

BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE

Rob Boulton of Pinhoe TSC gives us the lowdown on the club's ambitious construction project



The works on the new Pinhoe TSC club building are well under way.

How time has flown. I look at the date on my first drawing... March 2016! It was a few months before that the club had contacted me to design an ambitious extension at their range in Pinhoe, Exeter. My father and I had been members of a Newton Abbot club (Watts Blake Bearne) some 25 years previous. That club had now folded and members had combined to form a much larger and more dynamic concern at Pinhoe. It seemed that two other clubs in the area, had also found themselves without range facilities due to building redevelopment. With a proactive ethos, Pinhoe sought to expand their existing range to accommodate the amalgamation of these clubs.

Pinhoe's existing range was constructed in 1990 and consists of a five bay 25 yard range accommodating stations for 20yd benchrest/pistol and a 10m air range. There is also an outdoor 50m range. As a single smaller club, these facilities worked well with separate nights allocated for each discipline. With the potential influx of merged shooters initially swelling membership to 120, however, a single universal range would not be adequate.

Ideas were discussed and drawings were produced, adding a further pair of five bay 25m ranges and a dedicated seven bay 10m air range, together with additional storage, club facilities and a much larger armoury and equipment room. The proposal increased the floor area of the existing range from 380m² to 1130m². Consequently the club would have the potential to assign a dedicated range for prone, benchrest,

LSR and air while maintaining the flexibility to use any discipline on the three main ranges.

Planning permission was sought for a block-lined steel portal framed building, and the club found East Devon planning authority to be very supportive. The club progressed through building regulations and by January 2019 were ready to start works on the new structure.

With a dynamic committee, led by their enthusiastic chairman Mike Taylor, the club has raised funds for the project through member's donations, and grants from Sport England and the Viridor Trust. Unfortunately these funds fell slightly short of the total costings for the project, however with the understanding of a local builder the project started and the club accepted that a link between the new and old buildings would follow when funding allowed.

Work began, and cutting the first sod was performed by President Dirk Bate-Jones and other club trustees on 18 June 2019. The works did not run smoothly, however, and it was soon apparent that the water table had risen much higher than anticipated. Building works were therefore halted so that further drainage



Club President Dirk Bate-Jones cuts the first sod.

works could be considered and the foundation design revised. Unfortunately this delay led the club into what proved to be an exceptionally bad winter. Although a solution had been derived, the site was not workable for some time and the builder understandably took other commitments. Then of course the Coronavirus lockdown happened.

We are a frustrated club, but there is light ahead. Works restarted in earnest at the beginning of April. The builder still has other commitments that prevents him working fully on our project, and at the moment he is having difficulty obtaining the materials required.

As I write at the end of August, however, the ground works have been excavated, foundations are poured, and the steel portal frame has been erected. Purlin and side rails are being fitted, and blockwork up to floor level is about to commence. Truly taking shape as they say, and now finally members can see the volume and size of their ambitious project.

Fitting out the range will hopefully commence soon, with the range safety design being ably undertaken by club member Robin Batten, with a great deal of help and support from Geoff Doe.

On a personal note, my father and I have joined the new club and were warmly welcomed. Terry is in his eighties and initially wanted to shoot air pistol as pistol was the only discipline he could not master in the army. After a few attempts producing reasonable scores we opted for something more suited. We are now both settled enjoying benchrest and look forward to the future success of Pinhoe Target Shooting Club. ●