

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held in the NRA Pavilion, Bisley on Friday 13th June 2008 from
5.30pm.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr BWD Richards
Vice Chairman of the General Council:	Prof A.R. Horrocks
Secretary General:	Mr G.W.J. Alger
Members:	49 Registered Members

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

PROCEEDINGS

Attached hereto and initialled by the Chairman of the meeting as a record of the meeting is the report as published in the Journal.

ORDINARY RESOLUTIONS

a. Election of Officers.

- (1) **Re-election of the President.** The Chairman proposed on behalf of The Council that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales KG, KT, GCB, AK, QSD, CD, PC, ADC(P) be re-elected as President.

The Resolution was approved.

- (2) **Election of Vice-Presidents.** The Chairman proposed on behalf of The Council that the existing Vice-Presidents be elected en bloc.

The Resolution was approved.

- b. **Reappointment of the Auditors.** The Chairman proposed on behalf of the Council the re-appointment of Baker Tilly UK Audit LLP as Auditors.

The Resolution was approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2007

The Statement of the Chairman, the Report of the Trustees and the Audited Accounts were received.

CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH AND OPEN FORUM.

Attached at Annex.

Chairman

Annual General Meeting – 13 June 2008

Proceedings

Speech by Bill Richards, Chairman

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. There are no microphone facilities so if you can't hear me please just shout. I would like to welcome you all to my first annual General Meeting of the Association on Friday the 13th June. I hope there are no people amongst you who are superstitious.

I would just like briefly to introduce my colleagues from the NRA who are with me on the platform: Mark Haslakiewicz, our Treasurer; Glynn Alger, Secretary General; Dick Horrocks, vice chairman of the General Council

Our Auditor, Rob Hamlin from Baker Tilly is also in the room and I would ask for your permission for him to remain present as technically if you don't say he can he can't. Thank you very much. I would also like to welcome Ken Nash from the NSRA and I would like you please to agree that he can stay because if you don't then he has to go too. Thank you very much.

Batting order for the meeting. I am going to take the resolutions first and then run through a review of the accounts and the Trustees' report. Then I am going to say a few words and following that we will have an open forum for me to address any questions.

If I could move firstly to the formal resolutions it is my great honour to propose that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales be re-elected as our President. May I have your support for that?

Agreed. Thank you.

I would like then to propose that the current list of Vice Presidents be re-elected en-bloc.

Agreed. Thank you.

If I could then move on to the final formal resolution that is to elect our Auditors, Baker Tilly UK Audit LLP. May I have your support for that?

Agreed. Thank you.

The Accounts.

First of all I would like to thank Mark Haslakiewicz, our Treasurer, for the tremendous amount of work that he has put in on behalf of all of us in producing the accounts for audit. It has been an enormous task and he has put so much effort into it and we owe him a lot but, more importantly, I would like to thank Mark for agreeing to take any technical questions you may have on the accounts. If I could briefly just interpose one thing, Julian Hartwell acted as Chairman of Council from John Jackman's retirement in September until my appointment on 23rd February this year and I would like formally to thank him on behalf of us all for the work he did during that period.

APPLAUSE

In looking at the accounts, obviously these days as we are a charity, there are many statutes and statements of recommended practice (SORPS), charities acts etc that we have to comply with and Mark has put a lot into that. In particular there has been some focus in the Trustees' report on explaining what we have been trying to achieve and how that has been translated into our financial results. You will have noticed in the front of the accounts that we have managed to achieve a surplus on the general fund last year of £180,000 and we have also managed to repay another £150,000 of our bank loan leaving us only £300,000 to repay. I suspect many of you know much better than me that budgeting for the NRA is quite difficult., We have relatively fixed costs and a lot of variable income. Entry to the Imperial Meeting is volume sensitive, we have to work out what our MoD usage is going to be and we also obviously have the general economic conditions to contend with. As I am sure you are well aware it looks as though there may be some choppy waters ahead on that front. It is quite clear, not only from this year's accounts, but also in those from past years that there has been rigorous financial control exercised which has been totally necessary. However, that rigorous financial control has had an adverse effect on infrastructure expenditure at Bisley Camp and also for investments in other things like IT, marketing services, or helping the shooters in the regions. That needs to be arrested.

At that point, if I may I'd like to go now to ask if you have any questions on pages 10 to 20 of the accounts, then we will move to any questions you may have on the Trustees' report. I should say that we have had one point raised by one of our members. A typo has been picked up by Carol Painting. On page 15 in note 3 and note 4 the support costs refer to note 4 but it should refer to note 5. I would be grateful if you could note all your copies accordingly. May I now call for any questions you may have on the accounts?

Maurice Ayling

Mr Chairman I did write about this, and on page (?) it says the charity has unsuccessfully attempted to dissuade the International Confederation of Fullbore Rifle Associations from adopting measures that it believes to be harmful to the sport. What were those measures please?

Chairman

I think actually that is in the Trustees' report rather than the accounts and if we may we'll come to that after having dealt with the accounts.

Iain Robertson

Looking at the value of our ammunition stock. At the end of the year, £100,000 worth of ammunition, that seems to me at first look to be about a quarter of a million rounds. That sounds rather a lot to have in stock in the quiet time.

Mark Haszlkiewicz

I think one of the problems we have is the number of different types of ammunition and components that we keep. If it was a bog standard sort of round that we supplied we would be able to control the stocks to a much lower amount. The ammunition for the Imperial Meeting is outwith this, I am not sure if it has actually been made yet.

Martin Farnan

Cell A, if you looked at it today, is virtually empty. Last year we had 'cornered the market' in a particular nature of ammunition at a special price, hence the large stock at that time, but it has now all gone. With regard to the question of MoD ammunition no, we have not yet received that ammunition and we have 200,000 rounds due to arrive for military range use up until the end of March this year.

Chairman

Any further question on pages 10 to 20, no, then thank you.

If I could then move on to the question about ICFRA which was just raised. It was interesting that at the General Council meeting which preceded this meeting, the subject of ICFRA probably was the longest discussion item on the agenda. I am going to ask Dick, if I may, who is the Vice President of ICFRA to answer your question.

Dick Horrocks

Yes, could I please speak on this? I am the Vice President of ICFRA but I am also the NRA representative on ICFRA's Council. So I am there to put forward the NRA's position in proceedings. When ICFRA was formed in 2003 with great support from the NRA the technical rules for target rifle were essentially our rules, the NRA GB's rules. With certain modifications at Ottawa last year the rules were not greatly different from our current rules in terms of defining the target rifle. In the July August period of the Ottawa World Championships the target rifle committee met to develop rules for the next big match in 2011 in Australia. A number of rule changes were made which have gone counter to what we in Great Britain believe to be in the spirit of the target rifle. For the last 35 years, to my knowledge, we have always believed in having a tightly specified rifle, what I might call a standard rifle, whereby the sights and the weights and trigger pull are all closely defined. There are 3 major changes which ICFRA have adopted. One is the use of literally any combination of lenses within foresight and rearsight with the proviso of having a maximum power of .5 diopter in the Eagle Eye foresight but in the rearsight you can use any lens including another diopter system. NRA GB had already presented its case against this over a year ago when we carried out our own research to try and discover whether lens systems were rectifying deficits or creating advantages and there was certainly evidence we produced that whilst they might rectify a deficit in an older eye or an eye which had suffered an optical defect they could give an advantage to a person with normal eyesight, so we voted against this combination and submitted an amendment at the last Council meeting in Ottawa which was overruled. At the same Council meeting it was voted to change the trigger pressure minimum from 1.5 to .5 of a kilogramme. Again the NRA for the past 2 years have been debating whether to change and we have stayed with the 1.5 kilogramme for good reason. So that was objected to by ourselves. The third change was, in my opinion, put on the table at the last minute. It allowed no consultation amongst the ICFRA members and their parent NRAs and was that proposed elimination of the weight restriction of the rifle so instead of 6.5 kilogramme maximum any weight of rifle could be used. THE NRA GB's position at the current time from the Shooting committee of a month ago is that we still believe in the spirit of having a well defined rifle, what I call a standard rifle, and in the next Journal I have put an article of my own view of the standard rifle, the way ICFRA have gone and what the NRA GB might wish to do about it. We are now in a diverging position where in future World Championships it could be that the NRA sends out a team using the NRA rifle and that it will be pitted against other teams which are shooting the ICFRA rifle. There is a body of opinion which will say there is no difference in terms of intrinsic accuracy, however, there is a perception amongst many that to have any combination of lenses is ruling too far away from an iron sight principle and there is a perception that a very light trigger weight is not as safe as a heavier trigger weight especially if those with heavier triggers attempt to convert them to light triggers then they could become unsafe. The any weight rule will allow any barrel weight, anything that the shooter can lift and hold which some people will say is a natural limit in itself to accuracy. General Council have had their minds opened to these ICFRA changes and it's up to the NRA to decide what their strategy will be in the future. So that is why the statement is there that ICFRA is currently adopting measures which we believe, the NRA believes can be harmful to the sport in that it could dissuade young people who may see a greater investment than is currently required to achieve competitiveness in the sport, it may affect veterans who don't wish to up-grade their rifles and it may cause captains of our touring teams to insist

that their team members have an ICFRA rifle in addition to the normal rifle. Some nations in ICFRA, South Africa and New Zealand, have already adopted the ICFRA technical rules as their home rules so it will mean touring teams coming to the UK if they bring an ICFRA technically approved rifle into our shooting environment where that rifle will not be allowed the trigger weight and optical enhancement.

Ron Matthews

In regard to what Mr Horrocks has said regarding the .5 Eagle Eye, people in my home town can get an Eagle Eye made by opticians that are more than .5. Would we be able to control the .5 Eagle Eye or would there be people using .75 or more? We need to be quite sure that if someone has a rifle with the Eagle Eye that it is consistent with the regulations. So the Eagle Eye should be tested and approved. With this combination of various telescopic lenses which it would be with a backsight I don't think it is going to be an advantage to people like myself or older.

Dick Horrocks

Some of the discussions which have taken place with ICFRA are to remove the need to police any weight, so you don't need to weigh your rifle; a lighter trigger ok its .5 not 1.5 so maybe those figures will pass naturally without being weighed but interestingly enough if any lens combination was introduced we don't have to police it because if someone has got something in the backsight you have got to be able to police that and have some type of optical device to define what it is. Nobody has actually questioned how you police the power of the front lens. That is an interesting challenge to ICFRA let alone NRA and we should have some means of checking on the firing point that a competitor has the right power.

Ron Matthews

It could be that an Eagle Eye approved by the NRA must be stamped as to what it is

Simon Grant

Its very easy to make a lens of any power but it is also very easy to test any lens so if its going to be policed it should probably be policed in the same way that you police anything else. We should be able to do spot checks on anybody's kit at any time. But it would be very easy for somebody to put in a lens that was stronger than a .5 and it would be a very significant advantage because once you go above .5 you can introduce very large amounts of magnification very simply.

Iain Robertson

As Target Rifle rep I have discussed this specific issue of policing with the Chairman of our Shooting Committee and we had some ideas which we have not yet taken forward but would be ready to take forward if it was thought necessary. As Chairman of the ICFRA Target Rifle Committee I fully take Ron's point about the need to police Eagle Eyes and once ICFRA has its rules set and therefore we have a baseline to work from, which I expect to be issued imminently, I will raise that point within the ICFRA Target Rifle Committee. I think Ron has a very valid point.

Robert Stafford

Accepting that the lenses are slightly different is there any evidence that the ways in which we look, because we will have to diverge from ICFRA, that is the weight of the rifle and trigger pressure, is there any evidence that it actually gives people a real advantage?

Dick Horrocks

I think that Iain as Chairman of the Technical Committee has had great discussions on the advantages or disadvantages of having a weight restriction. There is a perception or a belief that a 20 stone shooter with a 10 kilogramme rifle is a better shooting platform than a 10 stone cadet with a 5 kilogramme rifle before either has actually fired a shot and the recoil reaction is obviously

favouring the former rather than the latter. There is an intrinsic accuracy of heavy barrels versus lighter barrels although. I believe the evidence is not conclusive either way. On the trigger issue the main issue which the NRA GB is concerned about is people with 1.5kg rifle triggers wishing to reduce them and there is only a safe range within which that can occur and outside of that range you are into an unsafe trigger situation. Also something that was pointed out earlier today is that we shoot echelon so there might be people with .5 kilogramme triggers a little bit clumsy around the trigger guard area whereas with a 1.5 you feel more secure at 300x when there are people at 600x behind you. There are arguments either way and I feel the safety one on triggers is a big one because you will get the amateur fettler who wishes to do something to his or her rifle which could compromise safety. Others will say I don't care what the trigger weight is. I will stay at 1.5 and other people will buy new triggers, But somewhere in the middle you only need that 1 or 2 irresponsible or ignorant people to change the trigger weight and render it unsafe and that compromises shooting for all of us if there is an accident.

Ron Matthews

One more thing on triggers, will they be looking at set triggers or electronics?

Dick Horrocks

Set triggers are not allowed and electronics are.

Iain Robertson

The only thing with electronic triggers was that they were another source of unreliability and if you want to add yet another gadget on the range in the rain that can have flat batteries, dead circuits and so on go right ahead.

Chairman

Are there any other questions on the Trustees' report?

Rae Wills

Can I change the topic completely to the Objects and the Activities. One of the problems I have is the actual status. I attended the last seminar in a group that was presented by consultants that were looking into the NATSS place here at Bisley. At the end of our group discussions the position was, as I understood it, that the choice is between tearing every association up (the big 3) and starting one super new NRA or whatever you want to call or establishing a Federation so that the existing governing bodies could retain their identities but operate together within the Federation. I notice under this plan that it says the NRA will promote the formation of a single body for the sport of all lawful target shooting throughout the United Kingdom. From that it seems to conflict with the two option approach. Can you confirm what our status currently is?

