

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held in the NRA Pavilion, Bisley on Friday 12th June 2015 at 18.00

Present:

Chairman	Mr JGM Webster
Vice Chairman	Mr DG Evans
Treasurer	Mr D Lowe
Chief Executive	Mr A Mercer
Members	47 Registered Members

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

PROCEEDINGS

Attached hereto and initialled by the Chairman of the meeting as a record of the meeting.

ORDINARY RESOLUTIONS

a. **Election of Officers.**

- (1) **Re-election of the President.** The Chairman proposed on behalf of The Council that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales KG, KT, GCB, AK, QSD, CD, PC, ADC(P) be re-elected as President.

The Resolution was approved.

- (2) **Election of Vice-Presidents.** The Chairman proposed on behalf of The Council that the existing Vice-Presidents be elected en bloc. Two further Vice Presidents were proposed.

The Resolution was approved.

- b. **Appointment of the Auditors.** The Chairman proposed on behalf of the Council the appointment of Saffery Champness, Chartered Accountants, as Auditors.

The Resolution was approved.

SPEECHES AND OPEN FORUM

Attached as Annex.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John J. Healy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chairman

Annual General Meeting – 12th June 2015

Proceedings

Chairman:

Ladies & Gentlemen, it's six o' clock.

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the NRA for 2015.

We have an agenda in front of us. The first item on our agenda is the election of our President. It is proposed by me on behalf of the Council, that His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales is re-elected as the President of our Association.

Are there any other nominations for this post? If not, could I therefore ask for a show of hands in favour of this motion?

(Unanimous show of hands)

Any one against? *(none)*

Thank you very much.

Item two is the election of our Vice Presidents. We are saddened this year to be reminded that Arthur Clarke is no longer amongst them, as he sadly passed away on the eve of last year's Imperial Meeting. Much has already been said and written about his influence on shooting. I would just like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that the Bisley V Club Long Range Match for Cadets has been renamed the Arthur Clarke Schools and Cadets Long Range TR Match, and will be held this year on Stickledown on July 2nd in the afternoon.

We should also note that Sir Jerry Wiggin is no longer amongst them as he passed away earlier this year. Sir Jerry was a former captain of shooting at Eton, a Cambridge half-blue, and an MP for almost 30 years, during which he was a tireless champion of rural issues, amongst them shooting. He became Chairman of the British Shooting Sports Council and was prominent in the campaign against tighter controls on guns introduced in the wake of events in Dunblane in 1996, even going so far as to defy the Government Whip over the Firearms Bill, objecting that the proposed level of compensation for those affected by the ban was totally inadequate. He will be much missed.

It is proposed by me, on behalf of the Council, that the existing Vice Presidents that are listed on the rear of the notice in front of you are re-elected en-bloc. In addition, your Council would like to nominate two further candidates. The first is Jim Thompson of Canada. Jim is a former Executive Vice President of the DCRA, a post that he held for many years. He has been a stalwart of relations between the two governing bodies, and has been involved in Canadian shooting for as long as I can remember, fostering competition between GB and Canada, (he is this year's Commandant of the Canadian Bisley Team) and enabling it too (he was Match Director for the successful Long Range World Championships and the Palma Match in 2007). The other is Bernand de Beer of South Africa. Bernand is the Chairman of the South African Bisley Union, and is also President of ICFRA, the International Confederation of Fullbore Rifle Associations. Bernand has been a strong force in the

continuation of both of those organisations, which the NRA strongly supports. You may recall that he presented our prizes here last year.

Can I ask if everybody is in favour of the motion of voting for all of the candidates as you see on the back and the addition of those two candidates?

All those in favour? (*unanimous show of hands*)

Anyone against? (*none*)

Thank you very much.

Item three is the selection of our Auditors. It is again proposed by me on behalf of the Council, that we reappoint Saffrey Champness who have been auditing our books for the last few years. They appear to be doing a good job for us at a fair price, and have indicated their willingness to be reappointed.

Can I have a show of hands please to see if their reappointment meets with the approval of the meeting? (*unanimous show of hands*)

Is anybody against that particular motion? (*none*)

Good, thank you very much.

Item four. We are going to follow the procedures of last year's meeting where I will make a statement, Derek Lowe will then go into more detail about our financial performance, as our Treasurer, and then Andrew Mercer will round up this part of the agenda with a few thoughts, as our Chief Executive.

The main headline is that we are able to report another healthy surplus for 2014. You will have seen our annual report that was published in March this year outlining this, and I am going to leave Derek to review this and the explanation of the details behind it; he is going to address you shortly.

There are a number of other positive achievements during 2014 that I would like to run through:

1. Our membership continues to grow. We now have over 7,800 members, with more joining at a rate of 76 per month so far this year. The reported increase in the 2014 Annual Report was understated as the implementation of the new membership database enabled us to expunge over 200 duplicate records.
2. Range use at Bisley by both members and corporate users continues to grow. Our revenue from range hire in 2014 was up 9% versus the year before, and we have continued to see this type of growth continue into this year. This is not obvious from the Annual Report as the more observant of you may have noted, since note 4 in our accounts headed Charitable Shooting Activity suggests otherwise. This is predominantly because 1) we did not hold an "Open Day" in 2014 and 2) we have been extremely cautious, on the advice of our Auditors, about how we categorise certain types of target hire by members; this is now captured mainly within "commercial trading operations".

Whilst on the subject of Charitable Shooting Activity, it is perhaps worthwhile mentioning that the decision by the Charity Commission to refuse the registration of the Cambridge Target Shooting Association as a charity at the end of last year is not a change in the Charity Commission's position; the rationale presented actually reiterates that target shooting can be charitable if pursued for the object of the advancement of education,

particularly for the young, or if the organisation promoting target shooting can demonstrate connectivity between their shooting and defence of the realm.

The NRA's stated objects and our activities are fully aligned in serving these twin public benefits through our assistance to those who are linked to the armed forces and the police, and our promotion of shooting for the young, especially amongst cadets.

3. We have made considerable improvements to our ranges, by growing capacity with the refurbishment of Melville, Cheylesmore and Butt Zero, and improving infrastructure with new target frames on Century, a new road and better parking area around the back of the 600 yard firing point, and some better toilet blocks. There remains a lot to do, but it's a decent start.
4. We have recruited three new Trustees to bring us to a full complement of 12. We had a very thorough process during which encouragingly 14 people came forward to express an interest in being co-opted to Council, and 11 followed up with a full CV upon request. If the quality and strength of all of the candidates and their willingness to put their shoulder to the wheel is anything to go by, then I think the prospects for the NRA look promising. Organisations like ours can only thrive if people volunteer their time and experience in meaningful quantities. It was very encouraging that so many were prepared to do just that and each one deserves our thanks. After the difficult process of producing a shortlist for interview, we chose three - Alice Gran, who is here, David Lacey, at the back, and James Harris, who is also here – and all of them have already made a positive impact. Amongst other things, James will be chairing our Regional Ranges Working Group, and Alice and David have been bringing the investigations into the allegations of illegality and impropriety regarding Rule 150 to a conclusion. As both have extensive legal experience and are completely independent of the dispute, this seemed an appropriate way to progress this issue, and I'm sure we will say more about that later.

There are a number of priorities that we are focussing on in 2015. These are encapsulated in the three year plan that was published last Autumn, and are very much underway:

First, supporting regional shooting. We have recruited a Regional Ranges Manager who starts work on July 1st. His first order of business is to produce a "state of the nation" assessment by year end, which will become the background working document from which the Regional Ranges Working Group can develop a coherent strategy.

Second, improving our skills training. As you know, we offer probationary courses to new members in order to deliver safe shooters as part of our commitment to the Safe Shooting System. We've committed the new Wimbledon House to provide a base for our training team to help ensure we maintain high standards at Bisley and other ranges.

Third, encouraging youth shooting. As part of our efforts to sustain interest in our sport and grow our membership, we have implemented a programme whereby all those under 25 now enjoy a 40% discount when entering any NRA sponsored competition or training programme. We are increasing our support for the GB U19 Target Rifle team which travels to South Africa each Spring and we are supporting a GB U21 team to the World Championships in Camp Perry later in August as a complement to our strategy of making the first 3 years of NRA membership free to those under 21.

Fourth, continuing to improve Bisley ranges and capacity. Central to this is the planned installation of electronic targets on a couple of ranges, which we believe can change the nature of the shooting that we are able to make available. This will be very much a trial at first as there are real concerns to be understood about how these targets can and should be used, particularly with the volume of shooting that they can be expected to undergo.

Fifth, developing a firm financial base and cash flows for future developments. Our continuing goal of generating strong cash flows to plough back into shooting remains a core priority. The keen readers of our 2014 report will note that we have altered our reserves policy to incorporate an ongoing target cash balance. As I have mentioned before, the right level of ongoing surplus for an organisation like ours continues to be a subject of debate, but I remain comfortable for now that it is both fair to current and future members of this organisation that current member activity breaks even, and income from commercial activity is either being invested or banked. Our plans could generate a substantial sum over the next 5-10 years, and later on Andrew Mercer will introduce the concept of the Bisley Master plan, so that we can prioritise how and how much we should spend on this, our greatest asset.

Sixth, improving services for members. While keeping the rise in membership fees and many other charges to no more than RPI, many of you will already be aware of the improved insurance coverage we have negotiated on members' behalf. Legal expenses and property coverage has been doubled, and personal accident limits significantly improved and extended. Improvements have also been made to club coverage.

The positive achievements of 2014 and the ongoing execution of the priorities for 2015 are a very full agenda. I am sure that you will appreciate that none of these things just happen on their own. I would like to pay a very big thank you to both Andrew Mercer and his staff, and my fellow Trustees, all of whom have worked with considerable professionalism, and not a little enthusiasm, to create the positive momentum I believe we are now enjoying.

With all these improvements and other things that are going on, nevertheless we cannot lose sight of the fact that future challenges remain.

There is continued pressure on Bisley and regional ranges as the former mops up the increasing lack of capacity available at the latter. As regional range access becomes more difficult, the aggregate number of range days available in any given period across the country is likely falling, while demand for more range time from a growing membership is almost certainly rising. To sort out this dilemma, we need to increase capacity, and use it more effectively.

We also need to engender more mutual respect and support between our many different types of shooting. The NRA controls seven different disciplines, while recognising or acknowledging over a dozen more. It is in all our interests to do this; we all know that we have enough detractors outside the wider shooting community without turning on each other. I have oft repeated the remarks of a predecessor in this post, and have no hesitation in doing so again; "if the shooting sports do not hang together, they will hang separately." Wise words which are still true today, and of which we must remain fully cognisant.

Part of this is to be mindful of the need for collective vigilance and partnership with the police to guard against those who would endanger our security. The radicalisation by terrorist groups of those living in this country should warn us that such a person could be living next door. Personal firearm ownership comes with responsibilities which we must constantly live up to.

If we do so, and do so successfully, I am convinced that we have a strong story to tell. The promotion of the sport of target shooting has many positive elements to lean on, from it being a truly open sport with different genders, ages and physical abilities competing side by side, to the medal success enjoyed at last year's Commonwealth Games, all the while fostering the public benefit that I mentioned previously. Few, if any, other sports can claim the same.

Derek, over to you.

Treasurer

Thank you Chairman

Ladies and Gentlemen, it's my pleasure to report on a healthy financial standing for the NRA over the last year.

We generated a surplus of £430k, in line with a budget for £450k and a 26% increase from 2013's surplus of £341k.

Our revenues showed a promising increase to £5.27m, up from £5.07m in 2013.

And we were able to reinvest all of our net cash generated, rather than needing to direct some of it to supporting our financial resilience. £746k was generated from our operating activities and £749k was applied to capital expenditure. That left our cash balance not materially changed over the year, closing at £394k. This cash generation was 56% higher than in 2013, when we also needed to retain around half of our generated cash flow to improve our financial flexibility.

I hope that you share the encouragement I feel from the financial performance in 2014, which continues into this year. The budget for this year looks to a surplus of £320k while allowing for capital expenditure of £500k and sustaining our cash balance confidently above £200k in line with our revised results policy. Based on figures available as far as April and noting that the busiest time of the year is yet to happen, we remain on track to achieve this.

When I took up the post of Treasurer in 2013, I highlighted two areas I felt to be of particular importance and they remain so today.

The first is that the finances should serve the shooting and not the other way around. Over more than the last year, we have seen significant investment in shooting assets, especially at Bisley, and in the NRA's capacity to serve shooting better, particularly through being able to afford a new post such as the Regional Ranges Manager. This investment comes not at the expense of members, since we are paying broadly what it costs to deliver the shooting we enjoy; rather it is our service of commercial clients which makes these investments possible. We need to remember that no organisation will survive, let alone thrive in serving the members of the present and the future, without its finances well in hand. Healthier finances also free up the time and attention of management and Trustees, allowing us to concentrate more on our operations and longer term future. We should keep it that way.

The second area is the importance placed by the Trustees on effective communication around our finances: within management for operational effectiveness; among the Trustees for oversight, direction and support; and out to NRA General Council and individual members for transparency and enfranchisement. With this in mind, members can read on the website regular publications such as our accounts, my reports to General Council and to this meeting and an article in the Summer Journals starting last year.

I record the Trustees' thanks to the Support Services team, led by Ray Hutchings, for making the communication and understanding of our finances so effective and timely throughout the year. Theirs is a critical contribution.

I now hand over to Andrew Mercer. Thank you.

Chief Executive

Thank you Derek.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to cover three issues this afternoon.

I really want to talk you through the basis of the current master plan that we are working through, touch on range developments, and finish off on a quick review of the Spencer Site development that caused considerable debates over the last 12 months or so.

The Bisley Master Plan: the rationale behind this has been really driven by a concern expressed by me and the Trustees that in our headlong rush to develop and improve Bisley - to develop Bisley into the engine room of the NRA that funds both activities here and further abroad - we are at risk of losing the very essence of Bisley that is so special to us all.

So what we have done is taken a step back from the projects of upgrading roads and all the other projects that you are starting to see before you, to look carefully at what we have at the moment, and what contributes to the magical essence that is Bisley.

We've engaged with two sets of professionals – heritage architects and landscape architects – to capture that essence. There is a report that they have produced, a gazetteer detailing all the buildings and we are shortly to start corresponding and communicating that and sharing that with you and the rest of the membership for comments before we move on to a three year development plan.

It will be a three year development plan – it is not some high faluting 20 year vision – that we will execute as we work our way through years 2016, 2017 and 2018, and I expect, and am under pressure, to deliver that and to start executing it towards the end of this year.

For me, what has been really interesting is the early reaction from our professionals. I've had several meetings with them on site. How they've captured Bisley, how they have described Bisley, is really interesting. They describe Bisley as an attractive but uncomfortable combination of old colonial and Martha's Vineyard with a soupcon of Butlins thrown in (*laughter*) which I think is a rather nice way of describing this rather confused estate that we have.

There is going to be particular focus on a whole range of issues; roads, accommodation - a very big issue for us -, trees and range developments as well. But what I am really keen to do is to make sure that the considerable sums that will be invested over the next three years, both in terms of revenue projects, as well as the capital projects, are carefully prioritised and targeted and we are able to share with you, the membership, the rationale behind the priorities that we have.

Bisley is getting busier. Our membership is growing and that pressure we are starting to feel. We are struggling at times to actually find sufficient range space and it's important that we continue to make our ranges as effective as possible. So growing capacity within Bisley is one of the important issues that we are trying to address.

This year has seen our membership and range hire growing by around 12% annualised. The Chairman's already reported the substantial growth in our membership and we are starting to see that impact on range availability, particularly at the busy weekends. We need to grow capacity by accelerating the development of such initiatives as the electronic targets that the Chairman has alluded to.

There has also been a series of programmes to make what we have more usable. We've spent quite a great deal of effort and not an inconsiderable amount of money making some of the Gallery ranges more weatherproof by putting in all-weather surfaces, improving drainage, improving car parking and trying to make Bisley ranges nicer places to visit and to shoot, and that work will accelerate as we go through this year.

One of the other big issues we are wrestling with is accommodation. Accommodation is a major challenge for us. The average utilisation of our accommodation is very poor. The quality of our accommodation ranges from barely acceptable to appalling. Last year we sold 5009 bedroom nights of accommodation. I reckon that equates to 8000-9000 days' worth of shooting. It is a very important contributor to shooting activity on the ranges. And in terms of how I prioritise the work that we do, I always preface every single decision with a question 'will it make the ranges busier', because if the ranges are busier then effectively, all the other activities are going to be positively benefited. In terms of accommodation, I think it is important that we deliver affordable, good quality and a range of accommodation to suit all budgets.

Spencer Site has been a very interesting example, and a very interesting initiative. We broke ground in September last year and I am pleased to report as at today, out of the 26 units that we have available, 24 have been sold, 1 has had a marker put on it this very day, and I've got one left to go to achieve one of my key ambitions - to secure my £5 bet before Queen's Final day that all 26 vans will be sold.

There has been some considerable debate – chatter - on the internet about how this has been a great drain on the NRA's resources. I am able to report to you that the total capital cost, the gross cost, is £334K, paid for by NRA funds, and the expected gross receipts by the time we have sold all 26 is going to be in the region of £188K. The net investment therefore is one less t'other, about £146k. That generates a rent roll of £50,850 a year that is index linked and will increase by RPI every year. The total value of the caravan sales when we finish the project is somewhere in the region of £1.14M. All of that achieved within 12 months.

So those who took great delight in telling us that they would never sell, I'd like to say actually that we are very pleased to have proved you wrong. That's not to say we're smug, that's not to say we got it right, that's not to say we could not have done it better, that's not to say that's how we are going to deliver all the accommodation going forward.

I think that 26 unit development pretty much takes up the full current demand for caravans of that price and development; we need to ratchet back and the next suite of serviced developments will be on a much more affordable level. We've realised what we like doing, we've realised what we are good at and we've found some areas we are not good at that we don't like doing as well. And that's all part of this learning process.

I hope that you and the people that are starting to visit Bisley regularly are starting to notice some improvements. Bisley is a bit of a super tanker and it does take some turning round. But I think there are visible signs of improvements starting to become obvious to all but the hardest of those who perhaps don't want to see.

A lot of what we do generates fierce debates, and fiercer criticism. I've yet to do any project, deliver any improvement that has not drawn vociferous criticism and that's part of the environment that we work in.

We do care passionately - and when I say we, I mean me *and* my staff - we do care passionately about Bisley and the NRA, and a lot of our effort now is to try and get Bisley set

fair on a good course so we can start diverting our efforts to the all-important regional ranges; because there are 22 odd thousand affiliated members who shoot full-bore who are not members of the NRA and who are shooting on ranges other than Bisley, and our service to them is nowhere near good enough.

Nic Couldrey, our Regional Ranges Manager, starts on 1st July. He will be the first of a number of regional ranges managers and we need to get a grip of what is happening out in the regions because our grasp of the reality, our grasp of the priorities, is very poor.

So I see in summary, actually a bright future for Bisley. I see a great deal of uncertainty for full-bore shooting away from Bisley and we need to address that very quickly.

