

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held in the NRA Pavilion, Bisley Camp
on Friday 6th June 2025 at 18.00

Present:

Chairman
Secretary General
Treasurer
Members

Mr D Lacey
Mr A Mercer
Mr A Reynolds
20 Registered Members in attendance
5 Online attendees

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) **Election of the President** The Chairman reminded the meeting that His Majesty The King Charles III gave permission for Council to name His Majesty as the new Patron of the Association. Council has not nominated any candidates for the post of President and so no election will take place and the position of President remains vacant.
- (2) **Election of Vice-Presidents** The Chairman proposed on behalf of The Council that the existing Vice-Presidents be elected *en bloc*. The Resolution was approved.

- b. **Appointment of the Auditors** The Chairman proposed on behalf of the Council the appointment of HaysMac LLP¹, Chartered Accountants, as Auditors. The Resolution was approved.

SPEECH AND RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Attached as Annex.



Chairman

¹ Formerly known as haysmacintyre LLP

Annual General Meeting – 6th June 2025

Record of Proceedings

Chairman:

It's six o'clock and I now call the 2025 Annual General meeting of the NRA to order.

Welcome to those of you who have joined us here in the Pavilion and those who are watching our livestream event. We provide a live stream of the meeting to promote engagement by members with the work of the charity.

This meeting will be followed by the Annual General Meeting of the National Shooting Centre Limited (NSC), which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the NRA that carries out commercial activities. We hold separate meetings to highlight the different functions and responsibilities of the two organizations.

We have three standing resolutions on the agenda that will be followed by speeches from me, the Treasurer and the Secretary General. There will then be answers to the written questions that we received in advance of the meeting, followed by an open forum for people to ask questions from the floor. Those watching the live stream will be able to see and hear the proceedings, but not to ask questions.

The first resolution concerns the re-election of the president of the Association. The post of President is currently vacant following the decision of His Majesty, the King to be our Patron. Council has not yet identified potential candidates for election to this post, and so I will not be putting that resolution to a vote.

The second standing item for voting at this meeting is the re-election Vice Presidents. There is a list of Vice Presidents printed on the agenda. Ian Sheer Gibbs sadly passed away since the last AGM and so does not appear on list. I now propose that all the Vice Presidents listed be re-elected. All in favour? Any against. I'm pleased to say that the resolution has been passed unanimously.

I now propose the resolution that HaysMac, LLP be re-appointed as our Auditors. HaysMac LLP is the new name of haysmcintyre LLP. All in favour? Any opposed? I'm pleased to say that the resolution has been passed unanimously.

This brings us to item four, the speeches by me and the Treasurer, Andrew Reynolds and by our Secretary General, Andrew Mercer.

Before doing that, I should introduce the guest that we've invited to the meeting, Simon Lee, who will take over the role of Secretary General of the NRA and Chief Executive of the NSC on the 1st of July. Simon, if you'd like to stand up? Simon is attending as an observer, and I'll not be inviting you to ask questions of him. You'll have a chance to do that in 12 months' time.

Our Annual Report for 2024 has been published and outlines our financial position. It demonstrates a steady improvement in our finances, essential to the long term viability of the charity. I am pleased to report that despite these challenging times, our membership held steady ending the year at 10,061, down from 10,157 at the end of 2023. Sustaining this level of membership is the result of a lot of hard work from many people, and makes an important contribution to ensuring the on-going success of target shooting in this country.

Welcoming new members also means more training for probationary members. 874 members completed a probation training course in 2024, demonstrating a 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 delivering these activities.

Range use at Bisley continues to grow, and we experienced high demand throughout 2024. 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 2024.

The increasing growth in membership and demand for targets inevitably means that the NSC cannot meet all the demands for targets. I want to thank all the professional staff involved in running the ranges for the way they manage this increasing demand and balance the many competing priorities for access to shooting facilities.

Sporting Clays continues to provide an important source of income for NSC, which helps fund rifle range improvements, and helps the NRA pursue its charitable objectives. I'm pleased to say that Bisley Shooting Ground Sporting Clay operations contributed £439,000 in 2024 to the operating profit of the NRA.

