

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held in the NRA Pavilion, Bisley on Friday 11th June 2010 from 5.30pm.

Present:

Chairman:	Dr R. Pizer
Vice Chairman of the General Council:	Prof A.R. Horrocks
Secretary General:	Mr G.W.J. Alger
Members:	63 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 2009

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 – 11th June 2010

Proceedings

Chairman

Firstly may I welcome you to the 2010 Annual General Meeting of the National Rifle Association. As you will know, a terrible tragedy took place in Cumbria on Wednesday 2 June about which the NRA expressed its shock. I would just like to reiterate that our thoughts and sympathy are with the families of those who have lost loved ones and with those who have been injured.

I will say more about our response after we have dealt with the formal items on our agenda.

I now turn to the formal agenda.

On behalf of the whole Council it is my great honour to propose that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales be re-elected as our President.

Agreed. Thank you very much.

I propose the re-election of the existing Vice Presidents, again I do this on behalf of the whole Council, so can I have your approval for that please?

Agreed. Thank you.

I now come to item 3 on the Agenda, that is the re-appointment of our Auditors, Baker Tilly UK Audit LLP. I again propose this on behalf of the Council so can I have your approval that they be re-appointed please?

Agreed. Thank you.

I will now say a few words before we get on to questions on the accounts.

Some of the challenges facing us have been mentioned by me at the front of the Financial Statements. I will only comment where there have been changes or new information is now available. I will start with some internal matters and end with some remarks about our response to the tragic events in Cumbria.

Last month Jonathan Holmes resigned as chairman of the Disciplinary Committee after 6 years. I would like to thank him wholeheartedly for the commitment he has shown in dealing with a myriad of problems that he and his committee have faced. In his place I would like to welcome David Evans who has been elected as chairman of the Disciplinary Committee. David thus becomes Ex Officio Chairman of the Disciplinary Body and a Trustee of the NRA.

I am delighted to say that four new Non Executive Directors have been appointed to the NSC Board. They are :

Roger Boyd who is a marketing and communications specialist with broad sporting and social interests.

Tony Cornwell who is a Chartered Management Accountant and former civil servant. Now a semi-retired consultant. He has a strong financial background with experience of turning government bodies into charities and the management of high profile leisure sites.

Russell Neighbour who was originally a quantity surveyor but is now a senior facilities and estates manager for a major international company.

Ron Pooley formerly in the Army and then worked as an architect before moving into property and estate management.

The NSC Finance Director, Bruce Pollard, went sick at the beginning of April and has not yet returned. As a result there have been some delays in sending out various invoices – in particular for caravan site rents and for storage of firearms. They are now going out in batches due to the work of Tony Cornwell, and I would encourage you all to settle these invoices as quickly as possible. I must thank Michael Blythe, former Financial Manager, for coming back from retirement and Mark Haszlkiewicz, our Treasurer, for their work in the completion of the 2009 accounts and for keeping our accounts for 2010 under control. This may continue for some time.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that after the austerities of the past several years, we have decided to ease the purse strings to a limited extent to allow for a greater level of both capital and current expenditure. This is intended to provide for a better standard of service and facilities for our members and customers. This includes actual reductions in subscription levels and increased assistance for our younger shooters. This will inevitably have an impact on our surplus for 2010.

On Wednesday 19 May 2010 a fire broke out in the Stickledown danger area. By Friday evening the fire had reached the back of the Stickledown butts coming within 5 yards of the target shed and came round both sides of Stickledown range. The fire stopped short of the main BSG shooting ground but continued several hundred yards across towards the Siberia ranges before dying out. On the Pirbright side the fire came towards Pirbright Camp missing Melville range but dying out at a point roughly parallel with the 1100 yards firing point. We were very lucky and various matters including fire breaks need discussing with MOD. I would particularly like to thank all our staff who responded magnificently to the threat, working in shifts around the clock and helping to protect the BSG ground when that was threatened. Anthony Roupell has sincerely thanked me for the help provided.

We wanted to help our Olympic Pistol Team and Heritage Pistol shooters but were advised we could not do this because in 2006 we changed the Second Schedule of the Charter and as a result of advice at that time, we deleted the objectives clause. This meant that we could only support rifle shooting as specified in the First Schedule of the 1890 Charter. We have now been advised that the deletion of the objectives clause was invalid and it has therefore been reinserted. The rest of the changes in 2006 to the Second Schedule remain valid.

