

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

**FINAL**

THE GENERAL COUNCIL  
Minutes of the General Council Meeting  
held by Video Conference Call  
on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021 from 2.00pm

**Present:**

**Chairman**

Mr D Lacey (DLa)

**Members:**

Mr GK Alexander (GA)  
Mr HRM Bailie (RB)  
Cdr NJW Benstead (NBe)  
Mr JPS Bloomfield (JPSB)  
Mr N Brasier (NB)  
Mr G Burns (GB)  
Mr CM Brooks (CB)  
Wg Cdr DP Calvert (DCal)  
Dr AMW Cargill Thompson (ACT)  
Mr M Charlton (MCh)  
Mr M Cotillard (MC)  
Mr DC Crispin (DCr)  
Mr A Dagger (AD)  
Mr CES Dickenson (CESD)  
Mrs A Gran (AG)\_  
Mr J Harris (JH)  
Wg Cdr CJ Hockley (CH)  
Mr RG Jeffrey (RJ)  
Mr RS Kenchington (RK)  
Mr JM Kynoch (JK)  
Mr GAE Larcombe (GL)  
Miss SS Lohmann (SL)  
Mr J Longhurst (JL)  
Mr D Lowe (DL)  
Mr N Macfarlane (NM)  
Dr J Marsden (JM)  
Mr MF Martel (MM)  
Mr M Pountain (MP)  
Mr A Reynolds (AR) - Treasurer  
Mr B Ritchie (BR)  
Mr R Roberts (RR)  
Mrs K Robertson (KR)  
Mr R Stebbings (RS)  
Mr D Stimpson (DS)  
Mr IR Thomson (IT)  
Mr MK Townsend (MKT)  
Mr G Trembath (GTr)  
Dr JD Warburton (JWar)  
Mr MP Watkins (MW)

**In attendance:**

Mr A Mercer (AM) - Chief Executive  
Mrs G Thatcher (GT) - Secretary to Meeting  
Col. R Bruce (RBr) - Trustee (joined meeting at 4.30pm)

**Apologies for absence:** Mr PR Coley, Mr J Harper-Smith, Mr M Maksimovic, Dr J Martin, Mr AJD Saunders, Mr I Shirra-Gibb, Mr C Steele-Benny, Mr N St Aubyn, Mr S Wallis, Dr AP Wolpe.

## INDEX G640 to G659

The Chairman declared the meeting open and welcomed all members attending.

### **1. G640 – APOLOGIES**

1.1. Apologies were received as noted above.

### **2. G641 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. The Chairman requested that members declare any conflicts of interest that may arise during the meeting.

### **3. G642 – RECORDING OF MEETING**

3.1. The Chairman confirmed that the meeting is being recorded to assist in the production of the minutes and the recording will be deleted once the minutes have been approved.

### **4. G643 – MEETINGS OF GENERAL COUNCIL**

- 4.1. The Chairman reminded the meeting that:
- 4.1.1. this is a meeting of General Council of the National Rifle Association (NRA), a registered charity. The NRA is separate from the National Shooting Centre Ltd (NSC) which is the commercial subsidiary of the NRA that carries out various commercial activities. This meeting deals with the charitable activities of the NRA;
- 4.1.2. there is a complaints handling process through the Designated Trustee function and the NRA is keen to resolve disputes by discussion and dialogue, rather than by formal proceedings, wherever possible.

No questions were raised.

### **5. G644 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

5.1. The minutes of the meetings held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2020 had been circulated, approved and published.

### **6. G645 – MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

6.1. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meetings held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

### **7. G646 – REVIEW OF ACTIONS**

- 7.1. The Chairman noted that there is comprehensive guidance on mixed motive investment on the Charity Commission website. He proposed that the item be closed at this time and will be revisited if required in the future. The meeting agreed. **Item CLOSED.**
- 7.2. Graham Burns (GB) of NSRA informed the meeting that the NSRA has a committee meeting next week and he hopes to have a paper to circulate following that meeting. The Chairman confirmed that the NRA continues to seek constructive dialogue with the NSRA. He proposed that the item is closed and revisited if required in the future. The meeting agreed **Item CLOSED.**
- 7.3. RK asked for an update on Site 103 and whether the NSRA have an arrangement with the NRA for maintaining the area, including mowing the grass. The Chairman confirmed this is an NSRA matter because NSRA is the owner of Site 103. GB will raise this subject at the committee meeting and respond separately following that meeting. **Item ONGOING**

- 7.4. The Secretary General confirmed that the NRA is making steady progress with the draft range operators guide and is planning to have a live document by the next General Council meeting in April 2021. **Item ONGOING.**
- 7.5. The Secretary General informed the meeting that range bookings cannot be archived on the range booking system at this time. Most capital expenditure is suspended at the moment and the NRA has no plans to update the booking system at this time. **Item CLOSED.**

## **8. G647 – FINANCE**

- 8.1. The Treasurer presented his financial report to the meeting.
- 8.2. The report gives a snapshot of the management accounts to 31 December 2020 (the year end of the NRA). The annual audit is in progress and there may be some differences between the presented report and the final published report.
- 8.3. The full year has seen an operating loss of £450k, which includes £368k for legal fees. Given the significance of the restrictions from Covid, this performance is very robust and testament to the actions of the Secretary General and the other members of the NRA professional team.
- 8.4. Liquidity has been the focus for the last 12 months and the charity remains solvent and liquid, having put in place a £1,000,000 overdraft facility with Barclays, secured on the NRA's real estate assets. There is expected to be significant headroom in the facility during 2021, which will be useful if further covid restrictions are imposed.
- 8.5. The performance of the restricted funds has been significantly affected through the year, as with many investments. At the year end, the asset managers have done very well in restoring the value of the NRA's restricted funds to the same position as they were at the start of 2020.
- 8.6. ACT requested more information on the budgets for the year ahead and how the finances look for the year ahead, based on current assumptions.
- 8.7. The Secretary and Treasurer confirmed that the budget/forecast data is completed on an annual basis and therefore the December Financial pack did not provide the 2021 budget information, but the next financial pack will.
- 8.8. The Treasurer added that the key theme, as shown on the reserve policy supported by the Trustees, is to ensure the NRA maintains its resilience. The Trustees wish to stop using the overdraft facility as soon as possible and maintain it as a reserve, rather than maintaining positive investment or cash balances. The charity is looking to reduce the overdraft as soon as possible and as a result of that is restricting many expenditure items. In particular, capital expenditure has been significantly reduced to help achieve this objective.
- 8.9. ACT noted the policy around reduced capital activity and would like to understand the projections for the year ahead and whether, based on the assumptions around the reopening of ranges, there will be points in the year that the NRA risks breaching its overdraft.
- 8.10. The Treasurer confirmed that there is significant headroom, even with the seasonality of the business and the Trustees do not expect to need to approach Barclays to increase the overdraft limit.
- 8.11. RR informed the meeting that the NSC has made attempts over the last 8 months to source a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan of £250,000 (the maximum amount available) but this has not been successful. The Chief Executive of the NSC is in the process of arranging a CBIL for £95,000 from Barclays.
- 8.12. The Chairman thanked RR for his efforts trying to secure a CBIL and expressed his thanks to Barclays for their continuing financial support of the charity.

## **9. G648 – OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

- 9.1. The Secretary General presented his report to the meeting and highlighted the items set out below.
- 9.2. The announcement from the Government regarding the easing of Covid restrictions to be made on 22 February will help shape the remainder of the year. January's budget projected the ranges opening mid/late March and this is looking increasingly likely.
- 9.3. The professional staff are planning to host the Imperial Meeting in July, with a back stop position for August if required.
- 9.4. The experience during 2020 of the easing of restrictions saw a cautious return to the ranges, getting busier once members were comfortable with the NRA's Covid-secure processes.

- 9.5. Staffing levels have reduced, with 11 staff members being made redundant during 2020. Of the remaining 65 staff, 41 of those have been furloughed. The NRA started 2020 with 77 staff, with a further 10 staff joining as part of the acquisition of Bisley Shooting Ground. The numbers have reduced over the last 12 months from 87 to 65, which has put a great deal of pressure on the remaining staff.
- 9.6. Membership numbers for 2020 saw a small increase in the number of individual members. The number of affiliated clubs has dropped over the last 12 months, although capitation levels have remained stable. Some analysis will be conducted over the coming months to understand why clubs have not renewed their affiliation.
- 9.7. 2021 individual renewal figures are slightly ahead as of end of January 2021, and almost three-quarters of clubs have renewed to date. The Secretary General expects club renewals to increase once the Bisley and MoD ranges open again.
- 9.8. NB informed the meeting that the recent membership survey had received over 2200 responses, which is very positive. The results will help shape the NRA going forward. The two main focuses were the charitable activities of the NRA, and the distinction between the NRA and the NSC. The results show a good understanding of the distinction between the NRA and NSC, but highlighted that more communication is required. Website development will help demonstrate that separation, as well as improve the functionality and search function. The range booking system will also be reviewed for better functionality.
- 9.9. The Secretary General asked the GC members to note that there will be variations between the financial pack and the statutory accounts, especially regarding the staff furlough payments which are required by the auditors to be shown as income rather than netted off against payroll costs.
- 9.10. The NRA is in regular contact with the MoD to see when the regional MoD ranges can open to civilian clubs. There is a mixed picture with some regions happy to open, and some being more cautious.
- 9.11. Terms of Office of the NRA's Committees have been poorly administrated in the last year and a spreadsheet has been set up to help manage this. The schedules will be circulated and shared with the General Council members and published annually at every February General Council meeting to ensure all elections are properly scheduled.
- 9.12. JL asked whether the NRA is able to offer capacity on the ranges for new bookings upon re-opening and is it appropriate for the GC members to be encouraging bookings.
- 9.13. The Secretary General confirmed that all current bookings will be considered and reconfirmed where possible and all competitions will be arranged with Covid-secure arrangements in place. The range capacity is likely to be based on the Tier 4 rules as before. The NSC is happy to take bookings and is grateful for any support.
- 9.14. JL also asked whether the lower age limit for NRA membership could be considered. He declared an interest as a father of an under-14 shooter.
- 9.15. The Secretary General stated that the issue is primarily range safety. The NRA is happy to have young shooters on the ranges under the supervision of affiliated clubs. To have young members being supervised solely by a parent or guardian is less attractive. The subject will be taken off line and discussed with the Shooting Committee.
- 9.16. AD asked whether the Phoenix Meeting would be the first competition to be run in 2021 and had the decision been taken to cancel the Spring Action Weekend and associated Gallery Rifle training days.
- 9.17. The Secretary General reported that the Phoenix Meeting is currently likely to be the first competition to be held but this is dependent on the Government's new advice and guidelines expected on 22 February. If timelines allow for other competitions to be run then the NRA will endeavour to ensure they go ahead. The final deadline for a decision on running the Spring Action Weekend would be Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February but there is no certainty at this time. The NRA will publish its competition programme by the end of February.
- 9.18. MW thanked NB for all the work undertaken the membership survey and asked whether the results could be published along with the correct answers to each of the questions to help raise awareness and understanding. NB responded that regular articles in the Journal are planned to help keep the membership informed of the NRA's charitable objectives.
- 9.19. RK asked whether the profit made by the NSC as the commercial subsidiary of the NRA can be given to the NRA. The Chairman confirmed that the profits generated by the NSC are donated to the NRA.

## **10. G649 – NSC CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

- 10.1. The Chief Executive of the NSC presented his report to the meeting and highlighted the points set out below.
- 10.2. BSG has been performing very well.
- 10.3. The Bisley ranges have been busy over the recent lockdown with a significant amount of police firearms training and the hosting of Olympic athletes.
- 10.4. The Secretary General explained the limitation of the use of .22 rim fire on the zero range.
- 10.5. RK asked what is Precision Rifle and how does it differ from F-Class.
- 10.6. The Secretary General responded that Precision Rifle involves multi-position shooting at steel targets.
- 10.7. RK remarked that he doesn't agree with the explanation given by the Chief Executive on the use of .22 rim fire on the zero range and wanted to note that the purpose of the zero range is to enable members to zero their rifles, and primarily their windage. There is no technical or ballistic reason why .22 rim fire cannot be used on the zero range. Winans range next to the zero range allows the use of .22 rim fire. The statement that .22 rim fires booking a range can zero on that range is misinformed as it is only true if the range booked is a 25-yard range. The Long Range Rim Fire Club (LRRFC) which is affiliated to the NRA, conducts competitions at Bisley at 300 yards on Century and you cannot zero a rifle at 300 yards, it has to be done on the zero range. RK feels the NRA is discriminating against .22 rim fire shooters and there is an equality principle. RK declared an interest as Chairman of the LRRFC.
- 10.8. The Chairman remarked that the .22 rim fire issue is a matter relating to range operation and asked whether the Shooting Committee would be happy to take this under advisement. CESD, Chairman of the Shooting Committee agreed to take this matter to the committee for consideration. He remarked that he understands one of the reasons .22 rim fire was disallowed on the zero range was because some shooters were abusing the use of the range by using it for long periods rather than just zeroing their rifles, but CCTV should help manage that going forward and he would be happy to endorse the use of .22 rim fire under guidance.
- 10.9. The Chairman added that range operational matters are for the NSC. They are not NRA matters but it would be helpful for the NSC to receive guidance from the Shooting Committee.
- 10.10. The NSC Chief Executive added that he would be happy to provide a zeroing facility for .22 rim fire rifles for competitions.
- 10.11. JH remarked that the Olympic Clay shooters are currently using the facilities at Bisley and asked what definition of Elite Athlete has been issued and whether the GB Teams should also be included in that definition.
- 10.12. The Secretary General remarked that the definition of Elite Athlete is those training for the Olympics and Commonwealth Games who are on a talent pathway or have podium potential.
- 10.13. MW clarified that the criteria set by the Government is for elite athletes training for the Tokyo Olympics that have been given this dispensation and does not include the Commonwealth Games as there is no shooting at the Birmingham Games.
- 10.14. DL added that when he looked at the regulations in place in October 2020, a team preparing for a World Championship was also included in the definition and the Palma team were able to train under that definition, but he is unsure whether that still remains in place. DL declared an interest as Adjutant of the Palma World Championship team in 2023.

