

THE GENERAL COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Council Meeting
held by Video Conference Call
on Friday 11th June 2021 from 3.00pm

Present:

Chairman Mr D Lacey (DLA)

Members: Mr GK Alexander (GA)
Mr HRM Bailie (RB)
Cdr NJW Benstead (NBe)
Mr JPS Bloomfield (JPSB)
Mr N Brasier (NB)
Mr CM Brooks (CB)
Wg Cdr DP Calvert (DCal)
Dr AMW Cargill Thompson (ACT)
Mr DC Crispin (DCr)
Mr A Dagger (AD)
Mr CES Dickenson (CD)
Mrs A Gran (AG)_
Wg Cdr CJ Hockley (CH)
Lt. Col. RG Jeffrey (RJ)
Mr RS Kenchington (RK)
Mr JM Kynoch (JK)
Mr GAE Larcombe (GL)
Mr J Lawrie (JLa)
Miss SS Lohmann (SL)
Mr J Longhurst (JL)
Mr D Lowe (DL)
Mr N Macfarlane (NM)
Mr A Reynolds (AR) - Treasurer
Mr R Roberts (RR)
Mrs K Robertson (KR)
Mr R Stebbings (RS)
Mr D Stimpson (DS)
Mr IR Thomson (IT)
Mr G Trembath (GTr)
Mr MP Watkins (MW)

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

Apologies for absence: Mr G Burns, Mr M Charlton, Mr PR Coley, Mr M Cottillard, Mr J Harper-Smith, Mr J Harris, Mr M Maksimovic, Dr J Marsden, Mr MF Martel, Dr J Martin, Mr M Pountain, Mr B Ritchie, Mr AJD Saunders, Mr I Shirra-Gibb, Mr C Steele-Benny, Mr N St Aubyn, Mr MK Townsend, Mr S Wallis, Dr JD Warburton, Dr AP Wolpe.

INDEX G660 to G670

The Chairman declared the meeting open and welcomed all members attending. He reminded attendees to keep microphones on mute when not speaking, and to raise hands or use the icons to raise any points throughout the meeting.

1. G660 – APOLOGIES

- 1.1. Apologies were received as noted above.

2. G661 – 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 arm of the Association.
- 2.2. This meeting is held to discuss the role of the NRA as a charity, reminding attendees of the role of the Trustees in terms of the executive authority and decision making on behalf of the charity, and recognising the very valuable work General Council does as an advisory body to the Trustees.
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. The Chairman requested that members declare any conflicts of interest that may arise during the meeting.

3. G662 – ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

- 3.1. The minutes of the meetings held on 20th February 2021 had been circulated, approved and published.
- 3.2. It was agreed that the agenda item would be amended to “Matters Arising from Minutes of the last Meeting of General Council”, as the minutes are approved and published within an agreed timeframe of the meeting rather than being approved at the following meeting.
- 3.3. There were no matters arising.

4. G663 – REVIEW OF ACTIONS

- 4.1. The Secretary General confirmed that the NRA continues to make steady progress with the draft range operators guide and is planning to have a live document by the General Council meeting in September 2021. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.2. The Secretary General has prepared a Conflicts of Interest policy for consideration and approval by General Council and this will be tabled later in the meeting. **Item CLOSED.**
- 4.3. RK asked for an update on Site 103. The Chairman confirmed that Site 103 belongs to the NSRA and he is unaware of any update on what the NSRA are doing with the property. The Chairman commented that General Council members could ask members to write to the NSRA requesting them to improve the site should they wish to do so. ACT remarked that the building does contain asbestos and the NRA has raised that previously and could possibly continue to request updates on a quarterly basis. ACT also remarked that the continued structural deterioration of Site 103 might pose an increased risk of asbestos being released, which the NRA should remain cognisant of. The Chairman offered to contact the NSRA after the meeting to inform them that General Council has raised the issue. The Secretary General remarked that the NRA have discussed the asbestos issue with the NSRA and they have provided an old asbestos survey which indicates the asbestos isn't the more dangerous 'blue' asbestos. The NSRA are aware of the NRA's concerns. GTr asked whether the NRA could take the land back from the NSRA if not developed? The Chairman remarked that the conveyance of the land shows that it was an unqualified sale. AG asked whether the NRA have considered offering to buy the land. The Chairman remarked that the NRA could offer to purchase it as the NSRA have withdrawn their application to develop a hotel on the site, and may be open to an offer. JSPB remarked that there was discussion regarding an uplift claim against the NSRA and that the land could be put against that value. The Chairman shares the view that it is an unsightly

eyesore that we would all like fixed, but not owning the land makes it complicated to address this. **Item CLOSED**

No further questions were raised.

5. G664 – BUSINESS PLANNING & OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- 5.1. The Secretary General's report was presented to the meeting.
- 5.2. The NSC Chief Executive's report was presented to the meeting.
- 5.3. ACT asked for an update on the Imperial Meeting entry figures. AM confirmed that CivSR has 138 entries, Match Rifle has 79 entries, IHAM has 41 entries, Sporting Imperial has 1 entry, McQueen has 23 entries, Gallery Rifle Imperial has 12 entries, F Class has 43 entries and Target Rifle has 389 entries to date.
- 5.4. RK asked which building was Building No.1. AM confirmed it was the building next to the RAF Clubhouse which used to be the Ladies Toilet which has been developed into a lodge.
- 5.5. DCal asked for clarification on Building 1 as the location map in the Bible shows building 1 as the NRA Main Offices. NB confirmed that Building 1 was the name of the Lodge, not the indexed map reference.
- 5.6. A Conflicts of Interest Policy was presented to the General Council for approval, having been developed from the Council's Conflict of Interest Policy. CD noted that in para 3.3(b), the words "indirect benefit" were missing from the end of the paragraph. ACT thanked the Chairman for keeping the policy simple. The policy was approved by consensus, with the noted amendment.

No further questions were raised.

6. G665 – FINANCE

- 6.1. The Treasurer presented his financial report to the meeting.
- 6.2. Performance has shown a significant turnaround in the last month with an operating profit year to date of £45k. BSG has had a good performance to date.
- 6.3. Capital projects have been cancelled with only a small budget of £120k for necessary projects.
- 6.4. NSC has agreed a £95k CBIL, but funds have not yet been drawn.
- 6.5. The 2020 Annual Report was signed off and published.
- 6.6. The KPIs show a cash balance showing a £60k positive net at month end.
- 6.7. The Acid Test ratio is still significantly below the 1 x threshold set by the Trustees.
- 6.8. The restricted assets show the investments have been performing well.

No questions were raised.

7. G666 – COUNCIL

- 7.1. The Trustees Report was presented to the meeting.
- 7.2. The Meeting expressed their thanks for the new report format but remarked that the report shouldn't replace the minutes and these should still be circulated to General Council members. ACT added that the suggested report format was intended to provide up to date information to the GC members as it can take a few months to receive the minutes from the Trustees.
- 7.3. RK remarked that access to MOD ranges becoming more restricted to civilians and reservists and asked whether the NRA should be looking to purchase their own ranges to establish a presence across the UK so as not to be reliant on MOD ranges. There are a large number of rifle ranges which could be brought back into use.
- 7.4. The Secretary General confirmed that the NRA had bid on a couple of ranges in the past but the bids were unsuccessful.
- 7.5. The Chairman added that if any GC members hear of any potential ranges up for sale, they should let the Secretary General know so that the NRA can consider bidding if deemed a suitable option.
- 7.6. AD asked whether purchasing ranges would be a new venture for the NRA.

- 7.7. The Secretary General remarked that acquisition of the freehold is one method, but the NRA have also considered renting ranges. The challenge is to be persistent but also have the funds in place to be able to act quickly.
- 7.8. The Chairman remarked that the challenge of funding should not stop GC members identifying good opportunities.
- 7.9. James Lawrie (JLa) made the point that there should ideally be a facility in place to fund range purchases in order to move quickly. Consideration should be given to secure an arrangement with a bank to have funds in place to move quickly.
- 7.10. The Treasurer remarked that realistically in the next 12 months the NRA's scope for financing is going to be constrained. There is not a great desire to seek further financing on top of the overdraft facility already secured against the NRA's land and buildings.
- 7.11. GTr remarked whether consideration should be given to collaborating with the MOD to take a range off them and manage it for them with a deal in place to share the range space.
- 7.12. GTr then remarked that the conversation had moved away from the original point of discussion about minutes of meetings.
- 7.13. ACT asked if the minutes of Council meetings could be produced in the same way as the General Council minutes, ie a draft within 10 days of the meeting, with a further 10 days for comments before being made final, to allow circulation of the minutes to GC members in a more timely manner.
- 7.14. The Chairman remarked that if this was the wish of the meeting he would take that suggestion back to the Trustees for discussion at their next meeting.
- 7.15. ACT asked for an update on the cost and availability of ammunition components and ammunition.
- 7.16. The Secretary General remarked that it is increasingly hard and expensive to procure ammunition and components at the moment with potential price rises of between 15-20% for 2021 ammunition, based on 2020 figures.
- 7.17. JSPB added that there are no American made primers available in the UK at this time and other components are becoming more difficult to find too.
- 7.18. ACT asked for an update on the Overseas Team Fund.
- 7.19. The Chairman confirmed that this was discussed at Council. Legal advice had been sought along with input from the Team Finance Committee and the conclusion was that there is a way to be able to make grants out of the OTF for touring teams. It is likely to depend on there being an element of involvement of Relevant People (current and former Armed Forces personnel, current and former Police and Emergency Services personnel, and current Cadets). The terms of reference for the OTF will be published in due course.
- 7.20. CB asked for an update on the NRA's liaison with the Charity Commission.
- 7.21. The Chairman confirmed that the Trustees provide a quarterly report to the Charity Commission including reports on the involvement of Relevant People in the NRA's competitions as part of demonstrating the contribution these make to promoting the efficient of the Armed Forces. The dialogue with the Commission is positive and they see that the NRA is making an effort and collecting the data and reporting and keeping them informed.

No further questions were raised.

8. G667 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE

- 8.1. The Chairman of the Shooting Committee presented his report to the meeting and highlighted the following:
 - 8.1.1. ACT was appointed Vice Chairman of the Shooting Committee at their meeting of 6th May 2021.
 - 8.1.2. A set of Shooting Committee Bylaws were agreed which have been submitted to this meeting of General Council for approval. The Meeting approved the resolution to adopt the Shooting Committee Bylaws by consensus.
 - 8.1.3. A set of criteria was agreed by the Shooting Committee for a team to qualify for Great Britain or NRA status and this was submitted to and approved by Council at their meeting earlier today. The criteria will be published and referenced in the Team Captain's Handbook in due course.
 - 8.1.4. Future projects include:

- 8.1.4.1. A draft proposal for the procedure to appoint GB and NRA team captains. The Target Rifle annex to that still needs agreement and a meeting will be held prior to the next Shooting Committee meeting to agree the revised set of procedures for team captain appointments which once agreed by the full Shooting Committee will be put forward for approval by Council.
- 8.1.4.2. The final draft of the Team Captain's Handbook is to be finished following the delay awaiting resolution of the Overseas Team Fund and this will be put forward by Shooting Committee for approval by Council.
- 8.1.4.3. The Terms of Reference of the Team Finance Committee (TFC) are also being reviewed by the TFC for submission to the Shooting Committee for approval.
- 8.1.4.4. The amendment of the rules for next year's Bisley Bible will be the key element of work for the Shooting Committee for the remainder of 2021.

No further questions were raised.

9. G668 – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

- 9.1. AG informed the meeting that the Membership Committee continues to work on their project to investigate how the NRA can support university shooting clubs in order to encourage young people into shooting, stay shooting and join the NRA and have been in discussion with around 20 universities rifle clubs.
- 9.2. NB has drafted a survey on behalf of the committee to send to affiliated NRA clubs asking them if they are interested in attracting young shooters.
- 9.3. An 'idiot's guide' to forming and running university rifle clubs in compliance is being prepared.
- 9.4. A poster is being developed on safety and marksmanship which will be sent to affiliated clubs.
- 9.5. Further projects will be developed from the responses to the survey.
- 9.6. ACT asked whether NRA members could be asked if they are alumni of any universities as part of the membership renewal process in 2022 to be able to gather data and seek possible assistance for the university clubs. ACT declared an interest as Chairman of Cambridge University Rifle Association (CURA).

No further questions were raised.

10. G669 – ESTATE WORKING GROUP

- 10.1. The Secretary General informed the meeting that Estate Working Group met on the 16th March 2021, and appointed Paul Charlton as their Chairman and discussed the issues raised by the South East Regional Representative.
- 10.2. Minutes of that meeting will be circulated once received.

No questions were raised.

11. G670 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1. Second Schedule

- 11.1.1. The Chairman reminded the meeting that AG had offered to collate suggestions for changes to the Second Schedule at the previous meeting.
- 11.1.2. AG commented that only one person had responded to date.
- 11.1.3. CD confirmed he has items for consideration and will submit them to AG.
- 11.1.4. JSPB remarked that it is extremely difficult to change the Second Schedule and it would be easier to try to 'work round' any issues rather than attempt to request formal changes.
- 11.1.5. The Chairman asked that all suggestions are submitted for consideration by General Council once collated and an informed decision can be made by General Council as to whether any are put forward for amendment.
- 11.2. **Standing Invitation for Trustees to be invited to attend GC Meetings**
 - 11.2.1. The meeting agreed that Trustees have a standing invitation to attend GC meetings.

11.3. Future Format for General Council Meetings

11.3.1. Discussion was held as to the preferred method for holding future GC meetings, either in person, by ZOOM or hybrid meetings. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have a mix of meetings with two meetings a year in person, and one by Zoom which would allow GC members who live away from Bisley to attend. The February meeting was considered to be suitable for a Zoom meeting when the weather was poor and minimum shooting takes place on the ranges. The consensus of the meeting was the next meeting in September 2021 would be held by Zoom.

The infrastructure to hold hybrid meetings will be investigated.

11.4. Revised General Council Agenda

11.4.1. ACT thanked the Chairman for implementing the new agenda which he felt had helped the meeting run more smoothly and with more focus.

11.5. Disciplinary Body

11.5.1. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Disciplinary Code had been amended to provide for the post of Vice Chair who will have the same responsibilities as the Chair but will not be a Trustee. Richard Vary was appointed the Vice Chair by the Disciplinary Body.

11.6. John Kynoch

11.6.1. The Meeting were informed that John Kynoch is retiring from GC following 27 years on the committee. The meeting extended its thanks for all his support and input with a round of applause.

11.7. Exhibition Hut

11.7.1. GTr asked for an update on the status of Exhibition Hut. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the plan for updating the property is in abeyance due to the current postponement of capex projects.

11.8. Regional Ranges

11.8.1. MW would like to propose setting up a body to help produce a strategy to support the potential purchase of regional ranges or help clubs keep their ranges. Following discussion it was agreed that MW, RK and GTr would set up a working party to develop a strategy for consideration and will work in conjunction with the Regional Representatives and Nic Couldrey as the Regional Ranges Manager.

11.9. Annual General Meetings

11.9.1. The Chairman reminded the meeting that the NRA AGM is being held at 6pm following this meeting and the NSC AGM is being held at 8pm.

No further questions were raised.

The meeting closed at 16.25pm



D Lacey
NRA Chairman

Date of next meeting: Friday 10th September 2021