

## Young Astronomers Aims and Objectives

The concept behind the creation of a nationwide *Young Astronomers* organisation was born from a desire to encourage the participation of today's youth in astronomy, in an ongoing attempt to try and attract youngsters into local astronomical societies, many of which have ageing memberships. Without an increase of younger members, the long term sustainability of the astronomical society as we know it is under threat; the ultimate survival rate – if not challenged and addressed – will ultimately result in a large number of societies ceasing to exist.

The generic title *Young Astronomers* was inspired by the need to attract more youngsters into the fold of the West Yorkshire Astronomical Society (based in Pontefract). WYAS members Pam Ward and Les Field, as a direct recognition of the issue and as a direct response to it, formed their own 'Young Astronomers' which, after its commencement in 2018, continues to flourish.

Each of the groups of young people formed as a result of the current scheme would be specifically known by names such as 'York Young Astronomers', 'Bradford Young Astronomers' and so on. This is quite deliberate and is intended to give them their own 'identity' rather than risk coming across as being 'part of something else' and avoiding them being classed as a 'junior section' or similar of the relevant local astronomical society. Each of the *Young Astronomers* groups would be run completely independently of their local astronomical society, and would organise their own meetings, visits and other activities.

With science having a greater impact on today's younger generation, it is vital that the subject of astronomy is not left standing. The fact that astronomy embraces so many other individual areas of science – physics, chemistry, geology, optics and so on – only adds weight to the necessary endeavours of *Young Astronomers* by way of inspiring and educating the next generation, inviting them not just take part in astronomy, but to play an active role in the field as a self-governing entity.

*Young Astronomers* will liaise and cooperate with outreach organisations for mutual benefit and to explore and improve lives through STEM education. Our vision is to provide the tools needed to give young people the skills and knowledge to carry them forward and build upon these in the future.

*Young Astronomers* is intended to be the pre-eminent national astronomy organisation whose remit is to solely promote local groups of *Young Astronomers* and in doing so hopefully, maintain, cherish, and preserve the existence of local astronomical societies, the very cornerstone of amateur astronomy.

Although the individual *Young Astronomers* groups will be scattered across the United Kingdom, it is intended that, operating in the capacity of a support hub/panel, ***Young Astronomers UK*** will provide individual *Young Astronomers* groups with a central resources unit. This will provide an integrated information matrix for all UK-based *Young Astronomers* groups to which they will have free access.

Typical objectives of ***Young Astronomers UK*** are:-

- Acting as a contact point for the general public
- Establishing contacts with astronomy and space agencies such as ESA, NASA, ESO and so on, and bringing the *Young Astronomers* organisation to the attention of other astronomy and space organisations, schools and universities with a view to inviting them, when appropriate, to collaborate on mutually beneficial ideas
- Assisting and advising groups who may want to apply for charitable status
- Helping and advising how groups can obtain funding
- To contact similar organisations to ourselves with a view to exchanging ideas