

October 2026

Dear Fellow,

I am writing to invite you to renew your membership of the Royal Astronomical Society.

Your Society has been incredibly active over the past year, particularly in responding to the proposed cuts to UKRI and STFC funding for astronomy projects and post-doctoral positions. We achieved a measure of success in influencing the proposed allocation of applicant-led funding for astronomy, and we believe that the allocations recently announced by UKRI and STFC are considerably better than they might otherwise have been.

However, as the consequences for individual projects become clear, it is evident that the outlook remains deeply concerning. The latest analysis suggests that the impact on STFC-funded fundamental astronomy projects is around 35 per cent, far greater than the headline 10 per cent reduction in project budgets cited by UKRI. This figure is much closer to the scale of the cuts many feared earlier in the year. These cuts are damaging not only to astronomy, but also to the UK's wider science capability and economic future. Your Society continues to campaign for their reversal and for a sustainable, long-term funding strategy for our disciplines.

The Society's authority does not come from our Royal Charter or our Royal patronage. It comes from you, our Fellows. Your membership gives us the mandate and the credibility to speak on behalf of our disciplines. It is only through your continued support that we can represent the interests of our community effectively.

This year we held a lively National Astronomy Meeting in Birmingham and delivered an excellent programme of Specialist Discussion Meetings. We are reviewing our events portfolio to ensure it continues to meet the needs of Fellows. Council will shortly consider how we can strengthen our membership offering, and we have begun modernising our systems to help us engage more effectively with you and better understand how we can support you.

Our scholarly journals remain a cornerstone of the Society's activities, and we look forward to welcoming Professor Matt Middleton (University of Southampton) as the new Editor-in-Chief of *Monthly Notices*. We've also delivered a successful programme of public engagement and education activities, and we are exploring ways to increase their reach and impact. We continue to work to ensure that opportunities offered through the Society are accessible to all, helping talented people at every career stage to contribute to and benefit from our disciplines.

I am particularly pleased that the Society has tripled the number of Research Fellowships we offer. This year, we will once again provide more than £350,000 in grants and awards, much of it directed towards early career researchers.

None of this work would be possible without your support. By renewing your membership, you help ensure that the Society can continue to champion astronomy and geophysics, support the next generation of scientists, publish world-leading research, and provide a strong voice for our disciplines at a critical time.

Thank you for your support. I hope we can count on your membership for the coming year and look forward to your continued participation in the life of the Society.

Yours faithfully,



Professor Jim Wild, FRAS
President, Royal Astronomical Society