

# TTSC Good Practice policy

All references to “Club” mean the Tondu Target Shooting Club.

## ***1 Home Office requirements***

There are a number of requirements to be fulfilled by clubs listed in the approval document – known as the “criteria” and all club officials should make themselves aware of them [see appendix 1] as the club will always comply with the Home Office Criteria.

The club will ensure that an officer of the club has responsibility for liaising with the SW Police – the Home Office Criteria E suggests that this person should be named as a Police Liaison Officer. Our club will also elect a second Officer to assist the clubs Police liaison Officer.

Club officers will be responsible people who can be entrusted with the administration of the club.

- Currently the club does not hold Guest days

## ***2 Police notifications***

The club will notify the SWV police force by email or ordinary mail using one of the following four formats:

1. **Mail** - Any person applying to become a member.

The notification will include:

- The full name of the person (and any previous names)
- Their full address
- Their date of birth
- Their place of birth

2. **Mail** - Any member who has not shot with the club for 12 months.

The notification will include:

- The name of the member.
- Any known reasons for non-use of firearms.
- Date of last attendance at the club.

3. **Mail** - Any person who, for whatever reason, is no longer a member of the club.

The notification will include:

- The name of the member.
- The date their membership ceased.

4. **Mail** - Any person who has become a full member of the club,

The notification will include:

- The name of the member.
- The date of the committee meeting where full membership was agreed.

These notifications will be forwarded to the firearms licensing department of the SW Police as soon as the notification requirement is reached and copies will be attached to the members admin record.

## ***3 Club Attendance Register***

The club will operate and maintain an attendance register of all members operated by our Paxton swipe card system.

The club will also operate and maintain the Range Mate Software system to record all shooting that has taken place on our ranges by our members. The information will contain the date, the member's name, and the details of the firearms used – including the make, bore, type and serial number of the gun. Entries for each firearm are to be verified, by the club. There is a need for members to ensure that at least three entries in a 12 month are verified in order to prove a need for ownership. The register will be kept for a minimum of six years from the last entry using the Range Mate software system.

#### **4 *Joining the club***

Any enquiry of membership does not need to be recorded, but as soon as a completed application form is provided to the club then Mail 1 above will be sent to the SW Police for vetting. If an applicant for membership is found by the SW Police to be unsuitable for any reason the Police will notify the club as soon as practicable, but due to data protection legislation they may not be able to provide any fine detail.

On receipt of vetting clearance from the SW Police the club will operate a probationary period for new members, which will be a minimum of three months, during which time the probationer must firstly have successfully completed the club induction course which will include the safe-handling and use of firearms, before being allowed to shoot. The Probationer must then attend the club regularly in order to qualify for being considered for full membership.

Applicants who have firearm certificates or are already members of another club approved for the same class of firearms as our club need not – at the club's discretion – undergo a probation period.

Anyone applying to join the club must declare on their dated application form:

- If they have ever had a firearm or shotgun certificate revoked.
- If they have ever had an application for a firearm certificate refused.
- That they are not a prohibited person under Section 21 of the Firearms Act 1968.

As part of the application process there is a separate medical declaration to be completed. The club will retain members application forms along with any details/records/declarations for a minimum of six years whilst accepting the fact that applicants may not always follow through to full membership.

#### **5 *Changes of club circumstance***

The Home Office must be notified if the club changes:

- The Secretary
- The Secretary's details (i.e. change of name or address)
- The club's name or
- Loses the use of a range or gains other ranges,
- Wants to change its approval classification

#### **6 *What is expected of club members?***

Members must be "of good character". Section 15 of the 1988 Act, as expanded upon at paragraph 18.22 of the Home Office Guide on Firearms Licensing Law 2016, states that members may transport, use, repair, clean etc. firearms and ammunition without a certificate ONLY "when engaged as a member of the club in connection with target shooting," but those firearms/ammunition must be of a type the club is approved for IE: Fullbore rifle /smallbore rifle/muzzle loading pistol. If a club member is to transport club

guns and ammunition away from the club range(s), the member will be provided with a letter of authority from the club and a copy of the club's firearm certificate. (See appendix 2 for an example letter)

If a club member possesses a personal firearm certificate (FAC), they must ensure that they update the SW Police licensing team with any changes to their primary Home Office approved club, if entered onto the conditions on their FAC. Members are expected to use each of the guns on their certificates at least three times per year and have the use verified by the club in order to evidence their continued 'good reason' at the next renewal of their FAC. Exceptions to this include personal circumstances such as ill-health or working away or older firearms which may undergo excessive wear and tear if used this often.

## **7 Ranges**

The club will ensure that sufficient financial arrangements are in place to meet any injury or damage claim by taking out Insurance cover through the National Smallbore Rifle Association.

