

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 17 June 2003 at 1400

at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present: Eddie Jones - Committee Chairman
Calvin Blacker
Kieran Brady
Ralph Fielding
Billy Gollan
David Hickling

In attendance: Colin Bridges - *Skydive Magazine*
Tony Butler - Technical Officer
Lesley Gale - Editor, *Skydive Magazine*
John Hitchen - NCSO
Martin Shuttleworth - Secretary-General

Apologies for absence: Paul Applegate
Ian Midgley

Item Minute

15/03 Minutes

Billy Gollan proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 15 April 2003 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

16/03 Matters arising

16.1 Skydiving calendar 2004 (minute 11)

Kieran Brady said he had yet to liaise with Tony Knight of the BPA Shop to ask about possible arrangements for sale through the Shop of the excess of BPA Skydiving Calendars 2004, these being the remainder after a free copy had been allocated to each Member (for distribution with the December 2003 issue of *Skydive Magazine*). Discussion followed about the possibility that to sell the calendar commercially through the Shop might dissuade photographers who might otherwise have been content to submit photographs for use in a calendar for members. Lesley Gale called attention to the competition for the submission of photographs for the calendar, which had a closing date of 12 August, which she had launched in the June issue of *Skydive Magazine*. She said she was particularly keen to encourage National Teams to enter photographs to help promote the sport and the teams' possibility of sponsorship. The Committee did not consider that it would be appropriate for the calendar to carry advertising, but confirmed that it had no problem in principle in Lesley Gale seeking sponsorship of the calendar by, for example, a camera or photographic film company. After discussion, the Chairman confirmed that the correct title of the calendar was the "BPA Calendar 2004".

16.2 New page designs: Affiliated Clubs & Centres and Associated Organisations (minute 13)

Lesley Gale had circulated a draft to the Committee ahead of publication of the new page designs in the June issue of *Skydive Magazine*. The Chairman and Kieran Brady thanked Lesley Gale for doing a good job on this challenging task. Kieran Brady asked her to keep an eye on the currency and veracity of the information on aircraft.

17/03 Report on Skydive Magazine

Lesley Gale's report on the Magazine had been circulated with the agenda.

17.1 Advertising

The Chairman referred to an advertisement by a military centre on page 30 of the June issue. He believed that this had been published on error, because there had been in place since 1987 an agreement that military centres would not advertise. Publication of the advertisement had resulted in a number of verbal complaints from civilian centres, and a letter from Peterborough Parachute Centre, addressed to the BPA Chairman, which the Communications Chairman read aloud.

In discussion, it became clear that, through a combination of late proofs and misunderstandings, the advertisement had slipped through to publication. The Chairman said he would reply to the letter from Peterborough to apologise for the mistake, and assure them that it would not recur.

Action: Chairman

The Committee believed that new management at the Drop Zone concerned might not be fully aware of the 1987 agreement between military and civilian Drop Zones that military Drop Zones would not advertise. A discussion of historical events revealed it was an agreement by the military centres not to advertise rather than the magazine agreeing to not carry military advertisements. Lesley Gale and Tony Butler said they would liaise with all those concerned to remind them of their agreement. Lesley Gale confirmed that any further advertisements received by the Magazine that raised issues such as this would be referred to the Committee, and apologised for the misunderstandings that which had arisen on this occasion.

There followed a discussion about claims made in advertising by civilian Drop Zones in the Magazine, some of which were subjective viewpoints. Kieran Brady suggested it might help if the advertisers were given guidance by the Magazine on such matters, and asked to soften any highly subjective wording.

Calvin Blacker said he thought the photograph of the two wingsuit flyers in the June 2003 issue of the Magazine had been very good, and had found the 120-way formation article to be most encouraging to young skydivers.

