

# The Sportsman's Association of Great Britain & Northern Ireland



**FIGHTING FOR FAIR AND EFFECTIVE FIREARMS LEGISLATION**

**Quarterly Newsletter 30/6/2020**

The Sportsman's Association  
PO BOX 2379  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP4 4AN

[www.sportsmansassociation.co.uk](http://www.sportsmansassociation.co.uk)  
Email: [info@sportsmansassociation.co.uk](mailto:info@sportsmansassociation.co.uk)  
[membership@sportsmansassociation.co.uk](mailto:membership@sportsmansassociation.co.uk)  
mobile 07521 508076

## **AGM**

The AGM is now postponed until next year. If restrictions on gatherings due to Covid-19 are lifted we will try for 29<sup>th</sup> May 2021, if the Phoenix Meeting goes ahead.

There will be three years of accounts to be approved. The database is now as upto date as is practical with membership remaining steady, and we have made a start on the photo ID membership cards.

The next thing for me to tackle is the website, I would like to make it a little easier to read and to have information on all the activities which members are involved in, with links to the major organisations. All suggestions are very welcome.

## **Shooting has Resumed in a Limited Fashion** 😊

Outdoor shooting resumed in July with pest control and game being the easiest to get going again since social distancing is not much of an issue with these activities. I believe clay target has been very busy. The NRA and many clubs with their own outdoor ranges have been open again, with limited numbers to allow for social distancing. MOD ranges did re-open and have now closed again for civilians. Indoor ranges can also re-open but with much stricter regulations than for outdoor ranges, so not viable for some of the smaller clubs, or for the NSRA's Lord Robert Centre.

Guidance is available from the following links and the major shooting associations will do their best to help you interpret it.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/furtherbusinesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-returnof-sport-and-recreation> and includes advice for providers of facilities on cleaning, social distancing, and protection for staff to help venues get back up and running safely.

NRA <https://nra.org.uk/news/>

NSRA <https://www.nsra.co.uk/index.php/119-frontpage/2795-the-nsra-and-lord-roberts-centre>

BASC <https://basc.org.uk/coronavirus/firearms/>

CPSA <https://www.cpsa.co.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19>

GTA <https://gtaltd.co.uk/news/shooting-grounds-and-ranges-opening-in-england/78>

MLAGB <https://www.mlagb.com/news/>

UKPSA <https://www.ukpsa.co.uk/news/covid-19-coronavirus-update/>

HBSA <https://sites.google.com/site/hbsauk/home/latest-news>

CA <https://www.countryside-alliance.org/covid-19-hub>

## **Advice on Security**

After a very nasty robbery in the MET area the police have issued the following advice.

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*On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2020 a firearm certificate holder advertised a gun for sale on GunStar, one of the well-known sites for sales of lawfully owned guns. The advert was answered by two men and the holder arranged for a meeting at his home address. He invited the potential "buyers" into his home where he showed the gun and his certificate. Sadly, what happened next would have been a shock to any person. The "buyers" were in fact criminals who proceeded to hold the certificate holder at knife point, tie him and his wife up and then instruct him to load the gun for them. They then left the household, leaving the holder bound.*

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To reduce the risk of another such crime, the police have asked for our help to make crimes of this type more difficult to perpetrate. They emphasis the following is advice; it is not guidance or regulation, and is provided as suggested options:

- Try to check certificates prior to any meeting. A genuine buyer should not object to, for instance, sending an electronic image of their certificate. That includes a photograph of the holder which can be compared with the person at the door, before any entry is allowed into the home.
- Try to complete a sale away from your home. At home, a criminal has access to the entire contents of your safe; a better location may be at your local shooting club as more people will be present. This may be the deterrent needed to prevent the criminal brazen behavior.
- Advertise locally within your club environment rather than online.

Ideally use an RFD as a conduit for sale. This is by far the safest option, and while the cost is understood, the risk to holder is entirely negated.

This robbery was shocking for the holder. The police ask for our help to prevent any further, similar incidents.

## Sad Words on Death of Jack Charlton (footballer) by Opportunistic Councilor

Brian Fox a well-known RFD and former member of the Sportsman's Association wrote to his Chief Constable with the following:

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*It is my understanding that York Councilor, David Taylor, has committed a criminal offence, by publishing what must surely be a hate crime, on Facebook, the heading of which is herewith:*

["Jack 'Bloodsports' Charlton has died. Good." Says councilor,](#)

[It is not just a case of deeply assaulting the well-being of Mr Charlton's family, friends, and countless world-wide admirers, but is inciting hatred of a vast number of decent people who operate within the law.](#)

*I believe it is for the public good that this crime should be prosecuted, and look forward to your positive response.*

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This is the Police response:

*"Thank you for your email in which you have highlighted the recent social media post that was made by York Councillor David Taylor. I am aware that his comment, made so soon after the death of the late Jack Charlton, caused upset and anger amongst many due to its timing and its reference to his participation in country sports. However, this does not constitute a hate crime on this occasion. For a crime to be considered a hate crime, the victim would have to be a target because they are a member of a protected characteristic as defined by the Home Office. In this case, Mr Taylor is showing his dislike for Mr Charlton because, as a member of the Green Party, he dislikes anyone who participates in country sports. This isn't to suggest that those people who are not members of a protected characteristic are not afforded protection in law, however in this case it is not a hate crime as you have suggested. Mr Taylor shared his opinion of Mr Charlton, without thought of the upset it might cause family, friends and admirers of the late footballer and since, I see has been brought to task by York City Council."*

This explains why those against shooting get to freely and publicly speak about us with such malicious vitriol and unfounded falsehood.

## Home Office Statistics for Firearm & Shotgun Certificates

Statistics were released on firearm and shotgun certificates issued by police forces in England and Wales for April 2019 till March 2020.

**As at 31 March 2020, there were:**

- **159,483 firearm certificates on issue** – 0.2% decrease, ending the year-on-year increase seen over the past 3 years.
- **567,358 shotgun certificates on issue** – there has been little variation in numbers over the last 10 years.

**Firearm and shotgun certificates on issue as at 31 March 2020**

- **586,351 people held a firearm and/or a shotgun certificate**, a 0.8% decrease of 4,951 since last year.

**In the year ending 31 March 2020, there were:**

- **7,962 new applications for firearm certificates**, of which 97% were granted and 3% were refused.
- **18,857 new applications for shotgun certificates**, of which 97% were granted and 3% were refused.
- **371 firearms certificates were revoked – a decrease of 1% (-5)** compared with the previous year and 0.2% of the total firearm certificates on issue.
- **1,141 shotgun certificates were revoked – an increase of 2% (+25)** compared with the previous year and 0.2% of the total shotgun certificates on issue.

The full report can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/firearm-certificates-in-england-and-wales>

The report also includes data on historical trends, police force comparisons, registered firearms dealers, visitor's permits, European Firearms Passes and Article 7 Authorities issued. It also includes figures on the number of people that hold a firearm and/or shotgun certificate, broken down by age and gender, and breakdowns of firearm and shotgun types. Although the breakdown of firearms owned is not very informative.

Taking the Home Office data and tables available; in 1996 there were 141,900 FAC holders owning 418,300 firearms. Today there are 159,483 FAC holders owning 604,920 firearms of which 58% are rifles. A further 33% are classed as "Other", of which 94% of these "others" are sound moderators.

So, what are the remaining 6% of this 33% of "others"?

And the remaining 9% which is not even mentioned?

Personally, I want to know how many Long Barrell Pistols and Revolvers are on

ticket, as this nonsense of no Home Office approved clubs for LBP/LBR's should be ended. There has also been considerable growth in the Muzzle Loading Pistol area, but how much growth is not known because the Home Office statistics are not that detailed.

## Legally-held guns

**HUNDREDS of guns, described as the 'most dangerous' types of civilian-owned firearms, are legally held in Cheshire.**

**New figures from the Home Office show that in 2019-20 there were 205 'section 1' shotguns across the county – a two per cent rise on the year before.**

**Covered by firearm certificates, these are multi-shot weapons that contain a magazine holding more than two rounds.**

**According to the Gun Control Network, these are similar to those used in mass shootings around the world and are not part of shooting traditions.**

**"By virtue of their magazine capacities and rapid-fire potential they represent the most dangerous civilian-owned guns," said Peter Squires, professor emeritus of criminology and public policy at the University of Brighton and member of the Gun Control Network.**

**"The fact that that they are few in number and little-used makes the case that they are manifestly not part of mainstream UK shooting traditions."**

**A total of 10,760 firearms were licensed in Cheshire in 2019-20 – three per cent more than the year before and a new record-high.**

**More than half of these were rifles, at 59 per cent, while 134 were handguns.**

**The number of firearms permitted by police forces throughout England and Wales rose to a record 605,000 last year, of which 'section 1' shotguns made up three per cent.**

**The statistics do not include the more common 'section 2' shotguns, which are licensed separately under shotgun certificates.**

**A Home Office spokesman said: "The UK has some of the toughest gun laws in the world.**

**"Before anyone receives a firearms certificate, the police must be satisfied that the person is fit to possess one and they have powers to revoke certificates if there is a risk to public safety."**

Articles like this have been appearing in local newspapers around the country, using the same Home Office data, but with a twisted interpretation to induce fear in the general public of lawful firearms ownership.

Using data from the Office of National Statistics on firearms crime <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peopleandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/offencesinvolvingtheuseoffirearms/Yearendingmarch2019>

I was able to ascertain that offences involving firearms accounted for **0.2% of all police recorded offences** (excluding fraud).

Shotguns, as mentioned in this article, are used in 8% of the firearms offences recorded, **0.016% of all recorded police offences**, and will have been discharged in 53% of those offences.

What I could not find in the ONS data was how many of the firearms used in crime had been owned by FAC/SG certificate holders. Or how many FAC/SG holders had committed a firearms offence. Anecdotal information in BSSC reports state that "0.025% of legally owned firearms were lost/missing in 2017, with a 20% rise in 2018 taking the total lost/missing to 0.03%. Only a tiny percentage of these were recovered having been used in crime.

Do write back to your local papers and challenge the Anti's.

## EU Regulation – Lead in Gunshot In or Around Wetlands

The Czech Republic stood up to the EU and forced the European Commission to "end without result" the voting on the restrictions on lead shot over wetlands. 15/7/20.

23 Member States, including CZ and GB, already have bans on the use of lead shot over wetlands, but the proposals being voted on go far beyond, with unclear and overly broad definitions of wetlands, and the abandonment of innocence until proven guilty, among a variety of other legal ambiguities.

The Czech Republic has a government that strongly supports the lawful use and ownership of firearms, and has the strength to challenge the EU when it feels the directives imposed on them restrict the freedoms of the Czech people. On this occasion they opposed the online voting procedure, and the definitions of wetlands, they asked for the proposals to be referred back to the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) committee.

The REACH committee vote took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> September via an online meeting with the European Commission and Member State representatives. The proposal will now be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council for a three-month scrutiny procedure. The European Parliament's job – as representatives of Europe's citizens and as the only directly elected EU institution – is to carefully exercise its scrutiny prerogatives. It has the power to reject this unworkable proposal, to ensure the final text is workable thereby contributing to proper legislation.

FACE will be lobbying the EU parliament and the Council of Ministers to reject the proposal from the REACH Committee on the basis of its illegality, inapplicability and disproportionality to ensure the issues are correctly re-considered within the REACH Committee.

Should the European Parliament see fit to approve the proposal it could come into force from December 23<sup>rd</sup>, technically requiring the UK to implement it. Jonathan Djanogly MP, chairman of the BSSC has written to the DEFRA Secretary of State, George Eustice MP, to seek reassurance that even if this EU legislation commences prior to Brexit on January 1, 2021, then the UK will not seek to implement it.

Please write to your own MPs and the Secretary re-iterating the sentiments.

## Deer Stalking Wanted

Our director Savvas is looking for stalking with possibly a couple of Friends, collectively they have 100 years of stalking experience, Impeccable references are available, definitely not a money making venture, management and sport being the ethos of the venture and they will probably take on a local apprentice or two . Reasonable money paid, central southern England would be ideal with Roe being a main quarry, but would look further afield.

Contact [savvastoufexis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:savvastoufexis@yahoo.co.uk) .

## Membership Cards

The new Membership Card printer has arrived, so I am now asking all members to forward photos of themselves. It does not need to be a passport photo, any good photo of you that I can crop is great, either digitally or pop one in the post, I can return it with your membership card.

Here is an example, although I need to work on my smile!



of Great Britain & Northern Ireland

Membership No. 000000

Name: Rachel Westlake

Expiry Date: dd/mm/yyyy

### £10 Million Public Liability Insurance

Membership includes third party public liability insurance cover for an indemnity of £10 million any one incident, including Member to Member legal liability and indemnity to principle, not subject to excess.

For full cover please refer to paper cover note as issued on joining/renewal.

The Association must be notified immediately of any incident which may give rise to a claim.



PO BOX 2379, SALISBURY, SP4 4AN

07521 508076

[www.sportsmansassociation.co.uk](http://www.sportsmansassociation.co.uk)

[membership@sportsmansassociation.co.uk](mailto:membership@sportsmansassociation.co.uk)

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[info@sportsmansassociation.co.uk](mailto:info@sportsmansassociation.co.uk)  
[savvastoufexis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:savvastoufexis@yahoo.co.uk)

Member of the British Shooting Sports Council  
[www.bssc.org.uk](http://www.bssc.org.uk)



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Keep on keeping well, Rachel Westlake.