

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION
THE GENERAL COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting
Held at the Pavilion, Bisley
On Friday 12th June 2009 from 2.00pm

Present:

Chairman: Dr R Pizer
Vice Chairman: Prof AR Horrocks

Members: Mr G Alexander
Mr HRM Bailie
Mr GV Barnard
Mrs ID Bennett
Mr JPS Bloomfield
Wg Cdr DP Calvert
Dr AM Cargill Thompson
Mr JH Carmichael
Lt Col ARK Clayton
Mr PR Coley
Maj MJ Farnan
Mr CN Farr
Maj SB Fraser
Mr EJ Gardener
Mr MJC Haszlkiewicz
Mr PD Hunter
Mr JM Kynoch
Mr GAE Larombe
Mr M Maksimovic
Mr CC Mallett
Mr MF Martel
Mr C Murton
Flt Lt I Robertson
Mrs KD Robertson
Mr J Saunders
Mr IW Shirra Gibb
Mr JD Warburton
Mr DD Watt
Mr RHF Wills

In attendance:

Mr GWJ Alger	-	Secretary
Mr JEM Hartwell	-	Vice Chairman of the Council
Mr B Thomas	-	Assistant Director of Shooting
Mr BW Pollard	-	Financial Manager
Mrs HL Webb	-	Membership Secretary

Apologies for absence: Mr MJ Black, Mr CM Brooks, Maj MG Farnan, Mr GMLN Gilpin, Mr PJ Hobson, Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, Nr K Nash, Col NJ O'Leary, Miss J Scrimshaw, Brig JR Smales, Mr JA Watson

G172 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 21st February 2009

The Minutes of the General Council meeting of the 12th September were received and agreed.

- a) **The General Council agreed the Minutes of 21st February 2009, with amendments to G164, and G167 (d) which the Chairman signed.**
- b) **The Chairman requested that the Secretariat be given written notice in advance of the meeting of any amendments to the previous meeting's Minutes.**

An observation was made that it was the late delivery of minutes that caused the problem not giving sufficient time to ask for amendments. The Secretary General stated that minutes went out in timely fashion as per required by the Rules of the Association. However he was prepared to email the minutes rather than post them to those that required them.

- c) **It was agreed that the Secretary General should survey the members of the General Council to establish which members would prefer to have the circulations in email or paper form. Following which those preferring email would get the minute in draft form before they became final.**

G173 DIRECTOR OF SHOOTING

The Chairman made the following statement.

“Martin Farnan has resigned from his employment as Shooting Director with the NSC on 1st May this year. As most of you know, over the years Martin has played a key role in the organisation and running of the Imperial Meeting. In spite of his decision to resign as Shooting Director, we tried to retain his considerable experience and expertise to assist with this and possibly also next year's Imperial Meeting. Our solicitors drew up a contract to engage Martin's services for the 2009 Imperial Meeting. Unfortunately, whilst Martin initially indicated some interest in such an arrangement he ultimately decided not to accept this offer. In the meantime, however, I am pleased to report that the team that has been assembled to manage this year's meeting have been making excellent progress and whilst they are, inevitably, on a learning curve, they are confident that this year's meeting will be a successful one.

The circumstances leading to Martin Farman's decision to resign are such that we cannot exclude the possibility that we have not heard the end of the matter. We have received clear advice from the NRA's solicitors that we ought not to comment on the circumstances surrounding Martin's decision to resign for the time being so as to avoid any risk that we might prejudice the position of the NRA or indeed the NSC. We intend to adhere to the professional advice obtained and therefore are unable to comment further.”

Concern was expressed that the statement had not been made earlier especially to the members of the General Council to stop speculation within the membership. Tony Clayton made a statement identifying Martin as a close friend who had been very supportive to him over the years that he has been the Chief Range Officer on Century. There were a number of members who expressed sadness and concern that Martin had gone.

The Chairman informed the meeting he was unable to say anymore on the issue.

The meeting was informed that the Chairman's statement would be published on the NRA website immediately after the meeting closed.

G174 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (G166)

The Minutes of the Membership Committee meeting of 6th March 2009 were received and adopted.

The meeting was informed that the membership continued to grow with over 450 new membership applications so far in 2009 and currently the membership stands at 6,400.

It was reported that the Membership Committee had written to all the clubs to survey and to encourage them to adopt a more proactive approach to gaining relationships with schools and cadet units in their area in an effort to encourage young people to remain in the sport after school or cadet service. To date, the response from the clubs had been disappointing.

The meeting was informed that the NRA was close to completing a Shooting Log Book that it intended to supply to young people to complete, which if done properly would show their qualifications and competence to shoot, thus avoiding the necessity for them to undergo a full probationary course. The membership committee were looking at various ways in which to retain shooters from the cadets, schools and universities and would report further after the next committee meeting on 11th July.

- a) **It was agreed that there would be a Membership stand at ISCRM to promote membership of civilian clubs and the Association to cadets and school pupils.**

An observation was made that at a previous Membership Meeting a comment had been attributed to the Regional Manager in regard to there being nothing to report from the regions when in fact the Regional Manager had not been in attendance at that meeting.

