British Parachute Association

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The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 21 February 2012 at 1845

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

Present: Martin Soulsby - Chair

Paul Applegate

Adrian Bond - Communications Chair

Karen Bain Kieran Brady Marc Fletcher Richard Head Ian Marshall Paul Moore John Page

Craig Poxon - Vice Chair & Development Chair

Steve Saunders - Competitions Chair

Mark Skarratts Weed Stoodley James Swallow

In attendance: Liz Ashley - Editor, Skydive the Mag

Tony Butler - Technical Officer
Debbie Carter - Treasurer (to item 7)

Jon Gretton - Financial Administrator (to item 7)

John Hitchen - NCSO & STC Chair
Martin Shuttleworth - Secretary-General
John Smyth MVO - IPC & RAeC Delegate, &

BPA Vice President (to item 8)

Item Minute

05/12 Minutes

5.1 Council meeting Tuesday 6 December 2011

The minutes of the last meeting, held on Tuesday 6 December 2011, had already been ratified electronically by the Council. The ratified minutes had been published on the BPA website http://www.bpa.org.uk/minutes on 13 January 2012. The Chairman signed the master copy as the official record.

Ratified electronically

5.2 Inaugural Council meeting 2012 - Saturday 28 January 2012

Paul Applegate proposed, and Steve Saunders seconded, a motion to ratify these minutes. The Chairman would sign the master copy as the official record.

Ratified

5.3 General Meeting - Tuesday 6 December 2011

Weed Stoodley proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion that these minutes should be published as a draft, for consideration for formal approval at the next General Meeting in December 2012. This carried unanimously.

Publish draft

5.4 AGM - Saturday 28 January 2012

Marc Fletcher proposed, and Richard Head seconded, a motion that these minutes should be published as a draft, for consideration for formal approval at the next AGM on Saturday 26 January 2013. This carried unanimously.

Publish draft

06/12 Matters arising from the above minutes

6.1 Reply from Royal Air Force regarding RAF Weston on the Green (minute 80.1.6 December Council meeting)

The Chairman reported on the reply dated 24 January 2012 (previously circulated) from Wing Commander D M Smith, Officer Commanding Force Development Adventure Training Wing, 22 Training Group, of the Royal Air Force. This was in response to the Chairman's request for clarification of the future of civilian sport parachuting at RAF Weston on the Green.

Wing Commander Smith had said in his letter that future activities there remained transitory due to a range of ongoing issues that he had listed. He had sought an early meeting with Tony Butler (BPA Technical Officer) but, although this meeting had been arranged and Tony Butler had attended at the appointed time and place, Tony Butler reported that Wing Commander Smith had not been able to keep it. However, Tony Butler reported that he understood that Joint Services Adventurous Training (JSAT) military courses had resumed on site, and he had been assured that it remained a long-term aspiration again to offer sport parachuting facilities at RAF Weston, including to civilian jumpers.

In discussion, the Council noted that it was not, and had never been, a condition of Affiliation as a Centre that its facilities were available to civilian jumpers.

The Chairman said the Council would continue to keep a watching brief on this issue.

Ongoing

6.2 BPA National Parachutist Licence (minute 87, 6 December Council meeting)

The Chairman reported that the BPA National Parachutist Licence would be available from 1 April 2012.

Noted

6.3 Co-options to Council (minute 1.10, 28 January inaugural meeting of Council 2012)

Tony Butler (Technical Officer) reported that the following organisations had historically been co-opted to Council:

Army Parachute Association (APA) Rhine Army Parachute Association (RAPA) British Collegiate Parachute Association (BCPA)

and, when it had been operating, the Royal Air Force Sport Parachute Association (RAFSPA). He saw such co-options as now outdated, since APA and RAPA were BPA Affiliated Drop Zones, and BCPA was a parachuting society recognised by the BPA.

After discussion, Kieran Brady proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion to write to these bodies to explain that co-option was no longer considered necessary, and that under the BPA's updated Articles, it would in any case not be possible to co-opt an organisation (as opposed to an individual, for example an organisation's chair or their nominee).

Carried unanimously - Action: BPA Office

07/12 Finance

7.1 Management accounts and membership statistics

Management accounts and membership statistics to the end of month 7, January 2012, had been circulated.

Council noted a debt of £6,056 of over 60 days owed by Skydive Weston Ltd. The company was in administration consequent on cessation by order of the RAF of civilian parachuting operations at RAF Weston on the Green (minute 6.1). The Chairman reported on legal advice he had received that a debt of a private limited company was not chargeable to its directors (who in this case were BPA members).

Weed Stoodley suggested that a director's guarantee could be included as part of new affiliations and/or re-affiliations of DZs. On the advice of Tony Butler (Technical Officer), Council did not believe it to be appropriate to tighten these terms for existing Centres,

although Tony Butler said he would consider the possibility of applying stricter credit limits to new Centres for a period of time.

7.2 Investment policy

Debbie Carter (Treasurer) reported that, in her opinion, the BPA should not cast its net much wider in terms of investment vehicles than it had done in the past. It was important to remember that, unlike a number of other membership associations, BPA had lost no capital from its reserves in the economic downturn. There had of course been record low rates of interest on offer, so our invested reserves were now growing much more slowly. The significance of these reserves was that they provided a stable base from which to assure continued operation of the BPA should its financial situation go bad.

The Treasurer recalled that, many years ago when she had first been co-opted to assume this office, the BPA had been close to going bust. Only by the careful shepherding of resources, and steadily building up a surplus, had the security of reserves been achieved. In the good economic times, these had yielded a decent return. That was no longer the case because of the economic downturn. However, the investment vehicles that BPA had used had always guaranteed at least return of capital invested (such guarantee applying only of course if the financial institution providing the investment vehicle did not itself go bust). This was a low risk option: there was no such thing as a risk-free investment. The BPA's independent financial adviser saw no case for the BPA to increase its investment risk profile. Specifically, he had advised against investment in commercial property because of the risk. A fixed rate investment of 9.3% over 3 years (nominally equivalent to 3.1% pa) had been identified as the most appropriate investment currently available.

The Treasurer said she would be very concerned about any suggestion of speculating with what was, in effect, members' money. BPA always sought the advice of an independent professional financial adviser.

The Chairman confirmed that no-one of the BPA Finance Group (comprising the Treasurer, himself, Weed Stoodley and Jon Gretton (BPA Financial Administrator)) was prepared to step outside financial investments because the risk may be high. Kieran Brady endorsed the continuation of this longstanding policy, and the Council agreed.

Noted

08/12 IPC plenary meeting 2012

John Smyth (UK Delegate to IPC) reported on the recent IPC plenary meeting he had attended in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He had reported in more detail to the Competitions Committee this afternoon, and would provide a written summary for circulation.

The key points were as follows.

- Non-competitor members of national delegations at the WPC Mondial 2012 in Dubai would be restricted to the Head of Delegation and eight role-specific others, total nine.
- IPC had established a European Tour Events Association to start a World Tour. The plan
 was to begin with Canopy Piloting and later to include other disciplines. This would be a
 cash event, for which commercial sponsors were being sought. It could be an exciting
 way ahead for the sport. It would not interfere with World Championships and World Cup
 events, but enhance them.
- This year, there would be a World Cup in FS and Artistics held in Prostejov, Czech Republic, in August; followed by the WPC Mondial in Dubai in December. It was a oneoff arrangement to hold the World Cup and WPC in the same year.
- The Style & Accuracy World Cup would be held in Grozny, Chechnya, Russia, on 20-27
 August 2013. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office continued to advise against travel
 there because of the security situation in the North Caucasus.
- There were minor rule changes for most disciplines, but a significant one in Canopy Piloting for safety reasons.
- IPC would no longer use FAI medals at world events, but IPC medals with the FAI logo.

- John Smyth reported he had been re-elected to serve for a further two years as a Vice President of IPC. He had been invited to serve as a jury member at the WPC Mondial 2012.
- Karla Cole had been appointed Chief Judge at the World Cup 2012 in the Czech Republic.
- There were no IPC rules for wingsuiting yet its working group continued.

The Chairman thanked John Smyth for representing us at IPC, and for his report.

09/12 Report on Royal Aero Club

9.1 RAeC Medals & Awards Ceremony

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to RAeC) reported that the RAeC Medals & Awards Ceremony would be held at the Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1J 7PY, on Thursday 17 May 2012 at 1700. He understood it to be planned that the Duke of York would make the presentations. The Office had circulated details received from RAeC of how to book tickets. BPA members Chris Thomas and Andy Pook would each be awarded the Bronze Medal of the Royal Aero Club for services to sport parachuting.

In addition, Helmut Cloth would be presented with the BPA Jim Crocker Award for an Outstanding Achievement in Sport Parachuting, for the development of the Cypres automatic activation device.

9.2 British Aerobatic Association

John Smyth reported that the British Aerobatic Association (an RAeC Member body) was considering proposing the idea of an RAeC airsports exhibition weekend at Duxford in 2013. The idea was that member bodies might work together to bring their sports to the attention of the public and the media.

The Council referred this request to the Competitions Committee for consideration, in the event that the RAeC Council, which was due to meet on Tuesday 17 April, decided to seek to progress it. Our Council had in mind a demonstration of sport parachuting – perhaps a 16-way or something of that nature – rather than a competition. However, if altitude was restricted, we might be limited to providing publicity material. Steve Saunders (Competitions Chair) agreed to liaise with John Smyth on any future planning, as appropriate.

Action: John Smyth & Steve Saunders

10/12 European update

For the benefit of new Council members, Paul Moore outlined the history of our driving the reformation of the European Parachuting Union (EPU); his role as President of EPU; and the roles of Kieran Brady and Tony Knight for the BPA, which in turn benefitted EPU, in monitoring and responding to consultation on planned single European skies legislation. Unless we remained vigilant, this new pan-European legislation could overtread sport parachuting.

Paul Moore emphasised that the European Air Safety Agency (EASA) would deal with only one voice concerning airsports, Europe Air Sports (EAS). In turn, EAS required a unified voice for sport parachuting - this was why we were driving EPU. EPU had to pay an annual subscription to EAS. Twelve nations currently subscribed to EPU. Other nations were dragging their feet a little, perhaps not fully recognising what harm could be done to our sport if we let new airspace regulations come into being without recognition of the particular needs of sport parachuting, which would almost certainly be overlooked unless we constantly pressed for them to be taken into account.

Kieran Brady asked Council to recognise that, if other nations failed to pay, the BPA might have to be prepared to carry more of the burden of this project, it being too important to let go as Single European Skies legislation drew closer. He said we seemed to be holding our own so far, but that could change tomorrow as the regulatory changes in prospect remained as confusing as ever, with dates that seemed forever to be being put back by the regulators. But

this prospective legislation remained key to the future of our sport, and we could not afford but to continue to monitor it closely, ready to respond where necessary.

In his capacity as President of EPU, Paul Moore was to attend the EAS AGM in Koln on 24-25 March 2012, together with Kieran Brady and Tony Knight.

The BPA's insurers, Jelf Manson Insurance Brokers and Liberty Mutual Underwriters, had in the past supported the BPA's work on Europe, and it was hoped that this support may continue.

The Chairman thanked Paul Moore, Kieran Brady and Tony Knight for their valued contributions to this important work.

11/12 Minutes of Committees

The minutes of each of the following meetings, except STC, had already been circulated, electronically ratified by the Council, and published on the BPA website.

13.1 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 6 December 2011

There were no questions.

13.2 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 6 December 2011

There were no questions.

13.3 Competitions Committee meeting on Tuesday 6 December 2011

There were no questions.

13.4 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 9 February 2012

There were no questions. John Page proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion to ratify the minutes of the STC meeting held on Thursday 9 February 2012. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

12/12 Headline issues from Committee meetings held this afternoon

12.1 Communications Committee

Adrian Bond (Communications Chair) reported that the Committee had:

• Received an update report, as follows, on the new BPA database with a facility for online renewals. A new computer system had been installed in the BPA Office last month, to replace the life-expired old one. However, the new database could not yet be used because it did not yet have all of the functionality of the current database. The current database had proven difficult to run on the new system, and the installers had had to reverse engineer it to discover how to install it successfully. They were sharing this knowledge with Phil Sumner of Archant Dialogue, who was developing the new BPA database, so that he could complete the missing relatively small, but critical, administrative functionality of the new system.

