

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR SHOOTING & CONSERVATION  
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT 9 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON ON THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2015

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Present:           | Alan Jarrett, Chairman<br>Mike Sherman (Vice Chairman)<br>Lee Freeston<br>Ian Grindy<br>Peter Glenser<br>Duncan Greaves<br>Neil Griffiths<br>John Thornley<br>Alisdair Troup |                                                                                                                                                         |
| Ex-Officio Members | Richard Ali<br>Gary Ashton<br>Steve Bloomfield<br>Philippa Bursey<br>Stephen Curtis<br>Christopher Graffius                                                                  | Chief Executive<br>Director, Wales<br>Director, England<br>Director of Business Management<br>Director, HR and Operations<br>Director of Communications |
| In attendance      | Sandra Loton-Jones                                                                                                                                                           | Agenda Item B5                                                                                                                                          |
| Minute Secretary   | Sophie Wingate                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                         |

*Note: Stephen Curtis left the meeting at 9.30am in order to attend a meeting with HM Inspector of Constabulary; BASC had been appointed as an external advisor and its input was being sought in relation to the inspection of police forces. As a consequence, the order in which items on the agenda were discussed was changed but in the minutes they are recorded in the order in which they appeared on the agenda*

**A1    To receive apologies for absence and to note absentees**

Apologies for absence had been received from Alan Balfour, John Graham, Mike Hardy, Martyn Howat, Sir Roger Jones, Tommy Mayne and Dr Colin Shedden.

**A2    To confirm confidential items**

It was agreed that items B5, B6, B7, B8, B11 and C5 should be treated as confidential.

**A3    To identify suggested items of any other business**

One item of Any Other Business was identified: a letter from the British Deer Society ("BDS"), copies of which had be circulated to all Council members.

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**A4     Declarations of Interest**

Alan Jarrett as a Trustee of WHT and Lee Freeston as a Trustee of WHCT each declared an interest in respect of agenda item B9. Alisdair Troup declared an interest in relation to the BDS letter to be considered under D1.

**A5     Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 20 November 2014**

The minutes of the meeting, having been circulated, were approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

**A6     Matters arising from earlier Council meetings**

There were no matters arising.

**A7     Action points outstanding from earlier Council Meeting**

The completion dates for all action points were noted. It was pointed out that under item 6 the Land Acquisition Group's report was to encompass an update on the work it was doing.

**B1     Health and Safety**

Two incidents were noted (Marford Mill and Northern Ireland).

The person injured in Northern Ireland had not taken time off work as a result of the accident, which was non-reportable under RIDDOR.

**B2     White Papers**

In 2014, the first white paper had been successfully issued and well received; the two papers laid before the meeting were to be the next in what is intended to be a series of such documents.

The intention is that the papers will be formatted and drawn up as "glossies" and launched with press releases mainly to the shooting press but also the agricultural press and papers such as the *Telegraph and Times*. The documents will be circulated to all policymakers including those in politics, before election manifestos are finalised, and representatives at all levels within bodies such as Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage, Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency in Northern Ireland.

A number of other topics for further white papers are being considered; it was agreed that Stephen Curtis would circulate this list and the meeting was encouraged to put forward other relevant suggestions.

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Council asked that its thanks be passed on to everyone involved in drawing up both documents; the amount of high quality work was very evident.

**B2.1 Grouse shooting and management**

A lot of hard work of work and consultation, both within and without the organisation, had gone into the preparation of the document the principal author of which was Kate Ives. The paper seeks to get recognition by policymakers and stakeholders of the important contribution of grouse shooting to the sustainable future of conservation and eco-system service provision in the uplands. It seeks appropriate support for the creation and improvement of shooting enterprises in the uplands and for facilitating the getting of grouse meat onto the market. It also seeks the engagement of stakeholders in a constructive dialogue, which BASC is helping to shape and lead, and to engender a joined-up approach between the public and private sectors, including local communities, to help to realise the potential and mitigate conflict.

Although BASC is an organisation that clearly supports shooting and conservation; the document itself has been drawn up with a full table of references so that it is clear that its recommendations are underpinned by proper research.

Noting the questionable benefit of management techniques undertaken badly, it was pointed out that, throughout, the document emphasises the importance of moorland managers adhering to best practice.

