

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held in the NRA Pavilion, Bisley on Saturday 30th June 2012 at 20.30

Present:

Chairman	Dr R. Pizer
Vice Chairman of the Council	Mr C.J. Murton
Treasurer	Mrs D.C. Meredith
Member of Council & Acting Chief Executive	Mr D. Mabbott
Head of Support Services	Mr B. Cottrell
Members	102 Registered Members

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

PROCEEDINGS

Attached hereto and initialled by the Chairman of the meeting as a record of the meeting.

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, excluding Robert Stafford at his request, be elected en bloc.

The Resolution was approved.

- b. Appointment of the Auditors. The Chairman proposed on behalf of the Council the appointment of Saffery Champness, Chartered Accountants, as Auditors.

The Resolution was approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2011

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 – 30th June 2012

Proceedings

Chairman

Welcome to the 2012 Annual General Meeting, which has been adjourned from the earlier date of the 15th June. Firstly let me introduce those of us on the top table so you know who we all are.

I am, Robin Pizer, your Chairman; this is Charles Murton, Vice Chairman of the Council; Derrick Mabbott who is a Trustee and Acting Chief Executive, Debbie Meredith who is our Treasurer.

The first item on the agenda is the re-election of the President and I have very great pleasure in proposing that H.R.H. The Prince of Wales be re-elected and I propose this on behalf of the Council.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.

Then there is the re-election of the Vice Presidents. Since publishing the agenda Robert Stafford has written to say that he does not wish to be re-elected so can I propose on behalf of the Council that all the existing Vice Presidents except Robert Stafford be re-elected.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item three is the re-appointment of the Auditors and the proposal, again by myself, on behalf of the Council that our current Auditors Saffery Champness LLP be re-appointed. Can I have a show of hands to re-appoint the Auditors?

Paul Charlton

Robin, I would like to ask a question here because I am slightly confused as last year when this motion was put to us, it was for the re-election of a different firm of Accountants. I'm not quite sure why they are not seeking re-appointment this year.

Chairman

They resigned.

Paul Charlton

They resigned.

Chairman

Yes, so we had to find new Auditors. OK?

Paul Charlton

We can't re-elect them then?

Chairman

Saffery Champness have done the audit this year so I am asking you to elect them to do the audit for 2012, they have done the audit for 2011.

Tony Mitchell

Mr Chairman, I wonder why the previous Auditors resigned?

Chairman

They didn't give a reason. So I therefore propose that Saffery Champness be appointed to audit our accounts for 2012. Can I have a show of hands please of those in favour? There were quite a lot of you not putting hands up – can I have a show of hands then from those that do not wish Saffery Champness to be re-appointed?

So the fact is that there is a sufficient majority there, I don't think I need to actually count but there are quite a few of you who have not actually put your hand up either for or against so I confirm therefore that the Auditors, Saffery Champness, are appointed.

Gillian Kaile

I'm afraid it's me and I am going to have to start again, but honestly if you unfortunately had a set of Auditors who have left us, we ought to have some reason and officially what you should let us know why, even if it was in the negative as it's the AGM that appoint Auditors so strictly speaking we can't re-appoint them we should have a vote to appoint them in and get things going.

Chairman

We have just appointed them.

Gillian Kaile

No, we asked everybody to re-appoint them

Chairman

No, I did actually change the words, I said to appoint them to be Auditors for the 2012 accounts. OK?

Gillian Kaile

I think if you do a re-vote you might get a few more hands I think on that.

Chairman

I do not propose to have a re-vote on this.

Statement by the Chairman June 2012

I have divided my talk into three sections covering

1. problems uncovered in the last year;
2. Results for 2011;
3. The way forward in 2012.

I would suggest that you listen to all three sections before asking questions so that you know the current situation.

I accept that our communications with members should have been better so I thought that it would be useful to give you some idea of what the Trustees and the Acting Chief Executive found when they started to implement the restructuring that was announced at last year's Annual General Meeting. Then I reported 7 areas of concern and now report that among other things, the following soon became apparent: -

On staff issues

Out of over 40 staff within the NSC, only 3 had signed contracts of employment. Few staff in the organisation had objectives and many did not have up-to-date job descriptions. Little training of any kind had been available to any staff before 2011.

In addition, staff terms and conditions varied hugely, with different working hours and benefits even between staff doing very similar jobs. Some staff benefited from side deals not available to others.

Managers were not properly supported by senior management. Regular management meetings did not occur, whilst managers were often undermined by senior management when seeking to enforce disciplinary issues.

All of these contributed to an environment where performance was not managed and good performance left to goodwill and then left unrecognised.

- Today, all staff have a common contract that all have signed. All have objectives and we are beginning training and development across all staff. Any pay rise in 2013 will be performance-related against those objectives. Side deals have been eliminated wherever they have been found. Managers meet regularly as a team chaired by Derrick Mabbott, the Acting Chief Executive.
- On finances

The financial systems were unable to generate sufficient information for the business to be properly managed. No meaningful expenditure budget existed. The business was run in 2011 on the basis of regularly tracking what was in the bank account. Staff had no experience of preparing budgets or managing their departments in accordance with them. In fact, there was no concept of financial accountability within the organisation at all.

As of today, we are introducing management accounts to track performance against the budget that all managers contributed to and all are targeted against.

On operational issues

There were no meaningful Health and Safety Procedures for staff. Whilst "health and safety" might be dirty words in some quarters, the lack of procedures, equipment and training resulted in the Camp only narrowly escaping two Enforcement Orders from Guildford Borough Council which would have effectively shut down Bisley as a shooting venue last summer; The vehicle fleet was falling apart as a consequence of lack of maintenance. Urgent arrangements had to be made to procure suitable vehicles in time for the 2011 Imperial Meeting;

There was a complete unpreparedness for Bisley Live with the result that substantial resources had to be devoted to this project to avoid possible exposure to the joint venture partner. Despite huge efforts by the staff, Bisley Live was not a success and we are now suing GSA, the guarantors of that contract.

Today, we have a good working relationship with Guildford Borough Council having resolved all of our H & S issues and we have got all Estates staff up to date on training and equipment.

On security:

Security on Camp was virtually non-existent. There had already been a theft of £3000 from an open safe in the Range Office and also £30,000 worth of used brass from a store on Camp. How would a theft of firearms have been dealt with? I know that whilst some of you think that our current arrangements are a good improvement, others think that we can do better. The Trustees would welcome further dialogue on this;

Many of the alarms on Camp were either unserviceable or were so unreliable that an unacceptable level of false alarms were being experienced, and the police were threatening to charge for call-outs

Today, we have a much stronger relationship with the Police, who now respond much more quickly to calls from Bisley and have guided us through the changes we have put in place.

I am very grateful to Derrick Mabbott for shouldering the burden of trying to sort out this mess. As will be appreciated, it has been no easy task and much remains to be done. Derrick has not exactly been the most popular person on Camp and there have been numerous grumbings about the changes, which have had to be made. I am hopeful that the new Chief Executive, whose appointment I hope to be able to announce soon, will be able to carry on where Derrick leaves off and that, in time, Derrick will be credited with the transformation which has had to be brought about. Please remember that Derrick has had the unanimous support of the Trustees for the restructuring.

I must also thank the staff. Whilst we as Trustees have asked Derrick to shoulder this burden, it has been shared by the staff, for who these have been tumultuous times. For many this has seen them leave the organisation, sometimes on good terms, sometimes with acrimony. For all staff it has meant change and uncertainty. In all of the criticism from Members of the delayed accounts and some typographical errors, I am saddened that few have recognised the extent of the

changes made, and expressed any thanks to the staff who have made this a reality and continue to push forward. I would like to make my position on this plain; thank you to all staff and well done.

Turning now to the 2011 results, I will highlight a few items. You will see from the Annual Report and Accounts for 2011 on page 15, there is still an unacceptable loss of £110,000. This needs putting in context. The turnaround looks impressive but needs some qualification. The loss in 2010 of £613,000 on page 15 included £274,000 of prior year costs giving a loss for the year of £338,000 in 2010. We have also recovered about £90,000 of bad debts that we had made provision for in 2010 (*see footnote 1 below). So the real improvement between 2010 and 2011 has been to cut the loss by about £138,000.

