

**NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION**  
**THE GENERAL COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a Meeting**  
**Held at the Pavilion, Bisley**  
**On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2007, from 2.00 pm**

**Present:**

**Chairman:** Mr JF Jackman  
**Vice Chairman:** Prof AR Horrocks  
**Treasurer:** Mr MJC Haszlkiewicz

**Members:** Mr HRM Baillie  
Mr GV Barnard  
Mrs ID Bennett  
Mr JPS Bloomfield  
Mr CM Brooks  
Dr AM Cargill Thompson  
Mr JH Carmichael  
Mr ARK Clayton  
Mr PR Coley  
Maj SB Fraser  
Wg Cdr CJ Hockley  
Lt Col LA Holley  
Mr CD Law  
Mr M Maksimovic  
Mr CC Mallett  
Mr MF Martel  
Dr P Monaghan  
Sqn Ldr R Nott  
Mrs KD Robertson  
Mr IW Robertson  
Mr IR Shirra-Gibb  
Mr JD Warburton  
Mr JA Watson  
Mr DD Watt  
Mr RHF Wills  
Mr D Young

**In attendance:** Mr GWJ Alger - Secretary  
Mr JEM Hartwell - Vice Chairman of the Council  
Maj MG Farnan - Director of Shooting  
Mrs HL Webb - Membership Secretary  
Mr B Pollard - Finance Manager

**Apologies for absence: Vice-Chairman:** Mr MJ Black, Miss MZL Boston, Wg Cdr DP Calvert, Maj Gen AP Farquhar, Mr CN Farr, Mr CN Higginbottom, Mr C Murton, Col WJ O'Leary, Miss J Rankin, Mr AJD Saunders, Brig JR Smales

## **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman opened the meeting by asking for a moments silence in memory of Alan Bishop. The General Council stood silently and reflected for a short period of time.

The Chairman then welcomed Lt Col Lester Holley of the ARA, Mr Michael Martel and the new Financial Manager, Mr Bruce Pollard, to their first meeting of the General Council.

## **G 104 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

- a) G 98(b)(3) – CCTV The Secretary General informed the meeting that representations had been made by Richard Bailie that the minute was not complete. **It was announced that the minute would be amended to read in addition “Question – Will the CCTV record number plates. Answer – Yes it will record number plates and passengers if the vehicle is driven at a sensible speed.”**
- b) G 95 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2006 – The Chairman pointed out to the meeting the amendment to minute G 78 of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2006. He stated that “Once appointed and during their period of office the Trustees carry total and sometimes onerous responsibilities for the Management of the Association.”

**General Council agreed the amendments and the Minutes of 24th February 2007 which the Chairman signed.**

John Bloomfield alleged that the minutes of the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006 had not been signed by the Chairman during the course of the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2007 meeting of General Council. The Chairman assured the meeting that the minutes had been signed (confirmed by the Secretary General) at the last meeting.

A question was asked as to why the minutes were depersonalised. The Chairman explained that “It was long standing practice” to depersonalise the minutes. A change to this practice was asked for and put to the meeting. Only the person proposing the change and one other supported the motion. Thus the motion was not carried.

John Bloomfield reminded the meeting that he had made a disciplinary complaint against the Chairman and wished to discuss the outcome in General Council. He was reminded by the Secretary General that details of a discipline case were not for discussion in an open meeting. He pointed out forcefully to the Secretary General that in his reply on the matter he had reached a finding of no case to answer but the matter had not been referred to the Chairman of Discipline. The Secretary General replied that the matters had been fully investigated and there was nothing to refer to Discipline Committee because there was no substance in the allegations against the Chairman or others.

Because of the nature of Mr. Bloomfield's demeanour the Chairman reminded him that he had had to warn him in the past about his conduct.

Mr. Bloomfield refused to acknowledge this point and continued to ask about a Discipline matter in open committee.

Again Mr. Bloomfield was warned.

He then alleged that the Secretary General had a conflict of interest in his behaviour on this issue, clearly indicating that in his view the Secretary General had acted improperly to protect the interests of those complained against.

The Vice Chairman of the Council then said “Mr Chairman may I say a few words at this point because following the last meeting Mr Bloomfield did indeed make complaints about the Chairman and others to the Secretary General, but it is material that he did make complaints to the Secretary General” I took responsibility for supervising the Secretary General in relation to those complaints because it was inappropriate that the Chairman of the Association should have any involvement at all with a complaint which had been made against him and I have therefore liaised very closely with the Secretary General. I can assure you that he has put a great deal of time and effort into investigating complaints which turned out to be spurious. There was no case to answer on any of the charges which had been raised. I am satisfied of that. I have seen all the material which the Secretary General went through and indeed his notes which he prepared. Those notes and the material are confidential. They relate to events which happened in the past. They are not up for further discussion now but I want to assure this Council that proper consideration in my view and actually Glynn spent too much time on this, days were spent researching complaints which turned out to be totally spurious and I take responsibility with him for the decision which he has made which is that there is no case to answer and that these complaints do not have to be referred any further.”

