

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATIONTHE GENERAL COUNCILMinutes of a Meeting held at the Pavilion Bisleyon Friday 5th September 2014 from 2.00pm**Present:**

Chairman: Mr JGM Webster (Chairman)
Vice Chairman: Dr J Warburton (Vice Chairman)

Members: Mr GK Alexander
 Mr HRM Bailie
 Mr GV Barnard
 Mrs ID Bennett
 Mr JPS Bloomfield
 Mr AM Bullen
 Dr A Cargill Thompson
 Wg Cdr DP Calvert
 Mr PR Coley
 Mr DC Crispin
 Mr HF Dunton
 Mr DGF Evans
 Mr NJ Francis
 Maj SB Fraser
 Mr JS Harris
 Mr JM Kynoch
 Mr D Lowe
 Mr M Maksimovic
 Mr CC Mallett
 Mr MF Martell
 Mr TS McDowell
 Mr K Nash
 Mr P Roberts
 Mr R Roberts
 Mrs K Robertson
 Mr P Ryder
 Mr R Sayer
 Mr I Shirra-Gibb
 Mr PDC Turner
 Sqn Ldr P Upham
 Mr RHF Wills
 Mr MP Watkins

In attendance: Mr A Mercer - Chief Executive
 Mrs G Thatcher - Office Manager

Apologies for absence: Mr T Bobbet, Col WGC Bowles, Mr CM Brooks, Mr M Charlton, Mr ARK Clayton, Mr N Cole-Hawkins, Maj. Gen IC Dale, Mr C Farr, Dr N Fyfe, Mr GMLN Gilpin, Mr J Harper-Smith, Major T Higham, Mr P Hobson, Mr JA Horton, Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, Mr K Hocking, Mr P Hunter, Mr A Hunter, Mr TLW Kidner, Mr GAE Larcombe, Mr T Lehman, Mr CN McEachran, Mr JF Miller, Col. Brig. WJ O'Leary, Mr WCP Richards, Mr J Rossiter, Mr AJD Saunders, Brig J Smales, Mr D Stimpson, Wing Cdr M Symonds, Mr G Trembath, Mr MJ Wood, Mr D Young.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman of General Council welcomed everyone to the meeting.

INDEX G369 to G380

G369 – APOLOGIES

Apologies were received.

G370 – 2014 GENERAL COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS & WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Chairman confirmed the following members had been elected to General Council for a period of 3 years:

Ordinary Members

JPS Bloomfield
Wg Cdr (Redt) DP Calvert MBE
GMLN Gilpin
DC Crispin
TS McDowell

Regional Members

HRM Bailie has been elected Northern Ireland representative
GV Barnard has been elected East Midlands representative
TLW Kidner has been elected Scotland representative
DG Young has been elected North Western representative

Shooting Discipline Members

Dr AMW Cargill Thompson has been elected Match Rifle representative
NJ Francis has been elected Gallery Rifle and Pistol representative
I Shirra-Gibb has been elected 300 Metres representative
P Ryder has been elected Historic and Classic Arms representative

The Chairman congratulated all the above members, and welcomed David Crispin, Steve McDowell and Peter Ryder to their first General Council meeting.

G371 – MINUTES OF MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING – 13TH JUNE 2014

The Minutes of the General Council meeting of 13th June 2014 were received.

The minutes were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting and duly approved.

G372 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 13TH JUNE 2014

The Chairman proposed that any matters arising be kept until the end of the meeting for general discussion as a large number of points will be updated throughout the meeting. The proposal was accepted.

G373 – OPERATIONAL UPDATE

The Chief Executive's report was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chief Executive updated the meeting with regards to the management of the ranges through the Target Shed team, Shooting Services team and Range Office and Armoury. This is the next area of the organisation being addressed, mainly due to the large demand being placed upon those teams as the ranges get busier. Cheylesmore and Winans ranges are currently in the process of being refurbished to bring them back online.

Increasing demand is being placed on staff regarding regional issues including access to military ranges. The Trustees have charged the staff to complete a financial analysis that will yield the forecast for 2014 and the budget for 2015. This will provide options in the budget to expand areas including supporting shooting away from Bisley.

All other issues had been included in the report. The Chairman requested any questions.

Paul Roberts asked AM to outline the issues surrounding the Exhibition Hut.

