

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 23 June 2009 at 1210

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

Present:	Martin Soulsby Craig Poxon	Communications Chairman
In attendance:	Tony Butler Lesley Gale John Horne Helen Lucas Paul Moore Andy Scott Martin Shuttleworth	Technical Officer Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i> Vice Chairman of Council (from item 31) Administration Secretary (to item 20) Competitions Chairman Secretary-General
Apologies for absence:	Paul Applegate Adrian Bond Grant Richards John Hitchen	NCSO

Item Minute

23/09 Quoracy

The Office confirmed that the Communications Committee terms of reference (Form 191) stated that a quorum comprised 2 voting members present. This meeting was therefore quorate.

24/09 Minutes

The Committee noted that the minutes (circulated) of the meeting held on Wednesday 22 April 2009 had already been approved by the Committee, ratified electronically by the Council and published on the BPA website <http://www.bpa.org.uk/minutes>

25/09 Matters arising

25.1 Membership subscription (minute 15.4)

The Committee awaited confirmation from Jon Gretton (BPA Financial Administrator) that the BPA element of the membership subscription from the next renewal could include the cost of the Magazine, with a Magazine element being used only for internal accounting purposes.

Action: BPA Office (Jon Gretton)

25.2 Action Plan 2009-10 (minute 21)

Weed Stoodley had suggested that the cost of the BPA skydiving calendar 2010 (to be published with the December 2009 issue of 'Skydive the Mag') should be funded from the Communications Action Plan budget rather than BPA general running costs as proposed at the last meeting. After discussion, the Committee decided to keep to the status quo as the same arrangement had applied to the budget for the calendar over the last few years.

25.3 AGM 2010 questionnaire (minute 18)

Craig Poxon apologised for the delay in circulating the analysis of the 37 responses that had been received from Members to the electronic version of the questionnaire that had appeared on the front page of the BPA website. This was a greater number of replies than the 26 that had been returned in hard copy.

Action: Craig Poxon

26/08 Editorial services contract 2010-2

The Chairman said he had arranged to met Lesley Gale, Editor, with John Horne (Vice Chairman of Council) immediately after this meeting to draft the contract following Lesley Gale's successful tender (Council minute 28/09 refers).

Action: Chairman & Lesley Gale

27/09 Editorial Report

Lesley Gale had circulated her Editorial Report in advance. This included a draft list of possible contents for the August issue, final selection of which would depend on the quality of material available at copy deadline. The Magazine was on budget for the year ending 30 June. Although advertising income was down year-on-year, and by about £6K on budget, expenditure had been contained. All issues in this financial year had been 84pp, there had been no 92pp or 96pp issues, as there had been in better global economic conditions when advertising revenue had been more buoyant. Advertising across most if not all media had been affected by the economic downturn, so this was a good result given the prevailing economic circumstances. Lesley Gale said the outturn for the financial year would be in surplus, the exact figure to be confirmed once the accounts for the year had been finalised.

28/09 New mag website

Lesley Gale reported that a representative of Warners online was expected to attend the next meeting of this Committee on Tuesday 18 August to outline plans for the new Mag website. The existing legacy website continued to underperform due to technical incompatibility with the new web hosts. There were several areas of concern including the online subscription facility not working, which Lesley Gale said was losing potential income from Magazine-only subscribers. She would continue to pursue this and other issues with the BPA's web consultants, Hcoms.

Action: Lesley Gale / Next meeting

29/09 Starter Mag

Lesley Gale reported that about 10,000 of the run of 30,000 Starter Mags printed in February 2008 remained in stock. A reprint would be required for the start of the season next April. All but one UK Affiliated Centre took the Starter Mag. The one that did not had stated their reason was that other UK Drop Zones advertised in it (advertising by overseas Drop Zones was no longer included). The Chairman said that Grant Richards was keen on the idea of an electronic Starter Mag, which might even be personalised with for example a different 'local' cover for each Affiliated Centre. The Chairman deferred discussion until the next meeting when more Committee members would be present.

Action: Next meeting

30/09 AGM 2010

The Chairman reported that an impressive list of skydiving videographers, photographers and names in the skydiving media had kindly agreed to be judges of the BPA Skydiving Film Festival at the Blackpool AGM on Saturday 16 January 2010. They were: Jeff Zaltman, Wendy Smith, Willy Boeykens, Simon Ward, Lesley Gale, Andy Newell and himself, Martin Soulsby, as BPA Communications Chairman. Some of the judges would contribute online.

Adrian Bond reported in absentia that a comedian for evening entertainment might cost between £240-£440. Paul Moore was concerned that a comedian might be distracting. The Chairman said he would discuss this with Adrian Bond.

Action: Chairman

The Office reported that the BPA's insurance brokers, Manson Insurance Brokers of Manchester, had agreed in principle to sponsor a safety day at the Blackpool Hilton on Friday 15 January 2010, the day before the AGM. Tony Butler (Technical Officer) said that the morning session might be for Drop Zone Owners and Operators followed by a joint session for them and CCIs in the afternoon. The theme would be safety management systems. Preston-based Stuart Morris, co-owner of North West Parachute Centre and a professional health and safety practitioner, had kindly agreed in principle to facilitate the day.

Lesley Gale said the 2009 presentation ceremony had been too long and that some of the awards could have been presented during the Chairman's speech to make better use of time. The Committee agreed that the whole morning session needed to be shortened.

The Committee asked the office to publicise the special price of £2.80 per pint of lager or bitter or glass of house wine from the function room bar, as they believed this would prove popular with members. High bar prices had been the main complaint about AGMs held at Hinckley.

Consider further at next meeting

31/09 AGM 2011

The Office, through a venues agency, had identified a number of possible venues for the AGM in January 2011. The selection brief had been based on Craig Poxon's postcode analysis to find the minimum travel distance for members. The postcode with the lowest average travel distance, at 96 miles, was NN13 in Northamptonshire. The venue search was therefore specified as a 25 mile radius of NN13. After visiting four of the shortlisted venues, Martin Shuttleworth reported that the best combination of ease of access, facilities and value appeared to him to be the Barceló Daventry Hotel (NN11), a sister hotel to the Barceló Hinckley Island. Although smaller than the Hinckley Island, it had offered the BPA virtually the run of the hotel for AGM day. This included use of the hotel's atrium for the exhibition. The atrium had reception on one side and an open-plan bar on the other. A second opinion was needed on the venue, and therefore the Office would arrange with the hotel for the Chairman to visit on his way up to Leicester on the day of the next meeting, Tuesday 18 August.

Action: Chairman / BPA Office

32/09 Review of the role of Club Reps

After further discussion, the Committee agreed to retire the role of Club Reps, the concept of a Council rep visiting Centres was arguably something of an anachronism in these days of virtually instant electronic communication. Craig Poxon believed face-to-face contact was important and suggested an initiative to encourage representatives from Clubs & Centres to attend BPA meetings. In discussion the Committee noted that had always been an open invitation to all Members to attend BPA meetings as observers, yet few took it up except when there was an agenda item of specific interest to them. To encourage more Members to attend might require funding - but this might not be a wise application of limited funds. The Chairman believed that the BPA should launch on Facebook and Twitter, and the new Mag website might provide a good opportunity for this. Paul Moore said that UKSkydiver.co.uk (UKS) already provided online social networking for British skydivers, and he was concerned that any new initiatives by the BPA in this area might weaken UKS.

33/09 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009

33.1 Publish a new BPA website

Stage 1, the new BPA website, was now complete - Action Plan target achieved.

Target achieved

The Committee confirmed the date of the debrief with Hcoms, the BPA's web contractors, as Monday 27 July, when Craig Poxon would be available.

33.2 Prepare to publish a new Mag website

This was on hold pending the debrief on the new BPA website (minute 33.1) and a presentation by Warners online division to the next meeting on 18 August (minute 28).

On hold

33.3 BPA Skydiving Calendar 2009

Target achieved

33.4 Explore the feasibility of creating an historical image archive of British parachuting

The Chairman reported that work on this project was ongoing. He had received letters of support from the IPC and the RAeC Trust. The Army Parachute Association had recently been invited to consider whether it too might be able to provide a letter of support.

Action: Chairman

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

Adrian Bond reported in absentia that he had been in touch with David Russell, the Member who had kindly offered to sponsor higher quality plastic membership cards that might include additional identity and security features such as a photograph of the member. David Russell had suggested that there might be some form of crossover sponsorship by which his firm might consider matching any outlay by the BPA on new cards. He had suggested that the new cards might be used to help to promote a new BPA safety campaign.

