

South Downs Planetarium. Chichester
Annual General Meeting. July 14th 2017
Chairman's Report

There has always been much to celebrate regarding our achievements at the South Downs Planetarium in Chichester. The performance for the year ending 30th April 2017 is no exception, it is remarkable and I would like to take this opportunity to share just a few of our outstanding results.

We have broken a number of previous records and the most significant being to welcome over 16,000 visitors for the year ending 30th April 2017. We have come close to this figure in previous years but this year we finally reached the ribbon of success, an outstanding result! It is important to note that our guests are not just casual visitors who call in for a short time. They are children, students and adults who receive a presentation in the Dome and, in many cases, extra activities related to space sciences with the Planetarium Team as part of their visit. During term times we delivered 150 of these events for students resulting in a total school audience of around 10,000 Primary and Secondary students. Feedback from schools tells us that these experiences have a very significant impact on the learning of young people. Our two busiest months were December and February with over 3,650 visitors of all ages in these months alone. We are a unique Planetarium in that all of our Performances are led by a live presenter.

We were delighted to launch our new All Dome Video System in the autumn. This bespoke system allows us to project amazing images across the whole Dome and presents a stunning visual experience. The result has been a record number of "Sell Out" Performances. Our audiences have been particularly inspired by our very unique show regarding the planned mission to Mars and how Tim Peake's trip to the International Space Station led the way forward. The Planetarium continues to research, develop and innovate with new approaches to learning in the science subjects for people of all ages. In the past we have successfully hosted Nuffield Students. This year we hosted two young students who were both awarded the highest Gold Standard as a result of their time and project at the Planetarium. Nuffield students are young people with high potential to become leading scientists of the future. We continue to mentor a number of A level students and undergraduates studying science subjects, and indeed some previous students are now working very successfully in the worlds of physics and engineering.

We have continued with a number of higher education courses and programmes including Teacher training. Our collaboration with Chichester and Portsmouth Universities makes a valuable contribution to the education of young students. Our hugely popular Telescope Courses continue to be in demand for all ages and experience. We are very pleased that we have the expertise to deliver these workshops on a regular basis. Perhaps our most unique training is Navigation Training for both the Royal Navy and International Navies. This programme has also grown substantially over the last year. All of our education design and implementation is led by Dr John Mason, MBE. Without his inspiration and endeavour we would not achieve the high standard in all aspects of our learning programmes.

Without doubt the Chichester Planetarium is privileged to have a truly outstanding team of dedicated and skilled Volunteers. They contribute knowledge and expertise in engineering, physics, management, chemistry and teaching to the ongoing success of the Planetarium. All of our success is a direct result of their loyalty, commitment and hard work. None of our achievements would have happened without their generosity.

We have seen a number of improvements made to the building and our site over the last financial year. My thanks must go to the Volunteer Team that has made these initiatives happen.

The South Downs Planetarium in Chichester continues to grow and enhance our reputation both nationally and internationally. Our contribution to science and learning has been valued at a number of conferences and events across the UK. We are proud to be the scientific learning hub for Chichester and West Sussex and will continue to engage people of all ages to understand more about our world and beyond.

Last year we set a target of receiving 200,000 visitors since we opened in 2001. I am delighted to report that we have far exceeded that target with a total number of 214,682 visitors. We are looking forward to ongoing development and new endeavours over the coming months, and maybe a total visitor number that exceeds 230,000!

My fellow Trustees have worked diligently within the guidelines of the Charity Commission, Legislation and the Education Curriculum to ensure our ongoing success. I would like to close with my sincere thanks to them, the Volunteer Team and Management for achieving another very successful year for the South Downs Planetarium.

We have had a truly amazing year and I look forward to another exciting year for us all.

Ann Mills. FRAS. Chairman of the Trustees.
South Downs Planetarium. Chichester.