Here at the Council meeting, Kieran Brady said that the office was not happy with the new system: more work was needed for it to replicate the functionality of the existing system that was relied on by the office staff to enable them to do their jobs. Now we were at the start of the busy renewals period, staff in membership services would not have the capacity to trial the new system. The main issue was that staff did not consider that the developer had interacted sufficiently with them, and that the principal window for this (in terms of staff availability) last autumn had now passed.

- Through the Editor, completed the annual update of the Starter Mag and the 2012 issue would be printed shortly.
- On the advice of the Editor, decided to undertake a review of the role of the Mag website in the light of the BPA website, and social networking websites used by skydivers.
- Begun to plan for the online membership survey 2012. The planned survey would concentrate on a particular theme. Adrian Bond invited Council Members to suggest any possible themes, with accompanying questions, to him before the end of March.

Action: All Council

- Started to formulate the Communications Action Plan 2012/3. One of the targets would be to work with Archant Dialogue on public relations for the sport. Archant Dialogue had offered to produce a media pack for Drop Zones, and to run people-centred features on skydiving in their lifestyle and regional titles. The Committee also planned to try selling subscriptions to 'Skydive the Mag' to the general public via Archant's http://www.subscriptionsave.co.uk website.
- Noted that the Editor was considering 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.
- Reviewed BPA AGM Day, including the BPA 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner, held at DeVere Whites, Reebok Stadium, Bolton, Greater Manchester, on Saturday 28 January 2012. About 500 members had attended, with 250 for dinner, which had been an excellent turnout. The exhibition had been held together with the main sessions in one big main room, with the afternoon seminars and meetings on the balcony. Feedback had generally been positive except for an acoustic problem on the balcony. Although an FA Cup match had been played at the stadium that afternoon, the effect on our event had been minimal, not least because the gate for the match had been modest and the stand above the Premier Suite, the room we had been using during the day, had been closed to reduce any potential noise.

Kieran Brady (Pilots' Chair) said that, in his opinion, the venue had been the worst he had ever attended. Members of the Pilots' Committee, which had met that afternoon, had walked out because the noise of the FilmFest starting had drowned out their meeting. Also, the corridor between the hotel and the function room hosting the dinner, in another part of the stadium, had been far too long. This had fragmented the event, and denied it the all-important focal hub. Steve Saunders (Competitions Chair) supported this view, and said it was the most difficult AGM Day he had ever attended, it being practically impossible to host any of the afternoon seminars on the balcony because of the poor acoustics and background noise. He also said he had been in a group ushered out of the main room early in the evening, forced to leave their drinks and go. Martin Shuttleworth (Secretary-General) reported that the logistics of such an expansive venue, together with the many additional facets that had been introduced to AGM Day in recent years, and to this 50th anniversary one in particular, had stretched the BPA staff team to near breaking point.

Adrian Bond said he would circulate to Council the feedback he had received as there had been many positive points that should not be overlooked.

Action: Adrian Bond

12.2 Development Committee

Craig Poxon (Development Chair) reported that the Committee had:

Considered proposals from three potential suppliers of a first-aid course for staff at drop zones. A preferred supplier had been selected with a view to running a trial/evaluation course with invited personnel (BPA technical staff, BPA Medical Adviser (if available), etc), ahead of opening the course for all DZs to nominate members of their staff to attend. Jelf Manson Insurance Brokers and Liberty Mutual Underwriters had previously indicated that they were willing, in principle, to cover the cost of the initial run of a course of this nature as part of their support for the BPA's risk management initiatives.