One of the problems of getting out of debt was that we did not do the maintenance at Bisley Camp that was needed. Your disquiet over the toilets and roads has been expressed quite forcibly. There is also the problem of maintenance of other buildings used by the NRA. The total cost of putting things right may well come to £3 million. We have made a start with refurbishing two toilet blocks on Site 2 and 5. There have been delays especially with the block on Site 5 which I am told will be completed by 26th June. It will be several years before the backlog is cleared.

I expect to see our strategy for the next five years published in a few weeks. This will drive our business plans and budgets and provide more focussed objectives for our staff.

A root and branch review of how the General Council, Council and Staff operate to deliver what our members want is still needed. We tried to get it done for a nominal sum using Business School

students but this did not work out. Once our strategy is in place we will concentrate on the structure of the NRA using our own resources.

Child Protection legislation kicks in on 1 July 2010 for sporting organisations. This also includes vulnerable adults. We have published guidance on our website for clubs and individuals. We urge clubs to consider this and implement changes appropriate to their circumstances. Phyllis Farnan has brought this to fruition and is available to provide guidance to clubs. I am very grateful to her.

As a result of the tragic shooting in Cumbria, the NRA is working closely with the British Shooting Sports Council and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation who are co-ordinating the shooting organisations' response. The NRA point of contact is Glynn Alger, our secretary general. We have put together a small team to support Glynn and will be reviewing the situation on a continual basis. We are very grateful to members who have offered to help and expect to take up some of these offers. If you think you have some specific skill or knowledge that is relevant and have the time to help please contact Glynn. Our initial objectives are:

- to be thoroughly joined up with the other shooting organisations and to make sure we are all speaking with one voice;
- to ensure we have all the necessary data available to support the arguments we may have to make;
- to manage the interface with our members;
- to engage with parliamentary / police / press contacts as required.

In due course, depending on how things develop, we will need to add:

- to contribute (probably both in our own right and collectively with the other organisations) to the inevitable enquiry.

Yesterday Glynn Alger attended a meeting of BSSC and I would now ask him to say a few words about the plans of BSSC. Glynn the floor is yours.

Glynn Alger

Ladies and gentlemen, what I would like to say about the NRA's response to the Cumbria Incident is that it actually commenced at 11am on the morning of the shooting when we were informed that there was an ongoing incident in Cumbria. At that stage the NRA contacted the British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC) and the British Association of Shooting & Conservation (BASC) to actually discuss joint working with them and the other shooting bodies into how we would manage the incident. As a result of those early interventions BASC managed the media in terms of TV, while we and the other organisations managed things like radio broadcasts and press enquiries. Following that according to the media and politicians in terms of feedback is that the heat, as a result of the interventions that we made at that early stage, had gone out of the incident, in that the main message that was sent by all the main shooting organisations was that we hoped the Government would not act too quickly in relation to legislate on shooting going from past experience based upon Dunblane and Hungerford. We know this as a result of direct advice from MPs. They have generously offered both to keep us informed and to help going forward in terms of any debates in the House on this issue. They did assure us that within Government the view was that this thing should be played 'long' and there shouldn't be a quick reaction to the incident. In our meeting with BSSC all of the major shooting bodies in the UK were represented and present at that meeting. The agreed strategy going forward, contrary to our positioning on previous occasions, was that we would actually offer to Government and the Home Office to be actively involved in discussions in relation to how best shooting ought to be managed going forward in relation to their particular requirements. The issue is that in the past our reactions to

changes to legislation have been that we would say “no” and we work up from there to a position where something would be enforced upon us. The position that I discussed with BSSC and the one that they have actually adopted is that we would have a more positive and joint approach to the Home Office. We would offer to put actual resource such as subject experts into the Home Office to assist them with any necessary changes to legislation that may help us and at the same time we would look at the whole issue of offering self regulation of the sport, being orchestrated across the shooting environment by the NGBs. So that’s where we currently are with the BSSC. At the end of the day the hope is that we are actually going to give the Government some answers to their current dilemma because we had a political advisor present during the meeting and his advice to us was that the Government at this point in time did not want to take any steps leading to further legislation in relation to shooting. That is the advice at this point in time of both Government and their political advisors, but shooting needs to be able to offer some assistance to the Government in terms of and I hate to use this expression “the Government needs to be seen to be doing something” If that need to be doing something originates from the shooting bodies that that something is a self regulation exercise, that would be preferable to something being forced upon us. So that is our current position. Thank you very much.

