

## COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE BRIEFING NOTE



### SHOOTING SPORTS AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

#### House of Commons, Westminster Hall Debate

#### **“Removal of shooting sports from Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games” (Alister Jack, Con, Dumfries and Galloway)**

**Wednesday 27 June, 11.00am – 11.30am**

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#### **Background:**

- As well as shooting being a hobby and a necessity for many jobs, it is also a competitive sport with shooters from the UK taking part in a variety of domestic and international competitions.
- At least 600,000 people in the UK shoot live quarry, clay pigeons or targets every year. This includes 280,000 people who take part in clay pigeon shooting, and 168,000 people who take part in small or full-bore rifle shooting.
- Last year the Commonwealth Games Federation announced their decision not to include shooting sports in the 2022 Games in Birmingham. Shooting is an optional sport for host cities but it has been contested at every Commonwealth Games since Kingston, Jamaica in 1966, with the exception of Edinburgh in 1970.
- The decision is reportedly due to “lack of appropriate facilities” near to the host city of Birmingham. Bisley Shooting Ground in Surrey, which hosted the shooting at the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games, was apparently dismissed as too far away, despite plans for track cycling at the 2022 Games to be held in London.
- At this year’s Games on the Gold Coast, Australia, 24 medals were won by shooters from England, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Scotland, and Wales, accounting for over 10 percent of the medals brought back to the UK. Wales, thanks to a fantastic performance in shooting sports, tabled their highest ever table position, and the Isle of Man registered on the medals table solely because of shooting.

#### **Countryside Alliance Position:**

- The Countryside Alliance is deeply disappointed at the news that all shooting sports are to be excluded from the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. This decision will undoubtedly leave hundreds of professional competitors from around the world angry and disappointed. Whilst shooting is particularly competitive in the UK it also offers huge potential for smaller nations that focus on shooting sports.
- Whilst shooting is an optional sport at the Commonwealth Games, its exclusion will have serious repercussions which we do not think have been properly considered. We understand that the list of sports has not yet been finalised, and there is still time for shooting to be included. We encourage the Government to explore all possible options for including the sport of shooting in the 2022 Games.

- Reversing this decision and including shooting in the Birmingham Games will allow the Government and the local authority to showcase the incredible gun trade history of the city. Gunsmithing is part of the heritage of Birmingham; it has given its name to the Gun Quarter, and continues to be of importance to the region. The exclusion of shooting sports from Birmingham's Games would be a missed opportunity to celebrate this part of the city's heritage and future.
- The first option is to use the facilities at Bisley, which is prepared to host international competitions. Bisley is the home of competitive shooting in the UK and has already signalled it is ready to host the event at a very reasonable cost to the organisers.
- The second option would be to consider a new centre of excellence, one that can be a real legacy for sport shooting. It is a travesty that there is only one centre for shooting sports in the UK. The West Midlands could blaze a trail for this accessible sport by developing a hub for shooting sports right in the heart of the country, maximising the cultural heritage of Birmingham as a centre for gun-making excellence. A new aquatic centre is being built for the 2022 Games at a cost of £60 million so it is right that shooting benefits from investment as well.
- If agreement cannot be reached, there must be a commitment from the Commonwealth Games Federation to include shooting in the 2026 Games, and to consider including shooting as one of the sports which host cities must be able to accommodate rather than it being an optional sport. Consideration should also be given to holding an international shooting competition in the UK to coincide with the 2022 Games.

### **The Value of Shooting:**

- An [independent PACEC survey](#) on the value of the shooting in the UK reported the following information:
  - **Shooting is worth £2 billion to the UK economy (GVA).**
  - **Shooting supports the equivalent of 74,000 full-time jobs.**
  - **Shooting is involved in the management of two-thirds of the rural land area.**
  - **Nearly two million hectares are actively managed for conservation as a result of shooting.**
  - **Shoot providers spend nearly £250 million a year on conservation.**
  - **At least 600,000 people in the UK shoot live quarry, clay pigeons or targets.**
  - **Shooters spend 3.9 million work days on conservation – the equivalent of 16,000 full-time jobs.**

### **For more information please contact:**

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