Chairman

Our current status is that the NRA is a charity. We are seeking to develop NATSS into one body if it is possible but that is not without its difficulties in view of the fact that two out of the three associations involved are charities and the other is not. If we were to end up in an organisation which is not a charity then there would be significant implications for the NRA. Among other things as charity trustees your Council has a duty to do everything that we can to preserve our assets. The debate as to the form of the organisation is a continuing one.

Name not known

On the subject of the charity are we making best use of our ability to claw back tax?

Mark Haszlkiewicz

We did have a tax audit 18 months ago which showed some problems with our filing. As a result of that we did go through our entire membership list to get as many people to sign or re-sign as possible and as a result we are as up to date as we can be with getting everyone prepared to sign a gift aid declaration and the result of that exercise at the end of the day was a positive one and we managed to capture quite a few people who had previously not signed. So yes we think we are doing everything we can to maximise our gift aid recovery. The forms that we send out do encourage the take up of gift aid.

James Watson

About 76% of our members are signed up for gift aid and of those remaining some do not qualify because they are under 25, or don't pay tax. Anyone who doesn't have gift aid signed up is sent a gift aid form. Forms are sent with renewal paperwork, application paperwork and there are forms on the website.

Ian Brown

Do you have an up to date figure of the benefit to us or being a charity in terms of rates, rebates etc?

Mar Haszlkiewicz

We have gone through an exercise relatively recently. It is a significant number. But at the end of the day the big issue about being a charity or not being a charity is that if we stop being a charity there is the issue of what would happen to our assets?

Ian Brown

Is that a transition that could be accomplished if it were thought a good idea?

Mark Haszlkiewicz

Well we haven't thought it a good idea to stop being a charity.

Ian Brown

What really worries me is when we were attacked by the Charity commission about 5 years ago (Chairman, actually 1998 there was a meeting in here aimed at raising about £125,000 to fight this thing off and a member asked the question as to whether we had actually undergone an examination in the first instance to see if there is overall benefit in being a charity at all and he was very quickly silenced from the Chair. At one of the merger meetings I went to, not here, the question was again raised and it was obviously very clearly thought that this was not on the agenda at all. I know a fair amount of hoop jumping goes on in order to maintain our charitable status and some of the decisions that are taken would appear to take years instead of months because of the need to satisfy charity law and I would be very interested to see a true cost benefit analysis carried out by somebody with business experience just to see if it is really worth all this stuff that we have to go through in order to maintain what is supposed to be a very precious status that may not be worth it at all.

Mark Haszlkiewicz

As a very quick answer it is well in excess of £100,000 a year to us in being a charity.

Ian Brown

I heard it was £150,000 about 5 years ago so it could be £200,000 now but I seriously wonder whether £200k is a really good price for the other stuff that we have to do and I would seriously like to see that looked at.

Dick Horrocks

My understanding of charity law having dealt with another charity is that if a charity wished to cease to be a charity it dissolves itself but all its assets have to then be transferred to another charity and then the body can start up again under whatever is the new system. So you have to dissolve, transfer out and then the NRA would start up again. If the Charity Commission deem you unfit to be a charity under the public benefit test then its unlikely that you can keep your assets.

Rob Hamlin, Baker Tilly

If you elect to cease being a charity you have got the issue that as trustees you have to act in the interests of the charity. Accordingly, as trustees to attempt to remove charitable status would conflict with your duties.. On the benefit side you get gift aid, and reduced rates. You also have a commercial trading operation, the National Shooting Centre, which also gift aids its profits to the charity and you don't pay tax on that trading operation. The actual gift aid payment to the NRA was £130,000 last year and £140,000 the year before so if you think about paying 30% tax on that then that is another saving as well. Changing from being a charity to not being a charity is fraught with issues so it is something you could look into but most charities that do look into it don't do anything.

Rae Wills

May I make a comment £100,000 looks very small in relation to our overall turnover, our assets and all those other figures. On the other hand if you have to raise that amount of income, it's an awful lot of rents and an awful lot of shooting spaces.

Chairman

Are there any other questions on the Trustees' report?. OK thank you very much let's move on to me saying a few words.

If I may I would like to divide this into 3 parts which won't be long. As you know I have been your new Chairman now for about 3 1/2 months and I would just like to spend a couple of minutes or so reflecting on some of the things I have found during that period then I would like to talk about some of the issues for the NRA as I see them and then look forward a year and see if we were all here in a year's time what we might have achieved and what deliverables there would have been.

One of the things that I have found is that we seem to have pretty heavy duty support across the political divide which is something, to be frank, I had not expected to see. You have only got to look at what Gerry Sutcliffe, the Sports Minister, said at the start of National Shooting when he concluded by saying "This is a sport for everybody" and we know that one of his predecessors, Richard Cabon, is very, very pro shooting and, in particular, very pro-shooting being taken into schools. Hugh Robertson, the Shadow sports Minister, said during National Shooting Week "We are pushing the Government to lift the restrictions on Olympic target pistol shooters". As we all know, fine words butter, no parsnips but at least that is a start. Don Foster, Liberal Democrats, was also very complimentary about shooting. Kate Hoey, as you know, is the Honorary President of the CPSA. More directly aimed at our own disciplines I was very taken by the words by His Excellency the Governor General of Australia when he was presenting the Queen's Medal at the Australian NRA's National Championships in Brisbane last year. Some of you may have already read his speech and if you have then I apologise but I would like to quote a couple of extracts from it which really grabbed my attention. The first is when he said. "Competitive shooting attracts virtually all types of people, men and women, from just about any occupation you can name, from craftsman to professional, but, from my experience, always very good people. A bit like golfers and fishermen! I thought it was a very nice remark but I thought a better one and one with which I

really empathise was when he said. "Competitive target shooting is a great training ground to build the character of youth. It teaches them discipline and courtesy, it is a healthy outdoor activity and, importantly, it allows people with disabilities to compete on equal terms". Now I think if we have got friends like that out in the market place doing our bidding its not all bad.

One of the things that I have noticed is that the requirements from the members of the NRA of their Chairman is similar to those that partners have of the senior partner of a large law firm operating in the centre of London. They want clear strategic thinking, grand vision, proclamations, a sense of direction and they also want attention to the unacceptable state of the temporary toilet facilities on short Siberia Road! They also want pretty much all points in between covered judging by some of the correspondence I have had over the last 3 1/2 months. In reality what this means to me is that shooters are passionate about their sport and want the best for it. The goal seems to be a common one but not everyone necessarily agrees on the most appropriate means of achieving it or what the priorities of the day are. Clearly one of my jobs is to engender clarity around those priorities.

What else have I found? Well shooters are definitely a sociable bunch judging by some of the experiences I have had in one or two of the bars around here. Target shooting is a sport which crosses age ranges, gender and disability. One of the things in particular that I have been impressed about is the incredibly high level of volunteering activity. I should also say that the demands on those volunteers are very high. I have also found that there is concern that Bisley may be developed as some sort of leisure complex to the detriment of shooters but there is no doubt that there is a recognition of the lack of investment in its infrastructure which creates an impression of slow decline that must be arrested. I have also noticed, certainly in the last month or so there are some signs of tension between some of the different disciplines as to range allocation. I don't want to overdo that but it has been noticed and the General Council has appointed a working party this afternoon to review the matter.

Clearly there is a real sense of heritage around Bisley Camp. I think in the last couple of months or so I have been up here at least a dozen times and there is no doubt there I a real feeling of warmth about the place and what it stands for. That needs to be preserved. I have also picked up recognition that we must at all times remember that we are the National Rifle Association not the Bisley Rifle Association and that's something that I shall carry around with me. I have also found that shooters really are like golfers in that we are all obsessed with our equipment. You are, and certainly golfers are, continually striving for the Holy Grail. I was at the L&MRA bar before the presentation of the prizes at the Phoenix Meeting last week. Just standing and having a beer or two listening to some of the people talking about technical issues reminded me that I could have been in my golf club bar albeit talking a different form of sporting Esperanto.

What are the issues as we look ahead? Well there are in my view several. In no particular order of importance, I would like to start with aspiring to the point where becoming a member of the NRA is more of a given to the fullbore target rifle shooting community than it actually is. and I commend you to read what Glynn wrote in the June issue of Target Sports to that effect. I want people to join the NRA because..... I don't want them to join the NRA in spite of what we do. Clearly the development at Bisley is one of the major areas of debate and we have to establish what is achievable within the context of the preservation of our heritage. The Real estate Policy is under review. Then there is NATSS which we have touched on briefly earlier. As I have tried to get more into understanding what NATSS is all about, I have come to the view that NATSS is more of a journey than a destination.

With target shooting I think that an important question we need to address is do we think we are doing all we reasonably can to remove any barriers of entry that exist from participation in our sport including in particular the cost of that participation.