- b) **It was agreed that the Regional Representatives should receive an email asking them for any views or concerns at local level that could be considered at Membership Meetings.**
- c) **It was proposed that the Membership Committee should consider inviting Regional Representatives to their meetings when the Regional Manager was not available.**

G175 SHOOTING COMMITTEE (G167)

The Minutes of the Shooting Committee meeting of 14th May 2009 were received and adopted.

- a) S566 – Match Rifle Rule 244. It was reported that the Shooting Committee recommendation to amend the rule had been agreed by Council. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the technical aspects of the Rule change and the decision making process. The meeting was informed that the decision making process had been correct and that the decision would stand unless there was a further change recommended by the Shooting Committee. **It was reported that there had been a failure to publish**

the amended Rule in the 'Bible' and it was agreed the amended rule should be displayed on the Imperial Meeting notice board and enclosed in the 'Dear Competitor' letter.

- b) S569 – Electronic Targets. There was much discussion on the reliability of the electronic targets. **i) It was agreed that the removal of the targets for the Imperial Meeting should be continued until such time as they could be operated at near 100% reliability. ii) It was agreed that the MD of NSC should write to those volunteers who had made themselves available to offer expert advice.** An observation was made that the NSC staff had made considerable effort to improve the performance of the electronic targets. However, recently Haring had shown less interest because of other projects and MSI who were maintaining the system are unable to explain the failures. The MD of NSC stated that they were seriously looking at the possibility of hard-wiring the system to increase reliability. Members pointed out the possibility that we might get better advise on systems were we to contact those dealing with the Commonwealth Games venue for Delhi as they were fitting all electronic targets, plus we might like to talk to sites in the UK who for the most part were using alternative suppliers of equipment and seemed to have a better experience than we had at Bisley. The MD of NSC stated they were looking at this matter.

G176 NATIONAL SHOOTING CENTRE LTD (G168)

The Minutes of the meeting of 11th March 2009 were received and a verbal report given by the MD of NSC.

- a) Electronic Targets - were still causing problems and that MSI were trying to resolve the issues. A full review of the system is being undertaken.
- b) Clock Tower – It was reported that the Clock Tower would be completed by the end of June and costs had increased by £2,500 due to extensive damage to the support structure and more damage than expected to the clock face and weather vane. It was announced that the Appeal had raised in excess of £8,000.
- c) Armoury – It was confirmed that all the certificates relating to the management of the armoury had been transferred to NSC with the Managing Director shown as the named individual. A report on the armoury procedures and practises had been commissioned, completed and reviewed with Surrey Police. Most matters requiring urgent attention had been addressed with the rest being resolved in the near future. It was reported that a number of recommendations had already been implemented and the recruitment of an experienced manager, on a 6 month contract, to oversee both the range Office and Armoury procedures was under way. Concern was expressed regarding the Associations potential exposure as a result of the failures identified in the report. The MD of NSC admitted the Association had to do better going forward.
- d) Military Exhibition – The meeting was informed that NSC is working with Defence Manufacturers Association and Battlespace Publications to host a two day military exhibition at Bisley during early November this year. It is hoped this will be held on an annual basis and as a result there will be spin-offs for use of Bisley during quieter periods for DMA companies to demonstrate their products to prospective customers.

- e) Ammunition – It was reported that 200,000 rounds of RUAG ammunition for the Imperial Meeting had been delivered and tested by the Palma team. Thanks were given to John Bloomfield and Iain Robertson for their help. In relation to the issue of RUAG ammunition for the Imperial Meeting there was discussion on the return of spent cases where a 10p refund would be given on the 83p spent per round and the practicalities of ensuring the correct cases were returned. **It was agreed that during flag-ship events it would be possible to have a level of confidence that the majority of cases being returned were those related to the ammunition issued. However this would not be the case for those rounds on general sale. It was decided in the case of those rounds sold commercially NSC should not purchase back the cases because of the uncertainty over the quality of what might be returned.**
- f) Imperial Meeting – The meeting was informed that entries were at normal levels compared with previous years. In terms of management of the event a team had been put together to run this year’s Imperial and several meetings had already taken place and it was expressed that the NSC were confident that this year’s Imperial Meeting would run smoothly.
- g) MOD Agreement – It was reported that this matter was still outstanding despite having meetings with the Military back in March 2009. However, the military had undertaken to increase their use of Bisley by using Stickledown Range for their main sniper training programme. A discussion took place on sniper training and the use by the military of ‘338’ ammunition. A question was asked that if the range was cleared by the military for use then would it also be the case for civilian shooters. The view was expressed that with the limited danger area for ‘338’ at Bisley the MoD could introduce safety procedures under the operational exigencies arrangements to shoot at Bisley, however it was unlikely that the same conditions would be appropriate for civilian use.
- h) Civil Nuclear Constabulary – The meeting was informed that meetings had taken place with the CNC who were looking to use Bisley for all their firearms training. To achieve this they were looking to invest in an upgrade for Cheylesmore Range to extend it back to 50m. The proposal is that CNC will use the range for 6 months a year and in addition will require accommodation for their trainees for the duration of their courses.
- i) Corporate Bookings – It was reported that there had been a downturn in the corporate hospitality market against budget by £8,000.
- j) Finance – The meeting was informed that there was a £10,000 negative variance against the budget overall for NSC due to a previously reported down-turn in corporate entertainment and a delay in Imperial entries. On the positive side, clay sales are up £24,000.
- k) Armoury Shop – It was reported that the Armoury shop generated in excess of £3,000 profit during the Phoenix weekend.

One of the traders at the Phoenix, Mr Andy Allwood of Allwood Stocks & Mouldings who traditionally has a small marquee on Monument Lawn took exception to the NSC

shop and verbally threatened NSC staff. As a result of this in future Mr Allwood will be refused entry as a trader to future Bisley meetings.

G177 THE COUNCIL (G169)

The Minutes of the meetings 12th February, 16th April and Written Resolutions T758 dated 2nd March and T757 dated 14th April were received,

Minutes of 12th February 2009 Council Meeting

There were no questions on the Minutes of 12th February 2009

Minutes of the 16th April 2009 Meeting

- a) T772(a) – Staff Uniform – the matter of staff uniform for NRA staff was raised. From an NRA management position there was a benefit in having staff in uniform in terms of quality of dress and representation of the Association. The point was made that the staff did not want to wear uniform. The management informed the meeting that the staff had been offered the opportunity to decide upon the design of their uniform by way of consultation. To date there had not been a decision on the style of any uniform. **A number of opinions were voiced and it was agreed to refer the matter back to the Council for further consideration.**
- b) T727 – Heather Webb Life Membership – **this was discussed and again referred back to Council for further consideration.**
- c) T765 (a4) – Victoria chalets – a question was asked regarding progress, relating to Victoria Chalets. The meeting was told that Chairman was trying to resolve matters and had made a proposal to the members concerned and was awaiting a reaction.
- d) T7659a3) Armoury – Concern was expressed regarding the Associations potential exposure under firearms legislation relating to its responsibilities in law as a Registered Firearms Dealership. The meeting was informed that there was an on-going review of the licensing and management requirements for the armoury with Surrey Police. The point was made that there had to be a responsible person that had made decisions about who should hold the licences and the conditions under which such licences are held.

G178 150th ANNIVERSARY (G157)

Disappointment was expressed regarding the general lack of support for the 150th Anniversary.

Karen Robertson suggested a quite expansive programme of events for the Anniversary celebrations under the theme ‘Year For Youth’.

The Secretary General although supporting Karen’s view observed that with a lack of volunteer support for the event that the workload was bound to fall back on an already overworked NRA/NSC staff which brought into question the viability of the additional large scale events.

It was agreed that a proposal would be developed and sent to the Secretary General by Iain and Karen Robertson for further consideration.

G179 TRUSTEE ADVISORY PANEL

The Chairman presented his paper to the General Council.

After much discussion it was agreed that General Council members should contact the Chairman to appraise him of any skills they possessed that were relevant to the panel.

G180 REVIEW OF THE WORKINGS OF NRA/NSC

The Chairman presented a paper calling for a full review of the workings of the NRA and NSC.

This was welcomed by the General Council but they asked whether it was necessary to incur the cost of an external consultant when there maybe suitably qualified members who would be willing to undertake the task.

It was agreed that General Council and the membership should be approached initially although it was stressed that time was not on our side.

G181 CO-OPTION OF TRUSTEES (G155 (3))

The General Council voted for the co-option of Mr Derrick Mabbott and Mr David Frank to the Council for a period of 3 years. (26 votes for co-option and 0 against)

G182 ICFRA (G140 (e))

The meeting was informed that the NRA had asked for reconsideration of a change in “the ICFRA Rules regarding U25s TR World championships 2011 in Australia, by reverting to the conditions used in the 2007 Championships, namely teams of eight firers shooting on two targets”.

The meeting was informed that initially ICFRA had resisted this application by stating that as no challenge had been received within 12 months of the decision as per ICFRA Rules the rule had to stand.

This was now being challenged by the GB ICFRA TR representative in that a challenge to the current decision ‘is’ allowed under the Rules.

Further information will be given to the General Council by the NRA ICFRA representative when it is to hand.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 1. It was agreed that the Secretary General should circulate to General Council the British Shooting Child Protection Policy for comment.**
- 2. The Chairman of the TR Sub-Committee announced to the meeting that as agreed at the Shooting Committee his Sub-Committee will be scrutinizing rifles**

and equipment used at this year's Imperial Meeting. It was requested that this be publicised to competitors.

3. Memorial Trees – it was reported that two of the memorial trees adjacent to the old ladies dormitory had been killed by their bark being strimmed off by Estate staff. **It was agreed that any dead trees would be replaced and the fitting of protective collars to the base of trees would be investigated.**

The meeting closed at 5.15

Chairman

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday 11 th September	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion