

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held in the NRA Pavilion, Bisley Camp
on Friday 10th June 2022 at 18.00

Present:

Chairman
Secretary General
Members

Mr D Lacey
Mr A Mercer
35 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.

The Resolution was approved.

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

The Resolution was approved.

SPEECH AND RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Attached as Annex.



Chairman

Annual General Meeting – 10th June 2022

Proceedings

Chairman:

Good afternoon everyone. I would like to welcome you all to the 2022 Annual General Meeting of the NRA, with thanks to everyone who has joined us.

This is the meeting for the NRA and it will be followed by an Annual General Meeting of the National Shooting Centre Limited, which you'll know is the wholly-owned subsidiary of the NRA that carries out commercial activities. And we are holding separate meetings this year as part of our ongoing work in highlighting the different functions and responsibilities of the two organisations.

We have three standing resolutions to put before the meeting. That will be followed by a resolution to amend the Second Schedule, and then in the usual way, speeches from me, from the Treasurer, who you will notice is not here, so that will be me as well; he has given me his speech, and any questions on that will be answered by Andrew Mercer and then a speech by Andrew as Secretary General. There will then be an opportunity for an open forum after I have dealt with the written questions that were received in advance of the meeting.

So first I propose the first resolution which is the re-election of HRH the Prince of Wales as the President of the Association.

Show of hands, all those in favour. And anybody against. I can report the resolution has been passed unanimously. Thank you very much.

The second standing item for voting at this meeting is the re-election of the Vice-Presidents, and there is a list of Vice Presidents printed on the agenda.

I regret to have to inform the meeting that since that list was printed Colin McEachran passed away. He was a tireless supporter of the Association, and I invite the meeting to observe a minute's silence. [*silence observed*] I can also report that I have written to Mrs McEachran on behalf of the Association to pass on our condolences.

I now call for the resolution for the re-election of the Vice Presidents. All those in favour. Anyone opposed? I am pleased to report the resolution has been passed unanimously.

The third standing resolution is the resolution that haysmacintyre LLP be re-appointed as our auditors.

All those in favour of the resolution. And anyone opposed? That resolution has also been passed. Thank you.

I now turn to the Second Schedule, which as you'll know contains various important provisions relating to how the NRA operates.

General Council resolved to conduct a consultation exercise in relation to potential changes to the Second Schedule at its meeting on 20th February 2021, and it set up a working group consisting of Alice Gran, Charles Brooks and John Bloomfield, and I'd like to thank them for their contribution to this work.

The Working Group reported to the General Council meeting on 19th February 2022, and recommended in principal, first that the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body not be a member of Council by virtue of holding that office, to reflect the separation of power between the Council, as the body that makes the rules for the Association, and the Disciplinary Body as the body that enforces those rules, and as a result there be an additional member of General Council elected to Council to replace the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body so that Council continues to have 12 members.

Secondly, the General Council have an expressed power to remove a member of Council (because General Council ultimately appoints or approves the appointment of all members of Council), subject to a fair process and reasonable timetable.

General Council endorsed that recommendation and it was adopted by Council. The Second Schedule can only be changed by the members of the Association at a General Meeting: that is, all of you.

Before going any further, I ask whether there are there any questions in relation to the proposed changes? I'm not inviting people to speak for or against it at this stage: are there any questions to clarify any of the operative provisions.

Martin Osment

Chairman, if I may, what was the driver behind this.

Chairman

There was a general consultation process. The working group received, I think it's fair to say, a number of proposals of various things that could be changed. There was a variety of things that were received, and General Council chose these out of the menu that had been put forward by the working group.

Jayne Lawley Morris

Can you confirm how the Chairman of the Disciplinary Board is then selected.

Chairman

The Chairman of the Disciplinary Body is selected by the members of the Disciplinary Body. So at the moment, nobody holds that office. There is a Vice Chairman, but no Chairman.

Hopefully, after this, they will appoint a Chairman.

John Webster

Two questions. The first question is the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee could be a Trustee, but does not hold that office ex-officio as Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee, is that correct?

