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Organisation of Public Events

Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines which will allow the safe organisation of outdoor use of the portable telescopes and associated equipment, and to successfully control events which are open to the Public.

It is the responsibility of the Committee to ensure that any sub group follows this procedure whilst organising such events.

Organisation

Prior to any planned event, the Public Events Organiser will review the necessary actions to ensure smooth and safe operations during the event. A volunteer list will be made available for members to complete prior to the event.

Upon completion of the volunteers list the Public Events Organiser (or a nominated deputy) will allocate the position of Event Co-ordinator, the name of which will be passed to the Committee to arrange allocation of a Society access card if required. The Committee will only allow access to appropriately qualified members, eg Telescope/Dome usage.

It is the responsibility of the Committee to arrange for all necessary access to the appropriate Event Co-ordinator for the duration of the event. This may include an extended period due to allowing protracted storage of wet equipment and will be left to the discretion of the Committee

The Event Co-ordinator will assign various duties amongst the volunteers in order to cover all areas. The two key areas are erection and dismantling of the Marquees and car park attendance/Public Control

Prior to the arrival of the public, the Event Coordinator shall ensure that the premises are set up correctly to ensure that visitors' safety is not compromised.

Erection of Large Marquees

The Event Coordinator must consider the immediate and upcoming weather and decide whether it is safe to erect the marquees.

The large marquees require two people to carry them to the area where they are to be erected.

To allow the marquees to be unfolded smoothly and prevent support struts being sprained and damaged, a person should be positioned at each leg. Take care to hold the struts away from the sliding supports thus eliminating finger trapping hazards.

Once the Marquee legs are in position the roof section requires lifting. (at this point it is easier to position the roof over the framework and secure in place). Care must be taken when lifting the support struts to prevent strains and head strikes.

Care must also be taken when depressing the small nodule in the leg which supports the beam once lifted into position. Use a suitable flat object to depress the nodule to prevent finger cuts.

Attach the feet pads and tent pegs appropriately, avoiding use of objects other than the correct size hammer to hammer home the tent pegs.



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Secure the side panels by wrapping around the support legs using Velcro strips supplied. The side panels can be reached prior to extension without the use of steps.

All guy ropes that are used to provide security/support must be positioned clear of walkways.

Dismantling and storage is a direct reversal of the erecting process. Care must be taken when folding the supporting struts against strains when lifting and also finger trapping hazards.

The event co-ordinator will co-ordinate the necessary actions during erection/dismantling and storage procedures.

Lighting

Inspect all electrical equipment for damage before installation.

Overhead Marquee lights must be fastened securely to the Marquee framework.

Electrical mains equipment boxes must be used as frequently as possible reducing the necessity for trailing extension cable use.

All connection sockets must be covered in waterproof plastic or other suitable material when using extension connections. Electric cables shall be positioned where they cannot be damaged or cause a trip hazard. Any cable that has to cross a walkway must be securely covered.

Car Parking

Coxmoor Road has history of vehicles speeding, therefore the setting out of cones and signs must be carried out by at least two people wearing high visibility clothing.

When crossing the road, choose a time when approaching vehicles are not visible, and cross directly, not diagonally.

Cones shall be placed on the grass verges opposite the observatory. The signs shall be placed on the observatory side of the road on the grass verges; the furthest being at the far end of the car park so that the visibility of cars exiting the car park is not hindered. Do not obstruct the public footpath.

The Top car park will be manned by at least two volunteers, both shall wear long sleeve Hi Viz clothing including hivy trousers and be provided with appropriate torches.

The car park attendants will control the ingress and egress of cars and members of the general public; cars must not be directed from off road back onto the highway (otherwise we accept responsibility for any RTA).

Drivers will be instructed to drive slowly and take instruction from the attendant that is guiding vehicles into position. The public can be keen to park as quickly as possible and get to the observatory, however drivers must be instructed to wait clear until other vehicles have finished their manoeuvres.

“Car Park Full” signs will be displayed at the entrance when required. Visitors should be discouraged from parking on the side of the road beyond the immediate area around the observatory, but ultimately, it is their decision, and at their risk.



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Telescope Pad

The telescope pad will be set up by members who have passed the necessary telescope training, unless of course members are using their own equipment, in which case such use will be their own responsibility.

Care will be taken to set up the scopes especially when transporting the scopes from the scope store to the pad, this may require a two person lift and should be assessed by the carrier accordingly.

Set up telescopes so that there is sufficient room between them to allow the public to circulate without tripping over or damaging the telescopes, or associated equipment. Use hazard warning tape or luminescent tape to show the position of tripod legs etc

Make sure that there are at least two sets of small step ladders available for use by young children.

Access to the pad will be controlled by a suitable volunteer to ensure that it does not become overcrowded

It is the responsibility of the accompanying adult to supervise children at all times. Such reminders are posted in and around the Observatory. This does not prevent the Telescope pad volunteers from overseeing and advising on any aspect of safety to the public as deemed necessary

During viewing periods, telescopes must not be left unsupervised.

Building Control

Maintain clear access / egress routes. Ensure building occupancy limits not exceeded. Maximum occupancy of 50, no more than 20 in the dome.

Refreshments

The setting up of hot drinks vending will be undertaken without the transportation of hot water. The hot water dispenser will be stored away from the public and only controlled by members designated by the Event Co-ordinator. Top up hot water will be provided in the refreshment area only and will not be transported from the kitchen area.

Security

Areas where the Public should not be allowed must be taped off with hazard warning tape. All other areas Workshop, Kitchen, sheds etc. should be closed or locked.

Emergency Arrangements

Volunteers with specific roles during an evacuation will undertake these roles in accordance with the Responsibility of Safety Controllers document.

All remaining volunteers will ensure that members of the public leave the immediate area and escort them to the assembly point at the car park



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A Briefing Note To Volunteers Specifically For Solar Viewing

Safety - this must always be your number one priority with solar viewing activities. Any eye damage that may be caused through not taking appropriate precautions may be permanent and it could render a disability to the individual concerned.

Under no circumstances must the telescope be pointed at the sun or used for solar work without the correct procedures being undertaken.

Before the event

- Members are responsible for their own equipment.
- All solar filters must be inspected for damage prior to use. Any equipment that is damaged or suspected of being damaged, must be withdrawn from service immediately and the Events Coordinator notified. The damage must be recorded in the observatory logbook.
- The telescope must at all times have its full end cap in position and the solar filter fixed in place before the telescope is pointed at the sun.
- **Always remove the finder scope or at the very least ensure that it has the lens caps fitted at all times.**
- **When aligning the scope, never look along the edge of your telescope to try to line it up at the sun.**
- **Place safety warnings on the approach to the viewing pad warning of dangers of looking at the sun**

During the event

- **There is the problem of perception on an outreach event that you are allowing the general public to use equipment to look at the sun. You must stress that this is a safely filtered system provided by experienced observers and that they must not try this at home!**
- **Explain [in simple terms] to children or adults how the filters actually work and why we need them.**
- **Never leave a telescope unattended that is pointing at or near the sun.**
- **Always supervise the casual observers and children that are near to instruments that are pointing at the sun.**

Approved By _____ The Committee Issued By _____ Observatory Director