The social and political backdrop for shooting remains challenging. The Government consultation on the use of lead in ammunition has ended, and the Health and Safety Executive has sent its recommendations to DEFRA. We must wait to see what, if any restrictions are introduced. I want to thank Andrew Mercer for all his work in informing the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency and Members of Parliament on the various ways that NSC and other range operators successfully manage lead on shooting ranges.

There is always work to be done on improving facilities at Bisley. During 2024 we completed 28 serviced caravan pitches on Wharncliffe, developed new car parking areas for Crawford Cabins, increased the size of the firing points and car parking area at 300 yards on Century Range, installed solar panels on Stickledown range to power the electronic targets, refurbished five Pavilion bedrooms, commenced work in the Pavilion Ballroom to provide a 10-meter air gun range and function suites.

I would note that a lot of this work has been completed and I encourage all of you to wander around on the other side of the Pavilion to see the results of a lot of hard work.

A good financial result in 2024 has enabled us to commission an extensive list of projects in 2025, including major structural works to secure of the facade of Site 103, the extension of firing points, and the installation of falling plates targets on Stickledown range, the installation of new running boar, running deer, and other targets on the Sporting Rifle ranges, the completion of the Pavilion Ballroom works, the refurbishment and decoration of Exhibition Hut, and the development of the Bisley Shooting Academy to include a shooting simulator.

As of today, we are cash positive, but this is a particularly high point in the seasonal fluctuations of our cash flow. We must continue to build the financial reserves of the charity 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 that 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 12 months. I would also like to thank members of General Council for their contributions throughout 2024.

That is the end of my Chairman's Statement. As this is my last AGM as Chairman, I hope the meeting will indulge me with a personal statement.

I have spent a fascinating and challenging time as Chairman, with my term ending in February next year, and I want to take this opportunity to recognize the contributions that so many people have made to my time in office.

First, all those NRA members who have shared their thoughts and ideas on the NRA so freely. The members of General Council for their efforts as the representative body of the NRA membership. My fellow Trustees for all their help and support, especially the Treasurer, who never tired of explaining basic accounting principles to me, or if he did, he never let on. The professional staff of the NRA for all their work in maintaining and improving the Camp, keeping the clay and rifle ranges running, operating the many accommodation options on Camp, managing our real estate assets and running the marksmanship competitions that are at the heart of the NRA's charitable mission.

A special mention goes to Georgina Thatcher, whose organizational skills are key to managing all the various meetings, elections, and other procedural matters, making sure that everything ran smoothly, all of which contributed in no small part to making me look good every now and again.

And finally, Andrew Mercer, who was always ready to listen to all of my ideas and even occasionally wrote one down! He has worked tirelessly in support of the NRA and the National Shooting Centre and will shortly start a well-deserved retirement.

To all of these people I extend my heartfelt thanks.

I now call on the Treasurer to report on financial matters.

Treasurer:

Thank you, David.

Good evening. Looking at the group financial statements in a bit more detail and in particular to kick off with the income and expenditure. In the year to December 2024, total consolidated income rose 11% year on year to £11million, producing a consolidated net surplus, including a £28,000 gain on restricted fund investments of £572,000, or a net margin of 5%. This compares with a surplus around one-tenth of this in 2023.

The main drivers for this year-on-year improvement in performance was due to stronger operating performance at the NSC, in particular Bisley Shooting Ground, and reduced pressure on overheads such as utilities, which had seen significant hikes in 2023.

The group also spent around £500,000 during 2024 on maintenance of the estate and ranges, which was in line with the amount spent in the prior year.

The Group's revenue has historically had three main sources: range fees, membership subscriptions and estate income. However, as mentioned last year, the importance of the BSG business which we acquired in August 2020, remains pivotal. Its divisional profit in 2024 represented around three quarters of the consolidated group profit for the year.

It is clear that BSG continues to make a very significant financial contribution to the Charity's ability to pursue its charitable objectives, such as holding marksmanship competitions and training. To that end during 2024, the NRA provided £59,000 to support the training and resources for members to participate safely and responsibly on the ranges and £367,000 support for the extensive program of competitions, including £78,000 for young shooters under 25 with the Imperial meeting discount.

Both programs aim to ensure the future generations will appreciate the discipline, focus and camaraderie integral to our activities.

Moving to the balance sheet, the group's net assets grew to £9.7 million although the Charity's free reserves, which considers our liquidity, continue to be negative as a significant proportion of the Group's assets are in the form of fixed assets such as land and buildings.

The NRA continues to have access to a £1million overdraft facility. This facility is an important part of the charity's reserves policy in the absence of an unrestricted sinking fund. Thankfully, the overdraft was not needed at all during 2024 and the year-end unrestricted cash balance, which is historically the peak point in the year, was a healthy £1.2million.

However, the year-end current net current viability position gives greater colour around this cash balance. The NRA received its 2025 subscriptions during the last month of the year, which flatters the year end cash balance as this is almost entirely this year's revenue.

Moving to the cash flow, as mentioned previously, through the planning of the finance team, we have enjoyed the ability to adjust our discretionary capital and maintenance expenditure to our operating cash flow generation and working capital requirements. This has included maintaining higher ammunition stock given the continued perceived vulnerability of our supplies. Despite this, the NRA managed to invest around £400,000 on range and estate improvements aside from the Wharnccliffe development.

The Group's liquidity has been monitored monthly in one of the Trustees' Key Performance Indicators, and this year I'm happy to report that this was met for the majority of the months during 2024, showing the headway that we'd have made in building back our resilience post Covid.

Our expectation, however, is for the unrestricted net cash position to remain positive throughout 2025 and our base case forecasts provided to our auditors HaysMac during the external audit are that we will also end 2025 with an improved net positive cash balance and will have made headway in reducing the acid test ratio breaches.

Despite unfavourable changes in employer taxation costs, projections for the current year are that the Group will generate a surplus before changes in investments of around £500,000, which would represent about a 4% net margin on the Group's turnover. This will allow for expenditure of around £1.3million on capital assets and maintenance to enhance our members' experience and ensure the highest standards of safety.

We also plan to maintain a significant level of support for the Group's charitable objectives with a projected spend of £450,000 on mixed military and civilian competition and youth shooting.

In closing, the Charity looks forward to a 2025 with fewer adverse economic headwinds, but an ever-greater need for the NRA and its role in promoting and encouraging skill at arms and marksmanship in defence of the Realm.

Thank you.

Chairman:

I now invite the Secretary General to the podium.

Secretary General:

Thank you, Chairman.

Good evening.

2024 proved to be another year of challenges and opportunity for the NRA. As the Treasurer has explained we ended the year in financial good shape and are now busy reaping the benefits with a large programme of improvements on Bisley Camp well underway.

Amongst the challenges ahead are the rapidly changing priorities for the armed forces as our politicians wrestle with growing threats from abroad. The announcement of the withdrawal of the cadet target rifle appears counter intuitive; a depleted army needs every source of prospective recruits, especially those who have been trained to shoot.

This brings into sharp focus the need for the NRA to invest in developing our own programme to encourage youth participation in target shooting. We have all the assets to hand – ranges, rifles and shotguns, ammunition and instructors – to deliver high quality airgun, small bore, shotgun and full bore shooting.

What we need are the staff to develop and deliver a sustainable programme of youth shooting. To this end we have just appointed a full-time Youth Shooting Officer. Collaborating with other shooting organisations and securing the enthusiastic support of our volunteers will be critical for success.

The dark clouds of new legislation are gathering ahead and we are facing yet another consultation on firearms regulation. Well-intentioned initiatives to reduce the risk to the public from legally held firearms can create a blizzard of process and procedure that distract police firearms licensing staff from the key task of assessing the certificate holder.

Focusing on the number of firearms and quantity of ammunition on ticket should not be a priority; great harm can be committed with one shotgun and a box of shells by someone with evil intent.

The NRA works hard to engage with the Home Office and police and other shooting organisations to promote responsible shooting. We are investing considerable resources developing and delivering firearms awareness training days for police firearms enquiry officers as part of the new College of Policing Training programme.

The course has a morning of “show and tell” presentations where we explain what we do, why we do it, how much ammunition we use; followed by the opportunity to handle the most common rifles and shotguns. Afternoons are spent shooting a wide range of rifles and shotguns.

These courses are funded by the NRA and provide an excellent opportunity to engage positively with firearms licensing staff, demonstrate a wide variety of firearms, and enhances the reputation of the NRA and Bisley with police forces, the College of Policing and Home Office.

We are still waiting for the response from DEFRA to the UK Reach report recommending the prohibition of lead ammunition used outdoors. The report includes a proposed derogation to allow the continued use of lead ammunition on outdoor rifle ranges. In preparation we have been working up a Code of Practice for the management of lead on outdoor ranges; I am grateful for the advice and guidance from a group of regional range operators who have made sure our procedures are appropriate for a wide variety of ranges away from Bisley.

One of the most important tasks in 2024 was the recruitment of the new Secretary General. Trustees set to work in September to attract good applications from talented candidates. Having screened over 160 applications, conducted many interviews the Council secured the services of the stand out candidate Simon Lee who is experiencing his first AGM with us today.

He is, unlike his predecessor, extremely bright and personable and excited with the prospects for the NRA ahead. Simon will be joined by Geetha Jackson as Chief Finance Officer when they both start on Monday 16th June. They join a talented, committed and thoroughly professional team of staff and I have every confidence in a bright future for the NRA.

The new team of staff will have but a few short months with the current Chairman, David Lacey, who returns to the ranks at the end of his term of office in February 2026. David has been an exceptional Chairman and has worked tirelessly to help navigate the NRA through challenges with the Charity Commission, Covid, lengthy contractual disputes, and the major RDA fire. He is without ego or any desire for aggrandisement and I have learnt a great deal working with him. Members of the General Council are charged with the weighty task of appointing his successor.

His fellow Trustees also deserve special mention for their commitment to the NRA cause; their work is often poorly understood and rarely appreciated.

If I were asked, at this my last NRA AGM, to summarise the key learnings over the 12 years in post I would offer the following:-

1. Pretty much all of the discord about shooting comes from within the shooting community.
2. Target shooting's rich heritage counts for little in the modern world; the NRA needs to be relevant, thoughtful about how we are perceived from outside; and engaged with key stakeholders.
3. We are all members of an enormous shooting community; there should be nothing more than friendly banter between the disciplines, including air, small bore, shotgun and live quarry.
4. The NRA is not a shooting club created for the benefit of the current cohort of members; it is a charity that must be relevant to both current and future generations of shooters.
5. NRA staff do the heavy lifting and respond well to friendly and supportive engagement; and
6. Generating financial surpluses is in the best interests of the NRA and essential to securing its future.

Dealing with so many interesting, passionate, kind and supportive members of the shooting community has been a great privilege.

Thank you.

Chairman:

That takes us now to answers to written questions. We received five questions by the published closing time of noon on 1st of June. Some of the questions are quite detailed. And in the interest of time, I would summarize the question, but the full text of the question will appear in the minutes.

Our first question comes from **Mark Holroyd, Member 29522**

SUMMARY

How do I provide feedback on the ranges of Bisley? In particular, the corex boards on Short Siberia do not always fit the timber. Can the Range Office have 'go/no go' gauges available to rent in common calibres?

FULL QUESTION

1. Could we look at the functionality of the website such that it's more easy to know what addresses to report issues and make suggestions to eg
 - a. The template the maintenance team use for the boards on Short Siberia is different from that used to make the frames - meaning it is not always easy to fit a board onto the frame without bending it all over the place (and while we're on Short Siberia - can they drill holes into the frames so that the score markers can be used (they used to exist, albeit frequently too small, and were useful)
 - b. Could the Range Office hold Go,No-Go gauges for more common historic rifle calibres - My suggestion would be that they then hire them out to people for 30 mins or so when the arms fairs are in town. I bought I Swedish Mauser only to later find it wasn't safe to shoot. Buying a gauge just for that purchase was prohibitively expensive but had I been able to borrow / hire one from the office would have saved me the trouble of having to get back to the dealer later, and would have allowed me to shoot more at Bisley.

ANSWER

The Ranges at Bisley are operated by the National Shooting Centre Limited. They have a Contact page here: <https://www.nationalshootingcentre.co.uk/about-us/contact-opening-hours/> which provides you with a mechanism for sending feedback and suggestions.

The Range Management team are aware that the Short Siberia correx boards are not always a correct fit to the timber frames. This results in customers having to bend the boards to fit into place, which is not helpful. Range Management will be carrying out spot checks to ensure the correx is correctly drilled and will check that frames also have holes for scoring paddles.

Go/No-Go gauges are used to check that the headspacing in a rifle is correct. Each gauge is unique to a particular cartridge. The Armoury has no plans to provide gauges for rent. Demand for these is very low and they need to be handled carefully to avoid damage. Dealers selling rifles are best placed to provide this service to customers.

The next question comes from **Mark Ellis, Member 23202**

FULL QUESTION

Are there any plans towards having concrete benches at Short Siberia, replacing the wonky wooden ones? If not, is it possible to get the wooden ones up to a decent standard for us shooters requiring a little more rigidity?

ANSWER

There are no plans to replace the existing wooden benches on Targets 1-5 on Short Siberia with concrete benches. That would be a considerable expense for relatively little improvement. Any bench that is found to be wonky should be reported to Range Control using the radio so it can be inspected and any defect promptly rectified.

Next, a question from **Robert Sterling, Member 6114**

SUMMARY

Could the NSC offer reduced rates to encourage midweek range usage?

FULL QUESTION

Looking at the ranges as I drive towards the Short Siberia on a weekday, they seem to have little use, in Autumn Winter and Spring, during the week. Typically, I see 2 to 3 benches at 600 and only a few firing points in use on the Century 100 and 200 yds. May I suggest a trial period, of a half price offer and maybe a special rate for senior citizens, for the coming Autumn Winter and Spring? More use of the ranges during the week at reduced rates could at least bring in some revenue, which is better than none.

For the members of the NRA, I would say 'Use it or lose it'

ANSWER

Midweek shooting has many advantages, including greater flexibility in target choices, and in fallbacks. The main reason for low utilization of ranges mid-week is that people have other commitments at that time, including work and family. Reducing prices would benefit those who are able to shoot, but is unlikely to drive increased utilisation. NSC already offers lower pricing mid-week, including 25% off on Tuesday.

The next question is from **Rob Bombeeck, Member 36078**

SUMMARY

Why do Visitor Permits take so long to obtain and what can the NRA do to assist?

FULL QUESTION

I want to take the opportunity for asking questions. I am not a native speaker, so upfront I want to say that do wat to come across as rude, not polite and not respectful and I apologize for my "Denglish". If my email is unclear to you, please do not hesitate to call and allowing me a verbal explanation for better understanding.

I have a question and, I speak on behalf of a few other overseas shooters. First I want to say that we like, appreciate the Bisley facility/opportunity enormously. The shooting possibilities/accommodations provided, the staff members that are always try to help and assist us overseas shooters, as communicating from a distance and interpreting everything in a first time correct way is difficult, but as said, staff members help us. The possibility that we do not have to leave the location during our stay is fantastic and also an USP. The Pavilion, the clubs that allowing us to have a drink, something to eat and a place to stay contribute as well to our "being more then comfortable experience". We also see that you are investing and refurbishing, that also gives a positive boost.

But now the "but".

The process of receiving in time/on a timely manner ones Visitors Firearms Permit (VFP) is stressful and more and more becoming an annoying process. It causes a lot of frustration, uncertainty and some people/shooters are more considering (some already did) to stop with the shooting at Bisley as they experience this process as being disproportional to all other actions that need to be taken before one can visit Bisley. Let me explain/ elaborate before I raise the questions.

Most overseas shooters (as group) need to plan and organize on an annual basis. After receiving the VFP, it basically boils down to:

- Planning the days of to visit Bisley
- Then starts the planning/coordinating the availability of the:
 - a. Ranges
 - b. Car planning/pooling
 - c. Ferry/Shuttle
 - d. Accommodation
 - e. If okay, try to get days off work (holiday)

But receiving a VFP after submitting the request takes “some time”. Bookings have been made whilst the VFP’s are still pending. When an intermediate change occurs in the national firearms permit it is almost impossible that get that timely synchronized with the UK VFP. We have the following examples.

