

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR SHOOTING & CONSERVATION

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT MARFORD MILL, ROSSETT, WREXHAM, ON THURSDAY 18th MAY 2006

Present:	John Graham Michael Alldis Eric Begbie Simon Breasley Walter Cole Graham Crompton-Howe Carl Eriksson Michael Evans Lee Freeston David Frost Duncan Greaves Robert Irvine Andy Macfarlane Peter Pursglove Ray Walters Tom Wylie	Chairman
Ex-Officio Members:	John Swift Glynn Cook Colin Shedden Christopher Graffius Philippa Bursey Vivienne Jasper	Chief Executive Director, Wales Director Scotland Director of Communications Director of Business Management IPS Secretary
Secretary:	Amanda Forshaw	Minute Secretary
In part time Attendance:	Mark Cokayne	Wildfowl and Wetlands Officer (incorporating WHT Marketing & Development Officer)

In attendance for item A5.2

A1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Jan Andrews, Ian Haddon, William Notton, Simon Hamlyn and Roger Pollen.

At this point, the Vice-Chairman expressed thanks on behalf of Council to John Graham, David Frost, Graham Crompton-Howe and Simon Breasley for their services to the organisation and for their contribution to Council, and he expressed best wishes for the future as this would be their final Council meeting before completion of their elected terms of office.

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A2 Confidential Agenda Items

It was noted that items B3 – BASC Pension Scheme; B4 – Financial Issues; C1 – Minutes of the Executive and Finance Committee; C2 – Minutes of Advisory Committees and C6 – Director of Business Management's report should be regarded as Confidential.

This was agreed.

Concern was expressed as to the level of confidentiality for item B4 as it was felt that input from members in readiness for the meeting would have been a useful contribution to the discussion. It was noted that as the meeting of Council was to discuss the strategic direction, it was felt inappropriate at this stage to include member's views. Once the discussion had taken place a decision could be taken as to whether the item should remain confidential.

A3 Declaration of Interests

The Chairman, Director of Business Management and the IPS Secretary declared an interest in item B3 – BASC Pension Scheme.

A4 To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18th April 2006

A4.1 In item B2.1 on the 5th line of the 1st paragraph, it was agreed to substitute the word 'sold' with 'traded'.

In item C1 it was noted that future acknowledgements of E & F minutes presented should contain the word 'accepted' rather than 'noted'.

The Minutes were then duly accepted as a fair and accurate record of the proceedings.

A5 To take Matters Arising from the meeting held on 18th April 2006.

A5.01 BASC as a sporting agency.

It was noted that this was now moving forward. There are to be two formats on the website - a) an area for the public to gain access to, and, b) a member's only section. It was expected that this would go live in June/July 2006. Assurance was given that protection had been built to ensure no unauthorised access and that publicity would be given to the initiative in due course.

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A5.02 Challenges and opportunities in gameshooting.

It was noted that this had now been circulated to partner organisations at the Shoot Summit and would be included as an agenda item at the September meeting of the Shoot Summit.

To remain as an action point

A5.03 WHT Review in October 2007

To remain as an action point.

A5.04 Memorandum of Understanding between BASC and Countryside Foundation for Education.

It was noted that no feedback had been received in response to the copy circulated to Council Members. This would now be signed at the forthcoming CLA Game Fair.

A5.05 Regenerating ownership, partnership and commitment.

It was noted that a productive meeting had taken place involving Eric Begbie and a small working group. It was reported that a number of good ideas had come from the meeting and that these would be taken forward.

To remain as an action point.

A5.06 Role of Chairman.

To remain as an action point.

A5.07 Proposed BASC Education policy.

This would be brought to the October meeting of Council for consideration.

To remain as an action point.

A5.08 Raptor Policy

It was noted that a meeting had now been held between the Director Scotland and the Chief Executive. It was reported that the original Scottish Raptor policy written in 2004 would provide the basis for the proposed UK policy document. The Director of Scotland is to produce the revised document at the July meeting of Council.

To remain as an action point.

A5.09 SWOT Analysis

To be discussed in item C4 – the Chief Executive's report.

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A5.10 Respect for Quarry DVD

The idea for the production of a Respect for Quarry DVD was raised at the recent Shoot Summit meeting. The partner organisations expressed an interest in participating in the production and distribution, however some concern was expressed relating to the content and it was felt that it should concentrate on best practice. They agreed to take the idea back to their respective boards and would report back.

It was noted that a scoping document would now be produced by Richard Thorne and brought to the July meeting of Council.

To remain as an action point.

A5.11 Wildfowling and Custodian Magazine

This would be brought to the July meeting of Council.

To remain as an action point.

A5.12 The late Bruce Wilson-North

It was noted that the Chairman had written a letter of condolence to the President of the CLA.