It was agreed that the opening of the second bullet point of the executive summary should be changed to read "Recognition for the benefits of pest control *and wildlife management*" to ensure that deer are not categorised as pests.

**B2.2 Shooting in landscape scale management**

In introducing this paper it was pointed out that the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities mirror those inherent in the grouse shooting document; the importance of landscape scale management is very clear as it underpins the argument that shooting benefits conservation and the environment on a very large scale.

It was agreed that both the documents should be reviewed to ensure that agri-environment schemes appropriately addressed. It was also agreed that Christopher Graffius should informally brief politicians to ensure their understanding of such schemes in relation to shooting.

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**B3     The Law Commission: Review of the Firearms Act 1968**

The meeting considered BASC's proposed submission in relation to the Law Commission Scoping Exercise to Review the Firearms Act; it was noted that in addition to his work on the BASC document, Bill Harriman had also significantly supported the BSSC submission.

It was agreed that securing acceptance of section (g) pertaining to Antique Firearms was not key for BASC. The meeting also felt that the first paragraph of section (h) did not make it clear that the term "occupier" applies only to sections 11(5) and 16 of the Firearms Act 1968. Accordingly it was agreed that the second paragraph of section (h) should be changed to read: "BASC proposes that the exemptions *contained in sections 11(5) and 16* should be redrafted without the term "occupier" and with no age limit."

The meeting debated the proposed recommendation in relation to pyrotechnic cartridges - section (v) - and accepted that it should be retained.

Noting that the Law Commission would be focusing on definitions and would have no interest in either licensing or sentencing, it was confirmed that once the consultation was running, BASC would expect to provide members with materials to enable them to submit their own responses. Anticipating members' desire to see the law changed in relation to pistols, the importance of aligning firearms law with best practice in relation to humane despatch was noted.

**B4     Natural England partnership agreement update**

The creation of Natural England ("NE") as the successor to English Nature had seen the end of the joint statement of common interest with BASC. Despite some difficulties centring on club matters, BASC's relationship with NE, particularly at the senior level was now good such that they were willing to enter into a new partnership agreement, the development of which was being based around the Regulators' Code

It was noted that the proposals included no targets or timescales. This was recognised but care would be needed to ensure that any put in place were appropriate and non-invasive in terms of both bodies' work programmes.

Referring back to the launch of the predecessor agreement, it was noted that there was nothing in the proposal that took the form of a "dowry"; in the current climate, and reflecting discussions that had taken place at a senior level between BASC and NE, this might take the form of BASC being given an opportunity to help NE deliver some of its conservation targets more cost effectively.

Concern was also expressed regarding the apparently inconsistent application of policy on the ground; it would be gratifying if the document could refer to both parties working together to ensure the consistent practical application of both policy and the law. This could be achieved by including reference to the Regulators' Code in the document.

**THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR SHOOTING & CONSERVATION  
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It was recognised that what had been presented to the meeting was not the final wording of the agreement, which was itself seen very much as a starting point.

It was the intention that the agreement should be launched at the Wildfowling Conference taking place on 28 March 2015.

**B5     Commercial Portfolio**

(Confidential)

Sandra Loton-Jones presented an update on the commercial portfolio noting the targets that had been set and the progress being made towards achieving them.

**B6     Risk Register**

(Confidential)

The Risk Register, which considered the risks to BASC's business not to the sport of shooting, had been revised to reflect the detailed consideration it had been given by the Executive and Finance committee.

Noting that the register is a "living" document, it was approved as presented.

**B7     Membership Review**

(Confidential)

Richard Ali presented an update on BASC memberships for 2014; it had been another good year and, led by Wales, all countries and regions had exceeded their targets. The Chief Executive and his team were thanked for what they had achieved in 2014; the Chairman requested that a note of thanks was to be sent to all staff.

**B8     BASC Structure**

(Confidential)

The Director of Business Management made a number of comments on the draft constitution that had been circulated, seeking Council's view on each

**B9     WHT Donation**

(Oral presentation)

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This item would normally be addressed at the February meeting, but as a February meeting had not been scheduled, it was necessary for the Council to decide on this year's donation to the Wildlife Habitat Charitable Trust based on the management accounts to 31 December 2014. The funding cap being £50,000; it was agreed that a donation in the sum of £40,000 should be provided for.

**B10 Scottish Land Reform Consultation**

Richard Ali presented a draft of BASC's proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the future of land reform in Scotland, which would be closing on 10 February 2015. The document had been considered by the Scottish committee which was generally content with its core messages but asked that it be strengthened with particular regard to deer and that more data from the latest PACEC report should be included.

While seeing no need to involve the Advisory Committee, John Thornley undertook to liaise with Alan Balfour regarding the comments on deer.

Subject to these revisions, Council approved the document.

**B11 Lead Ammunition Group**

(Oral, Confidential)

Council was provided with an oral update on matters pertaining to the Lead Ammunition Group.

**C1 Minutes and Reports**

**C1.1 Wildfowling Liaison Committee minutes 11 October 2014.**

The minutes were approved.

The committee had proposed that the budget for 2016 should include a provision to extend the PhD research into wildfowling and disturbance to show how the work in Poole could be applied to other estuaries. This was agreed in principle subject to the normal budgetary approval process.

The Chairman asked if Council had received the summary of the research work to date and requested that a note to be circulated to Council members.

**C1.2 Northern Ireland Committee minutes 8 December 2014**

The minutes were approved.

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The complaint against the Shooting Show had centred on a video clip that had been accidentally cached by a Northern Ireland member; the matter had been resolved and the complaint withdrawn.

**C1.3 Wales Committee minutes 9 November 2014**

The minutes were approved.

No evidence that a Greenland whitefronted goose had been shot on Anglesey had yet been provided. The committee chairman undertook to make further enquiries.

**C2 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman's report had been circulated to Council and was accepted as presented.

The Chairman reported on the meeting of the Consortium of Severn Estuary Wildfowling Clubs noting both a more constructive stance on the part of some in attendance and the very effective repudiation by BASC of complaints being voiced.

The potential defamation of BASC by a commentator was being considered by the Association's legal advisor; it centres on claims he has been making in relation to BASC's attitude to lead in ammunition. The meeting confirmed that behaviours such as this would be challenged with vigour.

**C3 Chief Executive's Report**

It was unanimously agreed that the annual Staff Day clay shoot and BBQ would be held at Head Office on 20 May 2015; the day prior to Council

**C4 Director of Communication's Report**

The Director of Communication's report had been circulated to Council and was accepted as presented.

The previous evening's members' meeting was considered to have been a great success and BASC's ability to put on an event in the House of Commons with representatives of each of the main political parties had impressed members. The meeting congratulated and thanked Christopher Graffius and his team for facilitating the event.

**C5 Director of Business Management's Report**

(Confidential)

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The Director of Business Management's report had been circulated to Council and was accepted as presented.

**C6 Director of HR & Operation's Report**

The Director of HR & Operation's Report had been circulated to Council and was accepted as presented.

Council was advised that Dr John Harradine would be retiring on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015 after thirty-six years of service, it was suggested that, without setting a precedent, he could be given an award on behalf of Council.

It was agreed by the Chairman and Council members that the presentation would be made to Dr John Harradine at the Council Meeting in March 2015.

**C7 To Consider Requests for Advice from Country and Advisory Committees**

The Deer Stalking Committee would be meeting on 25 February 2015 when issues surrounding wild boar would be considered. Council members who wished to feed in comments were asked to liaise with either the committee chairman or the Head of Game and Deer management.

Council noted the dates of other forthcoming committee meetings<sup>1</sup>. The England Committee was shortly to meet for the first time, Council members were asked to contact Martyn Howat if there were particular matters that the committee should address on behalf of Council.

The Chairman requested that the dates for all committee meetings be circulated to Council.

**D1 Any Other Business**

A confidential item was discussed.

**D2 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Council will be on Thursday, 19 March 2015, at Marford Mill; it will commence at 08:30hrs.

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<sup>1</sup>Welsh Committee - 29 March 2015, Northern Ireland Committee - 24 April 2015  
England Committee - 18 February 2015  
Scottish Committee and Gameshooting and Gamekeeping - 12 March 2015



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