- a. Request for a VFP submitted January 29th, 2025 yet still pending. This meant cancelling the Phoenix meeting 2025 or using a not preferred rifle for the contest. Cancelling a visit/trip has immediately a direct on effect on other shooters because we speak of carpooling and the total cost for the Bisley trip/visit go up due to the fact the total cost are divided by a lower number. Or they need to cancel as well due to non available transport. You pay a fee for getting the annual VFP but when you receive the VFP, which is as stated , valid for a year, at least 3, 4, 5 months of the year have already passed without having received a VFP. Please note that a trip to Bisley and staying over 3 nights costs approximately 650 GBP.
- b. Sometimes we see/experience a discrepancy (of a month or more) between the date the police has signed the VFP and receiving the VFP. Apparently, the police process steps are: 1.collecting the VFP applications, 2. waiting for a significant number of VFP applications, 3. then starts processing the VFP applications, 4. When a significant number of applications have been processed, return them to the NRA in batches?
- c. In general: the VFP process starting in end November is on average finalized in February/March.

The questions we have are the following.

- a. Is the NRA aware of this more increasing time consuming VFP application process?
- b. Is the NRA aware what effect that can have on (overseas) it’s members?
- c. What is the maximum time the Police is allowed for processing an VFP application? Is there a maximum processing time?
- d. If the NRA is aware, would the NRA be willing to share what corrective actions , improvement actions the NRA suggested and or what has already been undertaken? What was the response of the Police/authority?

- e. What can we expect in time looking at the handling of the VFP process? Will it improve?
- f. Is the NRA of the opinion the Police gives the VFP application process a priority?
- g. If the process takes so much time, is it an option to apply for the annual/yearly VFP already in August/September of each year for the following year?
- h. What will be done regarding the cost involved for a VFP when we are already in the year?
- i. Does the NRA have statistic records/data of the VFP process: days outstanding, number of complaints. Is it worthwhile to share that with the members?

Finally I want **to thank** the people, your staff that deals with the VFP process, because I can imagine that they get local and overseas shooters on the phone that complain about the VFP process and that some are not so understanding and respectful to your staff, they get the frustration, whilst they are just the messenger.

If I as an overseas NRA member I can contribute, support to the NRA, on a voluntary basis, just let me know.

ANSWER

Firstly, I would like to thank Rob for the kind words of support that he expresses in his question for the NRA staff who assist shooters visiting visitor to obtain a visitor's firearms permit. We know that delays in obtaining these permits result in cancelled trips and lost money for shooters coming to visit.

VFPs are issued by the Surrey and Sussex Police Firearms Licensing Team. The cost of the VFP is set by the Government and the NRA works closely with the police to minimize the time taking to issue them. Firearms Licensing teams are often poorly resourced, which results in delays in processing VFPs, FAC applications, renewals and variations and so forth.

The NRA assists people with the documentation for the VFP process, including the documentation. And you can read more about this in the following link:
<https://nra.org.uk/safety-legal-and-technical/visitor-firearms-permits-application-process/>

We liaise regularly with Surrey & Sussex to make sure we are doing everything we can to facilitate the process. Shooters can assist by making sure that their VFP applications are filled in accurately and completely with all relevant firearms. In particular, a variation of a VFP, for example, to add a new rifle or barrel is treated in the same way as a new application and is subject to the same processing times as for a new application.

The last question is from **Paul Charlton (Life Member 829)**

QUESTION

As a matter arising from the Bisley General Meeting 2024 may I thank you for the work put into establishing an Air Range in the Pavillion and ask for an update on this facility and on plans for further developments of ranges to the left of Stickledown?

ANSWER

The Air Range at the Pavilion has been completed and is now in a soft opening phase. It is managed as part of the Pavilion, and shooters wishing to use it should contact Velma Durham on extension 135 for bookings. The Air Range is open to air rifles and air pistols and has wheelchair access and an accessible toilet. It is an ideal place for people of all ages and abilities to hone their skills or to introduce new people to shooting.

