

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held at the Pavilion Bisley

on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013 from 2.00pm

**Present:**

**Chairman:** Dr R Pizer

**Members:** Mr GK Alexander  
Mr HRM Bailie  
Mr GV Barnard  
Mrs ID Bennett  
Mr JPS Bloomfield  
Mr CM Brooks  
Mr AM Bullen  
Wg Cdr DP Calvert  
Mr M Charlton  
Mr N Cole-Hawkins  
Mr PR Coley  
Mr HF Dunton  
Mr DGF Evans  
Maj MG Farnan  
Maj SB Fraser  
Mr HS Harris  
Mr JA Horton  
Mr P Hunter  
Mr JM Kynoch  
Mr GAE Larcombe  
Mr CC Mallett  
Mr MF Martell  
Mr JF Miller  
Mr K Nash  
Mr P Roberts  
Mr R Roberts  
Mrs K Robertson  
Mr J Rossiter  
Mr I Shirra-Gibb  
Mr MP Watkins  
Mr RHF Wills

**In attendance:** Mr A Mercer - Chief Executive  
Mr J Webster - Vice Chairman of Council  
Mrs G Thatcher - Office Manager

**Apologies for absence:** Mr T Bobbet, Col WGC Bowles, Dr A Cargill Thompson, Mr ARK Clayton, Mr C Farr, Mr NJ Francis, Mr GMLN Gilpin, Major T Higham, Mr P Hobson, Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, Mr K Hocking, Mr TLW Kidner, Mr T Lehman, Mr D Lowe, Mr CN McEachran, Mr M Maksimovic, Col. WJ O'Leary, Mr WCP Richards, Mr AJD Saunders, Mr R Sayer, Brig J Smales, Wing Cdr M Symonds, Mr G Trembath, Sqn Ldr P Upham, Dr JD Warburton (VC), Mr MJ Wood

## **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **INDEX G333 to G347**

### **G333 – APOLOGIES**

### **G334 – 2013 GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS & WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the new members who had been recently voted onto General Council.

John Rossiter, Chairman of BSRC (ex-officio member); Bill Richards (not in attendance); Reg Roberts; Harald Dunton – Eastern Regional Representative; Nigel Cole-Hawkins, Target Rifle Discipline Representative; Paul Roberts – Muzzle Loading Discipline Representative; Matthew Charlton (arrived at 2.10pm)

### **G335 – SELECTING AND DEVELOPING TRUSTEES**

Chairman introduced Alison Stobbs of Cazenove Capital. Alison is the HR Director for Cazenove Capital and has helped the Chairman on a regular basis with HR problems since 2009. The Chairman wanted Alison to provide the General Council members with some points around how to move forward successfully with selecting and developing trustees.

Following the presentation, a discussion was held with the members.

Karen Robertson raised the question as to whether the Trustees use the Code of Conduct originally written by Julian Hartwell and should it be updated considering how much things had changed. The Chairman confirmed that it is still used but hadn't been updated. RP stated that it may well be appropriate to review the Code of Conduct, along with a number of other governing documents and update where necessary.

Guy Larcombe raised a question as to whether the Trustees followed a training programme. RP confirmed there wasn't a process in place at present.

John Webster believes that a regimented process implemented by the Charity Commission could damage the NRA as all Trustees are volunteers and there is a limited pool of people who can be selected as Trustees. Therefore if the process currently in place at the NRA is found wanting by the Charity Commission it could ultimately disincentivise others from wanted to join.

The following recommendations were made by Alison as to how General Council should move forward:

1. Clear line of command/control structure
2. Consider how to attract and recruit Trustees and actively seek them.
3. Consider how Trustees should measure their performance.

KR raised the question as to whether the NRA should have an exit interview for outgoing Trustees. Alison agreed this would be useful to have as well as asking them to mentor new Trustees.

Alison also recommended that General Council members should read the Grant Thornton report which is available on the internet - <http://www.grant-thornton.co.uk/en/Publications/2013/Charity-Governance-Review-2013/>

John Webster suggested it may be worth visiting The Wine Society to understand how they manage their business as it is structured in a very similar way to the NRA and is very successful.

### **G335 - MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2013**

The Minutes of the General Council meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2013 were received.

David Calvert brought up the Membership Minutes which were only received at the previous meeting and would be discussed at this meeting.

Karen Robertson responded that the Minutes had been sent out by Steve Wallis three weeks ago as final, but they had not been seen by the Committee in draft. KR advised of a couple of changes which have now been done, but the minutes have still not been released as final following the last amendments.

Membership Minutes will therefore be discussed at the next GC meeting.

### **G336 – MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### **G337 – OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

The Chairman requested any comments of the previously circulated operational update by Andrew Mercer.

Guy Larcombe wanted it minuted that Peter Cottrell has done an excellent job, particularly throughout the Imperial Meeting, which ran exceptionally well. He also noted that Ray Hutchings has turned around finance.

GL requested clarification on Chris Dyers' function within the organisation.

AM confirmed that CD's position covers accommodation, catering, site mapping, caravans, lodges as well as some extra income received through filming on camp.

John Kynoch wanted it minuted that the operational update provided is extremely helpful and covers everything consistently and would like to congratulate AM personally on it. *Hear hear.*

David Calvert wanted clarification on the new membership figures of over 1,000 as to whether that was a nett increase or whether that would include those who had not renewed or left. AM confirmed this was a gross figure of new recruits and there is a churn of members.

DC also asked whether the 400 cadets who had signed up were new members and were expected to renew on an annual basis.

AM confirmed that this was a complimentary three year membership offered to cadets. Simon Fraser confirmed this and urged caution on getting too enthusiastic on the 400 figure. The task will be to retain the cadets at the end of the three year term and need to look at clubs around the country who could promote their clubs to the cadets.

DC then raised the question around the lack of ammunition on camp and asked whether we had received payment for the ammunition booked by the Commonwealth Games. AM confirmed we are still awaiting payment for this.

John Horton raised the question of shooting on MoD ranges and whether any bureaucracy is being gotten rid of.

AM responded that there is a grave risk that civilian shooting on MoD ranges is viewed as a nuisance. AM believes that the MoD does not want to be dealing with local rifle clubs and want to be dealing with an umbrella organisation that is the NRA which is able to put procedures and processes in place which are executed at local level. The NRA has a substantial amount of work to do to have common paperwork between the MoD and the NRA and clubs.

KR raised the question around how the ammunition situation affects the financial figures reported in the update.

AM confirmed that it does not affect the profit and loss situation at all.

Matthew Charlton raised the question of what the NRA was doing about the ammunition situation. AM confirmed that we are in the process of buying more. The RUAG contract expires at the end of 2014 and the next batch of ammunition is the last obligatory purchase the NRA have to make. Future suppliers are currently being discussed.

Charles Brooks followed up Matthew Charlton's question with a request and recommendation that Council should finalise the NRA's intentions with regard to our future ammunition supply as from 2014 without any delay.

No other items/matters arising.

### **G338 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Chairman requested any observations.

Guy Larcombe made the observation that it was rather poorly attended.

No other questions raised.

### **G339 – BISLEY GENERAL MEETING**

No points raised.

### **G340 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE**

John Bloomfield asked whether there were any questions on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May meeting. No questions raised.

JB then went on to discuss the meeting which was held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September.

Main points of discussion were:

1. Harmonisation of eligibility rules. Dick Horrocks is now working on this and has been given a target date of completion as the closure for the production of 2015 Bible.
2. Electronic Target Ranges Access. Raised by Barry Morgan at the last Council meeting having had an issue at Warminster whether the NRA certificate of competence for civilians applies to fixed targets at fixed distances and not ETRs as it does not mention ETRs. Warminster have been sent a response that ETRs are fixed targets at fixed distances and we are awaiting a response. MoD are currently changing their ETRs and we may be able to get hold of some original equipment for Bisley which is still in working order.
3. Meeting Costs. An extensive discussion held around the Imperial Meeting costs. Andrew Mercer's financial analysis is being discussed by Trustees at the next meeting in October. Any changes will be implemented if necessary once this discussion has taken place for next year's meeting. Extra shooting committee meeting arranged for second half of

- November to discuss with a questionnaire/survey going out to get feedback for those discussions.
4. Prize-giving. The Chairman kindly held a discussion at the meeting of Match Rifle Men in July and they have agreed on a trial basis to hold their part of the prize-giving on Elcho Day.
  5. Squadding for MacKinnon. Proposing to draw squadding for 900 yards by lot and then re-squadded at 1000 yards which should remove any perception of unfairness.
  6. 2014 Handbook publication. The last day for changes to the handbook is 15<sup>th</sup> November. Iain Robertson will be circulating the timetable in the next week or two to all members of General Council.
  7. Firing Points. Martin Townsend is leading on this having completed a survey of 500 and 600 and 800, 900, 1000 yards. They still have 300 and 1100, 1200 yards to do over the next month. A report of recommendations will be discussed by Andrew Mercer, Estates Manager and Head Groundsman with a view to implementation over the winter months.
  8. Target number boards have all now been replaced and are clearly visible.

KR asked whether the harmonisation of eligibility rules wouldn't disenfranchise people who have 'fairly ropery' rights. JB confirmed that this is a subject for discussion for those involved.

KR then asked the Chairman whether a meeting needed to be held with the National Match Council to agree to what is advised. The Chairman responded that if the rules of the National Match Council are accepted as the new rules there is no change and therefore no need to meet.

KR asked whether there was anything for the bible on the change of targets. JB confirmed that they do have some potential changes however it will not be made effective until 2015.

Charles Brooks raised a question about HM The Queen's Final squadding and whether it would be better to return to the old system which had been used before it had been considered that the trees along the left hand side of the range gave too great an advantage to those squadded on ranges 0 and 1. JB stated that they had in fact reverted to that old format for this year's Imperial Meeting

### **G341 – FINANCE**

The Chairman requested any comments on the finance. No comments raised.

John Kynoch would like to record his appreciation for all the work done so far by Ray Hutchings and his team.

Reg Roberts asked whether there were any more potential legal matters or claims which could result in settlements. AM stated that there is always something bubbling away at the edges due to the size and complexity of the organisation and it would be naïve to think the organisation wouldn't have anything going on, but nothing at the moment which would result in a major impact on the financial situation.

### **G342 – THE COUNCIL**

Minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> June were raised. No points mentioned.

JW reported on the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> August. Main points to raise are:

1. Financial Accounts. These have been signed off and lodged. The Management Accounts are now coming out on a prompt monthly basis and a great deal of credit goes to Ray Hutchings and his team. The Trustees are confident in the numbers being produced and confidence is growing each month.
2. Systems. New systems for Accommodation and Membership have been implemented and this is proving successful.

3. Meeting costs. AM and team have spent a lot of time working on accounts of each individual meeting, particularly the Imperial Meeting, especially following receipt of the petition received at the AGM. This is still work in progress.
4. Financial calendar. Derek Lowe proposes to produce a calendar of financial events throughout the year so that both Council and General Council can have an instant record of what is being done and it can be followed on a timely basis.
5. Co-option. Previously looking to co-opt a further member to Council with FCA audit experience. However, Council feels it would be better to have someone with the professional experience and covered by their own professional indemnity insurance in a cost effective manner as an advisor to Council rather than a full Trustee. Will advise General Council once further discussions held.
6. Journal. Barry Morgan working on the Journal and a survey has gone out to all members asking their view.
7. John Webster, as Andrew Mercer's line manager, has held a 6 month review with AM. AM had produced a set of objectives as part of the meeting and this was talked through with JW and will be part of the three year plan which AM is putting together.
8. Evaluation of Trustees. JW and John Warburton spent time discussing how the process should evolve for evaluating Trustees. Recommend to the Chairman that General Council members should receive information of who the Trustees are and what they do and their skill sets. Also look at providing a list of projects set out for each Trustee and how they are achieving success towards the completion. JW and Georgina Thatcher will produce a set of CVs and photographs for distribution to the General Council members.
9. Three year plan will be distributed to GC members once it has been discussed and provisionally agreed by Council.

KR brought up the minutes from 12<sup>th</sup> April minutes. One question surrounding Young Marksman Club and whether it was still happening.

AM confirmed that there was a meeting a few weeks ago, and it was very popular and going well.

KR would appreciate more publicity being made available to promote the YMC. Agreed.

Reg Roberts raised a query regarding the selection of Trustees and measuring their worth. JW responded that communication needs to be improved between the Trustees and General Council members so that everyone can understand what is required on the board and where gaps are and what can be done to fill those gaps, even on a temporary basis.

KR asked whether the Second Schedule could be amended to allow for more Trustees.

Charles Brooks responded that the change to the Second Schedule in 2003 made changes to the Board from the original 60 members of General Council to a proper board of 12 members which was an acceptable level for a Board. It was noted there are still two available places on the Council.

The Chairman raised the point that the trustees had decided to wait until AM has produced his three year plan and this has been discussed in Council before making any changes to the Second Schedule to ensure we understand the type of Trustee we need over the next three years.

The Chairman mentioned the three year review being done by AM. The last time a review was done was at the end of 2009. General Council input was requested and this would be very welcome again this year. Therefore once the three year plan has been discussed and provisionally approved in Council at the beginning of October, it will be sent to General Council for comments and input which will be towards the end of October, early November. The plan and budget will need to go firm in December, certainly for the first year of the plan.

David Calvert raised a question regarding the insurance of trophies and the liability on the

individual who takes it away.

AM confirmed this was still on-going and he is meeting with the insurance company over the next few weeks to clarify the insurance process. AM believes that if the individual takes the trophy away it is their responsibility to return the trophy and if not, they need to supply a suitable replacement. AM will report once fully investigated.

### **G343 – BRITISH SHOOTING & BSSC**

Guy Larcombe requested clarification between the two groups.

The Chairman responded that British Shooting are a body which has been set up at the insistence of UK Sport and Sport England to channel government funding into shooting and involves the NRA, NSRA, CPSA etc.

GL also re-stated his unhappiness at the level of salaries being paid to this organisation rather than investing it directly into shooting.

AM raised the point that it is a grant funded issue and there is a process to be followed. It is good news that British Shooting has attracted £1.2m. There are obviously alternative ways people would like to see the money spent but that is not the way UK Sport works.

Rae Wills raised the point that we need to ensure that the NRA try to get on board by forming our own 'Olympic' group to try and promote full-bore shooting as it takes time to create an Olympic champion and an individual shouldn't be dropped due to a failure in the first Olympic Games attended.

The Chairman responded that as the full-bore was no longer an Olympic Sport we need to be watching what British Shooting are doing and analysing what's successful and adapting that. But they need to also look at the success of full-bore shooting over the last 20 years.

Guy Larcombe requested that the Chairman goes back to British Shooting to show them how successful full-bore shooting has been. The Chairman commented that this had been done.

Martin Watkins commented that full bore shooting has been very successful in Commonwealth Games but the Olympic Games covers specific disciplines within the world of shooting and there are more successful Olympic shooting teams than that of GB.

John Bloomfield raised the point that English Target Shooting Federation has not received any funding from Sport England for Commonwealth Games preparation. The message that has to go back via British Shooting more firmly is that this is a disgraceful way of carrying on.

The Chairman raised the point that no English sport has received any money for Commonwealth Games training, not just shooting.

The Chairman is happy to go back to Sport England and ask when the money will be released.

The Chairman has offered to invite a senior person from British Shooting to attend the next meeting to answer questions. General Council members agreed.

The Chairman then moved onto BSSC. BSSC is an organisation that brings together all the major players in the shooting world, ie Countryside Alliance, BASC, NRA, NSRA, CPSA, UKPSA and Muzzle Loaders etc. The whole purpose of the group is to talk to Government about legislation.

There is a large raft of changes. The Home Office guidance is being changed at the moment. The HANSARD report of the Westminster Hall debate of 3 September (columns 35WH to 56WH) is

worth reading and can be found on the website at

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130903/halltext/130903h0001.htm#13090344000001>

Target Shotgun is taking up a large amount of time at the moment. In the old guidance UKPSA is the only organisation recognised by Government to carry out Target Shotgun and Practical Shotgun. However, in the new guidance the NRA is now recognised alongside UKPSA.

Changes to the conditions imposed on FACs for Target Shotgun have to go into the Home Office for approval. The Chairman has been in discussion with UKPSA surrounding Section 1 shotguns and solid slug ammunition and now have a joint approach going in today (6<sup>th</sup> September).

James Harris confirmed that BSSC will send in the combined submission today.

If that is accepted by the Home Office it will make life much easier for those who wish to shoot Target Shotgun.

Fees have not gone up since 2002. They are clearly going to go up substantially.

The requirement for producing a medical certificate before starting the process is still under discussion.

Paul Roberts requested clarification whether the use of expanding ammunition for target shooting is being looked at as he has been asked by a number of people who would like the restrictions removed.

The Chairman responded that the request be put in writing and he will raise them.

AM raised the point that the Chairman has an enormous burden on him with the amount of work and detail required to work with BSSC. AM would like it recognised by General Council. Agreed.

### **G344 – ELECTION RESULTS**

#### **General Council Ordinary Member**

41 papers returned

Peter Turner 38 Yes votes  
3 No votes

Duly appointed

#### **Council Trustee**

41 papers returned

Peter Hobson 31 Yes votes  
7 No votes  
3 Abstained

Duly re-elected.

KR raised the point of order that the Chairman nominated Peter Hobson and that could be seen as favouritism.

The Chairman accepted that point and should have made it clear that he was doing it on behalf of



the Board of Trustees as a whole as a discussion was held and decided that they did want to propose Peter for a second term.

Accepted.

John Kynoch wanted to counteract KR's point of order as he believes it was a totally acceptable thing to do by the Chairman.

The Chairman then raised the point regarding the Membership Committee and that Steve Wallis's position as Chairman ceased in July. Unfortunately arrangements were not made for the Membership Committee to co-opt him back onto the Committee. He therefore ceased to be a member of Council.

The Vice Chairman of the Membership Committee (Gary Alexander) had taken soundings of the Membership Committee and they would like to re-co-opt Steve Wallis to the Committee. KR confirmed that conversations had been done in private and was unaware of the views of other committee members. She believed they were still waiting for a definitive answer from Gary Alexander before announcing the result.

The Chairman confirmed that GA needs to tell the Membership Committee what he's told the Chairman and then move forward from there. He believed it can be done by email that the Committee have the power to co-opt and then decide who to make Chairman and Trustee.

The Chairman then raised an issue surrounding the Disciplinary Body. The last day of three members of the body is today. Two other member's terms expire in November.

The elections to the Disciplinary Body can only be done at a meeting of General Council. There is a need to find out whether current members wish to be re-elected or whether we need to seek new members.

David Evans stated that he had spoken with AM and AM is going to try and obtain other nominations. AM confirmed that we had a number of potential candidates for nomination.

David Evans believes there are enough members at present to form a disciplinary committee if required. Therefore as long as relevant number of people are elected at the February meeting, all should be OK.

#### **G345 – APPROVAL OF DATES FOR MEETINGS IN 2014**

Following discussion the dates for the 2014 General Council meetings were agreed with the exception of the February meeting which was agreed to be held on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

#### **G346 – HBSA ON GENERAL COUNCIL**

Following discussion, General Council members agreed that HBSA should be invited to become an ex-officio member of General Council. Under Rule 7e i of the Second Schedule the Council can now make the final decision to invite HBSA to accept ex officio membership of General Council and be represented by their chairman or other senior individual.

#### **G347 – OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

John Kynoch raised two questions with the Chairman.

1. Elections – what is the protocol when there are fewer nominations to vacancies. Do you really need to go through an election when it is not a contested election?

JB responded that there are two different types of election, one being an annual election for members of General Council on a three year term of office and the second being an election of people to casual vacancies which are done under separate rules.

David Evans raised the point that when you have fewer candidates to vacancies if you were to ask them to produce a CV the electorate body could decide whether they are in fact suitable to the position and therefore should go to a vote.

JB responded that the GC elections by the whole membership are a Yes/No vote only.

2. Is it acceptable that if a named officer of the organisation that has an ex-officio entitlement is unable to attend General Council that he send an alternative.

The Chairman confirmed that this is allowed as one of the members at the meeting today was not an elected member but does attend in place of his chairman. It is established practice.

Charles Brooks asked whether anyone invited to attend in place of a member who is unable to attend should sign a confidentiality agreement.

New members have signed confidentiality agreements, however this needs to be looked at as it was mentioned by KR that anything discussed at General Council meetings were considered to be in the public domain. Confidentiality agreements were for Council level meetings. JB stated he believed this was the case. It was suggested that this be looked at to confirm the situation.

John Miller expressed his thanks to the NRA staff for the work done on site in preparation for this year's meetings. The camp is looking wonderful in view of tomorrow's Open Day.

The meeting closed at 17.20 pm

## **Chairman**

### **DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS**

Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2014	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion
Followed by the AGM	5.30pm	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion