Strictly Private and Confidential

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation

Confirmed minutes of the Council meeting held at Marford Mill, Rossett, Wrexham on Thursday 11th March 2004

Present:	Alan Jarrett	Chairman
	Jan Andrews	
	Simon Breasley	
	Carl Eriksson	
	Michael Evans	
	David Frost	
	John Graham	
	Duncan Greaves	
	Sir Malcolm Guthrie	
	Robert Irvine	
	Stewart Ogden	
	Peter Pursglove	
	Ray Walters	
Ex-Officio Members:	John Swift	Chief Executive
	Christopher Graffius	Director of Communications
	Simon Hamlyn	Director of Operations
	Philippa Marshall-Purves	Director of Business Management
	Colin Shedden	Director Scotland
	Glynn Cook	Director Wales
	Roger Pollen	Director Northern Ireland
In Attendance:	Simon Clarke	Press Officer
	Gaynor Hodgson	Publications Officer
	Peter Fabian	Fundraising Manager
Secretary:	Denise Ashbridge	Minute Secretary

The Chairman introduced the new format for Council meetings as had been recommended by the Executive & Finance Committee at their meeting on 26th February 2004. The intention is to avoid oral iteration of written reports. To this end, it was agreed that more timely circulation of paperwork in preparation for meetings was required and for questions to be raised in advance so that accurate answers may be given.

1.00 Apologies

1.01 Apologies for absence were received from Walter Cole, Graham Crompton-Howe, Geoffrey Moore and Ian Haddon.

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2.00 To confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27th November 2003

2.01 Item 15.03. Simon Breasley requested that it be made clear that this was not a disciplinary matter, and had been brought before the Executive & Finance Committee for information only.

2.02 The minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 27th November 2003 were duly confirmed as a fair and accurate record of the proceedings.

3.00 To take matters arising from the meetings held on Thursday 27th November 2003

3.01 Roger Pollen provided an oral update of the position in relation to Albert Titterington and the forthcoming event in Northern Ireland. Further advice is being sought from lawyers in respect of Mr Titterington's resignation from the company organising the event and his continuing involvement with it. Roger Pollen will continue to act as Council's representative in dealing with the matter.

4.00 Minutes of the Executive & Finance Committee Meetings held on:-

a) Thursday 23rd October 2003

4.01 Item 4.06. Jan Andrews sought clarification of BASC's position in relation to the proposed DEFRA amendments to deer legislation in view of the approach of the closing date for submissions on 16th April 2004. The Chief Executive advised that Alan McCormick, Deer Officer was currently drafting a response for submission by the due date. Jan requested that BASC’s response be viewed by Council if possible prior to despatch to DEFRA. The Chief Executive undertook to make enquiries as to the progress of the response.

Action: Chief Executive

4.02 The minutes of the Executive & Finance Committee meeting held on Thursday 23rd October 2003 were duly approved.

b) Thursday 13th November 2003

4.03 It was agreed that the minutes, which had been confirmed by the Committee, should be circulated to Council for approval at their next Council meeting on 6th May 2004.

Action: Secretary

c) Thursday 22nd January 2004

4.04 It was agreed that the minutes, which had been confirmed by the Committee, should be circulated to Council for approval at their Council meeting on 6th May 2004.

Action: Secretary

d) Thursday 26th February 2004

4.05 The Chairman commented that the minutes were for noting only as they had not been approved by the Executive & Finance Committee.

4.06 Council duly noted the Minutes of the Executive & Finance Committee Meeting held on Thursday 26th February 2004.

5.00 Chairman's Activities

5.01 The Chairman expanded upon discussions held at the recent Duke of Westminster meeting and provided background information on those who had attended. At the meeting, the Chairman had agreed to draft up some options for closer working relationships with other countryside and field sports organisations.

5.02 The Chairman commented that the Code of Good Shooting Practice had been arrived at by consensus with other organisations, and recognised that it did not satisfy all of Council's aspirations, particularly in relation to disciplinary matters. Council accepted this issue would need to be resolved for future collaboration on codes of practice to take place.

6.00 Chief Executive's Activities

6.01 The Chief Executive highlighted the recommendation of the Executive & Finance Committee to agree a standardised front page for all minutes of advisory committee meetings. Consideration is being given to the format of the front page, which will be published in due course.

a) Chief Executive's Report

6.02 The Chief Executive's report was received and accepted in full by Council.

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6.03 The Chief Executive highlighted the case of an ex-member of the Association, Sean Adamson, who had been expelled in 2000 following a conviction for a firearms offence. Details of the conviction were provided by Simon Breasley. Mr Adamson had re-applied for BASC membership and the Chief Executive sought Council's approval for his readmission. Jan Andrews had been lobbied by DWA members for Sean Adamson's reinstatement and Jan produced a summary of his continued work with the DWA and his support for BASC even during his expulsion and recommended that he be re-admitted to BASC. Simon Breasley proposed that Mr Adamson be readmitted and this was seconded by Jan Andrews. The proposal was supported by a majority.

6.04 A Shoot Summit follow-up workshop is scheduled to take place on Thursday 22nd April 2004.

6.05 The Chief Executive advised that a meeting had been arranged with the Game Conservancy Trust, Countryside Alliance, BASC and DEFRA on Friday 12th March to discuss the latest version of the guidance document in relation to the Birds Directive. This will be presented to Government representatives at a meeting of the Ornis Committee in Brussels on Thursday 18th March and, if approved, will be published thereafter. Whilst the guidance document will not have the force of law it will have legal force. It will provide a source of evidence in the event of Government facing challenge in the European Court of Justice.

6.06 The Chief Executive gave an account of the background and outstanding issues pertaining to the transposition of the provisions of the Birds Directive into UK wildlife law.

b) Consideration of the recommendations of Advisory Committees:-

6.07 Deer Advisory Committee – 4th December 2003:

Council accepted the two recommendations of the Committee:-

i) that it endorse the approach contained within the discussion paper on the training of hunters to prepare large game to enter the food chain under the draft EU Consolidation of Food Hygiene Regulation

ii) that BASC supports and promotes the positive contribution that recreational stalkers can make to the management of deer within FC administered woodlands

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6.08 Scottish Committee – 11th December 2003

Council noted the recommendation to consider a policy on raptors for Scotland and hoped that this would help shape or become consistent with a nationwide policy.

Council supported the following recommendations:-

i) that the funding from the Scottish elements of the 2004 Sealed Bid Auction be allocated to the Trochry development project

ii) that BASC budgets £500 to the 'Waterbirds Around the World Conference

Council noted the recommendation that all communications and publications from BASC should recognise the sensitivities emanating from devolution.

6.09 Northern Ireland Committee – 29th December 2003:

Council accepted two recommendations:-

i) that the full membership should be consulted early in the New Year to gather their views and input in relation to the review of the NI Wildlife Order

ii) that BASC should explore using the Balmoral Show and the Birr Game Fair in May to raise profile for the Association and for the NI Game Fair.

The Committee's recommendation that "NI might develop its own sealed bid auction, with stalking being of particular interest" was rejected by Council on the basis that specific requests should continue to be earmarked by due process.

6.10 Firearms and Airweapons Advisory Committee – 15th January 2004

There were no recommendations arising from the Minutes.

6.11 Gundog Advisory Committee – 2nd February 2004

Council accepted the following recommendations (subject to budgetary considerations):-

i) that Council supports the concept of a further Gundog Conference being held in 2005, given that sufficient sponsorship can be made available to cover costs

ii) that Council considers the possibility of a joint funded Gundog post/officer in time to understudy Sheila Gussey and John Dryden's considerable involvement in this area.

iii) that Council continues to look upon the Gundog Survey as a high priority research item. The Chief Executive commented that John Harradine would be pursuing this matter. Jan Andrews asked to have minuted, Council's appreciation of the Gundog programme of events for 2004 and recognise the extra workload generated and the tremendous contribution by Regional Directors, Regional Officers and helpers.

6.12 Northern Ireland Committee – 3rd February 2004:

Council accepted the following recommendations:-

i) that Robert Crofts should chair a BASC NI Wildlife Order Review Group

ii) that a Code of Good Practice covering each of the NI Quarry Species should be developed

iii) that an active process of engagement be developed with Sinn Fein, to clarify their exact position on legally held guns and reverse their implied position

6.13 Gamekeeper's Advisory Committee – 12th February 2004

There were no recommendations arising from the Minutes.

6.14 Training Advisory Committee – 19th February 2004

Council accepted the following recommendation (subject to budgetary considerations):-

i) that Council supports the increased use of on-line training for BASC training programmes where feasible.

6.15 Scottish Committee – 19th February 2004

Council debated the following recommendations:-

i) that visitor insurance should be made available to all BASC members

ii) that Council notes BASC Scotland's short-term aim to ensure the continuation of catching-up, and its long-term aim to seek the removal of restrictions on timing.

BASC Scotland's moves to ensure the continuation of catching-up were applauded. It was agreed that further information was required with respect to visitor insurance. The Chief Executive undertook to look at the detail of extending BASC visitor insurance cover and report back to Council in May.

Action: Chief Executive/Secretary

6.16 Wildfowling Liaison Committee – 28th February 2004

Council rejected the recommendation of the Committee that a focus group be organised to discuss the lead shot review, whilst recognising the potential effects of the use of lead shot on the sport in the light of a forthcoming DEFRA survey. The consensus amongst Council members was that, ultimately, mandatory legislation could prohibit the use of lead shot in the future if compliance was proving ineffective.

7.00 Director of Communications' Activities

a) Presentation – The future of media relations at BASC

7.01 Simon Clarke provided an overview of the objectives of the Media Department when dealing with the shooting press. Short-term aims include the provision of more regional PR and support staff at Marford Mill. Longer-term aims included the provision of professional press staff in the regions and countries.

b) Presentation – The future of the BASC website

7.02 Gaynor Hodgson outlined the development of the BASC website. The press section of the site has been significantly upgraded, and now includes 'Shooting Facts for Journalists' as a download option. A Young Shots section had also been included with its own distinctive livery.

7.03 Future plans for the website include: the development of country, regional and departmental pages; a trade member section; a section related to Green Shoots initiatives; e-commerce and merchandise sales capabilities; on-line membership applications; on-line editions of magazines and editorials; advertising; intranet and extranet facilities. It was agreed that security provisions would be required for external access by Council members to the intranet facility when implemented.

c) Consideration of a proposal for BASC websites for wildfowling clubs

7.04 As part of the development programme, Gaynor outlined the facility that could be made available to wildfowling clubs to develop their own websites as a service offered by BASC. A seven-page customised website could be provided for an initial fee of approximately £50, with an annual maintenance fee being in the region of £300. Specific requests for extra pages would be implemented at additional cost. A simple maintenance system would allow clubs to update their own information. Such websites would display the BASC logo and include links to the BASC website.

7.05 It was agreed that emphasis should be placed on producing a quality package for the fee, and accepted that some flexibility might be required in respect of imposing BASC as part of the domain name. Clubs will be offered a choice of three website templates from which to choose.

7.06 The Chairman thanked both Simon and Gaynor for their presentations. Jan Andrews asked for thanks to be minuted on the brilliant work the media department is producing.

d) Director of Communications' Report

7.07 The Director of Communications' Report was received and accepted in full by Council.

7.08 Christopher Graffius reported on the success of the recent All Party Group meeting on hen harriers and grouse moors that had brought together representatives of English Nature and parliamentarians.

7.09 There were no further matters arising from the report discussed.

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8.00 Business Management

a) Business Management Report

8.01 The Business Management Report was received and accepted in full by Council.

8.02 Philippa Marshall-Purves stated that figures were currently being compiled in relation to the contribution made by BASC to the Wildlife Habitat Trust (WHT). Full details will be circulated in due course, and explanatory text will also be included in the accounts for presentation at the Annual General Meeting on 12th June 2004.

b) Approval of the financial statements

8.03 Philippa commented that pages 19 and 20 of the financial statements would be presented to members for information but that these pages did not form part of the audited accounts of the organisation.

8.04 The Chairman proposed acceptance of the financial statements, which was seconded by David Frost. The accounts were duly approved and accepted by Council.

c) Budget Preparation Timetable

8.05 Philippa outlined the proposed budget timetable as recommended by the Executive & Finance Committee. The Association's strategy for the following year would be considered at the July Council meeting at which meeting subscription rates and the required surplus would also be determined. With these key budgetary elements in place, subsequent work on the preparation and review of the budget should be simplified.

8.06 Council agreed that the Council meeting planned for 25th November 2004 would be postponed until Thursday 2nd December, this would allow the Executive and Finance Committee more time to make final adjustments to the draft budget.

8.07 The Chief Executive requested that the date of the July Council meeting be changed to Friday 16th July 2004 – this was duly agreed.

8.08 Subject to the above changes, the proposed timetable was accepted as presented. The Chairman advised caution when implementing the new timetable, as there was a danger that excessive subscription increases could result.

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9.00 Director of Operations' Activities

a) Director of Operations' Report

9.01 The Director of Operations' Report was received and accepted in full by Council.

9.02 Simon Hamlyn advised that Joanna Marshall had been appointed to the position of Cheshire Biodiversity Project Officer following interviews on 8th March 2004. No suitable candidate had been identified for the position of Development Manager (Wildlife Habitat Trust). The recruitment process for this position will continue.

9.03 In response to a query from Sir Malcolm Guthrie, the Chief Executive undertook to make relevant enquiries as to the appointments of Trustees to the WHT.

9.04 Simon Breasley clarified that the Wildfowling Development Plan had not been reviewed at the Wildfowling Liaison Committee meeting held on 28th February 2004 as had been indicated in Simon's report.

b) Fundraising Report

9.05 Peter Fabian presented an oral update on fundraising achievements for 2003 and 2004 to date and circulated a summary of activity, acknowledging the contribution made by the President Lord Lichfield. Meetings have been arranged, or have already taken place, with 21 high net worth individuals, generating income for the Association in excess of £35,000.

9.06 Two direct mail appeals have been undertaken, which have resulted in some 1,500 new donors generating approximately £60,000 of additional income. £31,000 has been pledged in legacies. To date, a total of £109,000 of income has been pledged in the current financial year, of which £19,000 has already been received. Council urged continued sensitivity when approaching members with requests for funds, and stressed the importance of seeking new donors and sources of income wherever possible rather than continually targeting those who are already giving.

9.07 A feasibility study is to be undertaken shortly for expanding the Green Shoots programme.

9.08 The Chairman, supported by Council, thanked Peter for his contribution in the fundraising arena, and thanked him for the update provided.

c) Consideration of centenary celebration ideas

9.09 Simon Hamlyn requested feedback on the range of ideas which had been circulated by the end of September. It was agreed that optimisation of all potential media opportunities should be utilised, and that perceived benefits to the grass roots membership should also be considered.

10.00 BASC AGM and Council ballot 2004

a) Arrangements for conducting the Council ballot

10.01 Philippa Marshall-Purves highlighted the draft document circulated in respect of the Council ballot for 2004, confirming that the final document would be inserted in the magazine. Arrangements would also been made for joint members to receive individual mailings of voting papers and instructions. The order of candidate's names on the ballot paper had been determined randomly by the scrutineer.

10.02 Council agreed that the member's county of residence alongside the entry for information and clear instructions of the voting process should be incorporated into the document. It was further agreed that the heading be changed to 'Country and Regional Elections'.

10.03 It was agreed that any further suggestions/comments should be forwarded to Mary Richards at the earliest opportunity for implementation.

b) Approval of the AGM Agenda

10.04 John Graham highlighted that item 6 (d) was not mandatory under the constitution, but the Chief Executive explained that members at AGM had resolved in 1986 that 2 WHT trustees are to be elected annually at the BASC AGM, and that that had been done since then.

10.05 Sir Malcolm Guthrie requested that he be correctly listed as the proposer of motion 7.5 as “Sir” Malcolm Guthrie.

10.06 Subject to the above changes, the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting was duly approved.

c) Consideration of motions for debate

10.07 Motions 7.1-7.4 – Regionalisation. Jan Andrews sought the views of Council in relation to four motions she had proposed. The consensus opinion was that as regionalisation had been incorporated at the request of the membership, there was an obligation to allow an appropriate period of time to assess its success. Following discussion on each of the options presented, Jan indicated that she would withdraw 7.3 and 7.4 and continue with motions 7.1 and 7.2 as resolutions to the AGM. It was noted that the motions did not amount to a rule change. If the motion were accepted at the 2004 AGM, appropriate rule changes would have to be moved at the AGM in 2005.

10.08 Motion 7.5 - Changes to Rule 4. The Chief Executive outlined the constitutional and employment law implications for the Association if the motion were adopted. Mike Evans (the seconder of the motion) said that under the management review conducted in 2000, no definition was made as to how the senior appointments were effected. Simon Breasley suggested that there was no benefit to members in making the proposed amendment to the rules and encouraged Council to reject and distance itself from the proposal. No further comments were made.

Secretary's Note: this motion has since been withdrawn.

10.09 Motion 7.6 – Restrictions on Council members' terms of office. The motion was noted and would be submitted to the AGM.

10.10 It was noted that Rule 7(g)(iv) should now be deleted as regionalisation had now been implemented.

Action Chief Executive

11.00 Role and operation of the Advisory Committees

11.01 It was agreed that no further discussion on this matter was required.

12.00 Recommendations of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee

12.01 The Chief Executive reminded Council that this matter had already been considered by the November 2003 Council and that the E&F had considered the matter as well.

12.02 He went through, once again, the recommendations made by the Chairman of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee in relation to the conduct of appeals, and gave the Executive & Finance Committee's conclusions as follows:-

Recommendation 1: Having discussed the appropriateness of 'de novo' hearings, and bearing in mind the Legal Advisor's clear opinion that Appeal Hearings are indeed de novo, the Executive & Finance Committee had accepted the recommendation.

Recommendation 2: There was no support from the Executive & Finance Committee for the recommendation to amend Rule 3(h) to enable the appeals committee to substitute its own sanctions. The decision of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee should remain that of upholding or rejecting the appeal. The E&F conclusion was that the proposal be rejected.

Recommendation 3: The Executive & Finance Committee agreed the recommendation of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee Chairman as presented, to the affect that when a power to make decisions has been delegated to a committee Council must accept the decisions it makes. To do otherwise on disciplinary matters creates a double jeopardy. The only exception would be where the committee has acted ultra vires.

Recommendation 4: The Executive & Finance Committee disagreed that Council should have the right to appeal the E&F's disciplinary decision other than where the committee had acted ultra vires, and it was therefore rejected.

Recommendation 5: The suggestion of codifying disciplinary sanctions was agreed by the Executive & Finance Committee for immediate instigation. The following levels are to apply:

Level 1: Warning
Level 2: Suspension of membership for a period not exceeding two years.
Level 3: Expulsion with a right to apply for re-instatement at a later date.
Level 4: Life expulsion.

Recommendation 6: The Executive & Finance Committee disagreed extending the timescales from seven to ten days for the notification of the decision of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee to the Chief Executive. The recommendation was therefore rejected.

12.03 It was pointed out that as few members had a copy of the paper they had been unable to follow the proposals and that even those who had were unclear as to what was being recommended.

12.04 In addition to the above recommendations, Council considered the quorum for the Disciplinary Committee, and agreed that it should be three of the elected members of the Executive & Finance Committee.

12.03 In concluding the discussions, the Chief Executive undertook to e-mail Council members with a full summary of issues upon which agreement was reached. Council members were asked to contact the Chief Executive with any comments. If no reservations are forthcoming, the BASC role and operations paper would be amended accordingly. The Chairman said that if Council members had reservations the matter should be brought back to Council on 6th May 2004.

Secretary's Note: The Chief Executive sent out a full summary of the issues to Council members on 1st April 2004. This summary will be ratified at the Council meeting on 6th May 2004.

13.00 <u>Code of Conduct for elected Council members and staff</u>

13.01 The Chief Executive stated that the revised paper presented incorporated all comments received on the draft document previously circulated. Council acknowledged the document as a valuable set of guidelines and endorsed its content.

14.00 <u>Any Other Business by leave of the Chairman</u>

14.01 Jan Andrews highlighted a document received from the Deer Department in relation to the issue of Chronic Wasting Disease in deer and the potential impact of the disease on deer populations. It was agreed that an appropriate policy should be formulated for the information of members, with Simon Hamlyn undertaking to liaise with Jan Andrews and Peter Pursglove to draft suitable guidance.

14.02 Carl Eriksson requested that consideration be given to the appointment of John Bond as a Welsh Committee member to represent Mid-Wales. Council agreed to the appointment.

14.03 It was proposed and accepted that Carl Eriksson be appointed to the Firearms and Airweapons Advisory Committee with immediate effect.

14.04 John Graham advised that two paintings had become available, the subject of each being Nick Frearson engaged in Puntgunning activities at Lindisfarne. The cost of each painting was £500 each. John sought donations from Council members for the acquisition of one of the said paintings, which was agreed. Donations totalling £165.00 were contributed during the course of the meeting.

14.05 Council accepted Philippa Marshall-Purves' recommendation that no donation be made to the WHT by BASC from the previous year's small surplus. It was agreed, however, that full details of the overhead costs attributed to the WHT by BASC should be provided to members.

14.06 Simon Hamlyn informed Council he had been made aware that at least one Wildfowling Club had commented on the subscription increase in relation to the cost of Young Shots membership. This will need to be monitored during the course of the year.

15.00 Date of the Next Meeting

15.01 The date for the next meeting was noted as Thursday 6th May 2004.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 3.50 p.m.

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Chairman

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Date