

# British Parachute Association

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## Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Tuesday 21 February 2012 at 1310**

at the BPA Office, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester LE2 9TF

<b>Present:</b>	Adrian Bond Paul Applegate Marc Fletcher Craig Poxon Martin Soulsby	Communications Chairman    Chair of Council
<b>In attendance:</b>	Liz Ashley Adam Browning Tony Butler John Hitchen John Page Martin Shuttleworth James Swallow	Editor, Skydive the Mag Assistant Editor, Skydive the Mag Technical Officer NCSO  Secretary-General
<b>Apologies for absence</b>	Kieran Brady Phil Sumner	Web Developer, Archant Dialogue

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### Item Minute

#### 01/12 Minutes

The Committee noted that the minutes (circulated) of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 December 2011 had already been approved by the Committee, ratified electronically by the Council and published on the BPA website <http://www.bpa.org.uk/minutes>

#### 02/12 Committee composition and terms of reference 2012

The voting members of the Communications Committee 2012 were: Adrian Bond (Chair, elected by the Council); Paul Applegate, Kieran Brady, Marc Fletcher and Craig Poxon. Liz Ashley was co-opted (non-voting), ex-officio, as Editor of *Skydive the Mag*.

The Committee's Terms of Reference, set out on BPA Form 191, had been circulated with the agenda and were noted.

#### 03/12 Matters arising from the minutes

##### 3.1 Log of Mag downloads (minute 57.1)

Adam Browning (Assistant Editor, Skydive the Mag) handed Craig Poxon a printout and confirmed that he had arranged for Craig Poxon to have access to the analytics website. Archant Dialogue would continue to provide Craig Poxon with Mag download data, about a week before each meeting.

**Action: Archant Dialogue**

##### 3.2 BPA vinyl promotional banners (minute 57.3)

These were now to be ordered by the Office, to provide one per DZ, as agreed at the last Drop Zone Operators' meeting.

**Action: BPA Office**

##### 3.3 Map of Affiliated Centres for display at wind tunnels (minute 57.4)

John Page reported that the map in the Mag showing the locations of BPA Affiliated Drop Zones had recently been re-drawn. He would liaise with Liz Ashley (Editor, Skydive the Mag) on

printing costs for a poster-size version of the map for display at wind tunnels, and report back to the next meeting.

**Action: John Page**

### **3.4 New computer system at BPA Office and new database (minute 61)**

New hardware and software had been installed at the BPA Office at the end of January. The installers had had to reverse engineer the current BPA database, the program for which was now over a decade old, to get it to work on the new system. However, they had achieved this and the new IT system and the database running on it appeared to be functioning properly. Staff in membership services were now working on renewals, and the pace of this work would increase as we moved closer to the peak renewals period. This meant that they would not have capacity to test and validate the new database until the pressure of work on renewals began to abate later in the year.

Adam Browning of Archant Dialogue reported in Phil Sumner (web developer's) absence that the installers of the new BPA computer system, Computerlink (Leicester), had been in touch with Phil Sumner regarding the reverse engineering of the current BPA database. This was with a view to providing him with technical information to enable him to complete work on the relatively small but critical administrative functionality, used exclusively by the office, still missing from the new database.

Martin Soulsby (Chair of Council) said the view was now that the Office should have been asked to project manage development of the new database from the beginning, because this core functionality was purely for the office and had little to do with online renewal per se. He was concerned that the project was now at risk of losing momentum.

The Committee therefore asked Martin Shuttleworth (Secretary-General) to co-ordinate the project from the BPA Office, and to seek a report from Phil Sumner of Archant Dialogue as soon as possible on the current position and way forward, bearing in mind the lack of capacity of staff in membership services for trialling a new system at peak renewals time.

**Action: BPA Office**

Craig Poxon asked if the scheduled task that ran weekly to provide a membership update to Archant Dialogue for the member check facility on the BPA website was running on the new system.

**Action: BPA Office / Computerlink**

## **04/12 Editorial Report**

### **4.1 February 2012 issue**

Adam Browning tabled a short editorial report. The Chairman asked that the report be circulated in advance of the meeting in future, per normal BPA procedure.

**Action: Mag team**

The Mag had had a design makeover for the February issue, copies of which were tabled. The Committee appreciated the new design. However, it expressed concern over the quality of the paper and the quality of the images, some of which appeared a little dull and grainy. Liz Ashley said she would enquire of Archant Dialogue and report back.

