



Falconry – Inscribed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind

Minutes of the Meeting of the Hawk Board held on 14 June 2018

UCMK, 502 Avebury Boulevard, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK9 3HS

The Chairman opened the meeting at 12:30.

Present:

Jim Collins (JC); Steve Eastwood (SE); Derek Hartshorne (DH); Nick Havermann-Mart; Graham Irving (GI); Terry Large (TL); Gordon Mellor (GM); Martyn Standley (MS); Derek Stotton (DS); Mark Upton (MU); Rachelle Upton (RU)

Apologies:

Graham Bennett; Gary Biddiss; Andrew Knowles-Brown; Paul Manning; Jemima Parry-Jones; Don Ryan; Dean White

Minutes of last meeting / Matters arising:

None

Chairman's Report:

This calendar year has been dominated by The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 and this is likely to continue until they become law on 1st October and beyond.

The Falconry and bird of prey keeping fraternity have rightly been upset by the process of consultation over these developments.

The Government's consultation principles state that all consultations should be targeted, consider the full range of people, business and voluntary bodies affected by the policy, and whether representative groups exist. They should consider targeting specific groups if appropriate and ensure they are aware of the consultation and can access it.

It is clear that the approach to this consultation did not meet the criteria, indeed it appears that the Hawk Board were systematically bypassed. DEFRA's approach in terms of who needed to be involved was restricted i.e. the Next Steps doc (Feb 17) leading on from the consultation says at the end that DEFRA will develop draft Regulations based on these conclusions and will continue to work with stakeholders through the National Companion Animal Focus Group, the Canine and Feline Sector Group and the Equine Sector Council to put in place the necessary supporting policies, guidance and documentation.

We responded to the 2015/16 consultation that made no mention of birds of prey, to date the Hawk Board has not received any communication from DEFRA, we were neither consulted nor recognised as a stakeholder. This is unacceptable although not acknowledged by the Government department at all.

The inclusion of birds of prey in the category of 'pet', was not defined in the original consultation neither was it defined in the Next Steps, and it does not appear in earlier legislation. The legal definition of 'pet' seems just to have appeared in the new regulations. We do know from an FoI request earlier this year that this decision was made by as yet unnamed 'junior staff'.

As far as the Regulations are concerned the Secretary of State needs only to follow the procedure set out in the Animal Welfare Act which states in section 12 that: "Before making regulations under subsection (1), the appropriate national authority shall consult such persons appearing to the authority to represent any interests concerned as the authority considers appropriate." Given that the current Licensing of Activities Involving Animals that will soon become law, were subject to a public consultation, however inadequate, I am advised that there are no substantive grounds for challenging the legality of the Government's action, given that the power to make regulations is for the Secretary of State acting in accordance with the law, as set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

We will continue to challenge these points through the appropriate channels, but it is clear that both DEFRA and the Government are sticking to the mantra that they have no case to answer. In effect we have been stitched up.

The irony of this situation is that the Hawk Board would have willingly worked with the legislators to ensure that new animal welfare regulations would have been workable, equitable and close the loop-holes that we all know exist - the often dreadful town centre, shopping centre, and garden fete exhibition of birds of prey for 'charity' will be untouched, whilst those who do legitimate and valuable education work will become subject to the Animal Activities license as will others working professionally with raptors and owls.

That sporting use is exempted from the scope of the new regulations is something that we have to champion and fight to retain.

Despite feeling betrayed by DEFRA and unrepresented by my MP, Government Ministers, and others, I have begun the process of rebuilding contact with the Government department and hope to re-establish some meaningful dialogue as we go forward.

We are facing an HB election this summer and I hope that some of my colleagues will stand again. Where we find gaps, I trust that some new blood step forward. We need commitment, impetus, and tenacity more than ever before.

GM: A pamphlet from the Hawk and Owl Trust has been brought to my attention, (<http://upp.hawkandowl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/20150223-Peregrine-Falcons-Guidelines.pdf>). There are inflammatory statements at the start. I have been in touch with the organisation and the author responsible has left, but HOT is looking into this. I have written to the MET WCU as they are named as supplying the information. My concern is it is in relation to urban peregrines and am not aware of any prosecutions relating to urban wildlife crime.

Treasurers Report:

At present the HB Current account and Savings account have sufficient funds.

