

# British Parachute Association

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## The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Tuesday 13 February 2007 at 1830**

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

|                               |                     |   |   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| <b>Present:</b>               | Eddie Jones         | - | Chairman of Council                                 |
|                               | Paul Applegate      |   |   |
|                               | Adrian Bond         | - | Communications Chairman                             |
|                               | Robin Durie         | - | Development Chairman                                |
|                               | John Horne          |   |   |
|                               | David Ibbotson      |   |   |
|                               | Paul Ledden         |   |   |
|                               | Ian Marshall        |   |   |
|                               | Paul Moore          |   |   |
|                               | John Page           | - | Vice Chairman of Council<br>& Competitions Chairman |
|                               | Weed Stoodley       |   |   |
|                               | Alex Wilson         |   |   |
| <b>Apologies for absence:</b> | Grant Richards      |   |   |
|                               | Mike Rust           |   |   |
|                               | John Smyth          |   |   |
| <b>In attendance:</b>         | Tony Butler         | - | Technical Officer                                   |
|                               | Debbie Carter       | - | Treasurer   |
|                               | Lesley Gale         | - | Editor, <i>Skydive</i> Magazine (to item 12.1.2)    |
|                               | David Hickling      | - | Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee                    |
|                               | Tony Knight         | - | BPA Liaison Officer to CAA                          |
|                               | John Hitchen        | - | NCSO  |
|                               | Martin Shuttleworth | - | Secretary-General                                   |
| <b>Observers:</b>             | Kieran Brady        |   |   |
|                               | Bruce Johnson       |   |   |
|                               | P Johnson           |   |   |
|                               | J B McGeechan       |   |   |
|                               | Stuart Meacock      |   |   |
|                               | Craig Poxon         |   |   |
|                               | Andy Scott          |   |   |
|                               | James Swallow       |   |   |

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## Item Minute

### 07/07 Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members of the Council 2007 to their first ordinary meeting. He said that there had been much informal discussion since the inaugural Council meeting on Saturday 20 January about the election of Chairman of the Association at that meeting. In particular, there had been comment about the Chairman's statement as a nominee for the

Chair, before he had been elected. The Chairman had since issued a written clarification of this statement (circulated to Council Members before today's meeting).

The Chairman said that a democratic and constitutional vote had been taken. One of the two nominees for the Chair had been successful, the other had not. It was now important for the Council to unite to get on with the job that all Members of Council had been elected by the Membership to do. The agenda for tonight's meeting included a number of important and urgent issues, not least insurance (minute 10) and the need to continue to maintain strong and decisive responses to proposals for harmonised European Legislation that might have an adverse affect on sport parachuting and other airsports in the UK (minute 14).

John Horne said that the Council would only come together when Council Members could trust the Chairman, and some around the table simply did not. He recognised that there may be legal implications arising from the statement the Chairman had made when he was a nominee for the Chair at the inaugural Council meeting. John Horne therefore suggested that the Chairman should stand down until this issue could be resolved. The Chairman declined, saying that any issue was between himself and the other nominee.

Ian Marshall strongly criticised the Chairman's statement as a nominee for the Chair at the inaugural Council meeting as a malicious and defamatory attack on the other nominee, John Smyth. Ian Marshall called for the Council to censure the Chairman for it. He said he himself would continue to work as a Council Member for the Association, but did he not respect the Chairman. The Chairman said that he had been elected to the Chair by a majority vote and that, whatever individuals' personal feelings looking back on it, it was now time for the Council to get on with the job that all Members of Council had been elected to do.

**08/07 Proposal by John Horne for a Vice President's Inquiry into the Council election process**

A paper by John Horne (circulated in advance) called for a Vice President's Inquiry to take place as soon as possible into our current voting system and in particular into any alleged abuses of that system in the election, the results of which were announced at the AGM 2007.

John Horne said there was a huge credibility gap in the way the Council elections were presently run, as evidenced by concern expressed at Drop Zones, in e-mails he had received, and in public discussion forums used by BPA Members on the Internet. The BPA's Articles of Association stated that votes were accepted until the AGM. The fact that an earlier closing date had become the norm was an example of the way the procedure had gradually slipped. This and other features may have developed into custom and practice, but this did not mean that it was the proper or best way to run an election. John Horne therefore proposed that a Vice Presidents Inquiry be held into the current voting system.