AM confirmed that the NRA were now working with Planning Consultants to assist in the process of planning consent for the work being carried out on Exhibition Hut which relates to the interior cladding of the hut only. A planned meeting with the planner was cancelled this week and will be re-arranged in due course.

There are a large number of complaints being raised with Guildford Borough Council for any and all planned work being carried on site regardless of whether permission is required which is taking a lot of staff time and effort to resolve.

David Calvert asked AM to expand on the report that competition entries were up overall and whether this included the Grand Aggregate and Queens Prize.

AM confirmed that some detailed analysis was currently being undertaken by the finance team which will provide in-depth detail of the Imperial Meeting.

The overall entries to the main competitions were between 3-5% up on 2013 numbers. This was due to more home entries, as the overseas entries were down on 2013. The aggregates were up in some cases by 10-12%.

The Chairman added that analysis provided by Bill Richards showed that the Grand Aggregate entries were up by 28 on 2013 and TR only UK based shooters were up year on year by 9%. The Young Rifleman's Aggregate was up by 46%.

Some more detailed analysis will be made available in due course.

Reg Roberts asked whether it was true that the NSRA Meeting entries were down due to rule changes. Ken Nash confirmed that entries were down but believes this was due to changes to the car parking on the ranges. The rule changes were only introduced at the Scottish meeting a few weeks beforehand.

No further questions were raised.

G374 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND BISLEY GENERAL MEETING

The proceedings of the Annual General Meeting on 13th June 2014 were received.

The proceedings of the Bisley General Meeting on 16th July 2014 were received.

The Chairman reported that among the main issues which came out of both the AGM and BGM were communication with members, holding the AGM & BGM at the same time and future dates of the Imperial Meeting to fit in with schools attendance.

Questions were requested.

Discussion was held regarding the bringing the dates of both meetings to the same time to make it easier for people to attend. However, the AGM must be held within 6 months of the financial year end (31st December).

KR raised the point that the AGM is only open to members of the NRA, whereas the BGM is open to everyone so you couldn't hold the meetings at the same time.

ACT raised the point that the AGM could be moved to an earlier date in the year when it can be better attended for all disciplines over a weekend when a major shoot goes on, i.e. Phoenix Meeting or May Open Day.

Peter Coley asked whether instead of having two inconvenient meetings, one be cancelled. However, it was agreed that both meetings had to be held.

The Chairman requested that thought be given to when the AGM could be more conveniently held for all members and disciplines and to come back with suggestions.

The proceedings of the Annual General Meeting were received and accepted by the members. The proceedings of the Bisley General Meeting were received and accepted by the members.

G375 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Shooting Committee meeting of 29th May 2014 were received.

There were no questions or matters arising.

A verbal report of the Shooting Committee meeting of 4th September 2014 was received.

The harmonisation of eligibility rules for the Elcho Match and Mackinnon was still ongoing. Dick Horrocks has undertaken a lot of work to date and the Shooting Committee hope to have a solution for next year.

The MoD have stated that there is no reason that hard targets cannot be put on Stickledown. There is still some discussion surrounding the buffalo target which will be put on target 51 on Stickledown and will be dug into the mantlet. This is however, down on the list of priorities of things which need doing so it won't happen immediately.

Regarding ETR's, the revision of JSP403 is being undertaken and the NRA has been asked to contribute to the draft. The MoD have welcomed the input and the publication is schedule for October 2014. JB expressed his thanks to Iain Robertson for the tremendous amount of work he has put into the document and the discussions he has had with the working party producing the document. Should all the suggestions go through successfully, it should resolve a lot of the current issues with the use of ranges outside of Bisley by civilians.

Harald Dunton asked whether this was being completed under JSP403 or pamphlet 21. JB confirmed that the overriding document will be JSP403 with some overlap with pamphlet 21.

The NRA are currently in discussion with the MoD to arrange training courses on the use of SARTS to allow others to be trained in the regions which will provide more flexibility and reduce costs for shooting on MoD ranges.

Harald Dunton then asked whether ETR targets were still being put on Stickledown. JB confirmed that the NRA will be looking to get some ETR targets from the MoD and put them on Stickledown.

AM added that the decision from TAS regarding the ability to shoot has just come through and we need to complete testing before we make approaches for available units.