- Discussed targets for the Development Action Plan 2012-3. Following the success of John Page's briefing sessions at the BPA 50th Anniversary Boogie last year, he would now take this idea forward in the next Action Plan as a canopy handling coaching roadshow. Other possible targets, still under consideration by the Committee, included some kind of BPA customer service award for Drop Zones and/or individual members of Drop Zone staff, and the possibility of inaugurating an informal 'buddy' system at drop zones to help with the Council's strategic goal of improving retention of members.
- Discussed the BPA Archive Project with Graham Spicer, one of the two BPA Archivists, who had attended the meeting to consider arrangements for the project. The BPA Archive Project had been successfully launched at the AGM on Saturday 28 January, as part of that day's crescendo of celebration of the BPA's 50th Anniversary Year, 1961-2011. Andrew Hilton, BPA Archivist, had also been invited to attend this afternoon's

meeting but had been unable to do so because of work commitments. However, the BPA Archivists were working closely together and either could represent both. Graham Spicer had outlined some of the tasks that he and Andrew Hilton foresaw in progressing the BPA Archive Project. They believed that the key deliverable should be a searchable and accessible online resource. The cornerstone of the project would be the searchable digitization of back issues of the Mag, all the way back to its first issue in 1964. Other strands included digitization of archive film, prints and documents that had been lent, or in some cases donated, to the project by members. The project was in the unusual position of being an Action Plan target - to research establishing and maintaining a BPA Archive, for which no budget had been required - that had already been completed several months ago. Indeed, it had been completed with such momentum that the project had seized the unique opportunity of the BPA 50th Anniversary Celebrations to launch. However, this had left us effectively with a project that would ordinarily not have been started until the next Action Plan year, already underway on a tide of enthusiasm, and in need of a budget.

Both Archivists were kindly donating their time and expertise on an entirely voluntary basis. However, digitization of back Mags and other preservation and conservation measures to construct an accessible digital archive - such as hosting of an archive website or section of a website - would incur direct costs, as would the Archivists' essential travel.

The Development Committee had considered the magnitude of the possible budget at length. Following a proposal made at the Committee by Kieran Brady and carried there, the Committee had resolved to make a recommendation to the Council that the total spend on the BPA Archive Project should be up to £10K (irrespective of whether this was over one or more financial years), plus a lesser annual amount, to be arranged, for maintenance of the archive. With this went a proviso that the BPA reserved the option to consider whether or not separately to fund any possible add-ons or extras at a later date, on a case-by-case basis. The Development Committee was asking for this budget to be assigned to them now, for the BPA Archive Project, so that the Committee could authorise expenditure on the Archive Project in controlled tranches commensurate with essential direct costs in constructing the archive.

The Council supported the need to establish and maintain a BPA Archive, and recognised that reaching the milestone of the 50th Anniversary of the Association was a clarion call to do so. That said, the Council recognised the duty upon it to establish a clear budget and financial framework into which the project would fit, as any project of this nature could potentially be open-ended, which could lead to difficulties in containing future costs.

Kieran Brady then put his proposal (which had been carried at the Development Committee as a recommendation to Council), direct to Council. It was to allocate up to £10K funding to the Development Committee for their controlled release in tranches to the BPA Archive Project, together with a lower annual maintenance cost yet to be agreed (as a reliable estimate of this cost was not yet available). Paul Applegate seconded the proposal.

Carried unanimously

The Council thanked the Archivists for their commitment to the project and wished them well in this important work.

12.3 Competitions Committee

Steve Saunders (Competitions Chair) reported that the Committee had:

- Received an oral report from John Smyth, UK Delegate to IPC, on the IPC plenary meeting 2012 (Council minute 8 refers).
- Noted the cap of nine on the number of accompanying personnel to the WPC Mondial in Dubai (29 November - 10 December 2012), and that all would need to have a specific role in the delegation. The Committee awaited publication of Bulletin 1 by the organisers, understood to be due out shortly, which would set out these arrangements in more detail.
 Others could go by themselves, rather than as part of the official delegation, but they

would not be entitled to services provided at the meet for delegation members, nor would they be covered by the BPA delegation travel and medical insurance kindly provided by Jelf Manson Insurance Brokers.

- Looked forward to receiving more information, expected within the next few weeks, on the Canopy Piloting World Tour.
- Awaited publication of Bulletin 1 on the World Cup 2012 in FS and Artistics to be held in the Czech Republic in August.
- Confirmed that we were unlikely to send a delegation to the World Cup 2012 in Style & Accuracy in Grozny, Chechnya if the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office continued to advise against travel there because of the security situation in the North Caucasus.
- Noted that IPC's currently proposed venue for the World Cup 2013 was Banja Luka in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Sought confirmation from the Development Committee about the BPA's agreement with the BPA Shop, with particular reference to providing the uniform for the UK delegation.

