

British Parachute Association

5 Wharf Way
Glen Parva
Leicester
LE2 9TF

Tel: 0116 278 5271
Fax: 0116 247 7662
e-mail: skydive@bpa.org.uk
www.bpa.org.uk



The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 2 December 2003 at 1837

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

Present:	Chris Allen	Chairman
	Paul Applegate	
	Calvin Blacker	
	Kieran Brady	Development Chairman
	Ralph Fielding	
	Billy Gollan	
	Eddie Jones	Communications Chairman
	Ian Midgley	
	John Smyth	Vice Chairman/Competitions Chairman
	Jim White	
In attendance:	Tony Butler	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	Treasurer
	Lesley Gale	Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i>
	John Hitchen	NCSO
	Martin Shuttleworth	Secretary-General
Observers:	John Horne	
	David Ibbotson	Council 2004 nominee
	Adam Jones	Council 2004 nominee
	Andy Scott	Council 2004 nominee
	Weed Stoodley	Council 2004 nominee
	Alan Wilkinson	
Apologies for absence:	David Hickling	
	Nigel Holland	
	Ian Marshall	

Item Minute

61/03 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed those of the new nominees for Council 2004 who were attending tonight as observers.

62/03 Minutes

John Smyth proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 October 2003 be accepted as a correct record.

Approved

63/03 Matter arising: AGM Dinner Dance entertainment (page 5, item 59)

After considering the options, John Smyth proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion that the Council should accept a kind offer by Jon Gretton, BPA Financial Administrator, that a band called *Run for Cover*, of which he himself plays lead guitar, should play at the AGM. As with the band *Grounded* (which had now disbanded) that had played at previous AGMs, *Run*

for Cover would charge no fee and the only cost to the BPA would be for the hire of amplifiers and staging.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman thanked Jon Gretton on behalf of the Council for his support of the Dinner Dance in this novel way.

64/03 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees

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

64.1 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 21 October 2003

Kieran Brady (Development Chairman) proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 21 October 2003 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

64.2 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 21 October 2003

Ralph Fielding proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 21 October 2003 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

64.3 Minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 23 September 2003

John Smyth (Competitions Chairman) thanked the members of the Competitions Committee for their hard work throughout a very successful year, a particular highlight of which had been the record-breaking FS Nationals in August and of course *VMax's* World Title in September. The Committee had already published next year's competitions calendar. This included an increase in the number of FS Grand Prix 4-way events from four to six, counterbalanced by fewer Grand Prix events in the Classics. Quite simply, the calendar was demand-led. Overall, about the same number of Grand Prix events would be held next year as Regionals had been held this year, so that the overall burden on judges would not be increased.

John Smyth then proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 4 November 2003 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

Lastly, John Smyth reported that the final competitions date for 2004 had now been arranged. The CF Nationals would take place at Langar on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 August 2004.

64.5 STC meeting

The Chairman noted that the STC would not meet until this coming Thursday, 4 December. There were therefore no minutes for ratification by the Council tonight.

65/03 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier this afternoon

65.1 Communications Committee

Eddie Jones (Communications Chairman) reported that the Communications Committee had:

- agreed with Lesley Gale the format in which to set out achievements in the *Club News* section of *Skydive Magazine* - this preserved the status quo but with fewer headings and thereby allowed more efficient use of space;
- monitored the budget performance of *Skydive Magazine* for the financial year 2003/4 to date and had found this to be acceptable;
- considered the type of photograph that would be suitable for the BPA membership card for the membership year beginning on 1 April 2004;
- monitored performance on the Communications Action Plan 2003/4 as follows. Target 1: Online Mag subscriptions - completed; Target 2: In-house update of Magazine

website - scheduled for the first quarter of 2004; Target 3: electronic *DZ Focus* - example seen and approved by the Committee at today's meeting, so project proceeding to plan and on budget; Target 4: BPA Calendar 2004 - completed.

The first copies of the BPA Calendar 2004, hot off the press, were tabled. The calendar would be circulated to members as a free-of-charge insert into the December 2003 issue of *Skydive Magazine*. John Smyth congratulated Eddie Jones, Lesley Gale, the Communications Committee and all the photographers and other contributors to the BPA Calendar 2004. He said this fantastic team effort was not only a great source of pride for us all in the many and varied achievements of British skydivers, but also probably one of the best marketing and promotion tools for our sport in recent years.