**Action: Editor / Archant Dialogue.**

Adam Browning said that advertising revenue at £15,120 had fallen just shy of the £16K target.

Production and distribution of the two BPA inserts (Annual Report 2011 and Membership Renewal Form 2012-3) had gone smoothly.

The February issue had been published later in its month than other issues because of the AGM. The AGM had this year been a week later than the year before. This meant that the gap between the February and April issues had shortened. The copy deadline for April was as soon as next week.

## **4.2 Mag website**

Advertising income on the Mag website had been just £205 this month, reflecting low traffic volumes. Liz Ashley believed it was time fundamentally to re-examine the purpose of the Mag website. Facebook had become so popular during the last few years, among skydivers as much as everyone else, that it called into question the raison d'être of the Mag website. Adam Browning said that the Mag website replicated some functions of the Mag, whereas any such website should have its own constant stream of content. He cited the case of a website Archant Dialogue hosted for another organisation outside skydiving where users generated the content by uploading images and videos. This made it the one-stop-shop on the web for events in that field.

Liz Ashley said that the Mag website, for which she had no contractual involvement as Editor of the Mag, seemed not to do much that was not already done elsewhere. She asked whether the Mag website, or that part of it which provided a unique service (such as hosting digitized back issues of the Mag), could become a section of the BPA website.

Martin Soulsby said that there simply did not seem to be an appetite amongst the membership for the Mag website. He had monitored it after the BPA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Boogie last September - a popular and well-supported event - but nothing had come up. Even on [www.ukskydiver.co.uk](http://www.ukskydiver.co.uk), which also had an image and video upload facility, and of which Marc Fletcher could speak as a moderator, typically only about one image a week was uploaded.

The Chairman suggested, to the agreement of the Committee, that a review of the role, function and future of the Mag website should be a Communications Action Plan target for 2012-3. See minute 8.4.

**Action: Take forward at next meeting as Action Plan Target**

### **05/12 Starter Mag 2012**

In a written quote dated 20 February (circulated in advance by e-mail) Archant Dialogue had quoted £9,418 for production of 30,000 copies of the Starter Mag 2012. In addition there would be a one-off fee of £600 to give it a design makeover to match the main Mag. The delivery charge of boxes of Starter Mags to DZs would be covered by Archant Dialogue rather than the BPA as previously agreed in the contract, subject to a specified weight limit. Archant Dialogue would be entitled to retain all advertising revenue up to £14K, as in 2011, rather than the previously-agreed £16K in the contract. This would cover all editorial costs, production time, storage and delivery. Archant Dialogue would share all revenue generated over £14K on the basis of 70:30 in favour of the BPA, and anything over £16K at 80:20, again in favour of the BPA.

The Committee was generally satisfied with this quotation. However, it asked for an explanation of the reason for the year-on-year increase in the cost of printing.

**Action: Archant Dialogue**

Liz Ashley outlined the minor editorial changes, as most of the content was not time-dependent. The Committee was content with this. Adam Browning reported that Archant Dialogue's advertising sales department had confirmed to him that advertising sales in the Starter Mag were on target.

James Swallow said the Starter Mag had often not been given out to first-time jumpers at his Drop Zone because of supply difficulties in the past, but he would now seek to give it out. He asked where readers of the Starter Mag were intended to put the centrefold poster, and the Committee said it had been designed for display at a workplace, where it could be a talking point. After further discussion, the Committee agreed to remove the word 'tandem' from the poster so as not to put off solo jumpers, although the image of a tandem would be retained.

**Action: Editor**

Adam Browning said that a digital version of the Starter Mag could be personalised for each Drop Zone, and the Committee invited him to formulate a plan about how the mechanics of this might work.

**Action: Archant Dialogue (Adam Browning)**

## **06/12 Media Co-ordinator 2012**

The Committee asked the Office to ask Rich Rust whether he was prepared to continue as BPA Media Co-ordinator for 2012, and to advise him of the Committee's plan to enhance public relations for the sport by carrying through a structured plan with the help of Archant Dialogue (see Communications Action Plan Targets/minutes 7.1 & 8.1).

**Action: BPA Office**

Martin Soulsby said that in recent years the plan for enhancing public relations had been to target four or five key skydiving events each year, and to provide the Media Co-ordinator/s with information on these up front. However, he recognised that, for whatever reasons, there had been no traction with this approach. The Communications Chairman agreed, and said it was time to try a different approach in partnership with Archant Dialogue.

## **07/12 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012**

### **7.1 Enhance media and public relations**

Adam Browning confirmed that Archant Dialogue would be pleased to work with the BPA to enhance media and public relations for the sport. This Chairman thanked Archant Dialogue for this and said the project would carry through into the next Action Plan year.

Archant Dialogue was putting together a media pack for Drop Zones, which would include brief notes on how to put together an engaging press release. All that was required for local newspapers was often one sentence, a name and a contact number, as they typically had a lot of space to fill. Tony Butler suggested that a presentation on media and public relations might make an appropriate item for this year's Drop Zone Operator's meeting.

**Action: Refer to Development Committee for consideration for DZO meeting agenda**

James Swallow reported that the Extreme Sports Channel had filmed 4 x 30 minute programmes at Skydive Hibaldstow and were planning to include them in their schedules for the next three years. The channel had recently sought his advice on the possibility of launching the series if possible to tie in with events in the sport. He would send the links for circulation to the Committee.

**Action: James Swallow**

**[Note:** James Swallow subsequently advised that he was unable to forward links as it would break the terms of the agreement.]

### **7.2 Celebrate the BPA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1961-2011**

- BPA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary car stickers had been issued in last summer. **Completed**
- The well-received series of five articles had continued in the Mag, looking at the history of British skydiving in each of the BPA's five decades to date. The February 2012 Mag had included the last article in this series, on skydiving in the first decade of the new millennium. **Completed**
- The Chairmen's Honours Board had been inaugurated at the AGM by a video message from Dare Wilson, the oldest surviving past-Chairman of the BPA. It would now be mounted on the wall in the BPA Board Room. The Office reported that the cost of the Board, to a bespoke design, had been £390 plus fitting, which had come well within the allocated budget of £850. **Completed**
- BPA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary branded pull-up cords had been given out at the BPA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Boogie in September 2011 and at the AGM in January 2012. **Completed**

### **7.3 Run an online BPA membership survey in spring 2012**

The Chairman suggested that the focus on this year's online membership survey should be retention, it being one of Council's strategic goals to improve retention rates. He invited all

Committee members to send him draft questions, and would also ask at full Council for topics and questions to form the basis of the questionnaire.

**Ongoing**

#### **7.4 Research costs and issues in building a digital archive of the BPA Mag and, possibly, BPA minutes**

Last year, Craig Poxon had reported to the (minute 51.4/11) that this target was on hold for the time being because of cost issues until technology moved forward. He was, however, continuing to review possible options to meet the target.

Since then, the Development Committee had appointed BPA Archivists Andrew Hilton and Graham Spicer, who had launched the BPA Archive Project at the AGM on 28 January 2012. The Archivists had seen the digitization of back copies of the Magazine, to produce an accessible, searchable, online resource, as a cornerstone of the BPA Archive Project. The Archivists would therefore be able to make use of the research that Craig Poxon had already undertaken.

**To be carried forward by the BPA Archive Project**

#### **08/12 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013**

This would be finalised at the April meeting, to recommend to the Council that evening. The Committee's plans so far in formulating the targets were as follows.

##### **8.1 Enhance media and public relations**

This would be a continuation of the same target as in the current year (minute 7.1), now working in partnership with Archant Dialogue following very constructive discussions that the Chairman and Secretary-General had had with Zoë Francis-Cox, Publishing Director at Archant Dialogue, in November 2011 (minute 62.1/11 refers).

By providing Archant Dialogue-produced media packs to Drop Zones, this would encourage coverage of skydiving and skydiving human interest stories not only (i) in local newspapers and other local media, but (ii) specifically, in Archant Lifestyle magazines, of which there were some 34 titles in all. The Archant Lifestyle titles, many on a county or regional basis, offered the prospect of the equivalent of some £40K of free advertising.

##### **8.2 Improve communication with members**

Explore inaugurating a facility whereby members could receive, by e-mail, BPA agendas and minutes for the Council and/or BPA committees they had selected. In discussion, the Committee noted that other organisations typically did this by means of a link (as BPA itself already did by including links to minutes in the BPA e-Newsletter). Martin Soulsby asked about RSS feeds, and Craig Poxon said these simply indicated when a link came up, they did not necessarily deliver all content. Craig Poxon believed that there was a demand from members for the pdfs in their inboxes, not simply a link. This would therefore need to be researched in terms of cost and practicability.

##### **8.3 Improve communication with non-members**

8.3.1 Add to the BPA website a facility for non-members to sign up to receive the BPA e-Newsletter free-of-charge every two months.

8.3.2 Consider selling subscriptions to 'Skydive the Mag' to the general public via Archant's <http://www.subscriptionsave.co.uk> website. This website had half a million visitors each month. However, the Mag in its present form was designed for members, and may not be of interest to the general public. This gave rise to item 8.3.3 below.

8.3.3 At the suggestion of the Editor, consider the possibility of publishing of a review of the year in the form of an annual Magazine, which might be made available for sale to the public. One possibility might be a BPA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary souvenir edition, pitched somewhere in the wide gap between the Starter Mag and the regular Mag. Tony Butler suggested the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of publication of the first Mag (1964-2014) would be another year to celebrate.

Martin Soulsby stressed the need to take extreme care in the content of material we might put out to the general public.

The Chairman invited Liz Ashley to consider the matter further and, if she deemed it appropriate to progress the idea as an Action Plan target, to prepare a proposal with outline costs for consideration for possible inclusion in the Action Plan 2012-3.

**Action: Editor**

#### **8.4 Review of the role, function and future of the Mag website**

Minute 4.2 refers. Merger of a rationalised Mag website with the BPA website would be one possibility to explore.

### **09/12 AGM Day**

#### **9.1 Debrief on Saturday 28 January 2012 at DeVere Whites, Reebok Stadium, Bolton**

The Chairman reported that he had received generally positive feedback on AGM Day at the Reebok Stadium, Bolton, Greater Manchester, on Saturday 28 January 2012. Concern over problems that might have arisen with the announcement, a couple of weeks before our date, of a FA Cup match to be played at the stadium on the same day did not really materialise, and we had in fact been little troubled by the match. A significant problem, however, had been the poor acoustics on the balcony of the Premier Suite for the afternoon seminars and meetings that had been held there. This had been highlighted in a letter from David Hickling, which had also commented on the aspects that went well.

Attendance had been estimated at about 500, and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Dinner in the evening attracted 252, a number significantly higher than for Annual Dinners held in recent years. There had also been evening entertainment including a singer and fun casino tables, a James Bond-themed fancy dress competition, and the ever-popular disco. 25 exhibitors had shared a single big room which had also the main AGM theatre, and this had worked well and attracted favourable comment.

Archant Dialogue had kindly provided £400 sponsorship for the afternoon seminars and meetings, and Jelf Mason Insurance Brokers and Liberty International Underwriters had kindly given £1,400 in sponsorship of the BPA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Dinner. The dinner sponsorship had included providing the services of a photographer who had offered James Bond-themed photographs. The photographer during the day had again this year been kindly provided by Archant Dialogue.

A debrief with the audio visual contractors, Istead Business Presentations, had taken place earlier today. Istead had now reached the end of their three year contract to provide audio visual services for BPA AGM Day, and had been invited, together with other audio visual hire companies, to tender for the next three years, from January 2013.

In recent years, the event had got bigger with more dynamics such that the BPA staff team had been stretched both during both the planning and build-up and particularly at the event itself. To sustain these developments was likely to require input from more staff at the BPA ahead of the event, and more event support from the venue on the day.

#### **9.2 Saturday 26 January 2013**

AGM Day 2013 would be held at the Leicester Marriott Hotel. Liz Ashley suggested this might be held in conjunction with a BPA safety day to cover CH1, CH2 and JM1 briefings. However, John Page believed that a hotel-based AGM was not the appropriate venue for training of this nature, especially in view of the Development Committee's plans to hold DZ-based coaching roadshows on safe canopy handling. Martin Soulsby agreed, noting that DZs briefed differently from each other because of variations in their equipment, SoPs, etc - this would give rise to too many issues were the BPA to seek to deliver a 'one-size-fits-all' brief at an AGM.

#### **9.3 Date and venue of AGM Day, January 2014**

To be arranged.

### **10/12 Dates of next meetings**

1300 on Tuesdays 17 April, 19 June, 14 August, 9 October and Thursday 13 December (revised date) at the BPA Office, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester LE2 9TF.

The meeting closed at 1454.

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