

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 11 October 2005 at 1430

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

Present:	Eddie Jones Paul Applegate Adrian Bond Kieran Brady Ralph Fielding Elizabeth Stoodley	Committee Chairman
In attendance:	Liz Astill Tony Butler Lesley Gale Martin Shuttleworth	Administration Secretary Technical Officer Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i> Secretary-General
Observer:	Karen Farr	
Apology for absence:	Tony Goodman	

Item Minute

32/05 Minutes

Adrian Bond proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11 October 2005 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

33/05 Matters arising

33.1 Magazine inserts to Members living outside the UK (minute 23)

Lesley Gale reported that there were difficulties in separating labels for overseas members from labels for overseas non-member magazine subscribers. This was a database issue. The Committee asked that Mike Gorman, who had programmed the database, should be asked to carry out further work to facilitate routine generation of the two sets of labels required. Lesley Gale would arrange a further meeting with Mike Gorman and the BPA Office to progress this.

Action: Lesley Gale/BPA Office/Mike Gorman

33.2 Use of the BPA logo (minute 23.7)

Only Affiliated Centres were entitled to use the BPA logo because it implied compliance with the Operations Manual. The Office had contacted a number of websites that were using the BPA logo without authorisation. A number of these websites were run by BPA instructors who, once the situation had been explained, had agreed to desist from using the BPA logo. However, there were also several websites that were devoted to promoting different kinds of sport, and two of these websites had expressed surprise at the BPA's request to remove its logo. The site owners had said it was normal for them to display the logo of a sport's governing body on their page about that sport. Further, because these websites were obviously sports information websites –

one was called 'Try my Sport' – there was little possibility that the general public might confuse it with a parachute centre.

The Committee noted these concerns. The Chairman questioned whether the current policy on use of the BPA logo had 'gates that were too narrow'. After discussion, the Committee decided to ask Ralph Fielding, perhaps with another Council Member, kindly to review the existing policy on use of the BPA logo in the light of the feedback received: and to make recommendations to the next meeting on whether or not the Committee should review the policy, and if so how. Ralph Fielding agreed to do this.

Action: Ralph Fielding

Elizabeth Stoodley asked the Office to advise the sports information website owners who had expressed concern at the BPA's current policy on use of the BPA logo that a policy review was underway.

Action: BPA Office

33.3 Advertising rates in Skydive Magazine (minute 25)

In clarification of minute 25, the Chairman said that it had been his intention that Adrian Bond should review what different advertisers were paying to advertise in the Magazine. Adrian Bond said he would be pleased to do this, from ledgers from the last few issues to be supplied by Lesley Gale.

Action: Lesley Gale / Adrian Bond

The Chairman said that at present, advertising income was less than half the amount of subscription income to the Magazine. Although he did not foresee that advertising could ever entirely fund the Magazine, it was his intention that the Committee should consider whether the BPA was optimising its potential advertising income from the Magazine.

34/05 Magazine Budget 2005/6

Lesley Gale had circulated in advance her proposed Magazine budget for 2005/6. The Chairman noted that actual cost of the Magazine in the last financial year had been £23,260 per issue and that the budgeted expenditure for this year was £24,803 per issue, an increase of £1,543. Kieran Brady said that he believed the Committee's goal should be to see expenditure go down, not up. Lesley Gale said that the figure was only about £800 extra per issue after taking into account the projected underspend that would be returned to BPA central funds at the end of the year.

Lesley Gale said that the number of pages per issue had increased from 60 pages to 96 pages, yet the amount of subscription per member that the Magazine received had stayed the same at £17.50 for the last five or six years. Elizabeth Stoodley said that the proposed budget would not cost the Membership any more, actually less because of inflation: additional value was coming from advertising, for what was, in accounting terms, a reducing year-on-year cost to the Membership.

The Chairman noted that the budget proposed a total spend of about £9K more than last year over the six annual issues of the Magazine. He said that the Committee had previously decided that the Magazine had now reached the desired size, and should not keep on growing, costing more money. The Committee understood that expenditure had to rise in line with inflation, but a number of items in the proposed budget included increases above the rate of inflation. The Chairman said that these items needed especial scrutiny. He said that the Committee was prepared to accept a 10% increase in overseas mailing costs because of the need to switch the distribution contract to a different company consequent on the unacceptably poor quality of service from the last one.

