

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 13 February 2007 at 1400

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

Present:	Adrian Bond Paul Applegate Robin Durie Paul Ledden Paul Moore	Communications Chairman (from item 5.1)
In attendance:	Kieran Brady Tony Butler Lesley Gale John Hitchen John Page Martin Shuttleworth Weed Stoodley	Co-opted Technical Officer Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i> NCSO (from item 5.1) Secretary-General
Apologies for absence:	Mike Rust Alex Wilson	
Observers:	David Hickling Craig Poxon	(from item 7.4) (from item 7.2)

Item Minute

01/07 Composition

Adrian Bond, who had been voted to the Office of Communications Chairman at the inaugural Council meeting on Saturday 20 January 2007 (Council minute 1) welcomed those present to this first formal meeting of the Communications Committee 2007.

Other Members of the Committee were, in alphabetical order: Paul Applegate, Robin Durie, David Ibbotson, Paul Ledden, Paul Moore, Mike Rust and Alex Wilson.

Lesley Gale attended meetings of the Committee in her capacity as Editor of *Skydive Magazine*, and appropriate BPA staff also attended.

The Chairman proposed, and David Ibbotson seconded, a motion to co-opt Kieran Brady as a Member of the Communications Committee for 2007 for the benefit of his experience and to help to assure continuity.

Carried unanimously

02/07 Terms of reference

The Committee noted its terms of reference (BPA Form 191, issue 2, September 2000), which had been circulated with the agenda. As this was the new 2007 Committee, the document was for information at this stage but if, later in the year, it became clear that the terms of reference might benefit from an update, the Chairman said the Committee could discuss them with a view to making an appropriate recommendation to the full Council.

03/07 Minutes

Paul Moore proposed, and David Ibbotson seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 5 December 2006 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

04/07 Matters arising

4.1 New promotional leaflet for skydiving (minute 38.1)

Lesley Gale reported that BPA Drop Zones had purchased 9000 copies of the new promotional leaflet for skydiving, since it was launched at the AGM on Saturday 20 January.

Completed

4.2 New promotional posters (minute 38.2)

Two new promotional posters had also been launched at the AGM, and copies were now available for Drop Zones, etc, to purchase. See minute 6.4.

Completed

4.3 Unauthorised use of the BPA logo by the Extreme Sports Café website

www.extremesportscafe.com (minute 38)

Martin Shuttleworth apologised that, due to staff sickness in the BPA Office, he had unfortunately not yet had time to progress the action at minute 38, but would do so as soon as possible.

Action: BPA Office

4.4 Use of the BPA logo on the UKS website (minute 38.7)

Kieran Brady said that the use of the BPA logo on the website www.ukskydiver.co.uk (UKS) was not in the same category as its use in the website in 4.3 above, because UKS was an entirely different type of website. He said he looked forward to the day when UKS could use the BPA logo in a positive way. Weed Stoodley said that UKS's use of the BPA logo, because it was in the context of a discussion forum about skydiving, came within the terms of acceptable use of the BPA logo under the existing policy (minute 10/06):

Policy on use of the BPA logo

The BPA logo may be used on advertisements or promotional material that promotes sport parachuting in a positive manner and has no financial return for the vendor or promoter. Only BPA Affiliated Clubs & Centres and BPA Registered Display Teams may use the BPA logo on advertising or promotional material that promotes any sport parachuting activity from which the vendor or promoter may gain financially. The above terms and conditions may be varied only by the written authority of the BPA.

She therefore saw no need to change this wording. Indeed, it appeared to be working as intended in differentiating between approved and unapproved use of the BPA logo. The Chairman agreed.

No further action

4.5 Mailsort (minute 38.1)

Lesley Gale reported that three Mailsort runs of labels for the Magazine had now not been produced in the Royal Mail's new Pricing in Proportion (PIP) format. It was necessary to produce labels in this format to receive the appropriate discount from Royal Mail. On each of the last three label runs, Warners had saved the day by re-formatting the labels to meet the requirements for PIP. The problem appeared to be with the program to run the Mailsort. Lesley Gale said she would try her best to resolve the difficulty by arranging a visit to the BPA Office by Mike Gorman, who looked after the Mailsort program.