Chairman

Thank you very much Glynn. I would now like to throw the meeting open to questions. My I first take questions on the accounts? When you ask the questions could I ask that you use a microphone and please give your name and club clearly. Who would like to ask the first question?

It almost looks as though the accounts are so clear that no one has a single question. That must be extraordinary, well done Mark.

APPLAUSE

So we can move away from the accounts and into Open Forum and so the floor is open to you for your questions.

Joanne Walker

International Long Range Pistol Shooters’ Association (ILRPSA)

My questions are as follows. As a member of the badly unrepresented human at Bisley human race or half of the human race called women, I would rather like the Council to give consideration to the female situation. I came to shoot at the Phoenix for the first time ever this year, I did manage to hit the target by the way, and my first experience of shooting was rather marred by the Range Offices who constantly looked at my male shooting companions and said to them “is she with you?” So essentially I think you need women, you need more women to join, you need more money, you need more women joining, you would have more fees. So surely doesn’t it make sense to actually make consideration for that and try to do something about it? A more welcoming attitude I think is the answer. And if I could just move on from there my daughter wanted to learn to shoot a long range pistol. According to the Home Office guidance to the Police she should be able to do this as a member of the ILRPSA the difficulty is that I can’t lend her my pistol for some reason. I can lend her my rifle, they are both 6.5204 what’s the difference? Can somebody please explain that to me?

APPLAUSE

Chairman

Yes, we would certainly like to see lots more ladies shooting and the problem I suppose has been that there has been a history of male domination but yes there are some very successful women shooters and there are many, many more now than when I was a young man I regret to say.

LAUGHTER

I should say I regret there were so few.

Glynn Alger

In terms of ladies shooting at Bisley it is an increasing phenomena in that, certainly during the Imperial Meeting, we are getting increasing numbers of young ladies, particularly in the 16-25 year grouping actually joining the Association. We have never had any sort of feedback such as you have just given us in relation to the experience you had during the Phoenix Meeting, although I'm sure it does happen. Usually the bulk of the ladies attend during the Imperial Meeting and shoot and we have had no such feedback during the Imperial Meeting on that particular issue. As you are aware the NRA runs the RCO courses and on the basis of your observations it maybe necessary to include some diversity training so that the RCOs can get a wider appreciation of their duties and the way that they should treat people.

The other issue that was raised is in relation to long barrelled pistols. Where we are at this point in time is the Home Office have adopted a ridiculous stance in relation to both long barrelled pistols and Section 1 shotguns in that they will allow the individual to actually own and possess but they will not allow a club to own and possess, they will not allow an individual to loan their long barrelled pistol or Section 1 shotgun to another individual to actually use. We have written to the Home Office on two occasions on this particular issue and I have asked for a meeting. Our stance is the one that you have just made in that how can a club actually ensure that a member is fit and properly trained to use a long barrelled pistol or a Section 1 shotgun if we are not able to train them properly to start with? We are sure that as our relationship improves, as I am sure it naturally will with the Home Office, we believe that we will be able to rectify that particular issue quite soon.

Joanne Walker

So you don't believe it is the way the NRA interprets the Home Office legislation?

Glynn Alger

It's not the NRA at all, the NRA have actually written to the Home Office complaining that this is inappropriate. We are currently supporting a legal action that involves a Sportsman's Association member on this particular issue with the Metropolitan Police, so it is not the NRA's position. The NRA wishes to own long barrelled pistols for its members to use but because of the current stance adopted by the Home Office and Surrey Police this has not been possible. I have to say this situation isn't across the board, a number of police forces they have actually broken ranks and they have gone with the good sense argument, so Wiltshire and Somerset to name two forces have already made allowances allowing clubs to own long barrelled pistols and Section 1 shotguns.

Carol Painting

Pumas RC

I think Joanna needs to get her Range Officers educated by someone else. We have no problems in TR, I have been shooting for 55 years and the Range Officers are always courteous and there is no difference as shooting is the one sport we can all compete on equal terms and that's why we never have it segregated, the small-bore people might but we don't.

I have a second question for you. I am very sorry about Bruce and I hate thinking about people being ill but I am very concerned for the Association's finance. Can you tell me whether he is getting anything more than statutory sick pay?

Chairman

Jeremy are you able to answer that?

Jeremy Staples

At this stage the answer is “no comment”.

Carol Painting

Then infer yes, what plans have we got to with someone on long term sick pay that we can't afford?

Chairman

There are legal requirements and those have to be played out.

Dietra Kimpton

Mars & Minerva RC

A few of you already know me as the person who is probably raised a few issues about the state of the Camp. I am actually up here to pay some compliments. I would just like to say that I came onto Camp for the first time at the Phoenix Meeting and there is a marked difference on this Camp right now. I think there is a change happening, I think that Robin and the rest of the staff here deserve a round of applause for their hard work it is going to take a long time and I think its up to us as the members to continue to support what they are trying to achieve here and on that note I think its also because of us being members of various clubs on Camp and some of those clubhouses are not in the best shape that isn't the responsibility of the NRA it is the responsibility of the members of those clubs and I think we should all get behind the NRA and start looking at our own club houses as well. I am proud to say that Mars & Minvera is one of the clubhouses I think is a good example on Camp and the same sort of work has been going on at the Surrey and other clubhouses but I just wanted to say thank you Robin because there is a marked difference and don't worry if you are a little bit behind in one of the loos, we know its going to happen because you are making it happen. Thank you.

APPLAUSE

Chairman

Thank you Dietra. The people who are responsible for doing this are, well three of them, are in the front row here and I think particularly to mention Jeremy Staples who has had to bear a lot of criticism from you and we are now able to give him a little bit more money to get some of the things done that are so badly needed.

Roger Mason

Somerset

You have three new Non-Executive Directors on the NSC. There are an awful lot of members who have property or who [belong to] associations and live on the Camp at various times. Would it not be a good idea to have a Non-Executive Director on the NSC to represent the users?

Chairman

I hope that all of the Non-Executive Directors will represent at least some part, or some group of the users but of course when they start working together as Non-Executive Directors they've got to think of everyone they can't at that stage represent a specialist interest. So, yes, we welcome the newcomers, we have selected them for their particular skills and I have mentioned some of those because we want to make sure we are going to move forward in the best possible way with the best possible advice so that our staff are well guided. So I can go part of your way but not, I am afraid, the full way.

Simon Dixon
North London Rifle Club

I would like to ask why it was that the NRA Trustees refused to allow me to make corrections to the misleading and incomplete announcement in December 2009 on the NRA website of my resignation as Chairman of the NSC and perhaps I can put the record straight.

It may not generally be known that I declined an invitation to become an NRA Trustee as I felt this would compromise my position as Chairman of the NSC and also my ability to chair the board of the company in the way I felt to be in the best long-term interests of Bisley.

I found that the Board's position was being undermined by the new Trustee regime, and day-to-day management inhibited in a way not previously experienced and in the Boards' judgment not proper. This was because of major differences of view over the way the NRA and the NSC should properly work together. It was therefore with the deepest regret that I felt the proper course was for me to resign as Chairman and a Director of the NSC on 17 December 2009.

Under the Chairmanship of my predecessor and myself, the NSC has achieved significant profits from its commercial activities. It may be remembered that in the 2007 Winter NRA Journal I explained that between £750,000 and £1 million was needed to keep Bisley working and to enable us to bring the facilities more up to date.

You will be aware that the substantial debt incurred in the 1990's consumed any surplus generated by the NSC as well as requiring substantial contributions from members' subscriptions. On the positive side, we gradually brought the day to day activities at Bisley into surplus and for the first time in living memory, without calling upon members' subscriptions.

In 2009 the NSC produced a record surplus. With imminent repayment of the final tranche of the 10-year bank loan, we can now look forward to a brighter future. The NRA can use these surpluses from Bisley, as it has done since the end of 2008, towards the development of the Bisley Estate. This will in turn raise additional revenue to further regenerate shooting UK wide. In the light of this progress I am even more saddened that I will no longer be able to contribute towards this exciting stage in Bisley's development.

