

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Council Meeting
held in the Webley Room, NRA Pavilion
on Friday 9th June 2023 from 3.00pm

Present:

Chairman Mr D Lacey (DLA)

Members:

Mr HRM Bailie (HB)
Mr PR Coley (PC)
Mr JPS Bloomfield (JPSB)
Dr AMW Cargill Thompson (ACT)
Mr PAE Charlton (PCh)
Ms A Gran (AG)
Mr J Harris (JH)
Mr MD Jenvey (MJ)
Mr GAE Larcombe (GL)
Miss SS Lohmann (SL)
Mr D Lowe (DL)
Mr FPR Northam (PN)
Mr CG Perry (CP)
Mr A Reynolds (AR) NRA Treasurer
Mr T Rylands
Mr AJD Saunders (JS)
Mr R Stebbings (RS)
Mr D Stimpson (DS)
Mr IR Thomson (IT)
Mr G Trembath (GTr)
Mr JGM Webster (JW)
Dr JD Warburton (JWar)

In attendance: Mr A Mercer (AM) - Chief Executive
Mrs G Thatcher - Secretary to Meeting
Mrs J Hilger-Ellis - Trustee

Apologies for absence:

Mr S Aldhouse, Mr GK Alexander, Cdr NJW Benstead, Mr CM Brooks, Mr N Brasier, Mr G Burns, Wg Cdr DP Calvert, Mr M Cottillard, Mr DC Crispin, Mr A Dagger, Mr J Harper-Smith, Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, Lt. Col. RG Jeffrey, Mr RS Kenchington, Mr N Macfarlane, Dr J Marsden, Dr J Martin, Brig. M Pountain, Mr R Sayer, Mr B Ritchie, Mrs K Robertson, Mr C Steele-Benny, Mr N St Aubyn, Mr MP Watkins, Mr S Wallis, Mr AM Whiffin, Mr P Wolpe.

INDEX G739 to G755

The Chairman declared the meeting open.

1. G739 – APOLOGIES

1.1. Apologies were received as noted above.

2. G740 – STANDING REMINDERS

- 2.1. The Chairman reminded the meeting that, following Charity Commission guidelines, the meeting should be cognisant of the distinction between the role of the NRA as the charity, and the NSC as the commercial subsidiary of the Association.
- 2.2. The Chairman requested that all members declare any conflict of interest at the start of the meeting, based on the agenda items. No declarations were made at this time.
- 2.3. The Chairman requested that members declare any conflicts of interest that may arise during the meeting.

3. G741 – DECLARATION OF INTEREST DOCUMENTS

- 3.1. The Chairman thanked all the members of General Council who had completed their Register of Interests and Register of Property Interest documents.
- 3.2. The following members were asked to complete and return their declarations to GT as soon as possible – Graham Burns, Peter Coley, Silke Lohmann, Tom Rylands, Steve Wallis.

4. G742 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 18th FEBRUARY 2023

- 4.1. MJ raised point 16.14 regarding the Terms of Reference for the Estates Working Group, where it was suggested that any follow up should be made by contacting the group to seek their views to move towards a more established group as a Committee rather than an informal group. MJ tried to do this initially several weeks ago, but was not permitted to send anything directly and not given email addresses, so only sent something via GT a week ago and has had no response to date.
- 4.2. The Chairman noted that disclosing email addresses is not permitted due to GDPR, but the office will pass on any information to the relevant parties. PCh, Chairman of the EWG, confirmed he had received the email and had circulated it to the members of the EWG who are working through the document will respond in due course.
- 4.3. MJ remarked it has been such a long drawn-out process the EWG hasn't been effective because of the timescale or the input not being able to come back in a timely manner.
- 4.4. PCh informed the meeting that his tenure as Chairman of the EWG is due to end in September, so the group will have to elect a new member and Chairman to the Committee. The Chairman asked anyone who wished to put themselves forward to the EWG to do so.
- 4.5. PN remarked that communication between GC members has been discussed on a number of occasions and suggested that all GC members should have an NRA email address for GC business, so they can communicate effectively.
- 4.6. The Chairman asked for input from the members of having a dedicated NRA email address. SL thought that was going to be done following the previous meeting. MJ agreed it would facilitate communication. ACT was supportive of the idea, but highlighted it must be easy to use and have the ability to integrate into current email systems on mobile phones or PCs, to avoid having to log in and out of different systems. JPSB noted Microsoft Outlook, the current mail service is not ideal.
- 4.7. GT was asked to collate email addresses of those GC members who contact her to confirm they were willing to allow the NRA to share their email address with other GC members and a list of those GC members who contact her to request an NRA-based email account.
- 4.8. MJ raised the issue of availability for the 300m shooters, who have been given dates at the start of the year, and have had a shoot on 21st June cancelled at short notice. He doesn't believe 300m are getting the support they deserve.

- 4.9. The Chairman noted that was an NSC matter, as the range operator, and asked AM in his capacity as Chief Executive to respond. AM informed the meeting the subject had been raised in the Shooting Committee meeting recently, and a meeting has been arranged between Simon Aldhouse, the 300m rep, and the Chairman of the Shooting Committee to review the restrictions that are limiting 300m use at Bisley.
- 4.10. There were no further matters arising.

5. **G743 – REVIEW OF ACTIONS**

- 5.1. The review of actions were presented to the Meeting.
- 5.2. JPSB to review the requirements for police and local council licenses for clubs to store ammunition in their armouries, and will produce a report for the next meeting. **Item ONGOING.**
- 5.3. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the purchase of Site 103 has resulted in the plans for Exhibition Hut being put on hold whilst the plans for the site are reviewed. Work has commenced on the Estate Development Plan for 2023 and plans for Exhibition Hut and Site 103 will be included in those proposals, due to be published in August 2023. **Item ONGOING.**
- 5.4. The Secretary General to request a report from the Membership team on the granular reasons for growth in the membership, including regions, disciplines, as there may be losses in the regions, but an increase nearer Bisley, to help understand where the issues may be and how to address them to retain the membership. A report will be produced for the August Membership Committee meeting. **Item ONGOING.**
- 5.5. The Secretary General to look at gathering more feedback from CSAs who have not renewed their affiliation with the NRA and report back at the next meeting. This will be implemented as part of the renewal process in future years. **Item CLOSED.**
- 5.6. The Secretary General confirmed suitable candidates for the co-opted Trustees had been interviewed and successful candidates will be put forward to GC for approval by electronic ballot after this meeting. **Item CLOSED.**
- 5.7. The Secretary General confirmed three GC members had put themselves forward for Non-Lawyer members of the Disciplinary Body and the results of the ballot will be announced later in the meeting. **Item CLOSED.**
- 5.8. PN understood AM was to check with the NRA's insurance broker whether the NRA insurance policy covers markers employed by intermediaries. PN stated that NSRA have unequivocally stated that such markers are not insured under their policy. The Secretary General noted it was not on the review of actions list, and it was agreed it would be added and actioned for the next meeting.
- 5.9. PN stated that there is a situation called "intermediate employment" and there are intermediate employers at Bisley hiring third parties, and all insurance companies he has spoken to have said neither they as intermediaries or third parties are insured. Club insurance covers markers who have been directly hired by the club to mark for them, but not markers from a third party.
- 5.10. The Secretary General noted it would be useful to provide guidance to clubs informing them of the responsibilities they have under range bookings, and the checks they should complete when engaging third party markers through 'gang masters' if they do not have insurance in place with an employer/employee contract. PN noted that there are markers working on site whose 'employer's are not following UK employment law, including paying PAYE, insurance, checks for right to employ under immigration law, or do not have GDPR or child protection policies in place. PN proposes all gang masters are asked to prove they have proper insurance and employment procedures in place, and if not they are banned from camp. The Chairman noted that he had sent PN contact details for all the relevant authorities, who have the power to investigate breaches of the law.
- 5.11. RS added that the difficulty the NRA has with the availability of markers is due to the markers being 'poached' by the gang masters and paying them more money. The NRA trains the markers and then loses them to other providers and the NRA must look at how this can be stopped or mitigated, as it is costing the NRA both money and reputational issues.
- 5.12. TR added that the gang masters having such a presence on camp in the first place may be because of the lack of availability of markers provided by the NRA, and there is a potential risk that if large clubs cannot get markers through the NRA, and are unable to find private markers,

they would not be able to run their club events, and a balance needs to be struck to protect both the NRA and the clubs.

- 5.13. The Chairman asked if the proposal is to find a solution to prevent the gang masters operating on camp, and asked for suggestions on how that could be done from an operational point of view. RS remarked that SCCs are already checked on the ranges, so could the markers have similar cards produced showing they are NRA markers, and those without a card are removed from the site.
- 5.14. PN suggested licensing the gang masters may be an option, to bring them into the business and thereby bringing them into the employment law process under the licence.
- 5.15. SL noted that a lot of clubs do use alternative markers due to lack of availability, but noted the NRA markers are not always up to the standard required by clubs. RS noted that could be because the gang masters have taken all the NRA trained markers which is costing the NRA money.
- 5.16. PN added that an injury to a private marker had happened at a recent event, which thankfully wasn't serious enough to be reportable to RIDOR, but if it did happen and the HSE had to visit the site to investigate, it could put the NRA at risk for not being insured.
- 5.17. The Chief Executive is considering the logistics of the NRA/NSC taking responsibility for the actions of third parties. He noted this had been raised before and PN was going to raise some issues with HMRC. PN is not personally going to introduce HMRC to review what is going on here. PN is simply providing the opportunity for the NRA/NSC to get its own house in order and make everything legal.
- 5.18. ACT added the principal concern here is that a number of GC members believe the gang masters are a risk to the NRA and because the NRA is a charity, we want the NRA to be confident that it understands the risks and puts appropriate mitigations in place, and the risks should be identified and solutions provided to mitigate them.
- 5.19. No further questions were raised.

6. G744 – BUSINESS PLANNING & OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- 6.1. The Secretary General and Chief Executive reports were circulated prior to the meeting, and the meeting was asked for any questions.
- 6.2. IT asked for an update on the operational business plan which comes out of the Strategic Framework. The Secretary General confirmed the business plan is still work in progress at present. IT noted the Strategic Framework timeline is now a third of the way through and there is still no operational business plan.
- 6.3. MJ noted the report on Firearms Legislation Liaison, the news has recently announced that following the outcome of the Plymouth incident the Devon and Cornwall firearms teams are due to be separated.
- 6.4. MJ noted an email had been sent out by the NSC informing them of an event taking place on Stickle-down range, but members were not informed what that event was. The Chief Executive confirmed the NRA/NSC were bound by a confidentiality agreement. The meeting asked that future communications include the fact that a confidentiality agreement is in place to avoid speculation, and improve communications. JW noted the income from such events is extremely helpful to the charity and any such NDA agreements should be adhered to so the NRA/NSC can continue to welcome filming events at Bisley.
- 6.5. SL remarked that positive communication after the event would be helpful to the membership.
- 6.6. No further questions were raised.

7. G745 – FINANCE

- 7.1. The Treasurer's report to 30 March 2023 was circulated prior to the meeting and the Treasurer provided an oral update to April 2023.
- 7.2. The Treasurer informed the meeting the charity was still running at a seasonal loss, year to date of £130k. There has been a good performance on ranges and BSG. Salaries costs have increased 11% year on year. Utilities costs have increased 25% year on year. A large amount of cash has been tied up in ammunition stock so the cash position will deteriorate in the run up to the Imperial Meeting.

- 7.3. The Acid Test Ratio has just gone above 1 x cover, which is the liquidity matrix. That will be impacted again this year by the seasonality of the business.
- 7.4. The business performance is in line with the budget, helped by the event income of c.£70k to date which is unbudgeted, giving a net surplus for the full year 2023 of £100k, which is a thin margin on a £9M turnover.
- 7.5. The Treasurer noted that the cost base is very inflationary, which has been mitigated as much as possible but the charity needs to ensure it continues in a solvent way and generates enough cash to support the charity.
- 7.6. PN asked for an update on Site 103 and whether there is a budget to renovate the building. The Secretary General informed the meeting that Site 103 was purchased in December 2022 for £240k. The NRA has commissioned an asbestos removal company, which started then went into liquidation. A new company has been hired and they are completing the asbestos removal this week. Work will then commence on making the building safe and weather proof before renovating the interior. Various options are being considered for the use of the building.
- 7.7. The Chairman asked the GC members for any suggestions for the use of the building, including any interested parties or commercial tenants who may wish to rent Site 103. The Secretary General will be happy to show anyone around the building, once it has been made safe to do so.
- 7.8. No further questions were raised.

8. **G746 – COUNCIL**

- 8.1. The report from Council had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- 8.2. The report was accepted as presented and no questions were raised.

9. **G747 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE**

- 9.1. PN asked for an update on the re-validation of the Club Coach qualifications, which are expiring over the next year or two. The NRA Training Department have renewed PN's qualification, based on usage in the last three years, and PN asked whether the NRA should be looking to create a new cohort of Club Coaches promoting the Target Rifle Skills course to members, noting the demand is low. The major clubs have routes to entry for the discipline and PN believes it would be useful to provide the skills to new shooters.
- 9.2. The Shooting Committee Chairman will take the suggestion back to the committee for consideration and asked PN to forward any correspondence to him for inclusion.
- 9.3. The Shooting Committee Chairman informed the meeting that the Adaptive Championships will be taking place on 22nd June on Melville Range, as part of the Imperial Meeting, and asked GC members to attend if possible to show their support of the event.
- 9.4. No questions were raised.

10. **G748 – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

- 10.1. The Chairman of the Membership Committee confirmed the professional staff have received the youth shooting paper and are reviewing the proposals.
- 10.2. The Membership Committee are working with the Secretary General and professional staff on new membership structure proposals.
- 10.3. No questions were raised.

11. **G749 - ESTATE WORKING GROUP (EWG)**

- 11.1. PN remarked that, as previously mentioned, it is very difficult to ask questions when no minutes have been produced by the EWG.
- 11.2. PCh, as Chairman of the EWG, stated that the working group is reliant on GC members asking the group to consider matters, and there is nothing outstanding to report on. PCh remarked that a suggestion has been put forward for the EWG to become a committee of General Council, but that would require a change to the Second Schedule, which would need to be approved by the NRA members at an AGM. MJ remarked that not changing the structure of the EWG results in a vicious circle, as nothing is referred to the group, so they can't do anything, so it would be more

- constructive for the EWG to be a committee and receive input from members and provide recommendations to General Council, not the other way round.
- 11.3. The Chairman informed the meeting, that since the EWG is a sub-group of General Council, General Council can amend the Terms of Reference if it felt this would make the EWG more effective. The Chairman asked that any suggestions to amend the Terms of Reference be put forward for consideration.
- 11.4. The Secretary General noted that the General Council is the body who represents the membership, and members communicate issues to GC members, and any estate matters would be referred to the EWG, who then report back to General Council.
- 11.5. PN raised a number of issues with AG regarding the estate which she passed to the EWG and was discussed during the first meeting of the EWG. The minutes of that meeting have not been circulated, so has had no feedback on the subjects raised, and without minutes General Council is unable to respond to any queries raised by the membership. AG remarked that the EWG should produce a report of items discussed and considered with recommendations.
- 11.6. PN asked what the process would be to change the Second Schedule to make the EWG a committee of General Council. The Chairman stated that the process would be a proposal from GC to Council with its proposed wording changes to the Second Schedule with a recommendation that Council put the matter forward for approval by the membership at the next AGM.
- 11.7. AG suggested that the EWG produce a report for General Council providing responses to issues raised, as that appears to be the major complaint, rather than trying to change the Second Schedule. AG added that it is within GC's remit to adapt the EWG's Terms of Reference to help improve the effectiveness of the EWG.
- 11.7.1. The Chairman asked PCh, as Chairman of the EWG, to inform the members of the EWG that General Council are unhappy with the lack of minutes and response to issues raised, and ask that a report be provided for future General Council meetings providing updates. The Chairman added that the GC can amend the Terms of Reference if it wishes and that amending the Second Schedule to make the EWG a committee of GC is a much longer process.
- 11.8. AG restated that the EWG should provide update reports at GC meetings, the same as other committees do. The meeting agreed.
- 11.9. PCh is aware that the group has not been effective, but is also aware that it would be more beneficial if more oversight of estate functions are referred by NRA to NSC as the commercial operators, to the EWG, then that would make the EWG more productive.
- 11.10. The Chairman confirmed PCh is correct stating the NSC deals with all commercial activity, and as part of that NSC operates some of the buildings on camp, eg Range Office, Pavilion. However, club houses have lease agreements with the NRA and that does not involve the NSC.
- 11.11. RS asked what the aim of the EWG was when it was set up. The Secretary General responded it was a body of GC that focused on real estate matters referred to GC members by the membership.
- 11.12. ACT hoped the EWG would have a more strategic role, so rather than focusing just on individual comments on specific matters from members, it would be a useful tool for advising General Council and thereby advising Trustees on matters relating to the estate, which seems to have got lost over time.
- 11.13. ACT asked whether the EWG is involved in the discussions for the Estates Development Plan, and if not why not, and should it be?
- 11.14. The Chairman responded that the EWG can engage in anything that is referred to it by General Council under the Terms of Reference.
- 11.15. MJ asked if the EWG is involved in the Business Development Plan. The Secretary General stated that the Business Development Plan will be sent to General Council for consultation, and any matters can then be put forward to the EWG for consideration.
- 11.16. PN asked whether GT could be asked to produce the minutes for the EWG, or any other resource that could be provided to the EWG to help produce minutes in a timely fashion. The Chairman does not believe that is an appropriate use of professional staff time, which can be better spent serving the membership rather than committees. The Secretary General informed

the meeting that the minutes had been produced by a member of the professional staff, and were awaiting approval by PCh. PCh confirmed he has the minutes to approve and will do so.

11.17. SL remarked that a number of committees have issues with producing minutes in a timely manner, and all committees should work harder to produce minutes after meetings to share with the membership. The Chairman endorsed that suggestion.

11.18. RS suggested the use of IT software to convert meeting tapes into text will help produce minutes more quickly.

11.19. IT added that there are at least two vacancies on the EWG, with the Chairman due to leave in September, so the EWG needs to be reconstituted to allow the group to continue to function.

11.20. No further questions were raised.

12. **G750 – ELECTION TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

For information under Rule 7 (g) the following members have been nominated for these vacancies and are unopposed.

Ordinary Members

JPS Bloomfield
NRJ Brasier
Wg Cdr (Retd) DP Calvert MBE
SS Lohmann
RN Stebbings

Regional Members

HRM Bailie – Northern Ireland
JPS Bloomfield – East Midlands
Dr JA Marsden – North Western

Discipline Members

Dr AMW Cargill Thompson – Match Rifle
A Dagger – Gallery Rifle & Pistol
N Macfarlane – Historic & Classic Arms
S Aldhouse – 300 Metres

The Chairman congratulated the successful candidates and thanked them for standing on General Council.

Casual Vacancies

The Chairman confirmed under Second Schedule Rule 7g(xi) the following casual vacancies will be advertised.

Scotland Regional Representative
F Class Discipline Representative

13. **G751 – ELECTION TO COMMITTEES**

The Chairman announced the results of the recently held election to the Disciplinary Body.

Non-Lawyer Members of the Disciplinary Body

Richard Kenchington, James Marsden and Charles Perry are all successfully elected to the Disciplinary Body as Non-Lawyer members. The Chairman congratulated the successful candidates and thanked the members for putting themselves forward to serve on the Disciplinary Body.

14. **G752 – RESULT OF TEAM CAPTAIN ELECTION**

The Chairman announced Paul Gray has been elected as Team Captain of the GB Rifle Team to Canada 2025.

15. G753 – MEMBER QUESTIONS

- 15.1. The Chairman presented the list of questions received from the general membership for discussion, along with responses from the professional staff.
- 15.2. MJ remarked that several pieces of information provided in response would be very useful to share with the membership and asked if a monthly bulletin could be produced to communicate helpful information, and published on the NRA website.
- 15.3. RS remarked that the cost of Cheylesmore Range has reduced, not increased like other range hire prices, and that would be very useful to communicate to the membership.
- 15.4. SL asked for an update on the recruitment of a Communications Manager as this would be something they could produce as part of the engagement with the membership. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the position of Communications Manager has been re-advertised as a full-time role and interviews are ongoing.
- 15.5. JB wanted to address a point against the last question raised in the paper, which is that rents charged on Bisley club houses have no effect on the rates set by the local Council. The rates on the building are business rates and set by the Valuation Office Agency on what they think the rent might be, so you can be charged a lesser rent than the rent valuation, or a lot more, but doesn't affect the actual rental value. RS confirmed that point was correct, as BYSA had to undertake that process when taking over SitPet Lodge.
- 15.6. The Chairman raised a question raised by a member through Gary Alexander regarding the Azolve database, asking if it was necessary to hold home address details. The Chairman confirmed that the NRA needs to hold this information as a condition of being a Home Office Approved club.
- 15.7. RS commented on a particular Facebook page called NRABisley which is commenting on matters relating to the NRA, but is not official, and therefore should be removed. The Secretary General asked RS to send the link on how to report pages and he will look at having the page and other similar Facebook pages taken down.
- 15.8. No further questions were raised.

16. G754 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 16.1. The Chairman asked Julia-Hilger-Ellis (JHE), Vice Chair of Council, to update the meeting on the co-opted Trustee vacancies. JHE informed the meeting that the NRA had received 46 expressions of interest for the vacancies, which was very positive, of which 12 formal applications were received. The calibre of all candidates was very impressive. Six candidates were shortlisted and interviewed with two candidates being selected and will be put forward to General Council for approval by electronic ballot.
- 16.2. ACT asked if there were any particular skills or expertise areas that existing Trustees would like the new candidates to contribute to the Board. JHE confirmed the request for candidates had stated a preference for estate management and marketing experience.
- 16.3. The Chairman notified the meeting that the term of office of the Vice Chair of Council expires in September 2023. JHE had confirmed her willingness to be re-co-opted.
- 16.4. SL informed the meeting that she has received a high number of emails from both friends and other members expressing their frustration at the difficulty in booking targets and the number of times target bookings are cancelled, especially at long range. SL appreciates this is an NSC matter, but the current situation is not working for NRA members and affiliated clubs and needs to be addressed.
- 16.5. The Chairman noted the importance of communication with the membership on why bookings are being cancelled so they understand the reasons why.
- 16.6. MJ noted that there is a conflict with club secretaries who are notified of the cancellation of bookings by the NSC, but do not have adequate time to inform their members and find alternative options quickly or easily. RS added that is exacerbated in the regions when members are having to travel long distances and more logistical issues such as accommodation need to be considered.
- 16.7. PN noted that the cancellations are impacting on GB Target Rifle team practices, which will have an impact on future World Championship, if teams are unable to secure range time.

- 16.8. SL remarked that when long range bookings are cancelled and shooters turn up at Bisley and there is no one shooting on the ranges, they obviously wonder why their booking was cancelled.
- 16.9. IT noted that markers also cancel at short notice which then affects range bookings, and is that being recorded by the Range Office.
- 16.10. MJ asked if the membership had been approached for assistance with an electronic range booking system as there must be many members out there with the skill set to assist.
- 16.11. The Chief Executive informed the meeting that the NSC has approached members twice in the past for assistance with a range booking system, and on both occasions has failed. The NSC have taken the decision therefore not to rely on unpaid volunteers, but to produce a professional bookings system and a detailed specification has been produced for development. Two quotes have been received for developing the system, one of £200k which is unaffordable, and one for £45k which is being progressed. The facilities available to the Range Office staff are very poor and they are under considerable pressure due to the increase in demand for the ranges. The inability to offer an online booking system to book targets is something the NSC is desperate to deliver. The system is very complicated due to safety margins which need to be incorporated into any target booking, especially with fall back options, and is not as simple as booking a clay range. RS agreed a booking system for range bookings is complex and he has experienced similar issues and large costs in his professional business. The Chief Executive reiterated that safety is the most important thing to get right for any bookings.
- 16.12. SL would like more flexibility to be provided across all ranges including fall backs so that clubs can practice and shoot more easily.
- 16.13. ACT remarked that there are two items to consider, one being how the ranges are going to be used on a given day, and the other is how can you make that work in terms of using an electronic system to coordinate bookings, and it is therefore important to get a decent front end, but the underlying thinking of how the ranges can be used as efficiently as possible is equally important. Not everyone is going to be 100% satisfied, but we also don't want to upset people by saying you can't have anything. If you give people something close to what they want, they will be happy enough. It is important to step back and re-think how the ranges are used on different days during the year in a way that maximises range capacity and use by minimising the number of different configurations permitted on a given day (and the associated need to block targets out of use for safety separation purposes).
- 16.14. IT asked whether there is a strategy to provide more electronic targets which would help reduce the marker reliance. The Chief Executive confirmed the cost of electronics restricts that option.
- 16.15. SL asked whether consideration has been given to fundraising for electronic targets. The Chairman remarked that sponsoring a target could provide valuable income to purchase additional targets, and asked if anyone knows of any organisations who would be interested in doing that to get in contact.
- 16.16. No further questions were raised.

17. **G755 – CARAVAN DEVELOPMENTS**

- 17.1. The following declarations of interest were made from GC members who own caravans on site:
- The Chairman as an owner on Waldegrave Site.
 - PCh and DL as owners on Spencer Site
 - RS as an owner on BCH
 - MJ as an owner on Site 5
 - PN as an owner on Site 7
 - JB as an owner on ToF
- 17.2. The Chairman commenced the discussion by asking if anyone had any questions to the serviced caravan developments update paper presented to the meeting.
- 17.3. MJ asked why the serviced caravan development was still being considered as the Trustees are presenting a case that is going to be affordable to 0.1% of the shooting population at Bisley.
- 17.4. RS stated that he had circulated a paper to GC members last evening which has various points in it and asked why has the NRA not conducted equal comparison in its analysis, and only

- looked at the ground work costs and not the total upfront cost to the member for the developments being proposed.
- 17.5. The Chairman responded that the ground rent cost is what the NRA incurs, funded by an upfront payment, and what people choose to put on their slab is down to them. This gives members the flexibility to purchase what is affordable to them to put on their slab.
 - 17.6. RS responded that by determining the size of the slab, it sets out what the minimum cost would be, because if some members only want something that is 3m x 9m, or 3m x 6m, the cost of that slab is going to be significantly less than the cost of a slab which is 20ft x 40ft. So by predetermining the size of the slab does force members down at particular cost route. The Chairman noted the cost of a half-sized slab is not half the cost of a full-sized slab, and smaller slabs does not provide double the number of units, because there is still a requirement under the caravan licence requirements to have 5m separation between units.
 - 17.7. RS added that the minimum upfront cost for the smallest slab is £7,000 less than the minimum cost for a small caravan site, which is noted in the NRA's paper as a marginal difference. It is a difference of 28.6%, which is 21.7% of the UK average wage and 35% of the UK's minimum wage. The difference between the annual rent of the smallest pod of £1900 and the smallest caravan size of £2900 is £1000, which is a difference of 34.4% to the member. RS asked the Chairman to explain what is meant by the phrase 'marginal'.
 - 17.8. The Chairman responded that he does not know enough about the financial circumstances of our membership to say what is or isn't marginal. The Chairman noted that as a charity, the NRA uses the income from the estate to pursue its charitable objectives.
 - 17.9. PN noted that the previous meeting had discussed consulting with the membership, and one thing the membership can be consulted on is their income bands, which would provide a reasonably accurate population-based idea of the disposable income of the membership. But the NRA has not consulted the full membership on what they need or want or what they can afford. The proposed development is beyond the majority of membership's affordability and is pushing members off camp if they can't afford the new development options. Suggestions have been put forward which provide cheaper options for development, which seem to have been ignored.
 - 17.10. The Chairman noted that all Trustees recognise the decisions have personal impacts on individuals and are not blind to that. Equally, the Trustees have a responsibility to manage the estate for the future of the charity and that means making some decisions which are not always comfortable.
 - 17.11. GTr asked why the development is being considered and what is driving the change to serviced caravan pitches rather than what is currently available.
 - 17.12. The Secretary General responded that there is a demand from the members for serviced pitches. RS asked if there was evidence of that. The Secretary General confirmed there was because two sites have already been developed and sold out within the year of development. The Secretary General confirmed the 70 members who have expressed an interest in the new sites to provide them with the development costs and suggested terms and costs of the lease to find out if they are still interested.
 - 17.13. MJ and RN both noted that is not consultation as it hasn't gone out to the full membership.
 - 17.14. The Secretary General stated that expressions of interest have always been sought as part of plans for developing caravan sites, and once enough interest has been received, the development is costed and considered and then goes out initially to market to interested parties and then the wider membership with any remaining available plots. This method has been very successful in the last two sites (Spencer and Waldegrave).
 - 17.15. The Secretary General added that the Trustees have not yet agreed to the proposed development, and only at the point that they are satisfied that there is sufficient demand will any decision be made for approval.
 - 17.16. The Chairman asked if any other GC members who are not conflicted would like to contribute to the discussion.
 - 17.17. DS remarked that he is conscious that he is unsure of how many caravans are currently on site. The Secretary General confirmed the caravan site licence allows for 387 caravans. DS noted that with a membership of 10,000, the membership have very diverse habits. There are

- people who come to Bisley once or twice a year, and those who come more frequently, so the need or desire to have a caravan is quite difficult to analyse, but the percentage of people in the membership that can have access to a caravan is very small. DS remarked that there are a small number of caravans compared to the membership.
- 17.18. The Secretary General added that lessons have been learned from the previous developments which has allowed caravan owners to select the units they want for Waldegrave site, rather than having to select a specific type on Spencer Site and this will continue for any new developments including different base sizes to allow for different units. One of the key objectives is to create developments more suitable for a modern audience. The traditional pitches are popular with traditional members, but do not have the standard facilities expected by a modern audience.
- 17.19. RS remarked that is survivorship bias as you are only asking the people and looking at those who are already using the facilities being provided, so it is a very biased view rather than asking everyone.
- 17.20. GL remarked it has been stated that Guildford Borough Council (GBC) are only allowing 387 caravans but is there any reason why you can't submit an updated application to GBC asking for an increase in that number. The Chairman responded that you would need to work out where you would locate additional caravans. The Secretary General added that in conversations held with GBC, they are looking to reduce the density because they see a capacity issue on camp with the number and size of units already in place.
- 17.21. GL remarked that more, smaller pods could be located on site rather than the larger caravans, so could GBC not be approached with that suggestion. The Chairman noted the separation between units, regardless of size remains 5m.
- 17.22. DL remarked that if there are currently between 300 and 350 units on site at the moment, then there is space available to expand up to the 387 allowance, so trying to increase the number may not be necessary.
- 17.23. ACT remarked that there are alternative options for accommodation on camp including ABC Lines and JK Lines etc, although they can be difficult to book in high season, especially during the Hopton when a number of Match Rifle competitors look to book accommodation on site.
- 17.24. The Chairman asked MJ if he is willing to yield on a response to his paper of questions raised for this meeting in order to allow the caravan discussion to continue, as there is limited time available with the AGM taking place after this meeting. MJ confirmed he was happy to receive a response to his questions via email, as the caravan discussion is more important¹.
- 17.25. RS remarked that the comment made for getting the best value for the charity and noted there have been two proposals put forward which generate the same rent. One has the more pods on it and is cheaper for the members, and the other one is more expensive and the upfront cost for that is 2 to 4 times the average salary and household income of the typical member. RS wants to know why the more expensive development option has been chosen, bearing in mind it doesn't cost the charity more to develop and the same rent is realised, and the cheaper option provides 20% more accommodation, thereby benefitting 20% more of the membership.
- 17.26. The Secretary General responded that the number of people being accommodated in caravans will be the same as the number being accommodated in pods. RS remarked that the difference is the amount members are paying for the pods, and you can get large pods 3m x 6m which accommodate 6 people.
- 17.27. PN asked if GBC is driving the NRA to get rid of un-serviced pitches and the existing caravan sites. The Secretary General believes GBC have consistent concerns about the state of the caravan sites at Bisley and a lot of those concerns have been managed by the steady progression of serviced caravan sites. The inspections are taken up by looking at the un-serviced pitches, so it is fair to say that as time progresses, the facilities of the un-serviced pitches cause greater concern to the licensing authority.

¹ Appendix 1 shown at the end of this document provides the questions raised by MJ and his responses to the answers provided by the Secretary General and Chief Executive. The Secretary General will provide further information at the September General Council meeting on the matters raised by MJ.

- 17.28. MJ asked what is covered in the caravan report of 15th March from GBC, because the previous report had a lot of detail regarding roads, lighting and structural supports, the majority of comments were about the state of the overall site not the individual units.
- 17.29. The Secretary General remarked the report from GBC was reported to Trustees and discussion has been held on which documents could or should be released for general information. The Chairman confirmed he has been directed to prepare a policy on publishing information relating to the Charity and that draft will be put to the Trustees for consideration at the August meeting, and be published once approved.
- 17.30. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the last report from GBC was quite complimentary and recognised the progress made to date. There are residual concerns about potholes on some sites, lighting on others and supports on other sites.
- 17.31. IT commented that the Estate Development Plan should articulate why the proposed caravan development is being considered and thoughts behind it. With the major expenditure potentially going ahead in the next six months that information needs to be shared at this point.
- 17.32. The Chairman highlighted the fact that it is not NRA expenditure². The Chairman noted RS's report commented that 50% of the membership would like the NRA to build a hotel and provide cheap rooms for shooters. The NRA does not have the money to build a hotel and the message needs to be shared with the membership that the NRA is not going to do that. There are a lot of things the membership would like that the NRA cannot fund or afford to deliver. Any assistance GC members can give in getting that message across would be very helpful.
- 17.33. SL remarked that the pods being smaller, are also more eco-friendly and consideration to provide pods should be revisited.
- 17.34. PN noted pods would also be in keeping with the camp and commented that he has had at least 20 people say they would rather have pods than caravans. PN reiterated that until we have canvassed the membership to find out what they want we cannot move ahead with the current plan.
- 17.35. RS remarked that the NRA as a charity should be supporting the Armed Forces and Emergency Services as part of its charitable activities, and they are paid considerably lower than the average member, and the proposed development would not be affordable for any of them, and is that a morally right thing to do.
- 17.36. The Secretary General remarked that is a good question to ask, but if someone acquired a good quality second-hand caravan the cost would be considerably less, although they would not get the full-term lease.
- 17.37. RS stated that's true but equally the same is true of Pods, and a second-hand pod would be even cheaper as they are cheaper to begin with and there is a huge number of second hand pods available after COVID
- 17.38. MJ remarked that the cost of a mid-sized caravan, added to the £25k development costs, would be £75k with £3k rent over the next 20 years which is £120k over 20 years which equates to a £6k annual investment. That is a lot of money, even with a second-hand caravan.
- 17.39. The Chairman asked if there were any further questions for the meeting.
- 17.40. PCh asked if there was a plan for a medical officer at the Imperial Meeting this year. The Secretary General confirmed paramedics would be provided through the meeting. It was agreed that the reference to medical assistance would be removed from the Bible.
- 17.41. MJ asked for the General Council elections to be notified in the Journal, website and via email by late March at the latest. ACT noted the Spring Journal now has a later publication date which affects the notice to members.
- 17.42. No further questions were raised.

² Post-meeting clarification – the NRA will use up-front payments from tenants on the serviced site, rather than funds already included in the budget. In that sense it is still “NRA money” but it is new money provided for this specific purpose.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and input.

The meeting closed at 17.15pm

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Lacey', written in a cursive style.

D Lacey

Chairman

Date of next meeting: Saturday 18th September 2023 at 2.00pm via ZOOM

General Council 9 June 2023**14. Any Other Business – M Jenvey Questions – responses in red****NSC Complaints Process**

This is to seek an up-date & firm timeline for instigation of a formal complaints process for NSC. The NSC is a significant "customer facing" organisation & as such, must have a complaint procedure in force.

There is mention of NSC in the NRA Complaints Policy:

<https://nra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/NRA-Complaints-Policy-adopted-17-April-2021.pdf>

1.4.2

complaints by customers of the National Shooting Centre Limited ("NSC") concerning goods or services supplied by the NSC (including range and target hire, ammunition sales, accommodation, food and beverages, and clay shooting activities at the National Clay Shooting Centre and Bisley Shooting Ground), which should be referred to the NSC;

However, if there is an NSC Complaints Procedure, it is not published - a search only brings up 2 other policies:

https://nationalshootingcentre.co.uk/?s=complaint&qodef_fullscreen_search_post_types_nonce=5bc4fc12f8&_wp_http_referer=%2F

Please can the circumstances be confirmed & a complaints policy introduced / published as a matter of urgency.

NSC is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the NRA, with operational responsibility vested in the NSC board of directors.

In 2022 NSC's income was £5,090k divided 39% clay shooting, 20% range income from NRA clubs and members, 17% armoury sales, 9% commercial contracts, 7% accommodation and events, and 7% range income from the NRA.

The customer base that supports NSC is diverse, and the NSC board is exploring options to implement an online customer feedback scheme to monitor performance.

An online customer survey will be launched later this year to gain a better understanding of NSC customers, their use of Bisley facilities, and levels of satisfaction for the services provided.

This is not acceptable, the question hasn't been answered; it is unrealistic to have a limited company (the customer-facing element) without a formal complaints procedure. A performance monitoring scheme is needed in conjunction, not in isolation. I do not understand the reluctance to instigate this.

Incidentally, we have worked on a standard range notification form, which may be of benefit – it will allow members to quickly send a report of any issues.:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1RSVk8->

[XDI6UhrIz2Iydl6muTQA4k7wePfw4CUIEIAw/viewform?fbclid=IwAR1iHeBfr0CDjcJo_sNC2X-CHxiwH94EV87rqYd52xCTi89wOFb6t-rDX7c&edit_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1RSVk8-XDI6UhrIz2Iydl6muTQA4k7wePfw4CUIEIAw/viewform?fbclid=IwAR1iHeBfr0CDjcJo_sNC2X-CHxiwH94EV87rqYd52xCTi89wOFb6t-rDX7c&edit_requested=true)

Increase by 12.2% - cost savings

Many (if not all) charges for 2023 have increased by RPI of 12.2%.

We discussed this briefly at the last GC Meeting (16.1 onwards) but nothing was resolved. Since the last meeting, it has been possible to research further into the factors that are included within RPI, & it is very hard to justify such blanket increases.

For example, RPI factors include mortgage interest payments (clearly not relevant to NRA charges), so RPI is heavily influenced by house prices & interest rates. It can also be argued that most of the CPI "shopping basket" of goods are not relevant to NRA charges, there are few (if any such purchases) that reflect against NRA activities. That said, buildings insurance is a valid RPI item, whereas estate agent fees & TV licence clearly are not.

From ONS:

"In 2013, the RPI lost its status as a NationalStatistic. Our position on the RPI is clear: we do not think it is a good measure of inflation and discourage its use."

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/shortcomingsforthetailpricesindexasameasureofinflation/2018-03-08>

The CPI "basket of goods" can be downloaded from here - note, CPI has been about 3% less than RPI:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflationbasketofgoodsandservices>

The food / non-alcoholic beverages item is weighted (Feb 2023) at 24% of the CPI basket, clothing / footwear at 12% & furniture / household goods at 10%. Recreation / culture was 17%. Without going through the other items (not relevant to NRA activities), that adds up to 63% of irrelevant items!

I should point out that when running an analysis of recreation range hire, for 2023, e-tgts have increased by around 19% (I suggest that this charge needs to be reduced) whereas Cheylesmore Bay B has had the charges reduced (between 5 - 35%!). Do they need to be increased?

Regardless, on what fiscal grounds has the NRA (& NSC) implemented this flat rate of 12.2%, when many RPI factors are not relevant? Other than a blanket overall increase, there cannot be any justification.

I propose that there is zero change in 2024 to balance out this inappropriate 2023 increase.

Increasing charges by no more than RPI has encouraged the NRA / NSC to grow membership, affiliations, activities and participation since 2013. Price have therefore remained largely static in real terms for the last decade.

However some key costs have recently risen considerably in excess of RPI, including energy (the NRA's electricity cost for the month of April 2023 was £54,252 compared to £18,729 in 2022), insurance premiums increased by over 20% and timber and other building materials by over 50%.

Payroll costs have been carefully controlled with the post-Covid (2022) and pre-Covid (2019) figures as follows:-

Total 2022 payroll costs £3,052k

(Increased staff numbers? What %% pay increases?)

Total 2022 BSG payroll costs £402k

Total 2022 payroll costs excl BSG £2,650

Total 2019 NRA payroll costs £2,613

Note the BSG (Bisley Shooting Ground) business was acquired in Aug 2020

Unrestricted income in 2022 was £8,751k and £6,528k in 2019 so payroll costs expressed as a percentage of income has reduced to 34.9% in 2022 from 40.0% in 2019.

However the current finances of the NRA significantly restrict the funds available for regional range investments and Bisley maintainance and developments.

The opportunity to re-base prices, coupled with continuing scrutiny on operational and administrative efficiency, will be explored when preparing budgets in autumn this year.

As briefly discussed, communication to members is essential to tell them WHY such increases are necessary.

Muzzleloaders Hut

I would like to ask please for a detailed status check / update regarding the Muzzleloaders / Exhibition Hut? Progress to date? Planning constraints? Timeline? Costs to date & proposed expenditure? Anything else that is relevant.

I can't find anything using the search function on NRA Home page (no big surprise there!).

The Exhibition Hut is Grade 2 listed and securing planning consent for even minor structural changes, or conservation officer consent for maintenance works such as re-painting the exterior, are both time-consuming and expensive.

Plans to develop Exhibition Hut as the NRA training centre were put on hold when we recovered possession of the Pavilion in 2016; subsequent plans for a visitor centre were suspended after concerns from the conservation officer. Refurbishment plans were further delayed by the impact of Covid.

The most recent proposal to use the building to accommodate an enlarged membership services department has been put on hold after the acquisition of Site 103 and the opportunity to develop this site.

Exhibition Hut has generated funds from filming contracts and is currently used for storage.

We have allocated funds to paint the roof and plan to submit proposals to the Conservation Officer by early August.

The draft Estate Development Plan is due to be published in August this year and will include proposals for the Exhibition Hut.

Hooter

I would like to ask for a detailed technical check of the functionality of the hooter (siren) system.

On 14 May, I reported this to the Range Office:

Safety issue - the hooter was not audible at 1330 hrs (900x) whilst wearing hearing protection (noise cancelling). Even taking the hearing protection off quickly, the hooter was exceptionally difficult to hear. I couldn't work out where the hooter sound was coming from but it didn't sound like it was coming from the hooter on the tree at the end of Elcho Road (or maybe that is only a loudspeaker?). Also important to note, there was no significant wind to disrupt the hooter sound. Depending on the wind strength / direction, I would think that there would be conditions such that the hooter would not be audible at all.

There was at least one day on the weekend of 29 - 30 Apr with similarly very weak audibility, but I forgot to report it - I had a 3 day illness shortly after I got home, so it slipped my mind.

Range Office has replied saying that they will check but I don't think anyone has looked at accumulative reported events / annual maintenance, etc.

It would be useful to know:

Have other firers / clubs had issues with this?

If so, what has been reported / when & what follow up?

Where exactly is the hooter (roof of NRA main building?) & any repeaters?

What annual servicing is carried out?

What annual / regular noise reading checks are carried out across the ranges to ensure appropriate audibility?

The hooter has performed with remarkable reliability for many years and is serviced / repaired as and when required. The range office report occasional queries regarding audibility, and respond by sending range safety staff to investigate. Audibility is affected by a range of factors including hearing protection worn, hearing loss, wind direction and tree leaf canopy cover. Setting the noise level also needs to consider the impact on our residential neighbours.

The questions highlighted have not been answered. The hooter is not capable of being heard by all firers / safety staff. The radios need to be updated so that the Range Office can transmit across all NRA frequencies to give an emergency STOP order.

Imperial Meeting Costs

At the last GC meeting (7.4), I asked for visibility of the full Imperial Meeting costings / expenditure.

Despite the Treasurer pointing out some aspects & the Gen Sec advising that the Imperial Meeting effectively runs at a loss (£68K), I believe that a detailed breakdown is necessary so that any specific areas / associated factors can be looked at in more detail. This might allow targeting, for example, of weaker areas, or factors that might benefit from discounting other areas, such as accommodation.

Looking back to the Winter 2013 Journal, page 39), basic pricing was listed in the Journal - this showed a net margin of some £26K. However, full-time staff costs were not included.

<https://nra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2013Winter.pdf>

Please can GC have a detailed breakdown of the all the cost centres for income / expenditure / overheads, etc, so we can look in depth at the overall package & see if there are areas / discounting / potential packages, etc, that could be used to enhance the efficiency & perhaps generate more income. For example, would free camping (slight revenue loss) generate increased participation - greater shooting profits that would easily off-set any such camping losses?

Increased participation would also have positive longterm benefits - greater participation in clubs -> more range bookings in the future, etc.

The 2022 Imperial yielded a £17k loss with £666k income being offset by £683k direct costs.

Cost headings of over £10k were:

1. ammunition £183k (charged at cost)
2. markers £123k
3. range hire £119k
4. youth subsidies £68k
5. RCO costs £36k
6. casual staff £26k
7. medals £21k
8. food £13k
9. Umbrella tent £11k
10. stats team £11k
11. buggy hire £11k.

Note these costs exclude payroll costs for permanent staff.

In 2022 NRA competitions yielded an aggregate loss of £267k after accounting for payroll costs and other overheads. Organising competitions is important to the delivery of the NRA's charitable activities; however the cost is high and needs to be carefully considered when reviewing entry fees.

The matter of higher than average overheads were discussed; these areas need to be addressed.

The provision of camping pitches is a source of income that contributes to the overall costs of running Bisley Camp and the NRA. Direct costs incurred providing pitches include marking out, waste removal, ablution servicing and utilities, staff and administration. To offer free camping pitches could be perceived as unfair by users of other Bisley facilities.

What please are the projected costs for the direct costs? Marking out is relatively quick; waste removal is already actioned for general camp areas & ablutions are already serviced / cleaned. Booking / payment is done on-line, so staff / administration costs should be minimal.

What business case has been carried out to assess lesser camping income versus increased competition fees?

GC Elections & notification to members

This is much more complicated than some people think, so a lengthy explanation is necessary - but the solution is very short & simple.

The current rules state:

"All notices of Meetings and other notices required to be given to Members generally shall at the Council's discretion be published in the Journal of the Association or circulated to Members, or advertised in such periodicals or newspapers as the Council may determine."

This is most important for members to act in time for nomination as a potential GC candidate. There would be even better emphasis if the phrase "or circulated to Members" was amended to "**and** circulated to members." This would bring matters into the 21st Century, I doubt if we use periodicals or newspapers for those in the far-flung areas of the British Empire; those days are long gone. As such, I would like to propose this simple change.

Just to mention the NRA website – this **must** be seen very much as a passive system & cannot possibly be defined as a "membership publication;" it requires all the membership as individuals to access the website, at the appropriate page, at the appropriate time, to locate the appropriate information. However, an email system is active, directing / informing all membership in one go, even if only linking to a web page in question. To be pedantic, the NRA website is **not** a Journal, it is **not** "circulated to members" (that would be direct communication), & it is **not** a "periodical or newspaper." Therefore, it does **not**, in any way, meet the required criteria for publication of notices.

Note that the Second Schedule, at **16 "Electronic Communication"** already permits the use of emails, namely 16 c) ii); we should always be maximising this for best possible open / transparent communication:

"sending an email to each Member who has provided an address for electronic communication to the Association stating that the information is available for viewing on the Website;"

The Second Schedule, at 7 g) vi) & vii) outlines that to be considered for election, a person must be a paid up member on **31 Mar** and subsequently, must apply by "closing time" on **30 Apr**. As such, timely notification is essential – firstly to remind "members" who have not renewed (a few possible reasons - change of bank account / expired credit card, deployed HM Forces member, etc), & secondly, to prompt about the election parameters. It's a pointless exercise ignoring the first date of 31 Mar for membership, but publishing the election criteria in the Spring / Apr Journal – the boat has sailed for those who forgot or were unable to renew membership!

Also very important to consider, 16 d):

*"Journal – The Association may publish a Journal in printed or electronic form. Notices published in an issue of the Journal shall be deemed received by each Member **14 days after the date of publication of that issue"***

As mentioned, if using the Apr (Spring) Journal edition, then even with a publication date of 01 Apr, the 14-day notice = 15 Apr, well past the 31 Mar cut-off date for membership. This is a flawed notification / publication procedure purely in that respect. Oh, from a survey published in the Winter 2013 Journal - see attached - only 79% of members said that they "always" read the Journal.....

Current / recent notifications / publishing:

Looking back over the recent years that I have data:

Dates that GC Election announcement were placed on the NRA website - for 3 yrs out of 5, inability for members to renew in time - even if they did "review" the website regularly):

16 Apr 2019 (inability for members to renew in time)
2020 - not found - Covid?
01 Apr 2021 (inability for members to renew in time)
12 Apr 2022 (I advised the NRA) (inability for members to renew in time)
09 Mar 2023

Dates that I can refer to when the Journal arrived for members - for 2 yrs out of 5, insufficient notification:

29-30 Apr 2019 - fail as per 16 d)
2020 - unknown
2021 - unknown
2022 - unknown
24-25 Apr 2023 - fail as per 16 d)

So, for 2019 & 2023, the NRA was in breach of the Second Schedule 16 d); effective date of notification must be when the Journal hits your door mat. More importantly, this effectively disenfranchised the (paid up) membership in that there was insufficient time to work to the 30 Apr cut-off for GC election nominations.

Solution:

Already, as per my previous suggestion that was adopted, the NRA notifies members of a forthcoming GC meeting & requests any inputs. Incidentally, the contact timeline stated in the notification email needs to be amended to allow sufficient time for the GC / Rep to have any necessary exchange with the questioner (clarification of any points etc), before being able to submit the question 2 weeks in advance.

However, currently, we do not communicate about the GC elections, especially as there have been historic "fails" - the current processes did / do not work. Obviously, the democratic process is of prime importance.

The answer is very easy, we formalise a simple communication plan to notify members in the best possible time about the GC Elections (& any other similar situation); there are no barriers to this - indeed, this option is specified at 16 c) ii) & should always be used.

I suggest that on 01 Mar annually (to allow for the 31 Mar cut-off date for membership), the following needs to be actioned:

- Notification of the GC Election process to be added to NRA website (normally actioned, but with variable historical dates).
- Notification by email to all members - either copying the GC Election process information, or, as per 16 c) ii), pointing them to the website (a specific page link would be the best way to achieve this).
- The Journal "publication" date must consider all aspects of the process / lead time, namely printing, packing & posting, & most importantly, the 14 day's notice. As per 16 d), the Journal must reach members by the latest of 16 Apr – but purely for nomination considerations – this ignores the membership renewal of 31 Mar. Consequently, the notification of the GC Elections must be in the previous (Winter?) edition of the Journal = no issues under 16 d) = this would also permit membership renewal by 31 Mar.

There are no onerous workflow requirements for this, merely one extra email to the membership. The other items are already covered, albeit the schedule of timings needs to be amended slightly & only require simple business calendar reminders.

Sending an email to members proved successful in generating interest when recruiting co-opted trustees and should encourage increase the nominations for the annual GC elections.

I think that means “yes” & that I have proved my point. However, please confirm, as discussed, that there will significant revision to the operational processes to bring the communication aspects into line with the stated timeline. The processes (as per 2nd Schedule) have failed, far too many times, & effectively disenfranchised members.