

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 20 August 2002 at 1400
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Kieran Brady	-	Committee Chairman
	Paul Applegate		
	Eddie Jones		
In attendance:	Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
	Lesley Gale	-	Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i>
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	National Administrator
	Sue Waterfield	-	Administration Secretary
	Lucie Wood	-	Development Officer
Apologies for absence:	Ian Midgley		
	Craig Poxon		

Item Minute

19/02 Minutes

Eddie Jones proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 23 April 2002 should be approved.

Approved

There had been no meeting in June.

20/02 Matters arising

20.1 DZ Focus feature in the Magazine (minute 13.1)

Lesley Gale reported that a DZ Focus on Silver Stars had run in the August issue, and Cyprus would also be included.

Ongoing

20.2 Start and finish date of annual Editorial contract (minute 13.3)

Ian Midgley had raised this item, and the Committee decided to hold it over until the next meeting when he would be present. The current Editorial Services contract fell due for renewal in October.

Action: Next meeting

20.3 Unpaid invoice from Bristol Web Factory (minute 21)

Lesley Gale had negotiated a 10% reduction of £200 in this £2000 invoice to the Mag from Bristol Web Factory for work on the Magazine website. The balance of £1800 had now been paid.

Completed

20.4 Freedom of the Skies brochure reprint (minute 17)

Martin Shuttleworth reported that the reprint had been made, with one minor variation to the text about charity jumping, as previously agreed (minute 17 refers).

Completed

21/02 Report on Skydive Magazine

21.1 Financial performance

Lesley Gale tabled summary accounts for *Skydive Magazine*. The Magazine had again achieved better financial actuals than budget, with a profit of £3,582 on the financial year ended 30 June 2002, compared with a budgeted loss of £7,340, on a turnover of £126,380. Including the carry forward of last year's profit, the accumulated profit on the Magazine over two years was £13,520. The Committee thanked Lesley Gale for the creditable budget performance of the Magazine.

Paul Applegate believed that the Magazine had now reached its maximum size and that there was no case further to increase the number of pages. The Chairman recalled that the Magazine had, some four years ago, requested and received (through a motion carried at the AGM) an increased component of the membership subscription to increase the size of the Magazine by eight pages. Now that the Magazine had grown in size by more than this and was in profit, he asked whether it was time to reduce the Magazine component of the membership subscription, so as no longer to charge members the extra. Lesley Gale agreed that the Magazine had now reached its natural size, and said she did not expect there to be a significant growth in advertising. However, she foresaw an adverse reaction from the membership were the number of pages in the Magazine now to be reduced.

The Chairman said there was an argument that the carried forward profit on the Magazine of approximately £10K from the 2000/1 financial year should be returned to members, as the money had not been used for the Magazine. Lesley Gale said it was open to the Committee to consider a target of returning this sum to the membership. The Committee agreed that, rather than seek to reach a conclusion now, the issue should be re-visited at a subsequent meeting when more Committee Members were present.

Action: Future meeting

Lesley Gale said she would set out a suggested budget for the next financial year at the next meeting. She pointed out that office costs for the Magazine had increased significantly consequent on there now being two people: and that budgeting for the purchase of a desktop photocopier would allow the acquisition of a much-needed piece of equipment that the Magazine office presently lacked.

21.2 Content of the June and August 2002 issues

The Chairman reported that he had received comments from Members on the last two issues of the Magazine, June and August 2002. These had started with the cover photograph on the June issue. Lesley Gale said it had featured a UK student, and had tended to polarise readers, some greeting it with pleasure, and others with concern. The concerns from had focused on (i) the assertion that the student had not been properly kitted out; and (ii) the student's apparent demeanour, which some had perceived as being perhaps a little loutish, whereas others had interpreted his expression and posture as indicative of the exhilaration of having just made a good jump. Lesley Gale explained that the student had in fact been properly kitted on landing, but the photograph had been taken shortly afterwards when the student had undone some of his straps. The Chairman said that appreciation or otherwise of a photograph of this nature was a subjective matter of personal taste, but all published photographs from UK sources should comply with the Operations Manual. In this case, whether or not the student had complied was also a matter of interpretation. Lesley Gale said this illustrated just how difficult the selection of photographs was, but she was pleased that a UK student had made it to the cover.

Concern had been expressed to the Chairman that Empuriabrava and Pumpkins had been included in *Club News*, since neither was a BPA Affiliated Club or Centre. Paul Applegate said similar comments had been made to him from members who felt strongly that the *Club News* section should be reserved purely for BPA Affiliated Clubs and Centres. This generated much discussion, during which POPS was cited as a case where, although not a BPA Affiliated Club or Centre, POPS news had, by custom and practice, always been covered in the *Club News* pages.