Kieran Brady said that about two years ago, the Magazine had developed to become, in his opinion, the best skydiving magazine in the world. Having arrived at that, the BPA had set a benchmark. He did not believe that the Committee should now spend any more of the Membership's money on increasing the size of the Magazine still further. He said that £9K extra was a lot to come from the BPA. Looking beyond the Magazine and the work of this Committee, at the wider BPA, he said that UK Sport had indicated that it planned to taper off its already

vastly-reduced exchequer funding for the BPA (which UK Sport had directed should be used for safety and competitions) – in line with most other non-Olympic sports – to nothing within the next two years. The point was that any loss of UK Sport funding would have to be made up by the BPA from the Membership's funds, as an additional call on these funds, and therefore it was necessary to review how much the Magazine could be contributing financially to the BPA rather than increasing expenditure on it above the rate of inflation. Against the background of a significant reduction in UK Sport funding over the last few years, the cost of insurance for sport parachuting had spiralled, the BPA's aggregate insurance bill having shot up from £120 –£150K per annum fifteen years ago to over £800K a year now. The rules of engagement had changed. It was now time to safeguard the future of the both Magazine and the Association and this required some careful financial analysis.

He believed that the Committee's goal should be to trim back wherever it could, without affecting the quality of the Magazine. He said that the Committee should consider whether it was practicable to charge advertisers more to help to offset the funds that were no longer available to the BPA from UK Sport, so that the Magazine's financial contribution to the BPA was increased. The USPA Magazine actually returned a profit, and although that was unlikely to be a realistic objective for *Skydive Magazine* because of the BPA's smaller membership, it was clear that was the direction in which we should be moving.

Adrian Bond suggested that the Committee should adopt the previous year's budget, increasing advertising income by 3%.

Lesley Gale said she was surprised and disappointed to have this new financial regime that she believed had been suddenly dropped on her. She said she had presented her proposed budget to the Committee just as she had always done, and that this year's had been very much in the same mould as previous budgets that the Committee had approved. She reminded the Committee that the Magazine had always, apart from in one single year, performed better than budget and had returned the underspend to BPA central funds. The Chairman acknowledged this, but said that if money were not being proposed for expenditure, it should not be included in the budget.

Kieran Brady proposed, and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion that there should be no overall increase in the Magazine budget this year (2005/6).

Carried unanimously

This decision would be reviewed at the next meeting in the light of additional information from a re-worked budget from Lesley Gale and Adrian Bond's review of advertising rates. The Chairman asked Lesley Gale to review in particular the potential to increase the rates charged to advertisers, and to contain increases in expenditure to the level of inflation.

Action: Lesley Gale / Next meeting

35/05 Advertising leaflet

Consideration of this item was deferred to the February 2006 meeting.

Action: February 2006 meeting

36/05 Starter Magazine update

Lesley Gale reported that about 8000 copies of the Starter magazine remained in stock, which was sufficient to last for about half a year, and in any case the uptake was less in winter. The Committee therefore decided to defer this item until its next meeting.

Action: Next meeting

37/05 Membership questionnaire survey 2005

The analysis of the 2005 Membership Survey Questionnaire had been circulated in advance. The Chairman thanked Liz Astill and other staff at the BPA Office, and some of their relations, who had carried out the heavy and repetitive workload of manual analysis. The analysis had been circulated to the full Council, and would be published in *Skydive Magazine* with a short introduction written by the Chairman.

Action: Chairman

The Chairman said that the analysis would be of great value in informing Council policy, and he thanked the majority of Members who had completed and returned the questionnaire.

38/05 Editorial Report

Lesley Gale tabled her report on the October and December 2005 issues of *Skydive Magazine*. She reported that the end-of-year accounts for the Magazine had been reconciled with the BPA's audited accounts for the year ended 30 June 2005. There had been an underspend of £5431 on the Magazine, but excluding year-end adjustments because of the dates when invoices had been received or paid, the effective underspend had been nearer £9K.

The Chairman said that it had been unwise to publish information in the Magazine about the cause of Adrian Nicholas's fatal accident before this information had been received in writing from an official source, as it had now been. The Committee passed on its condolences to Adrian Nicholas's family on his sad and untimely loss.

39/05 BPA calendar 2006

The Membership Questionnaire Survey 2005 (minute 37) had revealed that 75% of respondents wished the annual BPA calendar to continue. Lesley Gale said that most of the advertising space in the 2006 calendar had now been sold. The Committee agreed that Lesley Gale should arrange for BPA-Registered Display Teams to be invited to purchase the remaining advertising space. If they or any other likely UK advertiser was not interested, the Committee authorised Lesley Gale to arrange to offer overseas Drop Zones any remaining space.

Action: Lesley Gale

40/05 Communications Action Plan targets for 2005/6

40.1 Start to publish pdf files on the Magazine Website

This had already been achieved.

Achieved

40.2 Run a competition in the Magazine to further improve reader interaction

This would be progressed ahead of its June 2006 target date for completion.

On target

40.3 Publish a BPA skydiving calendar 2006, subject to consultation

See minute 39.

Near completion

40.4 Update the *Freedom of the Skies* brochure to attract new BPA members

This had already been achieved.

Achieved

40.5 Update the BPA Starter Magazine for first-time jumpers

See minute 36.

Action: Next meeting

41/05 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 6 December 2005 at 1430 at the BPA Office, Leicester.

The meeting closed at 1652.