

SCOTTISH TARGET SHOOTING RATIONALE SUB-GROUP

Introduction

The Scottish Target Shooting Federation (“STS”) is the overall voice for target shooting in Scotland. STS comprises the four Scottish National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for target shooting, namely the Scottish Clay Target Association, the Scottish Pistol Association, the Scottish Rifle Association and the Scottish Smallbore Rifle Association. Each of the four Associations runs its own affairs, but STS is the central link between the Associations on matters which affect all of the shooting bodies and bodies such as sportscotland, the Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland, local authorities and government agencies, as well as UK national shooting bodies such as British Shooting, the British International Clay Target Shooting Federation, the Muzzle Loaders Association of Great Britain, the National Rifle Association and the National Smallbore Rifle Association. STS is responsible for the selection of teams to compete at the Commonwealth Championships, together with the nomination of athletes for participation in the Commonwealth Youth Games and the Commonwealth Games.

Purpose of this Paper

Whilst STS is the overall governing body for target shooting in Scotland, STS's current structure is not conducive to the proper fulfilment of that role by STS. During discussions within and between STS and the Associations, and with sportscotland, the potential benefits of the unification of the four Associations into a single organisation have become apparent. The purpose of this paper is to outline the case for unification of the four Associations into STS so as to create a single organisation that would look after the interests of all branches of the target shooting sports that are currently within the remit of the Associations. STS view unification as an exciting opportunity to reinvigorate the target shooting scene in Scotland, so that the target shooting can develop and grow. STS's vision is that “Scottish target shooting will be a thriving national sport for all”. STS aims to deliver this vision by “leading, guiding and enabling the Scottish Target Shooting community to achieve higher levels of participation, development and excellence”.

As a preliminary point, it is useful to consider what exactly is the role of a governing body of a sport, and how well STS performs that role.

What is a Governing Body?

Sportscotland defines a governing body as an organisation that governs and administers a sport. Traditionally, sportscotland has described sports governing bodies as the guardians and custodians of their sports. Sportscotland considers that a sports governing body should create a vision and deliver a strategic plan for the development and delivery of the sport, which determines how it will be implemented nationally, regionally and locally. A sports governing body should carry out most (if not all) of the following functions, namely it should:

- prepare and implement a vision and strategic plan for the sport;
- promote the sport;
- manage the rules and regulations of the sport, including anti -doping;

- administer officials of the sport;
- establish and maintain links with the UK and international governing body / federation;
- encourage participation;
- develop coaches;
- develop athletes; and
- organise and host competitions.

It is also relevant to note sportscotland's view that for Scottish governing bodies to continue to play a major part in Scottish sport, they must demonstrate the following:¹

- strong accountability to members, funders and stakeholders;
- clear leadership of the sport;
- explicit roles and expectations to ensure optimum contribution from board members, paid staff, volunteers and players;
- modern and efficient plans for the long-term governance of the sport;
- a commitment to ethical standards and fair play in all aspects of the sport;
- transparent and compliant systems for managing and administering the sport;
- appropriate legal structures for the organisation;
- diverse sources of revenue without over-dependence on one funder;
- partnership working with related organisations to deliver national priorities for sport; and,
- a sport run with enthusiasm, energy and passion...
- ...which should all lead to increasing levels of participation and improving standards of performance in sport.

The above should be viewed in light of:

- the Scottish Government's national strategy for sport, "Reaching Higher", namely to make Scotland:
 - a country where sport is more widely available to all;
 - a country where sporting talent is recognised and nurtured; and
 - a country achieving and sustaining world class performances in sport;

and

- sportscotland's vision of a Scotland where sport is a way of life in Scotland, to be achieved by developing and supporting a world class sporting system at all levels.

Does STS effectively perform the functions of a Governing Body?

It will be evident from a review of the above that STS does not currently perform all of these functions.

Certainly, despite limited resources, STS has aimed to act as a guardian and custodian of the sport of target shooting. For example, STS participated in the Scottish Firearms Consultative

¹ Extracted from Modern Sports Leadership and Governance Programme, July 2003, from sportscotland's website.