Chairman

Correct.

John Webster

And the second question is, the removal by General Council of members of the Trustee Body applies to **all** Trustees, not just those appointed by Council.

Chairman

Correct. And that is because, in the first case, your question was could the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body stand for election to General Council, and there is no prohibition on that.

And in the second case, since General Council ultimately determines who sits on Council, either by direct election or by approving the co-option of members, or by the election of Chairman of principal committees, ultimately General Council decides who goes on Council, and the proposal is therefore General Council should also have the power to remove all Trustees.

Iain Robertson

Could I just confirm between you and John that you were talking about the same organisation when you said that the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee could stand for election, because I thought that John was talking about the Board of Trustees, and you talked about General Council.

Chairman

Then I will clarify, the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body can stand for election to Council. There is no prohibition on that in the rules. It is simply that the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body isn't automatically a member of Council by holding that office.

Iain Robertson

Thank you.

Chairman

If there's no other questions, does anybody wish to speak against the resolution? And I'm not going to ask anybody to speak in favour of it, unless anyone particularly wants to speak in favour?

I will then move to a vote. All those in favour of the amendment? And anybody opposed to the amendment?

We have one opposition, and everyone else in favour, so the resolution is passed.

Thank you very much.

I should have asked if there were any abstentions?

Alice Gran

There are two resolutions David.

Chairman

Oh, I should have taken them separately. Yes, I do apologise. Alice, quite correctly, points out that there are two resolutions, so I am going to do the first one first.

All those in favour? And against? (1 opposed)

And on the second one, all those in favour? And any against? (Unanimous)

And so both resolutions are passed.

Thank you Alice.

This brings us to item 5, which is the speeches by me, presentation on behalf of the Treasurer, and by our Secretary-General.

Chairman's Statement

I am pleased to say that the NRA has weathered many challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Many other charities have not been so fortunate, and I want to start by thanking all of those who supported the NRA through this challenging time.

Our Annual Report for 2021 has been published and outlines our financial position. It demonstrates that we have been able to recover from the financial challenges of 2020, although in part by delaying much-needed capital expenditure. 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 9,587 at the end of 2020 to 9,876 at the start of 2022 – a net increase of 289 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. 875 members completed a probationary training course in 2021. That's an increase from 2020, and a 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 especially given the reduced staffing levels brought about by our decision to use the Government's furlough scheme in 2020.

Range use at Bisley continues to grow, and we are experiencing high demand during 2022 as people continue to catch up on all the lost shooting opportunities from 2020 and early 2021. Meeting this demand is an important challenge for the National Shooting Centre, 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 enable as many people as possible to use the range and that ranges are allocated fairly. Again, I want to thank the professional staff for the way they have managed this increasing demand and balanced the competing priorities between all those who use Bisley Ranges.

The NSC was able to operate sporting clay shooting at Council Club and Cottesloe Heath for 9 months in 2021. 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 operational flexibility of having this land under the 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 2022 Commonwealth Games. 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 Members of Parliament on the various ways that NSC and other range operators successfully manage lead on shooting ranges.

There is more work to be done on improving facilities at Bisley and completing long-running projects. Most capital expenditure was suspended in 2021. So far in 2022 we have upgraded the ballistic walls at Melville, Zero and Winans ranges, commenced the development of a new range office in the Pavilion and upgraded the areas around the Clock Tower. During the rest of this year, there will be investments in regional ranges, an online booking system and new ablutions blocks for the Clock Tower and Caravan Site 7. As at today, we are cash positive, but this is a particularly high point in the seasonal fluctuations in our cashflow. We must continue to rebuild 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 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 contribution throughout 2021.

That is the end of my presentation.

In the absence of the Treasurer, who can't be with us due to ill health, I will present the financial report.

Treasurer's Statement

Our Treasurer says:

The ranges were finally re-opened on March 29th last year and this allowed the NRA and NSC to operate in some semblance of normality for the remainder of the year.

