

UK COSPAR National Committee

Eleventh Meeting: Opened July 2011

This meeting of the UK COSPAR National Committee was opened in July 2011, with Minutes taken by Richard Harrison.

1. Minutes of the 10th Meeting and Review of Actions

The Minutes of the 10th Meeting distributed to the Committee on 14 July 2011, and will be posted on the UK Website. Please note that the UK Website, which is hosted at RAL is awaiting updates to conform to STFC website policy and format. Apologies for the delays in this that have been out of our control. All actions had been completed or are covered in the minutes, below. However, we note that the main headline for the 10th meeting was the discussion about the possible invitation for a COSPAR Assembly in Manchester or Liverpool. Peter and I did do a site visit, as most of you will know, and we were impressed by the venues and the planning. However, the impact on the new space agency, which would need to take on the role as official host, and the liability, was too much at this time. We need to allow the agency to become more established and to discuss ideas for a future assembly extensively with the agency over the coming years. However, the interest in the Manchester and Liverpool areas has been noted and we expect to remain in touch with them.

Action: RAH to establish updated website and inform the Committee

2. Committee Membership

The Committee membership is formally those UK people that are actively involved in COSPAR Scientific Commissions, Panels and other activities, In July, we confirmed the up to date membership as the following:

- Peter Willmore [University of Birmingham] – UK National Rep to COSPAR
- Richard Harrison [Rutherford Appleton Laboratory] – Chair UK COSPAR National C'ttee; National Adhering Inst. contact; General Editor Space Research Today
- Chris Argent – Executive Editor - COSPAR bulletin Space Research Today
- Bob Bingham [Rutherford Appleton Laboratory] – Vice Chair – SC H
- Chris Castelli [UK Space Agency] – UKSA Rep. On Committee
- Andrew Coates [Mullard Space Science Laboratory] – SCOSTEP Rep.
- Mike Cruise [University of Birmingham] – Chair SC H
- Michael Dacombe [IUCR] - IUCr Executive Secretary/COSPAR Contact Person
- Chris Davis [Rutherford Appleton Laboratory] – Vice Chair – PE
- Manuel Grande [Aberystwyth University] – Intercommission/Panel Liaison
- Louise Harra [Mullard Space Science Laboratory] – Vice-Chair Sub-commission D2/E3
- Williamina Lazaro [IUPAP] -IUPAP Secretary General/COSPAR Contact Person
- David Rees – Chair COSPAR/URSI Task Group on Ref Atmospheres

3. Massey Medal

The Massey medal celebrates a major figure in UK space activities and has traditionally been awarded jointly by COSPAR and the Royal Society. The Royal Society has decided to not continue with this award. Recognising the importance of this award, Peter and I entered into discussion with Ruth Cooper at the Royal Society to explore ways for it to continue. Although the award was administered through the Royal Society, the medals are struck by the Royal Mint for UCL and there is a trust fund which covers the finance.

It was agreed that we should pursue a formula with UCL in which RAL could pick up any administration required. Tony Harker at UCL has confirmed that they would very much like to continue with the award, both to continue to honour Massey's name and to continue to use the money which was collected in the spirit in which it was donated. On the financial side, there is a fair cushion in the trust fund into which the Massey collection was placed, so we can certainly afford to continue the award at the present level of 500 guineas every two years. Ten more medals were struck about four years ago, so we are well set up on that front too. The medals are held by the Royal Mint. Tony checked with Ruth Cooper that we can continue to use the same design of medal. This was queried because the obverse, with Massey's portrait, mentions his links with both COSPAR and the Royal Society, although it doesn't explicitly say anything about a joint Royal Society/COSPAR award. He also noted that in some years time we will need to have another batch of medals struck; we don't know where the copyright lies (maybe with UCL as the Royal Mint's named customer), but the Royal Society confirmed that there would be no objection to striking further medals to this same design.

So, the mechanism from now will be the following: COSPAR will discuss and ratify the recipient with the National Committee. UCL will handle the finances. A cheque would be raised by UCL and forwarded to a representative of COSPAR. We need to decide who should liaise with the Royal Mint over the engraving of the medal. It might be best if UCL did that, so that's it's clear to the Royal Mint who should be invoiced for the engraving.

We need to tread carefully as the next award is processed to ensure that we cover everything, but it looks as though we are on safe ground.

Action: On RAH and APW to maintain liaison with COSPAR HQ, the Royal Society and UCL to ensure that the medal is awarded.

4. COSPAR Awards at Mysore, 2012

Nominations for COSPAR awards were discussed. A nomination for the COSPAR Space Science award was made. Details are not included here because the minutes will appear on the website.