As discussed at the last meeting the CFF account is in the process of being closed down and the funds transferred to the HB.

Although we ran at a loss we are due a corporation tax liability of £2.85.

MS: Why are we paying CT when we made a loss?

RU: I have emailed the accountants and am awaiting their response.

GM: We can't cut anything else out – if Corbyn gets in, falconry will be gone.

JC: Both sides are against us.

MU: Falconry is under the most pressure ever.

DS: We don't meet often enough.

GM: Meetings were reduced by 1 to save money.

DS: I will go anywhere and go to as many meetings and pay for it myself.

MU: There is no need for more meetings, just more communication.

Website/Facebook:

RU: PM has not been removed from HB Facebook page as yet; I removed certain comments, as they were

defamatory. I also remove any comments that are not to do with the original posts.

MU: When things got nasty we posted a disclaimer.

MU: It would be good to have regular statement about HB posted, what is going on etc.

GM: Have been thinking about what we post – regarding the regulations.

GI: In relation to Animal Welfare don't edit it, put it all out there.

GM: It will highlight the volume of stuff we have to get through.

GI: I would like links to NWCUC and PAW put on the website.

All Agreed

Election:

RU: So far we have received 8 nominations so the election is on – the closing date is midnight tomorrow.

RU: As discussed at the last meeting we will not be numbering the ballot papers, (because of what happened to the Belgium club). The papers will be security and water marked. This will be explained on the ballot forms and on the website and Facebook page.

RU: GDPR is an issue for the clubs as they cant send me the member's names ad addresses with out their permission. So the clubs need to contact their members for consent to send HB the details.

GM: I don't think we are required to have a data officer.

RU: Put on FB and website if you want to vote let your club secretary know.

GM: Proceed with RU proposal and comment on FB and website?

Agreed

NH-M: What about duplicates?

RU: These will be knocked out once I have the details.

DS: Do we have to have a Chairman?

RU: Yes it is in the constitution.

GM: IF we don't have one, who writes the letters?

NHM: It falls on the Chairman now, how about we look at sub committees going forward?

GM: People do like someone to blame, it draws the sting!

Game Fair:

RU: Who is able to help at the GF?

DS: I can do Saturday and Sunday.

GM: I will be there all 3 days.

MS: I will be there with the BFC so can pop in and out.

MU: I am there with BAF so can also pop in and out.

TL: Hopefully there for the 3 days.

RU: GM to be available for the seminar tent for QA sessions.

Cotes:

The Control of Trade in Endangered Species Regulations 2018 have now been laid before Parliament and are available for viewing on the Legislation.gov website (link below). The Regulations are now subject to the Parliamentary scrutiny before they can come into force on 01 October 2018.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/703/contents/made>

As previously discussed at CSUG, COTES 2018 is primarily a consolidation exercise of the several existing COTES regulations. Some new provisions are, however, highlighted below:

- Allow enforcement bodies a new power to make "test purchases" of specimens where trade in such specimens would normally be an offence
- Inclusion of a provision that a "suitably qualified person" would be able to take non-invasive samples from live animals or other samples, e.g. from dead specimens, parts and derivatives or plants, rather than requiring a vet to do this as was previously the case.

- Enable police to recover expenses linked to seizure of a live specimen in the course of investigating an offence. The court that convicts a person of the offence has power to order the person to reimburse the expenses.
- Allow for ban or suspension from possessing or controlling CITES specimens to be imposed on persons who transgress the Regulations.
- Include a power to designate ports of entry and exit through which CITES controlled species and products can be brought in and out of the UK.
- New offences, to be prosecuted via civil sanctions (existing offences will continue to attract criminal sanctions)
- Advertising specimens for sale- Annex A specimens without inclusion of an EC/Article 10 certificate number [Regulation 6].
- Failing to properly package and label caviar [described in Articles 64(2), 66(6) and 66(7) of Commission Regulation 864/2006]

Guidance on the civil sanctions regime will be produced prior to the coming into force of the regulations.

GI: HB and BFC Facebook page lays out what is going on.

GM: Does COTES come through NE?

GI: No DEFRA, COTES is the CITES for the UK.

GM: They will talk to us!

JC: It is Elaine Kendall.

GI: No comments on it?

JC: Rumour is that when Brexit happens A10s will go.

GM: Stay the same until 2021 unless no agreement then we become a third Country.

JC: You will need an export permit.

GI: Captive bred will drop down 1.

GI: Could the IAF ask about downgrading the Peregrine – if they are doing it this year we need to know before August to prime.

MU: Not sure if this year, but I will find out.

GI: I have asked WCU about the number of the article 10 on adverts.

- FB has a no animal sale policy.
- As soon as you a live one you cannot advertise until you have an article 10

JC: There is a clause that they can do sting operations

GM: Brexit could mean we just adopt EU rules.

NHM: Watch out for Welfare coming from Europe.

MU: IAF have been saying that.

NHM: That is why we need keep with DODs.

Animal Activities Licence:

DH: Julie says charity collections may be captured.

DH: We (Raptor Awards) are talking to another DEFRA person.

GM: Only get a response from Elaine Kendall and it is not her department. Unfortunately historical rhetoric has been we have to get them to do, which they do not like.

NHM: My local MP is asking DEFRA why they are not communicating with the HB and will chase them to reengage with the HB.

GM: All MP responses have been pretty much the same – Gove script. As far as I can gather all the Minister of State has to do is take note of the consultation, so they have a get out of jail free card. 10-15 years ago we had senior politicians who would bat for us, but no more.

JC: DEFRA has been quite smart and focused on Cat, Dog and retail pet market and show horned others. No one wants to go against the Welfare bill.

GM: Hansard is complimentary all the way through. Will become law an help from an MP to regain contact would be great.

GM: I am advised the weakness is the LA and implementation – judicial review would fail, so been recommended to fight case-by-case and then can go for case law. So how do we fight this, as most don't have the resources? Whether the HB would be willing to support cases either formally or indirectly.

MU: Couple of people have called and suggested this. Could start working on this and get a group working

on it. People with initials after their name eg Matt Gage.
GI: Richard Jones (HB Vet) is pro the regulations.
GM: It makes no sense, you can take 2 eggs and each judged differently on welfare issues. But got to be careful we don't end up with DEFRA changing to cover all.
DH: Breeding for sport is not definitely exempt.
GI: There is an exemption for up to 3 litters.
DH: 5 Badges of trade, e.g. do you advertise regularly? Hobbyist get out clause sys things like if you are a member of a club this would count towards being a hobbyist. Number of birds you are breeding if you have 1 pair then unlikely to be thought as commercial. LA's interpretation of the Guidelines.
GM: May have to do a FOI request to see results on inspections, granting or not a licence, after this comes into play.
MS: For the average falconer it is not really of concern, but it is for businesses.
GI: It will become an issue down the line; as costs for breeders go up the price of hawks will go up.
JC: DEFRA won't give answers.
MU: The big danger is that down the line when a commercial breeder has 2 chicks, one goes to a commercial and one to a falconer – why should the welfare rules be difference. The RSPCA may get on to that and change the rules for all.
JC: Dangerous animals act – this act mirrors it for costs. Some LA's won't licence unless you go to court, others will subsidise licence costs to get information.
GM: Subjective decision by inspector as to when they come back – and they will charge for it.
DH: Licences issues for 1, 2, or 3 years maximum. If low risk you may only get inspected 3 yearly, (all paperwork up to standard).
GM: Complicity breeds abuse, but we are where we are.
JC: It won't be driven by the LA, but by our opponents.
MS: Mst LA will be going for abusers of dogs and cats, (go for fur rather than feather).
JC: There will be loopholes and some organisations are already looking for them.
TL: Can DH be a point of reference for queries?
DH: Yes email us at info@raptorawards.co.uk.

SUN Update:
See Appendix 1

GM: NE do talk to us and great that they engage with us.

GI: First EU CITES meeting to discuss brexit was last week and the UK was excluded.

JC: Alien Invasive Species – UK has no say for 3 years which is dangerous as they are just starting to look at the new lists. There are 90 species and the Harris Hawk is on it.

GM: If HH is imposed then a big cause for us. Letters needed to brexiteer MPs.

JC: The Dutch are having problems with BoP with lost of legal raids. They are targeting Raptors, it's the new thing to do. They are going in mob handed, e.g. 12 people to raid a pair of owls.

MU: At the last meeting you mentioned that CITES were relooking at captive breeding, has anything happened?

JC: Being looked at at next months meeting – it is on the agenda. Rumour is that it is not on next year's conference.

IAF Update:
See Appendix 2

MU: IAF are asking Country clubs for a donation towards DODs, HB is not really a member so there is no obligation.

MS: But we are the political wing so we should support it.

GM: Irrespective of what the BFC do we would be short sighted not to support it, just depends on the amount.

MU: They have not mentioned amounts.

GM: Do we have an amount in mind, say €500?

Unanimous approval

CA Update:
See Appendix 3

NHM: Welsh say they are not doing animal activities, just licencing display givers. This is due to good effort – spoken to the leader of the Labour group in the Welsh Assembly and anything to do with Falconry/Raptors they will speak to the HB. It will be put in their terms of reference.

A.O.B:
GM: MK office is available to the HB until it is sold, whether GM is on HB or not.

TL: Please can RU chase the clubs for their meeting dates and locations and update the website with this information.

The meeting closed at 15:40

Next Meeting: 12.30pm Thursday, 18 October 2018

Location: UCMK, 502 Avebury Boulevard, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK9 3HS

Rachelle Upton, Co-coordinator – 16 June 2018

Sun Report from Jim Collins

Meetings with the authorities have intensified significantly in the past few months both in respect of Brexit and a slew of other regulations or regulatory proposals. There have been several meetings concerning the likely implications to trade specifically in CITES species post-Brexit but also on the movement of plants and animals whether or not on CITES between the UK and the remaining 27 EU Member States after Brexit. Further, the SUN Coordinator has attended the annual conference on Invasive Non-native Species in York and separate meetings with DEFRA officials responsible for invasive species regulations both on the management and scientific side of things. Preparations for July's CITES Animals Committee meeting in Geneva are well underway.

From these meetings it is clear that DEFRA and its associated agencies are primarily focused on the assumption that an agreement will be reached with the EU such that the announced interim transition stage can come into place (currently set to end on 31st December 2020 but with the Government having this week announced the possibility of extension until 31st December 2021). During this transition stage the UK would remain within EU CITES Regulations (though currently it seems without a seat on the EU's Scientific Review Group) and both certification and free movement between the UK and EU would remain unchanged. Likewise, there would be no additional or changed arrangements in moving animals and plants between the UK and EU, no changes to how the UK implements animal health regulations, etc. It remains unclear as to whether or not the UK will be obligated to vote with the EU block at CITES meetings but likely that this will be the case. In a similar way, the UK will be obliged to accept and implement all EU invasive species listings through the transition period although, again, the current understanding is that the UK will not have a seat at the Scientific Forum's decision-making body during this period.

Nevertheless, DEFRA are looking at how CITES and Invasive Species legislation may be better tailored to the UK following completion of the transition period. DEFRA are working-up, a backstop plan for a hard Brexit should no trade agreement and/or Northern Ireland rectification occur before March 2019.

The revised COTES regulations will become law on 1st October. A very limited number of areas where civil sanctions will apply – basically if people transgress on the requirement to list the A10 certification number on advertisements. Sting operations will be allowed, whereby enforcement officers will be permitted to purchase animals or plants that are believed not be being sold legally. A provision will be made for the authorities to stipulate Ports of Entry - this in anticipation of Brexit when the EU will no longer have a right to veto such decisions. A further provision will allow courts to prohibit the possession and/or trade of CITES species to those convicted of crimes involving CITES species.

With regard to our input on consultations seemingly not being listened to, response has been that Ministers would say they have listened to but not acted upon since they took an opposing view – I did ask about the disjunct between Government saying we need to build business and remove costs and barriers in the light of Brexit and then imposing heavy costs through charging regimes that drive people to instead import through the likes of the Netherlands. Similarly, the Animal Activities Licensing regulations will come into effect on 1st October with seemingly precious little done to clarify through guidelines the poor and loose drafting of the legislation to date.

Pilot studies for wildlife crime will be on hare-coursing and illegal catching of elvers, with other test examples to follow. Study on trade patterns has progressed and will be shared – some sectors have given little if any response e.g. snake skin trade. These will be used to better inform DEFRA and its agencies in the post-Brexit world.

There is no possibility for looking at deregulatory proposals on domestic legislation until Brexit arrangements are finalised but then suggested that ideas such as removing Golden Eagle and Goshawk from additional registration requirements might be considered.

IAF Report from Mark Upton

The IAF Council of Delegates Meeting is being held Bamberg Germany at the Deutscher Falkenorden International Meeting 21st to 28th October. It is the 50th Anniversary of the IAF. I am intending to attend on your behalf.

Adrian Lombard is retiring as president after two terms. The IAF rules only allow a position to be held for two terms, so we are expecting a new president. Also up for election are the positions of Europe, (Africa South of the Sahara & Oceania), Asia and Middle East North Africa. All these positions have been held for one term. The deadline for the receipt of candidatures, complete with their nomination by a member organization, is 31st May.

The IAF have supported the Hawk Board buy writing to DEFRA and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs questioning their Amendments to the Animal Welfare Act which could effect falconers. They received a standard reply from DEFRA. They are in communication with us on this subject and are on standby to help in anyway they can.

We have received a request from IAF to contribute towards the costs of Dods alerts. In the past we have contributed but not in the last year as we weren't requested to.

The IAF have been helping support Mongolian Falconers' Association Project for prevention of Saker Falcon deaths in the area of Argalant by retro-fitting electric poles. This project is likely to get support also from New Fund for Raptor Conservation. A new foundation for the conservation of raptors has been established by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.

The IAF received good publicity in the European Parliament when Dods reported on the launch of their new website for European Foundation for Falconry and Conservation launches flagship website www.ef-fc.org. See below.

The EFFC is a non-profit body dedicated to helping reinforce the positive role of Falconry in Conservation, Culture, Education and Animal Welfare.

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On the 2nd June the IAF held the official opening of their new offices in Brussels. On the same day they held a meeting of the Biodiversity group with FACE to work out future direction of the group. I was unable to attend either event being abroad at the time. Tony James attended both for Britain as he was invited to the opening anyway. He has reported back to me on the biodiversity meeting. They are still looking for an individual falconer to post British conservation projects on the Perdix portal. As now one has come forward I have suggested that Tony, myself and possibly Matt Gage do it between us as we all have connections with IAF and conservation projects. The funding for the project that we discussed at our last meeting of €99 euros per annum for each European member country has been promised for this year by BFC.



Launch of flagship website

EU Stakeholder - Press Releases



29/05/2018

The International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey, working with the European Foundation for Falconry and Conservation launches flagship website www.ef-fc.org

The European Foundation for Falconry and Conservation (EFFC) is getting airborne with the launch of its flagship website, WWW.EF-FC.ORG .

EFFC is embarking on its mission to bring falconry's values to Europe's future by enhancing the long-held conservation role of falconers in a European context. EFFC is supporting and funding projects in which falconry's vast knowledge and expertise is relevant. Its focus is on two main areas: *Conservation & Animal Welfare* , and *Culture & Education* .

As well as a board that comprises international raptor biologists, life-long falconers and specialists in the fields of conservation and culture, EFFC also includes a special Council of Patrons, chaired by international bestselling author of 'H Is for Hawk' and New York Times contributing writer HELEN MACDONALD.

The Foundation has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Moroccan government in Rabat to work together on conservation. Mr. Mohamed Endichi, Director of the Fight Against Desertification, Moroccan Ministry of Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests and Mr. José Manuel Rodríguez Villa of the EFFC signed the MoU in Rabat this week.

During the workshop, EFFC Conservation and Welfare Expert Dr Andrew Dixon gave a presentation on Electrocution of Raptors in Mongolia, and how falconers, as stakeholders, reacted to counteract the huge losses, particularly of Saker Falcons. He also outlined key data and ways to mitigate the problem. Presentations were also given by HCEFLCD, Junta de Andalucía and other international and local NGOs, electricity companies, and interest groups.

While Morocco is outside of Europe, it is an important crossroads for migrating European birds of prey such the Imperial Eagle, Bonellis' Eagle and Honey Buzzard. This development will bring about a significant decrease in electrocutions of migratory European raptors in the region.

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Countryside Alliance Update from James Legge

POLITICAL AND LEGAL UPDATE ENGLAND AND WALES June 2018

People Moves

Sajid Javid MP has replaced Amber Rudd MP as Home Secretary with James Brokenshire MP replacing him as Communities Secretary.

Labour's Animal Welfare Plan

Labour's Animal Welfare Plan was published on 14 February and contained 50 policies for wild, farmed, and domestic animals. This is perhaps the most stridently animal rights policy document we have seen from Labour and includes, for the first time, a policy to restrict game shooting and "enhance and strengthen" the Hunting Act.

Draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill

Following attempts in the Commons to amend the EU (Withdrawal) Bill to include explicit recognition of animal sentience and animal welfare, as set out in Article 13 of the Lisbon Treaty, the Government published a draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill. The draft Bill would increase sentences for the most serious cruelty offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, for which there is general support. However, the other part of the draft Bill dealing with sentience is unworkable. It was criticised by all sides in the debate and the EFRA Committee recommended that this part of the Bill be dropped. Despite the concerns raised the Government seems determined to proceed with the Bill with the inclusion of sentience. There is very real concern that any such Bill introduced into Parliament could be hijacked by the animal rights lobby.

Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(England) Regulations 2018

New Regulations under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 have been introduced, which updates the licensing system for five activities involving animals: selling animals as pets; providing for or arranging the provision of boarding for cats and dogs; hiring out horses; dog breeding; and keeping or training animals for exhibition. The new system comes into force in October and will be enforced by local authorities. These Regulations replace a number of existing Acts as they apply in England, such as the Riding Establishments Act 1964. DEFRA are preparing guidance, which we hope will give greater clarity and certainty as to the scope and impact of the new licensing system. The Regulations also contain a provision for them to be reviewed at least every 5 years, with the first report to be published before 1 October 2023. Similar changes are expected in Wales where the Welsh Government has announced it is introducing licensing for all mobile animal exhibits. This will have a direct impact on such things as falconry displays.

Environmental Principles and Governance Post Brexit

The Government has launched a consultation entitled Environmental Principles and Governance after the United Kingdom Leaves the European Union. This is an area of great importance to all those engaged in the management of land and animals. It should be noted that, despite the consultation, the Lords amended the EU (Withdrawal) Bill to require the Secretary of State to bring forward legislation creating a duty on public authorities to apply these EU principles of environmental law and a new enforcement body. It is very far from clear why existing bodies cannot take on a greater role in enforcement. The consultation closes on 2 August.

Live Animal Exports

A consultation has been launched on proposals to ban the export of live animals for slaughter to Europe. The consultation closed on Tuesday this week. While focused on exports there may be future implications for imports with obvious implications for gamebirds.

Electronic Collars

The Government has published proposals to introduce a total ban on the use of electronic collars for cats and dogs in England. The consultation closed on 27 April. The proposed ban would include electronic collars used in boundary fence systems, despite the absence of any evidence of harm. The Government should look at regulation rather than a ban, and an exemption for boundary systems.

Salmon (Environment Agency)

The proposal to introduce a mandatory catch and release policy for a number of rivers in England closed on 12 April. The Environment Agency has decided to postpone any changes to the byelaws until 2019. Given that there is no evidence that recreational angling is a problem these proposals should be postponed indefinitely.

Future of Farming

A consultation on the future of agricultural policy in the UK, outside of the EU closed on 8 May. There is concern that the document fails adequately to recognise food production as the essential element of farming. Current proposals risk seeing farmers turned into environmental contractors.

Airgun Review

The Home Office has undertaken a review of airgun legislation including consideration of licensing. The Government is expected to respond to the consultation shortly.

Firearms Licensing Medical Procedure

The saga of firearms licensing continues and the Home Office appears to be prioritising pacifying GP's demands for a fee, which would leave the shooting community paying for a system that does not work. Before we accept any fee we need to be certain that any medical procedure, and any agreed fee, is consistently applied across England, Scotland and Wales; that a mechanism exists to ensure that GPs are applying the marker to applicant's medical records and that GPs are not be able to refuse to cooperate with the police in the discharge of their statutory duty under the Firearms Act. Any fee must be a one-off cost and independently set and this must be part of the introduction of continuous monitoring leading to a ten-year licence.

Policing and Crime Act 2016 - Eight Week Extension of Certificate Licences

The introduction of a limited time extension to certificates, under the Policing and Crime Act 2016, to ensure the police make the correct decision and reduce the number of time-consuming section 7 Temporary Permits being granted, is welcome.

Proposals for an Offensive Weapons Bill

The Government are proposing a number of changes to the law affecting firearms and knife sales. These restrictions would disadvantage law-abiding shooters, gamekeepers and others without improving public safety. We await the Government's final proposals.