I wish the next NSC Chairman every success.

Chairman

Simon, you said that with the new regime of the Trustees you found it difficult because we were asking questions and, yes, a lot of this was myself asking questions. We tried to agree a statement to go on the website, we didn't really want to get into a huge amount of detail and that is why it was relatively short. We certainly recognise your contribution and we said that in the annual report and you are perfectly correct that you did warn the Association in that Journal article that they were neglecting maintenance on Camp at their peril. Now of course we are going to have to put much more into maintenance than if we had been able to do it at that time. I too hope and wish the new NSC Board every success in turning things around because we do want to generate these large surpluses to help shooting outside of Bisley where life has got significantly more difficult even in this past year. So, while we disagree on certain issues like management and style I hope we both agree that the Association must move forward. We must make it successful and we must be able to help people outside Bisley so I think that is all I would wish to say in response to your comments.

Brian Taylor

Army Target Shooting Club

I would like to follow the earlier speaker and again commend the team here responsible for the ablution block on Site 1. They've done a fantastic job, it really is a huge improvement. Very like the Hilton at the back of Stickledown, perhaps we should call it the Dorchester. Talking to one or two people who have used the facilities there is concern about whether we will be able to maintain and keep it in good order and I am not just talking about the individuals coming in off Camp to use these facilities I am talking about members themselves. During the Phoenix Meeting the toilet part of the ablution block after 24 hours was quite disgusting, by Monday morning it was dreadful and I am talking about the actual loos rather than the stand up ones. Some toilet brushes or something put in there would help us to enable members to leave them as they would hope to find them. The other thing is by the end of Sunday there were no loo rolls in there and that was a Bank Holiday weekend so we were stealing them from the ladies but by last weekend I think even the ladies had run out except for maybe one or two. I went in there today just to have a look and there are not enough in there to survive this weekend. The last point I would like to make is, and I don't know why it is but again on one of the loo doors of the men's there is a hook behind the door but the others don't and it would be most useful if they all had hooks. Sorry there was one other item we have gone now from the 6 wash basins we had in there last year, 3 in each part, down to 4. During the Imperial Meeting with 6 there was massive queuing so I don't know what its going to be like this year when you bear in mind in the shower block there is plenty of space there to have been a third one between the 2 that are in there now. So for future ones you may want to bear that in mind.

Chairman

Thank you Brian for those comments and I am sure we will bear them in mind. There are several more loo blocks that we have got to deal with and if we don't get it right with the first one or two we must make absolutely certain that we do with the later ones.

Ian Robinson

Lancing Old Boys RC

When I came in the evening, as I did last year, I was told that I was not allowed to vote because I was not an individual NRA member and I just put it to the Chairman why not? Or am I allowed to vote? And he said he didn't know and he suggested that Glynn Alger may be able to shed some light on it. I suspect there may be some others who may be encouraged to come from the Old Boys rifle clubs who are not full members so on behalf of those may I table the question?

Glynn Alger

I don't have a copy of the Rules with me but the Rules specifically state that it is individual members and so full members of the Association who are actually allowed to vote. So in terms of, shall we say, an affiliated club and an affiliated member, under the current guidelines you would not be able to vote.

Chris Law

You mentioned earlier about the removal of the Objects which included the defence of the realm. I notice it is not included in the current revised 'Bible'. Is it the intention to restore it.

Chairman

The final legal advice we got came after the 'Bible' had gone to press so, yes, I would hope that things would be back to normal next year and since I have mentioned the 'Bible' it has, as you have probably noticed undergone a huge change so there may well be inadvertent mistakes in there so if you see anything that needs to be put right please let us know. I would like to thank Iain Robertson in particular for undertaking this monumental task, he was at it for weeks on end I understand, and it is now in a much better situation or position for us going forward because we

want in the end to be able to say to clubs outside of Bisley “Here is a rule book that you can use”. And the way it is now structured we can strip out all Bisley centric stuff leaving a rule book which hopefully most clubs around the country can implement. So, yes, there are problems with the ‘Bible’, inadvertent I think and please let us know if you notice one.

Are there any other questions? No, then in that case all I need to do now is declare the meeting open, er no I mean closed.

The meeting closed at 6.15pm