65.2 Development Committee

Kieran Brady (Development Chairman) reported that the Development Committee had heard updates on the cost of BPA third party insurance, which was likely to increase dramatically. A number of factors had conspired to bring about the expected significant increase. These were:

- (i) the claims history
- (ii) the need significantly to increase the size of the pot for potential claims
- (ii) premiums in recent years had been too low to sustain the necessary account ratios for the underwriters to operate the account as a viable commercial policy
- (iv) the international insurance firm that had underwritten the BPA's present policy had decided to close down its UK subsidiary and cease to operate in the UK underwriting market.

The BPA had instructed two separate insurance brokers to trawl the market for the best deal. Airsports insurance was a specialist area that had constricted considerably upon the rationalisation of the global insurance market following the events of 11 September 2001. No actual quotations had yet been received by the BPA, which was why tonight's EGM would be unable at this time to settle the insurance element of student and temporary memberships taken out the new membership year from 1 April 2004.

Other items of business at this afternoon's meeting of the Development Committee had been:

- Nick Ward from *Centrepages*, the website design firm local to the BPA Office that provided support services to the BPA's website, had attended to suggest some technical and design areas for development of the website in the next Action Plan year (2004/5) ahead of the Development Action Plan ideas meeting on AGM Day, 24 January 2004;
- Kate Stephens and Lesley Gale had made an excellent presentation about plans for *Brit Chicks 2004*. The Development Committee had been most impressed with these plans and had wished the project well. It regretted, however, that with an unknown and probably significant - perhaps even massive - insurance increase looming (see above), the Committee was simply not in a position to vote BPA funds to sponsor the project.
- The Committee had monitored progress with the current (2003/4) BPA Development Action Plan. Progress had been good, with three out of the five actions already completed at this stage, approximately half way through the Action Plan year. Work was now due to start on the two remaining targets - (i) preparing a history of parachuting and the BPA for display at the BPA Office; and (ii) constructing a BPA webpage on the subject of travel insurance.

66/03 Reports from Club Representatives

There were no reports from Club Representatives.

67/03 Report on Royal Aero Club Activities

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to RAeC) reported that there had not been a meeting of the RAeC Council since the last BPA Council meeting. The next RAeC meeting was due to take place in Telford this coming Saturday, 6 December. Nominations for RAeC awards would be considered at that time.

John Smyth then summarised the position on the future of the RAeC Secretariat consequent on the planned retirement, in May 2004, of its long-serving General Secretary, Barry Rolfe (whose main job was as Secretary of the Leicester-based British Gliding Association). As Council Members would be aware from their post over the last few weeks, the RAeC had invited member organisations - including the BPA - to consider putting in a bid to tender for the work of the RAeC Secretariat. A paper by Martin Shuttleworth, who had recently met Barry Rolfe to discuss the work involved, had been circulated that set out his view on the practicability of importing this work to the BPA Office. The paper suggested that it would not be easy, but that it might be possible if careful attention was given to avoiding the potential for a completely new tranche of work to disrupt the existing generally smooth workflow at the BPA Office. The BPA Office had no slack and was operating with one fewer full-time member of staff than had been the case 15 months ago.

The Chairman said that there would undoubtedly be a number of issues that would need to be fully considered were the BPA Office to take on the RAeC Secretariat. For these, a realistic budget would need to be drawn up, both for staff and office equipment. He summarised the mood of this Council as being that the BPA would be prepared to consider taking on the RAeC Secretariat if the RAeC could not find suitable arrangements elsewhere. However, BPA hosting of the RAeC Secretariat would be likely to cost the RAeC more than its present arrangements because the additional work could not simply be overlaid on the present BPA Office personnel and facilities.

Kieran Brady proposed, and Ian Midgley seconded, that John Smyth should report the above BPA position on the future of the RAeC Secretariat to the meeting of the RAeC Council on 6 December 2003, and report back to the next meeting of the BPA Council.

Carried unanimously

68/03 AGM date 2005

In order to secure an advance booking at the preferred venue, it was now necessary for the Council to settle the AGM date for 2005. Accordingly, Eddie Jones proposed, and Ralph Fielding seconded, a motion that the AGM 2005 should be held on Saturday 22 January 2005 at the Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, the choice of venue being subject as always to BPA staff being able to negotiate a competitive price for the booking.

Carried unanimously

69/03 BPA staff and Christmas

BPA staff and others left the room for this item. Following discussion and consultation with the Treasurer, Ian Midgley (Staff Liaison Officer) proposed, and Billy Gollan seconded, a motion that the BPA should pay a Christmas bonus, similar to last year plus inflation, to its employed staff.

Carried unanimously

Following further discussion, Ian Midgley proposed, and Eddie Jones, seconded a motion that an appropriate budget should be set for the BPA to pay for an Office Christmas Lunch for its employed staff. This would be to thank employees of the Association, which is to say the paid staff of nine persons based at the Leicester office, for their work for the Association during the year. The Chairman wished it to be clearly recorded in the minutes that, as had been the case last year - when there had unfortunately been a misunderstanding among some of the membership of what the Council had agreed - the Christmas lunch was to be for the employed staff of the BPA, and not for Council members themselves.

Carried unanimously

The staff then rejoined the meeting. The Chairman advised them of the Council's decision and thanked the staff present, and asked them to convey to others not present tonight, the Council's thanks for their work during the year. Tony Butler, on behalf of the staff, thanked the Council for authorising the Christmas bonus to staff and for the Office Christmas Lunch.

70/03 Correspondence

The Chairman called attention to his letter to Mr A S Barnett of Cupar, Fife, dated 28 November 2003, which had been circulated to the Council, in reply to a letter dated 27 November from Mr Barnett addressed 'to all Council members'. Mr Barnett's letter of 27 November had *not* been circulated. The Chairman said his reply of 28 November was self-explanatory as to why he had believed it to be inappropriate for Mr Barnett's incoming letter to be circulated to tonight's meeting of the Council. A Panel of Inquiry, under the Chairmanship of Tony Knight, had been established to investigate the alleged breach. The Chairman believed that, in the interests of fairness and natural justice, Mr Barnett's complaint should be taken in the context of the issues that the Panel would be investigating. He had therefore passed Mr Barnett's letter to Tony Knight in his capacity as Chairman of the Panel of Inquiry. In due course, the Panel would report to STC and STC would report to the Council for ratification, which was the due process within the Association.

The Chairman reminded members Council that the Council is a tribunal of ratification and appeal. It was not a body of first resort and should not seek to intervene or impose upon the work of a duly constituted Panel of Inquiry that should be left to proceed with its investigation, including all related issues.

The Chairman then read aloud the last paragraph of his reply to Mr Barnett wherein he explicitly sought the support of the Council for the position he had taken.

Jim White said that it appeared that the Chairman was censoring correspondence specifically addressed to all Council Members. The Chairman said that the correspondence was available for inspection at the BPA Office by any Member of Council. There was a difference between making such material available for inspection and officially distributing a letter that contained potentially libellous statements.

Jim White said he believed that the subject of Mr Barnett's letter of complaint, and the subject of the Panel of Inquiry, were different. He therefore proposed that Mr Barnett's letter dated 27 November 2003 should be distributed to the Council and discussed at the next meeting. The proposal failed to find a seconder.

71/03 Date of next meeting

The Chairman thanked Members of Council for their hard work during the year, both on the Council itself, on subcommittees, and in a variety of other roles for the BPA. 21 nominations had been received for the 15 seats on Council 2004, and therefore a ballot of the membership would be held to allocate the available seats.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that one of the first items of business for the new Council and its subcommittees would be to compile the draft Action Plan for each of their areas of activity in time for ratification by the full Council at its meeting (to be arranged) in February 2004. This did not give much time, so it was important to start thinking now of worthwhile and achievable targets, each to be accompanied by a realistic budget, for the Action Plan year from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005. It was necessary to hit the ground running at the Action Plan ideas meetings to be held by most subcommittees after the inaugural Council meeting on AGM Day. Those who were not elected to the Council would still be most welcome to submit their ideas, either in writing in advance or in person at one of the subcommittee brainstorming meetings on AGM Day.

The inaugural meeting of Council 2004, for those elected, would be held on Saturday 24 January 2004 in Room 18 on the Ground Floor (near the Leisure Centre Entrance) of the Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, Leicestershire, immediately after the morning AGM and presentation ceremony has finished. This was usually at about 1130.

Kieran Brady proposed a vote of thanks to Chris Allen for his excellent work as Chairman of Council during 2003. He said that the integrity that the Chairman had brought to the table had been second to none, and that the Association had benefited greatly. He then thanked Eddie Jones (Communications Chairman), John Smyth (Competitions Chairman) and John Hitchen (STC Chairman) for their contributions to the BPA by chairing the subcommittees of Council. He also thanked Lesley Gale for her work as Editor of *Skydive Magazine*.

The Chairman thanked Kieran Brady for these kind words of appreciation, and in turn thanked Kieran Brady for his capable Chairmanship of the Development Committee during the year.

The Chairman then wished all present a Happy Christmas and a successful 2004.

The meeting closed at 1923.