

Ladies & Gentlemen

So I am pleased that we are able to report another healthy surplus for 2016, continued growth in our membership, and significant capital investment.

I hope by now you have all had the opportunity to read the Annual Report which was published in March which outlines our financial position. As is now our custom, I am going to leave Derek Lowe, our Treasurer, to review the financial report for you in a moment and then Andrew Mercer will describe the capital investment projects on-going at Bisley Camp and other things.

First, there are a number of other positive items that I would like to share with you.

Our membership continues to grow. As of the end of May this year, we have 8,375 members. We received 850 applications for new membership in 2016 – an average of over 16 a week – and we have experienced similar levels so far in 2017. The number of affiliated clubs increased to 746 in 2016.

Throughout this period, the membership team, led by Georgina Thatcher, have been updating the membership database to ensure our membership information is accurate, and I would like to thank them for their continued great work on this.

This level of membership applications, while essential for the growth of our sport, has obviously put pressure on the system, particularly on our training team, as the number of probationary members keeps growing. At one point we had 174 probationary members seeking training.

Consequently we have invested in new training facilities in the Pavilion, you're actually sitting in part of them now, to cope with this increasing demand. This includes a new armoury, and modern IT and audio facilities. We have also recruited David Camp as the National Training Manager, to manage the training at Bisley and to develop ways for the Association to deliver training away from Bisley, which we think will be helpful.

Range use by both members and corporate users continues to grow. Range use by individuals and clubs is up 11% year on year. This increasing demand has put considerable pressure on the booking system, as I'm sure many of you are aware, and I know that members will be frustrated at times with the inability of the current software to cope with the volume of booking requests received each month – there are often over 1000. We are working on new software to correct this, but in the interim the Range Office will focus on delivering range space for early and repeat bookings to maintain the usual shooting calendar. I know that many have found this irritating, but please bear with us. I know that a lot of bookings are being rejected for lack of capacity, and that is not good.

Coupled with this, we have experienced the usual problems with markers in the early part of the year. Many markers have academic and other commitments, as you know, meaning it is a challenge to maintain a steady supply of markers through the year. Demand for markers rose 21% during the first 5 months of this year compared to the same period last year. This demonstrates the popularity of shooting, but shows that we must look to new solutions, and the answer clearly lies with electronic targets. We are committed to introducing these and Andrew will talk more about this later.

There have been some notable events on the ranges. Last year's Imperial Meeting was the first to include the Cadet Imperial. This proved a popular success and we will hold it again this year. And the winner will be presented with the Simon Fraser Memorial Trophy – an honour for Simon that fortunately we were able to share with him before he passed away. Our major competitions, including the Imperial Meeting, were well-supported, building on recent initiatives. I would particularly like to thank James Harris and his team for the successful delivery of the Target Shotgun, Hand Gun and mini-Rifle leagues at ranges across the UK.

We also continued to organise competitions away from Bisley. In 2016 we held a major competition at Altcar, and earlier this year we held the Birmingham Bisley at Kingsbury, and I wasn't quite sure when that was last held, 2005, thank you James. I want to record my thanks to all those who helped organise these events and make them a success. It is something we wish to continue.

The GB TR Rifle team captained by Lindsay Peden in Canada/USA in 2016 and the team captained by Nick Tremlett in South Africa earlier this year won all their matches – the most significant of which was the Australia Match in Bloemfontein – as well as enjoying some notable individual successes. Emma Nuttall captained the NRA team to the Channel Islands with a revised schedule that worked well I think for both sides, and I hope will continue in future years.

Her presence and all of these competitions continue to demonstrate that we are one of the very few sports that can proudly say that men and women, as well as young and old, and able and physically challenged, can compete together in open competition.

Finally, I will touch upon estate issues. Our rental income continues to rise, and now stands at £1.25m in 2016, up from £1.18m the prior year. The CNC now rent the HAC Clubhouse, and we have renewed a grazing licence with the Surrey Wildlife Trust for the deer in the range danger area. Each of those agreements pays more in annual rent than ALL the clubs on Club Row, from the Army down to the British Commonwealth Club. So those who claim that our improving rent income flows from swingeing increases in rent to Bisley-based clubhouses are simply wrong.

Since 2013, we have agreed new leases in relation to 42 of the 108 properties on the Bisley Estate. All but one of those was agreed without controversy. Five of these are traditional Bisley Clubhouses on a 21-year tenancy. Each has been issued on a rack rent basis and these clubs appear to be doing well. The assertion that charging rack rents will kill off the Bisley based clubhouses does not ring true.

There have been many claims made in the past few days about this issue, and sadly many of these involve misrepresentation. I am sure we will discuss this topic in our question and answer session and I look forward to addressing any concerns of members on this matter.

Before I hand over to Derek, I would like to end by thanking my fellow Trustees, some of whom are here in the room, and Andrew Mercer and his staff for all their energy, enthusiasm and hard work over the past 12 months. Much has been achieved and I remain bullish about the Association's very positive future.