

British Parachute Association

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The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 19 August 2003 at 1830

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

Present:	Chris Allen	Chairman
	Paul Applegate	
	Calvin Blacker	
	Kieran Brady	Development Chairman
	Billy Gollan	
	Nigel Holland	
	Eddie Jones	Communications Chairman
	Ian Marshall	
	Ian Midgley	
	John Smyth	Vice Chairman/Competitions Chairman
In attendance:	Tony Butler	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	Treasurer
	Lesley Gale	Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i>
	Jon Gretton	Financial Administrator (to item 44)
	Lisbeth Harris	
	Proprietor of Fliteline	from item 45.3
	John Hitchen	NCSO
	Ronnie O'Brien	from item 45.3
	Martin Shuttleworth	Secretary-General
Apologies for absence:	Ralph Fielding	
	David Hickling	
	Jim White	

Item Minute

42/03 Minutes

John Smyth proposed, and Billy Gollan seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 June 2003 be accepted as a correct record.

Approved

43/03 Matter arising: Photographs submitted to Skydive Magazine (page 3, item 34.3)

Lesley Gale wished it to be noted that that by far the majority of photographs submitted for the *Club News* section of the Magazine were used, unless there were too many from the same Club. If photographs submitted for other parts of the Magazine were not used, usually because of a problem with the quality of the image, it was open to the photographers to contact the Magazine to find out exactly why. Guidelines to photographers were available on the Magazine website. The Chairman suggested that Lesley Gale might consider publishing an article in a future issue of the Magazine as a reminder.

Action: Lesley Gale

44/03 Audited accounts for the year ended 30 June 2003

The audited BPA Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2003 had been circulated in advance. There being no questions, Ian Midgley proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the accounts should be published as an insert to the October 2003 issue of *Skydive Magazine* ahead of formal consideration at the EGM on Tuesday 2 December 2003.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman asked whether the use of illustrative pie charts and/or an extended introduction might help to explain the accounts to non-specialists in finance. Lesley Gale said she would liaise with Debbie Carter and Jon Gretton on this.

Action: Lesley Gale

45/03 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees

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

45.1 Development Committee meeting on 17 June 2003

Kieran Brady (Development Chairman) proposed, and Billy Gollan seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 17 June 2003 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

45.2 Communications Committee meeting on 17 June 2003

Eddie Jones (Communications Chairman) proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 17 June 2003 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

45.3 Minutes of the STC meeting on Thursday 7 August 2003

John Hitchen (STC Chairman) reported on a typographical error in Section 11 Medical, paragraph 2.1, in an amendment to the Operations Manual attached to the minutes of the STC meeting held on 5 August 2003. This stated in error the maximum age for static line students with no previous experience as 50 years, whereas it should have stated 55 years.

Letters from Mick Nealis and David Hickling had been circulated ahead of the meeting. They related to STC minute 6(a) concerning the Report of the Panel of Inquiry into the Fatal Accident of Francis Charles Simmons, specifically that jumping continued after the fatality, and after the BPA Technical Officer had informed the CCI that he required parachuting to be suspended.

After discussion, Kieran Brady proposed, and John Smyth seconded, a motion that the Recommendation of the above Panel of Inquiry be accepted; and, at the same time, the letters received from Mick Nealis and David Hickling with reference to minute 6(a) should be referred to STC for consideration. This carried unanimously.

Action: STC

Lesley Gale asked for reconsideration of STC's decision to abolish the AFF Basic Instructors' rating. Tony Butler said that only about 4 or 5 candidates had come forward for the AFF BI course during the past five years. Of these, the ground schooling of most had not been up to the required standard. Abolition of the course was what the majority of STC wanted. Kieran Brady said that instructional matters were for STC to decide upon, and that STC had his full support in this matter. He considered that the proper channel of communication for any jumpers who were concerned by this decision, which had not yet been published pending ratification by this meeting of the Council, was that they should make representations through their CCI.

Paul Applegate then proposed, and Ian Midgley seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of STC held on 7 August 2003 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

Paul Applegate then raised an item in connection with the Riggers' Subcommittee meeting held on 7 August 2003. This concerned Allan Hewitt's request to run BPA courses for

packers, riggers, examiners, etc at his Drop Zone in Spain. The proposed courses would be run for British Nationals under BPA criteria, and participants would need to have their own insurance whilst outside the UK. The Riggers' Subcommittee had been content with the proposed arrangements, but the NCSO and Technical Officer had asked that the matter be called to the attention of the Council not because they had any specific technical concern, but because of the point of principle that to authorise BPA courses to run outside the UK (other than at UK military bases overseas, which were still on UK sovereign soil) was a change in policy that only the Council could sanction.

In discussion it became clear that STC had not yet discussed this matter in any detail. Kieran Brady therefore proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the Council should not reach a decision on the matter until the views of STC were known.

Carried - Action: Refer to STC

45.4 Minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 8 July 2003

John Smyth highlighted the item on judging matters in page 5 of the minutes. In this, the Competitions Committee had recorded its concern over IPC's policy on the selection of judges for top international meets. The Committee believed this to be unduly restrictive and was concerned that it would lead to a small élite of judges, with few opportunities for access by new international judges. This was evidenced by the cancellation of judges' seminars at the World Cup in 2002 and now at the Mondial 2003. The Committee had therefore recommended, subject to ratification by the full Council, that part of the funding earmarked in the Competitions Action Plan for training international judges, should be used to sponsor Kate Charters, BPA Judges' Co-ordinator, or her nominee, to go to the next IPC meeting to argue the case for reversion to more open access arrangements.

There followed a discussion about the need to send a fourth person to IPC when already John Hitchen (UK Delegate to IPC), Bob Card (UK Alternate Delegate to IPC) and John Smyth were planning to go. John Smyth said that the case for Kate Charters to go was a strong one because she had extensive specialist knowledge and would be likely to be most effective in lobbying delegates. There was known to be a proposal from Denmark for IPC to introduce new judges at each world meet, and it was important for the UK to drum up as much support for this as possible, otherwise the future for international judges from the UK could become very bleak indeed.

John Smyth proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that Kate Charters or her nominee should be sponsored by the BPA to go to the IPC meeting in Lisbon in January 2004 to lobby for a reversion to more open access arrangements for international judges. Sponsorship would be from the funding already allocated to training for new international judges. The voting was:

For - 6 Abstentions - 3 Against - 0 **Carried**

John Smyth also highlighted the following points from the minutes.

- 1 The Competitions Committee was obtaining quotations for the possible purchase of an Accuracy tuffet. It would then consider whether or not to include such a purchase in next year's Competitions Action Plan.
- 2 52 teams had entered this year's FS nationals at Target Skysports, Hibaldstow, making it the largest Nationals ever. The 4-way, 4-way women's, 8-way and Freestyle records had all been broken at this outstandingly successful meet.
- 3 John Smyth was continuing in his efforts to obtain corporate sponsorship for the next world meet. It was a long and hard process, but he was pursuing it with vigour.

John Smyth then proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 8 July 2003 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

Nigel Holland then spoke on his own behalf to make a direct request to Council for BPA funding of £3K to attend the Mondial 2003 for the National Champion Freely Team *Freejive*. He said that the team had set a new British record and that their performance this year would have been of Gold Medal standard had it been achieved at the European Championships in 2002 (although the Chairman asked whether the judging rules had changed). The team had strongly supported the BPA Skills Coaching Roadshow programme and had supervised some 100 coached training jumps. Nigel Holland said he was convinced that the team could bring home a medal from the Mondial and he knew that many BPA members were keen to see the BPA sponsor the team. The Chairman confirmed that the BPA wished to see as many eligible teams as possible entering World Championships, and would never, unless on safety grounds, wish to stop people entering; but the issue here was specifically about funding.

John Smyth set out the position of the Competitions Committee, which was that, unfortunately, team *Freejive* had not met the criteria for BPA funding. The team had not taken part in the World Cup in 2002. The team had attended only two Nationals. By contrast, the teams that had met the BPA's funding criteria had been regular competitors at the Nationals and had planned and carried out a demanding structured and progressive training schedule to bring them to peak performance for the Mondial. This was in contrast to team *Freejive* for whom funding was being requested only some two weeks before the World Meet.

Nigel Holland then formally proposed that the Council should authorise the expenditure of £3K in funding to sponsor National Champion Freely team *Freejive* to the WPC Mondial 2003. No seconder was forthcoming.

46/03 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier this afternoon

46.1 Communications Committee

Eddie Jones (Communications Chairman) reported that the Communications Committee had noted a copy of a letter it had been sent by Group Captain J Lamonte of RAF Brize Norton in reply to a letter from Peterborough Parachute Centre concerning RAFSPA's advertisement in the June issue of *Skydive Magazine*. Group Captain Lamonte had said that the appearance of the advertisement had been through a one-off misunderstanding and it would not happen again. Turning to the Magazine budget, Eddie Jones reported that there had been an overspend of £1073. This had been only the second time in eight years that the Magazine had under-performed against budget. The overspend had been caused by a combination of increased printing and postage costs combined with a slowdown in the rate of increase in subscription income. The Communications Committee had also selected photographs for inclusion in the BPA Calendar 2004. Finally, it had agreed that there would be no Magazine exhibition stand or Open Forum session at the AGM in January 2004.

46.2 Development Committee

Kieran Brady (Development Chairman) reported that Tim Porter had declined to co-ordinate compilation of the Freely coaching manual for a payment of £1K because Tim Porter had believed that the full budget of £2K should be available. This was not within the gift of the Committee to agree, because the full budget also had to meet the cost of printing and distribution, which would cost about £1K. The Committee was therefore now obliged to seek alternative arrangements for compilation of the Freely coaching manual.

The Development Committee had agreed to increase the daily subsistence rate for Examiners only from £25 to £50 a day with effect from the next Instructor's course. The extra expenditure was to be fully recouped from an increase in the cost of course attendance from £60 to £100 per candidate. Kieran Brady emphasised that this increased rate would apply only to Examiners - it would not apply to judges or others. John Hitchen reported that Examiners, through the years, had not only examined but had worked on expositions, panels and boards of inquiry, and written manuals such as the RAPS manual all on an expenses-

only basis. He was therefore pleased to hear of the new financial arrangements for Examiners that the Development Committee was putting in place.

Kieran Brady then reported that three of the five goals in this year's 2003/4 Development Action Plan had already been achieved. However, there was a potential problem in maintaining one of the achieved goals - the interactive coaching webpage - because of a difficulty in securing a sustained supply of guest coaches for different skydiving disciplines. He would discuss outside the meeting with the Chairman how another of this year's targets, developing a display on parachuting and BPA history, might best be progressed.

47/03 Reports from Club Representatives

There were no reports from Club Representatives.

48/03 Report on Royal Aero Club Activities

John Smyth reported that the next meeting of the Council of the Royal Aero Club was due to take place on 15 September 2003. As previously reported (minute 35), the RAeC was vigorously opposing the threat of a massive 81% increase in its subscription to the FAI. John Smyth said that Jim Crocker had been making the strongest possible representations to FAI against such an increase, and John Smyth would put his own weight behind this opposition at the next IPC meeting in January 2004. He said that the huge magnitude of the threatened increase was prompting some airports to consider whether there was any way they might be able to establish alternative arrangements for international governance outside the FAI. Were this to happen, it might threaten the existence of national airports organisations, such as the RAeC in the UK.

John Smyth then reminded those present that the RAeC was planning to change the location of its meetings from the traditional London venue to a new location in the Midlands, such as Northampton or Worcester. London meetings had always been convenient for him to attend at no cost to the BPA. However, the time and cost of travelling further afield meant that he was seeking another BPA Council member, ideally someone who lived nearer to the new venue once confirmed, to take over from him the BPA's seat on the RAeC Council.

49/03 Fliteline

At the BPA Council meeting held on 3 December 2003 (minute 68.02), it was resolved that the membership of the Proprietor of Fliteline (PF) should be suspended until such time as PF attended a Council meeting to explain his actions in connection with the failure of his company Fliteline. PF was in attendance this evening, and the Chairman welcomed him to the meeting.

A paper setting out the relevant extracts from the Council minutes had been circulated in advance. The Chairman gave a brief summary of the history of the matter. It had originated from a letter to the BPA Council from a BPA Member who had expressed concern about the failure of Fliteline. The Member had told the Council (minute 56.02) that he believed the failure of Fliteline had brought the sport into disrepute. This was a matter for the Council because were an allegation that a Member had brought the sport into disrepute to be proven, it would mean that the Member had contravened his obligations under the BPA's Memorandum and Articles of Association, and the Council might therefore exclude that Member from the Association.

