

British Parachute Association

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The Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Tuesday 23 April 2002 at 1830
at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Chris Allen	-	Chairman
	Paul Applegate		
	Kieran Brady	-	Communications Chairman
	Eddie Jones		
	Ian Marshall		
	John Smyth	-	Vice Chairman/ Competitions Chairman
	Craig Poxon		
	Jim White		
In attendance:	Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	-	Treasurer
	John Hitchen	-	NCSO / STC Chairman
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	National Administrator
	Lucie Wood		Development Officer
Observers:	Allan Hewitt		
	Nick Lupton	-	Team 4-Pak
Apologies for absence:	David Hickling		
	Ian Midgley	-	Development Chairman

Item Minute

22/02 Minutes

Paul Applegate proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 19 February 2002, should be accepted as a true record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

23/02 Matters arising

23.1 Re-write of Reserve Packing and Rigging Manual (minute 8.1)

The Chairman reported that Allan Hewitt had now returned the Association's payment of £7050. He had therefore been eligible to renew his BPA Membership, and had done so. The Chairman said that Allan Hewitt was present this evening, and invited him to set out his position to the Council.

Allan Hewitt explained that he had undertaken a great deal of work on the Manual, to an updated syllabus that had been approved by the Riggers' Subcommittee. The Manual was on compact disc, and included the BPA Safety Notice Database, which was now being used

by every advanced packer. 87 advanced packers had qualified using the new syllabus and manual, so its worth had been validated in practice by the four courses a year that had been used to test the material. The only part remaining to be tested was that for basic riggers, and this would be done at the next basic riggers' course during May. Allan Hewitt apologised for being late in delivering the material, but assured the Council of the volume and quality of the work that he had carried out. He appreciated why the Riggers Subcommittee had not been fully aware of this work, because so much of it had been used for riggers' courses, which members of the Riggers' Subcommittee - as qualified riggers - did not of course themselves attend. In the light of the progress made, he asked the Council to consider repaying him £6000 now with the balance of £2000 (to the originally-agreed fee of £8000) on submission of the finished material. However, this suggestion failed to find a proposer.

The Chairman invited Paul Applegate (Chairman, Riggers' Subcommittee) to outline his Subcommittee's concerns. Paul Applegate said that the work that had been commissioned had been to prepare a Reserve Packing and Rigging Manual and, notwithstanding the work that Allan Hewitt had done, the position remained that no such manual had yet been delivered as promised to the Riggers' Subcommittee. The Subcommittee could no longer keep waiting as it was now some four years since the project had been commissioned and deadlines for completion had come and gone with no end in sight.

In discussion, there emerged an issue about whether the re-written manual should be in hard copy format or on compact disc. Allan Hewitt said that it would be highly impracticable to conceive of the safety notice database that accompanied the manual, to be in a hard copy rather than electronic format because of the sheer volume of material it contained. However, Paul Applegate said that many riggers had little or no easy or regular access to computers in the field and relied on their manual in hard copy. The Chairman said there was clearly a need for liaison between Allan Hewitt and the Riggers' Subcommittee over the question of the format or formats for the material, but he did not see that this should present a major problem.

After further discussion, John Smyth proposed that Allan Hewitt should submit the work he had done to the next Riggers' Subcommittee on CD and, for the manual, in hard copy. If the Subcommittee was satisfied with the work, the Council would authorise the repayment of the sum previously paid to Allan Hewitt; together with the balance, subject of course to the work being satisfactorily completed. (Paul Applegate confirmed that the Manual could be a main agenda item for the next Riggers' Subcommittee, to avoid any undue delay in considering the material submitted.) Eddie Jones seconded the motion and the vote was:

For - 6 Against - 0 Abstention - 1 (Paul Applegate)

Carried

23.2 BPA representative to Sport England Northern Region (minute 8.3)

John Smyth proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that Chris Francis be invited to succeed Tim Andrewes (who had recently moved to Spain) as the BPA's representative to Sport England's Northern Region.

Carried unanimously

23.3 BPA Action Plan: 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003

A copy of the BPA Action Plan for 2002/3, as submitted to UK Sport last month, was tabled. The Chairman emphasised that this was an active document that should be referred to at every committee meeting, and not be consigned to the bookshelf. He reported that UK Sport was expected to notify the BPA during May 2002 of whether or not its application for grant aid for the next financial year (starting on 1 July 2002) had been successful, and if so the amount of any grant together with any specification on its use.

24/02 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees

The minutes of each of the following meetings had been circulated in advance.

24.1 Development Committee meeting on 19 February 2002

Kieran Brady proposed, and Craig Poxon seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 19 February 2002 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

24.2 Communications Committee meeting on 19 February 2002

Kieran Brady proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 19 February 2002 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

24.3 Competitions Committee meetings on 6 March and 3 April 2002

John Smyth highlighted key areas arising from the above two meetings of the Competitions Committee.