JB continued that the other issue being addressed for use of civilian ranges is the provision of first aid on the ranges. The qualified first aider must be qualified to the military standard of MAC3 Level 1. The NRA are still in the process of finding out exactly what that involves as it is a restricted document, and will report accordingly. Martin Watkins and Steve McDowell both offered to speak to contacts to find out any information regarding qualification required.

Another area discussed is known as the 'STANTA' problem surrounding the training area in the Norfolk/Suffolk area having been told they no longer have access to firing ranges because our RCOs are not qualified to run "moving target" ranges. JB commented that the NRA in the process of trying to talk to the relevant parties involved to resolve the issue including SARTS.

AM added that there is a lot of work to be done on the relationship with the MoD to be able to resolve the regional range issues. However, there is not enough staff resource available to devote the time required at present on this area. This is being addressed and hope to have some positive resolution soon.

The Chairman agreed that the NRA needs to be more proactive in this area, provide resources and the message had been received and understood by the Trustees. The Chairman also added his thanks for the work undertaken by Iain Robertson which has helped in the improvement of the relationship with the MoD which should help in discussions with regional range issues.

There has been discussion about creating a Regional Range Committee and that is still being proposed for acceptance by the General Council Members.

Re safety issues, the Kingsbury issue concluded and closed.

Walcott 50-calibre issue is rapidly proceeding to a conclusion. The military have lifted the prohibition of the use of 50-calibre rifles on their ranges and there is some ongoing work with the RPA Rangemaster.

The remains of the firearm from the Gairloch incident has gone to Shrivenham for metallurgical analysis. That is ongoing and hope to have a report by the end of November 2014.

Re disciplinary matters, there was a case of cheating at the Imperial Meeting this year with the alteration of scorecards after a shoot. The person concerned has been banned. The Committee have tasked JB, IR and Peter Cottrell to review the rules concerning completion and sign off of scorecards for any potential administration changes which could be implemented for 2015.

Re the Bisley Bible, JB requested that any contributions for changes to rules be sent by email to Iain Robertson with a final date for submission as 7th November 2014.

Re range bookings 2015, an exercise is currently ongoing which should relieve range booking problems and increase the ability to use the ranges. During weekends the target framework will be arranged around any major activity going on on the two main ranges and if requirements for range use coincide with what is being shot at these major events, bookings will be honoured.

Re Imperial Meeting dates, the dates for 2015 have been published on the website. The Queens Final will be the 3rd Saturday in July, ie 18th July. For 2016 the Queen's Final will be held on 4th Saturday of July, ie 23rd July. The long term intention, subject to review, is Queen's Final will be held on the 4th Saturday in July.

The Ages Match has been cancelled this year due to lack of interest from all groups. The proposal is that moving forward it will become a biennial match held mid-October alternating with the European Long Range Championship. The format is still to be discussed and agreed.

The NRA have offered to purchase a gun cabinet for The Sea Cadet Corp, Guildford, as a long term loan to assist with their return to shooting.

2019 will be the 150th Imperial Meeting. The Shooting Committee have requested ideas from all disciplines for what they would like to do during that meeting to mark the occasion.

Questions were requested.

Karen Robertson asked when the proposed programme for range bookings be made available to assist Club Secretaries with organising their programmes. AM confirmed the range booking programme will be available from the end of September.

Reg Roberts asked what is being put in place to avoid further potential of cheating during the Meeting. JB confirmed that there was a 'sin bin' pile now in the stats department and any suspect cards are placed there for review by the Shooting Committee Chairman/Firearms Manager before being released into the results. Any issues will be passed to the Secretary General/Disciplinary Committee for action.

Ammunition

The contract with GGG has been concluded which will see the supply of the issued ammunition for 2015/2016 Imperial Meetings. The intended price for retail will be between 75p-78p per round. The ammunition is the GGG cartridge case and propellant with a Sierra 2155 projectile. The ammunition was trialled at the Purples Match and is comparable to the RUAG ammunition. Delivery is due in June 2015.

David Crispin asked whether there was a guarantee that the Sierra heads would be provided as there has been an issue with the procurement of Sierra bullets.

AM confirmed that the NRA are a significant customer of Sierra bullets and that they would be geared up to provide Sierra bullets to RUAG, but now they would be supplying to GGG for the same order amount. The NRA does not believe there will be an issue. If there is a problem in supply, there is enough RUAG in stock to be made available for the 2015 Imperial Meeting.

