and hands-on materials outside to support a Dark Sky Discovery event, especially important to make a success of stargazing events even if the sky turns cloudy.

In both cases we would ask you to be looking for opportunities to continue this partnership into the future.

How to find your local Dark Sky Discovery group

ASDC, in partnership with the Dark Sky Discovery project, have provided you with the contact details of the nine regional leads in England, and the lead partner in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for you to get in touch. They have been briefed to expect a call and their details are at the end of this document.

ASDC will also offer a **grant application conference call at 11.30pm on February 9th** to help make your application a success – just dial in and we can advise you. Dan Hillier who is leading the Dark Sky Discovery Project will also be on the call and can tell you more about the regional teams. Book via our website.

Location! Celebrating city skies... and daytime astronomy

The benefits of seeing a clear, dark unpolluted starry sky are unquestionable, but a surprising number of inspiring astronomical experiences can be provided, even from city centre locations. At night even a small telescope reveals craters on the moon and the key features of brighter planets; the phase of Venus, Mars' polar caps, the moons and belts of Jupiter, and of course Saturn's glorious rings are easy to see, through even the most light-polluted skies.

You'll need to find a place with good sightlines, no direct lights and public access (amongst other criteria). For example, centres might choose to host stargazing activities on their roofs, in local parks or via outreach into darker urban areas. Of course, some ASDC centres are also based in rural areas and have great access to dark skies on their doorsteps.

And of course in the daytime, when our centres are at their busiest, our nearest star can be studied both by projection and using special telescopes equipped with solar filters which enable viewers to see sunspots and dynamic prominences. Please note: grants are primarily for stargazing in the dark, although they can also involve a small component of daytime observing if you wish.

Involving Research Astronomers or Space Scientists

Whilst the focus of the project is on developing relationships with the Dark Sky Discovery Project, we would be delighted if you would also like to involve a research astronomer or space scientist from your local university in a way that suits you. Phone the Press and PR departments of your chosen university and ask them who they would recommend for public engagement, or telephone ASDC for advice.

A Simple Application Process

This is a very quick turn around project with, in most cases, a prepayment of the grant by ASDC. The application is therefore short and simple. We understand that this involves developing new relationships with the dark sky teams so we are happy that you might not have every detail finalised at the time of application. We would however need evidence that the details had been finalised by March 30 in order for us to pay you the grant. Applications are invited from all ASDC members.

The ten selected centres would:

- Give a range of ASDC members in rural and urban locations
- Support centres with a range of experience in this area, including those who have done little in the way of stargazing before but are keen to develop in this area
- Include both outreach events and those at or near the science centres
- Include some centres who attract larger numbers to these events
- Demonstrate the desire to share ideas with others doing stargazing across the UK
- Be very keen to bring their experience of working with diverse community groups to this project

Training

ASDC, in partnership with the Dark Sky Discovery team based at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh, will offer flexible training and support to the 10 centres who have been awarded the grants.

The format of this training will be decided upon in relation to the needs of the 10 participating centres. However, we would like to offer all successful grantees the opportunity to attend a free of charge

'Stargazing Academy' on March 8th 2012 at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh specifically designed for this project. At this academy we will give you a stargazing masterclass, discuss a variety of formats that work for the events and train you on a variety of activities you can use at your stargazing activities as well as sharing your collective activities with other centres. The Stargazing Academy is likely to run from lunchtime on Thursday 8 March to the early part of the dark evening to include the potential for real stargazing and to facilitate ease of travel to Edinburgh. Travel costs for attending this day are eligible to be taken from the £1500 grant, and we will pay for your food at the training. For anyone who cannot attend the training academy, we can offer a series of informal conference calls and online resources.

Resources and Activity sheets

There are many ideas and resources for Hands-on activities on The Dark Sky Discovery website: www.Darkskydiscovery.org.uk. In addition, the BBC Stargazing Live programme broadcast on 16 - 18 January 2012 and filmed at Jodrell Bank, has a host of resources such as audio guides to the night sky and star maps which are free to use: www.bbc.co.uk/tv/features/stargazing/activity-cards.shtml

BBC Stargazing Live also publicised the Dark Sky Discovery partnership and resulted in over a million hits to The Dark Sky Discovery website.

ASDC, in collaboration with Dark Sky Discovery, will also provide training for centres to run a variety of low-cost hands-on activities that work well at stargazing events.

Reporting

All ten participating centres will be asked to submit a 1-2 page report with a couple of photos telling us about their event, for example who attended, what they did, how many people took part and how they might work with Dark Sky Discovery into the future. ASDC would then put this onto our website and share it with STFC (note: this final report must be proofed and web-ready and all images must be cleared for use on our website).

Grant Payment

The £1,500 grant will be paid to your centre on receipt of a claim form dated 30 March 2012. Please note that we have discussed this project with HMRC and consider this project and these grants outside the scope of VAT. If you need to charge VAT it must form part of the £1,500 and cannot be additional to the £1,500.

We are happy that this claim might be before you have delivered your event. No grants can be claimed after March 30 2012.

The grant agreement with ASDC will comprise of this grant information document in combination with the grant application forms you submit specifying the detail of what you will deliver.

Timescales and deadlines

Activities would need to take place between March 1 and Sunday June 10 2012. This timeframe includes the Easter Holidays, National Science and Engineering Week, the May bank holidays, the Queens Diamond Jubilee (June 5th) and the transit of Venus on June 5-6th 2012.

The deadline for applications is midnight on Tuesday February 21 2012.

The deadline for completing activities is midnight on June 10 2012.

Stargazing Project schedule

January 30:	Grants launched to ASDC members
February 9:	11.30 am: Grant Application Conference Call. ASDC will outline the project and what the grants are for, and you can ask any questions. Dan Hillier who runs the Dark Sky Discovery Project will be on the line to answer any questions and suggest ideas about that side of the project. Details on our website.
February 21:	Deadline for applications (midnight)
February 24:	Notification of all 10 successful applicants by email
March 8 2012:	Training session at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh – all invited
March 30 2012:	All grant claims from centres received for payment by ASDC
March 1 - June 10:	Delivery of your events and activities
June 10 2012:	Completion of all delivery of grant-related activities across the UK
June 14 2012:	Submission of final edited reports from participating centres
<u>Relevant 2012 dates:</u>	
March 9 – 18:	National Science and Engineering week
March 25 th :	Clocks change to BST
April 2 nd :	Easter Holidays begin (Easter day 8 th April)
June 5th - 6 th	Transit of Venus (visible at sunrise, 4-5am)
June 5th	Queens Diamond Jubilee (Bank Holiday)

The Application Form

Anyone considering applying is invited to take part in a collaborative telephone meeting on 9 February to ask questions and explore ideas. This is to make it easier for you to make a successful application and is not compulsory.

Your Name:

Organisation:

Phone number(s):

Email:

Please tell us:

The name of your Dark Sky Discovery partner, and their region:

Approximate date of event(s):

Who is your audience? eg: public, families, schools:

Please describe the event or activities in a few paragraphs:

What is the nature of the activities and expertise you would bring?

What is the nature of the activities and expertise the Dark Sky Discovery partners would bring?

How many people do you expect to engage (and specify any social networking that would happen during and afterwards)?

We would be delighted if you also involved a research astronomer or space scientist from a local University. If you will, please tell us where are they from and their name if you have it.

Your Overview budget

Description	Amount	Notes
Staff time @ £225 /day How many days and for what?	£0.00	Staff time can include developing the relationship with Dark Sky Discovery group, event planning, training, delivery, marketing, learning or any other (please specify)
Other costs	£0.00	For example: bursaries, consumables, travel, flyers, or a one off purchase.
Travel costs to Edinburgh for the Stargazing Academy	£100	For example
TOTAL	£0.00	This cannot exceed £1,500 (including VAT)

Approximate in kind contribution by your centre £.....

For any questions, please do call us at the ASDC office on T: 0117 915 0184

For further details: www.sciencecentres.org.uk/projects/stargazing

Please send applications by 21 February to Dr Michaela Livingstone at info@sciencecentres.org.uk

Mark the email as 'Stargazing grant'

Or send applications by post to arrive by 21 February **The Association for Science and Discovery Centres, The Watershed, 1 Canon's Road, Harbourside, Bristol, BS1 3TX.**

Dark Sky Discovery contacts

Country/region	Contact
Scotland	Dave Chalton Royal Observatory Edinburgh Visitor Centre 0131 668 8434 Dave.chalton@stfc.ac.uk
Wales	Allan Trow Dark Sky Wales allan.darkskywales@gmail.com
Northern Ireland	Robert Hill NI Space Office http://www.armaghplanet.com/html/niso.html
NE England	Pete Edwards 0191 3343782 physics.outreach@durham.ac.uk
NW England	Alan Brown STFC Daresbury Laboratory 01925 603488 alan.brown@stfc.ac.uk
Yorkshire and Humberside	Martyn Chesters or Helen Barraclough Space Connections 0845 652 2406 info@spaceconnections.net
West Midlands	Tony Fox Cannon Hill Park cannonhillfriend@aol.com
East Midlands	To be confirmed, please contact: Dan Hillier Royal Observatory Edinburgh Visitor Centre 0131 668 8406 Dan.hillier@stfc.ac.uk
SW England	Emma Dennis Exmoor National Park 01398 323665 EDennis@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk
East of England	Hugh Jones Hertfordshire University 01707 284426 Email h.r.a.jones@herts.ac.uk
South of England	Jo Lewis STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory 01235 445950 jo.lewis@stfc.ac.uk
London	To be confirmed, please contact: Dan Hillier Royal Observatory Edinburgh Visitor Centre 0131 668 8406 Dan.hillier@stfc.ac.uk