

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held at the Pavilion Bisley

on Friday 7th September 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
Mr A Bullen
Mr D Calvert
Mr JH Carmichael
Mr PR Coley
Mr DGF Evans
Mr MG Farnan
Mr NJ Francis
Mr D Frank
Maj.(Ret'd) SB Fraser
Mr J Harris
Mr P Hobson
Mr K Hocking
Mr G Larcombe
Mr D Mabbott
Mr C Mallett
Mr M Maksimovic
Mr J Miller
Mr CJ Murton
Mr K Nash
Mrs KD Robertson
Mr I Shirra Gibb
Sqn Ldr P Upham
Mr S Wallis
Mr J Warburton
Mr MP Watkins
Mr DD Watt
Mr WDC Wilcox
Mr RHF Wills

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
Mr R Blackmore - Head of Membership & Training
Mrs L Gendall - PA to the Acting Chief Executive

Apologies for absence: Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, Mr G Alexander, Maj. (Ret'd) AD Higham, Mr J Horton, Mr G Gilpin, Mr G Trembath, Mr C Farr, Mr J Kynoch, Mrs D Meredith, Lt Col ARK Clayton, Mr J Saunders, Dr A Cargill-Thompson, Mr M Wood, Brig.JR Smales, Brig.WJ O'Leary and Mr D Young.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Mr A Bullen, the new representative for Sporting Rifle and Mr James Harris, the new representative for Target Shotgun.

The Chairman then confirmed the appointment of Mr Andrew Mercer, the new NRA Chief Executive who would be taking up his post in November this year.

The Chairman advised the meeting that three of the members that had been included in ballot papers to be re-elected to the Disciplinary Body had in fact already completed six years and therefore the votes for Mrs M Gooden, Mr D Calvert and Mr R Wills would not be counted as they were required to stand down for a one year sabbatical.

A question was asked as to whether this would cause an issue with future disciplinary hearings. The Chairman confirmed this would not be the case as the Disciplinary Committee are permitted to invite members of the General Council to take part in disciplinary meetings.

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G298 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15th JUNE 2012

The Minutes of the General Council meeting of 15th June 2012 were received.

Matters arising

G290: John Bloomfield to take the appointment of Target Rifle representative temporarily, pending the election of a new representative.

The Chairman wished to confirm whether this appointment was until 31st July 2013 and General Council clarified by a show of hands that this was the case.

G286: A question was asked regarding the Bisley Live income figure and the Chairman confirmed that the figure of £157K included vat and this was the figure that had been invoiced to Westech. It was also confirmed that the settlement figure offered by Westech was £50K, although it was noted this offer had subsequently been withdrawn following the failure by Westech to sell an asset in the Far East.

G291: (Minutes of General Council meeting held on 9 February)

A question was raised concerning the wording of the minute covering NRA staff being on General Council. The Chairman said that further thought would be given to the matter of NRA staff being on General Council.

G299 OPERATIONAL UPDATE (G288)

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

People

DM introduced Richard Blackmore (RB) the new NRA Head of Membership & Training. RB has now been in post some five weeks and has already been working on new membership initiatives.

DM confirmed that terms have now been finalised with the preferred candidate for the role of Chief Executive and a considerable due diligence process has been completed in terms of referees and other issues. A start date of November 2012 has been agreed.

Recruitment of an Office Manager has commenced to replace Libby Gendall, who is retiring at the end of the year.

DM wished to record his thanks to all members of the NRA staff for their hard work in running a very successful Imperial Meeting.

Finance

DM went through the figures against budget until the end of July 2012. Further work is still required on the Management Accounts at 'Manager level' to enable decisions to be made.

Considerable legal work has been carried out on recovering the debts from Bisley Live although it would now appear that the contractual position is not as strong as first anticipated. The contract was signed by the Directors of Westech but not by the Chief Executive of the Guarantor Company GSA in Singapore. Work continues to see if the NRA have a case to pursue with Westech.

New Initiatives

DM advised that a number of new initiatives are currently being worked on. Membership recruitment from the Sporting Rifle sector, the second largest category for the NRA, is being sought through new forms of competition. Also work is taking place on the upgrading of RCO courses and training both at Bisley and across the Country.

DM also outlined proposed improvements to the current range booking procedure making the system more efficient and enabling Range Office staff more time to concentrate on customer service.

A comment was made in relation to the re-vamping of RCO courses and the necessity to liaise with Col. Billy Bowles and the DLRSC. DM confirmed that this had been taken into account.

Safe Shooter Certification Scheme

DM referred to recent comments about the relationship between the NRA and NSRA, in particular with regard to NSRA debts and use of NRA ranges for the NSRA August meeting.

Agreement had now been reached on these issues but the issue of certification cards, which caused considerable concern to the NRA had yet to be resolved.

DM outlined the background to this issue in that the NSRA had been issuing certification cards to fullbore shooters. The NSRA had denied this but evidence was now available to the contrary in the form of cards issued by the NSRA being produced at a recent Bisley event. Copies of this card, which included fullbore categories that do not have a smallbore equivalent were circulated at the meeting together with other correspondence between the NRA and NSRA.

It was reported that an incident took place on Bulford range in June 2012 where a club were found to have incorrect paperwork and they had allowed their NRA membership to lapse as they were able to get certification from the NSRA. The RCO present at the incident had an out of date qualification, which resulted in an investigation by the DLRSC which the NRA fully co-operated with and the NSRA refused to co-operate with. This action by the NSRA has already had consequences for fullbore shooters as all civilian bookings at Bulford range have been cancelled and are now slowly being reintroduced. MoD and Landmarc procedures have now been tightened across the Country.

Martin Farnan confirmed that in late 2008 at the original meeting with Col. Billy Bowles it was agreed that cards could be signed by a National Governing Body not just the NRA for .22.

Mr Ken Nash reported that a number of smallbore clubs affiliated to the NSRA are not also affiliated to the NRA and are therefore certified through the NSRA. NSRA cards are not signed by them but by the relevant Club chairman.

DM concluded by saying that the NRA would be rigorously representing their case on this to the MoD and that General Council needed to be aware of the possible threat to fullbore shooting as a result of the NSRA action.

G300 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 30th June 2012 were received.

Matters arising.

Mrs Karen Robertson (KR) raised an objection to the reference in the Chairman's speech concerning irregularities that had been found in relation to late payments on Imperial Meeting entry fees. KR reported that in the past servicemen, cadets, overseas competitors had been allowed more flexibility with late entries. DM said that such flexibility appeared more widespread and would stop in 2013.

KR also raised a question in relation to the question raised at the AGM by Gary Alexander in relation to the change of auditors. KR stated that she considered that the after note in the minutes did not reflect the original question. The Chairman said that it was sometimes difficult to hear the words on the tape recording especially where speakers failed to place the microphone in the right position.

KR queried the amount quoted by the Treasurer of £35K in relation to payments to consultants up to the end of 2011 quoted at the AGM. The Chairman confirmed this figure was correct up until the end of 2011.

KR asked to be advised of the results of the recent Employment Tribunals. DM confirmed that in terms of the case of John Swift, the NRA had won the case.

In the case of Jeremy Staples (JS), the NRA won three out of the four charges against the Association and a payment of £32K had been awarded to JS. The NRA has incurred a legal bill of approximately £10K in relation to this case.

KR asked why the NRA had not negotiated with JS and DM confirmed that the NRA would not negotiate. KR asked which part of the case was lost by the NRA and DM confirmed that it was in relation to not offering JS the role of Estates Manager.

KR then asked whether the NRA had any recourse against the HR consultant in place at the time of the redundancies. DM replied that this was not the case.

KR asked a question in relation to a payment made to James Scade (JSc) of the Range Office. DM confirmed that he had put JSc on a disciplinary charge of gross misconduct for reckless behaviour during Bisley Live. Following the investigation it became clear that whilst his behaviour was unsafe it was not an isolated incident and was actually partly due to poor safety practice within the range system. It was therefore not considered possible to substantiate the gross misconduct charge but it was important that JSc left the organisation.

G301 BISLEY GENERAL MEETING 2012

KR expressed disappointment with the Imperial Meeting entry figures being 112 down on 2011 and asked what action was being taken.

The Chairman said the Shooting Committee would be looking at the reduction in entry numbers and it was also agreed to look into the pricing of the Imperial Meeting and in particular entry fees for the aggregates.

G302 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (G289)

The minutes of the Membership Committee meeting of 18th February were received and there were no matters arising.

A verbal report of the Membership Committee meeting held on 17th July, the key points of which were as follows.

The Sporting Rifle initiatives and RCO training course changes, which had been outlined in the Acting Chief Executive's report earlier in this meeting.

It was also reported that both Heather Webb and Richard Blackmore are to look at membership retention and the reasons why some members are leaving after a year or so.

Promotion of the NRA to a wider audience had also been discussed together with a promotional video for use at Universities Fresher's week' together with other events.

A question was asked as to implementing an 'exit' survey of members to investigate the reasons for leaving the Association. It is hoped to start work on this at the end of the year.

G303 CO- OPTIONS & ELECTIONS TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL & COMMITTEES

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

- (a) Mr Richard Bailie was elected to the Council
42 Yes Votes
3 No Votes
2 Abstained
- (b) Mr David Frank was not re-co-opted to the Council
13 Yes Votes
30 No Votes
5 Abstained
- (c) Mr Derrick Mabbott was not re-co-opted to the Council
21 Yes Votes
25 No Votes
2 Abstained
- (d) Mr David Evans was re-elected to the Disciplinary Committee
37 Yes Votes
9 No Votes
2 Abstained
- (e) Mrs Karen Robertson was re-elected to the Membership Committee
39 Yes Votes
8 No Votes
1 Abstained
- (f) Mr Mik Maksimovic was re-elected to the Membership Committee
44 Yes Votes
4 No Votes
- (g) Mr Taff Wilcox was elected to the Shooting Committee
33 Yes Votes
4 No Votes
11 Abstained
- (h) Mr George Barnard was re-elected to the Shooting Committee
39 Yes Votes
4 No Votes
5 Abstained
- (i) Mr John Bloomfield was re-elected to the Shooting Committee
35 Yes Votes
12 No Votes
1 Abstained
- (j) Mr David Calvert was re-elected to the Shooting Committee
46 Yes Votes
2 Abstained

- (k) Mr Tony Clayton was re-elected to the Shooting Committee
44 Yes Votes
2 No Votes
2 Abstained
- (l) Mr Guy Lacombe was re-elected to the Shooting Committee
35 Yes Votes
9 No Votes
4 Abstained
- (m) Mr John Warburton was elected as Vice-Chairman of General Council
43 Yes Votes
4 Abstained

The Chairman expressed his thanks to David Hossack and Tony de Launay who had acted as scrutineers for these elections.

The Chairman also thanked Charles Murton and Mik Maksimovic who were both standing down under the six year rule and were therefore not eligible for re-election. A small presentation had been made at the Council meeting earlier in the day to thank them for all the work they had done.

It was noted that two further co-opted members of General Council, Humfrey Malins and Martyn Jones had both completed their term of office. They were no longer MPs and current MPs would be sounded out about taking on the role.

G304 SHOOTING COMMITTEE (G290)

The minutes of the Shooting Committee meeting of 17th May were received.

Matters arising

S689 A complaint had been received that there were no gauges in the butts but there are during major meetings and the Imperial Meeting.

S691 John Bloomfield expressed his thanks for the support he has received from Iain Robertson (IR) as Vice-Chairman of the Shooting Committee. IR would be continuing in the role of Secretary to the Shooting Committee including taking the minutes of meetings.

A verbal report of the Shooting Committee meeting held on 6th September, the key points of which were as follows.

In relation to range maintenance issues Martin Townsend would carry out an examination of the firing points along with Guy Larcombe and David Calvert. Improvements would be carried out in conjunction with Nick Karavias, Estates Manager.

Replacement of the wind flags should take place in the early part of the 2013 season so that there is a full set of new flags no later than the beginning of June once the worst of the weather has gone. It was noted that a full set of flags cost in the region of £2K.

It was reported that some of the Stickledown numbers have gone and these are being repaired and refurbished and will be replaced at the beginning of next season. The number boards on Century are currently being replaced with a smaller board but the size numbers and colour scheme will remain the same.

A draft paper had been presented on eye protection but this does not apply to locked breech firearms such as bolt action rifles. There will be a requirement for the Trafalgar Meeting that eye protection is mandatory for the majority of the events.

IR is to develop some formalised unload drills, which will be presented when agreed as best practice.

A review is taking place on target rifle prize lists as to the number of medals and bars that are given out. Large amounts are now issued and it is considered that this devalues this item. The proposal is to limit the list to 100 people who would receive a medal and a bar, the other 50's or 75's would be mentioned in the list unless you are class T.

The TR Sub-Committee is going to review the dimensions of targets with a view to potentially reducing scoring ring sizes. Any agreed changes would apply for 2014.

A complete review is taking place in relation to vehicle access to the range. Imperial Meeting ammunition distribution will in future be from a point at 300 metres and a further one at the back of range 16.

Private vehicles will only be allowed on to the range will be limited to those with a 'blue badge' other than any specific requests received. Buggies will be limited to the back of range 11 on both 300 and 500 yards and will not be permitted further across the firing points. Should anyone need access for medical reasons this will be permitted.

A review is also to take place in connection with items under mats. Representations have been made in relation to the recent change in the rule, which had been intended to clarify the existing situation. The results of the review will go to both the TR and MR sub committees and the F Class committee as these are mainly affected by it.

It was also confirmed that there would be adjustments to radio messages next year for TR and MR to remove some of the military ones that are not used and replace them with the higher number ones that are used. It was recommended that competitors refer to this section of the 2013 Bible to confirm any changes.

G305 FINANCE (G286)

The Chairman said that although there was still a way to go on the detail of the financial information available it was now much improved on previous information and the management accounts were up to date to the end of July.

It was confirmed that a summary of management accounts is now being attached to Council minutes when circulated to General Council.

G306 THE COUNCIL (G291)

The Minutes of the meetings held on 31st May 2012, 14th June and 17th July 2012 were received together with written resolution numbers T1173 dated 11th June 2012, T1187 dated 26th June, T1188 and T1189 dated 9th July.

Matters arising from the above Minutes were as follows:

Minutes of 31st May 2012

There were no questions.

Minutes of 14th June 2012

A question was raised in relation to T1185 Membership Committee and the minute taking at Membership Committee meetings. It was suggested that a member of the NRA staff be made available for this task, however DM advised that there was no-one currently available to do this and committees should make arrangements for their own minute taking.

A question was asked in relation to T1181c NRA vouchers. It was confirmed that NRA vouchers would be issued at the Open Day on 8th September.

A question was raised regarding T1169a free Imperial Meeting entries for young shooters and whether any had been awarded and to what categories. It was confirmed that four or five free entry applications had been received in 2012, one was withdrawn, a further one submitted during the meeting and the others were from cadets. There were no applications received from other shooters based on financial need.

Minutes of 17th July 2012

A question was asked in relation to the review outlined in T1198 Team Finance Committee. CM confirmed that the Treasurer had completed this review and reported back that there were no actual changes required to the procedures.

A question was asked in relation to T1191 Finance and the fact that the MoD had not yet paid their invoice for the current year's range use. CM confirmed that this was still the case and that the MoD were being pursued vigorously. DM advised that there had been further re-organisations within the MoD and this issue was now with Colonel Sykes of the MoD to deal with.

A question was raised in relation to T1192 and the construction of a 'sniper tower' for military use and what impact this might have on shooting at Bisley. DM confirmed that it was not planned to progress this at the moment due to the current financial situation. However, should this go ahead it would be unique and of primary interest to the MoD.

A question was raised regarding the current lease issues on Woffington Lodge and The Hut as to why the negotiations were failing and whether it was just one side that was being unreasonable. DM advised that David Frank had been leading on these issues and the issues were due to the lease wording on these properties being unrealistic

Written Resolutions T1173, T1187, T1188 and T1189

There were no questions on the above written resolutions

Council Meeting on 16th August

A verbal report was provided by Charles Murton on the meeting held on 16th August. The majority of items covered at this meeting had already been included in the Acting Chief Executive's operational update earlier in this meeting together with finance issues.

CM advised that the meeting on 16th August was his last meeting as Vice Chairman of the Council at that David Frank had then been elected as Vice-Chairman. However since the General Council had now decided not to re-co-opt David Frank, the Council were without a Vice-Chairman.

A verbal report was then given on the Council meeting that had taken place on the morning of 7th September, the main focus being finance and insurance related items including a review of insurance brokers. The conclusion of the review was that the NRA would continue with the existing insurance brokers provided they are prepared to agree to some amendments.

CM confirmed that from the close of this meeting he was standing down from his position on both the Council and General Council.

A question was asked regarding the current position on the HAC clubhouse and cottage. The Chairman confirmed that Russell Neighbour was now dealing with this and there had currently been 3/4 serious expressions of interest. The process for formal bids would start next week giving people six weeks to come back with their bid.

A question was asked if there had been an update on the Kingsbury range situation. DM advised that the MoD had banned 7.62 shooting on this range following an incident. Clearly this has impacted on civilian shooting despite representations from the NRA, which are continuing.

G307 BRITISH SHOOTING & ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT GROUP (G295)

The Chairman had presented a paper on British Shooting and asked if there were any questions on this.

A question was asked whether there had been any interplay between the Olympic shooting and Commonwealth Games shooting. The Chairman confirmed that the Olympic funding came under the Olympic Performance Group and that has been brought under British Shooting and that will continue and will be funded by UK Sport. Another organisation, Sport England, which funds English Commonwealth Games shooting, which in the past has gone through the English Target Shooting Federation. There is discussion about how these funds should be channelled in the future and it may well be channelled through British Shooting because British Shooting has been given responsibility by Sport England for developing shooting within England. It may be that Sport England and UK Sport may be amalgamated in the future.

A question was asked about the remainder of the Sport England funds the NRA had been allocated. DM confirmed that although we were looking to use these funds we were currently running as many RCO courses as was feasible and we had been unable thus far to secure clubs outside of Bisley to run courses.

G308 GENERAL COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS 2012

The Chairman confirmed that John Kynoch had been elected as an Ordinary member of General Council. There is one vacancy, which was not filled.

Alistair Bullen has been elected as Sporting Rifle Discipline Representative and James Harris as Target Shotgun Representative.

Resignations had been received from John Gardener as Ordinary member and Iain Robertson as Ordinary member and Target Rifle Representative.

The Chairman had presented a paper on the future of uncontested elections to General Council committees. A question was raised in relation to the present process providing the opportunity to cast a vote for/against a candidate. It was agreed to leave the process as it is currently until a review can take place once the new Chief Executive is in post.

G309 FUTURE MEETING DATES

The Chairman outlined the dates for the 2013 meetings of General Council as below and these were confirmed.

G310 ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

CM raised the issue that, following the General Council election results announced earlier in the meeting, there were now only eight members of Council and the Second Schedule required that there were nine.

It was agreed that advice would be taken on this¹. The Chairman added that members from the full membership could be co-opted to General Council and then they could be elected to the Council of Trustees. However, this would require a special meeting of General Council as otherwise no further action could be taken until February 2013.

A question was raised asking for an update on the position in relation to the NRA producing their own ammunition. John Bloomfield advised that the RUAG tender does not expire until 2014 and the current position is that various options are being considered.

1 Afternote : The Second Schedule states :

5) The Council

a) The Council shall be made up of not less than 9 and not more than 12 Members who

6) Powers and Duties of Council

b) Power to Act

The Council may act notwithstanding any vacancies in the Membership of the Council provided at all times there are at least 7 Trustees.

Comment : With the appointment of Richard Bailie, there are now 8 Trustees with 1 definite vacancy from the membership of General Council and up to 3 further vacancies amongst the co-opted trustees. Council will consider at their next meeting on 4 October the gaps in their skill sets and then advertise for potential trustees.

The meeting closed at 5.10 pm

Chairman

DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

Saturday 23 rd February 2013	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 14 th June 2013	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion
Followed by the AGM	5.30pm	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 6 th September 2013	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion