

THE GENERAL COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Council Meeting
held in the NRA Pavilion, Bisley Camp
on Friday 10th June 2022 from 3.00pm

Present:

Chairman Mr D Lacey (DLa)

Members: Mr GK Alexander (GA)
Mr PR Coley (PC)
Mr JPS Bloomfield (JPSB)
Mr N Brasier (NB)
Dr AMW Cargill Thompson (ACT)
Mr A Dagger (AD)
Mr CES Dickenson (CD)
Mrs A Gran (AG)
Lt. Col. RG Jeffrey (RJ)
Miss SS Lohmann (SL)
Mr D Lowe (DL)
Mr FPR Northam (PN)
Mr AJD Saunders (JS)
Mr R Sayer (RS)
Mr D Stimpson (DS)

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

Apologies for absence:

Mr HRM Bailie, Cdr NJW Benstead, Mr CM Brooks, Mr G Burns, Wg Cdr DP Calvert, Mr DC Crispin, Mr M Cottilard, Mr J Harper-Smith, Mr J Harris, Wg Cdr Cj Hockley, Mr RS Kenchington, Mr GAE Larcombe, Mr J Lawrie, Mr J Longhurst, Mr N Macfarlane, Mr M Maksimovic, Dr J Marsden, Mr MF Martel, Dr J Martin, Brig. M Pountain, Mr A Reynolds, Mr B Ritchie, Mr R Roberts, Mrs K Robertson, Mr T Rylands, Mr R Stebbings, Mr IR Thomson, Mr S Wallis, Mr MP Watkins, Mr I Shirra-Gibb, Mr C Steele-Benny, Mr N St Aubyn, G Trembath, Mr AP Wolpe, Dr JD Warburton.

INDEX G697 to G708

The Chairman declared the meeting open and welcomed all members in attendance. The Chairman reminded the meeting that it would be followed by the NRA AGM at 6.00pm.

The Chairman added that this is the first 'in person' meeting held for a while and he had been contacted by a member who had found the ZOOM meetings very helpful as they were able to hear the proceedings. A microphone will therefore be available, if required, to allow all participants to hear the proceedings.

1. G697 – APOLOGIES

1.1. Apologies were received as noted above.

2. G698 – 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. G699 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3.1. There were no matters arising.

4. G700 – REVIEW OF ACTIONS

- 4.1. The Secretary General confirmed that the draft range operator's guide has been put in abeyance due to the recent HSE report on lead in ammunition as an update will need to be included in the final version. For clarification, the guide will be put forward for approval by Council, not General Council. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.2. There was no update provided at the meeting on the Regional Ranges Working Group and the item was marked as ongoing. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.3. The Secretary General informed the meeting the Home Loading Ammunition Survey had been completed with a very favourable response from the membership. A summary of the results will be published in the NRA's Summer Journal, due out at the beginning of July 2022. **Item CLOSED.**

No further questions were raised.

5. G701 – BUSINESS PLANNING & OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- 5.1. The Secretary General's report was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 5.2. Derek Stimpson asked for it to be noted that as well as the NRA and NSRA disciplines, historic breechloading and muzzle loaded firearms will also have issues with the ban of lead in ammunition. A derogation for target shooting where the bullets are controlled, contained and recycled will solve that problem. If not, further thought needs to be given to alternative methods. The NRA needs its members to see that it is doing something to achieve something for them. If it is not successful, that is another matter.
- 5.3. The Secretary General confirmed that the communications regarding lead in ammunition are very important, but shooting associations need to be honest about what they are able to do.
- 5.4. R Jeffrey (RJ) asked what the timelines were for the completion of returns on the Strategy Review which was published in February.
- 5.5. The Secretary General confirmed General Council had already been asked for the comments on the review paper and it had gone out to the wider membership in May with a request for feedback.

- 5.6. RJ is surprised the document wasn't more formally circulated and has comments to submit.
- 5.7. The Secretary General will be happy to receive any additional comments and feedback.
- 5.8. The Chairman added it is an organic document.
- 5.9. The NSC Chief Executive's report was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 5.10. No questions were raised.

6. G702 – FINANCE

- 6.1. The Treasurer's report to end of April 2022 was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 6.2. The Treasurer was unable to attend the meeting due to ill health.
- 6.3. JPSB commented that the results of 2021 in the Annual Accounts was excellent, and a surprise considering the impact of the pandemic over the last two years. JPSB was extremely pleased with the bottom-line outcome from BSG, over a 9-month operating year. JPSB reported that 'inventor' of Cottesloe Heath, John de Havilland, was delighted as well.

No further questions were raised.

7. G703 – COUNCIL

- 7.1. The report from Council had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- 7.2. RJ asked whether the MoD had given an indication of when they will reply to the request for a Letter of Support regarding the NRA's view that civilian competitive marksmanship shooting continues to contribute to Defence of the Realm.
- 7.3. The Chairman responded that there has been no feedback to date from the MoD.
- 7.4. John Saunders (JS) asked why, given the increase in range bookings, is it still necessary to impose punitive charges on clubs who are trying to support shooting, because they have to book targets in advance and then have to pay cancellation charges when reducing the required number of targets and is there any plan to review the cancellation policy.
- 7.5. The Chief Executive of the NSC responded that the cancellation policy will be reviewed. The key aspiration is to maximise the number of people on the firing points in any one day. Late cancellations by clubs with large range bookings has resulted in complaints by members who are told there is no availability and then turn up to find the ranges empty. The opportunity for clubs to cancel targets without any penalty due to people not committing to partake in a club competition a week before the event have gone and the increasing demand for targets drives the cancellation policy.
- 7.6. JS would like someone to look at how clubs are run, as it can be almost impossible to get six weeks' notice from people. It is hard work, especially for volunteers, and numbers are not known until nearer the event and six weeks is excessive.
- 7.7. ACT asked whether a sliding scale could be considered where the cancellation percentage increases the closer to the date the bookings are cancelled.
- 7.8. CD remarked that the policy affects clubs who make bookings of 6 targets or more, but clubs who book 5 or fewer and cancel do not face the same cancellation penalties even if they cancel them all. Clubs that had booked 6 or more targets but who cancel only one or two targets, and not the whole booking, should not be more heavily penalised than other clubs cancelling the same number of targets.
- 7.9. The Chief Executive will consider alternative methods when reviewing the cancellation policy in September as the NSC does not wish to drive clubs away from the ranges.
- 7.10. GA remarked that four weeks rather than six weeks may be a fairer compromise.
- 7.11. JS remarked that clubs who have been charged 100% cancellation fee are not being refunded any money if the target is resold to another member or club. So the NSC is being paid twice for the same target.
- 7.12. Ash Dagger (AD) asked if the NSC is doubling up on income if targets are resold or can an element of the original booking be applied as a relief to original booker.
- 7.13. The Chief Executive responded that it is very good point and is finding the conversation very helpful. The challenge would be to look at how relief could be administered as there may be more than one club involved in resold targets. The NSC also recognises the difficulty facing clubs and members with regards to ammunition, components, and affordability.

- 7.14. PN remarked that the current cancellation policy is harsh and it is transferring significant financial risk to clubs which may organise competitions with 6 or more targets, and some clubs are not cancelling the targets to avoid the 100% charges, and some clubs will leave targets unused rather than cancel and allow them to be resold. Covid is still playing a part in the cancellation of targets due to inability of members to attend.
- 7.15. CD added that markers that have been booked are not always available, with short notice, and it is not the clubs' fault if they have to cancel because they are unable to shoot on targets without markers, and therefore should not be penalised for cancelling under those circumstances.
- 7.16. SL asked whether email communication can be sent to members informing them of last-minute availability of targets to help re-sell cancelled targets and maximise bookings.
- 7.17. ACT noted that one of the aspirations is to invest in a new range booking system, and asked whether a working group could be set up to help NSC to pilot the new software, or use a cross section of customers.
- 7.18. NB remarked that the NSC website shows target availability up to a week before.
- 7.19. ACT asked that communications be sent out to members informing them of the safety traces on the range which could help explain why ranges can look empty on occasions.
- 7.20. The Chief Executive thanked the meeting for the input and will take all the points made back to the professional staff for consideration.

No further questions were raised.

8. G704 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE

- 8.1. The Shooting Committee report was circulated prior to the meeting:
- 8.2. The Chairman of Shooting Committee asked the members of General Council to approve the minor changes to the Shooting Committee Bylaws.
 - 8.2.1. The meeting noted the change was to clarify the understanding about ex-officio members of committees and sub-committees. The meeting approved the amended Bylaws.
- 8.3. The Chairman of Shooting Committee asked the members of General Council to approve the revised draft Procedure for the Appointment of Great Britain and NRA Team Captains for submission to Council for final approval.
 - 8.3.1. CD reminded the meeting that the previous draft had been submitted at the February 2022 meeting and GC voted to reject that draft primarily on the principle that the proposed Target Rifle Electoral College of past TR GB captains disenfranchised those other members of GC who had declared TR as one of their disciplines from being involved in the ballot when there were two or more candidates for captaincy.
 - 8.3.2. TR members of the Shooting Committee had recommended a change to the TR Electoral College which had been approved by the full Shooting Committee on 4th May 2022. This retained the status quo of using a ballot of the TR members of General Council when there are two or more candidates. When there are no or only one candidate, the revised procedure uses an electoral college of all TR members of the Shooting Committee, in place of the TR Discipline Sub-Committee who currently undertake that role.
 - 8.3.3. The F Class procedure (Annex C) has also been revised and was approved by the full Shooting Committee.
 - 8.3.4. AD asked that the date for the Gallery Rifle & Pistol Team captain advertisements be amended for the NRA Journal publications to close on a date that allowed any nominations to be put forward for consideration at the August Council meeting.
- 8.4. The Chairman asked the GC members to vote for the draft proposal for recommendation to Council.
 - 8.4.1. The meeting voted for the proposal with 13 votes in favour and none against, recognising that changes to the Gallery Rifle nomination closure date would be needed in the future as discussed. There were 2 abstentions.
 - 8.4.2. The amended document will be submitted to Council for approval.
- 8.5. PN has asked Shooting Committee whether the rules for certain competitions be relaxed to allow any ammunition and any calibre due to the current shortage of available ammunition to help increase competition entries.

8.5.1. JPSB remarked that a proposal could be put forward to the delegated members of Shooting Committee for consideration as part of the Imperial Meeting rules.

8.5.2. CD added that there is sufficient provision for the Imperial Meeting competitions with issued ammunition.

No further questions were raised.

9. G705 – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

9.1. The Chairman of Membership Committee reported to the meeting that the committee continues to work on youth shooting and supporting universities and schools and will be drafting a new proposal for consideration and discussion.

No further questions were raised.

10. G706 – ESTATE WORKING GROUP

10.1. PN stated that at the previous GC meeting the members asked that the caravan development proposals be referred to the Estates Working Group (EWG) and now wondered if that had happened and is there a response.

10.2. The Secretary General confirmed that the proposals had been referred to the Chairman of the EWG but the working group has not yet held a meeting.

10.3. PN understands that the EWG had met previously and still no minutes have been produced or circulated to GC, which he feels is unacceptable.

10.4. The Secretary General will express the disappointment of General Council at the lack of minutes to the Chair of the EWG.

10.5. PN proposed that the EWG consider and provide report at the next meeting on the caravan developments and accommodation on camp for GC's input. The meeting agreed to the proposal.

10.6. The Secretary General will inform the EWG of the request of the meeting.

10.7. PN asked if the NRA has a view on alternative energy and solar, does it have a 'dual tariff' option for cheaper electricity and is there a policy on alternative energy.

10.8. The Secretary General will investigate whether the NRA has dual tariff electricity on site and will report back at the next meeting.

10.9. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the Real Estate Committee (a sub-committee of Council) has been charged by the Trustees to look into alternative methods of providing energy to camp.

10.10. AD asked that the heating be turned off in ABC Lines as it was still on during the Phoenix Meeting and the weather is now turning warm. The Secretary General will speak to the Estates team to ensure it is turned off.

No further questions were raised.

11. G707 – ELECTION TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Under Rule 7 (g) (iii) the following Elected Members of the General Council have been proposed and seconded for the vacancies:

Ordinary Members

MD Jenvey

D Lowe

CG Perry

RM Roberts

Mrs KD Robertson

IR Thomson

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

Regional Members

G Trembath - Northern

Dr JD Warburton – Yorkshire & Humberside

Shooting Discipline Members

JGM Webster – Target Rifle

J Longhurst – F Class

Congratulations were extended to the Regional and Discipline representatives.

For information under Second Schedule Rule 7g(xi) the following casual vacancies will be advertised.

Eastern Regional Representative

Muzzle Loading Discipline Representative

- 11.1. The Chairman informed the meeting that this would be the last meeting for James Lawrie, Paul Wolpe and Charles Dickenson, and thanked them for their service. The meeting extended a round of applause.
- 11.2. CD informed the meeting that he believes the election process has raised an issue with the Second Schedule as it includes a rule (7d(i)) which disenfranchises a significant number of members from voting for a Discipline Representative for a discipline they shoot where they have not registered that discipline as their primary discipline. Quite a few people shoot more than one discipline to a high level and have a vested interest in who represents them in each of those disciplines. He would like to suggest an amendment to the Second Schedule to allow members to vote for the Discipline Rep in all disciplines declared on their member's record, and have the proposal put to the Second Schedule working party for consideration next year.
- 11.3. GA supported CD's proposal as he shoots both TR and MR and wouldn't want to be disenfranchised from voting for either discipline.
- 11.4. AD asked whether having all disciplines available for elections would be deemed an abuse of the system and whether Primary and Secondary disciplines only should be allowed.
- 11.5. The Meeting agreed that the topic be included for discussion at the next General Council meeting.

No further questions were raised.

12. G708 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 12.1. The Chairman informed the meeting that the NRA Treasurer's term of office ends in September 2022 and confirmed the Treasurer is willing to stand for re-election.
- 12.2. PN asked whether the NRA is able to help clubs set up bank accounts with Barclays as clubs are finding it increasingly difficult to find banks willing to open accounts for shooting clubs.
- 12.3. DS stated that at the last British Shooting Sports Council meeting discussion was held in relation to banks and insurers for shooting clubs and DS has offered to approach the British Insurers Brokers about insurance and BSSC will also be looking at a range of banks. DS will report back at the next General Council meeting.
- 12.4. PN informed the meeting that during 2020 all scout shooting ceased because of the pandemic and booked targets were reemployed with scout leaders which resulted in around 250 scout leaders attending, many of whom have now taken up the sport. Surrey County Scout Rifle Club have set an objective of achieving 1000 shooters by October 2022 and have achieved 540 so far. One of the issues which may affect this achievement is the availability of ammunition and PN would therefore like to make a plea for any clubs or individuals who may have spare, old available ammunition which they would be happy to sell or provide to the scouts.
- 12.5. PN understands that some clubs are being asked to obtain police and local council explosive licences on the basis of ammunition stored in their armouries using the concept of net explosive quantities (NEQs) and does this apply to the finished product of Class 1.2, 1.4 S ammunition. JPSB will check the rules and report at the next meeting.

- 12.6. JS remarked that his club had to cancel a number of shoots last year due to failures on electronic targets and understood there was a review being undertaken on the efficiency and maintenance of electronic targets and asked if there was any update.
- 12.7. The Secretary General confirmed that the Shooting Committee have set up an Electronic Target Working Group to test the accuracy and reliability of the targets. The NSC is also undertaking a major programme of upgrades and refurbishments of electronic targets which commences in the coming weeks.
- 12.8. ACT remarked that the attendance at this meeting was disappointing and asked that a discussion be held at the next meeting as to how meetings should be structured to maximise attendance.
- 12.9. ACT would like to see the role of the NRA as the National Governing Body of fullbore shooting be included in the Strategic Review as he feels it is important.
- 12.10. SL asked why the Early Bird discount was no longer offered for Imperial Meeting competition entries and what did the entries look like for 2022 to date.
- 12.11. The Secretary General responded that 469 TR entries had been received to date which is on track for expected entries. With regards to discounted entries fees, the NRA cash flow is now more measured and no longer relies on the early entry fees, therefore the decision was taken to allow competitors to pay the same fees and enter up to 48 hours before the event.
- 12.12. The Chairman reported that he had sent a letter to Her Majesty The Queen congratulating her on her Platinum Jubilee.

No further questions were raised.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 16.30pm



D Lacey
Chairman

Date of next meeting: Saturday 17th September 2022 at 2pm by ZOOM