



Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

Newsletter #38, June 2020

Page 1 of 1

COVID-19: The consequences

During lockdown we have tried to keep in touch with members on-line, and we have managed to hold two on-line committee meetings.

Following our latest committee meeting we are agreed that it is unlikely that we will be able to use the inflatable planetarium for many months. This is because of the “close contact” risk of spreading Covid-19 among visitors and volunteers inside the dome. We have been considering possible ways of continuing our schools visits programme in a socially-distanced way using a 4m flat screen with our planned 4K projection system, and have contacted the schools’ STEM officer to make them aware of the possibility. We will have to wait, however, to see if schools would welcome such a visit under the new regime or not. The damage to achieving charitable aims has been great.

We have also been discussing purchases of 4K equipment: a laptop, a projector and a portable 4m flat screen. This is an expensive undertaking, even with the new Tesco Bags of Help grant, so we’re not hurrying. Fortunately we have found a local small company specialising in mobile cinema kit so we can hire items from them for evaluation - we’ll keep you informed!

National Astronomy Week November 2020

We’re hoping to join in with NAW in November, with an event in Glentrool. Details are a bit vague at the moment, but please have a look at the NAW website www.astronomyweek.co.uk from time to time over the summer.



ESA Exomars Rover (Photo: ESA)

Although Mars is at its closest to Earth on 13 October, it won’t be high enough to observe properly until the late evening. In November it will be observable in the early evening, even though it’s not quite as close, meaning that children can join in observing sessions. We are planning an early-evening session for visitors together with a Stellarium show in the Glentrool Visitor Centre and (possibly) an online live observing session from our mini-observatory. Exactly when this event happens will depend on Covid-19 restrictions and cloud cover but please pencil it into your diaries for now.

GFAS Membership

We welcome new members and hope that they can help in our outreach work to schools and youth groups. Members can join in our society meetings for free (when they resume, at least) and can borrow GFAS telescopes and other equipment for their own use.

You can email members@gf-astro.org for an application form or download one from the GFAS website www.gf-astro.org.

Subs are unchanged - £25.00 family, £15.00 adult, £0.00 (free) Junior or FTE

National Astronomy Week
14–22 November 2020

Get ready for a
Mars Encounter

www.astronomyweek.org.uk

Royal Astronomical Society
BAA
Society for Popular Astronomy
Tag us at #NAW2020

Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

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Bags of Help

Supported by Kilgallioch Community Fund
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