

# British Parachute Association

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## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on  
**TUESDAY 19 JUNE 2001 at 1410**  
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

<b>Present:</b>	Kieran Brady	-	Committee Chairman
	Chris Allen	-	BPA Chairman (from item 17)
	Paul Applegate		
	Ian Midgley		
	Craig Poxon		
	Lofty Thomas		
<b>In attendance:</b>	Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
	Lesley Gale	-	Editor, Skydive Magazine
	John Hitchen	-	NCSO
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	National Administrator
	Sue Waterfield	-	Administration Secretary
	Lucie Wood	-	Development Officer

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## ITEM MINUTE

### 14/01 Minutes

Lofty Thomas proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24 April 2001 be approved as a correct record and this carried unanimously.

**Approved**

### 15/01 Matter arising: Magazine advertising sales (minute 9)

In reply to a question from Lofty Thomas, Lesley Gale confirmed that Warners had in place an active credit management policy for advertisers. A period of up to two issues' grace was normally allowed, following which no further advertisements would be accepted until any overdue account had been settled. Approximately £6K in advertising fees payable to the magazine was currently outstanding and it was anticipated that this would be recovered.

### 16/01 Skydive Magazine

Lesley Gale tabled a report on Skydive Magazine, including a financial update against budget and a list of planned features for the August issue. The financial performance appeared to be on budget for the year ending 30 June. There were still a number of invoices due in respect of payments to be made for the June issue before the accounts for the year could be finalised. An increase in the number of pages in the Magazine had led to a pro rata increase in design, printing and distribution costs but all of these had been included in the budget. The additional costs were offset by increased advertising income which had also covered the cost of more content pages.

In answer to a question from Craig Poxon, Lesley Gale said that the interview with Jari Kuosma in the June issue had been only partly based on an interview published in *DZ*

*International* magazine. It had not been a simple re-run because about half of the material had been entirely new, designed specifically to be of interest to BPA Members.

Lesley Gale had circulated with the agenda a table of suggestions for improving the Magazine. These were now considered and the following points were recorded.

- **Canopy Education**

The Committee agreed that more articles on canopy education, and possibly a buyers' guide, might be helpful to improve safety and encourage sensible purchases. The Committee considered that any proposed content should be prepared in close consultation with the Chairman of STC to ensure that it reflected general informed opinion within the BPA. Requirements may vary between Drop Zones and only qualified contributors should be invited. It might also be appropriate to invite responses on certain issues from more than one qualified individual so that these could be published, with attribution, to highlight a valid spectrum of opinion. Finally, it was important to maintain robust liaison with parachute manufacturers on any references to their products or services to be made in print. The Committee knew that Lesley Gale was well used to careful checking of, and consultation on, draft material for publication and these skills would be particularly important in preparing material on canopy control, where neither BPA guidelines nor a progression system were in place.

- **Demonstration teams**

This had arisen from a suggestion made to Kieran Brady during a DZ visit. After discussion, the Committee did not consider that it would be an effective use of space in the Magazine to devote about 3 pages of a future issue to listing the names and contact details of each of the 80 or so Demonstration Teams currently registered with the BPA. In any case, the permission of each team would need to be sought before their contact details could be published. Ian Midgley suggested, and the Committee agreed, that a more economical use of space might be to publish an article on Demo Teams in the Magazine, and tie this in with a webpage listing the names of each current Demo Team. Contact could then be made with any of the Teams through the BPA Office. Lesley Gale said she would gladly consider this type of approach.

- **Advertising**

The Committee fully supported Lesley Gale in her initiative to increase sales of space to non-core advertisers to increase revenue and grow the magazine. Lesley Gale was pleased to report that a double-page spread of non-core advertising, from Land Rover, had been booked for the next two issues. She confirmed that she was considering engaging a specialist external advertising agency for non-core advertising on the basis of no advertisements, no fee. Warners would continue to provide agency services for core advertisers. When advertising comprised 40% or more of the Magazine, additional contents pages were triggered, the cost of which was met from the increased sales of advertising space.

- **Increase the number of Magazine-only subscribers**

The Committee fully supported Lesley Gale in her initiative to increase the sales of Magazine-only subscriptions. She proposed a sales push in Europe, for example by sending complimentary copies to Drop Zones on the continent. The recent launch of *DZ International* magazine appeared to confirm that there was a market across Europe, in which *Skydive Magazine* could well justify its place.

- **Club News**

The Committee was pleased with the development of this 'Magazine within a Magazine' to date, and would naturally support any further enhancements. Lesley Gale hoped to involve her soon-to-be-appointed new editorial assistant in work on Club News, and to introduce post boxes in Clubs to encourage the submission of photographs and stories. The size of the Club News section would vary according to the time of year, and would usually have more content during the summer which was the most active time for Clubs.

- **Incident Reports**

Lesley Gale said that a previous AGM had requested that incident reports should appear in the Magazine. Originally, Chris Jones had covered incidents due to pilot error and Alan Hewitt those due to kit. However, Chris Jones could not do this at the moment, which had left a hole. Tony Butler confirmed that he and John Hitchen had to follow legal advice that it would be inappropriate for them to comment in the Magazine as they were both involved in the official investigation of incidents. However, Tony Butler and Kieran Brady both kindly agreed to see whether they could help Lesley Gale to find one or two instructors who might be able to make an input to the Magazine on incidents attributable to pilot error. It was important to remember that comment in the Magazine was in the public domain and that it was regularly read by, among others, lawyers and the CAA. Material for inclusion in the magazine had to always to take full cognisance of this.