Muzzle Energy, that of course has been a very important issue for us since it was raised in the Autumn of last year and it will continue to be so.

There is the Clock Tower That has also been an issue and what I can say now is that it will be repaired this Autumn.

We have to develop the relationship with the MoD and the military. We have to think in terms of long term use by the MoD at Bisley.

You have heard something of ICFRA this afternoon, as I mentioned the General council spent a long time talking about it.

We have the Olympics coming up and we have to ensure that we can do what is necessary to provide the appropriate venue for the training facilities for 2012.

One of the issues which actually came up last year, as did the Clock Tower I might add because I have read the Minutes of last year's AGM., is the name of the Imperial Meeting. The name the Imperial Meeting seems to have hit the 'too difficult to deal with' tray. I accept that something like the Green King Fullbore Target Shooting Championships doesn't roll off the tongue in quite the same way as the Imperial Meeting and I know the name the Imperial Meeting is very dear to a great many members of the NRA. It will not be changed on a whim of Council. But if you just look at some of our other sports eg. Arsenal Football Club and move from the hallowed halls of Highbury to the Emirates Stadium. Is anybody really bothered about that? The Emirates happened to pay millions of pounds to Arsenal for that. Who would have believed several years ago that professional cricketers would be playing in pyjamas and earning millions of dollars. Life changes and we have to be prepared ourselves to make changes too.

I would like to see the NRA support shooters in the regions so that they don't feel the NRA is just a Bisley centric organisation and not interested in those out in the regions.

So what might be the deliverables in a year or so?

As you will have seen from the trustees' report, on page 6, one of the things is to encourage the schools and cadet forces and put steps in place for them to continue shooting throughout their lives. We have to bring people in at the lower level. As I look around this room I don't see many 20 year olds.

Clearly you need much more clarity around the potential for development at Bisley and I would think that in a year's time we would be much further down that road.

We have to continue discussions with the MoD so that civilian clubs take over administrative arrangements for use of military ranges. And I think that in a year's time we will be much further down that road too. Indeed, if possible it would be nice to have acquired a military range.

In a year's time we will definitely further down the road to meeting the requirements for Olympic training venue status.

Whoever is standing here in a year's time I expect will be reporting that the NRA is continuing with financial rigour in the operation of its affairs.

That is all I would like to say for the moment and I am now willing and looking forward to any questions.

Ron Matthews

In Australia just recently the cost of living is increasing and young people buying houses and having children cannot afford to do the sports they want to do. Not just the younger people but people in their 30s. The younger people will be having families, buying houses and getting into debt, the people you are to be looking at are those in their middle age.

Secretary General

I actually agree in what Ron has actually said in that if you focus purely on target rifle shooting or fullbore rifle shooting he is quite correct the issue is that it is one of the drivers for NATSS. If you actually begin to link the sports up not only do you set a pathway into shooting for kids in that they can come through air into .22 and then into fullbore, or they can cut straight into fullbore. You also allow them to make some decisions about their sport going forward. If you link it all and they can do it all they can actually make economic decisions during their shooting career as well as what they want to do as a hobby in that, as you know, it is far cheaper to shoot small-bore in that you can plink 100 rounds for about £4.50 and you can't do that with fullbore and you can't do it with clays either but if you link the sports together you give people a chance to actually stay in the sport socially and still compete in their sport but within a budget which is what we are not doing at this point in time when we actually restrict people into going down the artificial routes that we have created within our sport within the NRS, the CPSA and the NSRA.

Ron Matthews

During the Championships in Canberra last year 92% of the people were veterans.

Chris Law

You mentioned the NRA membership expanding and earlier this afternoon we were given a figure of about 5,600 members I believe, A member from my region, Roy Taylor, submitted a suggestion earlier in the year, and I know that events have somewhat overtaken the manpower available, but it was along the lines that he would be happy to send a Christmas membership for members of his family to the NRA if it were a figure of something like £10.00-£15.00 whereby they were not a shooting member, they had no voting rights, they could not sign out for firearms or ammunition, but they were associated with the NRA and to that end he suggested that there might even be an annual draw of those in that year. I wonder if there has been any thought given to that.

Karen Robertson

The gentleman concerned sent the letter to the Journal for publication. He wanted a family membership. We have already got the Friends' scheme which is currently £40 and you get the Journal and this is what was decided we ought to do so I did go back to the gentleman concerned and say that we would put it on the agenda for our next Membership Committee meeting. We have not had a Membership Committee meeting yet.

