

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 9 October 2007 at 1400
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Adrian Bond	Communications Chairman
	Paul Applegate	
	David Ibbotson	
	Eddie Jones	Chairman of Council
	Paul Ledden	
	Paul Moore	
	Mike Rust	
In attendance:	Kieran Brady	Co-opted
	Tony Butler	Technical Officer
	Lesley Gale	Editor, Skydive Magazine
	John Hitchen	NCSO
	David Hickling	
	John Horne	from item 41
	Helen Lucas	Membership Services Administrator
	John Page	
	Grant Richards	Co-opted
	Martin Shuttleworth	Secretary-General
	Weed Stoodley	from item 40
Apologies for absence:	Robin Durie	
Observer:	Craig Poxon	

Item Minute

36/07 Welcome
The Chairman welcomed Helen Lucas, BPA Membership Services Administrator with responsibility for administration of Magazine circulation, to her first meeting.

37/07 Minutes
Mike Rust proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 14 August 2007 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

38/07 Matters arising

**38.1 Unauthorised use of the BPA logo by the Extreme Sports Café website
www.extremesportscafe.com (minute 29.1)**

The Office had registered the BPA logo with the UK Copyright Service as an artwork copyright to the BPA. The Extreme Sports Café website was continuing to use the BPA logo without permission, despite requests from the BPA for them to remove it. The Office would now furnish their USA-based Internet Service Provider (ISP) with documentary evidence of the BPA's

ownership of the copyright of the BPA logo. The aim was to apply pressure through the ISP for the BPA logo to be removed from the Extreme Sports Café site.

Action: BPA Office

38.2 Photographic competition in Magazine (minute 29.3)

As it had not been possible to secure a high quality camera from a sponsor to use as a prize, David Ibbotson proposed, and Grant Richards seconded, a motion that no photographic competition should be run in the Magazine for the time being.

Carried unanimously

38.3 Clubs & Centres page (minute 29.5)

The necessary updates had been made.

Completed

38.4 Editorial Services Contract (minute 29.7)

Kieran Brady had clarified the wording of item 10.1 in the Editorial Services Contract to avoid ambiguity. He confirmed that the new form of words expressed only the original intention when the contract had first been drafted.

The original wording of item 10.1 had been: "The Editor is to ensure that the content of the Magazine must be representational of the whole membership over the period of the contract." The new wording was: "The Editor is to ensure that all disciplines of the sport, and all special interest groups within the sport, are represented in the Magazine broadly in line with their participation rates in, or significance to, the sport."

Suggestions by Weed Stoodley for variations to the wording of certain other items in the contract were noted for consideration.

There was discussion about item 6, the terms for termination, which read "Either party may terminate the contract. The minimum period of notice for termination shall be the print date of the next issue of the Magazine due for distribution to the membership."

Lesley Gale said that she believed that the period of notice of termination should be longer for the protection of both parties and others who would be affected, including her employee at the Magazine. There were also the arrangements for Magazine office equipment to consider in the event of termination of the contract, and this might well take longer than the minimum notice period as currently specified. Lesley Gale said, as she had only received the draft contract less than 36 hours ago, she wished to have more time to consider the wording of the contract, and to consult with professional advisers, before signing. The Committee believed it to be entirely appropriate and prudent that Lesley Gale should do this. Lesley Gale also said that she had input to make on the wording of other parts of the contract. The Chairman said he would discuss the wording of the contract with Lesley Gale and they would report back to the next meeting.

Action: Chairman & Lesley Gale

The Committee and Lesley Gale confirmed they would proceed on the usual understanding that until the new contract was signed, the existing one remained in place.

Lesley Gale confirmed that she would supply the BPA Office with a copy for its files of the 1999 Magazine contract with Warners. **[Note: This has been received with thanks.]**

Action: Lesley Gale

39/07 Editorial Report

Lesley Gale's Editorial Report had been circulated in advance.

39.1 October 2007 issue

The Editorial Report summarised the range of content in the October 2007 issue. The mailing had been a day early. Lesley Gale apologised that an image of a skydiver without head protection had slipped through the filtering process to appear in an advertisement. Mike Rust said a reaction he had received at his Drop Zone was "Brit Chicks are on the front cover again!"

39.2 December 2007 issue

Potential articles and features were listed, as always what was included would depend on the quality and of the material submitted and the available space.

