

Ladies & Gentlemen,

So I am pleased that we are able to report another healthy surplus in 2017, continued growth in our membership and continued capital investment in facilities for shooting. I hope by now you have all had the opportunity to read the Annual Report which was published at Easter and outlines our financial position.

Derek will follow me to review this, and then Andrew will describe the capital investment projects that are ongoing at the camp and other important matters.

But first there are a number of positive items that I would like to share with you. Our membership continues to grow; as of the end of May this year we have 8,604 members, 731 of whom are new members who applied for membership in 2017. We have received 520 applications for new membership so far this year.

This level of membership applications is the result of the hard work of many people, and of course is essential for the growth of our sport. It has obviously put pressure on the system, particularly on our training team, as the number of probationary members keeps growing. I'd like to pay tribute to the Membership Team, led by Georgina Thatcher and the Training Team, led by David Camp, for successfully keeping pace with this growth.

Range use by members and by corporate users also continues to grow. Range use by individuals and clubs is up 15% this year alone. This demonstrates the popularity of shooting, but this increasing popularity means that we must look to new solutions to increase capacity on our ranges. One answer clearly lies with electronic targets; we are expanding our use of these and introduced a further butt on Century Range earlier this year.

However, not everything goes to plan and we are behind - although not underwater - with the development of the other side of the Pavilion. The process of refurbishment has revealed more challenges than we were anticipating at the outset, but we are making sure that we do things properly and in a lasting manner.

At the end of last year we spent a lot of time developing a new 2018-2020 Three Year Plan. Prior three year plans have focused on several key elements; sound financial management, increasing and improving the services to members, improving the infrastructure and utilisation of Bisley Camp, increasing shooting activity, access and infrastructure at regional ranges, and improving communications to, and services for, all current and prospective members.

The review of the past 5 years' accounts shows the degree of success we have enjoyed. Since the beginning of 2013, we have spent almost £2.8M on capital expenditure, whilst improving our net cash position by almost £750k. As a result, we are now debt free, we have refurbished several ranges and other facilities at the camp, and we have reinstated a full maintenance programme for the entire estate.

Our membership continues to grow from 6,891 at the start of 2013, to 8,505 by the end of 2017, which is an increase of over 23%, and we enjoyed a net increase of 490 members in 2017 alone. Consequently, our ranges have never been busier, and we continue to see a consistent annual rise in range utilisation.

Price rises for membership, training and shooting have been kept flat in real terms wherever possible, and subsidies have been found to encourage younger shooters.

The new 2018-2020 plan seeks to build on these achievements of the past 5 years and more. It has been developed in consultation with representatives from two different sets of stakeholders; tenants at Bisley and regional clubs. It has also been reviewed by the members' representative body, the NRA General Council. Its reach extends to increasing our support for shooting in the regions away from Bisley, expanding training courses and competency certification, and focusing on improving the perception of target shooting, whilst continuing to build on our sound financial base and infrastructure.

The reach beyond Bisley is particularly important at this time. I believe it was correct that we focused mostly on Bisley over the past 5 years, since our world-famous range complex remains a mission-critical asset, given that it is considered the home range for around 16,000 fullbore shooters.

Maintenance programmes and investment had been necessarily shelved during prior financially challenging periods, and some catch up was required. But this investment has enabled us, as the range operator, to increase range capacity across a wide range of disciplines, and grow non-member income for everybody's benefit. It also demonstrates our commitment to our broader public benefit requirement as a charity, at the same time as improving service to our members.

But - and this is quite a big but - there are another 20,000 or so fullbore shooters that practice their sport on some 300 privately-owned ranges and 24 MoD ranges. In fact we estimate that out of the holders of the 200,000 firearms certificates and 650,000 shotgun certificates in issue, the NRA directly, and through its affiliated organisations, accounts for around 52,000 target shooters.

All these fullbore shooters have common interests, whether they are currently NRA members or not. They want access to ranges, they want to be able to practise their sport safely, as do the operators of the ranges that they use, and they want those who regulate shooting to do so using an informed and rational approach.

Access to ranges outside Bisley is not always straightforward. Privately operated facilities are typically 25 metre to 100 metre, no danger area ranges whereas most longer range shooting requires access to MoD ranges. Civilian shooting is low priority on MoD ranges, whilst privately operated ranges are subject to increasing scrutiny with respect to their operations and safety certification.

So our three year plan involves developing better access to MoD ranges, implementing robust safety systems for private ranges, and more investment into regional ranges including exploring opportunities to acquire and develop them.

As ranges get busier, we need to sustain our exemplary safety record for everybody's benefit. Access to MoD and privately owned facilities is possible because of the confidence the operators of those ranges have in the NRA's shooter certification card regime. Over the course of this year we will be implementing a programme whereby the NRA will issue all shooters certification cards centrally, with tests conducted by NRA affiliated clubs as at present, but with increasing levels of support from the NRA for the many dynamic and enthusiastic regional affiliated organisations that often depend upon a small handful of committed volunteers.

Increasing regulation and scrutiny from the authorities is inevitable in the current times. The NRA will make resources available to continue making progress in developing influence with Government, the Home Office and the Police Licensing authorities. Our efforts today have been on promoting and informing.

Our three year plan involves the careful, consistent and professional promotion of marksmanship. We all know that we have a good story to tell, including the all-inclusive nature of our sport without reference to age, gender or physical ability, our exemplary safety record and the fact that shooting is a major sport across the country, and we excel at it here in the UK.

I congratulate, in particular, the medal winners among the Home Countries competitors at the recent Commonwealth Games in Brisbane. They took five out of the six medal positions in fullbore, including David Luckman, who made the double-double of pairs and individual golds in successive games for England.

So before I hand over to Derek, I would like to end by thanking my fellow Trustees, some of whom are here in the room, and Andrew Mercer and his staff for all their energy, enthusiasm and hard work over the past 12 months. Much has been achieved and I remain bullish about the Association's very positive future.

John Webster, Chairman