In discussion, the Committee again noted that the current excellent turnaround times by the membership services staff at the BPA office could only be sustained if the facility to produce membership cards quickly and on-site was retained. The Committee believed this needed to be safeguarded, and that any new arrangements would need to take matching the existing turnaround time as a given. The cost of purchasing equipment to personalise plastic cards in-house was likely to be significant.

Any new features such as a photograph would generate additional work for BPA staff unless the process could be automated. If the incorporation of barcodes or other technological features was to be considered, there was the question of whether Clubs & Centres would make use of them. And lastly, there was the question of how durable a card that was re-issued each year really needed to be. For aesthetics, Members already had the option of a durable pictorial skydiving card in the BPA MBNA Skydiving Credit Card.

Linking a BPA safety campaign to the launch of new membership cards might be a complication as a new card would form only a part of such a campaign.

However, the Committee was most grateful for David Russell's kind offer of sponsorship. The Chairman would discuss the matter with Adrian Bond outside the meeting. There were many dimensions to this issue, some of them apparently conflicting.

Action: Chairman / Adrian Bond

34/09 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010

34.1 Feasibility study of high-level full-time marketing/communications/PR staff post

The Chairman and Adrian Bond would develop this idea.

Action: Chairman & Adrian Bond

34.2 Conduct online Membership Survey/s

The Chairman and Adrian Bond would progress this.

Action: Chairman & Adrian Bond

34.3 Publish a BPA Skydiving calendar 2010

Lesley Gale would produce this with input from the Committee, as usual. The calendar would be issued free-of-charge to Members as an insert to the December 2009 issue of 'Skydive the Mag'.

Action: Lesley Gale

34.4 Apply for a Heritage Lottery Grant to create an historical image archive of British parachuting

This was a continuation of a target from the last Action Plan year (minute 33.4) being progressed by the Chairman.

Action: Chairman

34.5 Harvest data on members' routes of entry to the sport

This would involve adding new tick-boxes about routes of entry on the conversion form, and recording such data on the new BPA Membership database, once this was available. Tony Butler said the conversion form was easily updated because the Office did not hold large stocks of printed forms. The Chairman and Craig Poxon agreed to consider what should be added.

Action: Chairman & Craig Poxon

34.6 Communications Action Plan grid

Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010

Target	From	To	By	How	Budget
1. Research the feasibility establishing a high-profile marketing staff post	No such staff post	Evaluation of return on investment were such a post to be created	June 2010	Consultation with stakeholders in the sport to determine whether, and if so how, such a new post might increase BPA Membership and help to drive the sport forward	£250
2. Conduct online membership survey/s	First online survey in 2008	New online survey/s	June 2010	Use commercial survey services, linked from BPA website	£250
3. Publish a BPA Skydiving calendar 2010	2009 calendar	2010 calendar	Dec 2009	Design calendar, sell advertising space, publish	£2,000 (from BPA running costs*)
4. Apply for a Heritage Lottery Grant to create an historical image archive of British parachuting	Positive feasibility study	Make a grant application	June 2010	Complete the Heritage Lottery Fund grant application process	£250
5. Harvest data on members' routes of entry to the sport	Limited data	Structured data to help to target membership recruitment initiatives	Feb 2010	Add tick-box options to conversion form and include relevant fields in new database	No additional budget required.

Available budget: £5980 Budget earmarked: £750

35/09 Libel insurance

Lesley Gale confirmed that the annual libel insurance policy had been renewed. This covered the Magazine and its associated publications, the Mag website and the BPA website.

36/09 The Conch website

The Chairman reported that he had been contacted by the Conch, a social networking website for the adventure sports community <http://beta.theconch.com/>. It was running a competition with a prize to be spent with brand partners (in our case, it would be the BPA Shop). The Chairman had therefore agreed that the BPA would be a brand partner, and could use the BPA logo on their site to signify this.

37/09 'Sorry you're leaving' letter

Andy Scott reported that USPA sent their members who did not renew a 'sorry you're leaving' letter inviting feedback on the reason why. He would liaise with Craig Poxon in case this might provide ideas for Craig Poxon's planned lapsed members survey (Development Committee minute 37.5 refers).

38/09 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 18 August 2009 at 1200 noon at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester

The meeting closed at 1335.

Ratified electronically by the Council and published on 13 July 2009