There is a great deal to do and I hope you've noticed and will continue to notice steady improvement and with that I'll sit down and leave you to the Chairman.

Chairman

Thank you Andrew.

We now come to item 5 on the agenda which is the open forum. Before I turn it over to the floor, we have had a question that was tabled through the Vice Chairman of General Council which was what progress has been made to date on the so-called Rule 150 issue.

So let me just remind everybody as to where we were with this.

There were three work streams that I talked about last year.

The first was the series of tests to understand the effect on pressure from various dimensions of free bore. Those tests are underway as we speak. It first took us a while to get the protocol arranged with the Birmingham Proof House. It then took us a while to get the requisite barrels - those barrels are now in place. The first series of tests with the bullet touching the lands have been completed. This and all the subsequent tests are being supervised by the Birmingham Proof House under the aegis of a man called Dr Derek Allsop. The barrels have now been released to have the throat moved forward and the second series of tests are happening on Tuesday and Wednesday.

So these trials are underway under their control. They are satisfied, they tell us, with the tests that they are doing. They have not told us what the results are and we are happy for them to continue to do their work and let us know where they come out when it is complete. When it will be complete I'm not sure, but we will seek to get an assessment of that this week.

There were two further work streams that we wanted to do.

One concerned allegations that the NRA had been behaving illegally with respect to the issuance of Rule 150. Our original intention was to go out to Counsel for an opinion, and it took us a while to organise our thoughts with respect to how to brief a member of the legal profession. I have to pay tribute to Alice [Gran] and David [Lacey] who, on their arrival onto the Council, were charged with this task and went at it with great enthusiasm and professionalism

The reason that we turned to them was not least because we felt that they being lawyers are two people who are very experienced in this type of work, but also it was clear to those of us who were on the Council when this all blew up, that these two were not, so they are also independent.

We have in the last 48 hours got a draft opinion from that barrister and as this is for the record, I'm going to read out a short statement.

"The NRA instructed Nicholas Doherty, a barrister with significant expertise on firearms matters, to advise on certain allegations made in respect of Rule 150. He has provided an opinion to the NRA in which he confirms that:

- a) Neither implementing Rule 150 of the rules of shooting, with an additional concession that is not referred to in the 1999 Memorandum, nor allowing the use in competitions of rifles with reduced chamber dimensions as described in Rule 150, resulted in the NRA committing any offence under the Proof Act or breaching the International Proof Convention, or breaching any duty it owes to its members.
- b) A person does not commit an offence under the Proof Acts if he or she submits for proof testing, pursuant to the 1999 Memorandum, a firearm with non-standard dimensions but fails to certify the specific non-standard dimensions required to be certified to the Proof House under the 1999 Memorandum"

The detail of his draft opinion is still being reviewed by the Trustees. We only met this morning to discuss it for the first time. It will be released in due course.

The other work stream that we talked about was investigating allegations of a lack of propriety as to how the 1999 Memorandum became the Rule 150 that we know today. John Kynoch put this into a motion that won the support of General Council. Our original intention here had been to instruct external Counsel to look at this. When David and Alice came on board, they concluded that the budget that we had put together for this was woefully low. At the same time, it became apparent that the QC that we had targeted with doing this task was no longer available for personal reasons.

It seemed therefore a good idea that both Alice and David would now become the two people who would run this part of the investigation. Because they are professional lawyers, and independent of the dispute, I can tell you that John Kynoch is entirely comfortable with this, an important endorsement given that it's his motion that has been put forward to General Council.

So with the Doherty opinion in hand the next step for Alice and David is to start that enquiry. Council has approved a process this morning for them and they will, no doubt, be interviewing various people and reviewing lots of documents and we wish them well in that task.

That, I think, gives the progress to date that I was charged to do with respect to the question that came forward. Thank you to all of those involved in surfacing this question in good time, so we could get prepared to make these statements.

So I now throw it open to the floor.

I think it would be really helpful if you could stand, say your name and ask your question. If you could limit your questions to two minutes, that would be helpful. So the floor is open to anybody who would like to use it.

Dietra Kimpton

I have been noticing the improvements and it is noticeable. But in light of that, the one thing I was wanting to ask, is there any money being put aside or any thoughts being put aside to

improve security on camp? Because you are investing an awful lot in the improvements and we are still in a position where anyone can come on here and nobody seems to know.

Chairman

Andrew, would you answer that please?

Chief Executive

I think it's a very good question well made.

I think we are reasonably well covered between 7pm and 7am. The security guard has an almost impossible job because you just say I've come to see Dietra in her caravan and he'll let you through. If you're - let's say - people with Irish accents turning up in a white transit flatbed, they may well have to persuade him a little bit more.

But all joking apart, in the evenings I think we are reasonable secure. The problem we have is during the day time; anybody can come in and the sheer volume of traffic coming in and out means it's very difficult to work out who's got a right to be here and who doesn't.

As our payroll cost grows and the number of ground staff grows, so does the number of eyes out and about actually seeing whose here; and we're trying to keep our staff alert. It is not uncommon for them to turf people off camp who are just here on a scouting mission. But it's a big site and it's very easy for people to go missing.

We are looking at ANPR, upgrading our CCTV, and as the camp get busier we are going to have to up our game. The problem is it's a question of balance between supervision and scrutiny and I don't particularly want to spoil the atmosphere of Bisley camp by covering it with CCTV and having booming voices out of speakers saying 'put your dog on a lead' or various other bibs and bobs like that.

But there is, and has been, underlying petty theft. We do pay particular attention to that. But it is part of the fine balance between open access and security. I don't think we're ever going to get the balance right, but I actually think as the camp gets busier, we are going to need to up our game.

Chairman

Anybody else?

Robert Stafford

Annual member since 1955.

Chairman, the Treasurer is aware of what I'm going to say. It is to deal with the Overseas Teams Fund which I was involved with on the Team Finance Committee and on Council for quite a while.

It is really quite inadequate to let people know where the money comes from and how the fund is dispersed, which is a pity, but I fully understand why this is so, given the annual accounts can only give broad numbers.

Up until 2008, this was dealt with by an Overseas Team Fund detailed account which was published in the Journal. For reasons which we probably best not go into, that didn't happen

after 2008, and I would like to see this reinstated in some form, probably through the Team Finance Committee in a report to the Trustees. Because I do think, especially as I know it is hoped to launch an appeal which the Team Finance Committee considered very many years ago, that people will want to know where the money is going, how it arrives and in fact, who it is funding.

As a simple example why it doesn't tell you enough, in the 2014 accounts, I think it may well be note 6, but I can't remember, it shows that £12k goes on team travel, but the actual outgoings are about £14k more. So I want to know where that £14k has gone. Equally the incoming sources are something like £39k or £35k. I don't know how that is arrived at because in typical years, we weren't making much more than £20k-£22k. So obviously it's been a bonanza, but you can't tell. So this is not a criticism, simply accounts can't do it without producing something like a trading statement that they do for Bisley Limited. But in the future, could we please have something like the old style report?

Chairman

Good, thank you. Derek?

Treasurer

Thank you Robert.

A couple of points.

There is a grant that is made by the general fund to support the cost of targets to GB teams as they train to go on tour. And that is put through the OTF because it is in support of overseas teams. So that is why the amount of fundraising, which people doing it will be familiar with, is not the same as the amount that is in the account, because it is the value of the targets which is added to that.

The reason for doing that is to be actually more transparent about how much the general fund is supporting our teams in different areas and the same goes for things like supporting the GB Under 19 teams, GB Under 21 team this year and so on. So there is support that comes from the general funds that goes through to our teams and therefore through the OTF, not merely the fundraising.

The Team Finance Committee has set itself a task over probably the next year or so to make the OTF more publicly known, and to come up with initiatives for raising money. I think to allow people to understand what's going on with fund raising and where the funds go to, whether it's a detailed form of account or something that does a similar job, that will be on the list of things that we look at.

Thanks for your question.

Howson

Caravan owner, Site 7.

Two points I would like to raise. One, we were forced this year to sign a document saying we are going to abide by some rather unbalanced rules and regulations, one of which states that we must empty any foul water down a foul water drain. There hasn't been once since

1988 on that site. We want to know when it's going to be done and is it an infringement of the site licence.

The second point is the ablution block there is atrocious and as an Australian veteran put it some years ago, it smells as though a skunk crawled in there and passed away.

What are we planning to do about that open drain in the corner which starts fermenting when the weather gets hot?

Chief Executive

This is site 7? Site 7 is the one at the back of Cheylesmore, is that right?

Howson

Back of Cheylesmore, what is the back of the HAC.

Chief Executive

Site 7 is the hot favourite for the next one for redevelopment. If we redevelop the ablution block will be demolished because we will be putting serviced blocks in there. That is part of the current plans we are working to.

One of the reasons why we've been reluctant to fill up all the spare spaces - we've got 16 or 17 spare pitches across the piece at the moment - is because one of the lessons we learnt with Spencer Site is that we need space to relocate people when we start development.

So are we going to do a major improvement to Site 7 ablution blocks this year? No we're not. Should we be maintaining them to a decent standard? Yes we should. If you are saying there's not anywhere to tip waste water, and if it hasn't been there since 2008, we're certainly not going to be putting that in this year.

In terms of the site conditions, the interesting thing for me with these is that they were only very moderately changed this year, compared to previous years. I think this year we took the unusual step, or the new step, of asking people to sign to say they'd read and understood them. And we had a lot of complaints - and I mean a lot of complaints - from people actually complaining about clauses that have been in the site conditions for the last 8 or 9 years. So I think greater communication promotes greater understanding, which, in this case, promoted greater criticism.

I think the general standard of the ablution blocks is poor; there are some improvements that we've executed. The problem is, if we happen to improve one next to you, happy days. If we do one that is not next to you, it makes yours look even worse. But there is a sequence that we are trying to work our way through.

One of the great advantages of Spencer Site and serviced developments means that we can demolish scrappy and untidy ablution blocks because people have their own facilities. And that's part of an ongoing process. But we are still going to need ablution blocks. We've yet to decide which of the long term ones that will be here for the next 5 to 10 years and those will be the ones we will be investing significantly in. So that will be the plan.

We are very much in care and maintenance mode at the moment. I did, I have to confess, rather lose patience, or lose heart, with a number of toilet blocks which we've cheerfully demolished. We might have got slightly carried away and we do need some temporary toilets to give additional capacity in one or two areas.

But again, what I am determined not to do, is to invest significant sums of capital on facilities that we find we don't need in two or three years' time.

Howson

Can I ask when do you plan to do the serviced sites on Site 7?

Chief Executive

If it is Site 7, we will be starting that next year.

Howson

And will we be able to keep our vans on there or will we be forced to buy your expensive ones?

Chief Executive

The next development we are looking to deliver the serviced pitches at a capital cost of £4-5k. Our plans are something like this; we found selling expensive caravans a very challenging experience, we've decided that on the next development we would prefer to give people the option to buy their caravan, to a standard that is acceptable to us and we are looking to provide pitches that provide hard standing for the car and the van, foul drainage, mains water and main electricity. That's it.

As to the pricing and the terms, I've got some clever ideas, but we've yet to test them with the Trustees.

Howson

Are they going to be half the price?

Chief Executive

Quite so.

Chairman

Any further questions or comments?

Brian Taylor

Life member.

I am a bit hard of hearing so I've not heard everything clearly what's gone on this evening, so I apologise if something I'm going to raise now is something that's actually been discussed.

I just wonder what's happening to the eyesore we pass every time we come into camp, namely the triangle which comes under the auspices of the NSRA, as I understand, in tidying that up as it really is an eyesore and it's getting worse and worse.

The second point I'd like to raise is following on from the previous one about the piece of paper we had to all sign as caravan owners earlier this year, which is it the intention of the NRA not to comply with their side of it. This goes back to a point I raised affecting my own caravan over a year ago; nothing has happened yet. This concerns fire regulations and basically I have raised the issue a number of times with the relevant person, I've emailed that person for the last time nearly two weeks ago, and I've not even had an acknowledgement.

Chairman

Would you like to take that second bit (*to Chief Executive*) and I'll take the first bit.

Chief Executive

I think if you just copy your email to me and I will deal with that myself.

I think in terms of are we in full compliance of the Guildford Borough Council site licence, no we are not. To do that we would have to clear probably 60-70 caravans off the site, because they do not comply with the site conditions we have. So we are trying to effectively work our way through closer alignment and closer compliance with the site conditions that we trade under.

The site licence is actually for 387 vans and there are a significant number of those vans that do not simply comply. And as a heads up, we have a schedule of caravans actually that we are going to be writing to as we work our way through this year giving people notice that the acceptance of that van on Bisley camp, is actually coming to an end.

Chairman

Let me take your first point, Brian, Site 103.

Site 103 does not belong to us. Site 103 belongs to the NSRA.

The NSRA and the NRA have been having a series of discussions about a closer cooperation. These I have to say have been very cordial discussions. They started with an idea that as we both run membership departments, we both run finance departments, and we both run competition departments, wouldn't it be beneficial to both of us to have one of each department between us.

Andrew and I have met with two senior people at the NSRA, their Treasurer and their Vice Chairman, and we had a very good discussion. We concluded, after a pretty thorough investigation, that actually this type of working together was going to yield a very, very small benefit to both sides while causing quite a lot of angst.

And so, we have gone through that exercise and decided that actually it's not going to move the needle for either side in any real way. What we have also undertaken to do, however, is to say that we shouldn't stop there, and the NSRA have invited us to come up with a different proposal about working together.

I think that's about as much as I can say at present. The problem in reality is that that site does not belong to us. I don't think it's any secret that the NSRA is in a difficult financial state, and they cannot afford to do what they undertook to do with it when we sold it to them in the first place. And so it's in both parties interest to try and reach some sort of

arrangement as to how we could work more closely together to sort out things like that. It's high on our agenda and yes, we are working on it.

Ian Brown

I know a number of members are very concerned about this Rule 150 business. I was aware that Ms Ritchie, a barrister was going to be appointed, and I did hear the suggested fee which I felt meant that it hadn't been seriously considered. It was far too low. I'm very pleased to hear that two other people have been appointed to look at it. I'm hoping that they answer all the questions around this issue, and not just skate over the top of it, because otherwise the dissatisfaction and the perception that unfairness in target rifle sport are continuing to persist.