PF was attending the meeting this evening to speak to the Council about this matter for the first time. He outlined the history of his company Fliteline, and its exclusive contract with a charity as a booking agency for sponsored parachute jumps. He said that, over the years, jumps booked through Fliteline had raised some £4.5m in funds for the charity. He explained that Fliteline, and he, had been a victim of circumstance when two charities had merged. The charity with whom he had had the contract had been a keen supporter of parachuting as a fundraising activity; the other charity had been anti-parachuting. PF said he had genuinely believed that his contract with the first charity would continue when it merged until the due expiry date of July 2003, but - after a protracted period of uncertainty during which he had

significantly increased his spend on promotional videos to boost business - this had proved not to be the case.

The exclusivity of the contract with the charity meant that Fliteline had been totally dependent on it, and that it could not work for any other organisation. This had led to the financial failure of Fliteline. As Fliteline had been an unincorporated body, PF had carried personal liability for its debts. PF had, subsequently, followed the due process through the County Court to enter into an Individual Voluntary Agreement (IVA) by a vote in favour by in excess of the prescribed majority of his creditors. The IVA would lead to the sale of his assets, including his home, to raise cash to pay his creditors the agreed sum of 14p in the pound.

PF said that, looking back, he may have been a little too keen to avoid confrontation, but that was the type of person he was. He had never, at any stage, sought to bring the sport into disrepute. Nor did he understand how the failure of Fliteline could reasonably be perceived to have brought the sport into disrepute.

PF then answered questions from the Council. He rejected the assertion that had been made in a representation to an earlier Council meeting (minute 56) of a betrayal of trust: he said he had not taken new bookings after he knew that the company would fold. He said that he knew of no complaints to the BPA from those who had booked jumps through Fliteline. He said that the issue was that of a problem in a business relationship that had been settled between the parties concerned.

Ronnie O'Brien, CCI of Peterborough Parachute Centre (PPC), who had come to support PF, then told the Council that PF had taken no remuneration for working as an instructor at PPC with students of whom a majority were from Fliteline. He failed to see how PF could possibly have brought the sport into disrepute, unless the matter had gone into the public domain, beyond the sport, which it had not. PF had lost everything, and to seek to punish the man further would be entirely without justification.

The Chairman, having confirmed that neither PF nor anyone else around the table had any further questions to ask or representations to make, thanked PF for his attendance. He said there would now be an in-camera (private) session of the Council. The Chairman stated that no member of Council who was a creditor to Fliteline would be allowed to vote. The Chairman then directed that all those other than Council members and staff should leave the room. This was done.

After the in-camera session, the Chairman invited PF and others to re-join the meeting. He said that the Council had taken into account its previous correspondence with various parties on the failure of Fliteline, together with the representations made by PF and others at tonight's meeting. The Council had found no evidence that PF had brought the sport into disrepute. Because PF had now discharged the requirement placed on him by the Council to appear before it to explain his actions in connection with the failure of Fliteline, the Council had lifted the suspension of PF's membership of the BPA with immediate effect. This meant that PF was now free to re-join the BPA at any time he chose, under the normal terms and conditions that would apply to any member.

PF thanked the Chairman for setting out the position to him; and thanked the Council for its decision.

50/03 Royal Aero Club Trust Photographic Competition Prize

A letter to the Chairman dated 28 July 2003 from Frederick Marsh, Chairman of the Trustees of the Royal Aero Club Trust, had been circulated in advance. This asked the BPA to consider donating a prize, such as a tandem jump voucher, for the winner of the RAeC Trust's photographic competition. After discussion, Ian Marshall proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the Council should offer a tandem jump prize available from Ian Marshall for the discounted cost of £150, with the condition that the jump had to be taken in the south east of England. In discussion around the table, the view was expressed that the

winner could come from anywhere within the UK, and it was therefore perhaps unduly restrictive to oblige the winner to make his or her jump in the south east of England.

The voting on Ian Marshall's proposal was as follows:

For - 2 Abstentions - 5 Against - 2 **Not carried**

Kieran Brady then proposed, and Ian Midgley seconded, that the BPA should meet the cost of a £220 tandem jump voucher supplied by the BPA Shop.

Carried unanimously

51/03 Dates of future meetings

Tuesdays at 1830 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester (following meetings of the Communications and Development Committees, for those involved, during the afternoon):
21 October, 2 December (after the EGM).

The meeting closed at 2045.