A5.13 Centenary logo

This had been received by Council members and, in the main, favourable comments were expressed.

A5.14 Insurance matters

It was noted that an article was to appear in the next issue of Shooting and Conservation magazine to alert members of the need to request additional cover, at no extra charge, for the humane despatch of deer involved in road traffic accidents.

A5.15 Update on the use of handguns for the despatch of deer

The Chief Executive had been in discussion with the Chairman of the BDS;

A5.1 Verbal up-date on proposed Communications Centre

It was noted that the line of sight issues were still being dealt with. An option to move the entrance to the opposite side was being considered; however this posed problems in that the egress would then be in a 60 mph zone which significantly increased the clear line of sight requirement. It was noted that a further meeting was to be held with the neighbour and that the architect and Simon Parrington would be present.

To remain as an action point

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A5.2 Update on Avian Influenza

It was reported that following an outbreak of low pathogenic Avian Influenza (H7N1) in Norfolk, the Government had rushed through legislation to cover both high and low pathogenic outbreaks in poultry. The legislation introduced exclusion zones of 3km (protection zone) and 10km (surveillance zone) for high pathogenic outbreaks and 1km for low pathogenic outbreaks. It also introduced 2 clauses which gave rise to concern, a) the use of live decoys would be prohibited, and, b) the release of gamebirds in the designated zones is prohibited. It was noted in respect of 'a', that discussions were being held to change the wording of this clause as there was a technical loophole that could allow keeping a live bird in a cage as a decoy. In respect of 'b', a definition was needed as to when a gamebird was considered 'released'. Council was clear that pheasants and partridges kept in a release pen were classed as livestock, as theft of birds from a release pen was a criminal offence of stealing property; but when they were free to come and go as they please, as they can in most release pens, they are considered to be wild. This was a very important difference that needs to be clarified as this would have an impact on compensation. It was reported that a further meeting was to be held to try to settle the matter.

It was noted that plans were now in place pending the arrival of migrating ducks and it was reported that 2 swabs would be taken as samples as well as feathers. The number of people required to conduct the tests was to be reduced in an effort to ensure that drugs were available should they be required. It was confirmed that BASC insurance was in place for those members who were listed as official test takers.
To remain as an action point.

B1 To receive a discussion paper on the Structure, Role and Function of Principal Officers, Council and Committees

A paper was presented to Council with an aim to stimulate discussion on the way the Association should be governed in the future. It was noted that there was some merit in looking into this matter in more detail and it was agreed that a working group be established to examine and evaluate a range of options with a view to reporting to Council in January 2007.

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It was agreed that Eric Begbie should bring a paper to the July meeting of Council to cover a proposed remit for such a working group and to include those who might be best placed to participate in the group.

B2 To consider the Council resolution for AGM

A paper was presented to Council which outlined objections to a resolution which was to be put forward at the forthcoming AGM. The resolution, if accepted, would require only one member of Council to serve on Advisory Committees and would allow non-members of the Association to be on Advisory Committees and even chair Committees. Council debated the objection.

It was resolved that Council would not move the resolution at the AGM.

B3 To receive a presentation on the BASC Pension Scheme

A paper was presented to Council which gave background to the current BASC pension scheme. It was noted that the original final salary scheme was wound up in 1994 and that a money purchase scheme (No. 1) was established in its place. When the mechanics of the original money purchase scheme became too onerous in 2000, a new money purchase scheme (No. 2) was implemented which was more cost effective and had a greater range of investment options for members to choose from. At the same time, a new scale of contributions was introduced which applied to both No. 1 and No. 2 schemes, though it was noted that the level of contribution was preserved for those members in the No. 1 scheme whose contributions exceeded the new scale. As an aside, it should be noted that the new Age Discrimination Regulations which come into effect on 1 October 2006, may require the scale of contributions to be revised and this may have budget implications.

Both schemes are managed by Trustees, 1/3 of which should be member nominated, at present there are no member nominated Trustees. It was reported that the new pension regulations, the last of which came into effect in April 2006, mean that pensions are now very heavily regulated and have placed an even greater burden of responsibility onto Trustees. The fundamental obligation to run schemes in a businesslike manner and to a high standard is very clear. Failure in any aspect will result in Trustees being made personally liable. Trustees are required to undergo extensive and continuous training. The appointment of a Professional Trustee has been considered but this route has not been followed mainly due to the cost involved.

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It should be noted that Norwich Union undertake some administration work for the schemes in conjunction with the Associations advisors Mercer Human Resource Consulting (formerly Marsh). This is in addition to the administration provided by the HR team, which is set to increase considerably with the new regime requirements. The current cost associated with running the schemes is likely to increase by £5,000 – £10,000 per annum.

Council was asked to consider the option of closing the two existing schemes and to replace them with a Group Personal Pension Plan (GPPP). With the administrative time and cost savings it would make, BASC would be in a position to continue to take good professional advice and to provide employees with information and professional advice.

It was agreed in principle that the Director of Business Management should conduct a detailed exercise into the costs and implications of winding up the current pension schemes and replacing them with a GPPP. A report will be brought to the July meeting of Council at which, given the time constraints of the Age Discrimination legislation, a decision will need to be made.

B4 To consider various financial issues

A paper was presented to Council to initiate discussion in respect of certain strategic financial matters requiring the input of Council

B4.1 Family membership

Council was reminded of their past decision to establish a family membership category. To date this has not been implemented due to the cost of programme changes required of some £13,000 – £15,000. It should be noted that if this is now to be implemented, the target date will be January 2007 as software and promotional materials need to be revised. Concern was expressed at the proposed cost of family membership; it was felt that this should be lower.

It was agreed that Wes Floyd and the Director of Business Management, be asked to produce a specific proposal for the July meeting of Council.

B4.2 Membership Categories

Council was asked to consider a matrix approach under which set percentage factors are applied to a core membership fee to give the fee payable each category of member. This would have the effect of maintaining a fixed percentage price differential between the various membership categories, although it would lead in time to greater

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monetary differentials between categories. It was noted that overriding the fee would damage the matrix approach.

It was agreed that the matrix approach should be used as a reference guide when planning subscription increases at the July meeting of Council.

B4.3 Alternative Income Streams

Council was asked to consider ways of protecting BASC in times of adverse markets which may result in loss of membership income. One consideration is to provide professional services on a fee earning basis. It was noted that this approach would have a number of implications which would need to be thought through very carefully. It was felt that BASC should look to develop alternative income streams without compromising the sport.

It was agreed that generating alternative income streams should be integrated as a theme into the 5 year planning process.

B4.4 Phased Direct Debits

Council was asked to consider the introduction of phased direct debits. It was noted that if BASC did go down this route there may be damage to the cash flow though it should help to increase and retain members. BASC would have to be scrupulous in ensuring the collection of premiums otherwise members insurance cover could be affected, this may entail the need for an additional member of staff. A suggestion was made that pre-payment phased direct debits could be introduced along with a 2/3 year membership option. It was noted that further market research had been commissioned to a) look at what and how other organisations are doing this, and, b) a mailshot has been sent out to a select number of membership categories to ascertain their views.

A report will be made at the July meeting of Council.

B4.5 Accounting for membership income

Council was asked to consider whether they wished to change the accounting policy which currently means that the accounts are qualified for failing to spread subscription receipts over the calendar period to which they relate.

It was agreed that BASC should prepare to comply with the Financial Reporting Standard No. 5 – Reporting the Substance of Transactions.

B4.6 Looking to the financial future

Council went into private session

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C1 To accept the minutes of the Executive and Finance Committee of 20 April 2006

The minutes of the Executive and Finance Committee were accepted as presented.

C2 To take the Minutes of the Advisory Committees

C2.1 Northern Ireland Committee – 20.03.06

The Minutes of the Northern Ireland Committee were accepted as presented.

Thanks were given to Roger Pollen and all involved in the Northern Ireland Game Fair. It was heralded as a great success.

C2.2 Gameshooting Advisory Committee – 29.03.06

The minutes of the Gameshooting Advisory Committee were accepted as presented.

It was noted that a number of recommendations to Council had been made.

- a) The Code of Good Shooting Practice, Section 7 'Releasing game', third bullet point should be amended to read "Under normal circumstances, all birds must be released before the start of their shooting season".
It was agreed that this would be considered in future discussions.
- b) BASC should be more proactive in promoting the Code of Good Shooting Practice and encourage other organisations to do the same.
This would be covered in the Chief Executive's report.
- c) BASC should encourage the shooting press of the need to sign up to and promote the Code.
This would be covered in the Chief Executive's report.
- d) The Committee notes the RSPB report 'Peak Malpractice'. The figures quoted do not tie up with those quoted by 'Moors for the Future'. Apart from the conviction of Reginald Cripps, evidence is circumstantial.
This would be covered in the Chief Executive's report.

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- e) The Picking up Code of Practice should be reviewed and amended in order to set good standards for picking up.
Noted for a future review.
- f) There should be a uniform inspection regime for traps and snares. Inspection should be at least once a day during the period one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. Or alternatively once per day at intervals not exceeding 26 hours.
- g) BASC should remove reference to inspection 'twice a day' in Codes of Practice.

It was noted that the legal requirement states once every day It was noted that the snaring code would be brought before Council in due course. As good practice, BASC recommends 2 inspections per day but this is not mandatory.

C2.3 Gundog Advisory Committee – 05.04.06

The minutes of the Gundog Advisory Committee were accepted as presented.

It was noted that a recommendation to Council had been made that BASC at executive level should enter into a dialogue with the RCVS suggesting that they should now allow vets to dock at their discretion under Section 6, Subsection 3, of the Animal Welfare Bill, pointing out that BASC do represent a great many gundog owners who would be affected by their decision.

It was reported that an amendment had been moved in the House of Lords to strike out the exemption and that the regulations regarding tail docking were being looked at in meetings between DEFRA and vets from which there was a large measure of agreement. It was felt that once the amendment was stopped, there would be an opportunity to link up with the RCVS to promote a more positive response.

C2.4 Deer Advisory Committee – 30.03.06

The minutes of the Deer Advisory Committee were accepted as presented.

C3 To take the Chairman's Activities Report

The Chairman's Activities Report was accepted as presented.

C4 To take the Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive gave an oral presentation to Council.

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It was noted that a meeting had been held between the Chief Executive and Tim Baines at which the Peak Malpractice Report was discussed. The Chief Executive had emphasised the need for a constructive response to the allegations contained in the document.

It was noted that the Environment Council had been tasked by English Nature and DEFRA to look at the process of resolving the disagreement regarding hen harriers. It was noted that BASC would participate in the dialogue.

It was noted that the Auto Cycle Union and the Motor Sports Association were to discuss with BASC aspects of risk management. Richard Thorne was in touch with them.

Council members were reminded of the recently circulated paper on expense claims and were urged to submit their expense claims promptly and accurately.

It was noted that consideration was being given to a number of possible occasions at which to pay tribute to John Dryden's contribution to BASC in readiness for his retirement.

It was reported that a further meeting had been held with Lord Home. He continues to be very interested in what BASC is doing and it was reported that he is looking forward to meeting everyone at the AGM.

Congratulations were offered to Glynn Cook for the successful results of last year's game fairs at Bodelwyddan and Usk. The 50% allocation of net profits amounted to £23,456.

SWOT proofing was taking place as part of the planning process and would be brought to the July meeting of Council.

A recent meeting of the Shoot Summit had been held from which a number of issues had arisen for which the Chief Executive hoped for a lead from Council. It was noted that dialogue was still being made with regard to these and a progress report would be made. It was agreed that the summit should focus on gameshooting issues and resist the inclusion of deer stalking, wildfowling etc. It was noted that the Chief Executive should maintain close contact with the country directors to ensure their interests are represented.

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A report was given covering the set up of a Special Purpose Vehicle to own and run the Code of Good Shooting Practice and the Shoot Assurance Scheme. Council was asked to give their reaction to the issues arising. It was noted that in the contract, CMI was the preferred contractor, but it had still to be finalised. It was noted that resistance was being given to the proposed name of the SPV (British Shoot Standards Association), it was felt that this was too similar to BASC. A revised version of the Memorandum and Articles was expected in early June. Concern was expressed regarding the benefit of the Scheme to BASC and the membership, the cost to shoots and whether small shoots in particular would find these prohibitive.

It was agreed that a small task force should be established to work with the Chief Executive to move this forward and deal with the final issues.

C.5. To take the Director of Communications' Report

The Director of Communications Report was accepted as presented.

It was reported that a victory had been won in relation to the Violent Crime Reduction Bill in that the government had agreed to strike out from the Bill reference to metallic ammunition loading presses.

C.6. To take the Director of Business Management's Report

The Director of Business Management's Report was accepted as presented.

C.7. To take the Director of Operations' Report

The Director of Operations' report was accepted as presented.

It was agreed that the draft of the Wildfowling Code of Practice should be agreed by the Wildfowling Liaison Committee.

D.1 To take Any Other Business by Leave of the Chairman

Council was asked to consider whether further enquiries should be made into the feasibility of online voting.

It was agreed that further enquiries should be made by the Director of Business Management.

Graham Crompton-Howe expressed his thanks to all Council members and staff for the last 10 years.

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It was confirmed that a calendar of Council and Advisory Committee meetings had previously been circulated to Council.

It was noted that a letter from HMRC regarding the VAT status for BASC was still awaited. Council members were reminded that supporter subscriptions were zero rated and that being key in the apportioning the value of member subscriptions they shouldn't be undervalued.

It was agreed that a discussion could be held at the next Gamekeeping Advisory Committee meeting regarding the Special Purpose Vehicle proposition.

Special thanks were extended to all those involved in the event at Cardross.

D.2. Date of Next Meeting.

It was confirmed that the next meeting of Council will be held on Saturday, 10 June 2006, commencing after the AGM.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 3.20 pm.

Signed.....Date.....
Chairman