
Cornwall Target Shooting Association

Registered Charity Number 258147



Affiliated to The National Rifle Association & National Small-Bore Rifle Association

NSRA Shooting Council report 22nd November 2014

Those of you who knew Lester Smith from Worcestershire (a Range Officer at many National Meetings) will be sorry to hear that he died suddenly recently.

Peter Underhill joined the Association recently as Assistant Secretary and should takeover from Brian Woodall on his retirement.

One of the main topics at this meeting was the result of round 8 of the summer 50m / 50yds national league being called in for checking. Some 3,500 targets were checked resulting in approximately 4.7% being found to have marking errors on them, some of them more serious than others. This resulted in some of the results in the leagues being changed by the NSRA consequentially the local scoring trial period is being extended and not expanded until the standard has improved.

In the light of letters received from Alloa & District RC, Devon County Smallbore Rifle Association and Perthshire Smallbore Rifle Association the Rifle Committee will review the amendments to rule 7.9 which came into effect in April 2014.

The Chief Executive's report to the Shooting Council follows below along with a letter from Andy Marsh, Chief Constable of Hampshire and the Chair of the ACPO Firearms & Explosives Licensing Working Group.

The next Shooting Council meeting is due to be held on the 21st March 2015.

P.L.Ralph

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT TO THE SHOOTING COUNCIL

22nd NOVEMBER 2014

Obituaries

It is with regret that I report the deaths of the following:

Roy Miller – who was a familiar face at our Rifle Meetings and had served as Secretary of Harrow Rifle & Pistol Club for over 50 years.

N L (Lester) Smith – from Worcestershire, who for many years had acted as a range officer at various National Meetings.

SHOOTING MATTERS

National Meetings

National Rifle Meeting, Bisley

The total number of competitors this year was 583 against 680 in 2013. In a normal year we would anticipate a loss of about 10 to 15 competitors, although this slow decline does not always happen. This year we were over 90 competitors down, which in one year is very concerning. If we do not retain or get the competitors back we could find that the Bisley National Championship becomes financially unsustainable very quickly.

The weather was a concern this year as the tail end of a tropical storm swept across the UK during the meeting and any competitor who shot on the first Sunday will confirm that the shooting conditions were very difficult. The weather did start to settle down towards the end of the week although the Roberts final did provide the finalists with some very challenging conditions.

Pistol Championships, Bisley

This year's Pistol Championship Meeting was held over the weekend of the 19th to 21st September. There were a total of 85 competitors in the pistol shooting events, which was 30 up on last year. In addition there were about 35 shooters in the Junior Air Rifle Open Championships, transferred from the Airgun Meeting in February, and a Sporter Air Rifle competition.

Even with these extra entries the meeting still makes a loss. The PAC Committee will be undertaking a complete review of this Championship to make it more viable. All medals and prizes have been distributed.

Postal Competitions

Winter Leagues 2014-15

The first round results are already back in the clubs and in a couple of cases the results were emailed to clubs within ten 10 days of the last date for shooting.

Knock-out Competitions

A number of the knock-out competitions have completed their first rounds and some are already near to the final date for shooting Round Two.

NSRA-Eley Competition

The Eley finals were held on 10th August and over the weekend of 4th and 5th of October. From an organizer's point of view it ran quite smoothly with no major problems. The finals for 2015 will run to a new format with increased numbers of shooters qualifying for the October weekend.

Postal International Matches

2014 Results

Successes in 2014 Rifle Matches were achieved in the Randle (equalling the British Record score), the Dewar and the Wakefield. The scores were:

Dewar

Great Britain	7807
United States of America	7790
South Africa	7687

Randle

Great Britain	3995
United States of America	3990
South Africa	3926

Wakefield

Great Britain	5933
United States of America	5899
South Africa	5828
Australia	5787

Drew

Junior Men team of 3	
United States of America	1753
South Africa	1751
Australia	1750
Great Britain	1743

Junior Women team of 3	
United States of America	1765
South Africa	1704
Great Britain	1692

Junior team of 10	
United States of America	5811
South Africa	5756
Great Britain	5687
Australia	5637

The scores for other teams in the Mayleigh Pistol Match, including the USA, are not yet known. However as the GB score of 2526 ex 3000 was marginally down on last year.

Match Officials

The Rifle Committee has appointed Miss Linda Smallbone as Captain and Mrs Ann Travis as Adjutant of the Great Britain Randle Team for 2015 and 2016.

The Pistol, Airgun & Crossbow Committee has appointed Mrs Kay Hankey as Captain of the Great Britain Mayleigh Team for the same years.

Electronic Targets

Following a review of the policy introduced in 2002, it has been agreed that electronic targets permitted in NSRA postal competitions will require the ISSF Phase I Test to have been passed, instead of approval at Phases I and II. The change comes into effect immediately.

As a result the following electronic targets have been added to the NSRA-approved list:

Disag	OpticScore	10m air rifle and air pistol
Meyton	MF5R1	10m air rifle and air pistol
Meyton	MF5R3	50m rifle and pistol
Sius	HS10	10m air rifle and air pistol.

The electronic targets that were already on the NSRA-approved list are:

Megalink	4K187	10m air rifle and air pistol.
Megalink	4K300	10m air rifle and air pistol.
Megalink	4K560-8	25m pistol, 50m rifle and pistol.
Sius	SA941	All distances.
Sius	LS10	10m air rifle and air pistol.
Sius	HS25/50	25m pistol, 50m rifle and pistol.

There are other makes of target which have not yet passed the ISSF Phase I test. Clubs and associations owning such targets may request that special consideration be given to them being registered for postal competitions.

At the time the original policy was put in place there were some Polytronic and Spieth targets which were approved at ISSF Phases I and II. No NSRA registration certificates were issued for any of these targets and none of their current models have passed the ISSF Phase I test.

Postal Competition Results

At the last major re-design of *The Rifleman* in the mid-1990s, a new format for the end-of-season publication of postal competition results was introduced. This involved the inclusion of a bi-annual results supplement, one for the summer season and one for winter. In each case the supplement also included a full listing of shooters who qualified for the RWS National Rankings in the various courses of fire.

With effect from the results and rankings from the Winter League 2013/14, the supplement will not be circulated with *The Rifleman*. Instead it will be available on the NSRA website.

25M Range, Lord Roberts Centre

Additional work on the outdoor 25m range has now been completed. The roof structure was strengthened during the summer and in early autumn the new roof covering was installed, together with a backdrop incorporating transparent "window" panels.

Scorers Course

Further Scorer's courses have taken place and the current number of qualified scorers is now 802 from 66 courses. Following the trials of local scoring a review of the course and local scoring is ongoing.

Lightweight Sport Rifle

Due to difficulties in getting the working group members together for a face-to-face meeting, individual meetings have taken place to gather information and ideas on the development of the LSR discipline. Also information from other organisations competition programmes has been taken into consideration.

The meeting took place on the 28th October to discuss the findings. This is now forming the basis of a paper to be presented to the PAC Committee.

Benchrest Club Instructor Course

A meeting took place at Driffild Rifle Club to gather more information and images of benchrest shooting for the new course. Both UKBR22 style shooting and NSRA Benchrest were observed and discussion about the similarities/differences noted. It is hoped to run the first course in March/April 2015.

Crossbow Development

An outline plan for the development of Sport Crossbow has been put together:

- Stage 1 – will include the development of rules, witnessing and the competition format for a postal event to run in summer 2015.
- Stage 2 –this will be taken to the next PAC meeting for discussion and amendment.
- Stage 3 – PAC present this to Shooting Council for approval

The competition is likely to be run along the lines of the current individual airgun event comprising of 3 rounds. A 10m competition would be the ideal start point as it could be run not only by clubs but also by uniformed groups. If there is sufficient demand a 20 yard version could be considered. If successful a National Championships could be planned for 2016 – this could also include not only the short range competitions but also more mainstream long range events.

Scouting is in the process of changing their PORs to place Crossbow within the Shooting section of their activities (from Archery). This will allow more development of crossbow within the organisation.

Run Shoot

Five pilot sessions of the Modern Pentathlon Run Shoot programme have now taken place and the format of the sessions formalised to make a national standard programme for the event. The sessions include an induction where the participants complete warm ups for the running section and basic skills and safety for the shooting. This was followed by a competition comprising shooting at knockdown targets and 200m runs. Support has been given to Modern Pentathlon to develop a specification for the instructors and staffing of the events. A minimum of YPS Tutor Pistol (with an add-on module) is proposed for the instructors. Further support has been given to develop the standards for provision of Run-Shoot activity, to finalise the operational manual, workforce development plan and approved "site"/ "provider" criteria for potential centres.

The further development of run-shoot for air rifle has been discussed with the organisation. Although Modern Pentathlon don't see the direct benefit of this it was highlighted that many uniformed groups already have the equipment and people qualified to deliver the activity. It would then be a simple matter to transfer to pistol. Aside from this initiative, the Run-Shoot for rifle (included in the Scout Championships) rules has been re-written to align them with ISSF Target Sprint.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Staffing

As a further part of the re-organisation preparatory to the retirement of Brian Woodall as Assistant Secretary next year, **Peter Underhill** joined the Association at the beginning of November, also with the title of Assistant Secretary. He is initially working three days a week and will take on a number of responsibilities including the servicing of the National Committees.

Bryan Smith joined the Competitions Department about a year ago, but has now left the Association to take up a post working with a small team supporting the activities of Army Cadet Units in Surrey. It was through Bryan that the services of ACF cadets were made available to assist on Century Range during the Rifle Meeting in August.

Shooting Council Meeting Dates

Council meetings in 2015 are scheduled for 21 March, 1 August (plus the Annual General Meeting) and 21 November.

Fees for 2015

Affiliation

The affiliation and membership fees rates for 2015 are:

Category A Clubs

Up to 15 members	£120
16 to 30 members	£155
31 to 75 members	£220
More than 75 members	£285

Category A Junior Clubs	
Up to 15 members	£120
More than 15 members	£150
County Associations	£190
Cat. B, D & E organisations	£190
Individuals	
Annual	£85
Junior and FTE	£42
Associate	£70

Competitions

The Board has decided that there should be a 5% increase in competition entry fees for 2015.

Christmas

The NSRA Offices and the Shop will close at 5.00 pm on Tuesday 23 December and Lord Roberts Centre at 6.00 pm the same day. The Centre and Shop will re-open on Saturday 3 January 2015, and the NSRA Offices on Monday 5 January.

The Rifleman

The Autumn edition of *The Rifleman* was the first to be produced by Blaze Publishing and the responses received have been predominantly positive. The new arrangement offers the Association a number of benefits, such as reduced direct costs and less staff time being taken up in its production. As Blaze produces a number of shooting titles, including the NRA Journal, it already has contact with a number of potential new advertisers, which will also bring benefits to our members and other readers.

A new format was introduced with the Autumn edition, but this does not reflect all the changes that will be made over future issues. In my introduction to Blaze's first production I mentioned the possibility of a change of name to something that would reflect more closely the diverse range of disciplines in which our clubs and shooters participate. This is not the first time that such a change has been discussed, and I am sure it is just as likely to have it firm proponents and equally firm antagonists as it did when it was raised on past occasions.

National Meeting Results

Up to the end of 2014, entry forms for National Meetings have included an opt-in declaration in relation to the publication of shooters' names and scores on the internet. This declaration is normally signed at the time of entry by in excess of 95% of cases. Past enquiries in relation to the lack of a signature has shown this was usually for one of several reasons, such as the entry form was completed by another person because the shooter was away from home, forms were completed in bulk, for example at a school by the Master-in-Charge, or simply that the shooter did not notice the declaration when completing the form. When the absence of an opt-in signature has been raised with such competitor when checking in at Reception for a meeting, almost all have been happy to sign. As a result the number of people who continue to refuse to allow their name to appear on the internet is exceptionally small.

The NSRA is in the course of bringing in new computer systems to process scores and results, some of which already have the capability to stream live scores direct to the internet. The need to redact a very small number of names from results causes a significant amount of work in checking that a particular shooter's wishes in this matter are met. To avoid the need for special procedures to be built into the new results systems, it has been decided that it will be a condition of entry to all NSRA National Meetings that a competitor agrees that his name, club and scores will appear in results of the meeting however they are published, including on the NSRA website. This new system will be introduced with effect from the British Airgun Championships in February 2015.

A separate review is being undertaken of policy on the taking of photographs at National Meetings and their publication, including the streaming of live video coverage to the internet.

Unannounced Police Visits

Under new Home Office guidance, police will be able to make unannounced visits to check on the security arrangements of certificate holders in an initiative to ensure firearms are being kept and stored securely. The chance that any particular firearm owner will be subject to one of these visits is slim. One police force in England has said that their programme of unannounced visits will be based on five per month, or 60 over a 12-month period, whilst it has 22,000 certificates currently in force within its area.

The full notice, placed on the NSRA website on 14 October, is as follows:

Under new Home Office guidance police will be able to make unannounced visits to check on the security arrangements of certificate holders in an initiative to ensure firearms are being kept and stored securely. However it should be noted that police do not have any new powers of entry.

The new Home Office guidance to the police states:

"Where it is judged necessary, based on specific intelligence in light of a particular threat, or risk of harm, the police may undertake an unannounced home visit to check the security of a certificate holder's firearms and shotguns. It is not expected that the police will undertake an unannounced home visit at an unsocial hour unless there is a justified and specific requirement to do so on the grounds of crime prevention or public safety concerns and the police judge that this action is both justified and proportionate.

"It is recognised that there is no new power of entry for police or police staff when conducting home visits. To mitigate any misunderstanding on the part of the certificate holder the police must provide a clear and reasoned explanation to the certificate holder at the time of the visit."

It is clearly the responsibility of every owner to ensure that their firearms are securely stored when not in use in accordance with the terms of their certificate. Although they will not normally be held on a certificate, it is important for airgun users also to take appropriate steps to store their airguns securely. Although the information issued suggests that the chance of an unannounced visit to any particular individual is small, it is the Association's advice to all members that they should immediately check that their current security arrangements are maintained to the appropriate standard.

If such an unannounced visit is made, the police are required to provide a clear and reasoned explanation for the visit to the certificate holder. Whilst it is sensible to co-operate with the police should such a circumstance arise, the certificate holder does need to satisfy himself that the visit is official and that it is not a scam being perpetrated by a bogus person posing as a police officer. It should be noted that an unannounced visit may not be occasioned by something relating specifically to the certificate holder, but be concerned with other factors such as local crime.

If such a visit takes place and the member believes that it was not undertaken properly, they are advised to report the matter to their local Constabulary Headquarters giving details of why they believe this to be the case. It would be helpful if such details could also be passed to the NSRA, so that they can be followed up through national channels such as through the British Shooting Sports Council.

A crime-stoppers line is being launched for anyone with concerns about firearms security or about sudden changes in the behaviour of firearm users. We do not believe that this is necessary and will be monitoring this initiative, as will other national shooting bodies.

British Shooting & Countryman Show 2015

The British Shooting & Countryman Show will again be taking place at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, on Friday 13 to Sunday 15 February. As in previous years there will be an NSRA presence alongside the stands of the NRA, CPSA and other shooting organizations, and there will also be an airgun range run by NSRA coaches.

Safeguarding

The Scout Association have for a long time used an information card (called a "Yellow Card") as an aid to helping instructors and others maintain good safeguarding standards when working with young people. It has been suggested that a version of this for shooting instructors and other working with young people in shooting would be useful. The draft content and layout for the shooting version of the card has been put together. Comments on the content and format have been received and the final version is being prepared. These will be made available to instructors, coaches and clubs.

Disabled Shooting Project

A further meeting of the Disabled Shooting Project has taken place at West Midlands Regional Shooting Centre. The meeting took place between original members of the project but not including any British Shooting representation.

- The project would continue on a voluntary basis
- Cross discipline working was very important and should continue
- The DSP would be set up as an organisation in its own right and not be embedded in one NGB
- The DSP would set up as a charity

The critical functions were to:

- Maintain communications network
- Maintain website

Once the project was re-established then other activities would be considered as time and funding permitted.

British Shooting was asked if they had any issues with the continuation of the project and they said there was no problem. However it was highlighted that the intention was to make sure any activities were complimentary between the two organisations.

More activity will start to take place from the Disabled Shooting Project when the organisation (which will be independent of the main NGBs) is set up as a properly constituted body in its own right.

British Shooting Sports Council

The BSSC have developed a page on their website outlining the training that is provided by member organisations. The NSRA Courses are now included on this page along with the other NGBs.

Dwarf Sports Association

Following the demise of the BS Disability Shooting Programme some national projects have suffered – one being the development of shooting in the Dwarf Sports Association. The association has a ring fenced amount of funding to help support shooting development which is held by British Shooting.

To help continue the development a meeting took place at West Midlands Regional Shooting Centre on 1st November to allow members of the association to try different types of air rifle to find which types are most suitable and if any adaptations are necessary. Mr Monksummers brought a selection of suitable rifles for them to try on the day and feedback for each gathered and collated. This

information has been presented to the lead officer of the association at a meeting at Dronfield on 10th November.

The next stage is to source the most suitable rifles (after discussion with BSA and Air Arms) and then adapt them as appropriate. A list of the location of the members has been provided which will be compared with the DSP list to find clubs to place the rifles for use.

Regional Squad Standards

A draft version of a set of standards for Regional Squads has been put together. These standards will allow the benchmarking of the squads and mark them as "Performance Hubs" for small-bore shooting. This may give them access to some funding via British Shooting. The main requirement of these standards (beyond what is normally required of a regional squad) is that they have strong links to Scouts, Cadets, schools and other youth organisations in their area to provide feeders for the squad.

British Shooting – England Development Group

Survey

1,700 people completed the recent British Shooting survey. An analysis of the data has been produced as a PowerPoint presentation and this has been circulated to the NSRA Board and will provide insight for future development.

Disability Shooting Programme

The Disability Gala Day took place at Lord Roberts Centre, Bisley Clay ground and Melville ranges on 6th September. The event was a disability focussed open day to provide opportunities for disabled people to try small-bore, shotgun and full-bore disciplines.

British Shooting have also launched a programme to provide small grants to a number of clubs for projects that will increase disabled participation in the sport. Further information can be found via the link: [http://britishshooting.org.uk/news/title=Disability Shooting Grants&d=1003](http://britishshooting.org.uk/news/title=Disability%20Shooting%20Grants&d=1003)

Up to £10 000 will be made available to support projects over the next 12 months.

Wheelpower

Following the success of the sessions run at the Sheffield Spinal Unit the project is to be extended to other units around the country. The first is likely to be Pinderfields Hospital in Wakefield. Wheel power has expressed an interest in acquiring their own laser rifles with a view to training staff to deliver sessions. Other units earmarked for shooting are Stanmoor and Salisbury.

Shooting will also take place in the Spinal Games but this will use air rifles not laser equipment.

In the background there are also moves towards more collective working between Wheelpower, Dwarf Sports Association, Limbpower and the Cerebral Palsy association. They are starting to think of organising more activity together as they represent groups of disabilities which have some similarities. This link could give more opportunities for disability shooting development.

Activators

Two part time "Activators" have been employed by British Shooting using the funds released by the closure of the Disability Shooting Programme. Georgina Geikie is the activator employed in the south of the country to cover Devon, Dorset and Surrey. Sam Sanderson (from Modern Pentathlon) has been employed in the north to cover Yorkshire, West Midlands and Cambridgeshire.

Meetings have taken place separately with the new British Shooting Activators and Liz Davidson to map out the areas of activity in the north and southern regions. In both areas the development will focus on:

- Coaching provision and development of the coaching workforce
- Disability development
- Cadet engagement

The ways that these will be implemented will be different in the different regions.

The two new Activators are now pursuing "leads" and opportunities to raise the profile of and develop activity within the priority areas. Successful meetings have taken place with several CSPs and they are keen to work with us to support clubs and activity.

Club Toolkit

A workshop took place following the last England Development Group meeting to discuss changes to the draft version of the clubs toolkit. The final version of the Clubs Tool-kit is about to be launched and will be available on: <http://britishshooting.org.uk/club-development-toolkit>

Talent Development

British Shooting has launched their 'Target Tokyo' campaign on 23rd July. This is a nationwide search for shooters across all disciplines (shotgun, rifle & pistol). The aim of the project is to identify those shooters that have the potential to be developed for the 2020 Olympic Games.

The first stage of the British Shooting/English Institute of Sport 'Target Tokyo' campaign took place on 8th and 9th November at Lord Roberts Centre. Around 100 rifle and 50 pistol applicants took part in the weekend. The candidates engaged in a number of shooting drills whilst being observed by coaches and also had interviews with sports scientists on psycho-social elements. The data is now being gathered together and analysed to give a ranking of the candidates and a first filter made. It is thought that 2 further sessions (smaller numbers but more intense) will be required to analyse the candidates and produce a final group. Exit strategies are required for those not making the standard but who could populate the levels underneath the GB Academy.

British Shooting is also looking at ways to raise the profile of elite shooters and promote their success at a local level. This involves producing profiles and information to enable this.

Army Elite Sports Programme

UK Sport, the British Army and the English Institute of Sport are working together on a talent programme aimed at identifying future Olympic medalists from within the ranks. The Army Elite Sports Programme (AESP) launches using a £1.4m donation the British Army received for providing some of the security at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This new partnership is designed to identify men and women in some sports who possess the potential to go all the way to the podium in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and beyond. As part of the AESP, Talent Scientists from the EIS will run assessments in the garrison towns nationwide and further afield in Germany and Cyprus. The launch of the AESP six years ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics is recognised as the time required to develop an Olympic hopeful into a medal contender. Shooting is one of the sports which will benefit from this initiative.

Cadet Project

Major General Niche at support command sent out a note to say cadets are officially working with British Shooting. This should make it easier to engage with the Cadets at all levels. A Launch event is planned in the New Year to help get across the key messages to all partners and those who can influence the project.

The talent ID opportunities for Cadets have been further discussed with Derby Lodge. A letter is to be sent out from Cadet HQ to all Cadet Leaders telling them how to upload their data to the GB Juniors National Database.

More locally, a mail out in Leicester, Rutland and Northampton has been sent to Cadet leaders asking them what they do, what they know about mainstream shooting structures and what help they would like has taken place. This "snap-shot" of leaders requirements (in an active region), will help tailor the delivery of future Cadet Initiatives. I have had discussions with the senior staff involved with the Cadet Sections of all the armed services and this has identified further potential to work together.

Laser Rifles

Following the success in several have-a-go sessions British Shooting have purchased four more Laser Rifles from BSW. Also the Jersey Rifle Association is considering using them for development on the island. They seem to be acceptable for use in places and with organisations that are sensitive about using air rifles e.g. schools. It has been emphasised that these should be used to "open the door" to shooting activity and quickly lead into sessions using air rifles or other real shooting opportunities.

Coaching Conference

British Shooting is planning a Coaching Conference in April 2015. The Conference is planned to be cross discipline and include discussion, lectures and workshop sessions for coaches. The conference is likely to be held in Lord Roberts Centre.

British Shooting Coaching Development Programme

British Shooting is to announce the launch of its coach development programme in December. This will supplement NGB programmes and explore CPD for coaches through a series of one-day workshops.

British Shooting Development Strategy 2014 – 2020

British Shooting are currently putting together a long term development strategy document to help focus development and provide a guide for future programmes and funding bids.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT TO THE SHOOTING COUNCIL

22nd NOVEMBER 2014

Supplementary Report

SHOOTING MATTERS

Electronic Targets

A correction is required to the second paragraph on page 3. The first NSRA registration certificate was issued in 2004 for some Spieth targets.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Unannounced Police Visits

Further to the item in the main report (page 6), we have now received a copy of a letter to Firearms Certificate holders from Andy Marsh, Chief Constable of Hampshire and Chair of the ACPO Firearms & Explosives Licensing Working Group. The letter is attached to this Supplementary Report and is also available on the NSRA website.

British Shooting – England Development Group

The Clubs Tool-Kit (page 9 of the main report) went live on the British Shooting website on Tuesday this week, 17th November.



**ASSOCIATION OF
CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS**

**Firearms & Explosives
Licensing Working Group**



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11 November 2014

Dear Certificate Holder,

You may be aware of the national activity around firearms licensing which commenced on 13 October 2014. Concerns were raised about this activity by some members of the shooting community and I wanted to write to you to provide some more information about the activity.

As the national lead for firearms I have worked closely with the firearms community including the main shooting organisations for nearly four years and very intensely in the past few weeks. I understand the importance of shooting as both an essential part of some business practices as well as a much valued leisure pursuit. I want to be very clear that the vast majority of firearms owners in the UK are law-abiding and safety-conscious.

To provide some background to the national initiative on firearms licensing: over the last five years, an average of 659 firearms, shotguns and certificated items have been lost or stolen each year. This number is coming down, but there are many individuals with criminal intent who want to get hold of guns. In this context, every gun lost or stolen is one too many.

The terrorist threat was raised recently from substantial to severe, meaning that an attack is likely. Presently there is little evidence of legal firearms users being involved in terrorism or criminal activity but we need to work together to ensure that this remains the case and to do everything we can to stop legally held firearms getting into the wrong hands and being misused.

To this end, a reminder was issued to gun owners to check the secure storage of their firearms to ensure that they were not inadvertently putting people at risk by making access to a firearm easy. People were informed that this would be followed up through visits to firearm owners to check their gun was being kept securely and provide advice if it was not. A national Crimestoppers hotline was also launched, so that anyone with any concerns about a certificate holder, which may include a gun being kept insecurely or a gun owner possibly showing changes in behaviour that could indicate signs of radicalisation or extremism or involvement in criminal activity, could report their concerns anonymously.

All of these actions have been taken to prevent harm, working with those in the firearms community to explain what we were doing and why. However, I am conscious that what we are doing may have been misunderstood.

The concerns raised have been appreciated and I would like to provide some reassurance to those in the shooting community who may feel that they are being unfairly targeted. This is not our intention. It would be neither productive nor effective.



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS

Firearms & Explosives Licensing Working Group



I understand that the dedicated Crimestoppers hotline has caused concerns and anxiety amongst the shooting community, and in particular amongst certificate holders who feel that they could be targeted by those opposed to shooting. As a result of listening to the shooting community we have agreed that there will no longer be a specific firearms licensing hotline number.

However we will continue to work with Crimestoppers, in close consultation with shooting organisations, around further campaigns on firearms licensing. However, these campaigns will only use the main Crimestoppers number. We will aim to reach the shooting community, their friends, family and loved ones, asking them to be vigilant about any potential concerns or risks.

The police and Crimestoppers already receive a high volume of calls on a daily basis about a range of issues. We are experienced at screening out false and malicious reporting, and at identifying cases in which reports made by telephone, text or email may be part of an organised campaign against lawful activities. The call handlers are trained in cognitive interviewing, and engage in conversations rather than simply reading from scripts. They monitor call levels and review them for trends and patterns, closely liaising with the police about the calls and referrals they make. Together, we carefully assess the intelligence received and respond proportionately and sensitively. Our only aim is to identify and deal with genuine risks and dangers to public safety.

The police have a responsibility to keep people safe so we need to be sure that concerns about gun owners are heard and looked into; even if the vast majority come to nothing. I can assure you that all the home visits will be intelligence led, carried out professionally and that gun-owners will be treated with respect. It is important to recognise that the primary purpose of the police as the licensing authority is where possible, to prevent harm being caused with lawfully held guns and further reduce the already low levels of gun crime and harm that we experience in the UK. This is clearly in the interest of the shooting community and underlines why we will only be effective in achieving this if we work together.

Our shared interest is to safeguard the public not impede the legitimate pursuit of shooting activity.

If you are in any way unsure of the best way to maintain proper security of your guns and ammunition, then you can find current and up to date advice in Chapter 19 of the Home Office Guide on Firearms Licensing Law, which can be found on the internet at <https://www.gov.uk>. Alternatively, telephone 101 and ask to speak to your local police crime prevention or firearms licensing department.

I hope this letter has explained why this action has been taken and reassured those with concerns that it is being done proportionately and in the public interest.

Yours sincerely

Andy Marsh
Chief Constable
Chair, ACPO FELWG