Paul Charlton

Excuse me Robin, but surely if you have gone from £600K to £300K and then you take the £90K from one and put it on the other, it has actually got worse because it has gone from below £200K to over, unless my maths is not up to it.

Chairman

I think your maths is not up to it.

Ross McQuillan

I think the question is bad debts were recovered from 2010, did they not show against the 2010 accounts rather than the 2011 accounts?

Chairman

No, because the provision had been made in the 2010 accounts, which effectively meant that we had a larger expenditure in 2010.

Paul Charlton

So if you have gone from £613K and you take off the £274 it will come down to £340K. You then take off the £90K, it comes down to £250K but the £90K has to go on the £110K so that brings the £110K back up to £200K. So you have got £250K.

Chairman

Debbie, do you wish to comment on this at all? It's certainly not my way of doing things but.....

Paul Charlton

But if you have made provision in 2010 and reversed it in 2011 and then you didn't need to make it in 2010...

Debbie Meredith

I understand what you are saying but that's not how I understand it to have worked.

*After note (1) - The Chairman should have made clear that the £90,000 of bad debts referred to the years 2001 to 2009, not 2010. Thus the loss for 2010 remained at £338,000. If the debts had referred to 2010 then Paul Charlton would have been correct.

The Chairman continued.....

So this just re-emphasises the need to cut our costs in 2012 and the necessity to restructure the organisation. In any event, however, we have halted the NRA's decline and made substantial changes, which will deliver lasting results.

The key component of the improvement in our position has been increased income. You will notice the Total Incoming Resources on page 15 have increased by £640,000 from £3,774,000 in 2010 to £4,418,000 in 2011. The main elements of the increase are an extra £90K in Estate income £140K in membership and training and £60K in charitable shooting activities totalling £290K on the charity side. On the commercial side there is an extra £100K from CNC, £120K in range hire and other shooting events and £130K Bisley Live income, which regrettably has had to be written off in NSC expenses.

The cost performance given this increment in revenue is a credit to the work that all staff have done to tighten our commercial discipline. There are some challenges still to address, however. I draw your attention to the contingent liability in Note 24 on page 33 and the comment by the auditors on pages 13 and 14. We are making a voluntary disclosure to HMRC about the potential PAYE and VAT problems.

There are some unfortunate errors in the 2011 Accounts due to last minute changes not being carried out correctly. These errors do not affect the Statement of Financial Activity on page 15 or the Balance Sheet on page 16. The auditors have approved some non-material corrections to these errors affecting pages 21, 23, 24 and 26. The website version of the Accounts has been changed accordingly.

I would like to thank Brian Cottrell, who is sitting over there, who is our new Head of Support Services, and his staff very much for getting us successfully through the audit, which was delayed by lack of staff continuity and new auditors who not unnaturally looked very closely at our activities. The auditors do emphasise the matter of PAYE and VAT in their comments on pages 13 and 14 but this is not a qualification of the accounts.

We have changed our insurance brokers to Bannerman Rendell who now collect premiums and answer questions about the member's and club's insurance directly so avoiding the potential problem of NRA staff inadvertently acting as insurance advisers contrary to FSA regulations.

We have revised the method of charging for water, sewerage, roads and waste collection by basing the method on the Rateable Value or Council Tax Band of the property so that there is no argument or scope for special deals. Why should a major Bisley club pay less than a hut in D Lines? We are very grateful to Richard Bailie who put a huge amount of work into sorting out what was a dreadful mess.

Hear hear and applause.

One unacceptable item of expenditure was the Journal where the production costs were far too high. Accordingly the decision was made to switch to Blaze Publishing,

saving the NRA about £20,000 per annum. The editions produced by Blaze have received mixed reviews, and there have also been issues over the editing of submitted material. We have listened to your comments and I believe that the most recent edition is nearer the mark. We are, however, heavily reliant on voluntary contributions and also very short of people to review material prior to publication. We have been reminded that this is the Journal of the Association, so we are reliant upon the members of the Association to contribute material. So this is one area where aid from the membership would be much appreciated and if anyone had the time to do this, we would be very grateful.

I turn now to 2012 and the future.

The budget for 2012 is based on 12 new cost centres and was worked on from the bottom up by the cost centre managers. As part of this exercise staff costs were reviewed and allocated to the 12 cost centres. Further an exercise in comparison with prior year budgets and actuals was also conducted and was consistent with the bottom up approach. After applying an average 10% increase in charges across the board and taking account of staff savings, the result was a budget showing a loss of £96,000 for 2012. The Trustees took the view that further savings would materialise during 2012. I am very grateful to our staff involved in this exercise, which is something they have never experienced before.

What this has shown is how critically dependent we are on commercial sales to support other activities.

The results for the first quarter of 2012 show a loss of £217,000 against a budgeted loss of £235,000, which gives a favourable variance of £18,000. This is against a group turnover of £934,000. There is further work to do to allow the cost centre managers to see how well they have performed on a monthly basis. This is a priority now that the audit is complete.

Outside of the financial area, I mentioned in the Annual Report and Accounts for 2011 that the restructuring has continued with a further 6 people being made redundant in 2012. It has been a very trying time for all our staff. We hope to recruit a Commercial Manager this autumn to generate new business particularly during the week.

During 2012 we have turned our attention to eliminating where possible special deals that had become a feature of Bisley life over the last decade or more. Why should someone have a free caravan site and free electricity for over 10 years because a previous Chief Executive said so? The irregularities over markers pay will impact on us in 2012 as will the use of vouchers for payment in kind for various forms of work provided. In future all people requiring payment for work they do will be paid through the payroll and where appropriate income tax and National Insurance will be deducted. Significant irregularities concerning the payment of Imperial Meeting entry fees have recently been uncovered and will be resolved prior to next year's meeting.

The 10 year dispute over the leases for Victoria Chalets has been settled at last and it is hoped that other outstanding lease disputes will end soon.

We have upgraded Short Siberia to be a National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) compliant range, repaired the access road and expanded the car parking facilities. We are devoting our scarce resources to security, health and safety and are investigating the feasibility of turning Cheylesmore into an NPIA compliant range to encourage Police Forces to use these facilities in the future. We hope to upgrade a further two ablution blocks this autumn.

We have taken a leading role in encouraging disabled people, particularly servicemen and women, to take up the sport of shooting. We are holding the first Military Adaptive Shooting Championships at Bisley next week alongside the Service Rifle events. This has been greatly helped by a grant of £90,000 from Sport England which is being spent partly on disabled shooting and partly on subsidising the costs of training RCOs and club coaches throughout England as Sport England wants to increase the take up of sport particularly those in the age group 16-25. It is disappointing that no clubs outside Bisley have so far been able to host training days on the ranges they use away from Bisley as Sport England wants the benefit to be felt throughout England. The money is available until 31 March 2013 after which any unspent is returned.

I thank wholeheartedly all our staff and volunteers for their contributions during another very difficult year.

Finally I look back over the last three years and remind myself of all the problems we have had to face. It is clear that the NRA was not in the fit state I thought it was in 2009. It will be a year or two before we are operating in a proper business-like way as staff need training and support in developing the new commercial disciplines that must underpin our future ways of working. What I am certain about is that we could not continue as we were and so I have no regrets for the difficult decisions we have had to make. It is essential that Bisley, supported by commercial revenues, becomes the powerhouse for the revival of our sport outside the south east.

I now open the meeting to questions and comments and suggest we start with the accounts for 2011. Will you please use a microphone so that everyone can hear you speak. Please give your name before making your points.

Gary Alexander – General Council

Can I ask a question reference the contingent liability and the situation with the new Auditors reference the significant liability for tax and national insurance as I understand that is not a new situation and it relates to previous years. So are the previous Auditors liable and why have they not pointed this out going back over many years. That's not the only example but it's a good one to start with.

Chairman

I think I can't answer that one directly, I don't know whether Debbie has any views on why the previous Auditors didn't raise this issue?

Debbie Meredith

I have no idea. The Auditors sent through documentation showing what controls weren't in place but these issues did not reach the council.

Gary Alexander

Should they not have? Does that not make them negligent?

Debbie Meredith

Clearly we will need to look into that. I'm not sure.

