

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 20 April 2010 at 1200 noon

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

Present:	Martin Soulsby Paul Applegate Christopher Beattie Adrian Bond Craig Poxon Andy Scott	-	Communications Chair
In attendance:	Tony Butler Zoë Francis-Cox Kirsty Kelly Phil Sumner Martin Shuttleworth	- } -	Technical Officer Archant Dialogue Secretary-General
Apologies for absence	Lesley Gale John Hitchen	- -	Editor, Skydive the Mag NCSO

Item Minute

14/10 Minutes

The Committee noted that the minutes (circulated) of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2010 had already been approved by the Committee, ratified electronically by the Council and published on the BPA website <http://www.bpa.org.uk/minutes>

15/10 Matters arising

15.1 Starter Mag 2010 (minute 5)

Outturn figures circulated in advance by Lesley Gale gave the cost to the BPA as £3,609 for 25,000 copies (14.4 pence a copy), about £1K under budget.

15.2 Communication with members (minute 6)

Craig Poxon had sent Members an e-mail reminder about the BPA membership survey. The survey had shown a marked increase in its response rate (minute 18.2), especially after the e-mail. BPA on Facebook now had 1300 fans. BPA was also on Twitter.

As a further initiative, this meeting was being streamed live over the Internet as an experiment by Craig Poxon, using his own equipment so that it was at no cost to the BPA. For legal reasons, Members had to log in to be able to see it. During the in-camera session (minute 16), the audio would be muted and a screen caption displayed to explain why. If the trial was successful, adding a password-protected Members' area to the BPA website might be a prospective future development. For the planned online renewals, each Member would have an online account and could select e-mail preferences etc on that. **[Note:** Apologies that on today's trial, due to an error, the meeting was streamed live but not recorded for later viewing on demand.]

15.3 Events for promotion by Media co-ordinators (minute 6)

Andy Scott outlined events, including the Nationals, which he would call to the attention of Becca Armstrong and Rich Rust, honorary media co-ordinators, for press releases.

Andy Scott suggested that the BPA could consider using charity jumping to help promote first-time jumping. Tony Butler said the BPA's established position was that people should jump only if they wanted to. If jumpers felt under too much pressure to jump they might be less attentive to the safety briefing.

The Chairman said this raised the wider issue of whether the BPA should be involved at all in the recruitment of first-time jumpers, which was a policy matter for the Council. These issues would be considered as part of the target to consult on the development of a marketing and retention strategy for the sport in the next Communications Action Plan (minute 19, target 2).

16/10 Editorship and production management of the BPA Magazine

The Chairman said that this item was to be held in camera, and those other than Committee Members and BPA staff left the room. Craig Poxon muted the audio to the live stream.

16.1 Resignation of Lesley Gale

A resignation letter to Council dated 29 March from Lesley Gale, Editor of the Mag, had been circulated. The Committee had received it with great regret. The Chairman said that he and other Council Members had tried to persuade Lesley Gale to reconsider, but that she had decided that now, after 15 years as Editor, it was time for a change.

The Committee expressed their gratitude to Lesley Gale for her sterling contribution to the Mag. The Mag had grown and developed hugely under Lesley Gale's Editorship, which had been marked by her great passion and enthusiasm.

This Committee and the Council would have time to consider how to honour Lesley Gale's 15 years of service. The Chairman said that Lesley Gale would edit the June and August issues, and she had asked if she could leave after that, rather than produce 3 issues during her notice period as per her contract. The Chairman had this would depend on arrangements for her successor as Editor being able to be in post in time, see minute 16.2 below.

Lesley Gale was now working with contract publishers Archant Dialogue who had designed the new Mag website and were providing editorial assistance and selling advertising. They had been disappointed when Lesley Gale had told them of her decision to resign.

16.2 Arrangements for remainder of contract period

After discussion, the Committee decided that there was no reason to repeat the tender process for the current contract period as the BPA had already exercised due diligence.

An outline contract with Archant Dialogue Ltd had been negotiated by Adrian Bond (who tabled headings) at a favourable rate to the BPA, which included Archant printing and distributing the Mag, which were not included in Lesley Gale's current arrangements with them. Archant Dialogue would themselves contract a skydiving editor, subject to the BPA's agreement to the individual concerned. The plan was to advertise the position in the June issue, and ideally for the new appointee to be engaged in time to be involved with the August issue.

Andy Scott proposed, and Craig Poxon seconded, a motion that the BPA should engage Archant Dialogue Ltd as contract publishers for Skydive the Mag and associated offline (hard copy) BPA publications (the BPA would remain as publisher in all cases), based on contract terms that Adrian Bond was currently finalising with Archant Dialogue. This carried unanimously.

Recommend to Council

The representatives of Archant Dialogue were invited to re-join the meeting, and the audio feed to the live stream was restored. The Chairman briefed them on the outcome of the in-camera session.

17/10 Editorial Report

Lesley Gale had circulated her editorial report in advance (she was currently team training outside the UK).

17.1 New look Mag and new Mag website

The Chairman reported that the new look Mag for April, and the concurrent launch of the new Mag website, had been generally very well received. The 3D feature in particular had generated

much favourable comment. There had been teething problems on a Club News item, and another Club had issues about the Club Zone on the new Mag website. The Chairman requested that any Member who was unhappy with articles or Club News to please contact this Committee. He would write to Club Reps to encourage them to upload photographs and news items onto the new Mag website.

Action: Chairman

Andy Scott said the user acceptance testing of the new Mag website had been very good. He hoped that Club Reps would use the improved facilities to upload content. The Chairman agreed, noting that any Club that did not wish to make use of the Club Zone on the Mag website was under no obligation to do so. The Committee noted that one of the stories on the front page of the new Mag website was out of date.

The Committee also noted that the copyright credit for the April Mag read '© Lesley Gale and Skydive the Mag' whereas it should be '© British Parachute Association Ltd' as per the contract.

18/10 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010

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

The Chairman said that the BPA had established a very successful record in safety and training. Could this success be replicated in promotion of the sport, and if so how? The idea of establishing a high-level public and relations and marketing staff position was one way in which to seek to bring this about. This target was to consult with stakeholders about the way forward.

The Committee was aware of the view that recruitment was a matter for Clubs & Centres themselves, whereas retention within the sport was a proper concern of the BPA. This needed to be discussed with Drop Zone Operators, as did the issue of customer service at Drop Zones that, from the survey of lapsed members, appeared to be having a negative influence on retention rates.

Adrian Bond asked about return on investment for any new staff post. Tony Butler said that the BPA had just seen a year of significant membership growth (see Council minute 24.1). He said if a marketing person had been in post during the previous twelve months, the increase in membership would surely have been attributed to them. There may be limits to the growth that Centres could cope with. He believed that everything relating to recruitment should be done through Clubs & Centres. He said that a BPA staff post of Development Officer (covering sponsorship and press relations) had been tried three times over the years, with little or no enduring success.

The Committee decided that the idea of the BPA establishing a new high-level PR/marketing post should be one of the ideas for discussion when consulting with stakeholders on developing a marketing and retention strategy for the sport (minute 19, target 2).

Action: Consultation target in Action Plan

18.2 Conduct online Membership Survey/s

Adrian Bond reported that 780 members had responded to this survey, compared with 380 to the 2008 survey. A draw for the winner of the Olympus 850 SW digital camera prize, provided by Archant Dialogue, would take place at the Council meeting tonight. The results of the survey (circulated as an online link) would be posted on the BPA website.

Action: BPA Office

18.3 Publish a BPA Skydiving calendar 2010

Target achieved

18.4 Apply for a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Grant to create an historical image archive of British parachuting

Per minute 7.4, the target of applying for a HLF grant had been achieved. The application had unfortunately not been successful on first submission. HLF had provided feedback. The Chairman was planning to re-apply, which would involve considerable extra work. He was in touch with some teachers about how to enhance the educational value of the project.

Action: Chairman

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

Per minute 7.5, this would involve adding new tick-boxes about routes of entry on the conversion form to be recorded on the new/updated BPA Membership database, once this was available.

Action: Chairman & Craig Poxon

19/10 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011

The Committee recommended the following to the Council at its meeting tonight.

- 1 Develop a communications plan
 - 1.1 Communicate regularly with members by e-mail
 - 1.2 Run more regular shorter membership surveys each focusing on a specific theme
 - 1.3 Publish campaign posters to send to DZs on (i) BPA information; (ii) safety.
- 2 Contact stakeholders on developing a marketing and retention strategy for the sport.
- 3 Publish a BPA Skydiving calendar 2011.
- 4 Re-apply for a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant to create an historical image archive of parachuting in the UK.

Action: Recommend to Council

20/10 AGM

20.1 AGM Saturday 22 January 2011

Adrian Bond reported that the benefit of nearby alternative accommodation and food, which had been appreciated by members at this year's Blackpool AGM, was not available in Daventry. Therefore, Daventry was not after all a good location for 2011. The Committee agreed Adrian Bond's proposal to recommend to Council that the AGM on Saturday 22 January 2011 should now be held at the Hilton Coventry.

Adrian Bond suggested, and the Committee agreed, that a nominal charge should be made to exhibitors. Exhibition space was limited and instead would need to be paid to manage it.

Action: Recommend to Council Hilton Coventry for AGM 2011

20.2 AGM 2012

Adrian Bond reported that Ray Armstrong's contact at the De Vere Hotels Group had been excellent. Adrian Bond had been able to negotiate a deal for the 2012 AGM at De Vere Whites at the Reebok Stadium (Bolton Wanderers) at Horwich, at a price match for the Blackpool Hilton in 2010 including fixed-price drinks. Andy Scott had said that availability would depend on the football fixtures, which were not likely to be known until summer 2011. The Committee agreed to recommend this venue in principle to the Council, subject to further research. Adrian Bond said he would arrange a facilities visit for himself and Martin Shuttleworth.

Action: Adrian Bond

21/10 Unauthorised use of the BPA logo

A case of unauthorised use of the BPA logo by a non-Affiliated overseas centre had been circulated with the agenda. The logo had not yet been taken down from the website. One of the BPA-qualified instructors at the Centre had verbally abused a member of BPA staff by telephone (Council minute 32 refers). The Committee agreed that the Centre should again be requested to remove the BPA logo from their website.

Action: BPA Office

22/10 Live streaming

Craig Poxon reported that 14 subscribers had been online at the start of the live streaming of this meeting, and four at the end. The Committee confirmed it would repeat the trial at the next meeting, and thanked Craig Poxon for use of his equipment.

Action: Craig Poxon

23/10 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays 22 June, 17 August, 12 October and 7 December at 1200 noon at the BPA Office, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester LE2 9TF.

The meeting closed at 1420.

Ratified by the Council and published on 7 May 2010.