24.3.1 Accommodation for the National Team at WPC 2003 Mondial, Gap, France

The Council was already aware (minute 9.4) of the prospect of an acute shortage of accommodation at WPC 2003 in Gap. The Office had researched a number of possible accommodation options, which had been considered by the Competitions Committee. The Committee was now recommending to the Council that a block booking should be made for bed and breakfast only (*not* half board) for the GB team at the two-star Hotel Carina in Gap, to cover both the training week and the competition week. The cost would be recovered from the self-funded team members. However, it was necessary for the BPA to pay a deposit of approximately £1,800 by February 2003 to secure the booking. In the absence of any questions, the Chairman said that ratification of the minutes of the Competitions Committee's meeting of 30 March 2002 would give official sanction for this deposit to be paid.

24.3.2 Funding criteria for FS

The Competitions Committee had discussed at length the funding criteria for FS. The benchmark of a performance equal or better to fourth place at the last world championships had of course been accepted. However, IPC had changed the dive pools this year and there was anecdotal evidence that this had slowed down the blocks, which was reported to be the stated intention of IPC. Nick Lupton of Team 4-Pak spoke in support of a paper by Team VNE (circulated) that argued for the slowing down of the blocks to be taken into consideration by the BPA in setting the performance criteria for funding. The Competitions Committee had indeed taken this into account and was recommending to the Council that for FS 4-way and 4-way women, the performance criteria should be set at an average score of 0.50 less than the actual average scored for fourth place at WAG 2001, that is 19.40 for 4-way (WAG 4th place score 19.90) and 13.60 for 4-way women (WAG 4th place score 14.10); and for FS 8-way, teams should be required to achieve an average score of 1.00 less than the actual average scored for fourth place at WAG 2001, that is an average score of 12.00 (compared with 13.00 at WAG 2001).

After discussion, the Chairman said it would be prudent for everyone to await more reliable empirical evidence to seek to quantify any slow down in the blocks. The evidence to date was from the Valentine's meet in the USA - an off-year weekend meet during the winter when new team members were still bedding in. A more equitable comparator would be performance at the FS World Cup 2002. John Smyth therefore proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that to be as fair as possible, the exact 4th place average scores at WAG 2001 should be published as the performance criteria for funding, with the caveat that these would be revisited in the light of the new blocks in operation at the World Cup 2002 to be held at Empuriabrava in October.

Carried unanimously

24.3.3 Minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting on 6 March 2002

John Smyth then proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Competitions Committee held on 6 March 2002 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

24.3.4 Swoop Canopies Competition

John Smyth highlighted this proposed new trial competition in the minutes of the Competitions Committee held on 3 April 2002. He reported that all key personnel were now in discussion about the proposed Swoop Canopies competition, which John Smyth was keen to develop to link with an Accuracy Landing competition in a combined event next year. On the grounds of safety, the proposed test event this year at Target (to whom he was very grateful for offering to host the competition) would be preceded by a coaching session and open only to those deemed competent, and therefore safe, to compete by the CCI, meet director and coaches, etc. Kieran Brady said that should there be any problem in Target obtaining planning permission for its water trench, or in the construction of the trench, Strathallan already had access to a trench and would be pleased to offer this facility for the competition. John Smyth expressed his thanks, and said that he hoped in any case after a successful trial, Swoop Canopies competitions would be rolled out to other Drop Zones.

24.3.5 Anti-Doping Policy and Rules

John Smyth then highlighted the Competition's Committees discussion on 3 April about the BPA's implementation of UK Sport's updated National Anti-Doping Policy, which was based on international standards. These were crystallised in draft Form 220: BPA Anti-Doping Policy and Rules, which had been circulated with the agenda. He confirmed that Dr John Carter, the BPA's Medical Adviser, had been consulted most especially on the BPA-specific parts of this document, which were the first page and the Appendix of prohibited and restricted substances and prohibited methods. The Rules closely followed guidance from UK Sport. Implementation of the policy was a condition of continuing support and recognition of the BPA as a National Governing Body by UK Sport. Competitors would be subject to random drugs testing by an agency appointed by UK Sport, including out-of-competition testing (ie, during training camps, including those outside the UK) for funded athletes only. A positive test result would invoke a disciplinary procedure for which the machinery would comprise an initial review panel, disciplinary committee and appeal panel. It was envisaged that the Competitions Committee would form the initial review panel, an independent disciplinary committee would be convened, and the BPA Council would act as the appeals panel, as it already did in other disciplinary matters.

John Smyth pointed out that ratification of the minutes would confirm immediate implementation of the provisions set out in Form 220, as recommended by the Competitions Committee. He thanked Martin Shuttleworth for his work in tailoring the UK Sport guidelines to meet the specific requirements of the BPA.