Craig Poxon (Development Chair) said the agreement set out that the BPA Shop 'may' act as provider of such clothing, and asked that the Competitions Committee should contact Grant Richards of the BPA Shop direct.

- Noted that IPC was, to date, still considering its formal position on wingsuiting. The Committee had received a request for an international judge to train BPA judges in wingsuiting, but had been unable to consider this consequent on the fact that IPC was still considering its position on the discipline. For the same reason, the Committee could not consider offering any funding to the wingsuiting camp to be held at Netheravon in May. The Committee understood there to be two different bodies seeking to represent judging in wingsuiting competitions, one from Europe and the other from the USA. Kate Charters (BPA Judges' Co-ordinator) had volunteered to go at her own expense to experience judging in the European system, but not to commit the BPA, in case IPC were in due course to choose the USA system.
- Formulated its recommendations to Council on the appointment of a Head of Delegation and Delegation Managers for the WPC Mondial in Dubai (29 November - 10 December 2012).

The recommendations were:

Head of UK Delegation to WPC Moindial Dubai 2012. IPC Delegate John Smyth had declined because he had been invited to serve on the jury (minute 8). IPC Alternate Delegate Tony Butler was now invited but declined because of other commitments. The Committee therefore wished to extend an invitation to Martin Soulsby, who had expressed an interest, subject to the approval of Council.

Richard Head proposed, and Marc Fletcher seconded, that Martin Soulsby be invited to be Head of Delegation.

Carried unanimously

Martin Soulsby duly accepted the invitation.

UK Delegation Team Managers to WPC Mondial Dubai 2012. Pending the publication by the organisers of Bulletin 1, it was unclear whether the competition would be run from two or three sites. The number of Delegation Managers we should need, two or three, would depend on this. However, the Competitions Committee's recommendations to Council for Team Managers were, in alphabetical order, Ian Marshall, Paul Moore and Weed Stoodley. Should Paul Moore be invited by the organisers to be a judge, and in such case only if three Delegation Managers should be required, the Committee recommended that his name should be replaced by that of Kate Charters, if she was available, and not herself a judge. The Council accepted these recommendations nem con. John Page said he believed that two Team Managers should be sufficient.

As the date of the December 2012 General Meeting and Council meeting, planned for Tuesday 4 December, fell during the Mondial, Paul Moore proposed, and Craig Poxon seconded, a motion to re-arrange these meetings to take place instead on the new date of Thursday 13 December 2012.

Carried unanimously

13/12 Strategy

The Chairman enumerated the key strategy goals of (i) the pursuit of excellence, (ii) improving the retention of members, (iii) reviewing whether the current BPA Office premises were fit for purpose, and (iv) putting in place succession planning.

A draft of a succession plan for BPA technical staff had now been prepared. A premises working party had been established, chaired by Adrian Bond, and the options that might come under consideration had been outlined in general terms by the Chairman of Council at a meeting with BPA staff held earlier today.

Ongoing

14/12 1000th FS Coach rating

Richard Head (FS Rep) proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion that the normal fee of £10 should be waived for FS Coach rating number 1,000, which was expected to be issued within the next few months (the numbering started in 1990), as he believed the publicity may help encourage more members to obtain their coach rating.

Carried unanimously

15/12 Council post

Karen Bain proposed, and Richard Head seconded, a motion that Council post should now be sent electronically by default. Council Members wishing to receive their post by snail mail could opt out by notifying Helen Lucas, BPA Administration Secretary.

Carried unanimously

16/12 Garden wall

John Hitchen wished to place on record his thanks to Steve Saunders for kindly offering to rebuild a garden wall at the back of the BPA Office that had recently been damaged by the contractors whilst demolishing the old garage and replacing it with a secure storage container.

17/12 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays 17 April, 19 June, 14 August, 9 October and the revised date (per the last paragraph of minute 12.3) of Thursday 13 December (after the General Meeting), all at 1830 at the BPA Office, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester LE2 9TF.

The meeting closed at 2123.