

# British Parachute Association

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## Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Tuesday 7 October 2008 at 1310**

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

<b>Present:</b>	Adrian Bond Paul Applegate Paul Moore Craig Poxon Grant Richards Martin Soulsby	Communications Chairman  (from item 38.2.3)  (from item 38.2.3)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Tony Butler John Hitchen John Horne Lesley Gale Helen Lucas John Page Martin Shuttleworth Weed Stoodley	Technical Officer NCSO  Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i> Membership Services (from item 42) Secretary-General
<b>Observer:</b>	Kieran Brady David Hickling	(from item 42)
<b>Apologies for absence:</b>	David Ibbotson John Page	

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## Item Minute

### 36/08 Minutes

Grant Richards proposed, and Craig Poxon seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 19 August 2008 should be approved as a correct record.

**Approved**

### 37/08 Matters arising

#### 37.1 Competition for Mag readers (minute 30.3)

The Chairman asked Lesley Gale kindly to scope this out with Kieran Brady, who had put forward the idea, and report back to the next meeting.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

#### 37.2 Potential to generate additional income from the Mag website (minute 30.4)

Lesley Gale agreed there was potential to take more advertising on the Mag website and would discuss this in due course with the developers of the planned new website for the Mag (minute 42..2).

#### 37.3 Deadlines for Committee feedback (minute 30.7)

Lesley Gale asked that copy for the Mag should be supplied by the copy deadline set out in the already-circulated Mag production schedule, and about which she reminded regular contributors by e-mail. In particular, copy for the BPA matters page often came in late. If copy could not be submitted on time, she asked that contributors should kindly let her know.

### **37.2 Content of the August 2008 issue (minute 31.1.1)**

Lesley Gale said she agreed with Paul Moore that it had been important to maximise the content about British jumpers in the article in the August Mag about the Spanish Nationals. She said she had scrutinised over 300 photos but the choice of images featuring British jumpers was limited to those she published. Lesley Gale said she also agreed with Weed Stoodley's comments (as reported in the minutes) that it would have been good to have included more about the Honda jump and to have named the jumpers who had taken part. She said that as she was currently without an Editorial Assistant, the Magazine Office was 50% down on its workforce, so she had not spotted the omission in the text supplied to her, due to a high workload.

### **37.3 BPA Skydiving Calendar 2009 (minute 32.3)**

Lesley Gale reported that a call for images for consideration for use in the BPA Skydiving Calendar 2008 had been included in the October issue of the Mag.

### **37.4 Tender for Editorial services (minute 33)**

Lesley Gale reported that the current contract with Warners Group Publications for advertising in the Magazine was at 3 months' written notice of termination; hence the published decision date of April (minute 33/08 of the August meeting) would be too late to meet the changeover date of June 2009 if there were to be a change of advertising agency.

## **38/08 Editorial Report**

Lesley Gale had circulated her Editorial Report in advance.

### **38.1 October 2008 issue**

This issue had been published and distributed on schedule.

### **38.2 December issue**

The Committee was content with the list of possible articles for inclusion, these being a 'shopping list' with final selection being determined by the quality and timeliness of material available for publication.

### **38.3 Magazine website**

Lesley Gale reported that there had been significant teething problems with the transfer of hosting arrangements of the Mag website from the BPA's previous web consultants, to the BPA's new web consultants. This may well have been due to the dated technology of the Mag website, which was now ancient in terms of web technology. One of the problems on transfer had been that the search facility had stopped working. When a search facility had, after some time, been re-instated, it had not been as user-friendly as the original one. Lesley Gale said that she was continuing to discuss potential for improving the search facility with the BPA's new web consultants.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

## **39/08 Magazine budget**

### **39 1 Current budget format**

Lesley Gale said the financial year ended 30 June 2008 had been the financially the most successful year ever for the Magazine. This had been achieved by maximising income by further tightening the production schedule to take advertisement bookings as late as possible, and by her meeting more often with Warners Advertising Agency to identify potential new or additional advertising. Lesley Gale said she had given equal attention to managing costs, notably by negotiating a more economical print contract with Warners.

The draft budget for the current financial year ending on 30 June 2009 had been prepared by Lesley Gale and had previously been circulated. Discussion had been held over until this meeting (minute 31.2).

Lesley Gale said that the current budget had been based on last year's, generally with a 5% inflation-linked increase on expenditure.

The Chairman asked Lesley Gale to clarify the budgeted figure for print, which he believed was high compared with last year's actual. Lesley Gale said the print cost of each issue varied due to seasonality, for example the August issue had had 4 fewer pages than the October issue. The Chairman asked that the seasonal fluctuations in print costs should be fully reflected in the

budget, and Lesley Gale said she would be pleased to review the budget figure for print and report back to the next meeting.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

### **39 2 Possible new budget format**

The Chairman referred to a discussion paper from the Office about the format of the budget, which had been circulated with the agenda. This suggested a review of the format of the Magazine budget as part of work on reviewing the format of budgets that was in progress across the BPA.

