

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION
THE GENERAL COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting
held at the Pavilion, Bisley
on Friday 16th June 2006, from 2.00 pm

Present:

Chairman: Mr JF Jackman
Vice-Chairman: Professor R Horrocks
Treasurer: Mr MJC Haszlkiewicz

Members: Mr HRM Bailie
Mr GV Barnard
Mrs ID Bennett
Mr MJM Black
Mr JPS Bloomfield
Mr CM Brooks
Wg Cdr DP Calvert
Dr AMW Cargill Thompson
Mr ARK Clayton
Mr C Higginbottom
Lt Col R Hoole
Mr CD Law
Mr M Maksimovic
Dr P Monaghan
Flt Lt IW Robertson
Mrs KD Robertson
Mr IR Shirra-Gibb
Wg Cdr ML Symonds
Mr JD Warburton
Mr JA Watson

In attendance: Mr JEM Hartwell - Vice Chairman of the Council
Maj MG Farnan - Director of Shooting
Mrs HL Webb - Membership Secretary
Maj SB Fraser - Rep Brig JR Smales

Apologies for absence:, Mr GWJ Alger, Miss MZJ Boston, Mr JH Carmichael, Mr PR Coley, Mr S East, Maj Gen AP Farquhar, Mr CN Farr, Mr JM Kynoch, Mr C Murton, Miss J Rankin, Brig JR Smales, Mr MWT Walton Mr RHF Wills

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by reminding everyone that any voting papers relating to Charles Murton's election to the Council should have been submitted by the commencement of the meeting. Voting was thus closed.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Charles Brooks for acting as Secretary in the absence of the Secretary General.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th FEBRUARY 2006

The Chairman commented that no representations had been received by the Secretary General in relation to the Minutes.

The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 25th FEBRUARY 2006

No matters were raised.

G 74 REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Mr Brooks presented the Report of the Secretary General which was taken as read.

No matters were raised.

G 75 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The General Council received the Minutes of the meetings of the Membership Committee held on 11th February 2006 and 28th April 2006.

The Membership Committee Chairman informed the meeting that there were no particular issues that had been put before the Council emanating from the two sets of Minutes. Observations would be made allowing for questions at the end.

There was a general discussion on subscriptions and membership. Essentially the Committee is looking at different marketing strategies and how to reach out into the regions and increase the number of younger members as the Association goes forward.

As part of this process, membership fees for 2007 are currently being worked on with the Treasurer to construct the budget. It is hoped that with increased membership there will be the potential to reduce subscription levels in due course.

M 135 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The meeting was informed that the new membership offer of £30 for first year membership is going very well and to date there are 469 new members of which 56 are probationary members so the figures are looking good for the year and already better than 2005.

M 134 INSURANCE UPDATE

The General Council was informed that the NRA had changed insurance brokers in 2006 which had resulted in some confusion. A dispute had arisen with the brokers following an unauthorised restructuring of the financial conditions leading to an exposure for the Association of £27,000. Negotiations have now been concluded which has reduced the cost of

an individual's insurance cover which has substantially reduced the Association's financial exposure.

QUESTIONS

A question was asked regarding the new insurance arrangements citing the experience of two clubs whose premiums have almost doubled

The meeting was informed that this and other issues would be dealt with during the forthcoming negotiations for 2007. However, for most clubs they had got a better overall deal and cover than previously.

The minutes were adopted

G 76 SHOOTING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting 18th May 2006

The General Council received the Minutes of the meeting of the Shooting Committee held on 18th May 2006.

S 349 APPROVED TARGETS

The meeting was informed that a working party had been formed, representing all shooting discipline interests, to review targets used under the aegis of the Association. The main objective was to identify any targets that potentially were in breach of the policy on humanoid targets. Views from General Council were asked for.

S 351 OPTICAL AIDS

The meeting was informed that the Association had been asked by ICFRA to consider the use of any lens in the rearsight in addition to that of an Eagle Eye lens in the front sight. After discussions with the TR sub-committee members and a sounding of other TR shooter opinion, the Shooting Committee had decided that it was in the interests of the NRA to reject this proposal. In doing so, this had left the NRA in a minority of one with regard to the ICFRA vote which caused concern among some ICFRA Council members given that we represented the largest number of TR shooters. Given these concerns, and in order to provide more concrete reasons for supporting their current position or otherwise, the Shooting Committee proposed to set up a small working group to consider the issue in greater detail.

Part of the working group's brief would be to undertake a series of trials using different combinations of optical aids fitted to rifles and fired by shooters across the age spectrum.

Interested parties were invited to take part in the trials.

S 364 TR TOURS 2008

The General Council were informed that the Shooting Committee had approved that the 2008 Tour would be to South Africa. As a result of the short notice and the Journal deadline had been missed it had been decided to contact all TR Members individually to get the selection of a captain underway quickly.

