

I am pleased to report that the NRA has weathered the many challenges brought about by the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. But many other charities have not been so fortunate, and I want to start by thanking all of those who supported the NRA during these last 18 months.

Our Annual Report for 2020 has been published and outlines our financial position. It demonstrates the significant financial challenges that the NRA faces as a result of the pandemic. Our Treasurer, Andrew Reynolds, will follow me to review this, and then Andrew Mercer will present the Secretary General's report. The meeting will be followed by the Annual General Meeting of the National Shooting Centre Limited, which is the wholly-owned subsidiary of the NRA that carries out commercial activities. We are holding separate meetings this year as part of demonstrating the distinction between the two organisations.

First, I am pleased to report that despite these challenging times our membership continues to grow; it rose from 9,497 at the end of 2019 to 9,587 at the start of 2021 - an increase of 90 members. This level of membership applications is the result of a lot of hard work from many people, and is essential to the growth of target shooting in this country. Welcoming new members also means more training for probationary members. 585 members completed a probationary training course in 2020. That's rather less than in 2019 but is nonetheless a pleasing result given the covid pandemic.

And I would like to pay tribute to the Membership Team, led by Georgina Thatcher, and the Training Team, led by David Camp, for successfully managing that growth especially given the reduced staffing levels brought about by our decision to use the Government's furlough scheme.

Range use at Bisley continues to grow, and we are experiencing high demand during 2021 as people catch up on all the lost shooting opportunities from 2020 and early 2021. Meeting this demand is an important challenge for the NSC, which operates the ranges. Electronic targets continue to be popular and you will see more of these as NSC brings more targets into use. Better co-ordination of range usage, including single distance shooting and stricter cancellation policies all contribute to making sure that we use as much of the range as possible each day and that ranges are allocated fairly. Again, I want to thank the professional staff for the way they have managed the changing covid regulations and the way they have implemented procedures such as social distancing and enhanced cleaning to ensure shooting could resume as soon as allowed during the year.

The NSC has added the sporting clay facilities at Council Club and Cottesloe Heath to the existing clay facilities at the National Clay Shooting Centre. This followed the settlement of litigation concerning the licence granted to the previous operator. Sporting clays provides a useful source of additional income for NSC and that income will help the NRA pursue its charitable objectives. The operational flexibility of having this land under our control and management of the NSC will help ensure that the use of our ranges is maximised, again contributing to our charitable objectives.

The social and political backdrop for shooting remains challenging. Shooting will not be part of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022 and the prospects for shooting at Delhi next year are uncertain. The Government consultation on the use of lead in ammunition will raise challenges for everyone in the shooting community. We also continue to engage with the Charity Commission on our charitable purposes. Target shooting is not recognised as a sport for charitable purposes, and the Charity Commission has expressed the view that the connection between civilian target shooting and Defence of the Realm is "tenuous".

There is more work to be done on improving facilities at Bisley and completing long-running projects. However, most capital expenditure has been suspended for the foreseeable future.

The NRA has survived the significant loss of income brought about by the various lockdowns. This is in no small part to the careful management of cash resources and the support of our bankers, Barclays Bank, who provided an overdraft to the NRA and a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan to NSC. As at today, we have repaid the overdraft and are cash positive but we must now rebuild the financial reserves of the charity, which will take a number of years.

There have been important governance changes introduced by the Trustees. A new Disciplinary Code provides greater structure and will facilitate the effective administration of the disciplinary function. It retains the important principle that the Disciplinary Body operates independently of the Trustees. A new complaints procedure provides a mechanism for people to raise concerns and complaints to ensure that we deal with them effectively. You can find all the policies of the charity on the NRA's website. I am also pleased to welcome Shelly Fletcher as our new Real Estate Administrator and Allan Stonell as our new Compliance & Risk Officer.

I would like to conclude by thanking my fellow Trustees and Andrew Mercer and his staff for all their energy, enthusiasm and hard work over the past 18 months.

David Lacey  
NRA Chairman