Gary Alexander

I'm sorry I didn't understand. To me there are several examples where we have had problems with our Accounts, we pay professional fees to a professional body and this is their job to pick up that. If I make a mistake in my job someone will make a claim against my professional indemnity. I don't understand why we allow them to not do their job and walk away from it and we should be looking to find out why

Debbie Meredith

The issue was there were insufficient controls in the finance department and therefore we have not had the information we were able give the Auditors.

Gary Alexander

They're not doing their job. They should look at our financial systems and advise you as to whether or not your systems are suitable to carry out the job they are supposed to do.

Debbie Meredith

They have been doing that.

Gary Alexander

The previous Auditors were advising us that our systems weren't working and we ignored them?

Debbie Meredith

We did receive the information but we didn't act quickly enough to rectify the situation.

Gary Alexander

And this was communicated to the membership how?

Debbie Meredith

The Trustees were not given the Auditors reports detailing issues identified within the Finance Department and so the Trustees did not know this had not been communicated.

Gary Alexander

We have a membership full of skilled and talented Accountants and Auditors. Rather than be kept secret could be passed out, we could have solved these problems and I find this is indicative of the whole aura around the Council where there seems to be a we're going to keep this secret and not tell anybody because you guys have no idea what you are doing and we are the only people that know what's going on. We the membership have a huge resource and a huge talent and Mr Pizer came into office taking a list of all the talents that were in the membership on the promise that he was going to use the talents and he's fallen into the pit of not talking to people and keeping things secret. These problems could have been picked up and solved.

Chairman

You are quite right. Three years ago I talked about the Trustee Advisory panel and I did get offered a lot of support and I am using those people still. At that time I wasn't aware that there were any serious problems with the accounts, I did check the management accounts for 2008 against the audited accounts, they agreed absolutely identically wherever they should.

Gary Alexander

That's my point, shouldn't the Auditors have realised that they didn't match, that there was a problem. We paid them fees to do this and they didn't do their job.

Chairman

It started to go wrong in 2010 and if I remember Bruce Pollard, who was then our Director of Finance, he was sick for about three months before resigning. Mark Haszlakiewicz, our Treasurer, had to come in and effectively work full time for about six months and it was at that point that it became apparent that there were problems. Mark stood down, as he had planned to do in the Autumn of 2010, James Ragg took over and Graham Gold came in as the new Head of Finance. He identified a number of these problems but there were so many problems that James Ragg had to say to him you haven't got time to deal with all of them you must deal with the following items which he, on behalf of the Trustees, felt were the most important to deal with.

Gary Alexander

But if there were so many problems and they were so obvious why did the Auditors and the Treasurer at the time not pick them up?

Chairman

Well they certainly weren't obvious, it was actually only when Debbie Meredith here came in and started looking at the financial processes throughout the organisation that the weaknesses certainly became much more understandable to me and I suspect to the other Trustees. Of course that was in 2011 when Debbie came in and since then we have had a great deal of work done to put things right, there's still a lot of work to do and that will be done this year.

Mike Fugeman – Windsor RC

If the Auditors have suddenly resigned it just seems all far too suspicious. Gary said that they were paid to do a job, I appreciate the weaknesses there were within the NRA in the way they were conducting their in house finances but the Auditors were professional people who were paid to find things out and they did not.

Is there not a case to sue them, there must be surely some sort of case to sue them for negligence. There must be reason to carry out a provisional investigation into suing them for negligence.

Chairman

Certainly we have to do some investigation into the PAYE and VAT problems. When we have done that investigation and we know what the liability is then we will be in a position to say should they have spotted this earlier and if the answer is yes then we will take professional advice as to whether we should take action against them.

Mike Fugeman – Windsor RC

That's one of the problems, as Gary said and you have just said yourself there are lots of errors. Surely there is a case of negligence for not picking up at least one of them, that's all I'm saying.

Chairman

They did pick up a number of these problems, which they did put in their management paper, which went to the Treasurer and for some reason that was never passed on.

Paul Charlton

The written questions I put to you which was is it possible to see the management letter from Baker Tilly and to see the letters of resignation and finally it said, if sight of the letter is not possible who on the Council has seen the correspondence? I think that is really what we want to know.

Chairman

I have seen the correspondence.

Paul Charlton

With which Treasurer did this take place, our current Treasurer or a previous Treasurer?

Chairman

The resignation would have occurred while Debbie here was Treasurer or just before?

Debbie Meredith

Just before.

Karen Robertson – General Council

Regarding the Auditors, I have been looking back at some of the minutes we have had over the last couple of years and what you have said does not match what is in the Trustee minutes concerning the re-election of the Auditors for last year.

Chairman

I haven't got a note in front of me so I am remembering things but Baker Tilly produced the audited accounts towards the end of May last year.

Karen Robertson

What I am specifically referring to is I am sure I have seen the fact that we were going to have Baker Tilly with the proviso that we were going to re-elect them and the Trustees were then going to look at searching out a new set of Auditors and that is in the minutes before the AGM last year.

Chairman

Yes, at the AGM last year which was towards the end of June it was also adjourned to a date different to that originally published, we did re-appoint Baker Tilly as Auditors and very soon after that they resigned and we had a 'beauty contest' and I think there were three sets of Auditors who responded and on the basis of that we chose Saffery Champness.

Karen Robertson

That wasn't what I asked, what I am saying is that it was in the minutes before the AGM that was what you were going to do so did they resign or were they asked to resign?

Chairman

No, not that I am aware of. I have seen no correspondence, which suggests that, they just sent an e-mail to say they did not wish to continue.

Karen Robertson

Can I ask Charles as he writes the minutes, do you remember anything about that?

Charles Murton

I don't recall seeing the actual resignation e-mail. I do remember the discussion at the subsequent Council meeting so it's as you say up until the AGM we were expecting that they would continue, it wasn't until after the AGM that they stood down so the Council then had to take action to make sure we had Auditors available for this year.

Karen Robertson

I think you're still missing my point that is it looks to me that there was a plan really afoot before the AGM to replace the Auditors but we weren't told as members – am I right in that?

Chairman

No

Karen Robertson

OK, well I will go and look out the paperwork and come and see you privately if necessary.

After note – The Chairman remembered the sequence of events incorrectly. As I understand the position Baker Tilly allowed themselves to be reappointed at the 2011 AGM in the knowledge that they were going to be replaced. It was therefore always the plan that new auditors would be appointed for 2011/12 but it obviously took a while for relevant firms to be identified and the 'beauty contest' to be organised. Once the 'beauty contest' in October had been concluded, Baker Tilly resigned on the 1st November 2011 in accordance with the prior agreement to facilitate the appointment of the new auditors.

Chairman

Ok.

Gillian Kaile

I was at the previous meeting although I am aware that some here were not but I did actually ask about a long term planning and was sort of given the answer that you were too busy with other things, but there are certain things in the accounts which have been rambling on which have needed long term planning and then the Charity Commissioners as well, one of the key elements of being a Trustee is you are obliged to make long term plans. What I wanted to say is you absolutely need to get some people looking at this at the same time, because this is the type 2 problem, which is very common to disaster rather than fighting your immediate type 1 problems. This is a key element to the Charity Commissioners and we want to be on the right side of them.

Chairman

Ok. Well let's start with that point. We published a strategy for the next five years, we did that two years ago. We have looked at this and said that this is still valid in today's circumstances and that is what we are trying to achieve. It's on our website.

Gillian Kaile

As quite a lot of our properties are leasehold from the Government and the National Audit office is starting to do a search around at the minute so I think we need to have all our bats absolutely lined up.

Chairman

I'm not sure what point you are making there.

Gillian Kaile

I will speak to you afterwards. No I don't want to be secretive but I am just trying to make my point. We own the leaseholds here, which we lease basically from the Government and the Government is looking at all its assets across the Country at the moment as reports will be made to the Government by the National Audit Office and they are liable to be looking at the efficiency and the good running of all their properties and assets etc.

We really need when they come round to have a clean bill to present to them because we don't really need the National Audit Office on our back as well at the moment.

Chairman

I don't think it's anything to do with the National Audit Office how we run our operations. We have a 125 year lease of which 10 or more years have now expired and if the MoD wish to change that in any way they would need to come to us and enter into negotiations.

Gillian Kaile

I see. Can I ask one or two quick questions – how much more did you save in staff cost savings this year?

Chairman

The full benefit of staff savings, I'm not answering you directly here, but when the full benefit come in, it will be £200K in a full year. We will not see that benefit in 2012, not in full, it will be 2013 before we see that full benefit.

Gillian Kaile

So can we say for the current year it will be £100K?

Chairman

As I said we have got figures for the first quarter which show that is a period when we spend more money than we receive but we have spent less than we expected in the budget and that is a good start towards making sure that the budget balances.

Gillian Kaile

So we haven't actually made any savings on the staff cuts yet?

Derrick Mabbott

Because most of the redundancies were announced in January, then we had notice periods and redundancy payments etc. then virtually nothing has hit in the first quarter, it will only be in the second quarter and beyond that the savings will show.

Gillian Kaile

So you are anticipating that the saving will be £200K for next year?

Derrick Mabbott

Well I am expecting this.

Gillian Kaile

So if we hadn't lost £130K from Bisley Live perhaps the staff cuts might not have been quite so draconian?

Derrick Mabbott

I think they would have been because bearing in mind we had a maintenance backlog of about £750,000. Ask anyone who complains about the state of the ablution blocks and they would say that we need to generate a lot more money if we are going to get the camp up to the standard that they would deem as acceptable.

Gillian Kaile

The maintenance backlog has got nothing to do with staff cuts, which I was asking about.

Derrick Mabbott

I think it has everything to do with it.

Gillian Kaile

You did this before five times at the previous meeting, going off at a tangent to prove something. I am trying to ask you directly about staff costs. You think when we come back to you next year staff cost reductions can be £200K and that is what we expect to see in the accounts, yes? Annualised?

Derrick Mabbott

Yes

Gillian Kaile

OK. So it has nothing to do with maintenance?

Derrick Mabbot

Well, no, you asked the point as to whether the cuts needed to be that draconian. If we.....

Gillian Kaile

Well I said they would have to perhaps be that draconian

Derrick Mabbot

Will you allow me to answer the question please

Gillian Kaile

All I want to know is about staff

Derrick Mabbott

If you will just allow me to answer the question. So you have made a point around whether the cuts needed to be as draconian as they were. We need to generate a lot more money as surplus within this organisation. If we are going to provide the level of resource we need to satisfy the Association nationally, if we are going to refurbish the camp appropriately, we need to generate an awful lot of cash and on that basis those staff reductions were entirely appropriate.

Gillian Kaile

That Sir, considering what's coming up with the Imperial Meeting has yet to be proved. Thankyou.

Applause

Carol Painting

I have actually got some questions of my own but I also have a statement from Mick Barr, so pretend I'm Mick Barr.

Chairman

Carol, would you explain why Mick Barr is not here

Carol Painting

Mick is currently in hospital and expecting some stents to be installed but they haven't decided yet whether they will do it.

He would like to thank everyone for their cards and calls. He is a Life Member of the NRA and a member of numerous clubs. He apologises for having to miss this AGM and he said at the recently postponed AGM earlier this month comment was made and thanks given for actions that severely reduced our monumental overdraft and he agreed with that and accepted the comment. However the root cause of the overdraft in his opinion was not resolved at all. Our overdraft was, in his opinion, caused by extremely poor management, which was allowed to run wild and it did.

The current Trustees and Derrick Mabbott especially are tasked with attending to this specific matter whilst still doing everything they can to keep shooting and our Bisley camp moving forward. I should, therefore, like to congratulate all of them and Derrick Mabbott in particular including newly appointed staff for what they have done and aim to do.

I fully appreciate that a proportion of the establishment feels put out by some of the steps taken and whilst this is unfortunate some very severe actions were necessary. These latter comments of mine may not suit some of you here this evening either, but let me now, if I may, put two basic questions to you. How many of you run your own businesses? Or hold very senior positions within successful businesses? He asks for a show of hands (many hands went up). The second question is how many of you employ wasters in your respective businesses? (Few hands went up)

To any new staff yet to be appointed I say you have an interesting challenge ahead and I sincerely wish you well. If I can help in any way you need to call me.

Mick also wrote a couple of words regarding the new journal – "it's crap"

Applause

He sends his best wishes.

I do also have some questions but Robin would you like me to bring them up later?

Chairman

You are here now so why don't we get on with it.

Carol Painting

There are just one or two things I would like to ask now and see if you know the answers. I was interested to know when Derrick started so that we could relate his salary to an annual rate and I wasn't sure when he started in his post?

Chairman

He was initially unpaid, then he became a consultant and we started paying him and then we got permission from the Charity Commission to pay him as an employee for

a specified period of time and the accounts show what we have paid him in this period.

Carol Painting

How many months was the £52K paid over?

Chairman

I don't normally go into this sort of detail on individual members of staff

Paul Charlton

Well you need to, it's allowed in the Charter in the final paragraph for us to query emoluments of officers in the general meeting

Chairman

We started to pay him as a consultant round about the 18th August 2011.

Carol Painting

Thank you. Now I was looking through the notes and I found a comment about the various committees and I was interested in the fact that the Treasurer is not on the Remuneration Committee and I would have thought that the Treasurer should be.

Chairman

My copy of the accounts shows the Treasurer as being part of the Remuneration Committee and if you turn to page 3 you will see that the fifth name down is Mrs D. Meredith from June 2011.

Carol Painting

OK. Sorry, that's fair enough.

In principle I don't think we should employ Trustees or Non-executive Directors, I think as a Charity we should be seen to do the right thing and I am concerned. Now what was the outcome of the £20,000 spent pursuing opportunities with the Police, which was paid to one of the Non-executive Directors and then the other one had £11,000 on construction projects.

Chairman

Well, let me deal with Roger Boyd first because he was the person who was paid £20,000. Roger was working with Glynn and he developed a great deal of knowledge about what Police requirements might be so this was if you like research, which was well worth doing. We didn't immediately benefit from it if I remember rightly but we have picked up some of those leads and some Police forces who were contacted in that period occasionally are now shooting at Bisley not perhaps that regularly and we are looking to get further Police business here. So that deals with him.

Carol Painting

Can you quantify the benefit then at the moment?

Chairman

I can't put pounds, shillings and pence on that, no. I haven't actually done that research but it is not huge sums of money.

Carol Painting

Turning now to the various Estate related construction projects in support of the Chief Executive.

Chairman

Russell Neighbour initially worked on this for us free of charge and then we started giving him quite a lot of odd jobs like writing a specification for the Torpedo shed when it had to be re-roofed, so he wrote the specification, he got the tenders in and he made recommendations to the Trustees and as a result of that we then got the roof done and he then made sure it was done ok.

It's visible things like that. The upgrade of Short Siberia, that was again an area where he wrote the specifications and so on. We are doing an upgrade of Cheylesmore, Russell has again written the specifications for this. The markers walkway, he was responsible for that. He didn't actually do the work he wrote the specification and obtained the quotes so that was the type of work he was doing.

Carol Painting

OK, so you think that was reasonable for a Non-executive Director to be paid for.

Peter Hobson

We would have had to pay someone anyway.

Carol Painting

Thank you I won't go into detail I have had an e-mail from Brian who also provided me with a lot of information. Thank you.

Chairman

Thank you Carol.

Karen Robertson

We have had a lot of consultants helping out with the accounts. When are we going to find out how much that has cost us? Bearing in mind some will have been last year and some will have been this year, but by an e-mail that Anna Catovic sent out they are obviously being paid a lot of money, where is it in the accounts?

Chairman

I hadn't thought of that one.

Unknown

Can you give us a ballpark figure?

Karen Robertson

Yes, a ballpark figure will do.

Brian Cottrell

These costs will be shown in the supporting documents I think it's on note 7, which is part of the staff costs.

Karen Robertson

I don't think it would have been in the staff costs by the amount that Anna has last billed us for and that was £8,000 or £9,000

Debbie Meredith

It is in the region of about £35,000

Karen Robertson

Is that for all of them because there was more than Anna.

Debbie Meredith

Yes

Karen Robertson

If you say so.

Norman Edwards

I would just like to know how much we have actually paid out in the previous financial year for industrial actions. Let's take Martin Farnan, all the legal costs associated with that. How much have we allocated for bad decisions on those that have left this coming year?

Chairman

Martin Farnan, the settlement was in the previous year, that was 2010 so that doesn't appear at all in 2011.

Norman Edwards

That was an example, but have we not been involved in industrial relations with any other staff?