The first range to the left of Stickledown is Melville. There are no plans to develop Melville range further at this stage.

The next range is Bisley Sporting Rifle (BSR). BSR is currently in its soft- opening phase, offering six 100-yard targets with benches. It's managed by Isobel Tinson (01483 795050) and please contact her to discuss bookings. The new Running Deer, Running Boar and static electronic targetry is scheduled to arrive from Germany at the end of June, and once installed BSR will open fully, including an online booking system. Individuals and clubs will be able to book targets by the hour, half day and day.

The Facilities Department has done a lot of work on the clubhouse and I encourage everyone to visit BSR to see the results of their work. And the team will be down there this weekend and look forward to welcoming you and giving you a tour of all the work that's been done so far. There will be further work on upgrading the ranges throughout 2025.

BSR will promote the Sporting Rifle discipline, as well as providing a useful source of 100-yard bench targets, as well as .22 disciplines such as Mini McQueen, See <https://www.bisleysportingrifle.co.uk/> for more information.

BSR will build on the 60 plus year legacy of British Sporting Rifle Club, which has done so much over the years to promote the sporting rifle discipline. The hard work of its many volunteers laid the foundations that will enable BSR to thrive and I would like to thank them for all their contributions to marksmanship at Bisley.

That is the end of the written questions and there is now an opportunity from questions from the floor. We have about an hour and a half available.

So could I see a show of hands as to how many people would like to ask questions? There are three questions, which gives us half an hour for each question and answer. I hope the questions can be made brief and I will try to do the same.

Could I ask each of the members wishes to ask questions to come to the microphone so that everybody, both in the room and remotely can hear their questions and the answers? And please announce your name.

Can I start with the first question?

Richard Hirst:

I'd like to just clarify, if you could, what the chamber gauges were for markers. It's my opinion because you're talking about marking the holes which puzzles me, would the gauges not be scoring gauges for markers?

Chairman:

That's a good point. A scoring gauge is something that you put up on the target to see whether the shot broke the line or it didn't. The question was specifically referring to the situation of purchasing a rifle without access to a go/no go gauge to check the headspacing.

Richard Hirst:

Alright, that concludes my question. Thank you very much.

Chairman:

Next, and thank you for keeping under 30 minutes.

Charles Dickson:

First an observation. It's disappointing to see so few members have actually taken the trouble to come to this AGM, given the significance of it. Phil, I don't know if you have numbers of the people attending on online. (Five). Sorry. It couldn't be more.

I'm also particularly sorry to see that so relatively few members of General Council have not come to the AGM given the fact that there was a General Council meeting only this afternoon.

But nevertheless, the question I have is regarding Wharncliffe site at the moment. Could you tell us how many sites are as yet not purchased and whether or not the investment that's been made has been covered by those that have already purchased or are we still indebted?

Secretary General:

There are seven sites to be sold.

Charles Dickenson:

But of all the ones that have been sold thus far, once the money has been received, will that have recouped the full investment cost?

Secretary General:

We have 28 pitches and still need to sell another seven. There is still £183,000 to recover.

Charles Dickenson:

So clearly at the moment we are struggling to find enough people to invest sufficient money in a caravan on Wharncliffe site to actually recoup the expense of the investment.

Secretary General:

I am confident that that they will be sold, although selling slowly, and will be sold in due course. But it may take some time.

Chairman:

We are now coming into summer selling season. We've got people coming back onto camp. The site is now completed. So rather than looking at a site and imagining what it will look like when it's finished, you can now go down there, see the completed site, and there are vacant caravans on the site that Caravantastic provided free of charge so people can see what is available.

Charles Dickenson:

But the prediction that all sites would be sold by the end of last year has turned out to be a little optimistic.

Secretary General:

Yes, that was wrong.

Rob Sanders:

Good evening.

I'm here really not to ask a question, but to make an observation with a bit of a concern attached.

What I want to talk about is what's seen as the rising costs of competition entry fees, and I have a bit of a history of this because I have been GB Team Captain in Target Shotgun for a number years, and I have struggled in the past to actually put together a team, sometimes because one or two of the top shots that I would like to put into the team were a little bit reticent to enter because they considered that the entry fees were a bit high.

The fees of course have been going up quite a lot over the years, and I've got my axe to grind on this. I'm an old man and I should add, by the way, I've been coming here since 1959. I'm 82. I've shot every discipline there is. It just so happens that at the moment I'm doing mostly Target Shotgun, and so that's my interest, but I do have access to a lot of the other shooters and their opinions, and so when I'm told that there is a bit of disquiet amongst shooters about the rising costs of entries, naturally I would take interest.

I can afford it. I'm an old man, I've got money so it doesn't matter, but I'm more concerned about the next generation of shooters and I didn't come from a privileged background. It was quite a modest background. I started when I was six, earlier than that, using an air gun in my mother's garden. But the point is I started shooting at an early age.

Shooting is in my blood and I only want to see it continue beyond my demise. And so I think it needs to be looked at a little bit so that the next generation of young shooter might take on board. The fact that it is a little expensive these days to enter competitions, and competitions are after all are the development of initial interest in shooting where one practices and perhaps reaches a certain standard and then maybe enters competitions, because that seems to be the way to go. That's the way I always saw it.

And so I'd like to think that the next generation of young shooters, which by the way, I haven't seen so many of around the camp; and I should add that I live mostly on the camp, so I do know what I'm talking about. I have seen what seems to be lower numbers of shooters and I know the argument from the NRA, and I understand, but the fact is that when you put prices up, you can lose entrants. And if there are, for example, no losses in numbers at the meetings that I mostly shoot, and there are the gallery rifle meetings, the Phoenix, as I've said, I've shot everything over the years, but they're primarily doing these days, it might be that the numbers are down. But I can say for sure because I do have my ears to the ground, a lot of shooters are entering fewer competitions. They might still come because why would they not? This is a wonderful place. I mean, that's, I have such a passion for this place and I have over the years, and I don't want to see it going downwards. That's my concern.

And lastly, I want to say thank you for all you've done over the years. I've been here a few years now and in the years that I've been coming here, since 1959, this place was amazing when I came here for what it is, but I didn't see any real difference over the next maybe 30 years or so. But I've seen a lot of difference under your stewardship, so thank you for that. That's all.

Thank you.

Chairman:

Can I pick up the theme of Rob's observations concerning youth shooting?

Youth shooting is the future of target shooting and all of the Trustees and all of the NSC directors operating the ranges are very conscious of that. As part of that, there are discounts for youth shooters; there's an Under-21 discount and Under-25 discount. The NRA also makes a significant contribution towards the costs of competitions like the Imperial meeting.

Treasurer:

The Association covers £360,000 on competition entry discounts and another £78,000 supporting youth shooting.

Chairman:

So that's £450,000 additional funds in addition to the competition fees that go to delivering competitions. And the NRA justifies that because it's part of its charitable objective to encourage marksmanship. And so it keeps the competition entry fees below what they would need to be if there was not that charitable contribution from the NRA.

We are working on appointing a Youth Shooting Development Officer whose job will be to seek out new opportunities to promote the air rifle ranges, giving you a fantastic opportunity to bring your children and give them some experience of shooting in an easy and low-cost way and as they get a bit older moving on to rimfire shotgun and then fullbore shooting.

Cost is an inevitable pressure in every operation. I will admit that I don't believe that any member has ever approached me urging me to increase the competition fees. Competition fees will continue to rise just because our costs continue to rise, especially given the impact of employment taxes and so on as we are an employment heavy operation. As you walk

around camp, you see lots of people in NSC and NRA branded gear because they're needed to keep the place operating. So I cannot promise that competition fees are going to go down, but what I can promise is that I know everybody responsible for delivering the competitions is very conscious of the importance of encouraging young people, those young in age and those young at heart, to keep shooting.

I think last year our youngest Imperial competitor was 14, and our oldest was 92. So Rob, you still have a way to go and I'll expect to see you.

If there are no other questions?

Thank you all very much for coming along, and thank you to those who attended remotely.

I would like to invite you all to stay for the National Shooting Centre's AGM at 7.30pm.

Thank you all very much.

Meeting closed at 18:45pm