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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 4 December 2007 at 1410

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

Present:	Adrian Bond Paul Applegate David Ibbotson Eddie Jones Paul Ledden Paul Moore Grant Richards Mike Rust	Communications Chairman Chairman of Council
In attendance:	Kieran Brady Tony Butler Debbie Carter Lesley Gale Jon Gretton John Hitchen Helen Lucas Martin Shuttleworth Weed Stoodley	Co-opted Technical Officer Treasurer Editor, Skydive Magazine Financial Administrator NCSO Membership Services Administrator Secretary-General
Apologies for absence:	Robin Durie	
Observers:	Craig Poxon Jason Thompson	from item 47.3

Item Minute

45/07 Minutes

Mike Rust proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 9 October 2007 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

46/07 Matters arising

**46.1 Unauthorised use of the BPA logo by the Extreme Sports Café website
www.extremesportscafe.com (minute 38)**

The BPA Office had now provided the Internet Service Provider of the Extreme Sports Café's website with evidence that the BPA held the registered copyright of the BPA logo. As a result, the unauthorised use of the BPA logo on that website had now stopped.

Completed

47/07 Editorial Services Contract – renewal for the year October 2007 to October 2008 (6 issues)

47.1 Contract for services

The Committee wished to be assured that Lesley Gale's status as a self-employed contractor would be recognised by HM Customs & Revenue. The Treasurer reported that there were a number of 'badges of employment' that the Revenue used to decide on whether an individual was

a contractor or an employee. These included such things as direction on working hours, the need to book holidays in accordance with an organisational policy, and the amount of supervision given. The parameters that the BPA set out in the Editorial Services Contract were all about service quality outputs – the quality, content and timeliness of the Magazine – the contract was silent on how production was organised or arranged. It was therefore demonstrably a contract for services, not a contract of employment.

Kieran Brady asked about fluctuations in the Magazine budget. The Chairman and Treasurer said these were due to seasonality in the Magazine's income from subscriptions and advertising. The print and postage costs were fairly stable. Kieran Brady said that his interest in the costs of the Magazine was so he could be satisfied that it was being produced for the membership to the highest standard and as cost-effectively as possible. His vision was for the Magazine to return an overall surplus to the BPA rather than to cost the membership money through the Magazine subscription element. He said that his wish to focus on expenses was driven by this, and he had been concerned at the suggestion at the last meeting (minute 39.4) that the membership might be asked to top-up the Magazine's income by increasing the Magazine element of the subscription, which he saw as throwing money at it. Lesley Gale said she was in total agreement, which was why she had revised the budget downwards since the last meeting so there was no cost increase to the Membership, the magazine element of the BPA subscription remaining at £17.50 as it had done since 1999. Further, she was managing the magazine as prudently as possible while maintaining quality, as directed by the previous Committee, and hence the magazine was indeed fulfilling its role as an income stream, returning a small underspend each year to the BPA. The Chairman and the Treasurer said they believed that the Editor's expenses, which might also fluctuate seasonally, were not a matter for the BPA as this was a fixed price contract for services.

47.2 Contract fee

The Chairman had liaised with Lesley Gale since the last meeting (minute 38.4) on renewal of the annual Editorial Services Contract including the fee payable by the BPA for the services set out in the contract. He had also held a discussion with Lesley Gale and Debbie Carter, BPA Treasurer, immediately before this meeting. A fixed percentage increase on the fee had been discussed. The Chairman said he believed that, in addition, it would be appropriate for the Committee to incentivise the contract by introducing a new performance bonus for effective financial management of the Magazine.

With regard to the fixed element of the contract fee, the Treasurer reported that an inflation-linked increase would be 3 or 4%. Lesley Gale had initially requested a 50% increase in the budget submitted at the August and October meetings (not approved by the Committee); then reduced to a 33% increase in a revised budget, circulated to the Committee in advance of this meeting. As it had just been explained to Lesley Gale by the Treasurer and Chairman in their pre-Committee-meeting discussion that they would not support this magnitude of increase, she was now requesting 6% on the basis of increased costs, and because she would not benefit from any incentive based on the Magazine's financial performance until August 2008 (once the accounts had been completed for the financial year ending on 30 June). There was no proposal from around the table for a 6% increase. The Treasurer said it would be difficult to justify an increase greater than the 4% that the Council had awarded the BPA staff.

Eddie Jones therefore proposed, and David Ibbotson seconded, a motion that the contract fee should be increased by 4%.

Carried unanimously

The Committee then considered a new performance incentive. The Chairman said that last year there had been an underspend of £13,443 on the Magazine budget. Mike Rust asked if it had been an exceptional year. Lesley Gale agreed it was and tabled figures showing that this was 35% above the next highest figure, this was due to a healthy year for subscription and advertising income, combined with strict cost management. The figures showed the annual underspend for the last 10 years had averaged £5118.

Paul Ledden expressed concern that introducing an incentive based on a budget underspend might conflict with quality. The Chairman assured him that that quality standards were written into the contract. After considering the options, the Committee formulated a performance incentive

based on a gateway or trigger figure underspent on the Magazine budget. This was designed to benefit both the BPA and the Editor. The figure would be open to review as part of the annual contract re-negotiation.

The Treasurer believed that it would be appropriate to set the trigger figure not as the average annual underspend for the last 10 years, but for the last 3. This was £7725. The Committee decided, in fairness to Lesley Gale, to consider the range £5000 and £8000 (from the average annual underspend for the last 10 and 3 years respectively), and take the mid-point of £6,500.

Mike Rust therefore proposed, and Grant Richards seconded, a motion that any underspend of over £6500 on the approved budget for the Magazine in the next financial year should be allocated in equal 50-50 share between the BPA and Lesley Gale on completion of the Magazine accounts following the end of the financial year. Further, this figure should be reviewed annually.

Carried unanimously

This decision would now go forward for ratification by the full Council at its meeting tonight. Kieran Brady thanked Lesley Gale for allowing the BPA to look inside her business activity.

47.3 Contract wording

The Chairman said he had discussed the wording of the contract with Lesley Gale since the last meeting. He thanked her, and the BPA staff, who had put forward suggestions for the wording of various items in the contract. He had taken the opportunity to incorporate those suggestions he had considered to be appropriate, together with his own, in the latest draft (tabled), which otherwise reflected the existing contract (to October 2007). The Chairman's contribution had been to set out the contract in a more professional way, and to include a number of standard contract headings, based on his experience of business contracts. Lesley Gale said that she had seen this latest draft for the first time ten minutes before the meeting started, and would need time to read it and take professional advice. The Chairman said there was no rush. Lesley Gale said she welcomed the introductory section that the BPA staff had suggested, which set out more detail about the Magazine, especially as it had been submitted in good time. However, Lesley Gale said she felt uncomfortable in being invited to discuss, in any detail, a new draft of a contract that she had only just seen.

The Chairman said that once the general intent of each item in the contract had been agreed with Lesley Gale, he believed that it would be prudent for the BPA to run the document past an independent Human Resources Consultant he knew of through his work, who was skilled in such matters, to ensure that the wording was sound, before the contract was signed. He said this would not cost more than £150, which was a favourable rate he had negotiated through a contact. The Committee agreed the spend as this would be a prudent safeguard for both parties.

On this basis, the Committee considered the latest draft of the contract, page by page, with Lesley Gale. A number of variations were made at Lesley Gale's request, including deletion of the requirement for her to provide the BPA with accounts for her business and deletion of an item regarding possible conflict of interest because the Committee believed that this might unduly restrict Lesley Gale's freedom to work for other clients should she so wish. At the suggestion of the BPA staff, items on copyright of *Skydive the Mag* and data protection were added. Lesley Gale said she welcomed this as a helpful addition. Lesley Gale had previously requested a review of the provision for early termination of the contract and had requested six months, ie, three published magazines. The Chairman in the current draft had set this at four months, equal to two published issues of the Magazine, with the objective to be fair and reasonable to both parties - this had been agreed with Lesley Gale in a telephone call the preceding week.

Lesley Gale said that she would discuss the draft contract, as amended at this meeting, with her advisers. The Chairman said he would supply Lesley Gale with an updated draft for this purpose.

Action: Chairman and Lesley Gale

In the meantime, the Committee agreed with Lesley Gale that the last annual contract, to October 2007, would continue until the new contract was in place: and that the new contract would be backdated to run from October 2007.

48/07 Editorial Report

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

48.1 December 2007 issue

Lesley Gale said that the Magazine had been mailed out on schedule, on 29 November and most copies had now arrived. She said she would check on a few reports of non-receipt but that these had been received before the magazine was in fact due.

Action: Lesley Gale

Lesley Gale said that the feedback she had received on the issue had been positive. Members of the Committee provided feedback on various images and articles.

48.2 February 2008 issue

Lesley Gale outlined her plans for the content of the February 2008 issue, and the Committee was satisfied with this.

48.3 Complimentary mailing list

Lesley Gale reported that the distribution list for free-of-charge copies of the Magazine had been trimmed and taken into the Magazine office. This had been a long process, as discussed at previous meetings but was finally complete. She thanked the BPA Office for its assistance with this. It would help to cut costs. The complimentary copies list comprised mainly photographers, opinion formers and organisations. The Chairman asked that the list should be copied to Members of the Committee for review.

Action: Lesley Gale and BPA Office

49/07 Starter Magazine Reprint

Lesley Gale reported that the take-up of advertising by Affiliated Drop Zones had, to date, been disappointing. With advertising sales of £5,200, it so far accounted for only about one third of the revenue of £14,180 that would have been forecast from advertising sales from overseas Drop Zones, which the Committee had decided not to include in the next print run of the Starter Magazine (minute 40 refers).

It became clear that Warners Advertising Agency had perhaps not capitalised as much as it could have done on the next issue of the Starter Mag not containing advertisements from overseas non-Affiliated Drop Zones. This was, in the view of the committee based on liaison with Affiliated Drop Zone operators, a major selling point. Paul Moore suggested that a letter should be sent by the BPA to Affiliated Drop Zone Operators, and the Chairman said this was a good idea and he would write a letter on behalf of the Committee. Ross O'Loughlin from Warners would then follow up the letter with a phone call to each DZ, in either late December or early January. This would demonstrate the Chairman of Communications, the Committee and Warners Advertising working together. The deadline for advertising had extended by 4 weeks in order to try to make up the shortfall.

Action: Chairman & BPA Office

The Starter Mag would be in print by the next meeting, when it would be reviewed by the Committee, including the uptake of advertising.

Action: Next meeting

Lesley Gale invited feedback from Committee Members about the planned updates she outlined to the content of the next print run of the Starter Mag but stressed she would need any editorial input this side of Christmas.

Action: Committee Members

50/07 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

50.1 Online Membership Survey

Once feedback had been obtained from Committee Members about which of the draft questions to include and which to remove. The Chairman therefore asked the Office to re-circulate the questionnaire in its current draft. The next stage would be for the Chairman to review the draft questions for the online survey with Tony Butler and John Hitchen.

Action: Committee, Chairman and BPA Office

50.2 Enhancement of the BPA website

The Committee declared the entry to the BPA website front-end design competition submitted by Tom Urbanski (Membership No 971872) to be the clear winner, and asked that their congratulations should be conveyed to him by letter. The prize was a free-of-charge Membership of the BPA for the membership year beginning on 1 April 2008.

Action: BPA Office

The winning design would be used as the basis to brief web consultants to update the BPA website. This would be done in association with developments to the back-end functionality of the website, which was being looked after by the Development Committee.

50.3 BPA skydiving calendar 2008

The BPA skydiving calendar 2008 had been distributed free-of-charge with the December 2007 issue of *Skydive the Mag*.

Completed

50.4 Trial promotional DVD

Paul Ledden reported that he had tried hard to interest a number of non-skydiving magazines in sponsoring a trial promotional skydiving DVD for example as a free gift, but had so far drawn a blank. He had kept records of all he done in case he was not on the Committee next year.

Not yet achieved

50.5 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 was still progressing this, and would provide details in due course.

Action: David Ibbotson

51/07 UK Skydiver website

Paul Moore reported that he had spoken with Stu Ferguson of the UK Skydiver website (UKS) www.ukskydiver.co.uk. Some 1200 to 1300 individuals had now registered online with UKS. It was believed that around 70% to 80% of these were BPA Members. So probably about one fifth of BPA full Members were involved, which Paul Moore said was significant. For about a year, UKS had offered, among its many online forums, an unofficial BPA chat forum.

The Committee discussed whether or not the BPA website should offer its own chat forum, and whether or not the BPA should recognise UKS in some way. Martin Shuttleworth suggested that one possibility the Committee may wish to consider might be for the BPA to recognise the UKS BPA Forum as the unofficial BPA Forum. The consensus was that UKS was a good site that appeared to be a generally effective communicator with responsible moderation. However, Mike Rust believed it to be important that the BPA website should retain its separation and distinctiveness from UKS. He believed it was important for the BPA to continue to ensure that the BPA website remained the primary and authoritative public source of reliable safety information for the sport.

The Chairman said that a Communications Open Forum was planned on AGM Day, and it would be interesting to note whether there was any feedback from the membership about UKS, including its relationship with the BPA. For the present, the Committee was content to let things continue as they were.

No further action

52/07 Chairman's closing comments

As this was the last meeting of the year, the Chairman thanked the Committee, Editor and staff for their contributions over the past twelve months. The work of the Committee had covered a lot of ground and a range of initiatives. There had been many good ideas put forward and much constructive and insightful debate that signified that the Committee was fulfilling its purpose. The Chairman said he hoped to see those around the table again next year.

53/07 Date of next meeting

To be arranged at the AGM, to be scheduled at 1400 on the day of the February Council meeting (to be arranged).

The meeting closed at 1640.