Paul Applegate highlighted the Magazine element of the BPA Membership subscription, which had remained at £17.50 since 1998, and which formed the cornerstone of the annual budget for the Mag. At the last meeting (minute 31.2), Tony Butler, BPA Technical Officer, had suggested that rather than base the Mag's income on £17.50 multiplied by the number of Members, together advertising income, etc – which had returned a net underspend of about £20K in the last financial year – it might be more appropriate to budget for break even. Then subscription income could be used to make up the difference between the Magazine-generated income of advertising and non-member Magazine subscriptions, and the actual costs of publishing the Magazine.

In the sense that £17.50 per Member was put into the Magazine budget each year but in most years the outturn had been an underspend, there was a way of looking at this that suggested the amount of the annual Membership subscription actually applied to the Magazine was less than £17.50. Equally, it might be viewed that the full amount of the £17.50 Mag element of the subscription was applied to the Mag, and that any underspend against budget was a profit from Mag-generated income.

The Committee noted that the current format of the Mag budget was based on the £17.50 Magazine element of the annual BPA Membership subscription. The BPA was possibly unusual in breaking down its subscription into elements in this way, as many other membership bodies simply charged an annual subscription, some of which was used to produce their Magazine, and their Magazine was supplied free-of-charge to their Members as a benefit of membership. In such cases, other bodies' magazines would often have a cover price, and/or an annual subscription rate, for non-member subscribers.

The Chairman reported that he understood that the original decision, many years ago, to list the Magazine element as a separate element of the BPA membership subscription had been due to the different VAT treatment of membership subscriptions and magazine subscriptions.

Lesley Gale said that, since the Mag element of the subscription had always been put to the AGM for approval, so too should be any proposal to do away with separately itemizing it. Further, because the Membership had voted through the Magazine element of £17.50 for the current financial year, she believed the Committee was duty bound to retain the current budget format because it had been predicated on this arrangement.

The Committee saw merit, subject to it not having a adverse effect on the tax position, of combining the Mag and BPA elements of the subscription and showing them as a single figure. Craig Poxon proposed, and Grant Richards seconded, a motion to recommend to the Council that it should put to the AGM that the Magazine element of the annual BPA Membership subscription should in future be subsumed within the BPA element.

**Carried unanimously**

The above was subject to there being no adverse tax effect, on which Debbie Carter, Treasurer, and Jon Gretton, Financial Administrator, would be asked kindly to advise.

**Refer to Treasurer and Financial Administrator**

Paul Applegate asked about the effect of the above on Joint Membership, where two memberships were supplied together at a discount because both Members shared a single copy of the Mag. The Chairman assured him that suitable arrangements would be factored in to preserve the cost benefit of Joint Membership.

Lesley Gale raised concern about any change being made to the format of the current year's budget insofar as the performance incentive bonus was concerned. The bonus that had attached

to the Editorial Services contract during the last financial year ended 30 June 2008 had been calculated on the basis of the existing budget format. To change the format of the budget part-way through the current financial year would imply moving the goalposts in formulating an incentive arrangement for this financial year.

#### **40/08 Editorial Services Contract fee**

This item was held in camera with voting members and staff only, Lesley Gale and others left the room.

##### **40.1 Performance incentive**

The Chairman confirmed that it was not the intention of the Committee that any proposals for a change in the format of the Magazine budget should affect the basis on which any performance incentive bonus on the Editorial Services Contract should be formulated. These were two separate issues that had to be decoupled. The Committee would use the existing budget format to inform its consideration of the performance incentive bonus.

The Chairman called attention to the minute 47.2 of the meeting of this Committee held on 4 December 2007, a copy of which read:

***Extract from minute 47.2 of the meeting of the Communications Committee held on 4 December 2007***

*Mike Rust [...] 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*

The Chairman said that the matter now before the Committee was to conduct the annual review of the figure for the current financial year, 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009.

The Chairman referred to another extract from the minutes of this Committee's meeting on 4 December 2007 that set out how the trigger figure had been calculated for the performance bonus during the last financial year.

***Further extract from minute 47.2 of the meeting of the Communications Committee held on 4 December 2007***

*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.*

After discussion, Grant Richards proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the fair and logical thing to do would be to substitute updated actuals for the financial performance of the Magazine over the last 10 and 3 years. This would mean including the last financial year in place of the financial years of, respectively, 11 and 4 years ago. The mid-point of these averages would then become the trigger figure for the bonus for the financial year ending on 30 June 2009.

***Carried unanimously***

Substituting figures (subject to official calculation by Jon Gretton outside the meeting\*) into the equation, the new 10-year average was £6,380 and the 3-year average was £9,056, which gave a mid-point of £6,322 that would be the new trigger figure for the bonus.

[\*Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Jon Gretton BPA Financial Administrator, has officially calculated the figures as follows. 10 year average £5,668; 3 year average £9,359; midpoint = bonus trigger figure = £7,513.]

The Committee decided that, to be consistent, the split of any underspend above the trigger figure would remain at 50 / 50 between Lesley Gale and the BPA. Again as before, any underspend on the Mag budget below the trigger figure would be retained in its entirety by the BPA.

After discussion, Grant Richards proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion to put a cap on the maximum amount of bonus that would be payable under the incentive scheme, and set the cap at £10K which the Chairman noted was a high figure that it was unlikely to be reached. The vote was for - 4, against - 1 (Craig Poxon).

**Carried**

Any bonus due would be paid, as it had been this year, once the final accounts had been audited after the financial year-end on 30 June 2009. This meant that any bonus due would probably be paid during August 2009.

#### **40.2 Contract fee**

Paul Applegate proposed, and Grant Richards seconded, a motion that there should be a year-on-year increase of 3% in the Editorial Services Contract payable by the BPA during the current financial year ending on 30 June 2009.

**Carried unanimously**

The Chairman then ended the in-camera session and resumed the open meeting. Lesley Gale and others re-joined the meeting. The Chairman advised Lesley Gale of the Committee's decisions (which were subject to ratification by the full Council) recorded in minute 40.1 and 40.2 above. Lesley Gale thanked the Chairman.

#### **40.3 Mag website domain**

The Chairman reported that, during his discussions with Lesley Gale, had emerged that although the BPA owned the content of the Mag website, Lesley Gale had said that ownership of its URL/domain name [www.skydivemag.com](http://www.skydivemag.com) was hers as she had paid for it when it had first been established a decade or so ago. The Chairman said he hoped that the BPA and Lesley Gale to seek to negotiate, in due course, an agreement whereby the domain remained with the BPA Magazine irrespective of the outcome of the tender process.

**To be further discussed**

#### **41/08 Tender for Editorial services**

This item was held in camera with voting members and certain staff only, and others including Lesley Gale left the room.

The Chairman tabled a draft of the tender specification document that he had drafted and which he and Grant Richards had considered at a meeting this morning, with Tony Butler and Martin Shuttleworth from the staff had also attended that meeting. He asked all those present to treat the document as confidential. The Chairman introduced the document and asked for feedback after the meeting so that an updated draft could be circulated to the full Council ahead of the next Council and Committee meeting on 2 December.

**Action: Committee Members**

The tender document would be issued early in January 2009.

The Committee discussed contingency arrangements in the unlikely event that no tenders were received.

The invitation to tender document (circulated) had been published on 1 October. A reference to it had been made in the October Magazine, saying that it would be available for downloading from the BPA website and on request from the BPA Office. In addition, it was being sent out by post to potential publishing houses, etc. The Chairman said that Lesley Gale would be invited to tender. The invitation to tender sought notification of intent to tender to reach the BPA by 1700 on Friday 28 November 2008

The Committee noted that the draft tender document covered not only the printed Magazine but also its online presence. The contract to update the existing Mag website had been awarded to Hcoms (minute 25.2 of the meeting on 25 June 2008, subsequently ratified by the full Council). However, work on this had not yet started because the Committee wished Hcoms to concentrate on the new BPA website first. In view of possible new ideas for exploiting the Mag's online presence that bidders might propose, the Committee took the view that it would be appropriate to schedule the update of the new Mag website such that the appointed Editorial Services Contractor could work with Hcoms to develop it.

The Chairman declared the in-camera session at an end, the open meeting resumed and those who had left the meeting returned.

**42/08 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009**

**42.1 Publish a new BPA website**

The Chairman reported that work was continuing on honing the new BPA website ready to go live. The intention was to e-mail a link within the next week or so to the full Council for feedback before going live later this month or early next.

**Action: Chairman & BPA Office**

**42.2. Prepare to publish a new Mag website**

The Chairman reported that plans for the new Mag website would be considered at the completion of the first stage of development of the new BPA website, once the new BPA website phase 1 was up and running. An issue that had emerged with the BPA website was that of design input, and this would need to be considered before work started on the new Mag website.

**On hold**

**42.3 BPA Skydiving Calendar 2009**

Lesley Gale presented a first draft of the BPA Skydiving Calendar 2009, and discussed it with the Committee, which provided feedback. The themes were (i) celebrating of British skydiving achievements in 2008 and (ii) aspects of the sport. Lesley Gale was pleased to report that 10 of the 13 available advertising spaces had been sold to date, and she was confident that they would all sell ahead of publication. Lesley Gale said she would e-mail an updated draft to the Committee within the next few weeks. The Chairman thanked Lesley Gale for the work she was doing on the calendar.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

**42.4 Explore the feasibility of creating an historical image archive of British parachuting**

Martin Soulsby, who was spearheading this project, reported that the Lottery Heritage Fund had now published its new grant application form. He was currently completing the application online. Once submitted, it was likely to take at least eight weeks for the application to be processed and for a decision to be reached. The Chairman thanked Martin Soulsby for the work he was doing on this exciting new project.

**Action: Martin Soulsby**

**42.5 Investigate the possibility of introducing a new, more durable type of membership card**

The Chairman reported that he was in the process of investigating new, more durable, types of membership card. Martin Soulsby showed him an example of the card used at the Spa Drop Zone in Belgium, which was a credit card-sized plastic card with a barcode (but no photograph of the holder).

**Action: Adrian Bond**

**43/08 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 2 December 2008 at 1400 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester.

The meeting closed at 1630.