17.2 Wind tunnel

Kieran Brady said he had received a complaint from a member that the June 2003 issue had been 'hijacked as an advertisement for the new wind tunnel'. Lesley Gale said that the *Tunnel Bunnies* article by *VMax* had in fact been adapted from an AGM presentation in January 2003 at which those present had asked for it to be published in the Magazine. The Chairman noted that there had been a paid advertising insert about the wind tunnel that had promised to 'keep you informed through the Magazine'. He noted that a number of items relating to wind tunnels had come together in the June 2003 issue, and stressed the need for a clear line of delineation to be maintained between editorial content and paid advertising. Lesley Gale confirmed that these areas were completely separate.

17.3 Budget

A budget update had been included in Lesley Gale's written report to the Committee. The Chairman pointed out that the format of presentation was not as had previously been agreed with the Committee. Lesley Gale apologised that too large a print area had been selected from her spreadsheet, and confirmed that the agreed format was being used, and was in fact a part of the printout that had been circulated. The Chairman noted that total expenditure on the Magazine

was running over budget, and invited Lesley Gale to comment. The budget showed an overspend of slightly more than £4K on printing. Lesley Gale said that the June 2003 issue had been web printed, which had been more economical. She had tried this two years ago but there had been technical problems, which improvements to the printing process had since overcome. Mailing costs were about £2K over budget, and Lesley Gale was due to meet with a company that may be able to offer cheaper rates than the Royal Mail for distribution outside the UK. Lesley Gale said she had spoken with Jon Gretton (BPA Financial Administrator) ahead of the meeting, and she said that the increased costs of Magazine printing etc appeared broadly to be in line with an increase in membership subscriptions received by the BPA. She believed, however, that expenditure would come back on budget taking the financial year as a whole.

17.4 Editorial & Website Co-ordinator

Lesley Gale introduced Colin Bridges, full-time Editorial and Website Co-ordinator for the Magazine, who had been in post for two-weeks now. Colin Bridges was the camera flyer on the National 8-way FS team *VNE*, and had previously worked as a professional photographer. Lesley Gale appreciated the variety of skills that he, as a fellow skydiver, was bringing to the Magazine. On behalf of the whole Committee, the Chairman welcomed Colin Bridges to his new role.

17.5 Magazine office

In response to a question from Lesley Gale concerning the need to install another telephone line to the Magazine office, the Chairman confirmed that this was not a matter for the Committee. Lesley Gale was on a self-employed contract for editorial services and her office arrangements were not therefore the concern of the Committee. Also, it had previously been agreed by the Committee that items of expenditure of less than £250, which were within the overall budget that the Committee had approved, need not be brought to the table for specific approval.

18/03 Report on the Magazine website

18.1 Secure online subscription facility

Lesley Gale reported that she had obtained a quotation of £425 (cf a budget of £500) for the installation of a secure e-commerce facility on the Magazine website for the purposes of registering and taking payment for new Magazine subscriptions online. Ralph Fielding proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that this should go ahead, which carried unanimously.

Action: Lesley Gale

18.2 More economic updates

The latest estimate of the cost of investing in facilities to update the Magazine website more economically, to save approximately £100 per issue, was £250 to £500 (cf a budget of £750). Calvin Blacker proposed, and Ralph Fielding seconded, a motion that this should be approved, for implementation at a time of Lesley Gale's choosing. This carried unanimously.

Action: Lesley Gale

18.3 Electronic Drop-Zone Focus

A draft letter to Drop Zones was tabled. This sought updated information and photographs to be submitted electronically for the proposed electronic version of *Drop Zone Focus* for the *Skydive Magazine* and BPA websites. However, before considering the letter, the Committee considered it important to obtain a quotation from the website designers of what the cost would be. A budget of £2.5K had been allocated by the Council in the Communications Action Plan, which included Magazine staff / BPA staff time in commissioning, compilation and editorial work.

Action: Lesley Gale / BPA Office

19/03 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays at 1400 at the BPA Office, Glen Para, Leicester (ahead of meetings of the Development Committee for those involved, at 1600; and the Council at 1830): 19 August [Apologies for absence from Ralph Fielding], 21 October, and 2 December.

The meeting closed at 1530.