Action: Lesley Gale

05/07 Editorial Report

Lesley Gale had circulated her Editorial Report in advance.

5.1 February 2007 issue - content

Lesley Gale reported that the February 2007 issue of *Skydive Magazine* would be published later in the month than other issues because it contained the annual Membership Renewal Form, which could not go to press until the subscription rates for 2007/8 were known. Readers had asked for more educational articles, and the February issue was packed with them, with more in the pipeline.

Lesley Gale had sent out a pdf version of the Letters page to the BPA Council last evening. It contained two letters relating to the election of the Chairman of the Association at the inaugural Council meeting on Saturday 20 January. Lesley Gale said that she had put the Magazine to press apart from the letters on this page, as she was aware that they might be contentious. A wide discussion followed in which a range of opinions was expressed, both in favour of and against publication of the letters. John Page referred to a letter that Jim Crocker, a Vice President, had recently e-mailed to Council Members in which Jim Crocker said this was a matter for the Council. The Committee therefore decided to refer the matter to the full Council meeting tonight.

Action: Refer to the full Council

The Chairman said he believed this Committee should review its procedures and protocols for considering letters submitted for publication in the Magazine in order to develop a more appropriate framework.

Action: Future meeting

06/07 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007

6.1 Reduce expenditure on printing and posting hard copies of BPA minutes

See minute 32.1.

Completed

6.2 Magazine website improvement study

Lesley Gale tabled proposals for improvement of the Magazine website by Centrepages/ZCT, web consultants to the BPA and the Mag. She said that the existing online subscription facility had proved to be a good way of selling more non-Member subscriptions, particularly from overseas. However, there was presently no online Magazine subscription renewal facility, and this could be a useful development. Another idea was to add an "I'd like to try it" button to the Mag website. Visitors to the website could use this to order one issue, either as a free sample or for a nominal charge of say £5. Lesley Gale believed that these developments would be cost effective because of the additional subscription revenue they would be likely to generate.

There followed discussion about putting more pdfs of the Mag online, and whether this might be counter-productive in possibly discouraging potential subscribers from the printed Mag, if they could access more and more of its content online. Lesley Gale said she believed it would work the other way: people who saw online that their photograph was in the Mag might be keen to click to purchase a copy. Attendees at an event feature in the Mag could be e-mailed a link to their photographs online with the aim of encouraging sales and this would also save money on posting samples.

Lesley Gale noted some of Centrepages' other suggestions, such as mobile alerts when new material was posted on the website, but she did not believe this would be appropriate because the Mag website was updated only with each issue of the Mag, every two months.

Lesley Gale recommended that in the short term, only the ecommerce measures, which would gain revenue, should be implemented, plus the Google statistics for each page. Then the uptake of Members downloading pdfs could be directly monitored to assess the interest. It would then be clear whether to build up the pdf library or keep it as present, comprising educational articles only. If an increase was indicated this would be long to medium term, perhaps beginning 12-18 months ahead.

The Chairman thanked Lesley Gale for completing the Magazine website improvement study, and was pleased to note that this had been achieved without spending anything of the £500 budget that had been set aside to meet this Action Plan target.

Achieved

David Ibbotson said he believed that e-commerce was the way forward, not only for the Mag but for other BPA services. The Chairman agreed, and said it was important to plan the development of e-commerce across the BPA in a co-ordinated manner, and to work closely with the Development Committee on this.

Action: Liaise with Development Committee

6.3 Advertising leaflet

See minute 4.1.

Achieved

6.4 Promotional poster

See minute 4.2.

Achieved

Lesley Gale reported that Drop Zones had not to date shown much interest in purchasing the posters. The Committee asked the BPA Office kindly to send one poster and leaflet to each Drop Zone, together with information on how to order copies, and the cost.

Action: BPA Office

6.5 BPA Calendar 2007

See minute 38.3. The Chairman congratulated Lesley Gale for bringing in each copy of the calendar 2007 at £1 under budget.

Achieved

07/07 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

The Chairman confirmed that the Action Plan 2007/8 was not, as previous Action Plans had been, a bid document. Rather, it was to be submitted to UK Sport as part of the compliance requirements for its already-confirmed exchequer funding grant to the BPA of £25K. This Committee's recommendations would therefore be made not to tonight's meeting of the full Council, but to the Council meeting after that (minute 9). This gave valuable additional time to formulate the Communications Action Plan for the year 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. The Chairman invited ideas from around the table for possible Action Plan Targets.

7.1 Closer liaison with UKS website

Kieran Brady suggested closer liaison between the BPA and the www.ukskydiver.co.uk (UKS) website (minute 4.3 refers). UKS's skydiving forum was being used by a number of BPA Members and was significantly better than an earlier forum on a different website, from which most users had now migrated, because the UKS forum did not allow anonymous posts and the forum was moderated. At the AGM in January, Kieran Brady had spoken to Stuart Ferguson and Paul McCormick of UKS, and had discussed the idea of formalising a link with the BPA by establishing a BPA Member log on facility to make the BPA Forum a Members' only area. This would help to maintain a context of reasoned discussion by identifiable posters, and help to reduce the risk of the misinformation and at times personal abuse that had characterized earlier, unmoderated, skydiving forums on the web - which had seen them being likened to electronic toilet walls.

Paul Moore reported that he had received a request from UKS for formal recognition by the BPA. He tabled a paper from UKS, which suggested the establishment of an official BPA Forum and a BPA News Section on UKS. Paul Moore said that UKS was enjoying considerable growth and the BCPA was involved with them. John Page said that it should be possible for UKS to set up an online BPA Members' Room. He said that John Smyth, when he had been BPA Chairman, had recognised the use of an e-forum and had been keen to see the BPA move forward in this area, to get the most from current communications technology.

Kieran Brady suggested a Communications Action Plan target of exploring the possibility of a formal link between the BPA and UKS, with an associated budget of £250.

John Hitchen said that care would be needed in setting out the terms of any endorsement, with particular reference to safety issues. The BPA had a duty of care to ensure that all the information it published, or endorsed - especially on safety and training matters - was an authoritative statement of the official position. Any formal recognition by the BPA of an external website over which the BPA had no control had to be mindful of this. The Chairman said this was an important point, which highlighted that the matter would need careful research to reap the benefits whilst avoiding possible pitfalls.

Weed Stoodley said that, in her view, UKS was fairly moderated. However, if the BPA Council started to post officially on the site, there was always the possibility that the moderators - either now or in the future, and of course the moderators might change over time - might take a side. Paul Moore said there should be no official compulsion about it: Council Members should not feel obliged to contribute. Those that did, including himself, Weed Stoodley and John Page at the moment, did so in a personal capacity, not as an official spokesperson of the BPA.

Lesley Gale said that an online skydivers' discussion forum might offer the flexibility eventually even to replace "Letters to the Mag".

The Chairman invited Kieran Brady and Paul Moore kindly to liaise with UKS to determine whether their closer association with the BPA may be mutually beneficial and help to give BPA Members an online discussion facility, and possibly other benefits, and to report back to the next meeting. This might also help to determine the nature of any web development target/s it may be appropriate to consider for the Communications Action Plan 2007/8.

Action: Paul Moore & Kieran Brady

7.2 Electronic-Membership Survey Questionnaire

The Chairman tabled a paper in which he had listed a number of possible Communications Action Plan targets for consideration. The first was a Membership Survey Questionnaire, similar to those undertaken in 2002 and 2005, but this time in electronic form. Most BPA Members now had access to a computer. The Committee considered that an electronic questionnaire might provide a useful step towards the possible future introduction of electronic voting in Council elections. Weed Stoodley said that this tied in with the discussion about UKS (minute 7.1) because UKS already ran online opinion polls.

The Chairman said that through his own job, he was aware of customer satisfaction software that analysed feedback of the type envisaged in an online Membership Survey Questionnaire. The software could remove the time-consuming burden of manual analysis of questionnaire returns in the old paper-based system. He said he would provide further information at the next meeting. In addition, he would be happy for Paul Moore and Kieran Brady to discuss online polling with UKS.