39.3 Magazine website

Lesley Gale said that the Magazine website www.skydivemag.com had been designed about 10 years ago and was now technically out-of-date. Although it offered non-Member Magazine subscribers an online subscription facility, the administration of this was still paper-based at the BPA Office. A full update of the Magazine website would probably cost around £4K. The Chairman said that there might be an economy of scale in considering updating the Magazine website at the same time as the BPA website www.bpa.org.uk

39.4 Magazine Budget Report

Lesley Gale tabled a budget report updated to October 2007. A key element in this was the fee for Editorial Services. Lesley Gale said that this had not been subject to an annual review, which therefore meant that it had fallen significantly behind and was now in her view due for an increase of about 50%. The fee had to cover her employee, together with equipping and running the Magazine office. It had also to reflect the increase in the number of pages per issue, from 48 when Lesley Gale had started 11 years ago to between 88 and 96 pages per issue now. Lesley Gale tabled figures on her personal income from the Magazine further to re-inforce the need for a review of the contract fee.

Lesley Gale said that the Magazine element of the annual BPA Membership subscription had been £13.50 when she had started as Editor, which had increased to £17.50 in 1999 and remained at that figure ever since. Had it increased at a rate of 3% per annum since 1979, it would have increased by £4.50. Lesley Gale suggested an increase of only £2.50 to £3, to bring the Magazine element of the BPA Membership subscription up to £22.50 or £23, which would be only about two-thirds of an inflation-linked increase since 1999. It therefore still represented extremely good value.

Kieran Brady noted that the budgeted income was based on 5,453 Members, whereas in the year to date the number was only about 4,300. He therefore believed that the budgeted subscription income for the Magazine might be an over-estimate. He also observed that the earnings figures Lesley Gale had tabled varied considerably from year to year and, looking at them from a business perspective, he believed that the cause of this variability needed to be identified. There were other issues to do with the way the Magazine had evolved that he believed should be explored to ensure that, as we entered a new contract period, all parties could be assured that the Magazine was continuing to provide best value to the Membership. Finally, he said that he believed benefits in kind also needed to be taken into consideration in determining the overall value of the Editorial Services Contract.

Lesley Gale said she was happy to provide any figures the Committee may require, and confirmed that she had submitted her annual accounts to the Chairman for information. She reminded the Committee that during every year but one, the Magazine's financial performance had exceeded budget expectations. The outturn for the last financial year had been an underspend of £13,500.

The Chairman of Council said that he did not believe that this Committee, nor indeed the full Council, itself had the power to consider an increase in the Magazine element of the BPA subscription – the subscription had to be set by the Membership at a General Meeting, and this was always done at the AGM in respect of subscriptions for non-provisional Members, ie those who received the Magazine.

Kieran Brady said that, to put this into a wider context, the Membership had already suffered a number of hefty rises in the insurance element of their subscription, and some were voting with their feet. Drop Zone Operators had also expressed concern about the cost of insurance. He therefore believed that it was important for the BPA to be sensitive to other possible sources of increased costs and to examine these carefully. He suggested that say two people should be asked to investigate the Magazine's business model and costs to ensure that it was delivering best value to the Membership. He said this was simply sound business practice – allocating more money for the Magazine without proper research and investigation may create more problems than it solved and in any case, the Members had to decide on any increase in the Magazine element of the BPA subscription at a General Meeting and they needed a clear report on their options.

The Committee agreed to establish a small working group to review the Magazine's business model and costs with Lesley Gale to ensure that the Magazine continued to deliver best value to the Membership, as well as assuring a reasonable fee for Editorial Services for those who worked on the Magazine. The Committee agreed that the working group should comprise the Communications Chairman, Lesley Gale, an accounts specialist (the Treasurer), and one other. The Chairman would progress this with a view to reporting back to the next meeting.

Lesley Gale asked whether any increase, if agreed, would be backdated to the October Magazine. Eddie Jones, BPA Chairman, confirmed that this was the usual procedure, as he remembered from his days as Chairman of the Communications Committee.

Action: Chairman / Next meeting

40/07 Starter Magazine Reprint

Lesley Gale tabled a paper on the Starter Magazine reprint. She anticipated the reprint to be required in February 2008 as existing stocks would by then have run down – presently only 10% of the last print run remained in stock, but the slower run-off during the winter gave more time. The paper set out costs based on (a) accepting and (b) declining advertising from overseas non-Affiliated Drop Zones, as had been requested by the Committee. The request had been made because a few Affiliated Clubs & Centres would not issue the Starter Magazine to their first-time jumpers because it contained advertising for overseas Drop Zones which they believed might attract their students away.

After discussion, the consensus was that the Committee wanted Drop Zone advertising only by Affiliated Drop Zones (advertising by overseas manufacturers etc was acceptable because their equipment could be used for skydiving in the UK, which is what the Starter Magazine, as a BPA house Magazine, was intended to promote). However, the Committee also wanted to square the circle by generating sufficient advertising income to cover the cost of the Starter Magazine, so it could be produced at no cost to the BPA. The two costed options did not present this scenario, but the Chairman asked if, for example by increasing the advertising rate charged to Affiliated Drop Zones, it might somehow be achieved. Paul Applegate said it was quite possible that Affiliated Drop Zones might be prepared to forgo their present heavily-discounted rate for advertising once they were assured that they would no longer be competing with advertisements from overseas non-Affiliated Drop Zones they may perceive as luring their students away.

Eddie Jones therefore proposed, and Mike Rust seconded, a motion to ask Lesley Gale kindly to liaise with Warners Advertising Agency with a view to seeking to set a budget to produce the next issue of the Starter Mag as economically as possible, without advertisements from non-Affiliated Drop Zones (as it was a BPA house Magazine) but with as much advertising as possible from other sources, to achieve a zero or as near as possible zero cost to the BPA.

Carried unanimously

Lesley Gale said she would need to check on the legal position of declining advertisements from overseas Drop Zones, such as those within the EU.

Action: Lesley Gale

41/07 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

41.1 Online Membership Survey

The Chairman had circulated a draft of the questionnaire and a number of Committee Members and other Council Members, together with the Editor, had kindly submitted additional draft questions for consideration for inclusion. The format of nearly all questions required a simple yes or no answer, and the Chairman asked that all proposed additional questions should stick to this format and be submitted via the BPA Office by the end of October.

Action: All Committee Members

41.2 Enhancement of the BPA website

A competition to re-design the front end of the BPA website had been launched on page 17 of *Skydive the Mag* for August 2007. The closing date for entries was 1 November 2007.

In progress

41.3 BPA skydiving calendar 2008

Lesley Gale was pleased to report that the advertising space on all pages of the Calendar 2008 had been sold. She would circulate a pdf of the Calendar to all Committee Members within the next few weeks. The Calendar would be distributed free-of-charge with the December 2007 issue of *Skydive the Mag*.

In progress

41.4 Trial promotional DVD

Paul Ledden reported that he had made a number of written approaches to Magazines to seek their involvement in distributing a DVD about skydiving, but to date none had shown any interest. He had happened recently to attend a social function at the House of Commons and had used the opportunity to talk to some people from the media, with whom he hoped it might be possible to establish a rapport. He invited other Committee Members to offer suggestions of other possible ways forward or contacts, as it was proving quite a challenge to get this project off the ground.

In progress

41.5 Feasibility study into extending e-commerce on the Magazine website

David Ibbotson had identified an external website that could be linked to the Mag website and the BPA website that offered facilities to upload photographs and share them with friends. The external site had an online card payment facility. He would provide details. The Committee agreed that it would be worthwhile to experiment with this link.

Action: David Ibbotson

42/07 CCPR – use of BPA logo in a campaign to increase the grassroots uptake of sport

A paper had been circulated. Paul Ledden proposed, and David Ibbotson seconded, a motion to authorise the CCPR to use the BPA logo in its campaign, for which it was seeking the support of Sports National Governing Bodies, to increase the uptake of sport by young people.

Action: BPA Office

43/07 UK Skydiver website

Paul Moore reported that the participation in the online forum on the UK Skydiver website www.ukskydiver.co.uk was now nudging around 1000 individuals. It included an unofficial BPA Matters section on its Forum for the exchange of news and opinions. Users of the BPA matters section of the forum had to register online before they could access it. The reason was that if BPA Council Members contributed to the forum – as a number did – they could only reasonably be expected to hold discussions with individuals who were identified, not anonymous posters. Recently, a poster had threatened another with legal action, so there were issues about the nature of what was posted.

The Chairman said that it had always been the intention to let the unofficial BPA Matters section of the UK Skydiver Forum run for a number of months, and then to review the BPA's relationship with it. He asked that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action: Next meeting

44/07 Dates of next meetings

Tuesday 4 December 2007 at 1400 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester.