

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION
THE GENERAL COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting
Held at the Pavilion, Bisley
On Friday 9th September 2011 from 2.00pm

Present:

Chairman: Dr R Pizer

Members: Mr HRM Bailie
Mrs ID Bennett
Mr JPS Bloomfield
Wg Cdr DP Calvert
Mr JH Carmichael
Mr PR Coley
Mr DGF Evans
Mr MG Farnan
Mr CN Farr
Mr NJ Francis
Mr EJ Gardener
Mr GMLN Gilpin
Maj AD Higham
Prof AR Horrocks
Mr GAE Larcome
Mr CC Mallett
Mr CJ Murton
Flt Lt IW Robertson
Mrs KD Robertson
Mr I Shirra Gibb
Sqn Ldr P Upham
Mr S Wallis
Mr JD Warburton
Mr DD Watt
Mr WDC Wilcox

In attendance:

Mrs EM Buttle	-	PA to the Secretary General
Mr R Neighbour	-	NSC Non Executive Director
Mr B Thomas	-	Assistant Director of Shooting

Apologies for absence: Mr GK Alexander, Mr GV Barnard, Mr CM Brooks, Dr A Cargill Thompson, Lt Col ARK Clayton, Maj SB Fraser, Mr PH Hobson, Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, J Horton, Mr P Hunter, TL Kidner, Mr JM Kynoch, Mr D Mabbott, Cdr M Magan, Mr MF Martel, Mr K Nash, Col WJ O'Leary, Mr M Maksimovic, Mrs DC Meredith, Mr K Nash, Mr AJD Saunders, Brig JR Smales, Mr G Trembath, Mr MP Watkins, Mr J.A. Watson, Mr MJ Wood, Mr DG Young.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed to their first meeting: Sqn Ldr Paul Upham (Secretary RAFSAA), Neil Francis (Gallery Rifle & Pistol Rep), and Steve Wallis (Chairman British Sporting Rifle Club).

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G261 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 10th JUNE 2011 (G248)

G227b: Discussion paper on NRA producing ammunition – *JB reported that other issues had prevented him from progressing this matter further and that Mik Maksimovic was now helping facilitate a proposal for the February 2012 GC meeting - John Bloomfield. Action Continues.*

Richard Bailie reported that the comment he had made under AOB in that Ulster had been unable to raise a team for the Inter Counties primarily because of the cost of flights, the charges for firearms carried on flights and his request for consideration of some form of sponsorship had not been minuted and it was decided this matter was better referred to the Shooting Committee for their January meeting.

The Minutes of the General Council meeting of the 11th June 2011 were received and agreed.

G262 FINANCE (G249)

The Chairman presented Debbie Meredith's apologies to the meeting.

The Chairman reported that the Treasurer had put forward proposals to the Trustees earlier in the week for upgrading the accounting system and had asked them to comment. An expert on the Dimensions accounting package and another on re structuring the whole general ledger were currently being employed on temporary contracts for 2-3 months and it was anticipated the new system would be running in conjunction with the old system in November/December and the new system would then stand alone at the start of next year. The new system will facilitate staff time recording, which will be introduced, as a paper based system, later this year once staff have been notified.

HR

The Chairman reported the following from Derrick Mabbott (Acting Secretary General), which had been circulated to managers.

“Currently we are reviewing our finances as we enter the last third of the year. It is clear that our financial processes do not give us the level of clarity we need, but I can tell you that I anticipate that we will make another loss in 2011. As a consequence, I am unable to offer a pay increase this year. Further, whilst I am working with your senior managers to implement the steps we need to return this organisation to health, it will be well into 2012 before we forecast a return to profitability and the beginning of 2013 before we can offer the prospect of a pay rise.

We have real prospects with the ongoing work with CNC to restore our fortunes, but we must re-engineer our organisation to achieve that. I am working with the management team to develop that plan and we will look for your input into it, but it will be well into next month before we expect to be able to present plans to discuss with you all.

Also, I am concerned that as a business, we have few HR processes, great disparity in terms and

conditions, lack of clarity on job descriptions and how key HR issues should be handled. This means that strong positive performance by individuals cannot be recognised and rewarded. Similarly, we offer little in the way of training and development for individuals. I have brought in an HR specialist called Simon Jacobs who will be working with the management team and I to develop a coherent HR processes which will provide clear job descriptions, objectives at an individual level and regular performance reviews which will mean reward is genuinely linked to performance.

I will continue to give you honest and direct information about where this organisation stands. This is my best assessment of our situation, which I know will disappoint, but I would rather be honest than hide the realities of our business from you.”

Debtors

The Chairman reported a continuing problem with debtors and the attitude of some members in ignoring requests for payment for considerable lengths of time. This situation would not be permitted to continue and a robust debt recovery system would be put in place and Trustees had been asked to consider a policy in line with that of British Shooting which was that 'BS has a policy of exclusion from events held under their auspices for individuals who are indebted to BS, BICTSF, NSRA, NRA, DTSGB or the CPSA for whatever reason, until the debt is cleared'. The NRA would need to add in clubs as well.

Open Days

The Altcar Open Day was discussed and the meeting was advised that the nett cost to the Association was £4,000 plus staff costs. The Vice Chairman noted that overheads associated with staff costs could be as high as 120% of direct staff costs. The Chairman questioned what value the Open Days both Altcar and Bisley were to the Association and requested that clubs be asked for feedback on the number of new members brought into their clubs by these events. The meeting felt that the Open Days were important to the NRA as furtherance of our Charitable Objects (Flagship Events), were central to promote the sport of shooting, were good for PR, and that finance should not be a driving factor. The Chairman emphasised the requirement for all events to be properly costed, including staff time, and that these figures needed to be provided to the Trustees in order for them to make an informed decision on where subsidies could be given.

Action G262: Acting Secretary General to write to Bisley and Altcar clubs asking for evidence of benefits to clubs from the holding of Open Days.

G263 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (G226)

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 29th June 2011 were received.

Matters arising.

Rae Wills felt that his comment did not reflect the case he was putting forward for a more dynamic view on pricing when there were empty spaces on the ranges and the Chairman responded that a review of pricing would be easier to undertake once the improved accounting systems were in place.

G264 BISLEY GENERAL MEETING (G227)

The Minutes of the Bisley General Meeting of 20th July 2011 were received.

Matters arising.

Concern was expressed that some comments had been made at the BGM, when the meeting was open to the floor, that were factually incorrect and had not been corrected at the time and it was requested that speakers be corrected at the time or that the minutes have an editorial post comment. The Chairman accepted that he had not corrected every speaker as it would have unduly prolonged the proceedings. It did show however how ignorant several members were and some post meeting note might be appropriate in the worst cases.

The Chairman advised that as part of the restructuring of the organisation the composition of the General Council, its Committees and appointments would be looked at and asked members to consider changes that would make the committee structure more effective. He suggested that it might be better to elect the committees directly from the NRA membership rather than from the General Council. He noted that there was currently a lack of interest in the chairmanship of the Membership Committee and hoped this would not arise if that committee had been directly elected. He added that the General Council would then be composed of the members of the different committees rather than be directly elected. Another aspect of the restructuring was that the NSC role would be reduced to that of a body accounting for non-charitable expenditure.

G265 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (G241)

James Watson gave his apologies for non-attendance, due to work commitments, and had made a report as follows: "Our July membership committee meeting was delayed due to Glynn's unavailability - we have one scheduled for 24th September.

In the last six years we have seen a growth from approximately 4,000 to 6,500 members and as Chairman of the Committee I have now completed my six years in post allowed under the rules of the Association. I'd like to thank the membership department for their support over that time and in particular Heather Webb for her efforts.

My position on the membership committee is also up for election and I have indicated I am happy to stand for a period of one year to provide a handover period for whoever takes on the role of Chairman. We still do not have a candidate for the position, so if anyone is interested please get in touch with Elaine.

Whilst there has not been a formal meeting of the committee, the membership committee made a recommendation to the Council to keep existing membership rates for 2012 however after a great deal of debate and with the current financial position of the NRA in mind, Council have decided that the main rate will rise by £5 to £70 a year. Discounted rates will rise to £65 but the Junior rate of £40 will remain unchanged. We will continue to offer new members a first year rate of £45 and those who pay by direct debit will receive the same 2011 discount of £2.50. Additionally, anyone moving across to Direct Debit (which greatly reduces the workload on our membership department) will receive a £10 voucher that can be redeemed against target hire within the calendar year.

Membership numbers have remained steady this year with almost 500 new members resulting in a small net gain year on year but it is difficult times for recruiting and retaining members."

In regard to incentives to pay by direct debit, a question was asked why the £10 voucher could only be spent on target hire and not be redeemed against something not Bisley centric?

[After note: The £10 voucher can be used against any NRA purchase.](#)

The Chairman emphasised the need for incentives to move to electronic systems that would assist

the NRA and its members in the future enabling all bills to be paid electronically. It was asked that such a system be implemented to enable range bookings to be paid for electronically at the time confirmation of booking was received. In regard to caravan bills a request was made that members receive only one bill per annum for Summer and for Winter storage.

Action G265a: RP to investigate the production of one caravan bill per annum.

G266 SHOOTING COMMITTEE (G251)

The Minutes of the meeting of 12th May 2011 were received and adopted.

The Vice-Chairman Shooting Committee briefed the meeting on the content of the Shooting Committee meeting of 8 September, from the notes taken at the meeting. The minutes will follow in due course.

G267 NATIONAL SHOOTING CENTRE LTD (G188)

The Minutes of the meeting of 17th June 2011 were received and the meeting was advised that this was the last meeting of the NSC Board in its current format.

The Chairman reported that the following NSC Non-Executive Directors had resigned: Tony Cornwell, Roger Boyd and Ron Pooley. Further, that as a result of consultation on restructuring the organisation, Jeremy Staples had been made redundant.

The Chairman was asked to clarify the future status of NSC effectively as an Accounting tool or would it continue to have any operational functions. The Chairman answered that the remaining Directors of NSC were Mik Maksimovic, Russell Neighbour and Derrick Mabbott and it was proposed that Debbie Meredith, Treasurer, should become a Director. It had not been decided what the NSC's function would be other than the required legal minimum but its function would be much reduced and further legal advice was awaited.

N1031 – RUAG Pricing

A question was asked over the anomaly between the price quoted in the minutes and the price paid at the till of 95p. It was also mentioned that there was no one in Fred James' absence who had the facility to amend the till price. The Chairman responded that the price quoted in the Minutes was correct at the time and that a decision had been made in July to increase the price to 95p.

N1037 RUAG Brass

John Carmichael (JHC) asked why he had not been able to purchase brass after the meeting when it had been sold for scrap at a cheaper price and the Chairman was unable to answer due to not having the information available. The 100,000 cases sold to Germany had been sent before the Imperial Meeting and payment received before shipping but the remainder had been stolen. The current brass from the Meeting was still in storage in a secure place. The brass that was stolen was covered by insurance and the insurance value had yet to be resolved. JHC was asked to email if he was still interested in purchasing quantities of brass.

It was reported that the new Estates Manager was due to take up his post on 19th September and it was up to the Acting Chief Executive to decide who from amongst the staff attended General Council meetings. Richard Bailie volunteered to be of help to the new Estates Manager should he be asked and the Chairman thanked Richard for all the help he had already given in setting out the new service charges and advised that the bills would be sent out the following week.

N1036 RFD Pro

In response to a question on what progress had been made with the installation of RFD Pro the Chairman replied that there was some training done for the staff in June but problems were encountered so implementation was postponed until August when there were further problems and it had been decided to wait until the situation was more stable when a decision could be made on whether to keep RFD Pro or not. It was desirable to retain it as it was apparently up and running but there was a problem in getting data of the firearms into the system. A stock take of the firearms in the Armoury had been undertaken in the morning by a number of Trustees and helpers, which should facilitate entry into the system. The main problem envisaged being that the system contained a great deal of bespoke software, which when RFD Pro update their product means we would not be able to apply that update without further substantial programming and the question had to be asked whether we should go ahead using RFD Pro on a regular basis. In response to a question on cost to the Association so far the Chairman responded that the payment to RFD Pro was £45k plus staff costs of approximately £30k and the purchase had been made on recommendation following the report into the Armoury and supported by Surrey Police.

G268 THE COUNCIL (G254)

The Minutes of the meeting of the meeting held on 2nd June 2011 and Written Resolutions T1063, T1064, 1065 dated 13th June, T1066, T1067 and T1068 dated 14th June, T1069 dated 13th July, T1070 dated 9th August and T1071 dated 12th August were received.

Matters arising from the Minutes and questions.

Minutes of 2nd June 2011

T1071 – Torpedo Shed

The Chairman responded to a question on the CNC occupancy of the Torpedo Shed that the CNC occupied three quarters and the NRA retained the remaining quarter.

T1057 – NRA Journal

Karen Robertson had challenged Minute T1057 and the Council had agreed at their last meeting that the minute was technically correct as it reflected what had been reported to the Council. However, it was also agreed that the accuracy of the information reported to the Council should be checked in light of the challenge. This would be pursued as part of the review of the future of the Journal.

The meeting received a verbal report on the meeting of 18th August 2011

Vice Chairman of the Council

It was reported that Charles Murton was re-elected Vice Chairman for a further period of one year.

Maritime Security

Having discussed the issues, the Council had decided that the Association should not provide training for maritime security purposes. This decision was taken in light of the Home Office having no regulatory framework in place and no policy it was also felt that there could be the possibility of a reputational issue of the NRA being inadvertently involved in the training of mercenaries. The meeting asked the Council to reconsider their decision at the 13 October meeting of the Council if their concerns could be addressed.

It was noted that the training of security guards for shipping on the high seas was becoming more acceptable with a course and qualification through the City & Guilds process and pressure from the International Maritime Organisation.

G269 IMPERIAL MEETING 2011 (G232)

Ammunition

A question was asked on the number of rounds of RUAG returned due to malfunction and the meeting was advised that the number was sufficiently low (about 85 of which about 42 were due to light strikes) as not to warrant further investigation.

Late Entry Fees

The custom of charging late entry fees was questioned as to whether it deterred some people from entering the Meeting. Karen Robertson informed the meeting that late entry fees were charged at 10% after 1st June, unless overseas competitor or cadet or service personnel, rising to 25% after 1st July. The matter was referred to the Shooting Committee who were asked to ensure that it was made clear on the entry form that refunds would be made in full for urgent or compassionate reasons and a £5 admin fee retained.

An Imperial wash up meeting was to be held on 15 September.

G270 CO- OPTIONS & ELECTIONS TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL & COMMITTEES (G257)

The following were appointed, co-opted and or elected.

- a) Andy Duffy was appointed as Target Shotgun Representative for a period of 1 year
21 Yes Votes
1 No Votes

- b) John Miller was appointed as Greater London & South East Regional Representative for a period of 1 year.

John Miller
13 Votes

David Lacey
9 Votes

- c) Chris Farr was co-opted as an Ordinary member – for a period of 3 years
21 Yes Votes
0 No Votes

The Membership Committee

Gary Alexander was re-elected to the Membership Committee for a period of 3 years and James Watson was re-elected for a period of 1 year.

Gary Alexander
22 Yes Votes
0 No Votes

James Watson
22 Yes Votes
0 No Votes

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

G271 – SECRETARY GENERAL

The Chairman was asked to explain to the meeting the continued absence of the Secretary General. The Chairman reported that the Secretary General had been on sick leave for 2.5 months, was signed off until 22nd September 2011.

G272 – DEVELOPMENT OF EVENT AND COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE INCOME

The Chairman reported that Commercial and Event income comprised approximately £100,000 out of total income of £1.7m and that with prior notice of the question he would have been able to give a more comprehensive reply.

G273 – STRUCTURE OF THE NRA

The Chairman was asked what timetable the Trustees were working to in terms of implementing the new structure and what was the target date for it to be in place? The Chairman hoped that very soon the job specification for the Group Chief Executive would be produced and applicants invited to apply for the position but this was dependent upon appropriate discussions with those affected by the restructuring. However, it was unlikely that a Group Chief Executive would be in place before next year. A Commercial Manager was not being employed at this point in time and would be reconsidered dependent upon the financial position.

The meeting closed at 4.15 pm.

Chairman

DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

Date	Time	Venue
Saturday 18th February 2012	2.00p.m.	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 8 th June 2012	2.00p.m.	Bisley Pavilion
Followed by the AGM	5.30p.m.	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 7th September 2012	2.00p.m.	Bisley Pavilion