In summary, the continued focus on restricting discretionary expenditure, preserving liquidity and building back our balance sheet resilience resulted in exceptional one-off profitability in 2021. However this needs to be contextualized with the significant loss we had incurred in the prior year and the significant way to go to repair the effect the pandemic had on the Group's balance sheet.

Looking at the financial statements, in the year to December 2021 total consolidated income rose 30% year on year to £7.5mm producing a consolidated net profit, including a £47k gain on investments, of £846k. This compares with a loss of £427k in 2020.

The group's net assets recovered to £8.9mm although the Charity's free reserves (which considers our liquidity) remain negative as a significant proportion of the Group's assets are in the form of Fixed Assets such as Land and Buildings. However, a market valuation of £10mm for the estate was obtained during 2020 and this continues to afford us access to a £1mm overdraft facility.

Thankfully, this has not been needed since April 2021 and the year-end unrestricted cash balance, which is historically the peak point in the year, was a healthy £717k.

The improvement in the liquidity of the Group was also reflected in one of the Trustees' monthly Key Performance Indicators - the Acid Test Ratio. This is a conservative metric which considers whether the Group could pay all its current liabilities from cash and readily monetizable assets. The Trustees previously set a minimum threshold of 1x cover, which was breached early on in the pandemic.

The year-end figure was just above this floor at 1.13x, which was the first time that we had achieved this since December 2019.

The expectation is for the net liquidity position to remain positive throughout 2022 and our base case forecasts provided to haysmacintyre during the audit are that we will end 2022 with a net positive cash balance of £694k and a comparable acid test ratio.

During 2021 net cash from operating activities increased to £1.2mm from £246k in the prior year reflecting in the main the improvement in net income. This traditionally has three main sources: range fees, membership subscriptions and estate rentals. However in 2021 just under a quarter of net income was generated by the Bisley Shooting Ground business, which continues to perform well.

The primary financial aim for the Trustees in 2022 is to fully restore our balance sheet resilience. We will measure this against the Reserves policy in which we aim to maintain a net cash position of at least £250k and an Acid Test Ratio of at least 1x cover at all times.

I hope that we can achieve this by the end of this financial year but to manage expectations it is worth reiterating that several one-off factors led to 2021 being an exceptional year: namely, the continued receipt of furlough support, the postponement of discretionary spending and reduction in headcount. On top of that, the economic conditions in 2022 are not without their own challenges and we are certainly not immune from the effects of inflationary pressures on our cost base in particular through rising wages and increasing energy bills.

Nevertheless, our projections for the current year are that the Group will generate a profit before changes in investments of around £228k allowing for expenditure just shy of £1mm on capital assets and maintenance, which will improve the experience of customers of the NSC at Bisley and assist the NRA in pursuing its charitable objectives across the UK.

In conclusion, while 2021 has been a fantastic year, putting the Charity and Group in a strong position coming out of the pandemic, it is important to keep in mind that we will continue to face challenges in 2022.

Finally, the strong financial performance last year was due in no small part to the continued efforts of Andrew and his Finance team and I would like to take the opportunity to thank them on behalf of all of us.

That ends the presentation of the Treasurer.

I will now call on Andrew with the presentation of the Secretary General

Secretary General's Statement

Thank you Chairman.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

This time last year I told members at the Annual General Meeting that whilst 2020 had been the year to survive, 2021 was the year for recovery, to facilitate a year for progress in 2022.

Looking back it was one of the rare predictions I got right in 2021. I remember telling our staff to expect a gentle start when we re-opened from lockdown at the end of March, and that we could expect a plentiful supply of candidates to fill the many vacancies that we had. What we experienced was quite different – great demand for our ranges and a fiercely competitive market for staff. Thankfully our staff and volunteers once again excelled themselves and delivered a successful year for the Association. I would like to record my personal thanks to each and every one of them.

As the Treasurer has reported, the financial damage caused by COVID has been largely repaired and we are busy making progress to address the large backlog of repairs, improvements and developments. Investing in our ranges, both rifle and shotgun, remain a priority, along with resources that facilitate their use such as the range office and accommodation.