So I would like to know how wide their brief will be, whether they will go into the motivation and the mechanism of the way Rule 150 was messed about with and include in it the scandalous issue of reels and reels of stickers being sent not only to certain gunsmiths but to certain people who weren't even gunsmiths.

Can I be reassured on that please?

Chairman

I can tell you that the Council has agreed a process today. I hope that both Alice and David would support the fact that we have given them unfettered access to the documentation and for the ability for them to interview whom they feel appropriate. I am sure I will be included in that, and I'm sure lots of others will be – Robin [Pizer], John [Carmichael], and others.

Alice Gran

Does Mr Brown want to be included?

Chairman

Well, there's a possibility. I'm happy. *To Ian Brown* – Alice has asked if you would like to be included in that process.

Ian Brown

Fine. Yes, thank you.

Chairman

To continue; we've had a pretty robust conversation about the fact that this must be objective. I think I stood before you 12 months ago saying that we had these three work streams and it is incredibly important that independent people are able to judge what happened and what has happened, and make recommendations and/or judgements about what we should do going forward.

As I say, Jean Ritchie was put forward, actually by David Evans, because David knows her pretty well. The difficulty that we had initially was drawing up the terms of reference for her, which is a very, very big task. And the more that we worked on that, the more we thought that the actual budget that we'd assigned for this was woefully inadequate. We felt we would rather keep those monies in-house. John Kynoch is perfectly happy that these two take this on on our behalf, and their fee will be substantially less than we'd have paid otherwise.

I hope that's satisfactory. Your point is made, and in a public forum.

Graham Clark

Whitgift Veterans Rifle Club.

Whitgift School has a very fine reputation as a shooting school. In fact, we were one of the originators of the Ashburton Shield and our name is on the Ashburton Shield. But for the last 15 years or so, the school has not participated in the Ashburton, or any full-bore shooting. This is because of the Headmaster who is anti-shooting. He has spent a fortune on just about every other sport, but not shooting, despite the fact we have a very fine cadet force.

Now the old boys are trying very hard to reverse this. We have had success on the small-bore side, because we've got an excellent small-bore range at the school. My colleagues and I have been coaching the boy's lunchtimes to bring them back into small-bore shooting.

Now the headmaster fortunately is going to move on in two years' time. So we may be marking time and keeping a watch on the situation. But I think we may have an uphill struggle because from what one hears about cadet shooting, and the rules that the MoD are bringing in about, you know, three minibuses, one for the boys, one for the rifles and one ammo, two staff in each. It's getting to be a ridiculous situation.

Before the Surrey schools and veterans the other week, they brought into this 200 mil rule, they only withdrew that when they realised the boys were shooting prone and it wasn't a fire and movement sort of thing.

I'm sure the NRA are well aware of what is happening, and it would make it extremely difficult as only the very wealthy schools really entrenched in full-bore shooting would be able to cope with the minibus requirement, or whatever it turns out to be.

So I just wonder if you can throw any light on what might be happening between you and the powers that be in the cadets.

Chairman

Thank you. A good question.

It is a great concern to us. In reality, this is a MoD issue and we the NRA really don't have any jurisdiction over cadets, be they CCF and/or ACF. So we are very heavily dependent upon Simon Fraser and the CCRS making the case.

I have offered the NRA's full support to Simon Fraser. Not least because I have a personal connection with Sir Nick Carter's second in command, and I am prepared to put that into action if needs be.

Simon is working as assiduously as he can. Andrew is engaged where he can be in providing advice. It is a concern to us because it flies in the face of our support for young shooting. It should be a concern to the MoD because 80% of the kids who join an ACF unit give the primary reason they joined the unit in the first place as they want to learn to shoot. But the MoD doesn't see it that way and we have a challenge to get them joined up internally.

So I have nothing to say other than warm words of support which don't really mean much, that we have a watching brief and we are supporting Simon Fraser and the CCRS as much as we possibly can.

Graham Clark

Thank you Chairman.

Chairman

Does anybody else have a question?

Martin Townsend

I'd just like to thank personally Council, Trustees, General Council, all the staff and Andrew for all that they've done, all the improvements. I said the same thing last year about the improvements that had taken place in the previous 12 months. And what's happened now I just think is fantastic and congratulations.

Chairman

Bless you and thank you very much

(Hear hear and a round of applause)

Chairman

Any further questions?

Good, well thank you very much.

Before I close, I should add that behind me, or behind David here, are the tests of the GGG ammunition that we are going to shoot this weekend.

You will see some groups that were shot at 200 yards, and they are compared to RUAG 60PG which, I think, is on the right hand side. Iain, is that right? *(Iain Robertson – yes!)*

I'm tempted to say the broad conclusion is that this ammunition shoots really well. It is a mite shy of the performance of 60PG, but it's better than any other batch of RUAG that we have had since.

So, I hope it works over the weekend *(laughter)* and I wish you all success and enjoyment in proving that right.

Thank you very much. Our meeting is closed.

Meeting closed at 19.05pm