John Page said he supported the call for an Inquiry provided it looked to the future, to how the system could be improved, rather than dwelling on the past. He believed it would be entirely appropriate to consider possible alternative voting arrangements. As such, he asked Council to focus on the proposal - as set out at the head of John Horne's paper - rather than any suggestions in the body of the paper of going back to review earlier elections than the 2007 election, which he believed would make the scope of the Inquiry too wide.

David Hickling reminded the Council that, some years ago, the BPA had contracted out conduct of a Council election to the commercial arm of the Electoral Reform Society. The cost had been significantly higher than the in-house system to which the BPA had since reverted. Weed Stoodley said that the Council 2006 had considered the voting system (minute 66/06) and had decided that it would be difficult to justify an additional expenditure of about £2.7K to contract out administration of the election, when there was (at that time at least) no evidence of any irregularity with the existing in-house system. Allegations of possible voting irregularities now had to be seen in the context of a small Association seeking to spend the Membership's money wisely. There had been no suggestion that the count itself, organised by the BPA Office, had been done in anything but a fair and auditable

manner – rather, the current concern appeared to centre on alleged irregularities in the completion of some ballot cards.

Kieran Brady noted that, on one Internet discussion group, he had apparently been accused of seeking to rig votes. He observed that, were this to be the case, he had obviously not been any good at it because he had been voted off the Council! Paul Ledden asked if the BPA had received any letters or complaints alleging any kind of voting malpractice, and the staff reported that there had been none. Paul Ledden said that third party allegations on an Internet discussion group did not stand in his view as allegations of which it was reasonable for the Association formally to take notice.

The Chairman summarised the mood of the meeting, observing that no one was against taking a fresh look at the voting system in the hope of formulating proposals to improve it. But this had to be done in the context of a responsible allocation of resources. John Horne asked how could the Council put a price on integrity?

John Horne then proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that a Vice Presidents' Inquiry should be held into the BPA's current voting system. The enquiry should have special reference to the 2007 Council election, and any alleged abuses or irregularities of, or problems with, the voting system. The cost to the Association of the Inquiry shall not exceed £1K.

Weed Stoodley made a counter-proposal that there should be a review of the current voting system with a view to identifying any parts of the process that could be improved by the introduction of electronic voting. The cost to the Association of the Review shall not exceed £1K. This proposal failed to find a seconder.

A vote was therefore taken on John Horne's proposal for a Vice Presidents Inquiry into the BPA's current voting system. The vote was:

For - 10 (including a proxy vote from John Smyth), Against - 2 (Paul Ledden, John Page)

**Carried**

## **09/07 Minutes**

### **9.1 EGM - Tuesday 5 December 2006 and Council meeting - Tuesday 5 December 2006**

The EGM minutes were taken as read.

With reference to the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 December 2006, Martin Shuttleworth apologised for an omission to the draft of Council minute 69 (to which needed to be added: Andy Scott was elected as Competitions Chairman), and an error in minute 74.2, bullet point 6, which gave an incorrect date for the cessation of exchequer funding from UK Sport as 'next year', which was corrected to read '2009'. John Horne requested that his name be removed from the draft of minute 74.2, bullet point 6, that incorrectly recorded that he was to Chair the Income Streams Subcommittee.

Paul Applegate proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion that (i) the minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on Tuesday 5 December 2006; and, with the variations in the above paragraph, the minutes of the Council meeting held on Tuesday 5 December 2006, both be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

**Approved**

### **9.2 AGM - Saturday 20 January 2007**

Paul Moore proposed, and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Association's thirty-ninth Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 20 January 2007 be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

**Approved**

The Council gave a vote of thanks to John Smyth, the then Chairman, and Kieran Brady, the then Vice Chairman, for their accomplished conduct of the AGM. John Horne also recorded the Council's thanks to the BPA staff for arranging the AGM.

### **9.3 Inaugural Council meeting 2005 - Saturday 20 January 2007**

John Horne asked why the draft minutes had not included the content of the statements made by the nominees for election as BPA Chairman. Although the meeting had not been tape recorded (as ordinary Council meetings held at the BPA Office customarily were), some Council Members believed that it would be imprudent to seek to set out in the minutes, and thereby involve the Association as a body corporate in promulgating, a personal statement that may be the subject of legal action between individuals.

Without prejudice to decisions on the amount of detail that it might be prudent to set out in future minutes, the Council decided that all its future meetings should be tape-recorded.