The issue was not whether news from these clubs and societies should be covered in the Mag, but whether or not it should be included in the *Club News* pages. For example, a 'POPS Corner' could always be included elsewhere in the Magazine; and the same applied to other, non-

Affiliated Clubs, that had news of interest to the membership. Lesley Gale had heard the concerns around the table and would contact the non-Affiliated Clubs to advise them of it and seek to negotiate a solution to the satisfaction of all parties.

Action: Lesley Gale

The Chairman said that the August article on fashion had proved to be controversial and a complaint about it had been made to him. The question of opting out of paying the Magazine component of the membership subscription had again been raised, by a member who felt he was 'buying adverts'. The Committee stood by its policy of keeping the Magazine subscription as an integral part of the annual membership subscription. Lesley Gale said there was more advertising today than ever before, but she believed this to have been more than offset by at least a pro rata increase in editorial content as the Magazine had increased its number of pages. To quantify this, Lesley Gale said she would carry out an analysis for the next meeting of the ratio of content to advertising.

Action: Lesley Gale

21.3 Magazine Readership Survey

Lesley Gale reported that analysis of the Magazine Readership Survey returns had revealed overall good results with 92% of respondents satisfied with the Magazine, which correlated well with the 91% satisfaction rate reported from the BPA Membership Survey. The Mag Readership Survey had helped to point the way forward by highlighting members' wishes to see more educational articles - particularly on canopy education - more on camerawork, skysurfing and more for newcomers to the sport. Respondents also called for fewer event write-ups - although Lesley Gale said the Magazine was under a lot of pressure from those organising events for them to be covered in the Magazine. Lesley Gale confirmed she was taking the outcome of the survey on board, starting with the October 2002 issue. The Chairman thanked Lesley Gale for her report, and said that a mix of features and articles was probably the best recipe for a successful Magazine for the membership, with the aim of having something for everyone.

21.4 October 2002 issue

Lesley Gale outlined the planned content of the October issue of the Magazine. The Committee signified it was content with the nature and balance of the proposed articles and features.

The issue would contain news of British skydiver Vicky Holton who had been seriously injured in a skydiving accident in Spain but had not had repatriation cover to the UK. Fortunately, she had been able to return and was now improving. Her plight had highlighted the importance of repatriation cover, and it was agreed that a piece should be prepared for a future issue of the Magazine, with input from appropriate specialists in the field, to call attention to this important matter.

Action: Lesley Gale and BPA Office

Finally, Lesley Gale reported that she had received a long letter about education in canopy handling from Chris Hollis, a colleague of the late Oliver Reynolds, who had suffered a fatal skydiving accident at this year's FS Nationals. The Committee agreed that Lesley Gale should liaise with Tony Butler, BPA Technical Officer, over the letter.

22/02 BPA Website

Lucie Wood reported that she was teaching colleagues Martin Shuttleworth and Sue Waterfield of the BPA staff the basics of website administration. There had been no significant developments to the website since the last meeting, but new and updated information was regularly being posted.

23/02 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003

The Chairman was pleased to note that satisfactory progress was being made on the two Communications targets for the new Action Plan year that had begun on 1 July, viz:

- 1 Continue to train to enable more pages of the BPA and *Skydive Magazine* websites to be updated in-house; and
- 2 Expand existing websites.

24/02 Overseas DZ's advertising in the Starter Magazine

The Chairman had received a letter from Sue Meacock of Peterborough Parachute Centre stating that her centre was no longer issuing the Starter Magazine. She went on to say this was because she did not regard it as in her interests to help to promote overseas drop zones [through some of the advertisements in the Starter Mag] to her hard-won students. Further, advertisements for foreign drop zones showed that they did not comply with UK standards. In discussion, it was noted that the standards being advertised by overseas drop zones were legal in their own countries. Therefore, the BPA had no means to question this if the advertisements were accepted, as they had been. There was, however, an apparent anomaly in that BPA Associated organisations overseas had been given what appeared to be free rein within a certain word limit to promote their services, albeit in an editorial format. Nothing could be done immediately, as the Starter Magazine had been reprinted only earlier this year, with the intention that stocks should last for around two years. However, the issues raised by Sue Meacock would certainly be re-visited at the appropriate time. Meanwhile, the Chairman would liaise with Sue Meacock to outline the position.

Action: Chairman

25/02 Dates of future meetings in 2002

Tuesdays at 1400 at the BPA Office: 22 October, 3 December.

The meeting closed at 1510.