John Bloomfield vehemently stated he was not satisfied and would be complaining about the actions of the Secretary General.

The Vice Chairman of the General Council asked to move on.

A member of General Council made the point that Mr. Bloomfield had not complied with his original threat to complain direct to the Discipline Committee thus the discussion was an “utter waste of time”. He made the point that Mr. Bloomfield’s actions were “purely vindictive and totally unnecessary.” General support was indicted from General Council for this view. The member concerned then asked that the meeting get on with its business, pointing out if Mr. Bloomfield had an issue he should deal with it through proper channels.

Mr. Bloomfield started to speak.

The Chairman gave him a final warning pointing out if he continued he would be asked to leave.

Mr Bloomfield stated he did not accept that.

The meeting recommenced.

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 24<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

### **G 105 CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL (G100 & G91(C))**

The Chairman informed the meeting that the post of Chairman to both the General Council and Council had been advertised inside and outside the Association, with a deadline for nominations from either Council being set as the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2007 to be in time for the meeting of the General Council on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

The General Council was informed that only one nomination had been received to date which is for Donald Anderson, nominated by Peter Coley and Richard Baillie.

### **G 106 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The General Council received the Minutes of the meetings of the Membership Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2007, 4<sup>th</sup> March and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

- a) **Membership Numbers** – The meeting was informed that at present the records showed that there are now 5,352 members of the Association with 300 still to pay, which was being dealt with by reminder. It was pointed out to the meeting that since the Membership Committee had been more proactive they had managed to increase the number of members year on year for the last 3 years.
- b) **M 146(1) Young Shooters Fund** – The meeting was informed that Terms of Reference were being produced for the Council to approve.
- c) **M 148(1) Cadets and School Leavers** – The Meeting was informed that to promote membership of the NRA and clubs to cadets that a number of linked initiatives were being introduced. Firstly there would be a promotion of the cadet skills courses around the country. Secondly the NRA would be introducing a shooting log book containing a raft of information and encouragement to keep cadets in shooting. If a cadet attended the skills course and passed successfully or completed all the sections in the log book, signed off by the appropriate teacher/officer they would qualify for their probation, getting access to free NRA/club membership.
- d) **Fees and Strategy** – The General Council were advised that with the movement towards a single national body it was imperative that there was a move towards ensuring that the fee structures for all three bodies were the same in time for any amalgamation. This would require simplification of the Membership subscription categories.
- e) **Membership Fees for 2008** – The meeting was informed that it was intended to present the proposed membership fees and budget to the August Council meeting.

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1) **Club Finder** - A question was asked about how cadets would find their nearest club. All present were informed that we already had a club finder service and that it was an essential part of the new service to cadets.
- 2) **Probationary Course Referrals to Clubs** – The point was made by a regional representative that only one probationer had been referred in their region in the last 3 years. The meeting was informed that if we have new shooters or cadets that need a club they are referred.
- 3) **Regional Representation on the Membership Committee** – It was pointed out that the regions are not represented on the Membership Committee as a result of reorganisation. It was explained that the Committee needed a certain skills base to function properly. However, the regions were represented by the Regional Consultant Chris Webb who represented their interests. In addition there would be 3 Regional Representative Meetings annually following each of the General Council Meetings to ensure Regional views were fully represented.
- 4) **Open Days** – The point was made that Open Days are becoming increasingly popular with some people who know the system booking over and over again, stopping others trying it. The meeting was informed that pre-booking ensured the

event was not over subscribed thus there were no safety issues and commercially we know what numbers are attending ensuring a healthy financial outcome. On the membership side 100 packs were issued at the last event, leading to some 30 new members/probationers being processed.

There were no other questions.

**The minutes for 27<sup>th</sup> January 2007, 4<sup>th</sup> March and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2007 were adopted.**

### **G 107 SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT**

The General Council were invited to take the issues in the order of the report, by asking questions.

- a) **MoD/NRA Agreement Ammunition Quality** – It was asked whether another supplier had been considered if the ammunition deal was not renewed or ammunition was not of the correct quality. The meeting was informed that this issue had been addressed two years previously and we were in a position to purchase ammunition from an alternative supplier if the quality was not good enough. A follow-up technical question was asked about the suitability of some ammunition to be used in military rifles. The Director of Shooting informed the meeting the conditions were laid down in the CIP Regulation as issued 18 months previously.
- b) **MoD/NRA Agreement Budget** – The point was made that if MoD competitions or general range use reduced or stopped entirely the NRA would find itself with a large hole in its budget. For the future the NRA had to accept that the MoD using Bisley was not a certainty, thus there was a need to adopt strategies that could cope with such a change in the future. A point was made from the floor that the Association needed to ensure that we offered good facilities and service to the military to keep their business. The meeting was assured that every effort was being made to add value for the military to keep them at Bisley.
- c) **National Standards** – It was stated that we needed to recognise that clubs needed a flexible approach to providing probationary courses. The meeting was informed that the NRA Probationary Course was being re-written to take account of club needs, offering them a structure and necessary elements that needed to be taught to ensure a level of safety and competence in every probationer. As a national body we should be giving this sort of support to clubs. At present they can choose to adopt the course as a model or not.
- d) **NATSS** – The meeting was informed that funding had been obtained from the CCPR and UK Sport to employ a facilitator to oversee the process of bringing the three national bodies together, which could take up to three years to achieve. A question was asked about support for the project bearing in mind the recent poll of members. The Chairman stated “I am very pleased, therefore, that NATSS has achieved Government funding to facilitate a merger, that our President and Patron have indicated their support and interest and that the survey of NRA members by the Secretary General in the Spring Journal has, thus far, indicated support of 307 members to just 17 opposed. The numbers responding were a little disappointing, but based on those who did, there were remarkably some 70 different names suggested although “National Association of Target Shooting Sport” just predominated with 161 votes for and 134 against!”
- e) **Discipline** – The General Council were informed that there had been a marked increase in the number of discipline incidents reported. This would demand a review

of discipline processes to make them more efficient and effective. A meeting between the Secretary General and the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body is planned for July to address the issues. It was asked if there were any trends that the Shooting Committee be informed to consider any potential actions necessary.

## **G 108 SHOOTING COMMITTEE**

The Chairman of the Shooting Committee presented minutes of the Shooting Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

The Chairman of the Shooting Committee presented the key issues from the minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 as follows:

- a) **S 418 Eagle Eye Foresights Working Group (S405)** – The meeting was informed that the debate on Eagle Eyes continues but that it was hoped to have a final proposal ready to take forward to ICFRA in the near future.
- b) **S 425 NRA/Grants Financial Support (S401)** – As a result of advice from the Charity Commissioners it was difficult to support elite teams travelling abroad with grants from the NRA, because according to advice these should only be given to individuals on the basis of low income, being new to the sport or in support of the young. It was proposed to approach the Charity Commission on the basis that elite sport helps promote shooting to all and should under certain conditions benefit from charitable grants.
- c) **S 427(d) Gallery Rifle & Pistol- Safety Glasses** – The General Council was informed that there was an on-going debate regarding the necessity of wearing safety glasses generally, as currently only required for GR&P.
- d) **S 430 ICFRA F Class Rules** – The meeting was informed that the draft changes to the rules for World F Class competitions were finally complete and ready to be considered by ICFRA.
- e) **Hand-loading** – Because of a number of incidents involving hand-loads the Shooting Committee are re-visiting whether the Association should reconsider its position and re-introduce hand-loading courses.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1) **Grants** – The point was made that a grant from the OTF, which is considered a Trust, was quite different from a general grant to a team from the NRA General Charity Funds.
- 2) **Moderators** – The case was put for the introduction of rules allowing the use of moderators. It was explained that this is unlikely to happen internationally because some members allow them and others do not at present.
- 3) **S 414 Hand-loading Notes on the Website** – The meeting was informed that this had not happened to date. To be progressed.
- 4) **S 424 Future GB Tours Programme** – The point was made that notification of a tour had been notified late causing problems in circulating all members to select a captain for the second year running. In future the tour programme will be agreed earlier in the year to avoid such problems.
- 5) **S 427(c) Match Rifle** – In relation to volunteers using their own rifles the point was made either the NRA should buy more rifles for the purpose or they should pay for the barrel wear. Both points were accepted and were being investigated.

- 6) **S 421 Recognition of the NGBs for the Republic of Ireland** – The point was made that the reference to the Kolapore was incorrect and should read ‘National Match’. Minutes to be amended.
- 7) **S 413 Firing Point Defect Cards** – The value of introducing these cards was questioned. A number of members of the General Council voiced their support for this innovation, however.
- 8) **Imperial Meeting – Overseas Teams** – It was queried as to why Jersey and Guernsey were not recorded as Overseas Teams in the documentation. To be amended for future years.
- 9) **Over 65’s Discount** – The removal of the Over 65’s discount was questioned. The Secretary General explained that during the course of Imperial Meeting Review a number of initiatives had been decided and others referred to the Council. Unfortunately the Entry Form had been printed and sent out. The Over 65’s discount is to be referred back for the next review. In the meantime it has been determined that the discount in 2007 should be given on application.
- 10) **ICFRA Rules** – It was restated to the General Council that the recent circulation of the ICFRA Rules only set the rules for World Championships. National competitions such as the Kolapore are still governed by the NRA GB Rules.

**The Shooting Committee Minutes for the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 were adopted.**

### **G 109 NATIONAL SHOOTING CENTRE LIMITED**

The General Council received the Minutes of the meetings of the Board of the National Shooting Centre Limited held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007 and heard a verbal report regarding the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

- a) **Leases** – The MD of NSC reported the following position on leases

Signed – Bullet Lodge  
Signed – British Pistol  
Signed – English VIII  
Signed – English XX

- b) **CCTV** – It was reported due to quality problems 2 new cameras had been fitted that would record number plates of vehicles entering Bisley 24hrs a day. It was also reported that work is underway to locate the fibre optics system laid for the Commonwealth Games to see if it is suitable for an expansion of the security system at Bisley. A question was asked whether passengers in vehicles would be identifiable. The answer was yes in the right lighting conditions. Shaun Hopwood was thanked for his donation to the system.
- c) **Tree Management** – It was reported that a survey was last done 2 years ago. In addition the routine maintenance of trees carried out by Merrist Wood free of charge no longer takes place. A new survey is currently under consideration.
- d) **Signs Nailed to Trees** – It was pointed out that if signs are nailed to trees using either galvanised or copper nails they will kill the tree. Instances around Bisley of this practice are increasing and are likely to result in more damage. Advice to be given.
- e) **N 544 Non-Members Booking Targets** – The meeting was informed that under Council Policy only individual members, members of affiliated clubs shooting on a club day or those taking part in an official corporate event should be allowed to shoot on the ranges at Bisley. However, NSC had received a directive from a former Chief

Executive of the NRA that on commercial grounds they could accept bookings from non-members shooting on Short Siberia and Melville Ranges. This directive has never been withdrawn. A change in policy used by NSC would have an adverse commercial effect on income from shooting. This matter will be referred to the Council to resolve.

- f) **Electronic Targets** – A question was raised about their reliability. It was acknowledged that there had been some reliability problems associated with using wireless facilities. It was felt that as there was no problem with the 300m targets which are hard-wired similar consideration should be given to the new electronic targets.

The meeting was asked if there were any other questions.

- 1) John Bloomfield stated he had comments to make about the Chairman of NSC's statements in the board minutes. He asked the Secretary General if he had complied with his demand for papers relating to the Board Meeting.

The Secretary General stated he had replied to Mr. Bloomfield's email and was not in a position to send him what he had demanded.

Mr. Bloomfield then started to talk about the loss of the Palma Captaincy and the fact that two other captains to his knowledge had not signed the required papers.

The Secretary General pointed out that unlike him they had not refused.

The Chairman pointed out yet again that Mr. Bloomfield had failed to raise these issues as matter for discussion prior to the meeting by informing the Secretary General. It was pointed out that the whole issue of Simon Dixon's appointment had been re-examined by the Secretary General, the Council and the Board of NSC.

Mr. Bloomfield then threatened that he was going to send a file on Mr. Dixon to the Charity Commissioners. He retorted that whether he was supplied with the papers requested did not matter because he would get them via the Charity Commission.

A member of the General Council then said "I don't think this is the place to involve personal vendettas publicly. This is all I see this to be. There have been 2 personal vendettas raised here again today. It is an absolute waste of time and I think we can do without it."

The Chairman then said "May I please just make a general point, I am not responding to John Bloomfield. I said this exactly in 2002 at my first Spring General Meeting when I had the situation that a member of the National Rifle Association had written to complain to the Charity Commission. It was actually a time when we were under detailed investigation by the Charity Commission, but ultimately we could have lost Bisley in the worst circumstances of de-registration because does not belong to us as it belongs ultimately to the Crown. I said then, and I remember my words that it is not in the interests of the members, there are procedures to resolve members' concerns within. As of now our relationship with the Charity Commission could not be better. We have got their trust, we have got an open line to the most senior people at the Charity Commission for the future of ourselves and target shooting sports as a charity. I only make this point because I cannot stop anybody doing anything but I do make



that general point to you that the present relationship with the charity Commission couldn't be better.

Again I am afraid we have taken time up and I would like to go back. Are there any more questions on the Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> April?

2) **Butts Appeal – Further Works** – The Chairman pointed out that the Butts Appeal had raised in excess of £25k. However, the work was not complete with a new shelf to be constructed in the autumn on Century Range and an increase in width on the 1200yd firing point on Stickle-down.

There were no more questions on the NSC Minutes.

## **G 110 THE COUNCIL**

Julian Hartwell presented the Minutes of meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007 plus written resolutions T531, T532, T553, T554 and T555 by reading a report covering the work of the Council.

**It was agreed that the full report should be appended to General Council minutes.**

### **Appendix**

## **QUESTIONS**

### **G 111 CO-OPTION OF JAMES RAGG TO THE COUNCIL (T 555)**

John Bloomfield questioned the co-option of James Ragg, stating that there was a 5 year gap in his CV.

A long discussion occurred about whether James Ragg should be appointed to the Council because of the perceived problem with his CV despite having been twice interviewed and references taken.

**It was agreed that subject to a satisfactory explanation regarding the 5 year gap in his CV James Ragg should be appointed.**

### **G 112 SWEETNAM DISCIPLINE (T 546 (i))**

A question was asked about the Sweetnam Discipline case.

The meeting was informed that the case was with the Discipline Committee for decision but through the case the Council had recognised some anomalies in the Code of Operation for Discipline Matters which were being addressed.

A question was asked about the detail of how the Council reached its original decision. Again the anomalies in the Code of Operation were highlighted and the fact that the case was still to be resolved and as such should not be discussed.

The Vice Chairman of the Council said “Mr Chairman may I add something to that as the person who is responsible for the operation of the Council. I accept fully that there was a gap

in the Code of Operation which I am grateful has been drawn to our attention. It is necessary that the Secretary General should have powers of suspension of membership or at least of using the facilities here at Bisley where somebody is charged with a serious offence to cover the period between when the offence is committed and when the disciplinary hearing takes place and that is the gap which we are seeking to plug. It is just something which wasn't thought through fully when the Code of Operation was first drawn up about three years ago now I think so we will be seeking to add an extra paragraph to that to cover that gap. It will be on the Agenda for the next Council meeting and it will certainly therefore be reported back to the next meeting of the General Council in September."

Comment was made that the original decision and the subsequent re-confirmation of the status of the case appeared to contravene the requirements of the Code of Operation.

The Vice Chairman of the Council stated "The responsibility for discipline rests with the Council. The Code of Operation is a statement of how the Council intends to operate but it doesn't over rule the ability of the Council to make decisions about disciplinary matters."

John Bloomfield then spoke vociferously about the Association being sued, natural justice and the legal ability of the Vice Chairman of the Council in an insulting manner.

The Vice Chairman of the Council refused to respond.

The Chairman made the point that the case was on the verge of being discussed before the Discipline Committee have had a chance to consider it.

John Bloomfield again verbally attacked the Vice Chairman of the Council stating that the Association was in breach of Common Law and Human Rights.

The Chairman warned Mr. Bloomfield twice more regarding his conduct.

Mr. Bloomfield threatened to take matters further.

### **OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

None having been notified in advance and there being time, as planned, the Chairman invited subjects to be raised.

### **G 113 MATCH RULES – F CLASS INTERNATIONAL MATCH**

A question was asked as to why the rules for the F Class International match had been changed.

The Director of Shooting explained, that the rules as they had stood, had been appropriate prior to the Republic of Ireland allowing the private ownership of firearms again.

The new rules were designed to ensure someone from the Republic for instance did not find themselves shooting against an All Ireland team, effectively shooting against their own country.

A point was made that the rules potentially impinged upon bids by a number of 'governing bodies' to have control over the various shooting disciplines.

**It was agreed that the issue should be dealt with outside the meeting**

**G 114 SELECTION OF GB CAPTAINS**

A question was asked about why an item did not appear on the Agenda as asked for on the Selection of GB Captains.

The Secretary General informed the meeting this had been referred to the Council for consideration.

The Chairman asked that in future more consideration be given to this opportunity to raise issues under the heading of “Other Items for Consideration”, particularly in relation to the future of the Association.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm

**Chairman**

**DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS.**

Date	Time	Venue
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2007	2.30pm	Bisley