We have announced plans to develop two new serviced caravan sites to build on the success of Spencer Site in 2016 and Waldegrave Site in 2019. Such projects are never universally welcome, and we work hard to smooth the passage of change for those owners who need to move to alternative sites.

We are also working hard to catch up with routine painting, road repairs and tree work. There is much to do but I hope visitors to Bisley can see real progress when they return this year.

Increasing range capacity away from Bisley is another priority, and we are investing our resources to re-open ranges for civilian shooting in Scotland and Dorset. I remain firmly of the view that participation in target shooting is limited by lack of range access, not lack of demand or high cost.

Gaining access to probationary training in the regions can also be difficult. Covid restrictions curtailed much club training throughout 2020 and 2021, and there has been strong demand for our Bisley courses. We are exploring opportunities to deliver more training away from Bisley and will be visiting clubs to learn how they deliver their own courses.

Despite being an eternal optimist I fear proposals to severely restrict the use of lead ammunition in rifle, shotgun and airguns in the recently published Health and Safety Executive report pose a material threat to all target shooting. We face the considerable challenge of persuading politicians that we need to continue shooting with a known toxic material. The proposed derogation to allow lead to be used on licensed rifle ranges is encouraging; however, the devil will be in the detail, and we are consulting with regional range operators to develop practical and affordable lead management protocols.

I fear efforts to counter proposals prohibiting the sale and use of lead shot in both quarry and target shooting will be severely hampered by some game shooting organisations' support of a voluntary ban of lead shot by 2025.

It is essential that target shooting organisations work together on the response to the lead consultation. We all have particular and peculiar priorities and perspectives, but we value the guidance and support of colleagues from organisations including the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association, the National Smallbore Rifle Association, the British Shooting Sports Council and the Historical Breechloading and Small Arms Association.

Despite the current challenges I am optimistic that the NRA will continue to flourish. The Association has experienced periods of momentous change and has weathered them all.

The war in Ukraine suggests that Defence of the Realm is not such an anachronism as some might suggest; I hope that promoting and encouraging marksmanship may come to be seen in a more favourable light.

Thank you Chairman.

Chairman:

This takes us to answers to written questions.

We received four questions by the published closing time of noon on the 2nd June.

Our first two questions come from Jim Starley.

First, can the NRA issue the 2021 Mini Rifle and Handgun Leagues results quickly and commit to issuing future results in a timely manner.

I can report that the 2021 Mini Rifle results have now been published on the NRA website, and I would like to congratulate Ben Ducker on winning the league, and Tim Gardner on a clean sweep of Handgun Open, Standard and Revolver.

Results of future competitions will be processed centrally by the NRA Competition Team which will ensure the results are published promptly.

His second question

“Can the NRA Handgun League Facebook page be renamed NRA Handgun and Mini Rifle League, or a second page created for the Mini Rifle League to make matches easier to find”.

I have passed this onto our Competition team to consider as part of reviewing the way that we communicate competition calendars. It is in everybody's interest to make it as easy as possible to enter competitions.

The next question comes from Alan Fitch.

I've summarised it slightly, but I hope I have preserved the essence of it.

“Bookings are refused, but when I visit Bisley the ranges are empty. I have to book multiple targets rather than falling back on one target. Bookings are not confirmed until a week before a shoot, and if markers are not available through the NRA this makes it difficult to find other markers”.

This question highlights some important aspects of range bookings. The ranges are of course operated by the National Shooting Centre, rather than the NRA, because range operation is a commercial activity. That said, the NRA does have an interest in efficient

range management. The main reason that your booking might be refused, but you then find the range space empty on arrival is a last-minute cancellation, particularly with larger bookings. This is frustrating both for NSC and for other range users. As a result, NSC has introduced a cancellation policy for bookings of 6 or more targets to encourage early cancellation of unwanted targets, so they can be made available to other shooters.