**Action: BPA Office**

Ian Marshall called attention to a personal allegation against the current Chairman relating to an alleged [non-operational] incident some while ago at the current Chairman's Club that he understood had been made known to a previous Chairman but which had not been brought to the Council table because it was, at the time, sub judice. Ian Marshall asked that, as any legal process would by now have been completed, the current Chairman should report on the matter to the Council within the next 28 days.

Paul Applegate requested a variation to the draft minute 1.2 on the election of the Vice Chairman of Council to state that he [Paul Applegate] had thanked those who had nominated him but regretted that he had to decline the nomination in view of the Chairman's statement, bearing in mind that he had proposed John Smyth as Chairman. John Horne asked that the minutes should record that he had been proposed and seconded for the office of Vice Chairman, and that he too had declined the nomination for the same reasons as Paul Applegate.

Paul Applegate then proposed, and Dave Ibbotson seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Inaugural Council meeting 2007 held on Saturday 20 January 2007 should be approved as a correct record. This vote was:

For - 8, Against - 2 (Ian Marshall, John Horne), Abstentions – 1 (Paul Ledden)

**Approved**

### **10/07 Insurance**

David Hickling (Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee) reported that a quotation for renewal of the BPA insurance policy for the year 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 had now been received from the Aviation Division of HSBC Insurance Brokers Ltd, underwritten by the St Paul at Lloyds Aviation Syndicate. This was the only quotation on the table. The quotation, together with the brokerage fee, had been translated into a schedule of the cost of the insurance element for the various types of BPA Membership. This had been set out, together with the other elements of the subscription (the BPA element, and for appropriate types of Membership, the Magazine element and where applicable the VAT element) in a draft schedule of subscriptions that had been circulated. Tony Butler reported that the BPA was still seeking to negotiate with the insurers a sliding-scale reduction in the insurance element for Conversions and new Full Memberships taken out later in the Membership year (currently the insurance element remained equivalent to the full-year rate). [**Secretary's note:** The insurers have agreed to a sliding scale, see BPA Form 107.]

The renewal was for the same policy to continue, except that the insurers had agreed to include the provision, as requested by the Membership at the AGM 2006, for experienced European Union skydivers who were current members of their own country's parachuting governing organisations, were FAI certificated, had a minimum of 100 descents and held current third party liability insurance cover of a minimum of 1,300,000 Euros, to jump at BPA Clubs & Centres without the need to take out BPA Membership.

For Full Membership, the insurance element had increased as follows:

| <b>Insurance element</b>                                | 2006/7 | 2007/8 |
|---|--------|--------|
|   | £      | £      |
| Full Membership   | 61.31  | 99.78  |
| Student Provisional &<br>Temporary Membership [1 month] | 19.80  | 24.25  |

With the agreed 3% increase on the BPA component (and VAT for Temporary Membership), and no increase on the Magazine component (Full Membership only), the overall subscription rates would be as follows:

| <b>Overall subscription</b>    | 2006/7 | 2007/8 |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|
|                                | £      | £      |
| Full Membership                | 112.60 | 152.10 |
| Student Provisional Membership | 25.50  | 30.15  |
| Temporary Membership [1 month] | 26.30  | 30.95  |

The full schedule of subscriptions is set out on BPA Form 107.

David Hickling reminded the Council that the insurers had commented favourably on the underlying downward trend in claims that they believed to be consequent on the success of proactive risk management in the sport. Had there not been two significant new claims during the year, both of which required significant reserves to be set aside, one at the policy limit of £2m, it would have been likely that the premium for next year might have been pegged.

David Hickling reported that the Insurance Subcommittee had continued actively to trawl the market and he had held discussions with another broker only last week. That broker had hoped to have delivered a quotation for today, but had been unable in the event to do so. This meant that if the Council was not minded to accept the renewal quotation from the existing insurers, there would be no skydiving in the UK with effect from 1 April 2007 because Drop Zones would be unwilling to allow jumping without a third party public liability insurance policy in place for themselves and their jumpers, both of whom were among the parties covered by the sport's umbrella of protection, the BPA insurance policy.

After discussion, Ian Marshall proposed, and Alex Wilson seconded, a motion that the insurance renewal quotation received from HSBC Insurance Brokers Ltd and underwritten by the St Paul at Lloyds Aviation Syndicate 5000, should be accepted.

**Carried unanimously**

The Council then discussed whether or not to hold an EGM to put the above to the Membership. The Chairman reported that an EGM required 21 days' written notice to voting Members. The cost of doing this would be about £2K. If the notice were to be published as an insert to the February 2007 issue of *Skydive Magazine*, it would cost nothing – but to issue the renewal form after an EGM would cost about £2K. If the Council did not call an EGM, the renewal form could be included as an insert to the February 2007 issue of *Skydive Magazine* (which was now being held at the printers) at little or no extra cost. In view of the fact that only one insurance quotation was on the table, and to ensure that the BPA Office had sufficient time to process renewals ahead of the start of the new Membership year on 1 April 2007, Paul Moore proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion not to call an EGM. John Horne disagreed and said in his view it was essential to let the Membership decide at an AGM. The vote on the motion **not** to hold an EGM was:

For – 10, Against – 1 (John Horne)

**Carried**

David Hickling said that he had advised the Development Committee that he was willing to remain as Chairman of the Insurance Subcommittee for the time being, although if the Development Committee wished a Council Member to take over the role, he would have no

problem with that. What he believed to be essential was that the Council should give a clear directive to the Insurance Subcommittee to set out what type of insurance cover the Council sought for the Membership in the next insurance year, 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009. He said that it was not the Insurance Subcommittee's role to formulate policy, rather its purpose was to find ways of implementing Council's directives. David Hickling urged the Council to address the matter now so that if any variations to the type or nature of cover were required, the Insurance Subcommittee could factor these in before approaching the insurance market.

**Action: Council**

Kieran Brady said that in the final analysis, it did not matter what decisions were made around the Council table on insurance, in the sense that if the DZ Operators, who are major stakeholders, did not approve of the insurance package they would simply not allow jumpers to jump at their centres. Kieran Brady therefore emphasised the importance of the BPA consulting with DZ Operators over insurance in order to take their opinions into consideration.

The Chairman thanked David Hickling and the Insurance Subcommittee for their continuing hard work on the always challenging and often controversial issue of insurance. He said he believed the Council had done its best for the Membership in the especially challenging circumstances in insurance this year.

The Chairman said it would be helpful to publish an update on insurance in the next available (April 2007) issue of the Magazine and/or on the BPA website.

**Action: BPA Office**

**11/07 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees**

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

**11.1 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2006**

With reference to the draft of Development Committee minute 42 (circulated), John Horne requested, and the Council agreed, to remove the reference to his agreeing to drive through the work of the Income Streams Subcommittee as this was not correct. With this amendment, Weed Stoodley proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 5 December 2006 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

**Ratified**

**11.2 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 5 December 2006**

Paul Moore proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 5 December 2006 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

**Ratified**

**11.3 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 1 February 2007**

In the absence of any questions to John Hitchen (STC Chairman), John Page proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the STC meeting held on 1 February 2007 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

**Ratified**

**11.4 Competitions Committee mini-meetings held on (i) Tuesday 5 December 2006 and (ii) Saturday 20 January 2007**

Unfortunately the minutes of these two mini-meetings of the Competitions Committee were not yet available because of staff sickness at the BPA Office, which had diverted the work of the committee secretariat to cover for other duties. However, John Page tabled a one page summary report of the key item requiring ratification by the Council, which was to confirm the expenditure itemised on sheet to meet the agreed Competitions Action Plan target of elite coaching for National Champions from, and within, the agreed competitions budget. John Page confirmed that the four teams listed for BPA coaching support had submitted a written training plan to the Competitions Committee and had named their coach of international standing who would provide the training. The BPA coaching support was strictly to be applied to coaching fees (not even to pay for the coach's jumps). The funding would be paid by the BPA direct into the bank account of the agreed coach, upon the coach's submission of an invoice to the BPA for up to the agreed amount. Ian Marshall declared the interest that one of

the top international coaches, Gary Beyer, was married to a member of the team he was to coach, Emma Beyer of women's 4-way FS Team Airkix. The Council saw no conflict of interest.

John Page then proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the summary report of the mini-meetings of the Competitions Committee held on (i) Tuesday 5 December 2006 and (ii) Saturday 20 January 2007 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

**Ratified**

The minutes of the above mini-meetings would come before Council for ratification at its next meeting on Tuesday 17 April (minute 22).

## **12/07 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier today**

### **12.1 Communications Committee**

#### **12.1.1 General**

Adrian Bond (Communications Chairman) reported that the Communications Committee had:

- co-opted Kieran Brady onto the Committee to provide continuity and experience;
- discussed provisional targets for the Communications Action Plan for 2007/8 to include (1) development of the BPA website; (2) a trial of an online questionnaire for Members; (3) publication of a BPA skydiving calendar for 2008; (4) possibly, production of a DVD. These ideas would be firmed up and a budget attached at the next Committee meeting on Tuesday 17 April 2007, with a view to recommending the agreed Action Plan for ratification by the full Council that evening;
- asked Paul Moore and Kieran Brady, on behalf of the BPA, kindly to liaise with the owners of the website [www.ukskydiver.co.uk](http://www.ukskydiver.co.uk) to discuss possible closer links with the BPA, because the discussion forum on the website now regularly included BPA matters. [This stemmed from discussion at the Council meeting on 5 December 2006, minute 79.06 'The BPA Council election and the Internet'.]

#### **12.1.2 Letters to the Magazine**

Adrian Bond reported that the Communications Committee had considered a printer's proof of one of the letters pages for the February 2007 issue of *Skydive Magazine* that Lesley Gale had e-mailed to the full Council last evening. The Communications Committee had therefore referred this item to the Council for consideration.

The page contained letters from Andy Scott and Cheryl Smyth (wife of John Smyth) concerning the election of the Chairman of Council at the inaugural Council meeting. Council Members expressed a range of opinions about whether the letters should be published or not. John Horne and Paul Ledden supported publication in the interests of openness and transparency.

Paul Moore said he was not against openness but argued that it would simply not be professional of the Council to sanction publication of letters of this nature in the Association's Magazine. He did not believe that the official journal of the Association was the appropriate platform to air personal comments on other Members, no matter who they were.

Adrian Bond said that the matter was still ongoing and did not believe that now was an appropriate time to publish, although he saw no reason why the Council should not give the matter further consideration at a later date.

Weed Stoodley was concerned that, because Cheryl Smyth's letter referred to the Council ballot - which had quite properly been a secret ballot - there was effectively no right of reply by Council Members unless they publicly declared their vote. The Office noted that the reply earmarked for publication under Andy Scott's letter had been from an internal document that the BPA Office had e-mailed to Andy Scott, which had been intended for his information rather than publication.

John Page quoted from a letter dated 12 February 2007 that Jim Crocker, a BPA Vice President, had circulated by e-mail to the Council which had said, inter alia, that for the good of the Association and so as not to bring the sport into disrepute, it was undesirable for such issues to be raised in a public forum and that the matters in dispute should be resolved quickly and with minimal outside publication. Paul Moore said this was precisely his point, that the Magazine was the public face of the sport.

Lesley Gale said that in her eleven years of editing the Magazine, she had always done her best to present a positive image of the BPA. She had received four letters to the Magazine on this important matter and believed the two on the proof page under consideration should be published. She expressed concern that the Council was prejudicing her editorial freedom by seeking to stop publication because she believed the Membership had the right to know and comment on what was going on in their Association. The matter had already been discussed elsewhere, including on Internet discussion groups and she believed it was of wide interest. Lesley Gale said the Magazine was published for the benefit of all 5000 Members of the Association, not just the 15 Council Members. She believed it was important for the Council to be open, transparent and accountable to the Membership.

Tony Knight said that the letters concerned a squabble that did the sport no favours and would only be perpetuated by putting it in the public domain through publication in the Magazine. He reminded the Council that it was the Official Magazine of the Association.

Weed Stoodley then proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion that it would not, on balance, be in the best interests of the Association and its Membership for the letters under discussion to be published in the official BPA Magazine. The vote was:

For – 7, Against – 2 (Robin Durie, John Horne), Abstentions – 2 (Ian Marshall, Alex Wilson)

**Carried**

As Cheryl Smyth was not present, the Council asked the Office to write to let her know why her letter would not be published in the February issue of the Magazine.

**Action: BPA Office**

The Chairman stated that there was no reason why the letters could not be considered for publication in the next [April 2007] issue of the Magazine. The problem in considering them today, for the February issue, had been lack of time because of the imminent print deadline.

## **12.2 Development Committee**

Robin Durie (Development Chairman) reported that the Development Committee had:

- invited David Hickling to continue for the time being as Chairman of the Insurance Subcommittee, to which he had kindly agreed; and for the Chairman of Council, Development Chairman, Paul Moore and Kieran Brady to be for the time being the Members of the Insurance Subcommittee;
- decided to hold a meeting of the Drop Zone Operators' Forum in spring 2007 on a date to be decided, the last such meeting having been successfully held in March 2005 [**Secretary's note:** The DZO Forum has now been arranged for Thursday 12 April 2007 from 1000-1630 in the European Room at Leicester Tigers' Rugby Football Ground, kindly sponsored by the Army Parachute Association.];
- agreed to work on formulating the Development Action Plan 2007/8 between now and the next Committee meeting on Tuesday 17 April 2007, with a view to recommending the agreed Action Plan for ratification by the full Council that evening;
- suggested that the Development Chairman, Robin Durie, and the Competitions Chairman, John Page, should be the BPA's nominees to the Airkix Fund Committee. John Page, who had not been at this afternoon's Development meeting, now confirmed that he would be willing to serve in this capacity and the Council agreed to



these two nominees, whose names would be advised to the Airkix Wind Tunnel by the BPA Office.

**Action: BPA Office**

Robin Durie reported that Alex Wilson had also joined the Development Committee. Ian Marshall asked that both the Communications and Development Committees should review their number of voting Members and their quoracy to ensure that they were compatible with other Committees such as the Competitions Committee.

**Action: Communications and Development Committees**

**13/07 BPA Action Plan: 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008**

The Chairman called attention to a hard copy e-mail dated 31 January 2007 from Jane Swan of UK Sport that set out UK Sport's exchequer funding schedule of the BPA as follows:

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 April 2006 - 31 March 2007 | £25,000 (confirmed) |
| 1 April 2007 - 31 March 2008 | £25,000 (confirmed) |
| 1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009 | £12,500 (planned).  |

Because the Action Plan 2007/8 was not, as previous Action Plans, a bid document but rather was to be submitted as part of the compliance requirements for already-confirmed funding of £25K, Jane Swan had said that UK Sport could accept its submission at a later date than in previous years. She had suggested that it should be signed off by the BPA Council in May or June 2007 and forwarded to her in time for implementation by the BPA during the new Action Plan year from 1 July 2007.

The Chairman said that this gave the Subcommittees of Council welcome additional time to formulate the budgeted targets for their own areas of operation such that these could now be recommended to the Council at the next Council meeting on Tuesday 17 April 2007 (minute 22).

**Action: Next meeting**

**14/07 Standing working group on aircraft, airspace usage, crew licensing, etc**

Tony Knight (BPA Liaison Officer to CAA) spoke to his paper (circulated) in his capacity as a co-opted Member of the Council. Over the years he, in association with Tony Butler, John Hitchen and others, had carried out administrative, liaison and watchdog functions on a range of matters broadly related to aircraft, airspace usage, crew licensing, etc. In recent years, this work had centred more on Europe in the light of the growing number of proposals for aviation and airspace regulations across Europe, some of which had been framed with little or no regard for established traditions in the UK and which, if implemented, could have serious adverse effects on UK airports including sport parachuting.

Tony Knight said he had now started to scale down his involvement in this work in preparation for his retirement. He had already handed over to Paul Hollow the BPA's representation on the General Aviation Consultative Committee and the General Aviation Alliance. As regards the other functions, Tony Knight recommended that the Council should consider establishing a small permanent working group of say four or five appropriate specialists such as a mix of experienced instructors and experienced pilots to oversee, and report to the Council on, this increasingly complex area. To this end, Tony Knight had sounded out a number of people including Paul Moore – who had particular expertise in the European dimension – Paul Hollow (general aviation committees), Kieran Brady (aviation legislation) and Robin Durie (parachuting operations).

The Council expressed its fulsome thanks to Tony Knight for all that he had achieved for the BPA over many years in this vitally important but usually unsung work behind the scenes. Tony Butler paid special tribute to Tony Knight's vital contribution to the BPA in these key areas. The Chairman invited Tony Knight kindly to firm up his invitations to those he had mentioned to join the new working group, and draft its terms of reference. The Chairman expressed the hope that Tony Knight would be able to convene and co-ordinate the new group so that it became established and effective, enabling him to slip in to more of a background role as he progressed towards his retirement, safe in the knowledge that the next

generation would be in a good position to carry forward this important work into the future. Tony Knight thanked the Council for its welcome support.

**Action: Tony Knight**

**15/07 Reports from Club Reps**

Club Reps for 2007 were in place as set out in minute 1, viz Northern – Adrian Bond, Central – Paul Ledden and Southern – Robin Durie. This gave each Club Rep a similarly sized allocation of approximately 9 Clubs. The Club Reps were now setting about making contact with their Clubs.

**Action: Club Reps**

**16/07 Report on the Royal Aero Club**

**16.1 World Air Games 2009 – UK bid**

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to RAeC) had circulated a report to the Council, to which John Hitchen (UK Delegate to IPC) spoke. It concerned a consortium bid to FAI led by David Cole, who was associated with the company Flying Aces Ltd, for the World Air Games in 2009 to take place in the UK. The successful bidder was due to be announced by IPC this summer. The bid had been submitted without formal consultation with the BPA or, for that matter, any of the National Governing Bodies of UK airports. If the bid were to succeed, it would commit the BPA to hosting a World Cup in Accuracy and Canopy Formation at either Goodwood Race Course or Silverstone Motor Racing Circuit – without our even being asked whether this was possible.

John Hitchen said that he and John Smyth had both first become aware of the bid at the end of January 2007 when they had been lobbied by telephone call from David Cole that had urgently solicited their support for a bid about which they knew nothing whatsoever. At the time they had both happened to be on BPA business representing the UK at the IPC Plenary Meeting in Italy. John Hitchen said that the lead time of 2 years was in his experience obviously too little to plan and organise such an event from scratch. Also, there were airspace issues in seeking to run sport parachuting competitions in the controlled airspace above the venues that had been identified in the bid.

John Smyth had asked in the papers he had circulated that he, in association with Jim Crocker (BPA Vice President and BPA Alternate Delegate to RAeC), should be authorised by the Council to handle the matter through RAeC, as all airports in scope to the World Air Games would be similarly affected. The Council agreed and thanked John Smyth for his assistance in seeking to regularise, and protect the interests of the BPA, in what appeared to be an utterly bizarre situation.

**Action: John Smyth**

**16.2 RAeC Awards Ceremony**

RAeC had arranged for its Awards Ceremony to be held on the evening of Tuesday 3 April 2007 at the RAF Club in London. Unfortunately, Team Airkix, winners of the prestigious Prince of Wales Cup, would be out of the UK training at the time. RAeC had therefore asked the BPA to nominate someone to receive the award from the Duke of York on the team's behalf. Andy Scott, husband of Team Airkix Member Claire Scott, reported that the team had invited John Smyth to receive the award on the team's behalf. The Council fully endorsed this arrangement and asked to Office to confirm it to Diana King, RAeC General Secretary.

**Action: BPA Office**

**[Secretary's note:** RAeC has since advised that the date of the Awards Ceremony has been changed to Tuesday 24 April 2007. Team Airkix will have returned to the UK by this date and will therefore be able to collect their award in person.]

**17/07 Staffing**

The Chairman asked that the next item should be held in camera. Those who were not Council Members or staff left the room for this item, and returned after it. A confidential staff matter was discussed.

The Council invited the staff to choose a Member of Council to invite to be the nominated Staff Liaison Officer, whose role was to act as a bridge between the Council and the staff on employment-related matters that could not be resolved through the staff management

channels at the BPA Office. The Staff Liaison Officer also had a formal role as set out in the published BPA staff grievance and disciplinary procedures.

**Action: Staff**

**Secretary's note:** The staff invited Weed Stoodley to be Staff Liaison Officer for 2007, and she has kindly accepted.]

**18/07 AGM 2008**

The Office reported that the Hinckley Island Hotel already had a whole-weekend booking for the BPA's preferred AGM date in January 2008. However, the earlier date of Saturday 12 January 2008 was still available. Debbie Carter (Treasurer) said that a pricing comparison with other Hotels of a similar standard had been carried out last year and that all of the alternatives had been significantly more expensive. John Horne therefore proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion that - subject to the Hotel submitting a satisfactory quotation for the event – the Office should book the date of Saturday 12 January 2008 for the BPA AGM.

**Carried unanimously - Action: BPA Office**

Paul Applegate asked that the Office should also make provisional bookings, at no financial commitment at this stage, with the Hotel for the BPA's first choice dates of the Saturday nearest to 20 January for three or four years ahead.

**Action: BPA Office**

**19/07 Peterlee Parachute Centre**

The Chairman reported that he and John Hitchen, together with many BPA Members from the North East of England, had attended a planning committee meeting of the District of Easington local authority in Peterlee, County Durham, on Tuesday 6 February. This was to support Ian Rosenvinge, DZO of Peterlee Parachute Centre, in opposing a planning application from a nearby factory to construct a wind turbine. The effect of planning consent, if granted, would have been almost sure to have so limited student parachuting at Peterlee as to render the Centre uneconomic such that it would have been forced to close. Notwithstanding a local meeting involving Tony Butler and John Hitchen with the planning agents, and a formal written objection lodged by the then BPA Chairman John Smyth, things did not appear to be going Peterlee's way when the planning officers of the local authority submitted their review of the case and recommended that the elected planning committee should approve the application.

However, a Herculean effort by Ian Rosenvinge and many supporters of Peterlee Parachute Centre, including both individuals (including strong support by student parachuting societies from local universities and colleges) and official bodies including Sport England, managed to turn the situation around with the result that the planning application was declined and Peterlee was saved. For the BPA, the Chairman had provided the planning committee with an incisive critique of the planning officers' report based on assumptions apparently made about sport parachuting without the technical knowledge for those assumptions to stand. The most powerful speech of all had been the final summary of the objection delivered by Ian Rosenvinge himself. The Council congratulated Ian Rosenvinge on this ground-breaking success.

The Chairman said that Sport England had advised that there was provision within planning law for a form of protected status to be given to active airfields. This had formed the basis of Sport England's support for Peterlee as a regionally important facility as the only Parachute Centre in the North East of England. It was important now to make the most of Peterlee's success and to seek to protect other DZs as the threat that Peterlee had defeated was unlikely to be unique and other DZs might well face similar threats in the future – this was a wake-up call. The Chairman asked the Office kindly to liaise with Sport England to investigate planning protection for active airfields in England where parachuting operations took place; and find out whether any similar provisions existed for the other home countries of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**Action: BPA Office**

Weed Stoodley suggested that Ian Rosenvinge should be invited to repeat the Powerpoint presentation he had made to the Drop Zone Defence Fund on AGM Day to the planned

meeting of the Drop Zone Operators' Forum that was to be organised by the Development Committee this spring. Ian Marshall asked that more publicity should be given to the Drop Zone Defence Fund, by publicising its work on the BPA website.

**Action: BPA Office**

**20/07 British Airways' conveyance of sport parachuting equipment**

The Office reported in a paper (circulated) that, consequent on changes made by British Airways to its baggage charging arrangements, the airline had surcharged a BPA Member £220 to fly his parachute rig with him on holiday from the UK to South Africa and back. British Airways recognised certain sporting equipment for an exemption from this charge, but parachuting kit was not on their list. This had already come to the attention of the Competitions Committee last October, following which the BPA Office had written to British Airways to ask them to recognise sport parachuting equipment. However, there had been no trace of a reply from British Airways, so it would be followed up.

The Council believed that if British Airways could be persuaded to recognise sport parachuting equipment, it might then be possible for the BPA to cascade this to prompt similar recognition by more airlines (although some, such as Emirates, already recognised parachute rigs as sporting equipment). The new British Airways rule did not apply to certain of their ticket types purchased through a specialist sports travel agent such as Traveleads, which provided travel agency services to the BPA that had most recently been used by the British Classics and CF delegation to the WPC 2006 in Stupino, Russia.

**Action: BPA Office**

**21/07 Online petition to object to the 'pay as you go' car tax**

Ian Marshall called attention to a paper he had circulated about an online petition for people to register their opposition to proposals being considered by the government for the introduction of a 'pay as you go' car tax – road pricing. He asked colleagues on the Council to consider adding their names to the petition because he believed that the proposed tax, if implemented, would be bad news for skydivers, many of whom drove considerable distances in pursuit of the sport.

**22/07 Dates of next meetings**

Tony Butler had sent out a memorandum with the agenda to ask the Council to consider reverting to the same pattern of Council meeting dates that had applied in recent years. This is because they fitted in well with the established pattern of dates for STC meetings. He had tried to juggle STC meetings to fit the new pattern of Council dates (minute 2) that had been aligned to copy dates for *Skydive Magazine*, but unfortunately had not been able to come up with a workable schedule without bunching STC meetings at the beginning of the year and a big gap between them towards the end of the year. Tony Butler said he believed any urgent or important information arising from Council meetings could in any case be most quickly disseminated to Members through the BPA website.

Alex Wilson therefore proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion to revert to the established pattern of Council meeting dates in 2007. This would be: Tuesdays at 1830 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 17 April, 12 June, 14 August, 9 October and 4 December 2007 (after the EGM).

**Carried unanimously**

The meeting closed at 2230.