

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

THE GENERAL COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Council Meeting
held by ZOOM
on Saturday 16th September 2023 from 2.00pm

Present:

Chairman

Mr D Lacey (DLa)

Members:

Mr GK Alexander (GA)
Cdr NJW Benstead (NBen)
Mr N Brasier (NB)
Mr CM Brooks (CB) Vice Chairman
Mr JPS Bloomfield (JPSB)
Wg Cdr DP Calvert (DC)
Dr AMW Cargill Thompson (ACT)
Mr A Dagger (AD)
Ms A Gran (AG)
Mr MD Jenvey (MJ)
Mr GAE Larcombe (GL)
Miss SS Lohmann (SL)
Dr J Marsden (JM)
Mr FPR Northam (PN)
Mr A Reynolds (AR) NRA Treasurer
Mrs K Robertson (KR)
Mr T Rylands (TR)
Mr R Stebbings (RSt)
Mr D Stimpson (DS)
Mr I Thomson (IT)
Mr G Trembath (GTr)
Mr MP Watkins (MW)
Mr JGM Webster (JW)

In attendance:

Mr A Mercer (AM) - Secretary General
Mrs G Thatcher - Secretary to Meeting

Apologies for absence:

Mr S Aldhouse , Mr HRM Bailie, Mr G Burns, Mr PAE Charlton, Mr PR Coley, Mr M Cottillard, Mr J Harper-Smith, Mr J Harris. Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, Lt. Col. RG Jeffrey, Mr RS Kenchington, Mr D Lowe, Mr N Macfarlane, Dr J Martin, Mr CG Perry, Brig. M Pountain, Mr AJD Saunders, Mr R Sayer, Mr C Steele-Benny, Mr N St Aubyn, Mr S Wallis, Mr AM Whiffin, Dr JD Warburton, Mr P Wolpe

INDEX G739 to G753

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, in line with Charity Commission guidance, 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 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3.1. The Chairman informed the meeting that MJ had notified him that MJ wished to raise a number of matters arising from the previous meeting. The Chairman asked if anyone had any other items. There being no other items, MJ was given the floor.

3.2. MJ requested an update on the implementation of a formal complaint-handling procedure for the NSC as the customer-facing part of the organisation.

3.3. The Chairman noted this question relates to NSC business, rather than NRA business. The Chairman determined that it was appropriate to deal with this question (and others like it) at this meeting in light of the reputational and financial interest the charity has in its subsidiary.

3.4. The Chief Executive of NSC confirmed the matter is on the agenda for the next NSC board meeting. The NSC board will be guided by the results of the customer satisfaction survey which is due to be published by the end of September.

3.5. MJ remarked that the implementation of a complaint-handling procedure should be quite easy to do and shouldn't rely on a customer satisfaction survey. The Chief Executive noted MJ's comments.

3.6. MJ called on the NRA and NSC to significantly improve communication to customers and members explaining the reasoning behind increases in prices.

3.7. The Secretary General responded that membership subscriptions have over the last 5-6 years been increased by no more than the retail price index (RPI). The annual reports clearly details the financial performance of the charity, and GC members receive regular updates from the Treasurer showing the current financial performance with commentary.

3.8. The Treasurer added the Annual Report is reported at the AGM, and along with the BGM, gives the membership the opportunity to ask questions. GC members are provided with regular detailed financial reports which can be shared with the membership they represent on General Council and are able to ask questions of the Treasurer. He welcomed members of GC taking more opportunity to do this.

3.9. The Treasurer added that utility costs are up 80% year-on-year, salaries are up 15% year-on-year and overheads are up 15% year-on-year. It is clear the NRA has an inflation-driven cost base and that is something that is appreciated by the membership, given how little negative feedback was received on the 2023 price rises. The fact that the NRA is looking to rebuild its financial resilience since Covid has been publicly shared in various open meetings including the 2023 AGM and BGM.

3.10. The Secretary General informed the meeting that a new Communications Manager, Francesca Lombardo, has been recruited and is in post and is settling in well. One of her first tasks will be to implement a member newsletter to improve communication with the membership.

3.11. MJ asked for an update on his requested functionality check of the hooter (siren) system.

3.12. The Chief Executive responded that all matters pertaining to range safety are reviewed at the monthly Range Safety Committee meetings. The performance of the hooter and its transmission frequencies of the radios are not matters of current concern. The hooter doesn't cover all ranges, eg. Chobham Ridge, but it is audible subject to hearing protection/background noise to the majority of shooters, and is kept under constant review.

3.13. MJ asked for more clarification on the Imperial Meeting costings/expenditure and high overhead costs, and what business case has been carried out, for example, to assess offering lesser camping fees to encourage more people to attend the Meeting, increasing the competition income.

- 3.14. The Secretary General remarked that the subsidies provided to youth shooting by the NRA in 2022 were £68,000, representing 10% of total Imperial income, which is a very significant subsidy provided to youth shooting. Reducing tent pitches by a few pounds per night isn't going to move the needle that much. Camping rates and touring pitches are the ballywick of the NSC and entry fees are a matter for the NRA.
- 3.15. PN remarked that £17 per night for a tent pitch is unaffordable to the majority of young shooters and is more expensive than other camp sites in the area, and that can be seen in the lack of tents on camp during the Meeting.
- 3.16. JPSB remarked that the competition is budgeted to produce a gross profit of 5% but it produces rather less than that, so if you increase the number of people coming to the meeting, you don't increase the profit. Offering something free is not going to be compensated for by the increased number of attendees.
- 3.17. MJ remarked that more people entering the Meeting would provide more income and therefore profit as the overhead costs are spread out across a greater number of competitors.
- 3.18. JPSB responded that 5% gross profit on an entry is only £25 for an average £500 entry fee meaning competitions operate on a net loss. Also, more shooters would require more overheads such as butt markers, targets, range staff etc.
- 3.19. The Treasurer added the Imperial Meeting comes under the NRA's charitable objectives and the charity could make a decision to increase its contribution. Due to refunds in 2023, the net loss was 10% of sales. Although there is always an aim for a gross profit of 5%, the NRA has always made a net loss. The contribution in 2023 was c.£72k. Trustees could make a decision to contribute more to something which is in the NRA's charitable objectives, but something else would need to give, such as CAPEX on buildings and estate improvements.
- 3.20. MJ remarked that there has been a gradual decline in competitor entries over the last 10 years, and if this continues there will be a major problem.
- 3.21. The Treasurer responded there isn't a hard link between the number of people who compete in the Imperial Meeting and the number of members who belong to the NRA. The NRA needs to look beyond Bisley in pursuing its charitable objectives.
- 3.22. JM remarked that the entry fee, as an F Class shooter, is the smallest part of his competition expenditure, and it is the other costs associated with the competition, such as component costs and fuel which is the main factor to reduction in entries. Shooting in the North West has definitely reduced due to costs, and is a national problem, not just a Bisley problem.
- 3.23. JPSB pointed out the Imperial Meeting entries are back to the level of .303 days. The entry numbers started rising in the early 1970s to a peak in the 1990s/early 2000s and have gone down again. Nobody knows why the numbers went up and why they are going down again now, but the cost of living must certainly be a factor.
- 3.24. RSt asked how much of the subsidy incurred during the Imperial Meeting is a result of the 40% discount for Under-25s.
- 3.25. The Secretary General remarked the 40% discount for young shooters in 2022 cost the NRA £68k. The Secretary General stressed the £183k of ammunition was charged at cost.
- 3.26. RS remarked that Charles Dickenson previously stated the biggest loss the NRA have had in terms of Imperial Meeting participants has been amongst the 'O' Class competitors, and wonders whether there is a link between the NRA's Imperial financial performance and the fact that the proportion of Under-25s has increased in relation to other classes of competitors who would not be getting any subsidy, and how that in turn impacts the profit. RSt remarked the O Class competitors are semi-competitive club shooters as those who are A or X Class, and wondered whether anything could be done to attract more of those.
- 3.27. The Secretary General asked whether RSt is suggesting the discounts should be reduced to the Under-25s and spread it across the O Class competitors. RSt doesn't know whether there might be other ways of attracting them back to the competitions, such as the timing of the competition as a large number may be teachers who cannot attend in term time, but it may be worth asking the question.
- 3.28. The Chairman asked the GC members to send any suggestions on how competitors can be encouraged to attend the meeting to the Secretary General for consideration for future Imperial meetings.
- 3.29. MJ would like the NRA to survey the membership to understand what would encourage the membership to enter the Imperial Meeting.

- 3.30. MJ's final point was his belief that notifications of GC elections are not being actioned in the appropriate timescale and suggest changing the protocol to include an email to the membership at the correct time, and this should be the primary method of communication, and/or include the details in an early edition of the Journal.
- 3.31. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Second Schedule is drafted on the basis that the Journal will be published at certain specified times. The publication dates of the Journal will be set to match the requirements of the Second Schedule, rather than being flexed to allow for late submissions of articles and information. The Chairman noted that the production of a regular newsletter will also allow such information to be included as well as the Journal and website.

There were no further matters arising.

4. G742 – REVIEW OF ACTIONS

- 4.1. JPSB has not received any further requests for information on the requirements of police and local council licenses for clubs to store ammunition in their armouries, and agreed the item should be closed. The meeting agreed that any NRA affiliated clubs who have any questions should contact the NRA's Legal, Safety and Technical Specialist, Iain Robertson in the first instance, and JPSB will assist with any technical information where required. **Item CLOSED.**
- 4.2. 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 2024-2028 Estate Development Plan and plans for Exhibition Hut and Site 103 will be included in those proposals. An update will be provided later in the meeting under the Secretary General's report. **Item CLOSED.**
- 4.3. 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 the issues and how to address them to retain the membership. The Secretary General informed the meeting it is very difficult to get an accurate report as it is a live database and you can't go backwards to get that information. RSt asked that a snapshot be taken every 6 months and an end of year report be produced based on that snapshot. The Secretary General confirmed that it could be done at the end of each calendar year. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.4. The Chairman reminded the meeting that any members who wished to be appointed to the Estates Working Group to put themselves forward for consideration. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.5. GT confirmed she had not received any confirmation from the GC members that they are willing to share their email addresses with other GC members. The Chairman reminded the GC members to inform GT if they are willing to do so. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.6. The Secretary General informed the meeting he had spoken to the insurance brokers and also one of the intermediaries who provides private markers. The intermediary said he doesn't employ markers, and is simply introducing markers to people who wish to engage a marker. A club that engages a marker direct is covered by the AXA insurance policy in place. The insurance covers employees, and an employee according to the policy is a person and a contract of service, a labour only contractor and persons supplied by them, and persons employed by labour only sub-contractors and self-employed persons. **Item CLOSED.**
- 4.7. The Chairman reminded the meeting that any suggestions on the use of Site 103 are still welcome. The Secretary General confirmed the asbestos has been removed, the building has been made watertight and definite plans will be drawn up once a decision has been made on the use of the building.
- 4.8. The Chairman reminded the meeting that any suggestions to amend the EWG's terms of reference to make it more effective should be put forward for consideration. **Item ONGOING.**
- 4.9. The Estates Working Group will be discussed later in the meeting under Item 9.
- 4.10. The Secretary General confirmed the new Communications Manager will be tasked with looking at the non-official Facebook pages. **Item CLOSED.**
- 4.11. The Chairman reminded the meeting that any suggestions for sponsors of electronic targets should be sent to the Secretary General. **Item CLOSED.**

No further questions were raised.

5. G743 – BUSINESS PLANNING & OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- 5.1. The Secretary General and Chief Executive reports were circulated prior to the meeting.
- 5.2. MJ asked why the plans for Site 5 have gone ahead without consideration of alternative accommodation, when the business plan hasn't been advertised or stated and it hasn't been linked to a prior Bisley Estate Development Plan and would like to understand the business case.
- 5.3. The Secretary General responded there has been a large amount of discussion within the GC meetings, with several papers presented on the subject and the Trustees discussed and fully considered all alternative options before agreeing to go ahead with the development of Site 5.
- 5.4. DLa declared an interest as a tenant on Waldegrave Site. MJ declared an interest as a tenant on Site 5, JPSB on ToF, CB on Site 1, RSt on Site 7, PN on Site 7 and MW on Waldegrave site.
- 5.5. MJ remarked this is the only area within the agenda with any opportunity to discuss the decision of the proposed serviced developments in detail.
- 5.6. MJ believes there hasn't been enough consideration for affordable accommodation across the board for the membership, and instead is only providing accommodation for members with large wallets.
- 5.7. SL agrees that consideration hasn't been given to the GC members' views and is also disappointed that the decision to go ahead has been made.
- 5.8. The Chairman noted that he is unable to report on Council discussions. MJ asked why discussions in Council on caravan development sites are confidential as there are many areas where they are discussed in General Council which have open minutes.
- 5.9. The Secretary General remarked that the caravan sites need improvement to bring them up to a modern standard. Serviced pitches are proving popular, and can be funded by those who wish to have a serviced pitch, allowing the improvements to be made by those who will benefit from them. Serviced pitches are also more widely used because of the heating, hot water and serviced facilities available, rather than unserviced pitches, which in turn drives more participation in competitions, events and range hire.
- 5.10. RSt remarked that there have been improvements at Bisley over the last 10 years, and no one would disagree that shouldn't continue. However, he has a very large objection to the NRA picking an option which is only affordable to the 1%, when other options exist. The average NRA member should be able to afford to come and shoot at Bisley and/or have accommodation to be able to support their shooting.
- 5.11. SL agrees with RSt's comments, and noted that RSt has done a lot of work in finding alternative accommodation options to caravans. Younger shooters don't want caravans, and would prefer pods, and this has been brought up on a number of occasions and the Trustees have completed ignored what GC has suggested. SL asked whether more Trustees could attend General Council meetings to get the messages across.
- 5.12. The Chairman confirmed that he will remind all Trustees of the standing invitation from General Council to attend its meetings.
- 5.13. PN remarked that a licence for the unserviced caravan sites to be in use for more than 9 months a year would make the accommodation more beneficial, and also the provision of good ablution blocks. PN added that members have stated they would give up their caravans and move to pods for short terms as a preference, and this should have been considered, and not ignored by the Trustees. Gaining an understanding what the membership would prefer should have been done through a survey/communication before any development plan was approved.
- 5.14. JW asked SL, PN and RSt to inform the meeting how their ideas would be developed without incurring any funding from the NRA, because one of the benefits of serviced pitch development is the NRA doesn't have to provide any funding.
- 5.15. RSt asked JW what makes him think people wanting a pod that is half the cost of a caravan wouldn't be able to fund it the same way the caravan developments are funded. More people will be able to afford pods, and the market is bigger, and no reason why it couldn't be funded the same way.
- 5.16. The Treasurer remarked the beauty of the serviced caravan development is it is self funded, and added GC members have been invited to put forward plans, and takes objection to harsh phrase and tone used by GC members. The Trustees don't ignore suggestions and comments, but ultimately, they must make decisions in the best interests of the charity as a whole. It is very easy for GC members to point the finger and say Trustees ignore things, but when the Trustees have invited people to participate and help, with quite low amounts of finance capability and resourcing, to help the NRA to create these studies GC demand and which are very difficult to constitute, it then falls on deaf ears when asked for input.

- 5.17. PN remarked that alternative accommodation options such as pods can be funded in exactly the same way as serviced caravan pitches, and they are more affordable and quicker to erect.
- 5.18. RSt remarked that a large number of GC members feel they are being ignored and a large number of the membership feel the same way, and that is because the Trustees are not engaging correctly. RS added the pitch for a caravan site doesn't need to be as expensive as quoted by the developers, and can be made cheaper for pods as they would only require ground spikes.
- 5.19. The Secretary General remarked that putting pin piles in the ground is a rational approach for pods on sites, and a sensible suggestion by RSt, but having long term flexibility of having pods or caravans requires concrete to be put down. The investments made at Bisley have been made with the maximum longevity on the return for the facilities and provide greater flexibility in the future. It is very easy to try and make the point that the NRA is trying to price out members with limited budget, but that misses the reality that there is plenty of affordable and modestly priced accommodation available at Bisley including 240 unserviced caravan pitches, 60 huts for annual let, and a wide variety of accommodation at club houses. It is not true to say that the NRA is pricing everyone out of the accommodation market on camp.
- 5.20. KR remarked that everyone is correct in their summations. Everyone is coming from a position of being right, but the problem is General Council have identified an issue and asked the Trustees for more time to gather information before any decision is made, and the Trustees haven't provided that and gone ahead with the decision to develop Site 5. KR asked what the rush is to start the development, and why can't there be more time to undertake a survey of the membership to find what they wish.
- 5.21. The Secretary General responded the project has been underway for the last 12 months and significant debate has been held in GC about it. The Trustees are aware of the views of GC, and added that there is a small number of GC members who are not supportive of the proposals, not all, and there has been expressions of interest in the development from the membership, and believes the site will be sold out very quickly, as were the previous two serviced caravan sites, which shows a demand for these developments. The Trustees considered the alternative options but there are wider issues in terms of planning, longevity of any development, and compliance with the Borough Council's caravan licence. The Secretary General added that members can buy second hand caravans to put on the serviced pitches, which would make it more affordable.
- 5.22. RSt remarked that putting second hand caravans on the site would not allow members to have a full term lease which makes it a less attractive option, and 21 expressions of interest is only 0.2% of the membership. A survey should be sent out to understand what members want before any decision is made, and accommodation that is affordable across the whole membership needs to be taken into consideration.
- 5.23. SL encourages everyone to revisit RSt's document and asked the Trustees to reconsider options before making a final decision.
- 5.24. MJ remarked that the NRA Trustees have not surveyed the entire membership to judge what they want and what they can afford, and is therefore making a false decision on subjective information and remarked a Special General Meeting should be called to get the views of the membership.
- 5.25. The Chairman would like to hold any further discussion over for AOB to allow the meeting to move through the agenda, and asked for any other questions on the Business Operation reports from the Secretary General and Chief Executive.
- 5.26. ACT asked for an update on the addition of Handloaded Ammunition on SCCs.
- 5.27. The Secretary General confirmed members of the Shooting Committee (SC) had provided some useful input which has been incorporated and will be going back to the SC meeting next week for review, before being put forward to the Trustees for approval.
- 5.28. KR asked the Chief Executive whether consideration has been given to employing ex-service personnel to help with staff retention which appears to be an issue, especially in the Target Shed, and would help veterans get back into the workplace, and could also help towards the NRA's charitable objectives. Accommodation could also be offered as part of the package.
- 5.29. The Chief Executive confirmed all relevant vacancies are advertised through various service job boards as well as Indeed, but the best person for the role is always selected, and no particular weight is given to ex or serving personnel over non-serving applicants. The consideration of providing accommodation to veterans is an interesting idea, but may not be allowed as there are restrictions on charities providing accommodation for employees.
- 5.30. MJ asked for a timeline for the NSC's customer satisfaction survey, and also for an update on the range booking system.

- 5.31. The Chief Executive confirmed the survey is due to go out to the NSC's customer base by the end of September. The proposed on-line range booking system is currently unaffordable and has been deferred until 2024.
- 5.32. PN asked what the driver is for a 100 yard indoor range, as previous clubs have looked at doing this but have found it too expensive to justify.
- 5.33. The Chief Executive responded it is due to demand from a range of commercial and corporate clients.
- 5.34. JPSB added that a provision had been made near the marker walkway to Century for a 200-yard range when the NCSC ranges were built and maybe this could be reopened.

No further questions were raised.

7. G744 – FINANCE

- 7.1. The Chairman noted that the Treasurer's report to 30 June 2023 had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- 7.2. PN asked whether the NRA is able to afford an electronic video conferencing system, as he understands a quote for such a system has been put forward for consideration.
- 7.3. The Chairman confirmed a quote had been received the day before the meeting but it doesn't include commissioning, installation or training. The IT Manager will be engaging with the provider to understand the full cost before any decision is made.
- 7.4. MJ asked for clarification on the plant and machinery cost line on the balance sheet which shows a value of £7m. The Treasurer confirmed that is the historic value and the accumulated depreciation cost of £3.6M should be deducted from that amount. The Secretary General believes the cost include all range items including target frames, stop butts, electronic targets, markers galleries, and the main infrastructure of the ranges.
- 7.5. The Treasurer updated the meeting on the figures to end July 2023 which shows an operating profit of over £100k, a net profit of just under £100k. The acid test liquidity ratio is still below 1. The capex budget has around £100k left for the remainder of 2023. The 2023 performance is above budget and on track to end the year on budget.
- 7.6. The Treasurer remarked the current impact on the Association's cost base will be taken into consideration as part of the 2024 budget and forecast discussions.

No further questions were raised.

8. G745 – COUNCIL

- 8.1. The Chairman noted that the report from Council had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- 8.2. No questions were raised.

9. G746 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE

- 9.1. The Chairman noted that the Chairman of Shooting Committee had circulated a report prior to the meeting, but was not in attendance.
- 9.2. JPSB advised the meeting a Target Dimensions Working Group is reviewing the TR target dimensions, based on work done by Charles Dickenson a number of years ago to regularise the bullseye sizes across different distances. A proposal will be put forward to Shooting Committee for consideration and then on to Council in October for approval. The new target sizes will then be implemented from 2025, giving competitors the required 12 months' notice of any changes.
- 9.3. PN asked why the electronic targets were smaller than the wooden targets as he has had a couple of instances where guest or novice shooters have hit the sensors, which had to be paid for. JPSB remarked that guest and novice shooters would be more suited to shooting at targets on wooden target frames to avoid this problem.

No further questions were raised.

10. G747 – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

- 10.1. The Chairman of the Membership Committee reported that the Membership Committee continues to work with the Secretary General on a consultation paper with some proposed membership structure changes, but no conclusion has been reached to date.

No questions were raised.

11. **G748 - ESTATE WORKING GROUP**

- 11.1. The Chairman confirmed the term of the current Chairman of the Estate Working Group (EWG) ends today so the EWG members need to elect a new Chairman.
- 11.2. The Chairman noted the minutes of EWG meetings remain outstanding, and noted that GC require minutes to be produced to ensure good governance, and anyone appointed as EWG Chairman will be expected to produce minutes in a timely fashion for GC.
- 11.3. The Secretary General confirmed vacancies on the EWG will be advertised in the coming weeks, along with other vacancies on various committees. The Chairman asked for all interested members to put themselves forward for consideration.

No further questions were raised.

12. **G749 – ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 12.1. The results of the following elections were announced:
 - F Class Discipline Representative** - Peter Dommet elected 33 votes to 1
 - Eastern Regional Representative** - no nominations received – to be re-advertised
 - Scotland Regional Representative** – Bryden Ritchie elected with 19 votes to 14 (Ron Scaglione)
 - Estates Working Group** - no valid nominations received – to be re-advertised
 - Elected Trustee on Council** – Gary Alexander elected 30 votes to 4
 - Co-opted Trustee on Council** – Julia Hilger-Ellis elected 26 votes to 8

The Chairman thanked all nominees for agreeing to serve in new or further roles for the Association.

13. **G750 – ELECTION TO COMMITTEES**

- 13.1. The Chairman announced the following vacancies will be advertised:
 - Disciplinary Body**
 - Shooting Committee**
 - Membership Committee**
 - Estate Working Group**
 - Eastern Regional Representative**
- 13.2. The Chairman asked any interested members to put themselves forward for consideration.
- 13.3. KR asked whether the Mi-Voice ballots were anonymous. The Secretary General confirmed they were anonymous.
- 13.4. ACT asked that all future ballots allow members to abstain from voting if they choose. GT confirmed this is usually the case but had been an error on the recent election and had been corrected by Mi-Voice.

No further questions were raised.

14. **G751 – MEMBER QUESTIONS**

- 14.1. The Chairman noted that a list of questions received from the general membership had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman noted that the increase in the number of questions received shows an increased engagement with the membership.
- 14.2. The Chairman requested that future questions be separated into NRA and NSC sections to reflect the two areas of the business, in line with Charity Commission guidelines.
- 14.3. The Chairman also confirmed that GC members should respond to any questions they have received from the membership with the relevant answers provided by the professional staff, and any further request for information should be directed to the professional staff¹.
- 14.4. MJ asked if the professional staff member who should be contacted for any further feedback could be identified on the question responses to help GC members with their responses to the membership.
- 14.5. The Chairman went through the list of questions provided to the meeting and asked the various GC members if they had any follow up questions to the responses provided by the professional staff.
- 14.6. **Camp Accessibility** - NB asked whether access to ranges for members with buggies or use of the buggy service can be reviewed as it is not always appropriate for some competitors with certain disabilities. Whether some vehicles can be allowed for members with disabilities who cannot stand to wait for the buggy service, or do not have their own buggies. The Secretary General responded that there are limitations for cars on the ranges during the Imperial Meeting, to protect the range floor with the number of competitors falling back across the range, but recognises lack of mobility covers a wide range of different issues and more thought should be given to that.

¹ A copy of the Membership Questions and responses provided by the professional staff is appended to the end of these minutes.

- 14.7. PN commended the range staff during the F Class competitions had been very good in managing the cars on the ranges at 900 yards, moving those off who did not have disabled badges displayed, and sorting passes for those who did need them. PN added the area behind 1000 yards, especially butt 4, is totally eroded and that needs to be salvaged through terracing or alternative surfacing. The Secretary General responded the staff are aware of the state of the ranges, however there is no budgeted plan scheduled to rectify the issues at this time.
- 14.8. **Balance between Target and Shotgun Usage Space** – CB remarked that whilst he understands the financial arguments, he would like to address the request for a review of how to achieve a balance between NRA income and support for all disciplines. CB is very conscious that trying to book targets sometimes with fallback on Century Range is extremely difficult to achieve and would like to throw that into the equation. The Secretary General responded that the range allocations, especially for fallback shooting, are reviewed very carefully by the range office staff, both ahead of and during and after the annual Range Booking Conference which takes place in November. There is not the range capacity to give everyone what they want all the time, and difficult compromises have to be made.
- 14.9. MJ remarked that 300M range still has difficulty with range allocation, as referred to in the previous minutes, and asked for an update. The Secretary General confirmed Simon Aldhouse, 300M Discipline Representative has met with the professional staff to discuss a number of creative suggestions of enabling the 300m range to operate alongside Cottesloe Heath, and these are being reviewed.
- 14.10. CB asked if the WiFi coverage on camp could be improved.
- 14.11. IT and GA both agreed the responses to the question put forward to them had been dealt with in the responses from the professional staff.
- 14.12. **Electric Vehicle Charging Points** - PN has received a lot of comments about the pros and cons of EV charging points and will forward those onto the Secretary General.
- 14.13. ACT remarked it would be useful to provide updates to questions and answers in the proposed member newsletter or Journal to share the information to the membership.
- 14.14. MJ remarked that questions 5 and 6 asked to PN regarding the state of the firing points and target pegs should be noted and reported by the range staff or NRA staff, rather than relying on shooters providing that information. The Secretary General responded that the staff are active on the ranges and if there is something that has been missed, especially during busy periods of the year, then please do tell us so we can rectify it. The Chairman noted that photographs of problem areas are very useful when reporting issues.

No further questions were raised.

15. **G752 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 15.1. The Chairman summarised the point raised by MJ regarding the circulation of paperwork for General Council meetings. Under para 8(k)(iii) of the Second Schedule, the agenda and supporting documents must be sent to members of GC not less than five clear days before each meeting. The Chairman confirmed this is the practice to date, and noted that it would be open for GC to extend the period, but not shorten it as that would require a change to the Second Schedule.
- 15.2. MJ confirmed that was he would like consideration to be given to extending the circulation time to possibly 10 days to give GC members more time to consider any items which would require study or engagement with outside agencies, such as site five development, to better engage during the meetings.
- 15.3. The Chairman noted that any extension to the circulation of paperwork would be constrained by para 8(k)(ii) which states business has to be put forward at least 14 clear days prior to the meeting.
- 15.4. KR remarked that 5 days has always been adequate for the receipt of meeting papers, and couldn't the meeting request items be held over to a future meeting if there hasn't been enough time for research to have been done.
- 15.5. The Chairman confirmed items can be held over to the following meeting under Matters Arising, so that mechanism is already in place.
- 15.6. MJ confirmed he would like a little more time to review the papers rather than push them forward to the next meeting, and suggests the Wednesday of the week prior to a meeting, rather than the Friday would provide adequate time, and asked whether all the documents had to be sent out at the same time or could they be staggered. The Chairman responded that having all items at the same time would reduce confusion and allow GC members to have all relevant documents in one place, rather than piecemeal.
- 15.7. The Chairman asked all GC members to put forward their proposals to MJ to formulate a proposal for discussion at the next meeting. MJ is happy to share his email address for that purpose.

- 15.8. MJ asked whether an email can be accepted as a nomination for vacancies, rather than a form, as has been accepted previously. The Secretary General confirmed email nominations are accepted as a matter of routine. MJ then asked whether a late nomination could be accepted for Phil Northam to be put forward for the Estates Working Group, as the nomination hadn't been submitted correctly before the closing date; there had been sufficient time for this to be pointed out to him & then subsequently corrected prior to the deadline. The Chairman responded that vacancies will be advertised again in the coming weeks, and all nominations can be put forward by GC members at that time.
- 15.9. The Chairman presented a paper from an NRA member, Tim Webster (TW), providing suggestions for Bisley Access and Circulation for consideration, following his request made at the Bisley General Meeting in July to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists on camp. The Chairman noted two suggestions from the many submitted, one being the introduction of a one-way system during the Imperial Meeting for vehicles, and the other a marked corridor behind the firing point to allow shooters to walk up and down the firing point without having to weave through kit. The Chairman requested feedback on TW's suggestions.
- 15.10. JPSB remarked that there is ample space for parking behind the 600 yard firing point if people park sensibly.
- 15.11. The Secretary General added that the area immediately behind the 600 yard Century Range is a SSSI area and therefore cannot be used as a car park.
- 15.12. IT believes a marked walkway behind the firing point would be very helpful for all competitors, as competitors used to leave a gap, but are not so courteous these days. CB agreed it would be very useful to have a clear path behind the firing points.
- 15.13. KR asked whether it was worth considering the promotion of car sharing so competitors could be squadded on the same detail if they share cars, which would reduce the number of cars parking near the firing points and the roads.
- 15.14. The Chairman asked for any comments or proposals on TW's paper should be submitted to him for consideration at the next meeting.
- 15.15. RSt asked whether any consideration will be given to disabled parking on the new serviced caravan site development on Site 5. The Secretary General responded they are not on the current plan but a good point raised.
- 15.16. NB remarked that the Secretary General has shared the draft Estate Development Plan in his papers and it would be helpful to have feedback on the proposals, including prioritising any items so they can be considered. The Chairman asked all members to send in their suggestions to the Secretary General or Chairman for inclusion.
- 15.17. JM asked whether it would be beneficial to have a GC and Trustee away day or meeting, either annually or bi-annually, where both GC members and Trustees can share views and perspectives. The Chairman will take that request back to Council for consideration.
- 15.18. JM remarked that shooting his first Imperial Meeting this year in FClass, he noticed how little catering was available on camp and asked whether the FClass meeting could be integrated more into the main meeting, or whether clubs could be encouraged to offer catering earlier in the week.
- 15.19. MJ asked whether the caravan site licence could be sent out to the membership, as it is a public document and should be displayed. The Secretary General confirmed the site licence is displayed in the main NRA reception for anyone who wishes to read it.
- 15.20. MJ asked for the Guildford Borough Council caravan site inspection report dated March 2023 to be published to the membership for information. The Chairman responded that the report had been discussed in the confidential session of the Council meeting and therefore will not be published. MJ responded that anyone can request a copy from Guildford Council under the Freedom of Information Act and that he would publish it.

No further questions were raised.

16. C753 - PROPOSED DATES FOR 2024

- 16.1. The following meeting dates for 2024 were approved by the meeting.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Saturday 24th February 2024 | from 2.00pm | ZOOM Video Conference |
| Friday 7th June 2024 | from 3.00pm | NRA Pavilion |
| Followed by the AGM | from 6.00pm | NRA Pavilion |
| Saturday 7th September 2024 | from 2.00pm | ZOOM Video Conference |

The meeting closed at 16.40pm

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

D Lacey
Chairman

Date of next meeting: Saturday 24th February 2024 at 2.00pm via ZOOM

MEMBER QUESTIONS – SEPTEMBER 2023

RESPONSES IN *Italicised Red* TYPEFACE

QUESTIONS PUT TO NICK BRASIER, Ordinary Member

I am wondering when the NRA might put together a basic plan to make Camp more accessible for shooters with a disability. I'm sorry to place this upon you but I seem unable to adequately highlight the importance of this accessibility issue to the NRA or NSC. I have asked on numerous occasions to have a rail and bench or seat to be placed into the ablutions where my caravan is situated. Whilst, after great kerfuffle, a rusty chair was found; by the time the Imperial Meeting came around it had vanished. For those who do not use shared ablutions on camp they are a slip hazard. They do not drain properly and due to this and the use of shampoo and conditioner quickly become like a skating rink. This is a danger to any able bodied person let alone anyone with issues with their mobility or balance. I had suggested a very simple and low cost fix for all shower blocks. In one cubical place grab rails and a simple plastic bench. This fix will meet the needs of disabled and differently abled shooters and their families and those with younger children. In addition, in each toilet block there should be at least one lavatory cubicle with grab rails to support those with limited mobility or different ability.

We received an email from the member on 6 June 23 thanking us for placing rails in the ablutions near her caravan, which allowed her to shoot the previous weekend and decide to attend the BCRC and Imperial Meetings. We are grateful to the member for raising these concerns and will review the provision of grab rails and benches in caravan site ablution blocks.

We remain in a situation where there is only one disability car parking space at 600 yrds and no other dedicated parking spaces for disabled shooters around camp. This makes simple things like getting your squadding cards very difficult. Finally this year Peter Cottesloe decided that cars could no longer be taken onto ranges during the Imperial Meeting. Those cars with government issued blue disability badges. His reasons were that 5 to 6 cars per year drive into ditches - not in my or anyone else's experience but I bow to his knowledge. The next day Tom Rylands (an able bodied shooter/armourer) was late for a shoot and drove his minibus onto the range on the left hand side and parked behind the 300 point. Due to the application of this rule I had to drop out of a series of competitive shoots due to pain caused by having to stand for 20 mins prior to shooting. (No I did not have a chair and as we are not allowed to store buggies on camp I also did not have a buggy - this was the first time this rule had been enforced) I believe in sensible rules and reasonable adjustments. I need to rely on these to help me return to and enjoy the sport and hobby I loved. I also believe in fairness. I want to shoot and I pay to take part in competition. I am also a life member of the NRA. I need the NRA to want to support our taking part in our less healthy years too. I had hoped by writing to you I might encourage the NRA and NSC to fulfil their duties to me as a disabled person and as a shooter. Sorry for this list, it is all easily fixed in under the cost of one person's caravan rental. The NRA and NSC's unwillingness to want to do this is inexplicable. Maybe you can find some clarity.

Competitor vehicles (other than 1 per team on during team competitions) have been excluded from Century range floor during the Imperial since 2013. This decision was taken to reduce ground damage and reduce the risks to shooters walking between the firing points. A buggy taxi service operates during the TR meeting to assist competitor access from the car park to the firing point.

Rhonda Lusty, Life Member.

I wanted to highlight an issue that around 10% of shooters experience at Bisley. For those of us with red colour-blindness it is sometimes impossible to distinguish the V from the 5 since the position is the same and the red looks black. I noticed that in South Africa they used a paddle in a different position. That seems optimal but I would expect the transition to be plagued with errors as people adapted. However, if we put any sort of shape, stripe, feature on the orange marker it would instantly make the sport more accessible. In practice, we carry on, but are a nuisance to those we are marking for since we have to ask if it is a V or a 5. A diagonal stripe on each of the score marker paddles would solve the issue. Can this please be considered?

Referred to the Shooting Committee

Neil Groves, Registered Member

QUESTIONS PUT TO KAREN ROBERTSON, Ordinary Member

The issue I want to bring up concerns the zero range. I would like to propose that the zero range fees are reduced to £2. My daughter and I shoot together and on arrival, on a shooting day, we buy two cards to the zero range and go and zero our rifles, using firing 3 - 4 rounds each. So that's the first thing, £10 for 8 shots is a bit rich, but it has to be done. Then there are many occasions where I have seen the zero range used for extended periods by people who park themselves there, by clubs who cycle people through on the same target and by people using a chronograph. Please understand that I do not object to any of these things, they are necessary, especially with beginners or when developing a load, I do not want to see it stopped but again, I'm paying £10 for less than ten rounds fired and usually less than 20 minutes of combined use for two people. Finally, I shot with the Shooting Club three times last year, on every occasion, there were people turning up who hadn't zeroed their rifles. This means that the RCO has to spend time getting them on target and this blocks a firing point for the rest of us. This is no criticism of the RCO's, they are a wonderful bunch and again I don't think any change is needed to personnel but rifles need to be zeroed before arriving on the point. This situation doesn't arise when I shoot with my club, because quite simply if you cannot hit the target, the RCO sends you to the zero range. I believe that the high price of the zero range is putting people off using it, I would like to see the price reduced to £2 and greater importance placed on zeroing before you go out to the point to shoot. Additionally, I believe you could use the range next to the zero range for chronographing and other extended activities. I believe that any reduction in revenue from charging less per user will be offset by it being used more. Also, if the adjacent range is used to better effect at a reasonable charge, this will help offset the reduction in price.

Range hire rates are a matter for the NSC (the NRA's commercial subsidiary); we will ensure this query is considered when reviewing prices for next year. On a wider point the NRA has a considerable backlog of repairs and maintenance, coupled with a significant requirement for capital funding for improvements and development. Much of this work is funded by surpluses generated by the NSC's commercial activities

Harinder Bakhshi, Registered Member.

Every time I tried to pay for my booking 14/09/2023 on line I got the gifted page thanking me for any contributions to the NRA. Not the payment page. I eventually rang the range office and was told I could pay by phone or on the day in question.

The range office have been unable to replicate this problem, and advise that if it happens again to ring them, quoting the booking reference for payment to be taken over the phone.

Is there any way we can simplify knowing in advance what ranges are available. Every time I made an online submission it was declined for one reason or another. Why not tell the membership what ranges are available and at what distances so we do not have to keep on trying to book the same range/distance on different days of the week until we get a confirmed booking for all requirements.

A specification for modern online booking system showing range availability has been produced but quotations received from software developers have been unaffordable with the present CAPEX budget. Target availability for the next 3 weeks can be found <https://nationalshootingcentre.co.uk/range-availability/>

James Phillips, Registered Member

QUESTIONS PUT TO CHARLES BROOKS, Vice Chair GC, Ordinary Member

Balance between target and shotgun usage space

At the Imperial meeting, the 300m was a great success with participants from the UK, Germany and Japan. Since the results have been out the team from France have been in contact about coming next year. Unfortunately the 300m discipline in this country, the main centre fire rifle discipline across nearly all of the world, is in danger of dying due to the lack of range time. We recognise the need for shooting activity and income to be balanced but it seems that the use of the area behind Century range for shotgun is making a key rifle discipline unworkable and we question whether the balance between resource needs and supporting 300m (and TR and MR on occasion) is right. Please push for a free-thinking review of how best to achieve a balance between NRA income and support for all disciplines - in the long term I'm sure it will strengthen the sport and Association.

The 300M shed on the left hand side of Century is used by a small number of NRA members. 26 competitors entered the 2023 300M Championship; this compares with an average of 21 competitors between 2015 and 2019. When in use the 300M shed reduces the number of targets available on Century and closes our shotgun ranges on Cottesloe Heath. We endeavour to schedule 300M metre shooting alongside Century and Stickledown bookings that close Cottesloe Heath. Balancing the requirement for the ranges to serve all rifle shooting disciplines fairly, whilst enabling the commercial operations to generate funds for NRA CAPEX, maintenance and repair, remains a considerable challenge. Range hire income for one day of the 300M range is equivalent to around 5% of the income sacrificed from Cottesloe Heath alone.

Matt Guille, Registered Member

To honour Her Late Majesty the Queen

My business is not so much a question, more a suggestion. It is that GC and ultimately the Trustees consider changing the name of the TR Grand Aggregate with the object of creating a lasting memorial to Her Late Majesty the Queen, our former Patron. I suggest that the Grand be renamed The Queen Elizabeth II Grand Aggregate. I believe that not only would this be a fitting tribute but it would also extend the precedent of naming competitions after Royal personages. We have the Alexandra, The Queen Mary (in SR), the Victoria and the Albert (in MR). Others include of the Duke of Gloucester - later renamed The Prince of Wales - and the Duke of Cambridge. If you consider that there may be merit in putting forward this idea for consideration please go ahead. I would be content for my name to be associated with it.

Referred to the Shooting Committee

Neil Fyfe, Registered Member

Toilet facilities

Is there any plan to provide good quality toilets near/by the 300yards car park on Century, beside Butt 19? The two current "cubicles" are, being polite, unsuitable particularly if one has a medical condition to contend with.

The draft Estate Development Plan includes proposals for a new "container" style toilet block to be installed by 2025. This will require new connections and long service runs for mains water and electricity, and the installation of a foul waste management system.

On a similar note toilet facilities behind the 600x firing point towards butt 19 would also be appreciated.

There are no plans at present for such a facility due to the proximity of existing facilities and the relatively light use of 500/600 yard targets on this side of the range.

Mario Guzzetti, Registered Member

Hobson's Way Tarmac

Is there any plan to tarmac the access road from the far end of Century to the Short Siberia ranges? It would be greatly appreciated, I am sure, by many NRA members.

The original planning consent for this road was conditioned upon an aggregate surface due to ecological concerns. We have no plans to lodge an application for a release from this condition. The tree line was cut back some years ago to reduce surface damage caused by rain. Specialist contractors re-grade the road surface each spring.

Mario Guzzetti, Registered Member

D Line Huts Refurbishments

I rent Hut D1 - top of D Lines, next to Elcho Lodge. Like all of D Lines, it's getting tatty and needs some TLC. I have been told that other tenants of D Lines huts have made contact with the NRA previously to ask whether they can carry out essential maintenance on their huts and they have been told that, because the huts are Listed, there can be no individual work undertaken in case the materials used don't confirm to various rules and regs, paint colour, etc. Either way, the huts are crumbling. First question is: what's the plan? There is a precedent for recent repairs: a new neighbour, who is renting the combined D5/D6, has recently had his hut touched up and filled and repainted - inside and out. As the huts are falling apart I would like to know what the

NRA's plans are for scraping off the loose paint, filling and treating the wood, and repainting. They are lovely, and it's criminal that they are falling apart - not least because the NRA continues to charge rent to those who inhabit them. Second question relates to planning rules and regs, and the business of tenants not being able to carry out repairs for fear of using the "wrong" paint colour, etc. Are they listed or protected and if so to what extent? If the outside of the huts are protected, what about the insides? Can tenants undertake works inside - the inside of my hut, although skanky, is less of a concern to me though, as it's the external fabric of all these huts that concerns me.

Huts are let on annual licences and the NRA is responsible for repair and maintenance. The huts are not listed but lie within the Conservation Area. Repairs are undertaken as required but are not keeping up with the rate of deterioration, so we are planning to redecorate and repair one block per year commencing 2024. Hut licensees can redecorate the inside, having obtained prior agreement for the (neutral) colour scheme from NRA Real Estate Administrator Shelly Fletcher shelly.fletcher@nra.org.uk

Simon Dickson, Life Member

Internet issues

I have a matter of concern concerning the very weak internet connection signal everywhere in the Camp area. Cuts are very frequent. In a time where everyone uses the internet daily these poor conditions are not acceptable and not worthy of the NRA. What plan does the NRA have to improve the connectivity?

WiFi access across the Camp varies by location. The draft Estate Development Plan includes provision to review and improve broadband provision.

Philippe Ginestet, Life Member, NRA Vice-President

Condition of the roads on Camp

My other area of concern is the very poor condition of the roads in the Camp, with many holes and sharp sides able to damage cars, even if carefully driven. What plan does the NRA have to improve them?

Our tarmac contractor's annual visit to repair potholes was delayed until August this year; most areas have been repaired but this will be a continuing problem on such a large estate.

Philippe Ginestet, Life Member, NRA Vice-President

QUESTION PUT TO PETER COTTRELL, Head of Shooting Services

I would like to raise a concern to be added to the meeting agenda on 16th September. About the cost of shooting, especially for guest days. The cost seems excessive at £75 for each booking to bring a guest. My old club London Practical Rifle Association, charge £20 for each booking on their guest days. Add into the costs of ammunition (which I appreciate is outside of NRA control) further exacerbates the cost of shooting and I'm hoping that the council can consider costs in helping mitigate against the cost of living crisis and making shooting more accessible to all. Rather than following a trend to keep adding more increases in costs for our sport. Ideally the council should look at ways to cut costs.

The NRA guest days are budgeted to break-even but rarely do so. Clubs such as the LPSA offer excellent value as they rely on unpaid volunteers. NRA guest days remain popular and well supported which suggests most members consider they offer fair value.

Cutting costs remains a constant and consistent challenge for the NRA. Like many charities we face significant cost pressures and growing concerns from our members regarding affordability.

Adrian Kruger, NRA Member

QUESTION PUT TO IAIN THOMSON, Ordinary Member

The ground on both Century and Stickledown is delicate and easily damaged by vehicles. Once damaged it takes a very long time to recover if it will recover at all. This is recognised by the information from Camp Standing Orders printed on the back of every Competitor's envelope at the Imperial every year.

The Bisley Camp Standing Orders contained in Appendix 1 Paragraph 9j clearly state the rules in relation to cars and parking on the ranges as below:

9 Car and Motor Vehicles

This includes, but is not restricted to, light motorised vehicles akin to golf buggies.

j Private vehicles may not at any time:

- i Go forward of the 1,000 yards firing point on Stickledown unless going to the butts for marking duty or to the Butt Zero parking area.
- ii Go behind the firing points on Century, other than at 600 yards, where vehicles must remain behind the line of trees, and in the gravelled parking areas behind 300 yards and at 150 yards on Butt 19.

Exceptions to sub-paras i and ii:

- Motor vehicles carrying a disabled person and displaying a valid Disabled Range Access Pass, issued from the Range Office.
- Light motorised vehicles, eg golf buggies. These vehicles may approach all firing points no closer than 20 metres but must not hinder or restrict any access by pedestrians.
- NRA staff on duty.
- At the discretion of the CRO, in formal competition teams may be permitted to use one vehicle to move team kit to and from the forward firing points

These rules make no provision for alteration by any person or for any reason other than as stated.

General Council is requested to confirm that these rules will be enforced in order to protect the delicate ground on Century and Stickledown and that this will include the annual .22 Meeting and European Long Range F Class Championship.

Vehicle access on Century range largely complies with these regulations. Access forward of the 300 yard firing point is permitted under licence by the NSC for designated vehicles attending the NSRA Summer Championships.

Un-authorized vehicle access forward of 1,000 yards on Stickledown is a greater issue and needs to be more carefully enforced.

Jeremy Tuck, Life Member

QUESTION PUT TO GARY ALEXANDER, Trustee & Ordinary Member

My question, which relates to all members and the reputation of the National Rifle Association, includes all of the following together with the background correspondence attached below: The recent Lucy Letby case has shown that ignoring people's concerns and sweeping them under the carpet is the worst possible course of action. As an extremely experienced, well qualified, and loyal member supporting the NRA for over 30 years, I have always presented shooting in the best possible light, even introducing a number of new members and volunteering my own time. The reward for that has been abuse. So why has General Secretary Mr. Andrew Mercer (and the other NRA officials shown below) shown such utter contemptuous disregard of that by refusing even the most basic courtesy of any acknowledgement whatsoever, let alone a proper reply, in response to serious concerns I first expressed to him in writing over 15 months ago and numerous times since then, particularly bearing in mind that we all help to pay his salary and that good manners cost nothing? Mr. Mercer's discourtesy reflects badly on his own position and is offensive, not only to me but to all members. Such disgraceful behaviour is completely unacceptable and an apology is in order. Michael Jay PS: For modesty reasons I do not normally include my CV in correspondence but I do so as my background to my question: CV: [//www.japansociety.org.uk/martial-arts-sports-experts](http://www.japansociety.org.uk/martial-arts-sports-experts) ----- Some of the original communications from me to Mr. Mercer, all unanswered: 10 August 2023 Dear Mr Mercer, It is disappointing, to say the least, that you have

yet again failed to deal with the matters about which I originally wrote to you on 11 April 2022 (see all correspondence below). Your email to me of 7 August 2023 states: 'Please be reassured we take the safety of all guests to our Bisley facilities as a very serious matter, and I was extremely concerned to receive your email.' That may be so, and covered the recent accident, for which I thank you, but you are clearly not concerned enough to have answered my original concerns about which I have yet to receive any response whatsoever even after writing to you and other NRA officers numerous times. I therefore ask you the following questions: 1. Do you and the NRA condone foul language and constant use of the F-word by your range officers in front of younger female shooters, or even towards male members and guests? 2. Do you and the NRA condone abuse, sarcasm and veiled insults from your range officers towards other range officers and their guests, especially on a live range where good manners and impeccable conduct are essential? 3. Why have you completely failed to respond to these and other concerns about which I first wrote to you on 11 May 2022? It is perfectly reasonable to expect a proper answer from you, considering that you purport to be the Secretary General of the U.K.'s governing body for shooting. Lack of such a courtesy merely indicates contempt for those of us who help to pay your salary. I have introduced many new Members to Bisley over the years. Sadly I will not recommend the organisation to anyone else. Should I still not receive any response from you, I will be forced to conclude that the above matters are condoned by you and the NRA, something which is hardly likely to endear shooting to the rest of the population. Michael Jay NRA Member 9946 _____ From: Michael Jay mjaysoma@btinternet.com Subject: Re: Range Officers - Current NRA Events Date: 5 August 2023 at 16:40 To: NRA Competitions competitions@nra.org.uk View this email in your browser Ref: NRA Range Officer Volunteers. Dear Sir/Madam, Thank you for your kind invitation below to volunteer as a range officer. Unfortunately, the treatment which I received when previously volunteering as an NRA range officer at Bisley was so appalling that, on 11 May 2022, I wrote to Mr Andrew Mercer explaining what happened and asking why I should ever volunteer again. I am yet to receive the courtesy of a reply or even an acknowledgement from him. On 24 December 2022, I wrote to him and again received no reply whatsoever. In view of a recent minor accident at Bisley, I wrote to him yet again on 22 July and 31 July 2023 (see below) and have STILL not received either a reply or an acknowledgement. So why should I volunteer again only to be treated in such a disgraceful way? I would be grateful if you would please explain just what loyal members have to do in order to get a reply from this man. Yours sincerely, Michael Jay NRA Member 9946 25 Ringwood Way, Hampton, TW12 1AT. UK ----- SENT 31 July 2023: Mr. Andrew Mercer Secretary-General. National Rifle Association Bisley Camp. cc: Mr. Oliver Jones, NCSC Manager Mr Iain Robertson Safety, Legal and Technical Manager. Dear Mr. Mercer, It appears that I have received neither a reply nor even an acknowledgement to my message below of 22 July 2023 either from you or from the two managers to whom I addressed it. Similarly, I have had no response whatsoever from you to my email of 11 May 2022 expressing my concerns about the disgraceful way in which I was treated when I volunteered my services as a range officer for NRA competitions at Bisley. I received no reply from you to the follow-up enquiry about that which I sent on 24 December 2022. Those concerns were about the unwarranted abuse to which I was subjected in public by another NRA range officer conducting the competitions together with the foul language used by him in front of female shooters. His language was so embarrassing that I felt bound to apologise to one of the young women who was subjected to it. She had made a long journey to take part in that competition and I did not want her to go away thinking that all NRA members were of the same ilk. After 17 years as a special constable in the Metropolitan Police, I am not a prude, but such behaviour is completely unacceptable especially bearing in mind the image which we shooters should all be projecting to the world. Also, the appalling accommodation provided meant that, due to lack of sleep, I was in no fit state to supervise safety matters on a shooting range. Fortunately, but with regret, I had both the good sense and strength of character to withdraw my services. Although now retired, my training and 31 years' impeccable safety record as a pilot flying heavy jets such as the Super VC10 and Boeing 747s around the world for British Airways taught me that safety is paramount. I apply that sense of duty to my personal shooting. For many years in British Airways we have had an excellent system whereby ANY suggestion to improve flight safety, whether coming from the most junior apprentice or from the top management, receives a proper acknowledgement and response. The UK Civil Aviation Authority operates a similar system, acknowledged worldwide, called CHIRP. Clearly, the NRA is not in the same class as those organisations. For over 30 years I have supported shooting and the NRA in this country in spite of the trials and tribulations caused by the anti-gun lobby and I have always used my numerous instructor qualifications and considerable experience to show British shooting in the best light, especially when introducing visitors and new members to Bisley. Clearly, all that support counts for nothing. I have asked you for nothing and have merely made a simple suggestion in the hope of avoiding any further accident. Can I therefore assume the lack of common courtesy by way of any response from you and your officers to be an indication of the contempt in which you and the National Rifle Association hold its loyal members and visitors?

I have written to Mr Jay apologising for the considerable delay in responding to his detailed and extensive list of complaints made by email on 11 May 2022, and invited him to meet with me to discuss. Mr Jay's message of the 24 December 2022 makes no reference to abuse and foul language; I have asked him to provide further details

Michael Jay, NRA Member

QUESTIONS PUT TO PHIL NORTHAM, Ordinary Member

1. Site 1 caravan owners - Why is there no dish wash station at the south end of site 1 caravans – the small shed at site 2 is inadequate.

This suggestion will be considered when reviewing responses to the draft Estate Development Plan.

2. Site 1 caravan owners - There is no sanitary disposal point for site 1 or 2, some have been seen using the land drains, can a sluice be provided?

This suggestion will be considered when reviewing responses to the draft Estate Development Plan.

3. Caravan owners - Some ablutions have 230v sockets some none, they are needed for irons etc can they be provided at all ablutions & not just those that kick up a fuss about not having them?

This suggestion will be considered when reviewing responses to the draft Estate Development Plan.

4. Adam Bagnall – are there any plans to fit EV charging points?

This suggestion will be considered when reviewing responses to the draft Estate Development Plan.

5. Various TR shooters - Firing points at 600yds Butt 14 are a mess. Why were they not remediated before the imperial, shooting on them was a bind.

Butt 14 600 yard FP was in a poor condition due to extensive wear and tear from use of the electronic targets. Re-turfing plans were considered but abandoned due to high range demand and hot dry weather. We are exploring options to install an all-weather surface at the rear of the firing point.

6. From an RCO – the FP pegs are in poor state some unreadable, making relaying messages harder. Many pegs are set too far forward so shooters are on the top edge of the FP hump with an elbow over it.

It would be very helpful if the RCO could assist by identifying the range(s), firing point(s) and / or target(s) to assist our staff in addressing this concern

7. Club Chair - What are the top 5 causes of HL failures that cause an accident or injury. (risk prevention).

We record the incidents but determining the precise cause is not possible after the firing of the round. Examination of other rounds assembled in the same batch / by the same home loader and / or investigations into competency / practices can produce circumstantial evidence to the cause. Powder (wrong propellant, wrong quantity) charge is probably the most common suspected cause.

8. How many people are on the waiting list for a hut or unserviced caravan pitch. (apparently there is a list)

We record enquiries from members; since 2020 18 have been received about huts and 5 about un-serviced caravan pitches.

9. How many empty caravan pitches are there by year over the last 5 years.

There were few, if any, empty pitches at the end of 2019 after caravans were relocated from Waldegrave site. The number has steadily increased in anticipation of the next serviced caravan pitch development; this ensures owners of displaced caravans are guaranteed an alternative pitch. The number of empty pitches currently stands at 35; these have been offered to owners of caravans on Site 5.

10. Could NRA collaborate with an ammunition remanufacturer to generate a CIP, product liability- CE compliant reloaded grade of ammunition using its empty cases vs their scrap value?

We have yet to identify a manufacturer interested in such a venture. The worldwide shortage of ammunition and components coupled with quality assurance / product liability concerns appears to make such an arrangement unattractive.

11. How many complaints has the Range Office received this year regarding Ranges/Firing Points, targetry, equipment & facilities?

Complaints and queries are received on the day in person to staff, by radio, or by phone. A majority are resolved on the day to ensure any disruption to shooting is minimised. We do not log these complaints; however the NSC will be launching a customer satisfaction survey to gather feedback.

12. Mr P Cutts - In the latest Journal in Mr Mercer's front piece he states that the NRA are holding a record quantity of stock and that this is restricting the ability to commission other projects.

As this is the case would the Gen Sec please give a response as to why vast sums are being spent on site 103 etc, with no published use communicated to the membership, whilst at the same time the Exhibition Hut remains in a terrible state of repairs. At an Umbrella Tent meeting some 3-4 years ago, after a question tented by myself, the Gen Sec assured the meeting that work on the Exhibition Hut was imminent and work would be resuming in the near future. This clearly has not progressed and the EH is further decaying. I look forward to the GCs thoughts on this matter.

The opportunity to acquire site 103 arose in late 2022 and was completed to remove a major eyesore that confronted every visitor to Bisley Camp. Expenditure to date has focused upon removing asbestos, clearing the site, and securing the structure whilst options for the future use are developed. Works for Exhibition Hut were deferred due to Covid; plans for the future are included in the draft Estate Development Plan that will be published for consultation by the end of September.

Various NRA Members/RCOs