Derrick Mabbott

We have three employment tribunals under way related to staff who have been made redundant in the last 12 months. We are fighting all of them, I don't know how much people know about these things but it is very common for people to settle before these go to an Employment Tribunal. We are fighting them all.

In each of these cases we feel we have a very strong case and clearly we will end up with Solicitors and Barristers fees, in the region of £12,000 thus far.

Norman Edwards

We seem to have suffered most of our losses over the past few years through abysmal executive management decisions, what's in line now, I know you are restructuring, but the losses we have incurred have not been through general staff not doing their job and yet they seem to have been the ones taking the major hits

Derrick Mabbott

I don't understand what you mean. In terms of how we repair the finances of this organisation.....

Norman Edwards

What I am getting at really is, if these bad executive decisions had been in the past, what infrastructure is there in place now to make sure the existing executive does not do the same.

Derrick Mabbot

In terms of infrastructure what do you mean?

Norman Edwards

Well you're setting management objectives but what are the executive objectives. Just a big ballpark thing saying we have got to make the NRA more profitable what is in place to check the executive, who's guarding the government?

Derrick Mabbott

The first thing is we are bringing in new managers for most of the senior roles within the organisation so with the nine redundancies I have made since June, six of them I will not replace. Throughout the period of this year, certainly for the first say 4 months I was meeting with the Trustees on a fortnightly basis as it became clear on the scale of the issues that we faced. My original plan to be quite transparent with you was to be in post for about 3 months. It was only when we learnt the full scale of the issues that we faced that we realised that was hopeless and naive. So we had fortnightly meetings and we have relaxed on those in more recent times. I think that we, the Trustees, need to stay close to the management of the organisation. There is a very different structure viz a vie the board of the NSC now and our control is much closer as Trustees. I am in contact with my fellow Trustees daily. I think it is a much tighter, much closer governance than it has been, perhaps ever and I don't think that will change once I move away and the new Chief Executive is in place.

Stephen Brooks – North London

Robin, 2012 comments, ablutions – you talk about dealing with those in October. We have a meeting starting in a week's time and the ablution blocks in this camp are a disgrace.

Hear hear & applause

Chairman

Yes, some of them are not at all good. I did a walk around them a couple of weeks ago and we are increasing the number of cleaners, we are wanting obviously to make it easier to keep these blocks clean and that means rebuilding to a certain extent, perhaps not doing a complete rebuild, as we did with site 2 and site 5, which was relatively expensive, but yes, I accept they are not good and we should become better. I am sort of reminded of the Deitra Carmichael compendium of 300 colour photographs of the toilet blocks at Bisley camp, which she gave me in August 2009. We really haven't done very much to better that.

Unknown

They have got worse, a lot worse.

Chairman

Well, that's always a matter of opinion

Richard Gardiner – Club 25

Caravan site 7. That caravan site didn't have its water turned on until April but we were all charged our normal rent from the normal date. In addition, Mr Chairman, you spoke about, in your opening remarks, improving communications. We had an invoice this year, everybody that has a caravan had one, accompanied by a letter from the Chief Executive explaining the price increase. I don't have a problem with the 5% increase, the NRA is in financial difficulties, but there was no mention in that letter that the NRA Finance Department or Council I don't know had taken the decision to make annual payments in future and not two separate payments for the Summer and Winter so they want the whole sum up front rather than spreading it between April and November. When you query this you just get a remark and I will quote, the remark was and this was from a Gabrielle Hemingway, 'I apologise if this has caused you any problems, this is a change in policy and takes effect immediately'. There is no communication Mr Chairman and really we as an organisation there needs to be a degree of customer focus and I am sorry to say there isn't any.

I left a message in the reception of Tuesday about the state of the road on caravan site 7 for the facilities manager or whoever it is and my phone number, not a call back.

Chairman

Well can I first deal with the letter about caravan charges. The Trustees had decided that because we were asking for the two sets of charges at once, that those charges could be paid over a period of time and that unfortunately did not get communicated out. I believe this was because of a change of staff at the critical juncture.

Unknown

That's not good enough.

Chairman

It may not be good enough but we tried. I accept that we failed to get that message out and so people were not able to ask to pay over a period of time and the road on caravan site 7, yes I have walked around that and it's not good and clearly we have got to drive really rather slowly but there is a limit to where we can spend the money we have got and we have spent most of that money on roads at Short Siberia, where we actually have a facility being used almost every day, which is generating more money. So we are concentrating our money where we are going to get a very quick payback.

Paul Charlton

Robin, the change to the annual demand, what legal and tax advice specifically with regard to vat and whether you are affecting Council Tax was sought before the change was imposed?

Chairman

There will be no impact on Council Tax, that we are quite clear on. It is just a change in the way we collect the money.

Paul Charlton

The question was did you take advice?

Chairman

As far as I am aware we took advice. I don't remember the details. Do any of my colleagues?

Derrick Mabbott

In terms of your comment about the Council Tax, there was no need to take legal advice as it was very clear that it would have no impact on Council Tax as Council Tax is related to the usage rather than the way we seek payment.

Nicholas Hill

Caravan site number 6. The shower block was not opened until May this year and the floors have not been cleaned since that date. Also the toilet facility has not been opened and I have had correspondence by e-mail with Mr Mabbott when he informed me that this block would not be opened and that they intended to turn this into a storage shed. Also in the e-mail in reply to my questions he has said bluntly that if I don't accept this then I can tender the resignation of my caravan and the NRA will then refund my caravan rent.

Unknown

He does that regularly as well.

Chairman

I think I should say firstly about the block that was not open, the intention was as you say to turn it into a store. The Trustees knew about this and they supported that so Derrick Mabbott was carrying out the instructions of the Trustees.

Derrick Mabbott

I remember the correspondence clearly. We have had to make some hard decisions, we haven't had a lot of cash so we can't do all the things we would like to do. I can either lie to you and promise things I know I can't deliver or I can tell you straight the situation. I chose the latter.

Nicholas Hill

Shame.

Derrick Mabbott

Well if it's a shame to tell people the reality of the situation then I stand guilty as charged and I will continue to do so.

Nicholas Hill

I can't believe your attitude though.

Derrick Mabbott

Well I don't think that's representative of the tone but the reality is we cannot afford to open that site

Nicholas Hill

But you have increased the rent of the caravans and then you have closed the facilities but that does not add up.

Derrick Mabbott

But that's the point, our numbers don't add up. I've had a lot of people saying the way you change the situation within the NRA is we lower prices and you spend more.

Nicholas Hill

There were no toilet rolls in the ladies or gents toilets in site 8. The shower block in number 6 has not been cleaned and the shower curtains in the ladies section my Wife informs me have all been slashed and there is no cover for ladies whilst they are using the showers so why has this not been checked regularly by people?

Derrick Mabbott

Well, those things should be checked, I believe they are being checked.

Nicholas Hill

They can't be, that happened this morning

Derrick Mabbott

So clearly we need to get on that but we are still making a loss....

Nicholas Hill

So why are you asking me to tender my caravan resignation because I complained.

Derrick Mabbott

That's absolutely not what I did...

Nicholas Hill

You sent me an e-mail.....

Derrick Mabbott

Well, you are twisting what I said. The reality is we cannot afford to open facilities and make further losses. We have to make some hard choices. If you want me to hide those from you, if you want me to promise things that we have no intention of doing, then I'm sorry but I won't do that.

Unknown

If we're caught short in the middle of the night, then what do we do?

Derrick Mabbott

Well, there are toilet blocks close by, it's not as though it's the only toilet block on camp. How on earth do you expect us to retrieve the financial position of the NRA if we continue spending money and don't increase our prices.

Unknown

Are we not paying for these facilities in our rent?

Derrick Mabbott

Yes

Unknown

Then why aren't you providing them?

Derrick Mabbott

Well we are providing the best we can afford to do. Look at the numbers. We are still making a loss.

Ross McQuillan

On that point, Mr Chairman, I have two questions both expanding on earlier questions. The first relates to the headline budget figures we saw earlier. When were they set and do they include provisional sums for the employment tribunals and disputes that were mentioned earlier?

Chairman

They were set in January and they do include a provision.

Ross McQuillan

And how much is that?

Chairman

It would be very foolish to give out numbers.

Ross McQuillan

I am not asking for individual cases I'm just asking for a total figure.

Chairman

I'm not able to give a number.

Ross McQuillan

The second question relates to something, which was raised earlier. It was a potential liability for VAT and PAYE. Have we taken advice on what we're dealing with i.e. is the worse case scenario, hundreds of thousands, millions?

Chairman

We are in the very early stages of investigating that and until we have had some help from the Auditors I don't really wish to comment at all on the size of this potential liability.

Ross McQuillan

How long has this been flagged as a potential problem?

Chairman

I can't remember precisely when the Auditors raised it, it would probably have been some time in May or maybe a bit earlier.

Ross McQuillan

I simply wish to highlight this as it's not completely unrelated problems that have caused the problems recently and the background scenario that may have consequences need to be raised at this meeting as that's what we are talking about. I think talking about anything else other than the scale of that loan is foolish. So at what point do you think you will have a clear idea of how big a problem this is?

Chairman

Some time later this Summer.

Unknown

And will this be communicated to the membership?

Chairman

We will have to, when we know the size of the problem, we will discuss that with the HMRC. I don't know how long those discussions might go on and until those are concluded and we have an agreed sum that we have to pay.

Ross McQuillan

Do we know how many years the problem applies to?

Chairman

No

Tony Mitchell

Have the HMRC had any contact with us about this problem?

Chairman

We are about to make a voluntary declaration to them

Lynne Johnson – North London RC

Just going back to the conversation about the toilet block on site 6, there are two ladies toilets, the door is locked and I have sent a communication with Mr Mabbott about this and been informed that those toilets will remain closed. However, last year a new boiler was installed in there to provide hot water for hand washing and it's two toilets, it's very convenient for the residents of site 6 and site 6 is predominantly occupied by people who attend the Imperial Meeting only and I can see there will be a lot of problems in a weeks time when people turn up and can't get in there and it's almost discrimination against ladies that I now have to walk further to actually less

good facilities. Please open the door, just unlock it and clean it, it's fine, it works, we want to use it.

Chairman

OK. Well we'll have to consider that, I don't think I have an immediate answer I'm afraid.

Richard Gardiner

I have a suggestion for the accounts next year. The one thing that I felt was missing was a breakdown of the income generation from external events so that the members are aware of how much income is coming in from external events. It did strike me such as the HOG rally and the Ascot security guards that were here for a week last week, the CNC, which we saw tonight but I can't find in the accounts detailed anywhere and the Police usage of the ranges. Obviously as the NRA is trying to generate income from other sources I believe the members should be aware what that income is, where it is not commercially sensitive then it should be published as separate lines within the accounts for us to be able to review.

Hear hear

Chairman

I hesitate to make the accounts even longer but if that is what you want then the turnover for the NSC, because that is where it would appear, that could be expanded. I think it says something like £1.7m from memory without a breakdown, so yes, we could provide a split on that. I'm told that there may be confidentiality problems if we have commercial charging.

Ross McQuillan

It's critical to know the total sums involved in order to be able to justify the employment of staff members who are solely responsible for managing and increasing that income. Without knowing how much that is it is impossible for the membership to support or object to the employment of a Commercial Manager.

Chairman

The Trustees will clearly know this, the Chief Executive will know this and he will be measured against what he achieves and he will be measuring his managers against what they achieve.

Ross McQuillan

What we are talking about is commercial income I can't believe that the total sum of commercial income could be commercially sensitive.

Chairman

You have got the total sum, which is about £1.7m, I think the feeling was that we should break it down to something smaller.

Richard Gardiner

Forgive me Mr Chairman, it wasn't commercial activity from shooting it was commercial activity from other events, that was the point I was getting at. We are trying to push to use the camp more effectively.

Chairman

Ok. I obviously had just broadened it somewhat. I would like to see more detail so that I know what is going on but there is a limit I think to the amount that we can give but I am sure we can give more, I am sure we can look at that.

After note 3 – the commercial income from MoD, Police, Bisley Live, HOG Rally etc came to about £720K in 2011 of which about two thirds came from the MoD and the Police.

Mick Sheehan

There seems to be a lot of confusion around here including myself on this. Now did I hear you right that people being made redundant have been replaced by people for the same job because as far as I know legally you are going to be in hot water.

Chairman

No, they are completely different jobs with completely different skill sets and we have to by Law offer those new jobs to the people whose posts are being redundant. We have done that.

Mick Sheehan

Now the only way of making cuts is that the person doing those cuts makes himself redundant, is that going to be the case?

Chairman

You are talking about my colleague here, who will not be with us for ever. He will be standing down when we get a new Chief Executive in so the post of Chief Executive will continue but there will be a change of personnel.

Mick Sheehan

Will there be a huge package going with it?

Chairman

We are advertising the post as a six figure sum.

Mick Sheehan

Right, why so much?

Chairman

That's because you have got to get people with the right skills and we are advised that to get the skills needed to do what we want to do on Bisley camp, we have got to offer that sort of salary

Unknown

As a local resident I was astonished to see the security fence going up almost to the day that the Northern Ireland troubles ended and throughout all the troubles this place has been wide open, how much did the fence cost?

Chairman

It didn't cost the NRA anything, it was put up by the Ministry of Defence and they maintain it at their expense.

Unknown

Oh right, thank you.

Gillian Kaile

It's becoming increasingly apparent that a lot of money is going out the door to pay for accountancy, to pay for tribunals which to a certain extent was man management and most things shouldn't get to tribunal at all and paying for other professional costs. We are an enormous reserve between us and some people might be willing to offer their services at a time when the management cannot even find the money to upgrade basic resources, which have been previously mentioned for which you are actually paying higher charges. Also the agents are very keen to keep the cost of managerial posts up but nationally it has been realised that there is a very good pool of management available across the Country. I honestly think that we need to scrutinise just how much you need to pay your senior management because every time we buy somebody in at the top it is normally the equivalent of 2 or 3 actual acting people at the bottom. So I think you might be able to get a very good resource at not the highest possible cost and you might be able to get some voluntary co-opted staff to bring down some of your charges so that some of the basic kit can be sorted out here to go along with the increased costs which you are making for the hire of caravans and other facilities. Could you actually do a register of resources of people who are willing to see if this cannot be effective?

Hear hear and applause

Chairman

We do in our membership database have information if it is supplied by the member as to what they do and we have from time to time approached some of these people and occasionally yes they are able to help and we have been very grateful for it. But for certain types of work we need people to be properly insured to give that advice so that if something goes wrong, we can actually go and sue them.

If it is just a volunteer doing it for free then we would be in the position of suing a member. So yes we are using people where we can.

Gary Alexander

So you will kick a member off camp because he won't pay for his caravan and you will pay Auditors but you won't sue them, it doesn't really make sense does it?

Chairman

Well we haven't said we won't sue the Auditors, I assume you're talking now of Baker Tilly, but you see you can't sue them unless you practically have a good case and we are not at that situation yet.

Karen Robertson

You might remember Mr Chairman last year I came and saw you and Glynn Alger because the sums for the Young Shooters Fund in the accounts were seriously incorrect in that approximately I think about £1500 wasn't shown in the accounts. I was told to keep quiet about it as it would be sorted out afterwards. I am very grateful it has been sorted out afterwards but I think you have given us far too much money. We have got nearly £5000 credited to the Young Shooters Fund, which should have been just over £2000. Also we have an expenditure of £1500, which it shouldn't have because the way the accounts have been set up it should be a separate loan to a young shooter, which they pay back into their own account, so what I am saying to you is that the Young Shooters Fund in the last two years accounts to my definite knowledge has been completely wrong and this is a very simple sum, it is a very simple fund, why is this going so wrong there? This is known as donations we should be getting this right. I have been asking for a breakdown of this for 4-5 years now and I still haven't got anything. I can't work this fund properly if I don't get the details from the accounts department or the Trustees.

Brian Cottrell – NRA Head of Support Services

I have been around since February and I think the word astonished is probably the best way to describe what the systems in the Finance Department were when I actually got here. I did hope that would now be getting better and more reliable information and obviously that hasn't happened. It will get better, it has to get better and that's what my job is and we have now a new team in the Finance Department but we are making headway and I will deal with this and the Overseas Team Fund and so on, but you will just have to bear with us for the time being.

Chairman

What I would like to do now is take a couple of questions, which have been sent in. I know one person can't be here who is having an operation on his leg.