**Action: Tony Butler and Kieran Brady**

- **Letters page**

Lesley Gale said that to warrant consideration for publication, letters should be relevant to the Membership as a whole. Some letters did not appear to meet this criterion, and the Committee agreed that such letters should simply be forwarded from the Magazine to the BPA Office for a personal reply from the appropriate Committee Chairman or member of staff. It would be helpful if, when doing this, Lesley Gale would indicate whether or not she was considering any particular letter (and the reply) for publication.

- **Non-UK content**

Kieran Brady reported that on a number of occasions, during his visits to Drop Zones, comments had been made to him about there being too much non-UK coverage in the Magazine. However, when asked to pinpoint examples, the complianants had been unforthcoming. He could therefore only conclude that this was more a matter of perception than reality, but a perception that he nevertheless believed should be reported so it could be borne in mind in planning the future content of the Magazine.

The Chairman thanked Lesley Gale for her ideas and confirmed that they carried the support of the Committee. This was not a matter on which any formal proposal needed to be taken, and the Committee looked forward to hearing in due course of progress under the various headings.

#### **17/01 Skydive Starter Magazine**

The print run of Starter Magazines had been 30,000 and approximately 20,500 copies had been distributed to date. Warners had reported a remaining stock of 5,500 which meant that around 4,000 magazines were presently unaccounted for. The shortfall would be pursued with Warners by asking them to check the delivery notes they had issued on call off. [Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Warners located an unopened pallet of magazines which fully accounts for the shortfall.]

The Committee unanimously believed that the Starter Magazine should be recommissioned for a further print run to replace existing stocks when they became depleted. Lesley Gale offered four options for this.

- 1 Reprint as is.
- 2 Reprint with minor variations.
- 3 Reprint with a more major update/overhaul.
- 4 Start again.

After discussion, the Committee decided to eliminate option 4, which left Options 1 to 3 remaining. Lesley Gale said she would obtain comparative costs for these in order that a fully costed option could be selected at the next meeting. She confirmed that advertising would need to be re-sold as the existing sale of space had been purely for the initial print run of 30,000 copies. Warners were ready and willing to re-sell the space. It was probable that a

number of advertisers would require updates to their advertisements even if they re-booked the same space.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

Chris Allen suggested that in the next print run, the inclusion of dates in the text should be avoided where possible to help to avoid building in obsolescence. Also, students' comments on the usefulness of the Starter Magazine might be quoted in any future publicity to encourage even greater distribution of the reprinted version.

**18/01 Magazine contract**

The contract for the production of *Skydive Magazine* between BPA Ltd and Lesley Gale, a self-employed Editor, had now been in place for nearly its full period of six issues and was therefore due for a routine review. The Chairman and Lesley Gale both confirmed that the contract appeared to have operated effectively for both parties and it was agreed in principle that it would be renewed. Chris Allen suggested a need for a variation to the wording in paragraph 12 of the contract, which covered the arrangements for the payment of Lesley Gale's expenses by the BPA. He suggested that as Lesley Gale was self-employed, it would be appropriate for expenses to be paid inclusive to a renegotiated contract fee rather than claimed on an ad hoc basis as at present. This was acceptable to the Committee and to Lesley Gale, and it was agreed that Lesley Gale and Jon Gretton at the BPA Office would both calculate Lesley Gale's annual expenses over each of the last three years and report them to the next meeting. At this meeting, a fair and equitable sum to cover expenses during the next contract year could be agreed for inclusion in the fee.

**Action: Lesley Gale, Jon Gretton**

Accordingly, the Committee agreed with Lesley Gale that:

- (i) a new contract would be planned to run from the next meeting in August 2001; and
- (ii) the present contract, which had been due to finish at the end of June, would therefore be extended until the start of the new contract in August 2001.

**Action: Next meeting**

**19/01 BPA Website**

Lucie Wood reported that she was receiving training on Frontpage and FTP programs which would enable her to develop new webpages. Some work on this had already been done. It was planned to post the scores from the World Air Games on the site, together with snippets of news about, or personal comment from, the British teams - obtained via John Smyth - to help make the coverage more interesting and informative. Ian Midgley said that the BPA computer had picked up virus apparently from e-mails sent to the BPA domain, which also hosted the website, and that the office computer network had now successfully been cleaned and up-to-date virus scanning software installed to help avoid a recurrence.

**20/01 Skydive Magazine Editorial**

Ian Midgley requested, and the Committee agreed, that this should be an item on the agenda for the next meeting. He wished to discuss his view that the purpose of an editorial was to promote key features in that particular issue. He also believed that it would be appropriate to consider commissioning editorials from a range of different sources within the BPA, such as the Chairman of Council, the Chairmen of Subcommittees, and others who might be invited to contribute guest editorials.

**Action: Next meeting**

**21/01 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 21 August 2001 at 1400 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester.

The meeting closed at 1540.

**Distribution:** Council/Committee, Vice Presidents, Staff, Editor