

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

FINAL

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held at the Pavilion Bisley
on Saturday 21st February 2015 from 2.00pm

Present:

Chairman: Mr JGM Webster (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 M Charlton
Mr N Cole-Hawkins
Mr PR Coley
Mr DC Crispin
Mr HF Dunton
Mr DGF Evans
Sqn Ldr A Fox
Mr NJ Francis
Maj SB Fraser
Dr N Fyfe
Mr JS Harris
Wg Cdr CJ Hockley
Mr JM Kynoch
Mr GAE Larcombe
Mr D Lowe
Mr CC Mallett
Mr TS McDowell
Mr JF Miller
Mr K Nash
Mr WCP Richards
Mr P Roberts
Mr R Roberts
Mrs K Robertson
Mr P Ryder
Mr I Shirra-Gibb
Mr D Stimpson
Mr PDC Turner
Sqn Ldr P Upham
Mr RHF Wills
Mr MP Watkins
Mr D Young

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

Apologies for absence: Mr T Bobbet, Col WGC Bowles, Mr CM Brooks, Mr ARK Clayton, Maj. Gen IC Dale, Mr GMLN Gilpin, Mr J Harper-Smith, Mr P Hobson, Mr JA Horton, Mr K Hocking, Mr P Hunter, Mr A Hunter, Mr TLW Kidner, Mr T Lehman, Mr M Maksimovic, Mr MF Martell, Mr CN McEachran, Col. Brig. WJ O'Leary, Mr J Rossiter, Mr AJD Saunders, Mr R Sayer, Brig J Smales, Wing Cdr M Symonds, Mr G Trembath, Dr J Warburton (Vice Chairman), Mr MJ Wood

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman of General Council welcomed everyone to the meeting.

INDEX G381 to G393

G381 – APOLOGIES

Apologies were received.

G382 – WELCOME TO NEW TRUSTEE

The Chairman welcomed Alice Gran as one of the Council's new Trustees. Alice Gran gave a two minute introduction to the meeting and was welcomed by the members.

G383 – MINUTES OF MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING – 5TH SEPTEMBER 2014

The Minutes of the General Council meeting of 5th September 2014 were received.

KR had requested a change to the point she raised under point G376 regarding price rises which GT confirmed had been made.

Harald Dunton requested a word change to point G375 from angles to ranges.

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

G384 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 5TH SEPTEMBER 2014

Harald Dunton raised a query regarding the demand placed on staff regarding regional issues. The Chairman confirmed that this would be discussed later in the meeting under item 4.

G385 – CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman presented four items to the meeting.

1. Three Year Plan

The Three Year plan had been circulated to all members of General Council. The Chairman thanked the members for their feedback.

The Chairman confirmed that it is a working document and that changes will be made throughout its time and highlighted the following points:

- The terms of reference for the Regional Range Committee have been approved by Council and a letter will be sent out to members inviting them to put themselves forward for consideration.
- The position of Regional Ranges Manager has been advertised and some encouraging responses have been received.
- A series of statistics has been produced on range utilisation which will allow prioritisation of investment into the various ranges.

A new insurance package has been negotiated for all members this year which has seen a greater offering including for Clubs, Schools and Associations.

An effort to increase competition entries has been implemented including a reduction of 7.5% in Imperial entry fees for TR competitions, and youth subsidies increased to 40% with a blanket coverage for all shooters under the age of 25.

TS McDowell requested that an acknowledgement be sent for responses to requests for feedback.

Chris Hockley added that more communication is required to members, especially following email requests.

The Chairman recognised the comments and agreed that communication does need to improve and apologised for the lack of response.

ACT commented that the improvements in the new insurance policy are excellent.

WCPRichards mentioned that the percentage figures shown in the table for range utilisation are based on the total membership but these figures were not listed. WCPR requested the actual membership figures.

AM confirmed that the membership numbers have increased in terms of TR shooters since 2012 however did not have the exact figures to hand. AM will provide WCPR with the figures.

Neil Francis asked if the new insurance package covered reloaded ammunition.

AM responded that there are some clarification required from the new brokers to the exact wording of the policy, which will be communicated out to the membership once completed.