David Hossack

I hope that before you take a decision about changing the name of the Imperial Meeting you will have a proper vote,

Chairman

I am sure that any decision to change will not be taken on a whim by Council. I am alive to the fact that a possible change of name is a very sensitive issue.,

Maurice Ayling

I would like to make a few comments about communications with the membership triggered by receipt of this (a cd-rom) in the Autumn which purports to be the Imperial meeting Prize List. When you open it up there are instructions inside which say I am required to use an Acrobat reader which conjures up pictures of a man reading it standing on his head and the other instructions refer to websites. I have got several electronic things, DVD players and what not but I do not have anything which I can use this with.. It is therefore completely useless and an utter waste of time for not only me but according to your own staff there are 40% of membership that do not have an email address which figure is reflected in the English XX club as well. Membership of the NRA is not dependent on having a pile of electronic gubbins which may or may not be obsolete as soon as you have learned how to use it but membership is a contract between the member and the Association. The Association is duty bound to provide the member with the information he requires and sending this thing out to me is a complete waste of money, my money, and over the last 60 years I have ploughed enough money into this place to have just about bought it and now in my dotage I do not care to be put aside and treated as though I am not worth bothering about. Having made those criticisms I don't like to do it without being constructive, as far as the Prize List is concerned it is surely not beyond possibility for a computer programmer to produce a program whereby the member's index number is punched in, the machine will then print out his name and address, the competitions which he has entered, the number of people who have entered those competitions, the score he has obtained, his position in the list and any prize he might have won. That, I believe, would be of much more use and a darned sight cheaper than the two predecessors. I leave that thought with you.

Chairman

Karen Robertson is jumping up and down behind you.

Karen Robertson

There has been some progress on this. We have had about 14 or so complaints along similar lines and we did make a decision that we are looking into publishing the Prize List from last year in a very limited number. There will be a message in the Journal which is coming out in the next couple of weeks saying that if you are interested please contact me and we will do the same again for this year but it obviously does involve a bit of work on my part and I probably won't be able to get round to it until after the Imperial Meeting but we are looking into it and it will happen.

Martin Townsend

I would like to agree that we really do need to have the printed book with all the results having spoken to Ted Molyneux who is the Curator of the NRA Museum. He is very much in favour of going back to having the books. The thing about these computer things is that over time computers change, programs change and in 30 years time no one will be able to get access to that so I agree with what Maurice has said, if you have got a book. It is on the shelf and if captains of various teams want to research records they can go back, they have got it all, all the information is right in front of them and it is very easy.

HEAR HEAR

Martin Farnan

If I may, ladies and gentlemen, the cost is between £10,000-£12,000.

Karen Robertson

Martin, we are looking at a very limited print run.

Ron Matthews

I just want to put something general to you and to the staff. The staff do an excellent job on the ground. After the Imperial Meeting when they get a chance could they please clean the ditches at the bottom of site 8?

Chairman

I am sure that Jeremy Staples is just making a note of that.

David Mumford

You said that the Clock Tower would definitely be repaired in the Autumn. It would be very nice therefore if it could definitely be repaired before the Imperial or even before the Green King Fullbore Target Rifle Championships.

Chairman

I am afraid I was able to go as far as I did on the basis that it would be done in the Autumn and it won't be possible to have it done before the Imperial Meeting. But I can tell you that it will be done this Autumn you have my personal assurance.

Mick Barr

I have a couple of points. One concerns the Cadets that the Chairman mentioned. We have got a match, its called the Bisley 'V' Club cadets and Schools Long Range Match and its on Thursday afternoon the 10th July this year. We struggle to find enough people, its almost got out of hand, we had 29 teams last year, these are young kids and with some of them the rifles actually stand taller than they do. But they put up surprisingly good scores and what I would like to do, as this is the Inter Counties meeting, if I can run through the list of teams which have entered if I could ask for a representative from each County to offer assistance on the firing point and we do need some folk down in the butts as well not to pull the targets but just to keep the kids going. We have teams from Nottingham, Greshams School; Dorset; Hampshire & the Isle of Wight; Somerset; Charterhouse, Surrey, Gloucestershire; two from London they are just down as 1838 Elm Park Squadron and 241 Squadron ATC; two teams from Northern Ireland; Staffordshire; West Midlands; Northumbria and Durham. That is the list that we are being squeezed down to because the Army are laying falling plates and that messes us up rather but I had better not say anything more about that. If anybody would like to come along we have free lunch in the City Rifle Club, a buffet lunch for anybody that is going to give a hand, be there at 12 o'clock please. I would like to know beforehand though. Come and see me any time.

The second thing is, I don't want to mention the Clock Tower, but I will mention the Memorial Garden. The wall was clobbered by some friendly little motor car some time ago and two things held that up, one was getting the right bricks and a well wisher gave us the bricks. And thanks to James Watson's dad for that. The design, building etc. etc I did have a fair amount to do with that it's a decent hand made looking brick and it's a reasonably old fashioned I guess pointing method. I am cussed, if you didn't know, and I want it built the same as the original. I spoke to a brick layer about an hour and a half ago, its one I have been after for a while and he built the original walls. That is going to be built before the Bisley Meeting, I have got to say weather permitting. We are going to pave in the 4 main corners also which might stop some of the rubbish being tossed over by, again, pleasant folk who come and sit up at the Garden and heave their beer cans and other materials over into the shrubbery. I would like to thank Val Brown, Alex Roberts and Pearl Townsend as they have been up their giving me a hand with weeding and generally clearing

up the place. Don't feel the need to ask me if you want to go up there and do any work, if you want to cut the grass, clear out the rubbish, pull a few weeds, please feel free.

Simon Grant

Do we have a policy regarding the disabled? I cannot think of a better person to have speaking for us than someone in a wheelchair.

Secretary General

I actually echo that. My first experience of the power of disability was at Westminster in that I had the privilege to go to Westminster Fair and I took an NSRA gold medallist with me, just giving her a lift. She was by our stand and in walked this rather brutish Scottish MP, he walked in and said "What do you kill then?" and I said I think you better ask this multi gold medal winner what she does and the guy was completely blown away, he couldn't even apologise and had to sort of leave the room immediately. From that point of view it gives a very powerful image. The other thing that I would like to say is that if we are now an Olympic training venue we are also a training venue for the Para Olympics as well so in terms of what we do on site, not just in terms of media and promotions we have actually got to improve our game in terms of what we actually provide on site for disabled shooters.. At the end of the day we have a stated policy in relation to disability but it is about time we started to deliver on it terms of being able to get into club houses and using our ranges efficiently and well.

Simon Grant

I know we had a policy in place but I had a picture of getting the press down to Melville Range as we have a lot of people in wheelchairs down there. Why not have something like a disabled open day?

Secretary General

There is an issue which we were actually discussing earlier in that we have Headley court which is just down the road and the guys that are coming back from Afghanistan minus legs and arms etc are struggling with the fact that they used to be fit and they need to do a bit of sport. That discussion is going forward at this point in time in how to provide them with some value back in their lives and to actually give them some sporting opportunities here to shoot. Where you are coming from is quite right and we value that opportunity and we value those people.

Ron Matthews

In regard to those opportunities, what about the costs of the ablutions and toilets and all the other things that they require?

Secretary General

A lot of the development that we are talking about in terms of what our application for planning means that we have to be compliant in terms of the requirements of the disabled. Anything that we build going forward we've got to accommodate access for disabled people. One of the buildings that has been built and does comply is the NSRA building and so do the Clay Ranges but although we say we are compliant I think disabled athletes would have a few problems with using this place more widely. Access to some of the toilet facilities etc, for example, is dire even if you are able bodied.

Rae Wills

I think looking back and looking at the problem we lost most of our wheelchair shooters after the pistol ban. The Anno Domini meeting used to produce more than half a dozen people in wheelchairs. Doing their stuff and I think you will find that most of them are doing air pistol shooting and air rifle shooting. Maybe they have a perception that the firearms, as such the real

stuff, is not for them and perhaps we ought to extend specific invitations to them for our open days. To those clubs that are dealing with it and the general disabled public,

Maurice Ayling

It might help to provide better facilities to get onto the 300x firing point, some of us have difficulty now, its like Beecher's Brook.

Paul Smith

In one of the more subtle areas of disability that I have come across in trying to do fullbore rifle shooting is the fact that I am a right handed shooter and a left handed writer therefore trying to write with my hand stuck up the barrel of the gun is difficult. When I first started fullbore someone came along with something called a PDA which you could mark your score on by tapping the screen in the appropriate place. Then some bright spark of management decided they would ban them because some people might find it more advantageous than an extra £1000 worth of kit. That means that since then I have not really done any competitive shooting at all.

Martin Farnan

I am afraid you are quite wrong in that you say. There was an article in the Journal in which it said that PDAs per se were perfectly permitted, what were not allowed were the programmable PDAs which could predict the wind.

Rae Wills

Is it true to say that if you have a specific disability that is not covered by the rules then dispensations can be given?

Martin Farnan

Yes they may be.

Chairman

Ladies and gentlemen are there any other questions? I think that brings us to the end of this year's Annual General Meeting and may I thank you all very much for taking the time and trouble to come here. I know many of you have travelled great distances and I certainly appreciate the fact that you have taken the trouble to come here this evening and I look forward to seeing you all again. Thank you very much indeed.

APPLAUSE