

NORTH WALSHAM RIFLE &PISTOL CLUB

Minutes of the 91st AGM held 25th April 2024 at the North Walsham Community Centre

Present were 53 members and the NRA rep for Norfolk Robert Kelvey.

Apologies were received from I.Keeley, C.Ross, R.Martin,W.Debbage, C.Grasby

The Hon Secretary (J.Sharman) called the meeting to order and called for the election of a Chairman for the meeting. Mr.C.Abbs was duly proposed and elected but stated that somebody needed to take the minutes. There being no volunteers he took the minutes himself and J.Sharman was elected to chair the meeting.

Minutes of previous meeting – The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated. There were no issues and they were approved by the members and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

Chairman`s Report – Colin Abbs thanked all present for coming and thanked everyone who had helped the club this year. We are run by volunteers and without people like John Sharman and Michael Mannings and all the others behind the scenes none of the large projects currently underway would ever take place. It has been pleasing to see new junior and lady members joining us this year and it goes to show that shooting really is a sport for all. The proposed lead ban has still not been decided and changes to the Home Office approval for shooting clubs came in on April 2nd. These won`t affect the members too much but will cause more red tape for the committee to deal with. If you are interested the approval criteria are on the government website (all 55 pages of them) but rest assured the committee are already dealing with the changes. Hopefully all these changes will be overcome and we can all continue to enjoy our sport for another year.

Hon.Secretary – John Sharman thanked everyone who had helped over the year. He pointed out that all affiliations and especially insurances had gone up significantly this year. We also need more volunteers to help us bring in the improvements we agreed on at the last AGM otherwise we will have to outsource some of the work and this will cost.

Treasurer – Isabel Snell reported that income was up, ammo sales are up and stocks are good. Target costs are up but we have just restocked early, there has been relief on they business rates so they have halved this year. Maintenance costs are variable but down on last year and diesel costs are down at present. There is only one payment left for the field purchase loans (Oct 2024) and water usage and therefore rates are up slightly. Over the year we did make a loss but this is entirely due to the cost of getting the electric supply to our boundary. There is £5k in the generator fund and when we stop using it we can move this money into the general fund. The annual accounts were circulated and approved unanimously by the members.

Rifle Capt. – Geoff Snell stated that it felt a bit like we were still getting over covid. When he first took on the job we had 120 members and although we are currently double that

membership has been higher. He would like to see more members on the rifle side. There are some youngsters coming through but he would still like to see more. Interest is being shown in Target Sprint and this will be looked into in the future. He finished by asking everyone to sing the praises of the club to anyone who will listen and all try to recruit new members wherever possible.

Pistol Capt. – Tony Heaps noted the improvements made to the pistol range - new lights over the firing points and slabs to be laid to improve disabled access out the front of the firing point and to enable brass to be cleared up easier. Sadly the target frames and holders are being shot up by badly positioned targets. These take time and money to repair. The toilet project is still on going. Range 3 is still being left messy- please clear up behind yourself and be extra vigilant of live rounds being left behind. If anyone spots another member doing anything wrong please email the Hon Secretary with details so we can nip these problems in the bud. It was noted that at Bisley all ranges now have cctv and when the mains electric is on he would like this to be looked into at our club.

Airgun Capt. – John Francis introduced himself to the members. He has only been in post for 3 months so had little to report but thanked all the Thursday night rco's and re-iterated the desire for more new members. Range use is increasing but we are still not quite back to pre-covid levels.

Development Officer – Michael Mannings reported that there appear to be fewer grants around at present and they seem to be for smaller amounts than they used to be. One application had gone in and he had been in touch with Sport England. They advised that there may be more money available next year. Our membership is stable and we seem to gain what we lose each year but of 260 members only 28 are under 25 years of age and this is where the majority of the grants come from. Attendance is on the up. Over the last few years we have built a new clubhouse, purchased the field next door, range quality has improved, Zeropoint have re-started and mains electric has reached the corner of the field. A future growth plan now needs to be drawn up. Unfortunately due to recent planning changes we now need a Bio-diversity metric for the car park extension. This is proving a problem and if anyone has experience in this field please get in touch.

Subscriptions – The Committee had officially proposed that subs should remain the same for the forthcoming year (Full £130, Junior £40). There was much discussion on this subject and several alternative proposals put forward and seconded including all fees up, all fees down, junior only down and a discount for over 67 years old. The cost of living, variations to age limits and variable fees were also mentioned but at the voting in was finally approved that all subs would remain the same as last year . Adult Full £130 Junior £40.

Any Other Business

Field Target range - A request for an airgun field target range to be set up in the woods beside range 3 was made. This had been mentioned at a previous meeting. The committee had looked into this and had a site visit. The biggest problem was one of access to the firing points. Any new facility must comply fully with current disability access regulations and

therefore be available to all members including anyone in a wheelchair. This would be impossible with the current suggestion. It was proposed that access and use could be limited to able bodied members only but it was pointed out that these regulations are law and to discriminate could jeopardise our Sport England status (and therefore any future grants) as well as being unlawful. Following these points the suggestion was withdrawn.

Car Park / Field - There have been some changes to the planning requirements. An application has been put in but it now needs a bio-diversity metric so we may have to pay an expert to do a survey. The cable for the electric may have to cross the corner of the proposed extension to the car park so it will be sensible to do both jobs at once or the cable first so we do not have to dig up the finished car park and make good after. A cable underground is cheaper than one on telegraph poles. We have not yet got fixed prices for these jobs but members should be aware that we may not have enough cash to do all the planned jobs at once. Solar panels may be an option open to us. There are some grants available for these and the Dev. Officer will look into these and explore members funding the projects as we did with the field purchase.

Club Name – A problem with some grant applications is that many grant donors do not recognise shooting as a suitable sport for donations and the words rifle and pistol in our name do seem to have a negative effect in some cases. It was suggested that we could change our name to Nth Walsham Target Club but it was pointed out that this would require changes to the land registry for the original ranges, air range and field which were all purchased and registered separately. This would also have a direct impact on our Home Office approval and we would have to pay to have this changed and all insurance policies and affiliations would need changing. All up we could end up paying out more than we receive in grants following the exercise but it is something that could be considered in the future.

The Big Bash – This was a showcase for local sport clubs and societies run recently by the council. Charles Cain represented us on the day and received much interest in the club by those members of the public who attended. Unfortunately we had very little notice of the event taking place and therefore no time to prepare posters etc for a stall. The next event is in 2 years time and it is hoped that we can have a stall and advertise ourselves in a positive and professional light. The committee will hopefully be able to look into this and prepare a little closer to the time.

Club member Vivien Minett has been elected to the NSRA Rifle committee and is the NSRA county rep for Norfolk

Election of Committee Members –

Chairman proposed and seconded Colin Abbs and Jeff Saville

At the voting Abbs 32 Saville 7

Colin Abbs duly elected

The following posts were unopposed and carried by unanimous vote

Hon Secretary John Sharman

Assistant Sec.	Charles Cain
Membership Sec.	Paddy O'Brien
Treasurer	Isabel Snell
Liaison Officer	Tony Barnard
Rifle Capt.	Geoff Snell
Pistol Capt	John Wheeldon
Airgun Capt.	John Francis
Safety Officer	Terry Thacker
Development Officer	Michael Mannings
Junior Rep.	Freya Giles
Website manager	David Sherwood
Rifle comp sec.	Colin Abbs

Presentation of Trophies – A selection of NCRA winter league medals were presented to those winners present.

Jenni Giles 50m trophy	Terry Chadwick
Chairmans Cup	Tony Barnard

A report from NRA rep for Norfolk – Robert Kelvey

Mr Kelvey introduced himself and stated that the previous night he had attended the NCRA agm and had given a report on the current activities of the National Rifle Association. He was then invited to attend our meeting and do similar.

He stated that it was nice to see our push for more juniors in the club . Cadet forces across the county are struggling to shoot and if we can help them we may be helping ourselves in our goal to develop junior shooting at North Walsham. Juniors are the future of the sport. Thetford is changing but still available if we wanted to sign up and do some fullbore rifle shooting. If there is anything we would like raised with the NRA we only need to contact him. The NRA council is currently very active in fighting the proposed lead in ammunition ban and currently are pushing to get more juniors themselves on the council.

He was thanked for his support and for turning out to our AGM.

There being no more business the meeting closed at 9.30pm