David Calvert asked whether it was the suggestion to increase the activity in short range shooting.

The Chairman confirmed that the Association needs to consider increasing the short range capacity to meet the demands –particularly during the week - of the membership, especially due to the demand placed on the ranges by corporate users, which provides a good income stream to the Association. Range utilisation statistics for 2014 suggest that over 50% of shooting conducted at Bisley is at 300m or less. The figures quoted (Short Siberia accounting for 41.8% of total range hire; Century 26.1%, and Stickledown 9.4%) disguise the fact that competitions skew these figures away from Short Siberia, and that the figures for Stickledown include short range shooting on Butt Zero.

No further matters were raised regarding the Three Year Plan.

Letter to John Carmichael

The Chairman had circulated a letter which he had sent to John Carmichael in response to an email he had sent to General Council members, the Proof Masters in both London and Birmingham and the people who will be conducting the tests.

The Chairman also wrote to the Proof Houses to inform them that he had written to John Carmichael following the email.

Rule 150 update

The Chairman confirmed that the tests were underway. There had been no changes made to the agreed protocol. The Birmingham Proof House who are undertaking the tests have all the required equipment to conduct the tests.

John Bloomfield had a meeting with Derek Allsop and Sam Perry, Assistant Proof Master and Wayne Massey, Head of the Laboratory in January. They have all they need to begin the tests.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the tests were the Proof Houses tests and resulting information can only be released to relevant parties by their authorisation.

With regards to the illegal behaviour alleged by John Carmichael, JC has attempted to substantiate these allegations in a letter to Council and the Council have asked JB to write a rebuttal letter back.

The Terms of Reference for the process of looking at all the information regarding any illegal behaviour are being created by David Lacey who is a new Trustee to Council. He is also new to the current situation with Rule 150 and an experienced lawyer. The brief will be prepared for delivery to Counsel by the end of March.

John Kynoch's proposal to General Council regarding impropriety is being processed. The Terms of Reference for Counsel have been agreed. Jean Ritchie QC is unable to complete the work due to personal circumstances, but has recommended a replacement QC/District Judge.

The Council have requested that David Lacey and Alice Gran assemble all the relevant information and documentation for the replacement QC. This will help reduce overall costs within the agreed cap.

Gun Mart Article

The Chairman raised the article published in January's Gun Mart regarding thefts from the NRA Armoury.

The Council will be posting a reply to that article in the Spring Journal, because it was felt that the report contained a number of inaccuracies, which were now in the public domain despite requests for them to be corrected. The Chairman confirmed that the stolen bolt and scope of Miss Bayldon-Lee's rifle was very unfortunate. The theft was reported to CID.

The Association admitted responsibility and offered to pay Miss Bayldon-Lee (JBL) full compensation based on an evaluation provided by JBL of £2.5k. However, JBL would only accept the compensation if she could keep the rifle. The Association considered that to be unacceptable.

JBL subsequently took the NRA to small claims court where she provided two further valuations, which were not shared with the NRA, of £4k and £4.5k. The judge decided that the only issue at hand was the value of the rifle which was valued at £3.5k and deducted £400 for the value of the rifle with missing scope and bolt. The NRA paid JBL that amount and court fees.

The Association feels that it has behaved properly in this matter.

There was an incorrect assertion made in the Gun Mart article that the judge upheld JBL's claim because the NRA does not operate a secure Section 5 Armoury. That is false and it was not mentioned at all.

The Association felt that it would be failing in its responsibility in relation to its members if it was to pay excessive sums to save the NRA's embarrassment about security failings in its armoury.

The incident has clearly highlighted shortcomings in the armoury and these have been addressed, including photographs of all stock held in the Armoury and the introduction of CCTV. The introduction of individual cabinets will also be introduced this year and keys will be held by members only.

Questions were requested for any items brought up by the Chairman.

Harald Dunton wanted to raise a question regarding the Rule 150 update and the point made by John Carmichael. He asked if the control batch of ammunition had an overall length of 2.785.

JB confirmed that was correct.

HD remarked that it was his understanding that that the maximum overall length is 2.80 and that a jump of 15thou has been allowed for.

JB responded that Rule 150 concerns use of factory ammunition. Four types/lots of factory ammunition measured by the Birmingham proof laboratory had an average length of 2.785" including HPS. If the bullet is initially to be in contact with the leade for the trials either the throat length of the rifle must be 2.785" or the ammunition adjusted to be 2.800" i.e., the maximum length allowable by CIP. We use factory ammunition, not altered factory ammunition therefore the throat length of the trial barrels was made to correspond with the ammunition as manufactured. The rules say that the throat length of the rifle must be such that for a cartridge loaded at 2.800, the bullet does not touch the leade. The initial tests are therefore going to be carried out with the bullet touching the leade. The throat length will then be progressively increased to determine the effect of throat length on pressure.

G386 – CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Chief Executive's report was presented to the meeting.

AM confirmed that the Terms and Conditions for caravans have been updated. There are still 24 caravan owners who have yet to confirm their wish to remain on camp.

JSP403 is still awaiting publication.

The new probationary training course is going well. A 40% discount is being applied to all training programmes for under 25s.

AM met with GGG during the British Shooting Show and received confirmation that they have received the Sierra bullets and are currently a month ahead of schedule in producing this year's ammunition and delivery should be made in April.

AM will be making an announcement to membership covering the Imperial Meeting discounts to TR competition prices, the 40% discount for competitions and training to under 25s and that GGG will be sponsoring the Inter Counties competition.

ACT asked what the final price of the GGG will be.

AM confirmed the pricing should be between 75p and 78p.

Paul Roberts asked whether matters had been resolved with Guilford Borough Council regarding Exhibition Hut.

AM confirmed that agreement has almost be finalised with just final permission of the interior wall cladding being signed off.

KR expressed her thanks to the NRA for the input of funds to the Young Shooters Fund from the recent auction of rifles.

AM confirmed that further auctions will be held, including a specialist TR auction and an Historics auction.

G387 - FINANCE

DL presented his finance report to the meeting.

2014 shows a surplus of £430k and a cash balance of £340k. DL expressed his thanks to AM and all the staff for their hard work during the year.

The audit took place at the beginning of March and was completed within a week. DL expressed his thanks to Ray Hutchings and the supports services team.

The Report and Accounts should be approved by the Trustees and published by the end of March.

DL expressed his thanks to Bill Richards and the stats team for the information they provided to allow for the 40% discount to under 25s.

The NRA have agreed to support the Under 19's team to South Africa this year through general funds.

Budgets for 2015 are a surplus of £320k and a cash balance of an excess of £200k.

The Chairman confirmed that the reserves policy will differ in 2015 compared to 2014. This is due to the changes being made by the Charity Commission. Comparing a report from year to year will show a difference in the policy.

G388 – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Gary Alexander, in the absence of Mik Maksimovic, presented a verbal report to the meeting.

Membership is showing a healthy sign of increase. The British Shooting Show saw the enrolment of a further 52 members.

The Azolve database is providing clearer information of the membership.

No questions were raised.

G389 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th September were presented to the meeting.

Harald Dunton raised an observation regarding Regional Ranges and the issues at STANTA. HD pointed out that they had resolved the issues themselves and wanted to express his disappointment that the issue had to be managed by themselves. A frank exchange of emails with the Range Administration Unit pointed out that the NRA RCO manual states that it is a document agreed with the MoD which resulted in a response from the MoD that the decision not to allow access has been overturned.

HD has also sent out an email to all ranges in his region which has resulted in a small response, but an underlying theme is that a lot of MoD Range Administration Units appreciated that civilians are qualified to run certified ranges.

The Chairman thanked HD for that information and confirmed that James Harris will be the Council member in charge of the Regional Ranges Committee and asked that HD correspond directly with JH.

Matt Charlton questioned point S700c/S732c regarding the harmonisation of eligibility rules for Elcho, National and McKinnon matches as to whether anything had processed on that subject.

JB stated that he has not heard anything further at this time.

ACT asked for more details regarding the composition of the Regional Ranges Committee and how it fits into the NRA.

The Chairman confirmed that this had been discussed at Monday's Council meeting and that James Harris had presented a draft Terms of Reference and a draft letter requested all members to put themselves forward for the Committee, which was accepted by the Council. The RCC would report directly to the Council.

Reg Roberts asked whether scorecards and scoring will be checked at the Imperial Meeting following last year's disciplinary issue.

JB confirmed that nothing would be changing. WCR added that the stats team pick up issues very quickly and they are resolved immediately so no further changes are needed at this time.

Albie Fox made an observation that it is being very obvious that working with the Army can be difficult and more should be done to work with them and one option could be getting civilians shooters as reserves which may produce a more positive working relationship.

Derek Stimpson would like confirmation that the HBSA Fulton's Plate mentioned in the Council Minutes need to be clarified as the Historics do not have a Fulton's Plate.

JB confirmed this would be looked at and the correction will be made at a later stage.

Harald Dunton asked if the MAC 3 Level 1 First Aid qualifications had been sorted out.

AM confirmed that he believes it has been sorted but we are awaiting as to what is included in JSP403 prior to making a formal statement. A number of regional clubs are being told that the NRA is approving first aid courses which is not the case. The NRA have recommended a First Aid at Work level qualification.

JB then gave a verbal report of the Shooting Committee meeting held on 29th January.

The handbook is in process, should be going to print at the beginning of March and comes into force on 1st April. Major changes to the bible include the F-Class programme which will now start on the first Friday with their Grand Aggregate concluding on 2nd Monday with St George's Final and two International matches held on the Tuesday. Their 'Queen's Final' has been renamed the 'Farquarson' Final.

An anonymous donation of £550 in memory of Jeremy Peter-Hoblyn has been received which will fund five £100 prizes for u/25 competitors in some of the Match Rifle competitions. This will be an annual donation for the lifetime of the donor

The Peter-Hoblyn Aggregate is a new competition which will be the Under 25 version of the Maxwell competition. There will be two prizes of gold/silver wire badges for 1st & 2nd places

The Kolapore will be shot on ICFRA targets – there will be no other changes to the conditions for the Match

The V Club match has been renamed the Arthur Clarke match.

JSP403 changes will not appear in the Bible this year.

The historical match records are not up to date and this will be updated after this year's meeting.

Safety Issues – the 50 calibre incident at Walcott is almost resolved.

Krag-Jorgenson incident has produced a very extensive forensic report from Shrivenham. Iain Robertson will be writing an overarching report for the MoD. The prohibition on Krag-Jorgenson rifles will remain in place until the report is completed.

Imperial Meetings from 2016 will have the Queen's Final falling on the fourth Saturday in July. This will be subject to review by the Council for 2017 to see the impact on schools.

Questions were requested.

David Crispin asked whether a .303 or .556 match could be included in this year's Imperial Meeting as they are popular calibres.

Following discussion it was agreed that DC would present a proposal for use of other calibres in future Imperial meetings to Nigel Cole-Hawkins for discussion by the Shooting Committee. Derek Stimpson will also put together a proposal to include Historics.

The proposals, if agreed, could be implemented for 2016 onwards.

Guy Larcombe suggested that if people did want to shoot in this year's Imperial they should consider entering under the F-Class competition as they allow any ammunition.

KR suggested that DC organises the people who wish to shoot during the Imperial, hire a range office target, get the feedback of what went well or wrong and then have a better proposal to put forward for 2016.

Peter Coley asked whether the County Short Range Junior competition would provide a medal for last year's competition as it was cancelled.

JB confirmed that this had not been considered and would review it over the weekend.

Peter Coley stated that it is the only competition his county can enter due to the lack of numbers and if only one or two teams enter the competition is cancelled and the medals are thrown away.

JB stated that the medals are not thrown away as they are not engraved until after the competition. Peter Coley disputed this and offered a bet of £50 that he was right.

JB confirmed that the standard TR target is due for revision but it was put into abeyance due to the change of ammunition. This will be reviewed after this year's meeting and will require one year's notice so should be a change for 2017.

David Crispin asked for more clarification on the situation with cadet rifle transportation which will affect cadet units visiting Bisley as well as other ranges throughout the country.

Simon Fraser responded that it is not only affecting the cadets but all military shooting. Two vehicles and four personnel are now required to move ammunition and rifles. SF does not believe that is going to change at the moment.

G390 – THE COUNCIL

The minutes of the meetings held on 22nd August and 10th October 2014 were presented to the meeting.

No points were raised.

The Chairman gave a verbal report of the meetings held on 13th December 2014 and the 16th February 2015.

An Under 21 team will be sent to the World Championships in Camp Perry for the first time.

National Clays Shooting Centre is being looked at in terms of its contribution to the overall income of the association. It is bringing in a good profit at present and AM is working with the team to look at additional ways in which income can be increased as well as making them feel more involved in the NRA's team.

The home-loading survey had responses from over 2000. The data is being studied carefully at the moment and a report will be produced with recommendations in due course. The Chairman thanked everyone for their feedback and input.

The Council are considering recommending some changes to the Second Schedule to General Council. This has arisen out of looking at costs of ballots. AM will be producing recommendations for review by General Council for online ballots.

The Chairman requested any other changes which the members would like to see to the Second Schedule so that all changes could be made at the same time.

ACT remarked that it would be good to move the February meeting to March to allow members who have caravans to stay on site.

Any changes will have to be put forward to the AGM for agreement in 2016. A timetable of events to be taken will be produced to assist people in putting forward any changes they would like.

Matt Charlton asked whether a grant had been awarded to the Under 21 team.

The Chairman explained that the Under 21 team will have a Team Manager. Gary Alexander has been approved as the Team Manager. A fund of £4k has been allocated from general funds to support the team manager's expenses.

KR asked whether it would be possible to return to the method of including election ballot papers with the Journal to save costs.

KR asked whether the new insurance package covered kit for travelling abroad.

AM stated that this would be checked and confirmed.

Harald Dunton for an update on point T1443 regarding hand-loading and the MoD.

AM confirmed that matters have gone quiet regarding this subject. AM has spoken to the MoD this week and there is a meeting arranged to meet with the Ranges Manager when this issue will be discussed.

G391 – ELECTION TO THE COUNCIL & COMMITTEES

The results of the voted to be re co-opted to General Council and election to the Disciplinary Committee were read out:

Toby Lehman	Yes	39	No	1
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Michael Wood	Yes	38	No	2
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No abstentions or spoilt papers

The Chairman declared both candidates duly re-coopted to General Council and elected to Disciplinary Committee.

G392 – ELECTION TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

It was recorded that the Elected Members of General Council who retire in 2015 have declared their wish to re-stand. The following member positions will be elected:

Five Ordinary Members
Five Regional Members
Three Discipline Members

G393 – OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Peter Coley asked whether it would be possible for the Club insurance to be completed earlier in the year to assist with Landmarc bookings.

AM confirmed that all Clubs, Schools and Associations will be renewed from 1st January from next year onwards to fall in with Landmarc bookings and that the first year's prices would be pro-rated to reflect the 9 months payment.

Harald Dunton asked that AM speak to the MoD re the range licence fee for insurance as paying twice – through the NRA and the MoD. AM agreed to discuss.

Byelaw 8

JB added that David Evans has re-written the disciplinary code in the bible which has been agreed by Council as part of the bible review. This administrative change requires giving one month's notice to all Council and General Council members of changes to the bylaws. Notice duly given at this meeting.

AM will inform GC members who are not at this meeting.

The actual change will be agreed by Council through written resolution in a month's time.

WCPR asked whether the road leading to the 300 yard car park is due to be fixed.

AM confirmed that the entire road across the back of the 600 yard car park is due for completion by the end of April.

Martin Watkins thanked the NRA on behalf of the Wales region for the SARTS training course which has enabled them to use the ranges in the area.

The Chairman added his thanks to James Harris for his leadership in that area.

No further questions were raised.

The meeting closed at 16.15pm



Chairman

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Friday 12th June 2015

3.00pm

Bisley Pavilion