Panel and responded to the Scottish Government's consultation on the licensing of airguns. STS also submitted responses to Royal Mail's recent consultation on the carriage of firearms by post and the Law Commission's proposals regarding unincorporated associations, with a particular focus on how those proposals would affect target shooting clubs.

STS does have an involvement in the rules and regulations of the sport, including anti-doping, equality and child protection policies. STS administers certain officials involved in the sport, notably at the High Performance level, and maintains links with some UK and international governing bodies and federations.

At a general level, as noted above, STS has also defined its vision for the sport, namely that:

"Scottish target shooting will be a thriving national sport for all".

STS aims to deliver this vision by:

"leading, guiding and enabling the Scottish Target Shooting community to achieve higher levels of participation, development and excellence".

It is however open to question whether STS, as currently structured and resourced, is in a position to actually implement this vision. This is because the bulk of the other functions ascribed to a governing body are fulfilled by the Associations rather than STS. This applies especially to those functions that are more closely connected with the grassroots participants in the sport of target shooting – for example managing officials, developing coaches and shooters, and organising and hosting competitions. STS is not well-placed to promote the sport of target shooting, nor to encourage participation, because it lacks the resources to do so and is too remote from grassroots participants in Scottish target shooting. Indeed, most target shooters in Scotland are unaware of the activities, and indeed the existence, of STS – so STS's vision is really that of the STS Council rather than the wider body of target shooters in Scotland.

In order to achieve STS's vision, STS itself will need to change. The case for unification of the four Associations into STS, so as to create a single, lean organisation to look after the interests of all branches of the target shooting sports in Scotland, is considered below.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF UNIFICATION

Current Structure of STS and the Associations

Although STS is recognised by sportscotland as the overall voice for target shooting in Scotland, the main power of decision-making and (importantly) the link to individual members rests with the individual Associations (i.e. the SCTA, SPA, SRA and SSRA). This structure is not conducive to the development of the sport of target shooting in Scotland for a number of reasons, notably:

- (a) the current fragmented structure means that each of the Associations has to go back to its own Committee / Council for approval before anything can change; unification would have the potential to make it much easier and quicker to make operational decisions;

- (b) each Association has its own Committee / Council / office bearers to manage its affairs, but the numbers of individual members in the current Associations are relatively low overall. This means that the level of administration required to keep the four Associations plus STS running is disproportionate to the number of members. If the Associations were to unify into STS, then instead of having e.g. five Chairpersons, Secretaries, Treasurers etc (one for each Association plus one for STS), only a single Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer etc would be required. This would reduce the dependence on heavily committed volunteers, and would also free up existing volunteers to help deliver benefits to the wider membership, e.g. in terms of coaching, club involvement etc;
- (c) as currently structured, each Association needs its own policies such as an Equality Policy, Disciplinary Policy etc. These not only need to be drafted in the first instance, but must then be updated e.g. to reflect changes in legislation and practice - including developments and best practice in other sports. In the event of unification, these matters could be dealt with by STS without the Associations either having to draft and update their own policies or flow down those adopted by STS; and
- (d) crucially, the ability of individual Associations to really make a difference at grassroots level is seriously limited by the lack of resources in each individual Association; unification would increase resources, provide economies of scale, and enable pathways to success – whether for competitors or coaches – to be developed.

Relationship between Scottish target shooting bodies and sportscotland

Scottish Target Shooting currently receives investment from sportscotland for High Performance training and events for elite level target shooters, to improve Scotland's prospects of winning medals at e.g. the Commonwealth Games and Olympics. It should be noted that sportscotland follows the classifications of sport under the European Sports Charter issued by the Council of Europe in 1993 - which recognises a single sport of target shooting. Accordingly, different disciplines within the sport (e.g. clay shooting or smallbore rifle) are not considered different sports.

In addition to High Performance investment, sportscotland also provides development investment for certain sports, to promote the development of sport at e.g. club level. Like other government-funded bodies involved in sport, sportscotland has a major interest in the governance arrangements for each of the national sports governing bodies in Scotland.

Sportscotland has indicated that development investment could be made available to target shooting, provided that the governance arrangements are improved and brought into line with other sports bodies. In particular, unification would be required.