The club will ensure that any range for which it is responsible is safe and will inspect it regularly to ensure that it remains compliant with the existing Range Safety certificates. The club will conduct regular inspections and maintenance of the range infrastructure and document this process.

The clubs current Range Safety certificates will be displayed in the clubroom.

## **8 Security**

Exactly the same security conditions on personal firearm certificates apply to club certificates, in particular that when not in use, reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent access by unauthorised persons and all club firearms and ammunition and will be locked up in the club armoury.

NOTE 1: - Section 15 (1) of the 1988 Firearms (Amendment) Act allows club members, when acting in connection with target shooting to have access to firearms and ammunition, and in this case they are not unauthorised persons.

NOTE 2: - The club and its members will place a high emphasis upon physical security of the club armoury, buildings, and infrastructure where firearms are used or stored. The club will maintain a CCTV and a monitored alarm system. All firearms when not in use must be cased on the club premises.

## **9 Welfare concerns**

Although figures are incomplete, there is awareness that some people sadly chose to use their licensed firearm to take their own life. A survey conducted by the charity Mind reports that one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. Whilst most people seek help and are able to manage their illness, unfortunately statistics show 6.7% of people will attempt suicide in their lifetime. All members are encouraged to look out for their fellow club members and speak to the club Welfare Officer or someone else if you notice any significant or sudden changes to someone's appearance, behaviour, communication capacity, become aware of any threat of danger to them or anyone else, or any unusual changes to their environment. If you become aware of any of these factors, it might be useful to seek advice from the Club Welfare Officer as the welfare and safety of the individual and other club members is of paramount concern.

All club members should be aware of the potential for members to be radicalised, blackmailed or of those members struggling to cope with significant changes in their personal circumstances. If any club member has any such concerns or suspicions, they should contact the Club Welfare Officer in the first instance as well as the firearms licensing department for help and advice.

### ***10 What can clubs expect from the police?***

The role of the police, normally via their Firearms Enquiry Teams, in relation to clubs is to support the safe and lawful practice of target shooting whilst ensuring public safety is not jeopardised. The approach taken by the SW Police should be based, in the first instance, upon partnership and co-operation as it is important to have trust between the club liaison officer and the local police firearms licensing department.

We can expect the SW Police to:

- respond to requests and communications politely, quickly and effectively.
- complete probationary members checks in a timely manner, currently quoted as 10 working days.
- not breach the Data Protection Act (or the provisions of the forthcoming Data Protection Bill) in relation to probationary members checks but to give the club a clear assessment as to an applicant's suitability.
- provide expert advice regarding personal and physical security.
- be objective and understanding about any concerns raised by the club regarding a member or prospective member.

The club accept that it is an offence for a person to obstruct the exercising of the powers under s. 15(7). That said, the club expects the tone taken by the SW Police Firearms Enquiry Team will always be one of co-operation and partnership in the first instance. In the event of an arrogant, abrasive or confrontational approach by the SW Police a complaint will be generated by the Club Secretary and forwarded to the SW Police Firearms Enquiry team. The club expect that such complaints will be treated in a serious manner and not whitewashed or ignored.

The club expect the police to visit the club. This may be prearranged, or it may also be unannounced. Section 15 (7) of the 1988 Firearms Act allows a constable or civilian officer authorised in writing to enter premises occupied or used by the club to inspect those premises and anything on them to ascertain if the provisions of Section 15 and any limitations or conditions in the approval are being complied with.

S. 45 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997 (which amends Section 15 of the 1988 Firearms Act) details that a constable or civilian officer exercising their power under Section 15(7), can require any information which is kept by means of a computer and is accessible from the premises to be made available for inspection in a visible and legible form. On attendance at the club Police will normally show their 'Green card' (Form I12) and Police ID which will verify their identity and complies with Section 15 (7) of the 1988 Act. The exception to this may be in an urgent situation, being managed by non-FET staff, who will not necessarily possess a 'Green card'. If the club has any concerns about the identity of anyone arriving for an unannounced inspection, please call the Firearms Enquiry Team at the SW Police headquarters or (out of hours) 101.

The purpose of these visits is simply to ensure the police are fulfilling their primary responsibilities in relation to the club – and that the club is supporting the lawful practice of target shooting, whilst ensuring public safety.

Among other things, the police may wish to:

- Review the club's physical Security
- Confirm their understanding of the club's security practices including range safety procedures and the storage of private guns and ammunition on club premises
- Conduct an audit/inspection of club guns and ammunition
- Confirm details of the club officials
- Discuss the range maintenance regime
- Discuss the conditions on the club certificate
- Review the club's membership (including probationary members)
- Review the club's attendance records
- Review the club's written constitution
- Have a general chat with club members

The club understands that if circumstances require it, the police have the power to revoke the club's firearm certificate issued to the 'responsible person' and/or recommend to the Home Office that approval is withdrawn. In the most extreme circumstances, the police may use either common power or statutory powers to cause the closure of the club.

## **APPENDIX I – Home Office Criteria for approval**

Clubs will not be granted approval unless they meet the criteria set out below. These criteria translate into conditions of the approval, if granted. Approved clubs which fail to meet these conditions can expect approval to be withdrawn.

The criteria as set out below should be observed:

- a) the club is a genuine target shooting club with a written constitution;
- b) the principal officers of the club are responsible people who can be entrusted with the proper administration of the club;
- c) the club has at least ten members at the time of application and at all times whilst approved unless, exceptionally, the Secretary of State or Scottish Government determines that there are special circumstances which justify a lesser number;
- d) members are of good character;
- e) the club must appoint a member to act as a liaison officer with the police, and the chief officer of police must have confidence that this person is providing the police with such information as they require to ensure that the activities of the club and its members are conducted properly and safely in accordance with the criteria and give no cause for concern;
- f) the club will maintain a register of the attendance of all members together with details for each visit of the firearms which they used;
- g) the club will inform the police of any person, other than a guest member, who has ceased to be a member for whatever reason;
- h) the club will inform the police of any member, other than a guest member, who has not shot with the club for a period of 12 months;
- i) the club will inform the police of any application for membership, giving the applicant's full name and address, date and place of birth, and the date on which they become a full member;
- j) no application for full or probationary membership will be granted unless the applicant has informed the club of whether he or she has ever had an application for a firearm or shotgun certificate refused by the police, or had a certificate revoked;
- k) members, prospective members and guest members must sign a declaration that they are not prohibited from possessing a firearm or ammunition by virtue of Section 21, as amended, of the Firearms Act 1968 (which applies to persons who have served a term of imprisonment or been given a suspended sentence of three months or longer);

- l) the club has regular use of ranges for the categories of firearm in respect of which approval is being sought or given, as the case may be. Adequate financial arrangements must be in place to meet any injury or damage claim;
- m) the security arrangements for the storage of club firearms and ammunition are satisfactory;
- n) the club does not run a day or temporary membership scheme, other than for guest members within the constraints of paragraphs o and p below;
- o) Guest members must be: members of a recognised outside organisation; people who are known personally to at least one full member of the club; members of another approved club visiting as members of that club; or, visitors possessing firearms that fall within the terms of the club's approval and that are held on their personal FAC or visitor's permit or permit under Section 7 of the 1968 Firearms Act.
- p) the club does not have more than 12 guest days a year. Guest members, (other than members of another approved club or visitors with a firearm certificate, visitor's permit or permit under Section 7 of the 1968 Firearms Act as above,) may only shoot during a guest day, and must be supervised on a one-to-one basis at all times when handling firearms and ammunition by either a full club member or someone who is a coach recognised by the governing bodies. The club secretary must notify each guest day to the police firearms licensing department of the area in which the guest day is to take place at least 48 hours in advance;
- q) anyone who applies for membership must be sponsored by at least one full club member;
- r) before becoming a full member, individuals must have a probationary period of at least three months during which time they must attend and shoot regularly. The probationary member must be given a course in the safe handling and use of firearms on a one-to-one basis by someone who is either a full member of the club or who is a coach with a qualification recognised by the governing bodies;
- s) until a probationary member has satisfactorily completed a course in the safe handling and use of firearms, he/she must be supervised at all times when in possession of firearms or ammunition by either the range officer, a full member of the club, or someone who is a coach with a qualification recognised by the governing bodies;
- t) the probationary period may be waived, at the club's discretion, for someone who is already a full member of another club which has been approved by the Secretary of State or Scottish Government in respect of the same type or types of firearm; or holds a firearm certificate; or has handled firearms in the course of his/her duty in the police or the armed services, and has a statement from his/her existing or former senior commanding officer saying that he/she is fully trained in handling the type of firearms in respect of which the club has obtained approval and is able to use them safely without supervision;
- u) the club never has more probationary members than full members unless the Secretary of State determines that there are special circumstances which justify a greater number of probationary members; and
- v) there is nothing else that would make the club unsuitable for approval. If approval is granted, the approval will be subject to a set of standard conditions which will reflect the approval criteria listed above. In certain cases, the Secretary of State may attach further specific conditions to a club's approval.

## APPENDIX 2

Sample letter of permission to authorise a member to transport club guns and ammunition

Secretary's Name/Address/ Telephone Number

Club name

Section 15 (1) of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988

I have authorised the below named person to carry firearms and ammunition under the above Act and Section, only while acting in connection with target shooting as a member of the above named club.

This authority runs from [date] to [date] or earlier, should the person named below cease to be a member of the club for any reason.

Name of member

Member's DOB/Address

Signed,

Club Secretary.