Falling back on the same target prevents people shooting on range space behind you when you are at shorter distances, and prevents people shooting on range space in front of you when you are at longer distances because of the need to separate targets for safety reasons. Allowing someone to fallback from, say, 300 yards to 600 yards on the same target during the same shooting session would block a lot of range space. For this reason, the Range Office will allocate range space for falling-back club competitions that usually yields additional targets alongside to maximise the range usage.

Confirmation of large bookings often depends on having to juggle a lot of competing demands for range space. The majority of bookings are confirmed well in advance; bookings for unscheduled falling back targets are confirmed at shorter notice. Availability of markers, especially in the early season, is sometimes uncertain and the range office works hard to give as much notice as possible if markers are not available. This means that bookings may not be confirmed until the week before. The NSC is conscious that this is not helpful, especially for clubs, and is working on improvements to provide confirmation of bookings in good time.

Demand for range space is increasing year on year, which is excellent as it means more people are shooting. That greater demand does mean that some changes are needed in how space is allocated to enable the greatest number of people to shoot. For example, single distance shooting may be needed during peak season so that all the targets on a range can be used.

The next question comes from Richard Higgs

“What is the NRA doing in relation to the Government proposals to ban lead in ammunition?”

The NRA is working with other target shooting organisations through the British Shooting Sports Council to inform Members of Parliament about the impact such a ban would have and to put forward proposals to ensure that the desire to ensure there is no lead in the food chain does not have unintended consequences. Lead is used in the form of shot and in the form of bullets. They have different uses and have different environmental impact. It is possible that we will see significant restrictions, or even a total ban, on lead shot following the initiative by the game shooting community to move to lead-free shot for game shooting by 2025. Likewise, we may see non-lead rifle ammunition becoming compulsory for game shooting, as it has been for some years on Forest Enterprises land. However, we are working with the BSSC to demonstrate that lead on well-managed rifle ranges does not pose a risk to the environment and that a ban on it would be disproportionate and go well beyond what is needed to protect the environment. I know there will be members who believe that we should oppose all restrictions on lead, whatever the circumstances. But this is difficult given the approach already adopted by the game shooting community, and could well result in a total ban.

Those are the four questions. We now have an opportunity for questions from the floor. We have about 90 minutes for questions to take us up to 8pm.

At this stage, could I just see who wants to ask a question, to gauge numbers. (Seven)

We have plenty of time to fill the next 90 minutes, but I'm sure everyone will appreciate if we can focus on the question as soon as possible.

So, choosing at random, sir would you like to lead us off? There is a microphone here if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself for the minutes and your question.

Neville Stebbings

My name is Neville Stebbings and I have a question about the road signage around camp. And it is a question because I think some of it also falls under the remit or the purview of the NSRA.

There are two signs in particular which I think are unsafe and could, at some point, lead to a serious accident.

One of those, and the worst one in particular, is if you drive past the St George's Lodge, coming out of camp, past the old cook house on the left hand side, and you come to the T junction at the end of that road, there is a sign there pointing down to the Lord Roberts Centre, the NSRA shop, etc, which is exactly at the right height so that you can't see past it.

(Chairman – this is on the left as you are driving? I know where you mean.)

It is dangerous and sooner or later somebody is going to pull out into traffic and cause an accident there.

There is a similar sign, although it's not quite so bad, driving out from Caravan Site 7 - the sign that points to Cheylesmore Range, and it also blocks the view of the traffic leaving the caravan site.

Now in my view, those signs would be fine if they were in a different place, and they should actually be on the opposite side of the road to the minor road, or the joining road, pointing into, let's say Cheylesmore, but across the road, not actually on the same side of the road as the road in Cheylesmore Range.

And the same also applies to the sign pointing down to the NSRA shop, etc. Now that obviously belongs to the NSRA, and I think it's on NSRA land, and therefore how much we can do about that I don't know.

But I think they should be told and put on notice that the sign is inappropriate and if there is an accident they have been warned and they have a duty of care to do something about it.

So after that real long and drawn out introduction to the question, my question really is what will the NRA do about that signage to get rid of the risk.

Chairman

Thank you for that question.

You are right that the sign at the end of Elcho Road on the left sits on Site 103, on the triangle, which is not NRA land. The NSRA shop sign is in a similar position.

The Site 7 sign pointing to Cheylesmore is on our land and is one of our signs.

Secretary General

It is Chairman. So actually, just on the NSRA sign, I was encouraged with vigour by a member of the NRA earlier this week to deal with the NSRA about the very sign you have mentioned.

By good fortune, the very next day I was due to meet the Commercial Chief Executive of the NSRA, so I alerted to him the concerns that were identical to the ones you have expressed, and suggested he drive his car and see what he thought of that exit, because they traditionally come out on the other side, down the side of the CPSA.

He said he would do that. I am yet to find out what his response to that is.

Neville Stebbings

And I guess that we will have to offer him to allow him to place the sign on the opposite side of the road on our property, but that would get rid of the risk at least.

Secretary General

I have suggested he puts the sign up higher or lower.

Chairman

The problem with the sign, the one you are thinking of, is in your car it is right in your eye line. If it was lower, or higher, you could see the cars.

Neville Stebbings

Potentially. There is a British Standard for road signage, and I suggest that someone should refer to that.

Chairman

And Andrew, can you have a look at the Cheylesmore signage?

Secretary General

I will go and look at it Chairman.

Chairman

And let's go over to this side of the room, Martin would you like to lead us off?

Martin Osment

Good evening Chairman, thank you.

Martin Osment, Life Member, and also the Chair of ABCAT.

Could I ask you for an update on the electricity charges issue.

Chairman

What aspect?

Martin Osment

Well, how is the past over charges situation being resolved?

Chairman

In terms of issues, people know that we continue to engage in an arbitration process with Mr Mustafa concerning his claim in relation of the supply of electricity. We have also offered to enter into mediation to resolve that, in line with our published Dispute Resolution Policy.

There aren't any other ongoing disputes in relation to the supply of electricity, if that was the focus of the question.

Martin Osment

You are obviously aware that several other clubs and individual tenants feel that they are also aggrieved and waiting until there is some overall guidance.

Chairman

There is only one ongoing dispute. If people want to raise other things with us, they are welcome to do that.

Martin Osment

Thank you Chairman.

Could you give us an update please on the Estates Committee meetings and progress.

Chairman

I am looking at my notes, because Martin very kindly gave me a 'heads-up' about the questions he would be asking, for which I am grateful, because it has allowed me to do a bit of preparation.

The Estates Working Group is a working group of General Council. It reports to General Council on matters referred to it by General Council, and the results of its work are recorded in the minutes of General Council, which you can find on the website.

Anybody who has a matter that they would like General Council to consider referring to the Estates Working Group should send it to their discipline representative, or their regional representative. And so then the Estates Working Group will then hold meetings on matters that General Council have referred to them, rather than Council.

Martin Osment

Thank you Chairman.

And finally, do you have any updates on the situation regarding markers and marker fees?

Chairman

Andrew, are you happy to take that?

Secretary General

Access to markers is always problematic. It is a very competitive market and we pay rates we think the shooters can afford, and the markers are prepared to work for. It is getting better and as students finish university and schools finish their exams, access to markers will improve.

Sunday afternoons are always problematic because we have a significant cohort of markers who are aged 16 and they can only work for 2 hours on a Sunday.

Martin Osment

Thank you very much.

Chairman, if I may ask just one other thing briefly, the request for Strategy Review consultation, I couldn't find a closing date on that. Can you tell me what that is?

Chairman

Have we set a closing date for that?

Secretary General

I think we are going to have a think about that. We will re-publish it with a closing date.

Martin Osment

Thank you Andrew. Thank you Chairman.

Chairman

I will then come back to this side of the room. Working backwards, Gillian were you next?

Gillian Kaile

Two questions basically.

One, you indicated a return to the previous reserve levels as they were, but I'm suggesting here with inflation that will need to go up quite a bit to actually give us the same buffer as was originally envisaged and I realise you are in an invidious position because you were speaking on behalf of the Treasurer, but could that be referred?

The other thing, on world trade and international supply chains, I know there is difficulty, but where are we going with our international and diplomatic arrangements to try and get a reasonable high standard of ammunition in really large bulk, and therefore keeping the cost reasonable and having it here well in time to be tested.

I do realise the problem because I have got that international knowledge, some of the diplomatic knowledge, but I think most of the shooters on the whole, especially TR not handloaders, and rely entirely upon a good level of ammunition.

Thank you

Chairman

Thank you.

Dealing with the first question, it is absolutely right to note that £250k is eroded each year by inflation, so it may well be appropriate to raise that number higher. At this stage, I want to work towards getting the number up so that we've got cash in the bank for financial resilience. But it is an important point, and I thank you for making it.

In terms of the world trade and purchase of ammunition, apparently there are other people buying lots of ammunition at the moment, which is an issue, but Andrew you might have more detailed knowledge than me in terms of the supplies we have.

Secretary General

It's mighty difficult to be honest to find ammunition to buy it at all. And then you have the tricky problem trying to negotiate the price that you and your customers are going to be prepared to pay.

I was talking to Simon Favell, who has come down from Derbyshire, and is the great proprietor of Thorpe Cloud, and his clubs are finding exactly the same problem.

So, our ability to influence the international supply of ammunition and components is pretty limited.

Our primary supplier is based in Lithuania, and it is fair to say that the delivery of the Lithuanian supplied ammunition is one of the high points of my year so far, and that with other supplies due will keep us going until March/April 2023. But it is getting expensive.

In fact, I alerted the Trustees today that we may well need to reduce our expectations in terms of margin on ammunition to keep the ranges busy.

So it is a difficult job, and I spoke to our primary importer this week and he tells me that the Americans are buying up again because they know there is another election coming. Every time there is a shooting outrage, a horrific thing that happened, the purchase of ammunition and components shoots up.

For ammunition in Europe, there are a lot of examples that a lot of that goes East rather than West, so it is very problematic.

There are no easy answers. Although we acquire a very significant quantity of ammunition for resale and issue over the course of the year, we are a tiny player in a big international market.

Martin Osment

Chairman, can I just ask a supplementary question on that. Of the four major component parts of ammunition, is there any one particular one that is causing the bottle neck?

Secretary General

I think is primarily projectiles and primers.

Chairman

It is hard to build a new primer factory, because primers are the most dangerous part to make. But if anybody knows of anybody with several million rounds of ammunition they want to get rid of, please give us a call – we'll be very interested in hearing from you!

Thank you Gillian.

Can I come back to this side of the room, working backwards, sir would you like to ask your question?

David Mumford

You mentioned very briefly the furlough scheme, I heard the word once. Would you like to elaborate on that, see how it affected us, if indeed it did, or anybody, etc etc. Thank you.

Secretary General

The furlough was designed to stop getting rid of staff. The income from furlough in 2020 was about £530k, and allowed us to retain a significant number of staff. In 2021 the furlough receipts dropped to £143k.

We made a significant number of staff redundant at the end of 2020, and I thought, as I said in my speech, that we would be able to replace them readily and quickly in early 2021. How wrong I was! So we are just about now back to where we were at the end of 2019 before the pandemic hit.

David Mumford– what with staff members?

Yes

Chairman

And can I come back to this side of the room?

Ron Scaglione

My name is Ron Scaglione, I'm an individual member and representative of an affiliated club, West Atholl Rifle Club in Scotland.

We seek clarification on Rule 150, in particular to the point raised by a few members. Is there a reason why there is no mention of a 155gr weight limit for Target Rifle.

If there is a reason for it, we would perhaps like to know what it is, or perhaps it is maybe an omission. But we seek clarification why 155gr bullet weight limit isn't mentioned for the Target Rifle discipline.

Chairman

Thank you. Rule 150 is about chamber dimensions.

Target Rifle in general.

Secretary General

Don't ask me to help you on this one Chairman! (*laughter*)

Chairman

No but it is about chamber dimensions rather than projectiles?

Charles Dickenson

No it refers to everything associated with Target Rifle and the regulations specifically for Target Rifle discipline. It's not just the chamber dimensions. That was a contentious issue a few years ago, but it covers an awful lot more.

Chairman

Yes, on the basis that was the only bit I had to report on! Tunnel vision – I learnt far too much about chamber dimensions! So, I can answer that question by saying I'm not a TR rifle shooter, and I haven't got the foggiest idea. I will however invite anybody from the floor with a simple answer to that question.

Charles Dickenson

John Bloomfield probably has the best answer!

John Bloomfield

The simple reason is there is no restriction on what weight bullet you can use for Target Rifle.

There is a restriction on the bullet weight you can use in the Meeting, because that is what we issue and in fact, the chosen projectile as you realise is the Sierra 2155 and that is what we order for issued ammunition, the meeting is shot with issued ammunition.

Therefore if you are shooting outside the meeting, you can shoot what weight of bullet you want to use, subject to whatever rules of competition that club or organisation puts in place.

So if you wanted to use 190gr bullets, in principal, there is no reason why you can't.

Ron Scaglione

So our members basically seek clarification, and it is up to the club then to say this is a competition limited to 155gr, but the NRA does not have a formal stance on the matter one way or the other, it is up to the club.

John Bloomfield

Only for the issued ammunition that we use in NRA competitions.

Charles Dickenson

The other constraint comes from ICFRA. The ICFRA rules, if you shoot under ICFRA rules, has a limit of 156 grains. For Target Rifle in the Imperial Meeting as John has said, the standard issued ammunition is 155 grain, but for any other competition it is entirely up to the organisers whether they place a limit or not, and if so, what limit they put on.

Chairman

Gentlemen, I am indebted to you both. Now I know more about Rule 150 than I thought I would ever need to know.

Phil Northam

I just wanted to clarify on top of that last comment, we had a discussion in General Council that people are obviously finding it difficult there to get certain ammunition, can competitions accommodate different calibres, different weights of bullets, and the answer is if it is a competition organised by a club or county, yes. And it is up to you to do that.

Ron Scaglione

I think next year, as the Secretary, West Atholl will need to look very carefully at what sorts of limits are available and may need to stretch the rules a bit.

Chairman

If we are done on that point, can I come onto this side of the room, working backwards. Is there anything else on this side of the room?

Anybody else anywhere in the room who would like ask another question.

Phil Northam

Can I just make one little announcement which we discussed in General Council?

Most of you probably know me, Phil Northam, and I'm an advocate for junior shooting and younger shooting.

And so I am kind of speaking on behalf of the Scout shooting movement. During COVID we were seriously restricted in what we could do, we couldn't put children at risk, etc. So rather than cancel all our ranges, we cancelled the children's participation and invited all the scout leaders and the scouts parents and helpers and we had an amazing response. A big response.

And from that we have set ourselves a target to achieve 1000 meaningful, positive shooting experiences for scouts, scout leaders and their associates, by the October championships this year. We are at 550.

I think given the scenario that we've been in, shortage of ammunition, shortage of ranges, uncertainty, disease, pandemic, plague, however you want to describe it, I think to actually achieve 50% of that incredibly quite a stretched goal is a big thing to be able to say we've done.

And I think it shows the positivity of shooting and what can be achieved when we put our minds to it.

And I would encourage all of you to basically use all your guest days, grow your clubs.

Thank you.

And thank you to somebody who has kindly offered us sufficient ammunition to complete that target.

Chairman

That was of course more of a public service announcement than a question. (*Laughter*) But we had plenty of time.

So I am going to call the meeting to a close, looking around the room for a last chance for hands to go up.

I call the meeting to an end, and I look forward to seeing you all at the NSC AGM which kicks off at 8.00pm

Thank you all very much.

The meeting closed at 18:52