

Chairman's Speech

Our Annual Report for 2022 has been published and outlines our financial position. It demonstrates that we have been able to recover from the financial challenges of Covid, although there remains much capital expenditure still to be done. The Treasurer will address that in more detail in his presentation.

I am pleased to report that despite these challenging times our membership continues to grow; it rose from 9,876 at the start of 2022 to 10,200 at the end of 2022 – a net increase of 344 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. 1,169 members completed a probationary training course in 2022. That's an increase from the last year and useful confirmation of the continued interest in target shooting.

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.

Range use at Bisley continues to grow, and we experienced high demand throughout 2022. Meeting this demand is an important challenge for the National Shooting Centre, which operates the ranges. Electronic targets continue to be popular and more of these were introduced in 2022. Better co-ordination of range usage and stricter cancellation policies have all contributed to making sure that we enable as many people as possible to use as much of the range as possible each day and that ranges are allocated fairly. I want to thank all the professional staff involved in running the ranges for the way they have managed this increasing demand and balanced the many competing priorities for access to shooting facilities.

2022 was the first full year of operations by the NSC of Council Club and of Cottesloe Heath. Sporting clays provides a useful source of additional income for NSC and that income helps fund rifle range improvements and helps the NRA pursue its charitable objectives.

The social and political backdrop for shooting remains challenging. The Government consultation on the use of lead in ammunition will raise challenges for everyone in the shooting community. The NRA is working with other bodies to help inform the Health & Safety Executive, the Environment Agency and Members of Parliament on the various ways the NSC and other range operators successfully manage lead on shooting ranges.

There is always work to be done on improving facilities at Bisley and completing long-running projects. During 2022 we upgraded the ballistic walls at Melville, Zero and Winans ranges, commenced the development of a new range office in the Pavilion, upgraded the areas around the Clock Tower and in December we re-acquired Site 103. During 2023, the NSC plans to develop an on-line range booking system and the NRA will continue the work of repairing the shell and the services of Site 103.

Plans for two new serviced caravan sites are progressing and we are reviewing timing for the commencement of the works.

As at today, we are cash positive, but this is a particularly high point in the seasonal fluctuations of our cashflow. We must continue to rebuild the financial reserves of the charity and to ensure its resilience to future economic shocks. In particular, we want to restore a minimum cash balance of £250,000 and maintain a 1x acid test ratio even during the low points of our cash cycle. This process will take a number of years.

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. I would also like to thank the members of General Council for their contributions throughout 2022.