Action: Chairman, Paul Moore, Kieran Brady

7.3 Enhance the BPA website

Although the Development Committee had, in recent years, looked after the BPA website during its development phase, the Chairman said that Robin Durie (Development Chairman) and he had agreed that now that the web had become an established communications channel, the Communications Committee would look after the BPA website as per its terms of reference (minute 2). Kieran Brady said it made sense for the BPA website to come under the Communications Committee now it was in steady state. But he said that the Development Committee's budget still included the website, and that an appropriate adjustment would therefore need to be made to take account of expenditure on the BPA website now being controlled by the Communications Committee.

Action: BPA Office (Jon Gretton)

Robin Durie said that it would be appropriate to freshen up the BPA website and to think of new ideas and possible enhancements. Martin Shuttleworth (Secretary-General) said that the Communications Open Forum at the AGM had suggested e-mail alerts to new information on the BPA website, and he was discussing this with Centrepages/ZCT, the BPA's web consultants, who had also been present at the Open Forum. Other suggestions at the Open Forum had included online surveys, online voting and online membership renewals, and Centrepages/ZCT were advising on the logistical and cost implications. The Chairman said it would be considered further at the next meeting in the light of discussions with UKS (minutes 7.1 and 7.2), which also related to online communications. Eddie Jones (BPA Chairman) said that consideration of the possibility of online voting was a matter that had already been referred to Development Committee.

Action: Next meeting / Development Committee

Martin Shuttleworth said that along with additions to the website, it might also be appropriate for the Committee to consider discontinuing less popular pages. To that end, the interactive coaching facility, by which Members were invited to ask questions of the guest coach - currently British and World Champion female 4-way Formation Skydiving Champion Team Airkix - had received only a handful of questions since last summer. The interactive coaching facility was not therefore being used to anything like the extent that had been hoped for when it had originally been introduced a few years ago. The Committee therefore agreed that this webpage should be discontinued.

Action: BPA Office

7.4 BPA skydiving calendar 2008

The annual BPA/Skydive Mag calendar had now become a regular annual publication that was warmly welcomed by Members. The Committee was keen for the calendar to continue in 2008 (with publication in December 2007). It would therefore be further considered, at the next meeting, as a Communications Action Plan target for 2007/8.

Action: Next meeting

7.5 Skydiving DVD

A possible Action Plan target on the Chairman's list was the publication of a DVD on skydiving. John Page said that, so far as BPA Members were concerned, he believed that most would prefer that the BPA, rather than give them a 'free' DVD, should reduce the cost of their membership subscription by an amount equivalent to the cost of the DVD. Discussion then focused on the idea of producing a skydiving DVD to be given away with, for example, an extreme sports magazine, Maxim Magazine or FHM Magazine to increase public awareness and take-up of the sport. Eddie Jones suggested that any DVD should, if possible, aim to become self-funding in the same way as the BPA calendar. Paul Ledden said that if the DVD were to be used as part of a recruitment drive, it would possibly come more under Development than Communications. However, he kindly offered to help with research, and the Chairman gratefully accepted, saying that the matter would be further considered at the next meeting.

Action: Paul Ledden

08/07 Links between the BPA and BCPA

The Chairman tabled a paper copy of an e-mail from Marc Fletcher, Chairman of the British Collegiate Parachute Association (BCPA). It asked, as a result of discussions on the UKS website (minutes 4.4 & 7.1), whether it might be possible to form closer links between the BCPA and the BPA. In particular it asked that University Parachute Clubs with their own websites might have a links section on the BPA website. No-one on the Committee dissented from this idea.

Action: BPA Office

Marc Fletcher had also invited other suggestions or ideas from the BPA about possible closer links with the BCPA. The Chairman said it would be appropriate to return to this once the BPA's possible arrangements with the UKS website (minutes 7.1 and 7.2) were considered at the next meeting.

Action: Next meeting

09/07 Date of next meeting

To be decided at tonight's meeting of the full Council. The Communications Committee would meet at 1400 on the afternoon of same day, with the Council meeting in the evening.

The meeting closed at 1557.