Question from Dennis Smith – Treasurer of the BSRC

I am raising this question in my role of Treasurer of the BSRC. I would like this question read out and explained at the AGM and would also request a written response to myself as representative of BSRC. I am very pleased to see the previous mystique involving the calculation of service charges has been simplified and is now clearly understandable.

I would however like to query the very basis upon which these calculations are made as I feel it throws up anomalies which I am sure are not intended. In the case of BSRC this has generated a service charge bill, which is only 2% less than a club, the Old Sergeants Mess which has the benefit of toilets, cooking facilities, bar, washing facilities, accommodation. My club has none of these facilities furthermore we can only use our facilities for a maximum of 6 days per week and not 7. We also lose some of these days because the NRA exercises its right to use our facilities on an agreed basis.

The reason for the anomaly is because the calculation is made using total rateable value rather than basic rateable value. I would request that the service charge calculation is revisited, this time using basic rateable value a much more equitable spread.

Chairman

I have only seen this tonight so I have not had a chance to talk to Richard Bailie about this and that will be the first thing that I will do and I will take his advice and respond to Dennis Smith accordingly.

The second question from Peter Williams, it doesn't say what club he is from. He says:

"Myself and colleagues have since the beginning of the year have booked targets on half days and shared with other NRA full members. This is usually conducted mid week and has become quite popular. A couple of members of my local affiliated club, have expressed an interest in joining us from time to time but it appears they are unable to do so as the NRA will only accept official club bookings from affiliated members. As our booking is made by a full NRA member, who takes responsibility for the payment, checking of competence certificates and membership cards etc. would it be possible for an affiliated members to join us, their membership of an affiliated club means they would have insurance in place. There are quite a few such shooters of a certain age out there who would welcome the chance mid week range share and lets face it their money is as good as anyone else's especially at times when the firing points are mostly empty".

I have a suggested response here but I think I want to take more advice on it because it is quite important that whoever shoots is properly insured and therefore I think it would be better for the affiliated club to take the booking rather than a member and then invite his friends, but as I say I have only just seen this so we will answer that one to Mr Williams. Is he here by any chance? No response.

Chairman

That's all the written questions that have come in. Sorry Mr Williams has a second question.

The second question concerns the target range booking system.

"Would it not be possible to do this on-line using a system like www.availablecheck.com which could be integrated into the NRA website. Like hotels or any bookings, it would then be paid for at the time of booking, available dates would be advised and the booking time confirmed. This can apparently be without expensive be-spoke software. The present system, means one has to virtually bid for specific dates and pay according to our Club Secretary."

The problem here is, it is not like booking a hotel room, you have to get the safety gaps between the different types of shooting on Century and so we can't just book say one target at 600 yards without thinking about the consequences it would have on others, that's why at the moment we don't see an easy way of making this automatic on-line.

There is also a question from Paul Charlton about the Disciplinary Committee report. Has that been overtaken by events?

Paul Charlton

No

Chairman

Do you wish to raise it?

Paul Charlton

Yes, it has partly been overtaken by events. The question I asked has been slightly overtaken by events in that it there has now been disclosure in one of the three places where disclosure is required but the result of this has been only in the journal but I note nothing has been posted on the Secretary General's board and the website.

Chairman

The Secretary General's board is only in operation for about 2 weeks of the year.

Paul Charlton

But it's still outside the NRA offices?

Chairman

Yes it is but there's nothing on it.

Paul Charlton

Yes, that's the problem. It is supposed to be on there, it says so in the Rules. The point I'm really asking of those disciplinary cases that are ongoing i.e. those that weren't published as at June 15th, is there any way we can find out or be informed in general terms when the offences were alleged to have been committed and when they came to the NRA's attention and at what stage they are at. Because I am concerned that the disciplinary process has not been dealt with speedily.

Chairman

Sometimes you get appeals and that delay things.

Derrick Mabbott

I think you're right and I think we have been weak in terms of keeping that process flowing during the course of 2011.

This was largely driven by some quite fractious cases, involving people who did put their papers in within 2 weeks but actually resolving those things can take considerably longer. Four of the 2011 issues are unresolved. In terms of 2012 there are 3 cases but they have all happened in the last 3 weeks. One of the problems is actually scheduling the disciplinary meetings but we are in the process of doing that to cover all those three.

Paul Charlton

There was also a second question, which was asking about the loyal greetings that had been sent to our Patron on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee. What was sent and when was it sent?

Chairman

I regret to say nothing was sent.

Paul Charlton

May I make a suggestion that on the occasion of the first stage of the Queen's Prize, loyal greetings should be sent.

Hear hear

Derrick Mabbott

What we are proposing to do is yes to send that, but we are actually planning to do a similar photo to 1977 and 2000, of the Queen's 100 so we will send that too.

Mike Wells – Kensington Rifle & Pistol Club

I have listened to the varying conflicting stories about the Auditors who we have paid thousands of pounds to but don't seem to have done anything to recover under their insurances and we are looking at the NRA as a business. It's not down to the Auditors, it's down to the management and they should be looking at their bank statements every day like I do and that way you know how healthy the organisation is. The NRA should be run by educated officers. Another thought, just prior to the 2002 Commonwealth Games my Club had leased a property at Bisley and there was an ablution block behind that. I organised a detail, a work detail to clean and decorate the whole of that ablution block. Now we didn't get any problems with worrying about whether or not we had done the job properly, we just got down and did it. I think that to sit here and listen to the alienation of your members on locking lavatories, basic human rights, is an appalling situation and to say we haven't got the money then organise a working party. Making cut back all the time is not going to benefit the Association. The Association will just get deeper and deeper in debt unless actions are taken.

Chairman

Well we did, and this is going back a year now, we did close the Camp Cottage ablution block because it was in such a terrible state and the residents in that area came to us and said they wanted to redecorate it and bring it back up to standard

and they have done a fairly good job, it is still not complete though and this is now a year later so we do accept help.

Mike Wells – Kensington Rifle & Pistol Club

In the London riots in Clapham Junction the local residents all basically mustered together and put Clapham Junction back on the map after the riots and I am sure there is a camaraderie amongst all these members here.

We have all got the same interests, we all shoot and we love this camp and we don't want to see that it's mismanaged.

Chairman

I don't want to see it mismanaged either and that is frankly why the Trustees and myself have been doing what we have done over the last 12 months. It has been quite a terrible problem that we have had to face up to.

Kevin Hill – Wandsworth Full bore Rifle Club

The last coats of paint will be on Camp Cottage by the meeting.

Chairman

I am delighted to hear it.

Kevin Hill – Wandsworth Full bore Rifle Club

But I still feel the NRA could use voluntary help a bit more. We are all complaining about roads at the moment but if some scrapings were strategically placed you would find the little pixies would move them into the potholes very very quickly.

Chairman

But then unfortunately the large pixies in their 4 x 4's would drive a little bit too quickly and all the bits would come out of the holes and if you talk to Mick Barr about this, repairing potholes is not a simple task, you have to do it in a particular way and you have got to know what you are doing.

Kevin Hill – Wandsworth Full bore Rifle Club

But we need something done before the meeting?

Karen Robertson

It's impossible to drive round there now

Kevin Hill – Wandsworth Full bore Rifle Club

Behind Canada House is a very bad area and I agree that it is the 4 x 4's that are causing it. Most of whom drive down to the Old Sergeants Mess.

Rae Wills – Classic & Historic Arms

Mr Chairman, over the last few weeks of these meetings I have only heard one thing that the workload on the Trustees has been absolutely horrendous and the problems that they are dealing with are not necessarily of their making. I have some sympathy with this and we can all appreciate there are hard decisions to be made. But having said that with their eye on the very big ball, which is propped up by a lot of other balls, that is on communication in other words.

I have no idea as to why the changeover in the journal occurred, but the way that volunteers that write for you were treated, in that I queried the requirement for discipline reps, which was set in 1999. I was just ignored.

I still haven't got an answer from the Trustees with regard to that request and whether this is still in force. After six months I have managed to get back into print but not with my regular column. I think the journal has to find a balance between what is popular and with what the Association needs. But my statement is that people who have volunteered are not welcomed and dealt with properly and in fact like me only by persistence over six months getting back into print, it's not going to work. I think that the whole effort needs to be directed in that direction otherwise all our volunteers, range conducting officers who come for free to the meetings, if they are not treated well then we will lose them.

