

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

THE GENERAL COUNCIL
Minutes of the General Council Meeting
held by ZOOM
on Saturday 18th February 2023 from 2.00pm

Present:

Chairman

Mr D Lacey (DLa)

Members:

Mr GK Alexander (GA)
Cdr NJW Benstead (NBen)
Mr CM Brooks (CB)
Mr JPS Bloomfield (JPSB)
Wg Cdr DP Calvert (DC)
Dr AMW Cargill Thompson (ACT)
Mr PAE Charlton (PCh)
Mr DC Crispin (DCr)
Mr A Dagger (AD)
Ms A Gran (AG)
Mr J Harris (JH)
Mr MD Jenvey (MJ)
Mr RS Kenchington (RK)
Mr GAE Larcombe (GL)
Miss SS Lohmann (SL)
Mr D Lowe (DL)
Mr FPR Northam (PN)
Mr CG Perry (CP)
Mr A Reynolds (AR)
Mr B Ritchie (BR)
Mrs K Robertson (KR)
Mr R Sayer (RS)
Mr R Stebbings (RSt)
Mr D Stimpson (DS)
Mr MP Watkins (MW)
Mr JGM Webster (JW)
Mr AM Whiffin (AW)
Dr JD Warburton (JWar)

Vice Chairman

NRA Treasurer

In attendance:

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

Apologies for absence:

Mr HRM Bailie, Mr PR Coley, Mr N Brasier, Mr G Burns, Mr M Cottillard, Mr J Harper-Smith, Wg Cdr CJ Hockley, Lt. Col. RG Jeffrey, Mr J Longhurst, Mr N Macfarlane, Dr J Marsden, Dr J Martin, Brig. M Pountain, Mr T Rylands, Mr AJD Saunders, Mr C Steele-Benny, Mr N St Aubyn, Mr IR Thomson, Mr G Trembath, Mr S Wallis.

INDEX G723 to G738

The Chairman declared the meeting open.

1. G723 – APOLOGIES

1.1. Apologies were received as noted above.

2. G724 – 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. G725 – REGISTER OF INTEREST DOCUMENTS

- 3.1. The Chairman asked General Council members who had not yet completed the required Register of Interests and Register of Property Interest documents to return them to GT as soon as possible.
- 3.2. The Chairman will send a reminder email to those who have not yet responded.

4. G726 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

4.1. There were no matters arising.

5. G727 – REVIEW OF ACTIONS

- 5.1. The Secretary General reported that the draft range operator's guide was published on the NRA website in December 2022, and comments and suggestions are being received for consideration and inclusion in future updates. **Item CLOSED.**
- 5.2. The working group will present their report on the Regional Ranges Working Group later in the meeting. **Item CLOSED.**
- 5.3. The Secretary General informed the meeting the range booking cancellation policy is currently unchanged and remains as it was in 2022. The Chairman noted the item is NSC business as it is a commercial activity. **Item CLOSED.**
- 5.4. The Chairman noted the Estates Working Group has its own agenda item and will therefore be discussed later in the meeting. **Item CLOSED.**
- 5.5. The Secretary General informed the meeting that tenants have been informed of the electricity tariffs applicable to 31 March 2023. **Item CLOSED.**
- 5.6. JPSB has not yet reviewed the requirements for police and local council licenses for clubs to store ammunition in their armouries, and will produce a report for the next meeting. **Item ONGOING.**
- 5.7. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the purchase of Site 103 has resulted in the plans for Exhibition Hut being put on hold whilst the plans for the site are reviewed. Work has commenced on the Estate Development Plan for 2023 and plans for Exhibition Hut and Site 103 will be included in those proposals.

No further questions were raised.

6. G728 – BUSINESS PLANNING & OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- 6.1. The Secretary General and Chief Executive reports were circulated prior to the meeting.
- 6.2. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the NRA now has over 10,000 individual members, showing a steady growth over the last 15 years. 2023 renewals are progressing well. Clubs, Schools and Associations (CSAs) affiliations have seen a drop from 773 in 2021 to 766 in 2022. Smaller clubs seem to be merging to create larger clubs for greater efficiency.
- 6.3. RSt would like to understand the granular reasons for the growth in membership, including regions, disciplines as there may be losses in the regions, but an increase nearer Bisley. RSt believes the information would be very beneficial in understanding where the issues may be and how to address those to retain the membership. The Secretary General will take that request back to the Membership team.
- 6.4. AD asked why the number of school affiliations had dropped. The Secretary General reported that the numbers fell during Covid and haven't returned to previous levels but he did not have information as to why schools are no longer taking part in competition shooting. The Secretary

General agreed that more feedback should be gathered from CSAs who have not renewed and will report back at the next General Council meeting in June.

- 6.5. PN remarked that the new Home Office Approval fees has increased to £372 which is a substantial amount to be paid in addition to affiliation fees, insurance and storage fees for small clubs and schools. PN also noted that the increase in HOA fees may increase the demise of small clubs and school CCFs. PN feels there should be some thought on how the small clubs can be supported to operate without paying HOA fees, under Section 11 (Firearms Act) exemptions.
- 6.6. RK remarked it would be useful to know how many schools do not affiliate to the NRA and may be interested in shooting long range .22 rather than just 25 yards.
- 6.7. RSt noted that there are over 500 schools in the UK with a CCF unit and the majority shoot on MoD ranges using their MoD cover so don't need to be affiliated. More thought needs to be given on how the NRA can attract schools to shoot at Bisley.
- 6.8. MJ asked for an update on Site 103 including advice from the planning consultants on options for refurbishing or developing the building. The Secretary General reported that the work being conducted to make the building water tight and structurally sound is considered as refurbishment work that does not require planning permission. The current use category under planning rules is not clear and further work needs to be conducted before the planning consultants can provide further advice.
- 6.9. MJ asked who will be involved in the Draft Estate Development Plan. The Secretary General confirmed the professional staff will be working on the plan in conjunction with directions from Council, and will be shared with General Council, before being put out for wider consultation with the membership.
- 6.10. MJ asked what the new service charge regime is. The Secretary General stated the previous service charge apportionment had been done on rateable value, which was deemed to be inconsistent, and service charges will now be based on the gross external area of the building.
- 6.11. MJ asked why there was a need to recruit an HR Manager. The Secretary responded that there has been budgetary constraints so the HR function has fallen on the senior management team, who are at capacity. A new HR Manager will consolidate the HR function and be able to provide enhanced HR support to the NRA.
- 6.12. The Secretary General asked the meeting to contact either the Chairman or Sec Gen if they have any suitable candidates for the co-opted Trustee vacancies. A formal note will be circulated to GC members by the end of February. KR remarked that not all positions had to be filled. The Chairman remarked that someone with Real Estate experience would be useful. JW noted that a space should remain available for co-opts when specific skills are required.
- 6.13. RK asked whether schools needed to be affiliated to the NRA to shoot in the Ashburton and its associated competitions. JPSB confirmed that schools are required to be affiliated to the NRA to enter the Ashburton competition.
- 6.14. ACT reminded the meeting that he had suggested that risk management and strategy experience be added to the Trustee Skills Matrix list and would like to see that done before any further recruitment of trustees is conducted.
- 6.15. PN remarked that he is still worried that private markers are not covered by the club insurance policies and asked the Chief Executive to check that all clubs using private markers have adequate insurance in place, as this is a Home Office Approval requirement, and the NSC is responsible for all activity taking place on the ranges. RK noted that not all clubs shooting at Bisley are Home Office approved.

No further questions were raised.

7. G729 – FINANCE

- 7.1. The Treasurer's report to 31 December 2022 was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 7.2. The Treasurer informed the meeting the 2023 budget process is ongoing and the association hopes to bolster its profitability in 2023. A confirmed budget is due to be circulated by the end of the 1st quarter.
- 7.3. The Treasurer reported that the purchase of Site 103 will have an impact on the capex available through 2023.
- 7.4. MJ asked whether it was practical to obtain a comprehensive breakdown of the income and expenses for the Imperial Meeting to review the overall cost of competitions and consider offering incentives to encourage more shooters such as cheap accommodation. The Treasurer responded that slide 8 in the financial pack shows the business unit performance and there is information in the competitions column, which shows competitions run at a net loss. MJ remarked that there are a lot of staff costs associated to the Imperial and questioned whether they need to be included as staff are paid throughout the year. The Secretary General remarked that the competition income was £870k and the gross costs were £940k,

giving a gross loss of £68k. The cost of sales in relation to competitions does not include any permanent staff costs. It does include range markers, armoury staff, range hires, RO costs etc. The Treasurer remarked that the net loss represents a charitable contribution of the NRA to the competitions held as part of its charitable activities.

- 7.5. The Secretary General noted that the range hire for the Imperial Meeting is charged at the same rate as all other range hire charges. Ammunition and markers are both charged at cost. MJ asked if there was any way of showing the income from accommodation. The Secretary General remarked that accommodation doesn't make any money for the NRA over the year. The accommodation is sold out for the key times of the Imperial Meeting. Bunkabins are brought in for additional accommodation at a cost of £18,000. The cost of the Bunkabins are shared with the HotRod Hayride that takes place just after the Meeting.
- 7.6. RSt asked what additional capacity there is on the ranges during the Imperial Meeting, as there used to be about 1500 people shooting the Grand Aggregate but last year there was only about 900. The Secretary General reported that he did not have that information to hand but believes the ranges are configured in the same way as for previous Imperial Meetings and so the capacity remains the same. RSt believes the best way forward is to take action to increase entries. The Secretary General remarked that additional competitions run by the NSC would need to be sustained which has a cost. The Treasurer noted the Imperial Meeting is currently run at a net loss as a charitable exercise and therefore a larger Imperial Meeting would not help the charity as it would be taking up range space which would have otherwise been sold through the NSC. Competitions provide less than 10% of the NRA's overall income. The intention is for competitions to provide a gross profit of 5%, but this was impacted in 2022 due to the range fires and the refunds made to competitors.
- 7.7. PN asked if the NSC could review their camping prices as he believes it is too expensive, and could the 40% discount offered to Under 25s be offered on accommodation to encourage them to enter the competitions.
- 7.8. JPSB remarked that the Meeting could accept no more than 1605 entries for any competition, due to the number of targets available. In practice, 1500 entries would be the maximum for the Grand Aggregate due to the layout of the ranges.
- 7.9. RSt asked how many people have attended the Imperial in the last 10 years, and how many of them return as it would be interesting to analyse attendance as it is the flagship event which drives competitions and attendance in the regions as well. The Secretary General doesn't have that information to hand. The Treasurer remarked that the professional staff do not have the capacity to do this type of analysis. RSt offered to help if given the information.
- 7.10. JW remarked that the TR sub-committee is reviewing how the costs can be managed for the TR meeting, such as changing some competitions to 2-and-10 shots instead of 2-and-15. Another idea is charging separately for the second stages of the Kings and St George's competitions, which removes the subsidy from all competitors for those second stage competitions.
- 7.11. ACT remarked the challenge to reduce costs is not easy due to the rising costs of ammunition and other external costs including materials and it would be useful to have an idea of costs and to explain the costs to potential competitors through an article in the Journal.
- 7.12. RK asked for a glossary of acronyms in the Finance Report¹.

No further questions were raised.

8. **G730 – COUNCIL**

- 8.1. The report from Council had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- 8.2. MJ asked for sight of the presentation made to the Trustees by the Real Estate Administrator, Shelly Fletcher, regarding the proposed caravan development sites.
- 8.3. The Secretary General confirmed that presentation had been sent to the Estates Working Group who will be reporting later in the meeting.
- 8.4. CB asked whether the liaison with the Charity Commission was going well and had there had been any response to the regular submitted reports. The Chairman confirmed no response had been received, to date, and the NRA continues to submit regular quarterly reports. The Chairman confirmed the Charity Commission has not specified an end date for reporting.
- 8.5. ACT asked whether the Trustees had given further consideration to the status of youth shooting as a charitable objective, and whether this will be formally recognised. The Chairman responded that article one of the Second Schedule does not specifically include education as a charitable objective but the

¹ The acronyms used are: (a) FYE – Financial Year End (b) yoy – year on year (c) YTD – year to date (d) KPI – key performance indicator (e) BS – balance sheet (f) SG – Secretary General (g) DD – direct debit (h) YE – year end (i) OH – overhead (j) FY – financial year (k) FTSE – Financial Times Stock Exchange share index

Trustees consider it incidental to the specified charitable purpose. The NRA's engagement with the Charity Commission has resulted in them looking favourably on engaging with young people in the context of promoting the efficient of the Armed Forces. The NRA continues to engage with young people.

- 8.6. PN asked whether there is an opportunity to expand the charitable objectives to include education. The Chairman confirmed the process is not straight forward and the NRA can engage effectively with young people as part of pursuing its existing charitable objectives.
- 8.7. AG reported that a proposal for youth shooting by the Membership Committee has been accepted by the Trustees and put to the professional staff for consideration and implementation.

No further questions were raised.

9. **G731 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE**

- 9.1. The Chairman of Shooting Committee gave an update of the last few meetings held since the last General Council meeting in November and January.
- 9.2. The main topic for discussion at the two meetings were the proposed changes to the Handbook. The period for making amendments to the handbook has now past and a draft copy of the handbook will be sent to GC members this weekend for proof reading only.
- 9.3. A new TR long range team aggregate has been included called the Yorkshire Volunteer Shield.
- 9.4. A GB Pistol Team has been approved by Council and they will compete overseas in 2023. Dave Harris has been elected the Team Captain for the 1500 World Championships in Sweden.

No questions were raised.

10. **G732 – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

- 10.1. The Chairman of the Membership Committee reported that the Membership Committee have submitted a youth shooting paper to the professional staff, and also consulted on proposed restructuring of the membership offering. Discussions have also been held regarding insurance and rating affiliates on a risk basis and changing the charges for insurance to affiliated clubs who chose to join the insurance offered by the NRAs insurance brokers. A discussion was also held about a proposed new SCC membership and questions were raised as to whether they would be well received by the affiliated club members. Discussions are ongoing.

No questions were raised.

11. **G733 - ESTATE WORKING GROUP**

- 11.1. PN remarked that this is the third GC meeting with no minutes from the Estates Working Group.
- 11.2. PCh, as Chairman of the EWG confirmed the minutes of the last EWG meeting will be circulated after this meeting.
- 11.3. PCh gave an oral report to the meeting.
- 11.4. The EWG was asked to review the serviced caravan development plans and discussions are underway and a number of matters have been raised for response by the professional staff prior to plans being put to the Trustees for approval. Considerations have to be given to the conservation areas near BCH site, as well as potential infrastructure costs for Site 5, and these will be fully investigated.
- 11.5. There have been 59 expressions of interest for 49 potential plots.
- 11.6. Affordability has been raised regarding unserviced pitches and whether serviced pitches are the plan for the full site, and whether that is sustainable.
- 11.7. The EWG are cognisant of the value of providing affordable accommodation options across the camp.
- 11.8. MJ remarked that there has been no consultation with the membership on the proposed caravan site developments, and just having it on the website wasn't measureable in terms of views. The presentation made by the Real Estate Administrator would be valuable in understanding what the process has been implemented to inform the decision-making process for developing the two proposed sites, and this should be circulated to General Council.
- 11.9. RSt remarked that he believes the NRA should not be making such decisions without consulting the full membership. The serviced pitches are not within most members' financial resources, and is above the UK's median income. The 59 expressions of interest in the new serviced pitches may no longer be valid due to the changes in people's circumstances following Covid and the cost-of-living crisis. He and a few other GC members therefore produced and circulated a survey to as many contacts and network groups as possible and received responses from 541 responses. He reported he had circulated the survey to most GC members on the morning of this meeting. The responses show that people want something

different to what is being offered and RS believes the NRA needs to offer wider and more affordable options. RSt would like the Trustees to consider the responses as part of their development plans.

- 11.10. The Chairman reported that no decision has been made on the redevelopment of either site. The engagement with General Council and the EWG is an important part of gathering data to inform the decision making. He added that the NRA is not building any accommodation as part of either proposal. Instead, the NRA would use advance rentals from tenants to fund the construction of serviced pitches and tenants would provide their own caravans. The sites are operated under the terms of the caravan site licence, and what can be done on the two proposed sites is limited by the terms of that licence. The licence from Guildford Borough Council limits the number of caravans allowed on the camp to 387, with no more than 60 units per hectare, and there must be 5-6 metres between units². The Chairman asked that any proposals put forward to the Trustees for consideration are within the scope of the site licence.
- 11.11. PN remarked that caravan licences can be re-negotiated with the Council.
- 11.12. SL remarked that alternative options are available such as wooden huts/cabins. The Chairman remarked that the caravan site licence is very clear and all units must meet the requirements of Section 29(1) of the Caravan Sites & Development Act, and you can't put structures on the site that are not caravans. The Chairman confirmed his caravan meets the requirements of the Act.
- 11.13. RSt remarked that he put a response into the initial consultation request suggesting alternative options such as smaller pitches and glamping pods and spoke to the Secretary General. The Secretary General confirmed RSt's proposal has been put forward and is part of the consideration process and response to the Trustees. There has been work conducted with the designers to review the capacity of the proposed sites under the site licence by having smaller units and is awaiting a response to that.
- 11.14. ACT would like to explore the comment that the NRA is not going to be building anything. The current model of the members paying upfront for the sites to help fund the development is a sound model and works for their sole use. For members coming to Bisley for a few weeks per year is becoming expensive for caravan and hut owners on a per night basis, so would there be an opportunity for funding methods on a timeshare type basis.
- 11.15. The Secretary General believes it is a good point made about occasional accommodation, which is already provided by ABC Lines, JK Lines and the Pavilion as well as the club houses. The NRA's occupational levels run at around 25% throughout the year with the peaks during the main meeting and other competitions, with the main demand at weekends and very little during the week.
- 11.16. RSt understands the NRA is not building accommodation and is not advocating any one option but wants to see all options considered. An explanation to the membership of what can or can't be done as part of any development would stop a large amount of the comments being made in the survey. A high demand for motel type rooms has come out of the survey, so development of ABC lines could assist in producing such accommodation and possibly increase income.
- 11.17. The Chairman would like to know how the GC members believe funding for such upgrades could be achieved. PN believes members would pay for pods to be sited on plots on camps, and challenging the licence could assist in realising that option. PN formally requests proper consultation with the membership before any decision are made to truly understand what they would want to see at Bisley and what they are willing to pay.
- 11.18. The Chairman believes the results of the survey will help inform the Trustees decision.
- 11.19. JW reminded the meeting that General Council is an advisory body to the Trustees, and the NRA is an organisation with responsibilities. GC members should bear in mind what the membership wants, but it cannot dictate what the NRA can or can't do.
- 11.20. PCh informed the meeting that discussion had also been held around electricity supplies to camp and possible alternative methods, such as ground heat pumps. There is a limit on the electricity supply on camp, but there is scope to upgrade three of the existing six sub-stations to increase supply. New gas boilers are due to be phased out from 2025 which will put further strain on the electricity supply so other options are being considered. Options for electric charging points are also being reviewed.
- 11.21. PCh informed the meeting that his co-opted term on General Council comes to an end this summer, so the EWG will need a new co-opted member and also a new Chairman.
- 11.22. DC asked whether the Trustees had considered installing a solar farm in the danger area behind the butts. The Secretary General responded that it is a SSSI area and therefore it would not be easy to install anything on the area. JPSB mentioned that any building works or additions to buildings and the camp may need building permission as it is in a conservation area.
- 11.23. RSt asked if the NRA has an objection to caravan owners or clubs putting solar panels on the roofs. The Chairman responded it would depend on what the lease states, and asked anyone who wanted to

² The caravan licence states "the gross (average) density shall not exceed 60 caravans to the hectare, calculated on the basis of the useable area"

consider that to refer to their lease. RSt mentioned that the armoury roof could also take solar panels and car charging points could be located close by.

No further questions were raised.

12. **G734 – REGIONAL STEERING GROUP**

- 12.1. The Chairman of the Regional Steering Group, Bryden Ritchie, presented the group's report to the meeting.
- 12.2. BR requested feedback from the other regional reps on the report as there are a series of sensitive and important issues that are being discussed, including DIO and local interfaces with police which affects shooting in the regions. The next meeting is scheduled for April, and BR would appreciate the regional reps getting in touch to attend.

No questions were raised.

13. **G735 – ELECTION TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

- 13.1. For information under Rule 7 (g) (iii) – Elected Members of the General Council who retire in 2022 who have been invited to declare if they wish to stand for re-election.

Five Ordinary Members

JPS Bloomfield
NRJ Brasier
Wg Cdr (Retd) DP Calvert MBE
DC Crispin
SS Lohmann

Four Regional Members

HRM Bailie – Northern Ireland
JPS Bloomfield – East Midlands
Dr JA Marsden – North Western
BD Ritchie - Scotland

Four Shooting Discipline Members

Dr AMW Cargill Thompson – Match Rifle
A Dagger – Gallery Rifle & Pistol
N Macfarlane – Historic & Classic Arms
VACANT – 300 Metres** (subject to Committee elections)

(* not standing)

The Chairman relinquished the chair to the Vice Chairman to announce the election results.

14. **G736 – ELECTION TO COMMITTEES**

- 14.1. The Vice Chairman announced the results of the recently held elections to various committees.

NRA Chairman

David Lacey has been elected to serve a second term as Chairman. The Vice Chairman thanked David for all that he has done during his first term.

Co-Opted Member of Council

Robert Bruce has been co-opted to serve a 2nd term as a co-opted Trustee.

300M Discipline Representative

Simon Aldhouse was unanimously elected as the 300M Discipline Representative.

Members of the Membership Committee

Alice Gran was re-elected to serve on the Membership Committee.

The Vice Chairman extended his congratulations to all the candidates.

- 14.2. The Vice Chairman expressed his disappointment that no candidates had come forward for Lay Members of the Disciplinary Body, and asked that candidate put themselves forward when the next round of elections are advertised.

The Chairman resumed the chair and thanked everyone for their support for a second term.

- 14.3. RK apologised to the meeting for not submitting his paperwork for the Lay Member vacancies, and expressed his willingness to be appointed to the Disciplinary Body. RK noted that he hasn't actually attended a disciplinary hearing during his first term, and wondered if there was scope for occasional

meetings of the Disciplinary Body to discuss a unified response between committee members to any incidents or infringements which do occur. The Chairman asked RK to raise that with the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body for consideration.

- 14.4. The Secretary General urged members of General Council to put themselves forward as Lay Members of the Disciplinary Body as there is an urgent need for three Lay Members to ensure the body can act when required. He thanked RK for his willingness to stand.

15. **G737 – MEMBER QUESTIONS**

- 15.1. The Chairman presented the list of questions received from the general membership for discussion.
- 15.1.1. **Could weekday range prices be reduced to encourage wider use in this cost of living crisis.** The NSC confirmed that weekday range hire rates are discounted on most ranges. The NSC will be promoting a 25% discount on Tuesdays to see if this increases range bookings.
- 15.1.2. **Could we have a covered firing point at 600 yards.** The NSC previously installed out-of-season shelters just in front of the 600 yard FP which proved moderately successful. The military canvas tent system was damaged during a violent storm and was not replaced due to cost and resources. It is felt that adding covered FPs to the most popular distances (300x, 600x and 1000x) is not cost effective and would restrict the use of the ranges. Gazebos are available for hire on request. PN asked that the NSC consider collaborating with the NSRA to borrow their frames to create covered firing points.
- 15.1.3. **Can long range rim fire be recognised as an official discipline by the NRA.** This query will be considered by the Shooting Committee.
- 15.1.4. **Does the NRA need to modernise its communications?** Yes and the NRA has appointed a Communications Manager³ and will publish a communications plan in 2023.
- 15.1.5. **Whilst I attend Bisley for traditional rifle target shooting sessions, I attend more regularly purely to check zero on my hunting rifle's before heading out deer stalking. With the latter in mind I have yet to find a satisfactory method of being able to attend Bisley, hire a lane, and shoot one rifle, 3 to 5 shots at 100 yds, then come away without having to make a range booking on Short Siberia for at least an hour. This makes checking zero a costly exercise (Around £100 per year). To this end I am actively seeking an alternative, more cost effective solution. QUESTION Does the NRA have any thoughts on a more cost effective facility to cater for checking zero of hunting rifles on a regular basis?** KR had responded as follows: "Book Short Siberia as normal and also zero rifle. After zeroing at 100 yds on S/Siberia, go STRAIGHT to Zero Range without changing any sight settings on rifle. Shoot a group on a Zero card and take card away to keep. Next time just use Zero Range and make sure MPI matches the previous group" NSC agrees and remarked the minimum booking time on any range is 1 hour.
- 15.1.6. **Due to cost of ammo I think it's only fair that shooters that enter the main meet should keep or get a refund on all converted sighters, at £1.50 round I can convert about 15/20 rounds, about £ 25-30.** All NRA competitions are budgeted to yield a 5% gross margin after charging standard range hire rates, and run at a net loss. The Imperial meeting accounts are credited with the value of the returned sighters, so if they were retained by competitors the NRA would need to charge higher entry fees.
- 15.1.7. **Why are marker/supervisors NRA employees rather than NSC?' All permanent and casual staff are employed by the NRA, and seconded as required to the NSC. The cost of the seconded staff is charged by the NRA to the NSC. One employer enables all staff to be efficiently managed as one team, with one payroll, common terms of employment etc.**
- 15.1.8. **'Are the NRA or NSC signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant? If not, why not?' No, because the NRA's charitable activities support the efficiency of the armed forces.**
- 15.1.9. **'Would it be possible to allow booking of what used to be a standard fallback ie 300 yds for half a session followed by 600 yds on a different target number for the other half session, using the same marker? This used to be standard procedure, but a fallback to the current Range Office staff means a straight fallback on the same target.** Yes – the member/club can book two targets (300 and 600) for the half day, plus one marker. The member/club cannot book one target (300) for the first two hours and a second target (600) for the remaining two hours.
- 15.1.10. **'I'm extremely concerned regarding the proposed banning of Lead ammunition. I'm a target shooter, I'm also a muzzle-loading shooter as well as a deer stalker and a rabbit shooter. I also shoot air rifles and pistols. How will this affect any of the disciplines me as I can see no viable alternatives for any of my disciplines that are accurate and repeatable.'** The NRA and NSRA are engaged in detailed discussions with UK Reach to secure an exemption that will allow lead ammunition to continue to be used on rifle ranges. We hosted a visit to Bisley on 14th February by a

³ After the meeting the proposed Communications Manager confirmed he would not be taking up the post

delegation from the Environment Agency to explain how lead is captured, retained and recycled on rifle and shotgun ranges at Bisley and in the regions.

- 15.1.11. I believe that 300m as a discipline want reassurance that the NRA will support them, and work with them to build up numbers shooting 300m. They are currently in a downward spiral where lack of range time is reducing numbers, leading to less range time etc. exacerbated by a vicious circle between 300m and shotgun range availability. It has been previously stated that a replacement range would be possible to the left of the Sporting Rifle range - to 200m, 300m would be more difficult. I believe now is the time to investigate fully the provision of a new range, possibly using baffles if the backstop is the difficulty?
- 'Sustainability of 300m Shooting in the UK – Developing a Way Forward. We are deeply disappointed with the 6 ½* days of training and competition that are scheduled to take place on the 300m range on Century in 2023. This number includes 2 half days for the British Championships which took place very successfully in the Imperial meeting this summer, we are very grateful for the team that fitted this into the programme and are keen to see this continue if 300m survives in the UK. We therefore have only 5 ½* days for all other shooting. 2 days of these 5 ½ days are weekdays, that leave a total of 3 ½ days spread over 5 weekends for the 300m club to organise all club activities. The international calendar starts in April, and no dates before this for are available for trials and preparation. Andrew has kindly explained to us very clearly in the past how the use of the 300m range is limited due to its danger area being land that is critical for the income generation of the NSC because it is used for lucrative sporting shotgun shooting. We completely understand this situation and its importance. Nonetheless, we are equally clear that we need to work together with our NGB to prevent the demise of our only ISSF World Record holding discipline in worldwide target shooting. We are certain that the level of access to the only 300m range in the UK is now below a sustainable level. We no longer have sufficient range time to hold the regular competitions needed for general enjoyment of the sport and which are used for international match qualification and trials. There is certainly insufficient time for training. Additionally, in some counties (e.g. Hampshire) there is actually insufficient range time for an FAC holder to demonstrate the use needed to hold a 300m rifle. We hope that you can see this is now an unsustainable position, but we are determined not to see a key ISSF discipline with worldwide participation die in the UK. We want to work with NSC/NRA to find a way forward, even if that is not possible immediately and requires significant flexibility on the part of the 300m shooters. In a previous meeting with Andrew a potential move of the 300m range was mentioned to Simon Aldhouse and Matt Guille, we realise that this was a part of a wider plan that the pandemic disrupted but might that be resurrected for example? We are writing more widely than just to Andrew as CEO because the effective loss of a discipline is not simply an operational matter in our view, it is a strategic matter for the NRA, and we hope that we might be able to have a broad discussion around developing a plan for progress in this context.'** The NRA recognises the importance of supporting all forms of target shooting including 300m. The number of active 300m shooters is small; there were 17 competitors in the NRA 300m Championship in 2013, 18 competitors in 2018, and 20 competitors in 2022. Demand for range space at Bisley has been steadily increasing and the NSC endeavours to provide targets for the maximum possible number of members and clubs. The 300m shed, when open, reduces the number of 600 yard targets available on Century range by 24. Building a new range at 100m and possibly 200m adjacent to the Sporting Rifle range is being explored. 300m would extend into the range danger area (designated a SSSI) and is likely to be substantially more expensive and technically challenging.

- 15.2. The Chairman asked the relevant General Council members to respond to members who had raised these questions and offered to assist with preparing responses. The Meeting confirmed that future requests for questions should inform members to direct their questions to their discipline or regional representative in order to ensure the question is being asked once, rather than to numerous GC members.

No further questions were raised.

16. **G738 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 16.1. The Chairman noted MJ had put forward a note on a review of annual APR increases on caravan and camping fees and asked MJ to inform the meeting what he believes the increase should be and why.
- 16.2. MJ responded that the RPI increase (12.2%) does not appear to be related to actual cost increases, and commented the only maintenance to the caravan sites is cutting the grass and maintaining the ablution blocks. The cost increases are making it very expensive for people to visit Bisley to shoot, so unless there is a strong business case to support such increases, they should be reviewed and reduced.

- 16.3. The Secretary General responded that the Trustees had adopted the implementation of price increases across all areas of the business by no more than RPI. 88% of caravan owners have renewed to date for 2023.
- 16.4. ACT asked that better communications on price increases would be very helpful and welcome. ACT believes the membership fee is expensive for what is offered. The Chairman remarked that the membership fee is primarily to support the charitable activities of the NRA. The Secretary General added that the membership renewals are on a par with previous years.
- 16.5. JPSB remarked that the inflationary increase of 12.2% was the inflation rate for September 2021 to September 2022 when the fees for 2023 were set. They are always applied in retrospect, and the NRA doesn't know what the inflation rate will be in the next 12 months, and guessing would not be a good way forward.
- 16.6. MJ remarked that the caravan increases would only affect a small number of people, not the whole membership. The Chairman asked MJ how the charity would justify putting up membership fees by RPI but not caravan licence fees. JPSB asked MJ which other income stream should be increased to compensate for a reduction in caravan licence fees. MJ responded he would need to see the figures to make a judgement.
- 16.7. ACT remarked that it would be reasonable that increases in costs to the NRA and NSC are passed onto respective users equally in percentage levels. The lack of understanding where costs falls and how the business operates would be greatly improved through data analysis and then justified to the members through communication.
- 16.8. RSt noted that accommodation costs increase the costs to those members travelling long distances to shoot at Bisley and consideration could be given to increasing range fees, and reducing accommodation costs, but until the membership are asked what they would be willing to pay, you cannot make an informed decision.
- 16.9. The Secretary General remarked that there are areas of the business which can flex in terms of costs, but there are others such as ammunition which is a competitive market, as is the clay business. Accommodation is also competitive with other providers on camp. Range hire and membership are only provided by the NRA and NSC, and may need to be re-based to reflect the increased costs of operation.
- 16.10. The Chairman noted there needs to be a balance of interest between all users, members and tenants.
- 16.11. JW wanted to endorse the thoughts of the Secretary General, and noted that the late Harald Dunton would comment that the NRA must be careful not to simply price the target availability on supply and demand, or it runs the risk of pricing out those people who the NRA wants to encourage to shoot. JW believes that people should pay for what they consume, but also noted that accommodation drives range hire, and it is a good theory that encouraging people to stay at Bisley increases range use.
- 16.12. The Chairman noted that the NRA also needs to be cognisant of the future of the charity, so maintenance and upkeep of the ranges is also important.
- 16.13. RSt asked that the NRA consider where members are travelling from and the additional costs incurred by members travelling long distances to shoot at Bisley, and more consultation and analysis would help guide costs.
- 16.14. MJ noted that the Terms of Reference were due to be reported on under Review of Actions for the planned proposals of the Estates Working Group (EWG) and remarked that they appeared very restrictive and he would like to propose that the EWG becomes an Estates Working Committee with the same formal basis as the other committees, assisting and directing the flow of information to General Council rather than the other way round.
- 16.15. The Chairman remarked that proposal would require a change to the Second Schedule because the Membership Committee and Shooting Committee derive their constitutional status from the Second Schedule. The Chairman asked MJ to take that up with the members of the Estates Working Group in the first instance if he wished to.
- 16.16. PN updated the meeting that the plea for ammunition made at a previous meeting to help the scouts achieve an objective to introduce 1000 people to shooting had resulted in over 1300, 400 in fullbore rifle and 300 in gallery rifle, and about 900 smallbore. PN remarked that the scouts were denied range space in 2022 and will therefore have no representation in the National competitions in October. Scout parents are talking about making complaints to the Charity Commission and that needs to be avoided. The NSC Chief Executive asked PN to ask the scout leaders to contact the NSC direct with any concerns.
- 16.17. RK asked whether consideration is being given to providing 4-year SCC cards to club members, in line with those given to NRA members. The Chairman asked RK to refer that to the Membership Committee for consideration.
- 16.18. BR asked that all attendees on General Council ZOOM meetings have their full names on screen for assistance.
- 16.19. ACT remarked that he had put forward a proposal for combining membership and SCC cards about 18 months ago and believes that was being considered and would appreciate an update in due course.

- 16.20. ACT remarked that in the Match Rifle community there is a feeling that long range ability has been squeezed in 2023 and would like more dates to be made available.
- 16.21. DL added that there should be some demand for 800 yards over the next 12 months due to practice requirements for the TR World Championships taking place in South Africa in 2024, and asked for consideration to be given to that.

No further questions were raised.

The meeting closed at 17.02pm



D Lacey
Chairman

Date of next meeting: Friday 9th June 2023 at 3.00pm in the NRA Pavilion