QUESTIONS

Open Days – A question was asked about funding of new equipment for Open Days as they grew in popularity. It was noted that the running of Open Days at Bisley and providing the equipment is the responsibility of the NSC. If more equipment is needed then it should be within the necessary budget and NSC has a duty to make sure it is there, if possible.

Service Shooting – A comment was made that there appeared to be some constraints on overseas teams competing in TASAM/CENTSAM (Annexe A para 4 to the minutes).

Due to a growth in popularity of the event and the increase in the number of overseas teams there had been a problem with range accommodation in 2006. This was being looked at for 2007 following the principle that accommodating foreign teams is given top priority.

MoD/NRA Agreement – A question was asked about the progress of negotiations between the Association and the MoD (Annexe A para 9). It was re-affirmed that the current Agreement covers the 2007 Imperial Meeting.

The meeting was informed that an initial meeting had taken place to get an outline understanding for a way forward and a number of new issues to be addressed. Following that meeting it is intended that the two parties will try to establish Heads of Terms by the end of 2006.

The Minutes were adopted

G 77 NATIONAL SHOOTING CENTRE LIMITED

Minutes of the Meeting 11th April 2006

The General Council received the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the National Shooting Centre Limited held on 11th April 2006.

QUESTIONS

Security – A question was asked about the progress of CCTV

The meeting was informed that the appropriate electrical infrastructure was being installed later in the year for CCTV. At present priority was being given to commission the electronic targets .

No other matters were raised.

G 78 THE COUNCIL

Report to the General Council by Julian Hartwell, Vice Chairman of the Council

The minutes of the Council Meetings held on 25 February, 6 April and 11 May were presented.

The Vice Chairman gave emphasis to the Trustees' plans for the future and invited General Council members to assist with an active role in advising in the planning process towards shaping the future to build on the substantial achievements of the past few years.

No matters were raised at this point.

The Vice Chairman drew attention to the following issues in particular.

1. Shooting Committee

He paid tribute to the work of the Shooting Committee whose members deal with matters of day to day importance for anyone who shoots any of the shooting disciplines for which we are responsible. Their new Chairman, Paul Monaghan, has been faced with a very full agenda for his first year in post. Among the items they have dealt with, or are in the process of dealing with, are:

- Terms of Reference (T 376)
- Relationship with ICFRA (T 377)
- Range Regulations (T 378)
- Shooting Events, Rules and Conditions (T 375) (T 380)
- Imperial Meeting Review (T 383)
- Imperial Meeting Name (T 384)
- Targetry (T 325) List of approved targets to be available by the end of this year

Inputs and opinions were invited from members of the General Council.

2. Membership Committee

The Membership Committee has also had a very full agenda especially in encouraging the fullest possible membership of the Association. This is desirable for a number of reasons in order to:

- enable us to maintain contact with those who participate in our sport
- enable them to have their voice heard
- give us greater standing when dealing with the outside world
- assist in the promotion of the sport on a UK wide basis
- help us to achieve our goal of bringing down the cost of individual subscriptions.

Working with the Secretary General, the Committee has been looking at ways to achieve this. It is not an easy task. The crux of the matter is that the Association relies on the membership subscriptions to meet its existing commitments, including in particular regular repayments to the bank, and any fall in income could set us back in a serious way.

For the sake of the long term health of the Association and our sport the General Council was asked for support in promoting membership and building on the increase in the number of members which has already been achieved.

Among the matters which have been considered by the Membership Committee over the past few months are:

- Club Affiliation (T 386)
- Insurance (T 385)
- Individual Membership (T 386)

3. Charter and Rules (T 388)

The Rule changes to be approved at the immediately following Annual General Meeting include most significantly a limit to the term of office of Council members. In most cases the limit will be 6 years. This will ensure that there is a regular turnover. This should help sustain the vitality of the Council and assist in recruitment. These proposals are consistent with modern best practice and help to demonstrate that we are a forward looking, actively managed organisation. The work in drafting these changes undertaken by Charles Brooks was acknowledged with thanks.

4. Chairman

One consequence of the changes is that the current Chairman, John Jackman, will not be eligible for re-election to office in September 2007. Whilst it was known that he was not intending to stand again after this next year, now the decision will be taken out of his hands. There is now pressure on General Council members to identify a suitable successor since it elects the Chairman who is then, ex officio, also Chairman of the Council. Mr Hartwell stressed the importance of this issue and indicated that the Council will be taking steps to promote the identification of a suitable person and he invited members to contribute to this process with ideas or comments which they should give through the Secretary General.

5. Regional Ranges (T 419)

He reported that Glynn Alger continued to work hard to protect and promote the regional ranges. It is not an easy task. Members were asked to refer to his Report and to assist him where possible. He emphasised that it is vital to the long term welfare of our sport that there should be ranges accessible for use by civilian shooters at a reasonable distance from their home, wherever they live.

Attention was drawn in the Council minutes to the reference to proposed financial assistance for Thorpe Cloud Range in Derbyshire. The Council plans to make a loan of £5,000 to help secure the long term future of this range.

This loan has been considered by reference to the Council's newly developed Policy for providing financial assistance to support regional ranges a copy of which was annexed to the minutes of the Meeting held on 11 May.

6. Open Days (T 390) (T 425)

It is with the prospect of promoting shooting in the regions that the Association has, for the first time, recently held an open day at Altcar. This was an important milestone. Not only did it establish our presence in the north west of England, but also it brought together a number of local clubs and demonstrated to the local police that we are a respectable and responsible sporting organisation. Unfortunately the weather was not kind on this occasion. It is recognised that next time we need to do more marketing to get the numbers up, but we will be building on a good foundation. We all owe a great debt to David Young and all the others who were involved.

By contrast the Open Day at Bisley was almost a victim of its own success. So many people attended that the challenge for next time is to see if we can handle the registration formalities more efficiently. That is in hand but of course the real answer is to get some of the people who came signed up as members and shooting here at other times than open days. Anyway there can be no doubt that the Open Day was a great success and again, grateful thanks to all who were involved.

7. National Shooting Centre Limited

With regard to these minutes which the Council also receives it was emphasised that NSC operates autonomously and is basically responsible for everything which happens here at Bisley. Attention was drawn to the fine legal distinction between the things which are directly under NSC control (the commercial activities) and those for which it is responsible as agent for the NRA (for example NRA Flagship Events (T 382) and real estate). Thus so far as the members are concerned it is NSC which is their point of contact for all matters regarding Bisley and the work of Jeremy Staples and his team was acknowledged.

There is now a proper working relationship between the NRA (as the charity with a UK wide responsibility) and the NSC (as responsible for Bisley). Both are ultimately working to achieve the same things and therefore there is a balance to be struck between maintaining the separation on the one hand and working co-operatively on the other. Support was asked of General Council members to assist in the smooth running of this relationship and a request that any incidences which run contrary to this approach are referred to Jeremy or Glynn, as appropriate.

8. Real Estate (T 323)

The Vice Chairman pointed out that NSC administers the Bisley Real Estate on behalf of the NRA and according to a policy developed by the Council, a copy of which is annexed to the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11 May. After much hard work it is now considered that the policy is fair to our members, promotes the use of the Bisley facilities and is consistent with Charity Law. Whilst being a sensitive subject and expressing hope that as it beds down it will be seen to operate in a way which is both fair and open, invited questions on this policy.

QUESTIONS

Concerns were raised about the current Real Estate Policy by a number of people present during a lengthy discussion (a transcript is available from the Secretary General's office).

Mr Hartwell stated that the Council will review the Policy in the light of the points made.

The Vice Chairman concluded by sharing his vision. He envisages substantially upgraded accommodation on site. That is not to say that the caravans and huts are gone, but that some of the eyesores should go and instead to have a proper resort hotel. During the week, when demand from shooters will be low, it could be used for conferences. He suggested that Bisley is well placed for that. He remarked that the NRA has come past the point of crisis management and it is now time for exploring what we would like to see happen over the coming years. He invited the General Council to play a full part in that process.

9. Strategic Plan (T 401) (T 417) (T 422)

The meeting's attention was drawn to the published Strategic Plan. It is currently being worked on to include a list of specific objectives and action plans, with an assessment of the resources (both cash and staffing) required to achieve them, target dates and measures for assessing the extent to which they have been achieved. This will in turn be carried through to the budgets for coming years. He expressed the hope that members of the General Council will contribute their ideas towards the Plan. This can be done via the Secretary General.

Linked to this there has been consideration whether the Association should increase the number of recognised shooting disciplines and move towards a position where it welcomes any full bore discipline which is safe, well run and lawful.

QUESTIONS

A question was asked about when the draft report on the proposed increase in number of recognised Shooting Disciplines would be available for consideration by the Shooting Committee.

The point was made that the process was at a very early stage and the Group has no status to make decisions. At present it is acting as a think tank for the Council and reporting back. When the Council is satisfied with any draft documents at that stage views will be sought.

10. NATSS (T 394)

The National Association of Target Shooting Sports has been born. At present it is an independent organisation set up in conjunction with our friends at the NSRA and CPSA. In time it is intended that NATSS should become the single national body with overall responsibility for target shooting sports. It is a case of united we stand, divided we fall. However it will be a gradual process and in the short term ways to co-operate to achieve specific benefits for all 3 organisations are being sought. Initially this will involve press releases and political lobbying with insurance arrangements also high on the agenda. Eventually it is intended to appoint a consultant, a facilitator, to assist with this process of amalgamation.

It was emphasised that the management impact on Bisley will be minimal because Bisley is already run by the NSC as an autonomous operation. NATSS is about target shooting across the UK and ensuring that everyone involved in target shooting acts co-operatively to promote it to make it easier for example for someone who shoots .22 to shoot fullbore.

QUESTIONS

A number of questions were asked:

Q. Would the NRA no longer exist as a body?

A. It is anticipated that at least for the foreseeable future there will be 3 divisions of which the NRA will be one. NATSS will be responsible for the overall governance and strategy and not the day to day management.

Q. Why NATSS – what sort of organisation is it, is it being formed a limited company, a charity or an un-incorporated association?

A. NATSS at present does not have a formal existence, it is an informal gathering of the 3 senior people from the 3 organisations.

Q. Some people say they find the choice of name strange.

A. What we are trying to do is raise the political profile of shooting.

Q. Have you envisaged the affect on the relationship with the GBTSF?

A. In fact the Chairman of the GBTSF is one of the 3 Officers of the CPSA and fully involved.

Q. When this is formed do we pay our subscriptions to NATSS?

A. Yes we have still got to iron out a number of details like that.

Mr Hartwell concluded that one reason why we are seeking a consultant is that we all have our own angle on how it should be done. Certainly it has got to be done fairly and not dominated by any one of us. We are having help from Sport England and the Charity Commission in finding people that have done this before.

11. Summary

In summary, the Vice Chairman reiterated that this is a particularly exciting time. The three national organisations are working together for the first time, the membership is growing, the 2012 Olympics are on the horizon and our financial difficulties are now largely a thing of the past. This is a significant time for an incoming Chairman.

QUESTIONS

Membership Subscriptions – The point was made that in the past subscriptions have been used to sustain Bisley which was unfair to the regions.

The meeting was reminded that it was now policy for Bisley to make a profit, paying its own way and contributing to the Association towards its national plans.

In future Membership income will be spent increasingly on national projects, especially once the debt has been repaid.

Thorpe Cloud Range – A question was asked about Thorpe Cloud Range.

It was explained that support for Thorpe Cloud was seen as part of the Association's policy to support shooting nationally.

G 79 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Treasurer presented the financial statements and the audited accounts for the 15 month period ended 31st December 2005 and in particular explained the effects of the change in year end.

No matters were raised.

G 80 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Professor Horrocks, Chairman of the working group, presented an options paper to the meeting outlining the group's membership and the various events that could be run to celebrate the 150th Anniversary both at Bisley and in the regions. (**Annex**)

The General Council was asked for views and ideas to be sent to the Secretary General.

G 81 ELECTIONS TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

It was announced that there were 2 vacancies for Ordinary Members of the General Council plus a vacancy for each of the Greater London/South East and Wales Regions which can be filled in accordance with Rule 7g (xi).

It was proposed that the Secretary General be allowed to circulate county and club secretaries to identify suitable candidates to fill the 'casual vacancies' for Regional Members in accordance with the precedent of Resolution G 7 and that for Ordinary Members the vacancies would be announced in the Winter Journal 2006 in accordance with the precedent of Resolution C 102.

The General Council was invited to continue with these precedents - **Agreed**

G 82 ELECTION TO THE COUNCIL

Charles Murton was elected to the Council by 17 votes for and 1 against.

G 83 OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Committee Chairman Absent from the Council Meetings – concern was raised and a question asked whether a deputy could attend when there was an absence?

The point was made that the Trustees, whether or not actually present, were individually and collectively responsible for the decisions made at the Council meetings. As such it would not be possible for nominated deputies to attend and act as a Trustee.

Arms Fairs – A question was asked whether it was appropriate for knives to be displayed and sold at Bisley.

The meeting was informed that the Secretary General and Managing Director of NSC had been tasked with developing policy on this issue by 31st December 2006 (T 412).

Hut 103 – A question was asked whether the NRA had discussed with the NSRA what their intentions were in relation to developing the old cook house as it had become an eye-sore.

The meeting was informed that the Managing Director of NSC had approached the NSRA to have the building taken down under Health and Safety Regulations. To date this had not progressed because of an asbestos problem and the costs associated with its removal.

Vice Presidents – the selection and election conditions surrounding Vice Presidents was raised.

It was explained that Vice Presidents are selected on the basis of having given a particular service to the NRA.

Tradition has meant that existing Vice Presidents have been proposed for re-election on an annual basis, perpetually.

Chairman

DATES OF THE NEXT MEETING.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday 15 th September 2006	2.30pm	Bisley

Annex Paper on proposed 150th Anniversary Celebrations.