Chairman

Well I accept that we have been bad at communications, I admitted that right at the start when I began speaking. We have got to do very much better, the first two issues clearly were not satisfactory as far as very many members were concerned. We had wanted to broaden the appeal of the journal but we clearly didn't get it right. I would certainly be interested in feedback on the third edition of the journal which has just come out, is this better, is this what you would like to have or have we still got a long way to go?

Unknown

It was just like the second edition

Chairman

So you don't like it?

Unknown

It's exactly the same colour, you can't tell the difference between this one and another and they both have that wretched brown cover. In previous years every edition was a different colour.

Chairman

OK thank you, that's a helpful suggestion.

Tony Caulkett – Salisbury Vintage Rifle and Hand gun

You've answered my message that we sent through to you earlier in the week regarding the renewal of Range Conducting Officer certification. We have some of our members saying that as they shoot here on a regular basis why is it necessary for

them to come and pay for an additional 2 day course to get re-certified. Why can't they be automatically re-certified?

Chairman

The RCOs need to come to a meeting where you can discuss the changes and the rules and the implications of them because you may not always understand those implications when you just read it cold and maybe your circumstances are slightly different to those of another club. We do strongly recommend that we require people every 6 years to undergo a refresher course to make sure that they fully understand what is needed. I get so much paperwork over my desk that some of it I'm afraid just gets skimmed and not properly looked at. I am worried an RCO might do the same and miss something. So that's why we do say you've got to come.

Tony Caulkett – Salisbury Vintage Rifle and Hand gun

But does it have to be 2 days and at the same cost as now?

Chairman

I'm not qualified to say whether it should be 2 days. The costs this year are reduced because of the grant of money from Sport England so take up that offer if you have got new people who would like to become RCOs, get them enrolled, I believe it's £45 for a course instead of £160, so that's a huge saving. You can get 2 or 3 more RCOs in your club for the price of previously one course.

Tony Caulkett – Salisbury Vintage Rifle and Hand gun

We have received a further notice from the MoD cancelling bookings following an incident on one of the ranges? Is this happening nationally or just on the Bulford ranges?

Chairman

Your e-mail was the first I knew about it

Tony Caulkett – Salisbury Vintage Rifle and Hand gun

I know you said you were going to find out for us but I wondered if this was just us.

Derrick Mabbott

I think it's worth just flagging actually, the arrangements we have with the MoD through DLRSC. The Defence Land Ranges Safety Committee is the only reason that we can use MoD ranges.

People like Mik Maksimovic and James Watson have put an awful lot of time into getting those arrangements put in place and we need to demonstrate a robust process. So it's not necessarily us that determine what that robust process is, it's that we need give comfort to the MoD. It is constantly a threat and we have had an

incident recently, very recently, which is one of the 3 disciplinaries that I mentioned earlier, whereby we had a problem on an MoD range with an RCO whose qualification had run out in 2007 and indeed that club's affiliation to the NRA had lapsed. That's causing quite a lot of grief for us. There is an inquiry under way at the DRSC, which we are participating in and contributing to.

It is something we need to keep a very keen eye on, if we lose that we lose a lot and so I would just encourage you to work with us on this and make sure we are as squeaky as we can be on it because the alternative is not worth thinking about.

Henry Day – formerly Cambridge University Rifle Association

Can I suggest, you obviously have a problem in that the NRA hasn't got any money and you need to claw that money back. Would you consider the option of going back to competitor marking during the Imperial Meeting. The Imperial Meeting costs are going up and up, the ammunition is not securing huge savings at the moment due to the contract we have with RUAG as far as I know, I think it's something that has worked in the past, a lot of younger people do the meeting who I am sure would be quite happy to do their own marking and it's a way the NRA could make a reduction in costs to its members without the NRA suffering financially as well. Is that something you can look at?

Chairman

I see no reason why we shouldn't look at it. Certainly when I started shooting you always did your own marking anyway. Paid markers came in much more recently and then of course it was felt that they should all be paid markers and competitors could have an extra period when they wouldn't have to do anything and could relax between shoots. But yes I don't see why we shouldn't look at this.

Henry Day – formerly Cambridge University Rifle Association

Certainly, the reason I'm enquiring is the discount for entries has dropped from 50% to 30% in the last few years, which is hitting particularly the university age group hard as they don't have the benefit of schools equipment and funding.

Karen Robertson

Could I just answer that because obviously I know a little about it from my past employment, unless Bill Richards is here? no. If you go back to competitor marking, which I don't have a problem with you actually have to cut The Telegraph and The Mail down to 10 shot shoots. It also leaves the Conan Doyle on Wednesday, which you can't physically fit the marking in with shooting. So if you do, two will go down and it's also incredibly difficult to police as obviously we need to check on who is down in the butts and who isn't. The other reason is that if you have competitor marking when you get 2 days where Counties have their team matches you can't do them.

Henry Day – formerly Cambridge University Rifle Association

I think there could be a combination of both and find a way of reducing the cost of Imperial that way. I think a lot of people wouldn't mind only doing 10 shots.

Unknown

If you could chose to do it before the 1st of May for instance but after a certain cut off you would have to pay.

Henry Day – formerly Cambridge University Rifle Association

Yes and people that didn't want to mark for various reasons wouldn't have to.

Chairman

It seems we have made 2 points, it is a worry to all of the Trustees that the costs of the Imperial Meeting have gone up, particularly the ammunition and we do need to think seriously how we can save costs and perhaps reduce them.

Ken Shorthouse

I would like to give you a bit of good news, the McQueen discipline of shooting is taking off on this camp now. To shoot McQueen you have got to look at 20 or 30 pages to find out what you are doing. I have run McQueen for many years you have got a problem I think with the shooting members not the RCOs trying to work out what this is. Could I call for a Shooting Committee member to be just for McQueen. It would be good when I want to discuss things, it would be great help to everybody if we had a Shooting Committee member for McQueen only. The second thing I want to say about McQueen is looking at discrimination. This year I'm not sure whether you are aware but the NRA are supplying rifles for the McQueen A. Now any servicemen here knows that you can't use a Walther rifle left handed. I think I am right in saying that. Why are we discriminating against a person who shoots left handed because most cadets and the Canadians are left handers and they have to be sent away.

Chairman

I haven't the faintest idea of the type of rifle that is being used for McQueen and I am sure there are people in this room that will consider what the situation is and say how that can be alleviated.

Iain Robertson – Secretary of the Shooting Committee

Firstly moving on to the rules of McQueen, if they are incorrectly stated in the Bible I would be delighted to give advice in the 2013 as to how to describe them correctly, production for that will start in September and the schedule will be produced around about the second week in December and I would be very happy to include you in the process.

As regards extending the Shooting Committee, McQueen is not a discipline in its own right, I think I'm correct in saying, it falls under the heading of Civilian Service Rifle.

Ken Shorthouse

Miscellaneous rifle, I clarify that, Miscellaneous Rifle

Iain Robertson

There is no discipline called Miscellaneous Rifle, therefore it is represented by the Civilian Service Rifle representative who is Vice Marshall Bob Hunter of the Royal Air Force.

Ken Shorthouse

I haven't seen this man on the firing point at McQueen for the last 10/15 years, I would like to ask for a member for McQueen only so that we can have a go about the rules and regulations where the shooters are trying to bend the rules. That's my point.

Iain Robertson

Perhaps we could discuss this outside this meeting.

Peter Hobson

I shoot McQueen and have done for many years. I endorse exactly what you have said, the rules have been bent over many years. The Range Officers have done their best over the years, some people don't shoot McQueen anymore because they think the rules have been bent, particularly in stalking rifle. It's not part of historic arms, it's not covered by service rifle, it's not governed by target sports, it is a specific sport, however I would thoroughly endorse the Shooting Committee to look at this and have a representative to encourage this particular part of our sport to clean it up, get it where it belongs and encourage people, particularly younger people who seem to be very interested in this. I would make a recommendation for that.

Applause

Chairman

I would now like to draw this meeting to a close and thank you all very much for your attendance and the very detailed questioning that you have asked us about and we will take very careful note of what you have been saying and hopefully things will be better before too long. Thank you.

Applause

Meeting closed 22.40