24.3.6 National and Regional Competition Rules 2002

Reference to the updated Anti-Doping Policy and Rules had been made in the National and Regional competition Rules (the final drafts of which had been circulated with the agenda), and signatures of acceptance by competitors were required on the entry forms for the Nationals to acknowledge that they were subject to random drug tests at the competition. The Chairman asked that the attention of host Drop Zones for the Nationals be called to the need to ensure that the appropriate forms were signed as a pre-condition of entry to the competition. Ratification of the minutes would confirm acceptance of the rules (subject to insertion of the funding criteria for FS as set out at minute 24.3.2 above).

24.3.7 Delegated authority to deal with routine, non-financial, competitions matters

John Smyth summarised the discussion that had taken place at the Competitions Committee on 3 April about an apparent mismatch between the dates of Council meetings, when decisions were ratified, and the dates of publication of *Skydive Magazine*, which was an important medium for the communication of decisions to Members.

Kieran Brady said that the Communications Committee had considered sympathetically the Competitions Committee's request for assistance in better co-ordinating the dates next year. However, the publication date of the February issue, which tied in well with the AGM and the inaugural Council meeting each year, was determined by the need to issue Membership Renewal Forms (which were inserted into the Magazine) by no later than the middle of that month. In turn this set the pattern of bi-monthly publication dates for the rest of the year. It

was probably important to have a regular pattern to publication dates so Members knew when to expect the Magazine, rather than publish at different times during different months, which might then appear to be almost random and unplanned.

John Smyth accepted this, and thanked Kieran Brady for his kind consideration of the problem. The Chairman noted that the Competitions Committee had also proposed an alternative solution, which was for the Council formally to delegate to that Committee authority to decide on routine competitions matters that did not involve any new or additional expenditure. This would avoid the need for the Committee to have to wait, sometimes for a month or six weeks, for the Council to formally to ratify the publication of dates, dive pools, or other routine competitions matters. The Committee would still be held fully accountable for its decisions by the Council, and any variations to policy, and of course requests for funding, would still need first to be formally proposed to the Council in the normal manner. The aim was simply to remove a sometimes tiresome bureaucratic barrier that got in the way of the Committee actioning routine matters within its scope as quickly and efficiently as it could. Kieran Brady said that if the Competitions Committee believed this was for the good of the sport, he had no hesitation in supporting it. In response to a question by John Smyth, Kieran Brady confirmed that a point he had raised at the last meeting (minute 9.4) about publication of the date of a Skills Coaching Roadshow on an Internet newsgroup had not in fact centred on release of the date before ratification by the Council, but the first promulgation of the date by a source other than an official BPA channel of communication. John Smyth appreciated this concern, and believed that the delegated authority with which the Council was about to entrust the Competitions Committee would enable the BPA to be more proactive and publish information more quickly on its own website.

Jim White reported that he had arranged the final FS Skills Coaching Roadshow of the season for September, with XL as coaches. Details were about to be published.

Finally, John Smyth thanked the small but extremely active Competitions Committee for their hard work during the year to date. It had been an exceptional year, with two Committee members standing down early on for different employment-related reasons, which had left the Committee under-strength numerically, yet productively it had been particularly strong.

24.3.8 Minutes of the Competitions Committee held on 3 April 2002

John Smyth proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Competitions Committee held on 3 April 2002 be ratified. This included, specifically, (i) ratification of BPA Form 220 - BPA Anti-Doping Policy and Rules; (ii) ratification of the National and Regional Competition Rules 2002; and (iii) delegation of authority by the Council to the Competitions Committee to action routine competitions matters, not involving policy variations or requests for funding, without having to wait for ratification by the next Council meeting, but subject always to retaining full accountability to the Council.

Carried unanimously

24.4 Minutes of the STC meeting on Thursday 11 April 2002

John Hitchen (Chairman, STC), highlighted key issues in the above minutes. The Panel on RAPS Safety chaired by David Hickling had now become a working group and was making steady progress. The Riggers' Subcommittee had recommended to STC the suspension of a Parachute Rigger and Advanced Packer ratings of a Rigger abroad, exceptionally on the basis of his written evidence and without him attending in person (which was logistically awkward), subject to his agreement to the matter being dealt with in his absence. STC had been saddened to hear of the fatal accident to Pete Lambson on 30 March 2002. The Board of Inquiry into this accident had recommended to STC that no Panel of Inquiry should be convened on this occasion, and STC had accepted this recommendation.

Paul Applegate then proposed, and Jim White seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of STC on Thursday 11 April 2002 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

25/02 Reports on meetings held earlier today

25.1 Communications Committee

Kieran Brady reported that this afternoon's meeting of the Communications Committee had considered the final plans for the second printing of the Starter Magazine, which was now imminent. It had also supported plans by the Development Officer to place a banner advertisement on the BPA website to promote banner advertising. Lastly, it had started to think about slight variations to the BPA's *Freedom of the Skies* brochure, which would need to be re-printed as present stocks were becoming depleted.