No further questions were raised.

## **11. G650 – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

- 11.1. AG informed the meeting that the Membership Committee has embarked on a project to investigate how the NRA can support university shooting clubs in order to encourage young people into shooting, stay shooting and join the NRA. Each member of the committee has been assigned a list of universities to talk to and the responses will be assembled in the next month to produce a recommendation for a programme to assist the university shooting clubs.
- 11.2. GA has been elected interim Chairman of the Membership Committee.
- 11.3. The Secretary General added that the Membership Committee elected GA as the interim Chairman until September 2021, and elected AG to be Chairman from September 2021

onwards because AG had only recently stepped down as a Trustee and was therefore currently ineligible to be Chairman.

- 11.4. AD asked that the list of university clubs interested in Gallery Rifle be provided to him as Gallery Rifle Rep and especially those in the Somerset area as they would be in the capture area of his home club, Frome & District Rifle Club and he would be happy to make contact with them and offer some advice and guidance of getting into Gallery Rifle and also some facilities. AG agreed to make contact once all the clubs had been contacted and a plan to move forward had been agreed.
- 11.5. BR asked that all Regional Reps be involved to help provide assistance to all university clubs throughout the UK. RS will provide the relevant contact details.
- 11.6. ACT declared an interest as Chairman of Cambridge University Rifle Association and would like to strongly encourage asking NRA members whether they are alumni of university clubs and would be prepared to offer help.
- 11.7. AG added that the Membership Committee will be producing an article for the Spring Journal and will ask for alumni contacts as part of that article.
- 11.8. The Chairman asked for all ideas and suggestions to be emailed to AG for consideration.
- 11.9. CESD added that he has been asked to develop a strategy for youth shooting which he will circulate to all people with an interest including Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting and British Young Shooters Association for their input.

## **12. G651 – SHOOTING COMMITTEE**

- 12.1. The Chairman of the Shooting Committee informed the meeting that the Shooting Committee is now fully constituted which has allowed the amendments to the NRA Handbook to be finalised.
- 12.2. The position of Chairman was elected at the January meeting, with CESD being the successful candidate.
- 12.3. The Shooting Committee are looking at revising their bylaws and discussions are ongoing with a view to finalising them at the next meeting in May 2021.
- 12.4. The Team Captain's Handbook is also under review and members of the Shooting Committee are looking to approve that in May 2021.
- 12.5. The NRA Handbook has a number of rule changes which include the classification for Target Rifle for Class A has been amended to reduce the Grand Aggregate qualification from 51 to 200 down to 51 to 150. This is due to the declining numbers of attendees at the Imperial Meeting. A new rule has been introduced which states anyone who has qualified twice or more as Class X in the previous 10 years will not be able to drop below Class A unless they happen to be over 70 on 1<sup>st</sup> July. This has gained 28 reputable shooters who would have otherwise fallen to class O, making it much fairer on the Class O shooters.
- 12.6. For Match Rifle it has been agreed to hold an Any Rifle class concurrent with the Hopton as a trial in 2021, and it is hoped that the 'Eights' will be encouraged to open up their meetings to an any rifle class.
- 12.7. F Class rules now allow the use of barrel tuners.
- 12.8. There are new rules for Gallery Rifle and Target Shotgun for approving alternative positions for people who have physical difficulties which prevent them from using particular positions.
- 12.9. Authorisation has been approved for delegating the decision on dispensations for disabled shooters for a particular meeting to the Meeting Director.
- 12.10. The Classic & Historic Handbook has been formally approved for its first issue.
- 12.11. The programme for the Target Rifle Imperial Meeting has been developed and CESD expressed his thanks to Peter Cottrell and his team for the work to date.
- 12.12. It has been confirmed that there will be no military competition (DEFOSC) this year, nor ISCRAM for the cadets or the Schools Meeting or Cadet Imperial.
- 12.13. The Match Rifle, F Class, Target Rifle, CivSR, Historics and Gallery Rifle elements of the Imperial Meeting will go ahead in July. An August date may be considered if required as a result of covid-related restrictions.
- 12.14. The Target Rifle programme has adopted a number of changes from the success of the September Meeting in 2020. These are to be trialled in 2021 and if unsuccessful the programme will revert to its previous format for 2022 onwards.
- 12.15. A paper suggesting how GB team status is defined is being drafted for consideration.
- 12.16. The appointment procedure for GB and NRA Team Captains is being revised and reviewed.

- 12.17. A suggestion has been put forward as an aid to fundraising for the Palma and World Championship Teams for providing a unique number to each GB cap, starting from the very first. The first international match was the Kolapore Match in 1871, 150 years ago. An opportunity to produce some marketing items to help support the teams including the purchase of a ceremonial cap. The principle of cap numbering has been approved by Council and Shooting Committee. The principle of producing a ceremonial cap is still under consideration including what level of income will be forthcoming to the Overseas Team Funds out of the proceeds of any profits.
- 12.18. The Chairman remarked that fundraising is a regulated activity and everyone involved in fundraising must ensure all fundraising is done in accordance with those regulations.
- 12.19. MP informed the meeting that ISCRAM and the Schools Meeting had been regrettably cancelled by CCRS due to Brunswick Camp not being available this year. CCRS are looking to develop a Regional model with a final event being held at Bisley and will update the meeting in due course.

No further questions were raised.

### 13. G652 – THE COUNCIL

- 13.1. The Chairman reported that the Trustee's meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February discussed the administration of the Overseas Team Fund regarding the NRA's charitable status and the extent to which funds can be used in line with the charity's objectives. Legal advice is being sought to assist in the understanding of how the fund can be utilised correctly.
- 13.2. The NRA published a response on the Home Office Public Consultation on Firearms Safety and members were encouraged to respond to that.
- 13.3. Council is working on a Communications Policy that will help provide better structure to the way the NRA communicates with its members and the public.
- 13.4. The Trustee Annual Report for 2020 is being produced.
- 13.5. Access to MoD ranges is being negotiated with the MoD.
- 13.6. A financial review was undertaken and the Trustees concluded that the charity remains able to pay its debts as they fall due.
- 13.7. CB asked whether any further report can be given on the discussion on charitable assets and the plan for encouraging Relevant People to participate in competitions and an explanation of why this was discussed in the confidential part of the Trustee meeting.
- 13.8. The Chairman responded that the ongoing debate as to the charitable purpose for which the NRA exists is a sensitive subject. The Charity Commission requires the NRA to report on the participation of Relevant People (present and former members of the Armed Forces and Emergency Services and current Cadets) in its shooting events and how it has encouraged that attendance. There is an ongoing debate as to the precise scope of the NRA's charitable purpose.

### 14. G653 – MATTERS FOR GENERAL COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

- 14.1. The Chairman put forward a number of proposals for General Council members to consider and following discussion a vote was taken for each proposal.

#### 14.1.1. **Proposal 1 – Standing Invitation for Members of the Disciplinary Body**

That members of the Disciplinary Body be invited to attend and speak at General Council meetings but may not vote or put business on the agenda of a meeting unless that person is a member of General Council.

**Result: 26% Yes, 64% No, 10% Abstain. Proposal Not Passed**

#### 14.1.2. **Proposal 2 – Standing Instructions to arrange Ballots**

That the Secretary General be authorised to arrange postal or electronic ballots to fill vacancies that may arise from time to time in any post to which a person may be elected, appointed or re-elected or re-appointed by General Council.

**Result: 92% Yes, 3% No, 3% Abstain. Proposal Passed**

**14.1.3. Proposal 3 – Standing Instructions to arrange Ballots**

That the Secretary General be authorised to advertise any vacant post to which a person may be elected, appointed, re-elected or re-appointed by General Council on the NRA website, in the Journal or both as he determines or as General Council directs.

**Result: 92% Yes, 0% No, 8% Abstain. Proposal Passed**

**14.1.4. Proposal 4 – Communications to General Council**

That all notices and other communication from the NRA to members of General Council may be sent by electronic means only unless directed otherwise by General Council.

**Result: 84% Yes, 8% No, 8% Abstain. Proposal Passed**

It was agreed that a Dropbox facility would be set up to provide a secure, centralised place for all General Council agendas and supporting papers.

**14.1.5. Proposal 5 – Constitute Young Shooters Fund**

That the Secretary General is authorised and directed to invite nominations for the post of Chairman of the Young Shooters Fund and to arrange a postal ballot to appoint the Chairman of the Young Shooters Fund.

**Result: 47% Yes, 42% No, 11% Abstain. Proposal Passed**

**14.1.6. Proposal 6 – Conflict of Interest Policy**

That the Secretary General is directed to prepare a Conflicts of Interest policy based on the form adopted by the Trustees to be tabled at the next meeting of General Council.

**Result: 84% Yes, 5% No, 11% Abstain. Proposal Passed**

14.2. The Chairman put forward additional items for consideration by General Council members:

**14.2.1. Amendment of Second Schedule**

It was agreed following discussion that there would be value in revising parts of the Second Schedule to facilitate the good governance of the Charity. Any revision would be done carefully and under consultation before being put forward for consideration and approval at the Annual General Meeting in 2022.

CB put forward a proposal that the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body not be an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees to ensure the legislative position was not involved in the disciplinary position. The GC members agreed with the proposal and this will be considered.

AG, CB and JSPB agreed to review the schedule. All suggestions are to be emailed to AG to collate.

**14.2.2. Report on Guidance for the Charity Commission**

The meeting noted the advice and guidance provided in the circulated correspondence from the Charity Commission which has been published on the NRA website.

**14.2.3. Report on Legal Advice in relation to Charitable Purposes of the NRA**

14.2.3.1. A summary report had been provided to the meeting of the legal advice provided to the NRA in relation to the charitable purposes of the NRA.

14.2.3.2. AD asked what are the real consequences for the NRA should it lose its charitable status. The UKPSA has achieved charitable status for its dynamic marksmanship and the NRA has dynamic marksmanship in elements of its activities and AD would like to understand why that doesn't count.



- 14.2.3.3. The Chairman responded that the UKPSA had regained its charitable status because of dynamic marksmanship, and whilst some NRA recognised disciplines do have some form of dynamic marksmanship, the majority of disciplines do not involve dynamic marksmanship.
- 14.2.3.4. BR remarked that there is a long road to travel and the NRA needs to take a long view and get a fighting fund together to assist with any legal support and start getting opinions back to accepting shooting as a good sport.
- 14.2.3.5. MW added that he has done some background reading on UKPSA to look at the comparisons between the UKPSA and the NRA. Practical shooting governed by UKPSA is one of the fastest growing shooting sports in the UK and they now have Olympic viewer status and are obviously being viewed favourably by the Charity Commission. There are some things the NRA can draw from that and a separate committee to have a good look at where the NRA is going and how it can address some of these issues to help it grow.
- 14.2.3.6. The Chairman thanked MW for that observation. The work of the Membership Committee getting in more members and also raising the profile of shooting in a positive way and also a contribution from General Council members would be very helpful.
- 14.2.3.7. JSPB added that the decision in the Cambridgeshire Shooting Association case for charitable status was unhelpful. The NRA could challenge that decision but it would be an expensive process. The Chairman thanked JSPB for that useful background. In 2015 the Cambridgeshire Shooting Association lost its appeal for charitable status and the NRA would have to overcome that decision if it wanted to seek recognition of shooting as a sport for charitable purposes.
- 14.2.3.8. ACT accepts the issue around shooting as a charitable activity and it is going to be a long, difficult and expensive battle to fight and win. There is the education charitable purpose and the NRA has long supported school and university shooting and while that hasn't formally featured in the NRA's charitable purposes, it would be reasonably uncontentious for the NRA to record that fact and make more of it in addition to the NRA's contribution to the efficiency of the Armed Services.
- 14.2.3.9. CESD remarked that it is going to be difficult to sustain the charitable status for the purposes of defence of the realm in the longer term and the NRA will need to look further afield to the educational aspect and also look at shooting as a sport as beneficial for both physical and mental health and start to gather data to support that. There is information available that can be searched for and this would be a good time to start collating that data and CESD would encourage everyone to do so.
- 14.2.3.10. JL remarked that he is pleased to see the NRA is evaluating the possibility of challenging the Cambridgeshire decision and believes it would be a lot easier to do this if the NRA had the public on side. The shooting community is divided into many subdivisions amongst NRA disciplines and other shooting associations. Should the NRA consider bringing all the shooting associations together to work towards one goal, rather than all fighting the same battle separately.
- 14.2.3.11. AG added that the NRA must have some activities similar to UKPSA, such as target shotgun and CivSR, and has the NRA considered how it can integrate that into its charitable purposes and activities with the Charity Commission. Also the NRA needs to make better friends in the UK Parliament.
- 14.2.3.12. DS added that convincing the Charity Commission that they should view shooting as a sport would be very helpful. British Shooting Sports Council coordinates the British shooting and collecting community and it is a very complex job. DS sits on that Council as Vice Chairman of BSSC, and as Chairman of HBSA. The NRA, NSRA, CPSA, UKPSA, BASC are also all represented plus others.
- 14.2.3.13. The Secretary General remarked that shooting is very fragmented and is practiced by small groups of individuals. The largest aggregations of shooters is at the NRA's Imperial Meeting and the NSRA's Summer Championships. There is a lot of good work being done by organisations such as BSSC under the radar and is therefore largely unseen. To launch a credible argument for the Charity Commission to change its view will have to be done from both a legal point of view and also with the support of the whole shooting community.

- 14.2.3.14. DC remarked that a couple of years ago at the NSRA's annual meeting they conducted a mental test survey of lots of volunteer shooters and gained some very useful data together on the mental benefits of target shooting. Could that be shared with the NRA?
- 14.2.3.15. The Chairman asked for a volunteer from General Council to be the point of contact to collate all the information and ideas to help support the NRA's charitable objectives and status.
- 14.2.3.16. CESD volunteered to be the main point of contact for any ideas and information. General Council members were asked to send all their information to CESD.
- 14.2.3.17. The Chairman added that across General Council there must be people who may have 'political' contacts and asked for a volunteer who would collate any contacts from GC members. Silke Lohmann volunteered and all contacts are to be emailed directly to SL.
- 14.2.3.18. GB raised a point of interest that the NRA USA held a promotional drive that shooting was a healthy outdoor sport and 20M guns were sold in the USA last year. The figures showed a very large uptake especially between the 35-45 year age group.
- 14.2.3.19. AD asked what the consequences would be if the NRA lost its charitable status.
- 14.2.3.20. The Secretary General remarked that the NRA would lose its assets, especially the retention of Bisley Camp (as these would need to be transferred to another charity).
- 14.2.3.21. BR added that the reputational impact of the NRA losing its charitable status would also need to be considered.

No further questions were raised.

#### **14.2.4. Equality Policy**

A request for comments on the proposed changes to the Equality Policy was made and all comments should be sent to the Secretary General within the next 60 days. The draft policy would then be published on the NRA website with a request for comments from members and the public.

### **15. G654 – ELECTION TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

Under Rule 7 (g) (iii) the following Elected Members of the General Council who retire in 2021 have declared that they wish to stand for re-election:

#### **Five Ordinary Members**

GK Alexander  
 CM Brooks  
 MJJ Charlton  
 JM Kynoch \*  
 MK Townsend

#### **Five Regional Members**

PR Coley – South Western  
 RS Kenchington – West Midlands  
 GAE Larcombe - Southern  
 AN Gran – Greater London & South East  
 MP Watkins - Wales

#### **Three Shooting Discipline Members**

JS Harris – Target Shotgun  
 N St Aubyn – Civilian Service Rifle & Practical Rifle  
 S Wallis – Sporting Rifle

(\* not standing)

### **16. G655 – ELECTION TO COMMITTEES**

As per the Second Schedule, Rule 8c(i), the results of the recent election to the two principal committees were announced:

David Calvert was duly elected to the Shooting Committee  
 Richard Stebbings was duly elected to the Membership Committee

**17. G656 – DISCIPLINARY BODY**

As per the Second Schedule, Rule 8d, the following members have been elected to the Disciplinary Body

Legal Members

Charles Brooks  
Leslie Christy  
Nick Hinchliffe  
Richard Jeens  
Richard Vary  
Rosalind Wiltshire

Non-Legal Members

Anthony de Launay

**18. G657 – VACANCIES ON COMMITTEES**

- 18.1. A vacancy remains for a non-legal member and the Secretary General informed the meeting that one nomination had been received, which would, if that person was elected, bring the Disciplinary Body up to its full number.
- 18.2. A casual vacancy exists for the Eastern Regional Representative of General Council. The Secretary General proposed that nominations be sought from the general membership and invite them to contact a member of General Council to be put forward for consideration. The GC members approved the proposal. The Secretary General will publish the casual vacancy for the Eastern Regional Representative on the NRA website and invite nominations.

**19. G658 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**19.1. Matters Concerning the Estate Working Group**

AG informed the meeting that she had received the circulated memo from a member in her region who feels his complaints and views are not being heard by the NRA management or General Council and would like the matters to be considered by a group within the General Council.

The main points are:

1. What is the role of the Estate Working Group (EWG); and
2. A list of issues for review by the EWG

- 19.2. The Chairman asked the meeting to consider first whether they are content to refer the list of issues put forward by the NRA member in point 2 above to the EWG to consider and report back to General Council and asked if anyone wished to speak in favour of the proposal.
- 19.3. ACT is in favour of the proposal and asked if the meeting could be reminded who is on the EWG.
- 19.4. The Secretary General confirmed NB, IT, PCh from General Council and three co-opted lay members – Philip Dodd, Sq Ld Chris Fopp and Steve Gillingham form the EWG.
- 19.5. CH asked whether the EWG has ever met. The Secretary General confirmed that the EWG had not yet met as there had been nothing referred to the group by the General Council to consider.
- 19.6. JSPB remarked that there may be a misunderstanding on the member's submission as some suggestions raised are matters for the NSC Board and others for the NRA management to deal with and JSPB is not convinced these matters should be considered by a working group of General Council, and has only been put forward as the answers from the management were not accepted.
- 19.7. AG responded that the member is frustrated at the answers from the NRA management, and there may be some matters not appropriate for the EWG. However, it does not mean the EWG should not consider whether it is appropriate and whether they should address these questions. A member should be able to raise his concerns with General Council.

- 19.8. RK agrees with AG's comment and believes it shows the NRA management is out of touch with what its members think as these are issues which are important to them.
- 19.9. The Chairman proposed that GC agree that all the items put forward by the member be referred to the EWG to consider and report back to GC who will then determine the response to the individual and how that is delivered. The proposal was accepted and approved.
- 19.10. The Chairman moved onto the first question raised in the paper which was whether individual members should be able to raise matters direct with the EWG.
- 19.11. AG added that the member is seeking an answer from GC as to whether the relationship between GC and the EWG should be limited to referrals from GC to EWG or whether NRA members could have direct access.
- 19.12. The Chairman would like to consolidate all the points raised in the first section of the note to whether individual members of the public should be able to contact the EWG and put matters before the EWG for it to report back to GC.
- 19.13. NB remarked that if a member has a concern that they raise it with a GC member and then GC decides what they want the EWG to look at.
- 19.14. The Chairman put forward the proposal that members of the public be allowed direct access to the EWG. The meeting voted and the proposal was not approved.
- 19.15. The meeting authorised AG to respond to the member and confirm that the business items will be referred to the EWG, but the proposal for direct access to the EWG was not approved by GC.

19.16. **Voting**

- 19.17. DCal asked whether the ZOOM voting system used for the previous polls could be implemented for all voting requirements rather than show of hands.
- 19.18. The Secretary General confirmed that this could be arranged and this will be implemented for future votes.

19.19. **The Role & Functioning of General Council**

- 19.20. SL informed the meeting that she and ACT have been working on the paper with Robert Bruce (NRA Trustee) and with some support from the Chairman and Charles Brooks.
- 19.21. ACT and SL would like to encourage the GC members to participate and give feedback on how the GC can work more closely with the Trustees (and the Trustees with GC), and for GC meetings to become more forward looking rather than simply reviewing minutes of previous meetings of committees.
- 19.22. SL would like to note that this meeting has shown there has been much more involvement sought by the Trustees from GC members which is very positive.
- 19.23. ACT and SL have circulated a draft amended agenda for GC meetings and would like to seek feedback from the GC members on this proposed amendment.
- 19.24. SL would be happy to receive feedback via email from the GC members and collate that into a document for discussion at the next GC meeting.
- 19.25. JK applauds the initiative and agrees that GC could offer more constructive input into the decision-making process in a more timely fashion, and a revised agenda is a good start to that process.
- 19.26. CESD agreed the new proposed agenda will help GC focus on looking forward. CESD would like Elections and Appointments to be added as a regular item to the agenda.
- 19.27. BR asked that the regions and membership beyond Bisley are considered and regional reports can be included on the agenda. The Chairman added that articles for the Journal from the regions would also always be welcome.
- 19.28. ACT would encourage Trustees to consider what can be reported to GC members on sensitive issues so that some information is provided wherever it is appropriate to do so, rather than no information at all.
- 19.29. The Chairman believes GC can be a good force for good and a significant contributor to the work of the NRA.
- 19.30. The Chairman noted that the proposed agenda referred to a report from Council on confidential matters. The Chairman expressed the view that an item should either be open or confidential. It was not practical to refer to a confidential item "in outline", since that simply invited requests for more information, defeating the purpose of the matter being confidential.

- 19.31. SL asked that all feedback and comments be sent to her, but would like to see the proposed agenda be accepted for the next GC meeting in June.
- 19.32. ACT asked that consideration be given to agreeing that minutes of all Committee meetings including Council are produced within the same timeframe as agreed for GC meetings to allow prompt circulation of the minutes to GC members. The meeting agreed.
- 19.33. The Chairman proposed that a vote be put to the meeting for the draft agenda to be accepted for implementation for future meetings. **Result: 80% Yes, 9% No, 11% abstained. Proposal approved.**
- 19.34. The Chairman extended his thanks to ACT, SL and RB for all their work to date.

## **20. G659 – OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 20.1. MKT remarked that the top end of the 1000-yard firing point has very little grass and asked that it be re-seeded or re-turfed.
- 20.2. MCh asked whether future meetings could be both in person and online to increase participation. The Chairman confirmed that work is being undertaken to allow hybrid meetings in future.

No further questions were raised.

The meeting closed at 17.45pm



D Lacey  
NRA Chairman