

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT TO THE SHOOTING COUNCIL

29th NOVEMBER 2009

Chief Executive's Report

This report will be posted on the NSRA website early next week, and this will be normal practice for the reports going to future Council meetings.

SHOOTING MATTERS

National Meetings

Attendance at the Bisley Rifle Meeting was significantly down, from 937 last year to 879. This is particularly disappointing because of the large contingent of shooters from the USA who came in connection with the Roberts and Randle Goodwill Matches. Despite this there was an increase in the number of shooters taking part in both the Championship Aggregate and the Weekend Aggregate.

Attendance at the Pistol Meeting showed a disappointing reduction from 95 competitors in 2008 to 75. It appears that this was due in part to the entry form and information being printed in The Rifleman, which former entrants did not see, despite being Annual members. Because of the poor entry in some competitions, these were cancelled before the meeting started. On the other hand entry for the 25m Rapid Fire competition had its range capacity increased slightly at the meeting planning stage, and we were not able to accommodate every entry.

Results on website

As part of our ongoing investigations in using new technology to further communications and in response to requests from members, we have looked at the possibility of getting some National Meeting results on the website whilst the meeting is taking place. We have now identified a means of achieving this and it will be trialled at the Airgun Championship in February.

Meeting Vouchers

For many years County Associations have been able to apply to the NSRA for free entry vouchers for National Meetings, which counties are then able to award to shooters who have not previously taken part in National Meeting. Originally they covered a free entry to the meeting Aggregate, but with the change of programmes this has more recently covered entries to a maximum value of £50.

There are three vouchers available to each county, one each for the Scottish or Bisley Rifle Meeting, one for the Pistol Meeting and one for the Airgun Championships.

It has now been agreed that County Associations will not need to apply for these vouchers, but they will be issued automatically to all affiliated counties.

Sponsorship

Confirmation was received earlier this week that there will be two new sponsors of the Airgun Championships in February. Air Arms are sponsoring the eleven British Open Championship events and Walther will sponsor the ten Aggregates competitions. Further information on this sponsorship, which in total is worth about £1,400, will be issued shortly with the meeting programmes and elsewhere.

International Matches

Roberts Match

Under the Captaincy of Neil Gibbons, the Great Britain team won the Roberts Match against the United States by 3842 points to 3806. This is the largest winning margin in the history of the GB v. USA shoulder-to-shoulder matches, which started with the Pershing Match in 1931.

Junior Rifle Squad

A team from the NSRA's Junior Rifle Squad visited South Africa in late September and early October. This was primarily in response to an invitation from the South African National Schools Shooting Union to take part in their Championships, which particularly included Sporter Air Rifle competitions. The touring party comprised ten shooters and four management/coaching staff, including Bill Bond, the Suffolk representative on the Council.

It was certainly an eventful and successful trip. There were a number of visits to tourist venues during the settling in period, such as a game park and the Cullinan Diamond Mine. The unexpected event was a flash flood at the end of the training day, causing some serious problems for the competition organisers.

On the shooting side the team performed well, returning with a total of 51 medals covering both individual, team and pairs competitions, and across all the events – Sporter Air Rifle, ISSF Air Rifle and Small-bore.

Postal Internationals

The Great Britain prone rifle teams had a highly successful year with a clean sweep in all six matches (Dewar, Wakefield, Randle and three Drew matches). In addition the teams set new British Record Scores in four of the matches, and only missed equalling the record in the others by one point in the case of the Drew team of three girls and two points in the Randle.

The Rifle Committee has appointed Phil Strong as Captain and Martyn White as Adjutant of the Great Britain Team for the Dewar Match in 2010 and 2011.

Gerry Weir has accepted the Pistol, Airgun & Crossbow Committee's offer of appointment as Great Britain Team Captain for the Mayleigh Match in 2010.

West Midlands Regional Shooting Centre, Aldersley

Work at the Centre has continued, most recently with a major renovation of the overhead lighting on the 10 metre range. Thanks are due to Neil Gibbons who carried out all the work.

Regional Squads

The first new Regional Squad for some time has been formed. It is Mercia which covers Northants, Leicestershire and Rutland, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. It has already held two training weekends with more planned. The squad started as prone but is expanding into 3P and air rifle. In addition it has started to build a selection of training courses which will include Lightweight Sport Rifle. The courses are based around Holwell RC and details of next year's courses are available on the NSRA website.

Benchrest Working Group

It was announced on page 27 of *The Rifleman*, Autumn 2009 edition that the Rifle Committee was initiating a review of NSRA Benchrest rules. To help the working group that will be charged with this work, it was indicated that we would welcome:

- a. the submission of views from any shooters, clubs and organisations as to how benchrest shooting can be developed move forward within the NSRA;
- b. the provision of details of competitions (format, conditions, targets, etc) by those NSRA-affiliated clubs and associations which run postal competitions or meetings for benchrest shooting.

A number of submissions have already been received about arrangements and targets used in the Midlands, Derbyshire, Cambridgeshire and Yorkshire Leagues, but information from any other County or other associations or clubs running benchrest competitions will be appreciated.

Postal Competitions

In view of the very low number of teams taking part, being a maximum of three in each of the last four years, it has been decided to discontinue running two Inter-County Competitions. They are the Three Positions Rifle (Comp. 540) and the Sport Pistol Air (Comp. 585).

Range Conducting Officers

At the end of 2007 it was announced that all Range Conducting Officer licences issued in 2003 or earlier, which pre-dated the introduction of the current 6-year validity period, would be deemed to lapse in a rolling programme between June 2008 and December 2009. The final tranche of these licences, being those issued between 2001 and 2003 will expire on 31 December 2009.

With their affiliation, all clubs and organisations received a full list of NSRA RCOs registered to them, identifying those with licences that are about to expire. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of course packs sold during the last two years, but it remains a concern that at least one-third of our Category A clubs operate without a single RCO registered to them.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Sport England Project

The first opportunity for the NSRA Board to discuss the full implications of the withdrawal of the CPSA from the Sport England project was at its meeting in late September when it was decided to proceed with just the NRA as a partner, subject to Sport England's approval.

At the September meeting the Board also approved the 'Agreement to Cooperate' document with the NRA which relates to both parties agreeing to undertake the task of receiving the Sport England Award and administering and managing the programme of activity to deliver the agreed outcomes.

However the NRA only signed off on accepting the Award in late October. Fortunately Sport England agreed that the two bodies alone, NSRA and the NRA, as GBTSF Ltd could be provided with the award and contracted to oversee the implementation of the whole programme in the absence of the CPSA.

The 'Agreement to Cooperate' between the NSRA and the NRA was finally signed by both parties in early November, and the inaugural meeting of GBTSF Ltd, has been held. At this meeting, Mr Ken Nash was elected as the Chairman of GBTSF Ltd.

The prime purpose of GBTSF Ltd, the company that will administer the award on behalf of the NSRA and the NRA, is to manage a programme of activity to deliver the agreed outcomes to Sport England, and this will be the day to day responsibility of a National Development Manager that will be appointed in the very near future.

Primarily, the Sport England award is for the creation of a programme to improve a variety of areas important to target shooters and volunteers at the grass roots level, including coaching, officiating, facilities, image of the sport, etc, in order to deliver a more enjoyable and satisfactory personal experience of target shooting. This would help us achieve the Sport England objective of 'Sustain'.

The second Sport England objective applicable to GBTSF Ltd, i.e. 'Excel', initially requires the creation of a talent identification strategy for target shooters. Once the pathway has been established across all disciplines it will be promoted through the coach networks throughout the country.

NATSS

At the September meeting the Board also discussed at length the issue of the CPSA withdrawing from NATSS, and the fact that there were no more funds available from the grants received from UK Sport and the CCPR for this purpose.

In particular the Board considered whether there was merit in continuing with the NATSS process with just the NRA.

It was agreed to continue working towards amalgamation, concentrating initially on the Sport England project, and by cooperating on mutually agreed projects. In terms of working with the NRA, all practical efforts will now be focussed on ensuring that the Sport England project is successfully delivered.

2012 Olympic and Paralympic Shooting Venue

For the record, the following should be noted:

- Not long after the 2008 Beijing Olympics it became known that the ODA were reviewing Woolwich as the site of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Shooting venue.
- The NSRA contacted both LOCOG and KPMG to offer assistance and cooperation should they wish to consider Bisley instead of Woolwich, and the response was that they wanted to focus on reviewing Woolwich. It is understood that the NRA received a similar response from LOCOG.
- However, at the same time the NRA commissioned an architect to develop their Bisley "Whole Site Plan" which included not only their vision for the National Shooting Centre, but incorporated an independent (with no KPMG involvement) proposal to stage the 2012 Olympic Shooting events at Bisley.
- This was unfortunate as it denied the NSRA the opportunity to press for KPMG to conduct a proper feasibility study on Bisley in consultation with the NSRA and the appropriate Shotgun authority.
- KPMG did not properly engage with any of the Shooting NGBs in conducting a feasibility study on Bisley. Had it done so the whole process would have been more transparent.

- The NRA proposal was presented by British Shooting as its own. The ODA and LOCOG viewed this proposal as the Bisley feasibility study and proposal, and rejected it. The NRA's insistence on continually linking the Olympic site with their whole site plans, confused and diluted any case that we may have had.
- Furthermore, NSRA's attempts to provide input and legitimate technical corrections to the British Shooting proposal were rejected by the NRA, and it was clear that all the NRA and British Shooting wanted from the NSRA was tacit approval of their proposal.

On the 15 October 2009, the London Olympic Board issued a statement saying that: "The Royal Artillery Barracks at Woolwich is confirmed as the venue for Olympic and Paralympic Shooting and is the preferred venue for Paralympic Archery. The Olympic Delivery Authority will submit the planning application for Woolwich in the next few weeks."

In these circumstances the NSRA will continue to do whatever is necessary to ensure that there is a legacy of some sort for the sport of Small-bore Shooting.

British Shooting

Following the resignation of Phil Boakes from the position of Chairman of British Shooting with immediate effect at the end of July, and also Keith Murray as the Secretary, only the position of Secretary has been filled up to this point in time.

John Perry has been appointed as the Secretary, and following an approach from a friend who is a newly-appointed Trustee of the NRA, a Mr M Searles has expressed his interest in the vacancy of Chairman.

Pistol, Airgun & Crossbow Committee

On the recommendation of the Committee Chairman, the Board has appointed Roger Monksummers and Andy Lawrence as additional members of the Committee.

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The NSRA's guide to policy and procedures has been issued with the 2010 re-affiliation packs to all affiliated clubs and organisations. Copies of the booklet are available today for any Council Members who do not already have one, and it is also downloadable from the website in A4 pdf format.

Although they are a different form of organisation to a club, a County Association will also need to look at the policy in relation to its own activities. Whilst they may not have individuals as members, they are likely to do things in which juniors and/or vulnerable adults are participants, and where safeguarding issues could arise. These will include, for example, the organising of open meetings, running teams in postal competitions and holding coaching courses or social events.

Staffing

Charity – Our former Accountant, Michael Rietschy, resigned in August after his probationary period had concluded to seek an appointment more suited to his skills, which did not match our needs. We have been fortunate to find a very well qualified replacement in Mirza Muhammad Javed who has a BSc degree in Applied Accounting and is an Affiliate of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountancy (ACCA). We have received a number of applications for the position of Assistant Technical Manager (Geoff Doe's understudy) and will be interviewing the shortlisted candidates in early December.

NSRA Limited - Mark Cook will start work as our Operations Manager for the Lord Roberts Centre on 30 November. He has a HND in Leisure Studies and has significant experience in managing leisure clubs and sport centres, most recently being employed as the Assistant Manager for the Bracknell Forest Borough Council for two of its sports centres. Lynn Thomas started work as a Customer Services Officer earlier this month and may well be your first point of contact at Reception as you enter the Lord Roberts Centre during weekdays.

Membership

Fees for 2010

The fees for 2010 have been agreed by the Board of Management as:

Clubs

30 members or fewer	£125
Over 30 members	£170
County Associations	£390
Cat. B, D & E organisations	£140

Individuals

Annual	£74
Junior and FTE	£41
Associate	£52

Welcome Deal

The Welcome Deal will continue to offer special introductory rates to new Annual members. It gives a substantial first-year discount to those joining the Association for the first time as an Annual Member and paying by Direct Debit. For 2010 the fees are £42 for an Annual Member and £25 for a Junior Annual Member. In addition the new member's primary club, if affiliated to the NSRA, will receive a bounty of £10 for each Annual Member and £5 for each Junior Annual Member.

Despite the current economic climate and recession conditions, the total number of new people joining, lapsed members re-joining and Associate Members upgrading to Annual Membership during the last 12 months has been 404. This compares favourably with an annual average of 380 and a peak of 390 in the previous four years. 276 of the 404 members joined under the Welcome Deal and a further 37 upgraded from Associate Membership.

New Deal

The New Deal was introduced in 2007 and provided three-year memberships at a discounted rate. We are now at the end of the first three-year cycle and the Board has agreed that the Scheme will continue in 2010.

During this first cycle a total of 1,015 members, or about 19% of the paying membership, are covered by this scheme. Of these almost 600 have paid the lump sum, making a significant addition to the Association's short-term working capital.

Membership Working Group

The Board has set up a small working group of some Board Members and NSRA staff to look at options for the future. The group has just started work and in due course there will be an invitation to affiliated organisations and individual members to contribute their views.

British Field Target Association

We have been advised that at their AGM last Saturday the BFTA decided not to offer insurance to their members. We have passed "introduction" packs to BFTA for distribution to their clubs, who would be able to enjoy full NSRA affiliation for less than their previous insurance premium via BFTA. The NSRA already has about 15 field target clubs already in affiliation, and a few other clubs which shoot field targets as well as other disciplines.

Firearms Legislation

In the Queen's Speech it was announced that there would be legislation seeking to reduce the risk of airgun accidents by children having access to the firearms when unattended by an adult.

We have been advised it will be brought in via the Crime & Security Bill and it will be 'an offence for a person in possession of an air rifle to fail to take reasonable precautions to prevent any person under the age eighteen from having the weapon with him'. The draft legislation goes on to give exceptions and grounds for defence if charged.

In addition the government has announced that it wishes to devolve additional powers to the Scottish government, including the power to pass legislation on airguns. This is a very worrying development. With input from Geoff Doe, the BSSC wrote to the Home Office, putting forward reasons why it should not go ahead.

Some press coverage has included headlines such as "Airgun Ban in Scotland", this is not true. The Scottish Government's proposals as we understand them are that only professional pest control officers licensed by the Councils or persons whose "good reason" is target shooting will be permitted to have an Airgun Firearms Certificate. Airguns will have to be stored at the premises of the "approved" club.

We will, along with all members of the BSSC, be making representations to the Scottish Executive at an appropriate time. However the Scottish proposals are dependant upon the Westminster Parliament passing primary legislation to delegate the power to the Scottish Assembly, and the government has stated that this legislation will not be introduced until after the General Election.

Certificate of Competence For MOD Ranges

The following paragraph was contained in the report as issued to the Shooting Council. However a subsequent clarification has been received which means that the NSRA and NRA will continue to provide one-year certificates to clubs for issue by them to their members. The four-year concession only applies to certificates issued by the NRA, in its role as a Home Office Approved Club, to its Individual Members.

The system for the issue of certificates of competence started at the beginning of this year, at which time a person's certificate had a validity period of one year. We have received notification from the MOD that we and the NRA may now issue certificates of competence which have a four-year validity period. The NSRA will be implementing this immediately, but we understand that the NRA plans to do this progressively to spread their current renewal burden over the full four-year cycle.

Value Added Tax

V.A.T. increases to 17.5% on 1 January 2010. Any orders received and paid for before this date will be processed at the current, lower band rate. However the Showroom (and offices) will close for the Christmas/New Year break at 5.00 pm on 23 December.

Shooting Council Meeting Dates

Council meetings in 2010 are scheduled for 20 March, 31 July and 20 November.

Lord Roberts Centre

A decision has been made to install a mezzanine floor as you enter the Lord Roberts Centre which will enable the Gun Shop to be extended to the front entrance of the building, and for the Hockey Shop to move upstairs closer to the rink. The Business Plan developed by the NSRA Limited Directors estimates that the increased capacity for the shops will result in a growth of business. This work should be completed and ready for the shop to operate in their 'new' facilities sometime in January 2010.

Bisley has been designated as one of the five Olympic Training venues for shooting. Investigations are being undertaken into the feasibility of having 25 metre electronic targets installed at Lord Roberts Centre.