25.2 Development Committee

Kieran Brady had chaired the Development Committee in Ian Midgley's absence. The Committee had agreed to purchase a new desktop computer terminal costing approximately £1400 for the Development Officer. This was to overcome problems of her existing laptop terminal, including poor ergonomics for sustained desktop use and lack of full compatibility with the office computer network.

26/02 Club Reps

26.1 Southern

Craig Poxon (Southern Rep) reported on a visit to Hinton Skydiving Club. He said that several members had asked him about an apparently harsh sanction by STC against a former CCI, who had had his ratings removed for 10 years and a lifetime ban on being a CCI. The Chairman assured the meeting that the sanctions had been fully justified and could not be considered harsh by any reasonable person in possession of the full facts of this exceptional case.

Among the other subjects that had been raised with Craig Poxon during his visit was the role and function of the Technical Officer (TO) and NCSO - who were employed staff of the Association, in contrast with Council Members who were annually elected directors/officers who served unremunerated in a voluntary capacity. The Chairman said the roles of all members of the Association's staff were summarised on the BPA pages of the second printing of the Starter Magazine, to which enquirers were welcome to refer. The TO and NCSO confirmed that they would be happy to discuss their duties in more detail with any Member who may care to telephone them. The Council noted that the duties of the TO and NCSO, which were key posts of critical significance to the safe enjoyment of the sport, inevitably involved them in regulatory and disciplinary matters that might not always prove popular with those being regulated or disciplined. Kieran Brady assured the TO and NCSO of the Council's mature understanding and sincere appreciation of the hard work they carried out for the Association, together with the Council's empathy with its sometimes thankless nature.

Other matters raised with Craig Poxon had included a request for more electronic formats of downloadable documents from the website. This was referred to Lucie Wood, who said an extension in the available formats was already on her wish list. However, it would involve considerable additional work and therefore cost which had to justify itself against other, sometimes more pressing, website development work, for which finite resources were available.

The Chairman thanked Craig Poxon for undertaking the visit, and asked him kindly to report back to the Centre on the points that had been raised.

26.2 Northern

Kieran Brady (Joint Northern Club Rep) reported that two DZ's in his region, Brunton and Errol, had sought his assistance in preparation for DZ inspections, which he had agreed to provide.

27/02 Report on the Royal Aero Club

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to RAeC) said that the April RAeC Council meeting had unfortunately been coincident with this BPA Council meeting, this clash of time and date meaning that he and Ian Marshall (Alternate Delegate) could not attend both.

The annual invoice to the BPA for Membership of RAeC was expected soon. In discussion the consensus emerged that it would be difficult for RAeC to justify an increase above the level of inflation on last year's fee of £4,307. It was therefore agreed to pay an inflation-linked increase, but that anything more than this would need to be justified by RAeC to the BPA in terms of an improvement to, or extension of, the RAeC's service.

Ian Marshall had attended the recent RAeC Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony at which he had also been pleased to have the support of the Chairman and the Technical Officer, who had also attended. Lofty Thomas, the BPA's longest-serving Council Member until his retirement in 2001, had been presented with a silver medal and Alistair Hodgson, a skydiving double amputee, with a bronze medal. Polly Vacher had also been presented with an award for flying round the world. Ian Marshall said that it had been a memorable and rather emotional evening. The Chairman noted that Alistair Hodgson had commanded loud applause for his resolve and courage.

Notice had been received from RAeC about a possible threat from a European Directive to the '28 day rule', and the need to lobby DTER in writing to help to stave off this threat. The Council decided, at the suggestion of John Hitchen, to e-mail the notice tomorrow to all Clubs and Centres to give them the opportunity to make representation direct to DTER if they so wished.

Action: BPA Office

28/02 Application for Re-Affiliation: Border Parachute Centre

Change of CCI to George McGuinness and change of Director to Chris Francis. The re-Affiliation of Border Parachute Centre was proposed by Eddie Jones and seconded by Paul Applegate.

Carried unanimously

29/02 Re-Affiliation procedure

Tony Butler asked whether the Council wished to continue to require Clubs and Centres formally to re-Affiliate consequent upon a change in their CCI. He said that BPA staff would in any case call to the attention of Council any specific issues relating to particular changes. The Chairman said that rather than take a decision now, he would be pleased for the Council to consider any revised procedure that Tony Butler may wish to put forward to a future meeting.

30/02 Dates of future meetings in 2002

Tuesdays at 1830 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 18 June, 20 August, 22 October, 10 December (EGM & Council). Following meetings, for those involved, of the Communications Committee at 1400 and the Development Committee at 1600 at the same venue and on the same days.

The meeting closed at 2015