Current Opportunities – Funded Post / Glasgow 2014

- (a) Sportscotland has indicated that if the Associations were to move forward to unification, with STS being the single governing body, sportscotland would be prepared to fund a post for a professional person to guide STS forward at a strategic level. This is a major opportunity to drive forward the sport of target shooting in Scotland.

- (b) The possibility of development investment - in addition to High Performance investment at elite level – represents an opportunity to improve and promote the sport at grassroots level. As noted above, in order to secure development investment, improved governance arrangements in the form of unification will be required.
- (c) In the run-up to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, sports of all types are in the spotlight, so there is a period up to 2014 in which to capitalise on this. There is inevitably the possibility of a reduction in investment post 2014, so it would be preferable to take advantage of such opportunities now.

Potential Impact of Unification at Club Level

The current funding structure of the Associations is simply inadequate to support a proper sporting infrastructure, in terms of the recruitment, training and development of new entrants to the sport. Other Scottish sports require individual participants to affiliate directly – i.e. as paying, individual members – to their governing bodies. The subscription payments provide essential financial resources to those governing bodies, which allow them to put in place vital infrastructure such as:

- (a) a standardised, easily accessed procedure for new entrants to the sport;
- (b) a clear-cut set of pathways for individual members to progress in their sport (should those members wish to progress), from beginner to elite sportsmen / sportswomen, with measurable classifications; consider for example the “Academy” structure as used by Cricketscotland;
- (c) a uniform and accessible route for more experienced members to be educated and trained as coaches, from club coach to elite level;
- (d) enhanced coaching and cooperation at elite level, e.g. to promote cross-fertilisation of ideas, thereby enhancing prospects of medal success (which is vitally important in terms of public perception, even if it affects only a very small number of individuals; it can also increase the number of new entrants to the sport);
- (e) access to a wider pool of volunteers;
- (f) a central point for Disclosure Scotland checks etc, as well as centralised administrative records and functions more generally; and
- (g) promotion of best practice across the different disciplines within the wider sport.

Taken as a whole, the current structure of the Scottish target shooting bodies is not conducive to the growth of the sport. The Associations have very limited funding, comprising affiliation fees (i) from only a fraction of all target shooting clubs in Scotland, and (ii) from a limited number of individual members - often those who are involved at advanced or elite level, owing to the perceived lack of benefits for less experienced target shooters to join their national Associations.

The Associations are finding it increasingly difficult to promote their sport, and to take meaningful steps to bring in new recruits to the sport. In many cases, the resources of clubs are also inadequate to do so, even at a relatively low level. (STS is aware of at least one club that has had to send potential new shooters elsewhere simply because the club lacked the resources to provide proper induction and training to new members.)

It is not an exaggeration to say that as things presently stand, owing to over-reliance on an ever-diminishing number of volunteers, a lack of new entrants and an ageing shooting population, target shooting in Scotland is, overall, on a downward spiral.

The current, fragmented structure of the sport of target shooting in Scotland makes it difficult for STS, and indeed at least some of the Associations, to fully understand the demographics of those involved in target shooting.

In particular, if individuals do not affiliate directly to a governing body, but are simply members of an affiliated club, the governing body has no direct visibility of membership trends (including e.g. whether a particular trend is unique to a particular discipline or applies across the board). The fact that clubs are, in effect, interposed between individuals and their governing bodies makes it very difficult for the governing bodies to accurately calculate how many people actually participate in their discipline - let alone any membership trends, or how and where to recruit future shooters.

If the Associations were to unify into STS and promote a system of direct, individual affiliation to STS, Scottish target shooting as a whole would benefit from having a more efficient and effective governing body that would have the resources to really make a difference at club level. The level of affiliation charges would need to be carefully calculated having regard to typical subscription costs for target shooting clubs, to ensure that clubs did not lose out as a result of direct affiliation to STS.

Target shooting in Scotland needs a properly resourced and capable governing body to deal with these matters, both at national level (in terms of the matters outlined at (a) to (g) above) and at club level, for example by providing direct, practical assistance to clubs. Examples of STS assistance at club level might include (i) the provision of trainers and coaches to those clubs who have beginners, perhaps by holding initial training events on behalf of multiple clubs in a given region, and (ii) administrative assistance in applying for grants and financial assistance for new club facilities, including e.g. facility development plans and support in relation to governance matters.

If individual shooters were to affiliate directly to STS, then membership of STS should entitle those individuals to shoot any of the disciplines covered by STS, subject to compliance with the relevant legislation – effectively a kind of "passport" to all shooting disciplines. Events such as championships that are specific to one discipline could be more easily combined with championships for other disciplines, under the auspices of STS. As currently structured, the Associations hold a number of competitions each year, and following unification into STS it would seem logical for the former Associations to operate within STS, perhaps on the basis of discipline-specific committees, to run competitions for each discipline.

Insurance

Anyone who affiliates directly to their governing body has a legitimate expectation that they will gain tangible benefits from their affiliation. A key issue here is the ability of a governing body to provide insurance. The economics and practicalities of providing insurance mean that a substantial number of members is required. SCTA currently procures insurance directly for the benefit of its individual members, and it should be possible for this to be widened to cover all four disciplines under STS.

National Shooting Centre

One of the key issues confronting Scottish target shooting is the lack of a proper national shooting centre. This is now being progressed by STS with sportscotland and the Scottish Government. In order to receive investment, the decision-makers involved in investing in the new facility will need to be confident that a well-governed national body is in place (even if STS is not the body that actually runs the facility on a day-to-day basis). As a multidisciplinary facility, STS should logically be the governing body that is involved in the new facility, as opposed to e.g. an individual Association that focuses on only one type of target shooting. STS would be much better placed to do so if the current fragmentation in Scottish target shooting could be overcome, by unification.

As grassroots level, the availability of a national shooting centre could be a further benefit to individuals who joined their national governing body, e.g. if individual membership of STS constituted a condition of their use of the facility (again, whether or not STS was directly involved in the day-to-day running of that facility).

Whilst it is always tempting for members of the shooting community to focus on something tangible such as the proposed national training shooting centre, from the perspective of sportscotland and the Scottish Government, what is at least as important is to ensure that the sport itself is sufficiently healthy to generate a continuing flow of users of such a facility. This would involve the promotion and development of the sport of target shooting across the whole of Scotland, with proper pathways for aspiring shooters – not just a physical facility that, merely by virtue of its geography, might be used only by those located within striking distance of that facility. Nevertheless, it is unquestionably important to the development of the sport of target shooting that a national shooting centre should be established; no sport can exist without adequate facilities.

Legal Structures

Apart from the SCTA, neither STS nor any of the other Associations are set up as a limited company. Accordingly, they are unincorporated associations which can involve the office bearers in personal liability. It would almost certainly be preferable to form a company limited by guarantee, as has been done by numerous other sports. Even a company limited by guarantee has certain formalities to deal with, and it would obviously be easier for those formalities to be dealt with centrally by a unified STS rather than all four Associations plus STS having to do so. Whilst it is (broadly speaking) open to STS and the Associations to structure themselves as they see fit, unification into STS would seem to be a good opportunity to bring together the Scottish target shooting leadership, by reconstituting STS as a company limited by guarantee, combining all four Associations.

External Facing Aspects

As noted above, each Association has relatively limited resources. This applies to external matters, as well as matters that are "internal" to the sport of target shooting. Unification of the Associations would have the potential to provide increased resources to deal with external threats such as noise complaints arising from target shooting. The greater membership of a unified STS would also provide more "clout", e.g. in dealing with UK bodies such as British Shooting.

Coping with the Legacy of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games

It is important for Scottish target shooting, as a whole, to be capable of dealing with a possible surge of interest in target shooting following the media exposure provided by the Glasgow 2014 Games. Other sports experienced a similar surge of interest following the London 2012 Games. As currently constituted, as noted above, the Scottish target shooting bodies and clubs are not in a position to do so. The sport lacks the infrastructure to welcome and train new entrants.

A unified STS could potentially be in a much better position to provide the necessary infrastructure and support. For example, STS might be able to set up "hubs" to which new entrants could be directed, as a useful precursor to having a national training shooting centre.

Website and Publicity

Nowadays, the first port of call for people who are interested in any particular matter is likely to be via the internet. The four Associations and STS each have their own website. If properly resourced, STS could provide a single portal for target shooting in Scotland, which could provide full details of what is involved in each discipline and links e.g. to book a visit to a training facility. It is important to recognise that new entrants will often be attracted by the concept of target shooting in general terms, and not necessarily to a specific discipline.

A properly resourced STS should also be better placed than individual Associations to organise publicity material such as marketing brochures, and to deal with public relations matters. The ability to properly publicise the role and work of STS to its own members is also important since as noted above, STS as currently structured is largely invisible to shooters at club level or - for those who are aware of STS - is likely to be viewed as being aimed at the elite level.

Potential Scottish Independence

In the event of Scottish independence, bodies such as the NRA and NSRA might well cease to be relevant to target shooters in Scotland. Scottish target shooting would then need a specifically Scottish national governing body. At the elite level, if Scottish shooters could not compete as part of a GB team, STS would have to have the organisational strength and lobbying power to secure investment for high performance training and competition.

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED IN RELATION TO UNIFICATION

Resistance to Change

In any situation where organisational change is proposed, some resistance will always be encountered. In the context of the Scottish target shooting scene, it is only natural that not everyone will be immediately comfortable with the proposed unification of the Scottish target shooting bodies – especially since the Associations are not new bodies but have a substantial history, and are well-established in their current roles. It is a feature of any organisational change that individuals within the hierarchies of any existing organisations will have a vested interest in their organisations remaining as they are – even if their individual members would be in favour of change. The STS Council members hope, however, that all those involved in target shooting in Scotland will recognise that as matters currently stand, target shooting in Scotland is in a state of decline. The unification of the Associations into STS is a real opportunity to provide strong leadership for the sport as a whole, with the potential to reverse that trend.

Legal / Administrative / Financial Issues

It is recognised by STS that each of the four Associations currently operates under its own constitution and holds assets such as trophies. Unification into STS – which might have as a consequence the dissolution of some or all of the existing Associations – would need to be approved by each Association in terms of its own constitution. An appropriate solution would need to be found as to how to deal with those assets and trophies in the context of a unified STS, having proper regard and respect to the history and origins of those assets and trophies. STS consider that an appropriate solution is achievable for all such issues. For example, the Associations could be “kept alive” for the sole purpose of holding trophies, though equally it is common practice for constitutions to provide for the transfer of assets to another charitable body having similar purposes. Whilst some detailed work would certainly be required as part of the proposed restructuring, the potential benefits of unification into STS are considerable. As noted above, in relation to the target shooting competitions currently run by the Associations, these could continue under the auspices of discipline-specific committees within STS.

As regards the financial position, STS fully recognise that the SCTA is financially stronger than the other Associations and has a larger membership base (in terms of individual, paying members). It will be essential to ensure that SCTA does not view unification as a retrograde step. Equally, though, the differing position of each of the Associations provides an incentive to STS to ensure that the proposed reorganisation of the Scottish target shooting scene delivers meaningful benefits to target shooters across all disciplines.

In STS's view, the needs and priorities of the sport of target shooting are what should drive the organisational structure of the Scottish target shooting world, and the objective should be to optimise that structure to develop the sport of target shooting, as set out above. The various legal and administrative hurdles to unification – many of which exist for what are essentially historical reasons - are all capable of being overcome.

How to Convince Club Level Target Shooters of the Merits of Unification

STS recognise that many target shooters, apart from High Performance participants, are simply unaware of the existence of STS, and in some cases may have little or no involvement with the Associations. In common with the rest of the UK, many target shooters engage in their sport on a very informal basis (although safety is always paramount even at informal club events). For those target shooters who are more interested in the social side of target shooting, e.g. spending a day outdoors with their colleagues within their club, the potential availability of pathways for personal improvement etc may be of limited interest. It is likely that those shooters' primary focus will be on the cost of membership, i.e. will they be better off or worse off following unification? This links back to the need for tangible benefits such as the availability of insurance and the national shooting centre, as well as wider matters such as acting as a guardian of the sport at a national level (including in relation to legislative proposals). STS are confident that with suitable resources and a clear mandate from the Associations, these challenges can be overcome.

Scottish Target Shooting Federation
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