Peter Coley asked if the RUAG would be offered at discounted prices. The Chairman stated that any RUAG would be made available at discounted rates to young shooters to help them with their shooting, especially in World Championship years.

Harald Dunton asked if any further progress had been made with the MoD with regards to hand-loaded ammunition.

AM confirmed that the NRA will shortly be launching a survey to all NRA members regarding home-loaded ammunition to understand how widely it is used and where in the regions so that we can then go back to the MoD with a considered response to concerns raised by them.

Peter Coley asked that a question be included in the survey to ask how many malfunctions they have had with hand-loaded ammunition and compare that with the number of malfunctions with commercially produced ammunition.

AM responded that question was already included in the survey. JB added that comparing malfunctioning commercially produced ammunition with malfunctioning home-loaded ammunition would not be done until the survey data has been collated.

ACT asked whether it was worth including clubs as well as non-members, full members and affiliated members to get a wide ranging response.

AM responded that we are trying to get an understanding from the members of how much home-loaded ammunition they use on MoD ranges and how did members gain the skills to make the ammunition.

G376 – FINANCE

Two finance papers were received by the meeting.

Derek Lowe reported that the NRA is in good financial health as shown in the first paper. The three key measures show that as of the end of July 2014, there is a surplus of £415k (£50k up on budget). The cash balance currently sits at £660k (£40k ahead of budget) and net current assets are £461k.

The Finance team will be producing a forecast through to end of December 2014 as well as budgets for 2015 for presentation to the Trustee meeting in October. The strategic 3 year plan will be included as part of the budget.

DL confirmed that more communication was being provided to members with regards to the financial position of the NRA and this will continue.

The second paper was a financial calendar which shows the process of financial information throughout each year.

DL would like to express his thanks to Ray Hutchings and his support services team for the hard work and effort which has been done over the last year in producing accurate and timely information.

Questions were requested.

Steve McDowell asked what opportunities there were for revenue generation for Bisley Camp have been discussed for the winter months.

AM responded that profitable income must be key and not just turnover. Shooting activities are the key profit area for Bisley. Other opportunities tend to create turnover but not significant net profit. Therefore there is a need to focus more on out of season shooting on Cheylesmore and Winans as covered ranges, rather than Century and Stickledown.

SMcD asked whether specific issues had been requested from the membership in terms of communication or whether publishing the financial information would be acceptable.

DL confirmed that the financial information has been published both on the website and in the last journal.

HD asked whether semi-permanent covered firing points were still on the agenda for the ranges.

AM confirmed that the pavilion stands would be erected this year to provide cover on the firing points.

ACT commented that the financial updates provided to members were extremely valuable and heading in the right direction. ACT would like to see more information provided on what is being done with the finances both at Bisley and in the regions.

Reg Roberts raised the point that the escalation of surpluses is very rapid. In an SME or commercial business, it would take 5-10 years to achieve what has been achieved at Bisley in 2 years. Obviously Bisley has a captive audience which helps. The NRA has achieved a 9% surplus which is excellent compared to any SME company.

The Chairman responded that the Council are thinking their way through what level of surplus is reasonable and remarked that the long term goal is that shooting in itself breaks even and any surplus generated comes from commercial activities.

However, shorter term surpluses need to be generated to cover infrastructure spend which has not been undertaken over the last 5 years to be fair to both the current and future membership. This investment needs to be made to ensure the future of Bisley for all. Once achieved, a look at income streams and their variability can be undertaken to see whether savings can be made to 'give back' to members.

The Chairman added that the Council see Bisley as the 'Crown Jewel' which belongs to all members and if surpluses can be generated in Bisley, then all can share especially the regions.

HD added that there is a lot of discontent in the regions and what would be done about that to show value for money.

AM confirmed that now that the NRA is generating hard cash, securing the future of the NRA, surpluses can now be deployed in the regions, and that is one of the priorities for the NRA.

Peter Coley suggested that the Regional Representatives find out what ranges are available in their areas and report to the Committee.

The Chairman responded that having a Regional Range Committee will be key towards building relationships in the regions and this is one of the priorities for the Council.

David Calvert asked whether a regional Queen's Prize could be organised as they do in Australia.

The Chairman asked for any ideas and thoughts as to how the General Council would like to see the surplus dispersed as it is very important to the Trustees to move forward wisely.

KR asked whether consideration would be given to the large rises in the years prior to 2014, when producing the new fees for 2015.

The Chairman confirmed that membership fees would be raised by no more than RPI – and therefore no rise at all in real terms - as per the three year strategic plan that was announced last year.

G377 – THE COUNCIL

The minutes of the meetings held on 25th April and 13th June 2014 were formally received.

A verbal report of the meeting held on 22nd August was received.

Possible sponsorship of the Imperial Meeting following the positive increase in social media conducted during the meeting which can be demonstrated to future sponsors.

Communication was one of the major topics of discussion following the feedback from the AGM and BGM. The Trustees have decided that the NRA will place the updated strategic plan and the new organisational structure on the website so all regional / discipline members are informed.

The Chairman and AM asked the General Council for their thoughts on whether the Chairman and Chief Executive should undertake regular provincial meetings. This was agreed as a good idea.

The idea of a press and media campaign was also discussed and the Chairman has asked Steve McDowell, a communications expert, to assist with that. SMcD has agreed.

Trade stands at Bisley were discussed and the Trustees are seeking to be more accommodating for trade stands along the lines of the Bazaar Lines for the 2015 meeting.

It was agreed at the meeting that the hand loading survey will take place. Some feedback has been received that the NRA is opposed to hand-loaded ammo. The Chairman wanted it placed on record that the NRA is not opposed to anti-hand-loaded ammunition.

The Rule 150 three step protocol was also discussed. The Birmingham Proof House testing protocol is now approved, and should start this month. The QC, Jean Ritchie, has been instructed to look at the process of how Rule 150 came about and will commence on 17th September.

The Chairman has written to John Carmichael following his allegation. Two letters have been received from JC and he has confirmed he has nothing further to add. The Trustees are now producing a response to that. All documents will then be looked at by an independent arbiter. The NRA hopes to have a full report available for discussion at the next General Council meeting in February 2015.

Questions were requested.

KR asked what DVD was as mentioned in minutes of 13th June. MM responded that it is one of the largest Military Equipment shows in the UK.

KR commented that the social media coverage during the Imperial Meeting was fantastic and asked whether Paul Deech was paid or a volunteer. AM confirmed that he was paid.

SMcD asked whether it would be useful for him to attend a Trustee meeting to understand what the future plans are for communication and media coverage and again offered his assistance. The Chairman and Chief Executive both accepted that.

The subject of trophy values was raised. The NRA insurance policy covers up to £30,000 per claim only. Any trophies taken home by competitors must be insured for their full amount in case of loss.

G378 – VICE CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL AND CO-OPTED TRUSTEES

The Chairman asked General Council's approval for David Evans to become the Vice Chairman of Council. This was duly approved.

John Kynoch wanted to express his thanks for the information provided for the potential co-opted Trustees put forward to the General Council including the rationale behind why the three candidates were being put forward for election. It was extremely helpful.

The Chairman confirmed that 14 expressions of interest had been received, with 11 CVs being put forward for consideration. 4 candidates were then interviewed following a confidential evaluation by the Trustees, with 3 candidates being put forward for election.

The results are:

Alice Gran	34 Yes	1 No
James Harris	32 Yes	2 No
David Lacey	32 Yes	3 No

All three candidates were approved as co-opted members of Council.

The two candidates who are unknown to General Council will be asked to make a presentation at the next meeting to introduce themselves. Updated biographies of all Trustees will be forwarded to General Council in due course.

G379 – APPROVAL OF DATES FOR 2015 MEETINGS

The following dates were approved for 2015.

Date	Time	Venue
Saturday 21 st February 2015	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 12th June 2015	3.00pm	Bisley Pavilion
Followed by the AGM	6.00pm	Bisley Pavilion
Friday 4th September 2015	2.00pm	Bisley Pavilion

G380 – OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Peter Coley asked whether the speed humps on camp could be removed as they are ineffective and damaging to cars.

AM responded that they do slow vehicles down on camp as there are occasions when the speed limit is not adhered to, especially since the upgrading improvements to the roads were made.

Peter Coley asked whether a rule change could be made for the Counties Short Range Junior and Senior matches where only one team enters, can the prize be presented. It was agreed that the Shooting Committee would look at this.

The Membership Committee has recently elected a new Chairman and would therefore provide an update at the next General Council meeting.

No further questions were raised.

The meeting closed at 16.45 pm

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John John Roberts".

Chairman

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Saturday 21st February 2015

2.00pm

Bisley Pavilion