

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held at the Pavilion Bisley

on Friday 15th June 2012 from 2.00pm

Present:

**Chairman:** Dr R Pizer

**Members:** Mr HRM Bailie  
Mr GV Barnard  
Mrs ID Bennett  
Mr JPS Bloomfield  
Mr CM Brooks  
Dr A Cargill Thompson  
Mr JH Carmichael  
Lt Col ARK Clayton  
Mr PR Coley  
Mr DGF Evans  
Mr MG Farnan  
Mr NJ Francis  
Maj.(Ret'd) SB Fraser  
Mr J Gardener  
Prof AR Horrocks  
Mr D Mabbott  
Mr MF Martel  
Mrs D Meredith  
Mr J Miller  
Mr CJ Murton  
Mr K Nash  
Mr IW Robertson  
Mrs KD Robertson  
Mr I Shirra Gibb  
Sqn Ldr P Upham  
Mr S Wallis  
Mr J Warburton  
Mr MP Watkins  
Mr JA Watson  
Mr DD Watt  
Mr WDC Wilcox  
Mr RHF Wills  
Mr D Young

**In attendance:** Mr B Cottrell - Head of Support Services  
Mr B Thomas - Assistant Director of Shooting  
Mrs HL Webb - Membership Secretary  
Mr R Neighbour - NSC Director  
Ms S Lohmann

**Apologies for absence:** Mr D Calvert, Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, Mr G Alexander, Mr C Mallett, Maj. (Ret'd) AD Higham, Mr J Horton, Mr G Gilpin, Mr G Trembath, Mr C Farr, Mr G Larcombe, Brig.JR Smales, Brig.WJ O'Leary, Mr J Saunders, Mr A Duffy, Mr K Hocking and Mr P Hunter

## **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that Ms S Lohmann was in attendance.

## **INDEX G284 to G297**

### **G284 SPORTING RIFLE REPRESENTATIVE**

The Chairman wished to record his thanks to John Kynoch who had been Sporting Rifle Representative to General Council for over 20 years.

### **G285 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2012**

G227b: Discussion paper on NRA producing ammunition - John Bloomfield declined to comment on this matter at this stage. Action continues.

G262: Acting Secretary General to write to Bisley and Altcar clubs asking for evidence of benefits to clubs holding Open Days - Derrick Mabbott advised that he had been in discussion with David Young. Action continues.

G265a: RP to investigate the production of one caravan bill per annum – RP confirmed that this had been completed and one invoice covering the year had been sent out although the option to pay by instalments had not been included in the letter sent out.

A point was raised regarding the Charity Commission and the appointment of a Trustee as Acting Chief Executive and the Chairman confirmed that authority had been given for this.

The Minutes of the General Council meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2012 were received and agreed.

### **G286 FINANCE (G276)**

The Chairman advised that he would go through some headline numbers from the Accounts, explaining that there had been little institutional memory left as both the Auditors and the Finance team were all new. Financial systems and processes had caused further issues together with different cost codes being used. The Accounts had been signed off on Thursday 14 June 2012 and were now available on the website.

A question was then raised about the Auditors being changed after the last AGM. A further question was raised regarding past financial records. It was clarified that the previous Auditors had resigned and that the previous financial systems and processes were not fully fit for purpose.

The Chairman then explained the turnover had increased by £645K in one year.

Costs had increased by £142K, the loss had decreased from £613K to £110K.

A question was then raised as to the accuracy of this loss figure. The Chairman explained that some of the loss, approx £274K, was attributable to previous years.

The Chairman explained that the turnover had substantially increased due to increased income from the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and this was estimated at around £100K. Also previously £148K had been written off as a bad debt but subsequently £90K of this had been recovered. Membership and Training income had also increased. The income from Bisley Live of £157K was shown as income although this was later written off in the accounts as expenses. A further £80K income related to range hire and other shooting events.

A question was raised regarding the Bisley Live amount shown as income and the Chairman explained that this was accounting practice to show it as income and then for the amount to be written off elsewhere in the accounts.

A further question was asked regarding the action being taken against the company running Bisley Live. The Chairman explained that this company had now gone into liquidation. Having taken legal advice, we were taking action against the Guarantor in the UK courts to recover the debt.

A question was asked as to whether the increased membership, training and range income was due to membership increases or range hire price increases. It was confirmed that the income uplift was a mixture of these but definitely extra use of the ranges, which was a positive in the current financial situation in the Country.

The Chairman continued by explaining that there had been a 3.2% increase in costs against an inflation rate of 5% resulting in a 17% increase in turnover although this figure would be modified due to the write off of the Bisley Live income. The majority of the cost reductions, including redundancies, did not impact on the 2011 figures, they would however impact on the 2012 accounts.

The Acting Chief Executive added that the cost reduction figures were due to an awful lot of hard work by the staff who had taken a very disciplined approach to expenditure. A question was asked and it was confirmed that some redundancy payments would be included in 2012 figures, also that some provision had been made for any costs due to employment tribunals this year.

Contingent liabilities were covered in note 24 of the Accounts and there had been two problems, which had financial implications for us. These were in relation to PAYE for markers and the use of vouchers instead of cash together with a potential VAT issue. Both of these are under discussion with the Auditors who are going to help us in quantifying how much we possibly owe and assist us in discussions with HMRC. We will be making a voluntary disclosure to HMRC that we believe we may owe them money. It was confirmed that there is no tax implication on prize monies, however there could be a liability on vouchers.

Brian Cottrell, Head of Support Services, then elaborated on how VAT is dealt with within the organisation.

The Chairman concluded by saying that the figures following the first six months of restructuring reflected the commercial disciplines that had been imposed on debtors, requiring payment in advance, controlling expenses and a taking a pro-active approach to new business. The Chairman added that the important point to be noted was that the figures recorded for 2011 did not include the anticipated cost reductions due to the staff redundancies, which was approximately £200K.

### **G287 CHANGE OF DATE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Chairman advised that the suggested date for the postponed Annual General Meeting had been Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 5.30 pm, the reason for this date was due to the Chairman being unavailable other than that date. Other options had been suggested and had been discussed by the Trustees and a potential date of Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June, which would give the full fourteen days notice required. The various date options and timing had been discussed and following a show of hands, the majority decision was that 8.30 pm on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June would be the preferred date and time.

### **G288 OPERATIONAL UPDATE (G275)**

A detailed presentation was made to the meeting by Derrick Mabbott, Acting Chief Executive, a copy of which is attached.

A question was raised as to the likelihood of the NRA getting the funds from Westech and the legal costs involved.

DM advised that Westech had already offered a final settlement figure of £50K but this offer had been refused.

A comment was made that the 2012 first quarter figures could not necessarily be relied upon as these may include caravan invoices and early Imperial Meeting payments. It was confirmed this had been taken into account and the figures were still looking favourable at this stage.

A question was raised regarding the payment of £20K mentioned in the Accounts to one of the NSC Non Executive Directors for work carried out in relation to pursuing the various possibilities for Police use of the Bisley ranges. DM confirmed that this work was very involved and a huge amount of time had been spent on this. DM advised that it was hoped to recruit a Commercial Manager in the near future who would be looking at all possibilities for increasing income.

It was also confirmed that no payment had been made to any Trustee, other than to the Acting Chief Executive, apart from properly incurred expenses.

A question was raised regarding the cancellation charges made by the NRA to anyone booking a range and subsequently cancelling it or not showing up and that this should work in reverse when the NRA itself cancels a range booked by a member for some reason.

A question was raised as to the condition of the roads and in particular the road to Victoria Chalets. The Acting Chief Executive confirmed that all roads requiring repair were being dealt with in a planned manner.

## **G289 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (G278)**

Steve Wallis advised that the minutes of the meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2012 would be circulated within the next week.

Steve Wallis thanked Heather Webb for the work she had carried out on 'lapsed' members resulting in the number of lapsed members in 2012 being 10% less than 2011.

Further initiatives were being explored in relation to increasing the membership by focusing on those that already shoot but might be interested in other disciplines and also by improving how the NRA could attract younger members through Universities and Schools.

The next scheduled meeting, which had been planned for earlier that day but had been postponed due to a lack of elected members. A new date during the Imperial Meeting had yet to be agreed.

## **G290 SHOOTING COMMITTEE (G279)**

Iain Robertson provided a verbal report of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012, which had dealt largely with arrangements for the 2012 Imperial Meeting.

Further points to be reported from that meeting were:

- (i) Whilst it was understood that the Estates staff were under considerable pressure it was felt that the work needed should be prioritised and Martin Townsend had undertaken to inspect all firing points and report.
- (ii) The Shooting Committee had once again raised concerns with the Journal. In particular, the failure to publish notices of forthcoming International tours was impacting on Captain's selection and preparation of their teams.
- (iii) A report was provided by Steve Wallis on the Sporting Rifle team tour to Oslo.
- (iv) Iain Robertson explained that, as a professional employee of the NRA, his role had now expanded to the point where conflicts of interest with his position as Target Rifle Representative were more than a theoretical possibility. Therefore, he intended to resign as Target Rifle Representative and thus from General Council at the end of this meeting. John Bloomfield emphasised that a Target Rifle Representative was essential for the proper functioning of various shooting activities. John Bloomfield offered to take the appointment temporarily, pending election of a new representative. This was approved by the meeting.

A question was raised in regard to the electronic targets – the response was that it had been initially intended that these would be in and working by the end of March. There had been issues with sourcing the target faces in that quotes from the manufacturers were excessive. Further quotes were obtained from Paul Cutts which were at a much more reasonable price albeit with a delay and by the time the materials were in stock the Estate staff were under heavy pressure to get ready for the Imperial Meeting and it was decided to delay until after the Imperial Meeting had finished at the end of July.

A question was raised in relation to the number boards having been taken down on Century range which could lead to possible cross firing during the Imperial Meeting. It was confirmed the number boards will put be re-instated prior to the Imperial Meeting.

A vote of thanks was tabled for the work that Iain Robertson had carried out on the Shooting Committee. The meeting then gave thanks and applause.

### **G291 THE COUNCIL (G280)**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012, 9<sup>th</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012 were received together with written resolution numbers T1155 dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

Matters arising from the above Minutes were as follows:

#### **Minutes of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

A question was raised regarding the 2012 Open Day registration costs – the Council minutes of 27<sup>th</sup> January state £17 for the September Open Day but the website is stating £20 for this event – which represents a 33% increase on the previous cost. The Acting Chief Executive said this would be investigated.

A statement was made that increases to members had been set at 10% but those for commercial customers by less than this amount. Previous communications gave the impression that all prices would be up by 10% across the board. It was confirmed that Government organisations would only accept an increase of 5% without the contracts being re-tendered.

Several questions were raised around the validity of expired vouchers. The Council had decided that notwithstanding previous custom and practice including the acceptance of expired vouchers for Imperial Meeting entries, expired vouchers could not be accepted in payment for any NRA goods or services. It was confirmed that legal advice had been taken and all vouchers are considered a benefit in kind and therefore taxable. Further advice is being sought with regard to Open Day voucher payments, which will be communicated in due course. In future all vouchers will be valid for twelve months only.

It was commented that in previous years expired vouchers had been able to be accepted as donations to the young Shooters Fund. It was confirmed that this will not now be possible.

#### **Minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

A question was raised in relation to NRA staff being on General Council. Being a member of General Council is a privileged position and the General Council ultimately gave the right to hire and fire the Trustees and in turn the Trustees have the right to hire and fire the Chief Executive. It was considered that a member of staff would have a conflict of interest if they were also a member of General Council.

It was also confirmed that the Chief Executive would call into a General Council meeting any member of staff that is required to answer specific questions.

## Minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012

A question was asked as to whether those living on camp would be given access to the security pad at the front entrance barrier and it was confirmed that this would not be the case.

A question was asked as to when would management accounts be attached to the minutes. The meeting was advised that a full set of management accounts was not yet available, however a summary set of Profit and Loss accounts would be attached to the minutes of Council meeting on 14 June. Full management accounts should be available at the next Council meeting.

A verbal report was provided by Charles Murton on the meeting held on 31 May, which was held to discuss the approval of the accounts and time line of the AGM which has since been overtaken by events.

Three key points from the meeting on 14 June were vouchers, which had already been covered. Secondly the Silver display at the Imperial Meeting. This had been discussed by Council as the security in the past had been done by two volunteers, not professional security people. The advice from the Police was that this practice should not continue and the Trustees had decided that the Silver display this year would be limited to a single day and would have professional security guards in attendance. The number of those viewing the display this year would be recorded to assist with future decisions on the holding of this display. The prize giving will take place as normal in the Umbrella Tent with security guards in attendance.

The other point to report was that the process for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive was almost complete and a final decision was now close and a further update would be issued by e-mail hopefully within the course of the next month.

The question of using volunteer security guards was raised but it was noted that this would affect both our insurance and the present contract with our current security company.

### **G292 GENERAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS & VACANCIES**

The Chairman advised that this item was for information only. A question was raised relating to the dates for nominations to be received and that this should be amended to the 17<sup>th</sup> of August. It was also noted that candidates should submit a CV and a short election statement. A list of nominations for election to General Council was not available but would be circulated shortly. It was believed an election would be needed before the Imperial Meeting for some vacancies.

### **G293 ELECTION OF TRUSTEES**

The Chairman advised that this item was also for information and re-iterated the need to consider carefully the skills of those elected as Trustees.

## **G294 CO-OPTION OF TRUSTEES**

Charles Murton advised the meeting that, following a vote by the Council, John Webster had been proposed for co-option to the Trustee Body and approval was now sought from General Council. Approval was confirmed by a majority vote.

A question was subsequently raised concerning a CV for John Webster and it was confirmed this would be sent out with the minutes of the meeting.

Charles Murton confirmed that an advertisement would be placed for co-option of a further candidate on to the Trustees and a nomination would be tabled at the September meeting. The deadline would be extended for those who have expressed interest.

## **G295 BRITISH SHOOTING & ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The Chairman requested that any questions on this item should be discussed with him after the meeting and he would speak further on this at the September meeting.

## **G296 GB & NRA TEAM CAPTAINS**

This item was for information only.

## **G297 ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The Vice-Chairman advised that he had received a letter from Mr Edward Jones concerning his invitation to tender for the HAC building and cottage. Mr Jones requested that the letter, which was now read out, was brought to General Council's attention.

The Acting Chief Executive explained the background to the decision not to accept the tender from Mr Jones. It was further confirmed that his bid had been duly considered along with all the others received.

A question was raised regarding the joint invoicing for Winter and Summer caravan storage as to whether this changed the implication on Council Tax liability of those with caravans. The answer was no.

The meeting closed at 5.10 pm

## **Chairman**

## **DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Venue</u>
AGM Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2012	8.30pm	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion