

British Parachute Association

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The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 12 June 2007 at 1830

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

Present:	Eddie Jones	-	Chairman of Council
	Paul Applegate		
	Adrian Bond	-	Communications Chairman
	John Horne		
	David Ibbotson		
	Paul Ledden		
	Ian Marshall		
	John Page	-	Vice Chairman of Council & Competitions Chairman
	Grant Richards		
	Mike Rust		
	John Smyth		
	Weed Stoodley		
	Alex Wilson		
Apologies for absence:	Chris Allen	-	Vice President
	Robin Durie	-	Development Chairman
	Paul Moore		
In attendance:	Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	-	Treasurer
	David Hickling	-	Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee
	John Hitchen	-	NCSO
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	Secretary-General
Observers:	Kieran Brady		
	Stuart Meacock		
	Craig Poxon		
	David Turner		
	Carl Williams		

Item Minute

40/07 Minutes

Draft minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 April 2007 had been circulated. It had not proved possible to ratify these by e-mail (per the try-out of electronic ratification agreed in minute 34) because substantive variations had been requested which needed to be put to the meeting.

John Smyth requested a number of additions, which were discussed and agreed for inclusion in the minutes. Adrian Bond requested an addition, which was agreed for inclusion in the minutes.

With the above additions, John Page proposed, and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 April 2007 should be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

The ratified minutes, incorporating the above additions, would be issued and posted on the BPA website by the end of the week.

Action: BPA Office

The process of electronic ratification of minutes was discussed. The Council confirmed its intention was that the procedure would follow established custom and practice that the draft would be issued once the Chairman was satisfied with it.

41/07 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting on Tuesday 17 April 2007

41.1 Significant areas for sports (minute 26.10)

The Chairman reported that he was planning to make a first approach to Sport England on the basis that all BPA Affiliated centres eligible for designation under the scheme (ie, all Affiliated Centres in England) were centres of national importance to the sport.

Action: Chairman & BPA Office

41.2 Vice President's Inquiry into the Council election process (minute 27)

The Council considered correspondence (circulated) from two Vice Presidents, an e-mail dated 11 June from Jim Crocker, and an e-mail dated 12 June from Chris Allen. The Council noted that the Vice Presidents had not yet had an opportunity to meet to discuss, and come to a common mind, about whether or not an Inquiry was justified by the evidence of alleged irregularity in the Council 2007 election that had been forwarded to them by John Horne.

The Council therefore expressed the hope that the Vice Presidents could find a mutually convenient time when all four were available to consider the matter, and come to a decision to report back to Council as soon as possible on whether or not there is a sufficient basis on which to conduct a Vice President's Inquiry.

Action: Vice Presidents

41.3 BPA Action Plan: 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (minute 30)

The final draft of the Action Plan had been circulated. One variation was made to the text. The Council then approved the document. The Office would forward it to UK Sport in compliance with their requirement for exchequer funding to the BPA of £25,000 in support of competitions and safety and training targets set out in the plan.

Action: BPA Office

The Chairman said the Action Plan was a living document and asked all Committees kindly to refer to it throughout the next year to chart progress towards the achievement of the agreed targets in each area of the BPA's activities.

42/07 Correspondence

42.1 Insurance

David Turner of Peterborough Parachute Centre was present to discuss an e-mail he had sent (circulated) that sought clarification of whether it was possible for an Affiliated Centre to purchase BPA Student Memberships without the BPA insurance component. Tony Butler said that the Council had agreed to this in the past, where the Centre sourced its own insurance provided that acceptable evidence was provided that it was at least equivalent to the BPA's insurance.

There followed a discussion in which David Turner said he considered the cost of almost £25 per tandem student payable for BPA insurance to be inequitable. He said it was a massive, unjust and unfair premium bearing in mind the relatively low level of risk to a student on a tandem jump. He said that Drop Zones were facing rising costs all round, for aircraft fuel, instructors and insurance, and that this was exacerbated by revenues being squeezed by

increasing competition for jumpers by foreign drop zones due to the easy availability of cheap flights abroad. He said that the financial pressures on drop zones demanded a wake-up call and it was now time to re-balance the insurance premium to lessen the burden placed, unfairly in his view, on tandem jumpers. David Turner said he was convinced of this because he could obtain insurance at a significantly lower premium, although he was not prepared to divulge the details for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Mike Rust said that David Turner had put forward a good argument. However, the BPA insurance policy stated that all jumpers had to be included within it, or the policy would not respond. He said that in a fuller explanation of David Turner's proposals that he had seen, there had been recognition that instructors would need to contribute relatively higher premiums as they represented a higher risk to the insurers.

Tony Butler said that the insurance for Student Membership was, in effect, insurance for the Drop Zones. The present arrangements had evolved to be the fairest way to spread the insurance costs within the sport. If tandem students were covered by their own insurance policy, it would not cover the drop zone, instructors, other experienced jumpers, manifestors and all the many other parties who enjoyed cover by the BPA's umbrella policy. These other parties would then all have to take out their own insurance. Without the economy of scale of student insurance it would undoubtedly cost more: and it was inevitable that these increased costs would have to be recovered from DZs.

John Page agreed, saying that the student insurance premium was not set on the basis of the level of risk of a tandem jump, but was a way of apportioning the insurance costs of the sport across the membership.

Kieran Brady said he would be delighted if David Turner had been able to identify a route by which insurance costs might be reduced, and suggested that David Turner's ideas should be considered by the Insurance Subcommittee.

The Chairman thanked David Turner for his contribution. He said that the Insurance Subcommittee had been established specifically to consider the many and often complex issues about insurance, and invited David Turner to attend its next meeting if he so wished.

Action: David Turner / Insurance Subcommittee

42.2 Council nomination form

A copy of an e-mail had been circulated, from Andy Scott dated 16 May. In this he had asked the Council to consider including a new section in the candidate nomination form for Council 2008 in which the candidate would set out his or her specific goals for the year. A copy of the blank Council 2007 nomination form was tabled for information.

John Horne proposed, and Alex Wilson seconded, a motion to refer Andy Scott's suggestion to the Communications Committee for consideration.

Refer to Communications Committee

43/07 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees

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

43.1 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 17 April 2007

Adrian Bond proposed, and Grant Richards seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 17 April 2007 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

43.2 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 17 April 2007

Adrian Bond (Communications Chairman) proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 17 April 2007 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

43.3 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 31 May 2007

John Hitchen (STC Chairman) reported that Iain Firkins had sadly suffered a fatal accident on a display jump on 6 May 2007. The Council expressed its condolences to his family and friends. John Page had chaired the Board of Inquiry.

John Hitchen then reported that Paul Hollow, CCI of Target Skysports, Hibaldstow, had suffered a serious injury. The Council wished him well in his recovery.

There followed a discussion about instructor training syllabuses, and the Chairman said that any representations about this should be made to STC. John Hitchen said that proposals for variations to the syllabuses needed always to be considered against the standard of whether they enhanced safety.

Mike Rust noted that the BPA Disciplinary Procedures were being invoked as a result of a fatality at Bridlington. This would be the first time that a disciplinary tribunal had been convened under the new procedures. There had been some concern expressed at STC about the length of time the new procedures might take, however Mike Rust said it would be unfair to form a view on this until the case had been concluded.

Alex Wilson sought and received clarification of "grandfather's rights" for Riggers as documented in the minutes of Riggers Subcommittee approved by the STC meeting on 31 May.

John Page then proposed, and Mike Rust seconded, a motion that the minutes of the STC meeting held on 31 May 2007 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

43.4 Competitions Committee meeting held on Tuesday 6 March 2007

John Page (Competitions Chairman) proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Competitions Committee held on Tuesday 6 March 2007 should be ratified (a summary report had been ratified at the last Council meeting, minute 28.6, as the minutes had been transcribed late due to the then staff shortage). This carried unanimously.

Ratified

43.5 Competitions Committee meeting held on Tuesday 8 May 2007

43.5.1 Trophies

John Page reported that he had authorised expenditure of £100 from the competitions budget to repair some Classics Nationals trophies that were in need of attention. Not all the trophies for each discipline within the new Canopy Piloting Nationals had yet been sourced, but the aim was to have a full set of trophies available in time for presentation at the first CP Nationals in July 2007.

43.5.2 World Cup Stupino, Russia: 4-12 August 2007

John Page reported that he had now invited Mike Rust to Head the British Delegation to the FS & AE World Cup in Stupino, Russia, from 4-12 August 2007, and that Mike Rust had accepted subject to Council approval, which he now formally proposed as a motion that was seconded by Ian Marshall. The vote was:

For – 11 Against – 0 Abstention – 1 (Mike Rust)

Carried

John Page asked Council to consider granting an exemption for the Stupino August 2007 meet only from the BPA's UK Nationality criteria that specified that all competitors in our National delegation had to hold a British Passport. Dru Spork, a FS competitor who had lived in the UK for nearly 12 years had been a BPA Member for 8 years, and held a sporting licence issued by the BPA, met all the FAI requirements but did not hold a British passport. John Page proposed, and Mike Rust seconded, a motion that Dru Spork should be exempt from the requirement to hold a British passport to compete as a member of the UK national delegation at the meet in Stupino in August 2007.

Carried unanimously

43.5.3 Canopy piloting selection criteria

John Page reported that a CP competitor believed he had been misled by the BPA because he had only recently heard the news that selection (self-funded) for the World Cup 2007 and World Championships 2008 in Canopy Piloting would be at the first CP Nationals in 2007. Previously, because there had been no CP Nationals, other selection arrangements had applied and the competitor had believed, based on communications with last year's CP Rep on the Competitions Committee, that those arrangements would continue for the time being. As such, the competitor was not planning to attend the CP Nationals because of work commitments and it appeared that, because he had been on the British National team for Canopy Piloting before, he had assumed that he would automatically qualify for selection for the World Cup 2007 under existing arrangements.

The Council believed that it was entirely appropriate for the selection arrangements for Canopy Piloting to be built around the Canopy Piloting Nationals. John Smyth said that to make an exception to the selection arrangements for one competitor to bypass the Nationals would not be fair on the rest of the competitors who were planning to support our Nationals. The Council concluded that priority for selection shall be given to those who attend the Nationals. If any places on the National team still remained unfilled after the Nationals, the Competitions Committee could then consider other interested competitors who had not attended the Nationals.

Action: Competitions Committee

43.5.4 Discipline Reps

John Page reported that two new Discipline Reps had been co-opted to the Competitions Committee: Chris Hollis as FS Rep and Clare Murphy as Speed Skydiving Rep.

43.5.5 Ratification of minutes

John Page proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 8 May 2007 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

44/07 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier today

44.1 Communications Committee

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

- begun work to progress the new Communications Action Plan for the year from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008;
- discussed BPA Communications Policy with Lesley Gale, including agreeing to update the wording of the annual Editorial Services Contract, clarification of responsibilities and accountabilities, consideration of the role of electronic media in BPA communications, and the criteria for the publication of readers' letters in *Skydive Magazine*.
- initiated planning for a reprint of the Starter Magazine, to replenish the current stock, which was expected to last until about spring 2008.

44.2 Development Committee

In the absence of Robin Durie (Development Chairman), Adrian Bond had also chaired this afternoon's meeting of the Development Committee. He reported that the Development Committee had:

- begun work to progress the new Development Action Plan for the year from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.
- received an update on insurance matters, including receipt of a letter from the senior claims officer of the Ministry of Defence that asked the BPA to consider increasing the cover above its current £2m limit.

45/07 Reports from Club Reps

Weed Stoodley reported that, although not the Central Club Rep, she had held a 'meet a Member of Council' session at Langar together with David Hickling, Chairman of the Insurance Subcommittee, who had given an overview of current insurance issues. She had circulated a written report of the meeting and called the following issues that had been raised by jumpers to the attention of the Council.

- Succession planning for technical staff. The Chairman confirmed that there was a raft of Advanced Instructors and Examiners who would be eligible for consideration for any vacant technical post on the BPA staff that may become available in due course, for example by retirement.
- Has the new Canopy Handling system improved safety? The Chairman said yes, although it would take time for this to show in the statistics. Anecdotally, there was a strong perception that the new system had improved safety.
- Provide copies of a blank BPA poster for Centres to complete to promote competitions, roadshows, and other events. The Chairman referred this idea to the Communications Committee for consideration.

Refer to the Communications Committee

The Chairman thanked Weed Stoodley for arranging the meeting at Langar and for her report.

Paul Ledden (Central Club Rep) reported that he had received an invitation to visit North London Parachute Centre at Chatteris on the occasion of their 10th anniversary. He had met a number of jumpers. It was clear that insurance was a main issue on their minds, and concern had been expressed that the ever-rising cost of insurance was making it cheaper to jump abroad. He thanked Martin Crossley and Mike Rust of NLPC for their warm hospitality during the visit.

46/07 Report from the Royal Aero Club

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to the Royal Aero Club) reported that the RAeC Awards Ceremony on 24 April had been a successful event that had been appreciated by all who had attended. The opportunity had also been taken to arrange the informal presentation by the BPA of a Certificate of Appreciation to Chris Gay for his brave in-air rescue of Maria Russell.

John Smyth said that there had been no recent meeting of the RAeC Council.

47/07 Europe Air Sports

The Council noted recent correspondence about Europe Air Sports, on which Paul Moore represented the BPA. Funding of 1000 Euros per supporting nation to help Europe Air Sports to fight burdensome pan-European legislation from the European Aviation Safety Agency that could be inimical to sport parachuting. It appeared that the Germans and French sister bodies of the BPA had or would each agree to make available this amount of funding. John Hitchen believed there was a strong case for the UK to do the same, and there was unanimous support around the table.

Ian Marshall proposed, and John Horne seconded, a motion that the BPA should make available the sum of one thousand Euros to Europe Air Sports to fight new legislation that might be prejudicial to sport parachuting.

Carried unanimously - Action: Treasurer / Paul Moore / BPA Office

The Chairman thanked Paul Moore for the valuable work he was doing in this important area, where it was important for the BPA to remain proactive.

48/07 Balance of BPA Committees

Ian Marshall reported that, since the last meeting (minute 35), he had spoken to the Chairmen of the Communications, Competitions and Development Committees, who were in agreement with the two proposals he was about to make.

Ian Marshall proposed, and John Horne seconded, a change in the name of the above Committees from 'Subcommittees' to 'Council Committees'.

Carried unanimously

Ian Marshall then proposed, and Alex Wilson seconded, a motion that, effective from 2008, each of the above Committees should have on them, as voting Members, no more than 50% of the voting Members of Council. (Others, including further Council Members, could be co-opted, but would not be entitled to a vote on the Committee.) This was so that no single Committee could dominate the Council, for example by approving spending plans on its own, which might be possible if any Committee had a majority of Council Members as voting members of the Committee.

Carried unanimously

John Page asked what arrangements would be made if more than 50% of the Members of Council wished to serve on a particular Committee. The Council decided that there should be a ballot for the voting places.

49/07 Staff pay review

The Chairman said this item would be held in camera. Non-members of Council including staff left the room. The Council received and considered the recommendation of the Employment Subcommittee (comprising the Chairman, Treasurer, Staff Liaison Officer and Chairs of Development, Communications and Competitions), which had met immediately before the Council meeting. John Page then proposed, and Mike Rust seconded, a motion that the pay of BPA staff should be increased by 4%, in line with inflation, effective from 1 July 2007.

Non-members of Council including staff then returned. The Chairman announced the Council's decision. He also thanked the staff for their teamwork earlier this year when the BPA Office covered for the shortage of one member of the administrative staff. On behalf of the staff, Tony Butler thanked the Council.

50/07 Application for Affiliation: Skydive Swansea

An application by Carl Williams for Affiliation for Skydive Swansea had been circulated. Carl Williams was present as an observer.

Tony Butler explained that this was a different organisation to the existing parachuting operator at Swansea Airport, Swansea Skydiving Limited. Carl Williams, who was now the applicant, had resigned as CCI of Swansea Skydiving Ltd about two weeks' ago. The BPA had received reports of tandem students having paid for jumps at Swansea Skydiving Ltd but not being able to jump because the Centre was not operating. The Centre also had a significant amount outstanding to the BPA in payment that was due for Student Memberships.

An e-mail dated 8 June had been received from Paul Johnson, on behalf of Swansea Skydiving Ltd, stating that operations had been suspended for the foreseeable future but suggesting that it may be possible for monthly or bi-monthly operation at a later date. However, correspondence from the Manager of Swansea Airport was tabled, which stated in a letter dated 7 June that all terms and agreements granted to Swansea Skydiving Ltd for the use of Swansea Airport as a centre for their parachute operations had been terminated, followed by a fax dated 12 June stating that no further negotiations were being entered into.

Carl Williams explained that he had applied for Affiliation on the basis of the permission he held from Swansea Airport to conduct sport parachuting operations there; and on his understanding that Swansea Skydiving Ltd had permanently ceased operations. The Chairman said that it would not be possible for the BPA to Affiliate Carl Williams' Skydive

Swansea whilst Swansea Skydiving Ltd remained Affiliated to the BPA, as both related to the same drop zone.

John Smyth proposed, and Alex Wilson seconded, a motion that Swansea Skydiving Ltd should be given 14 days' notice that, in the absence of supplying evidence to the contrary, it will be struck off from the BPA's roll of Affiliated Centres because, on the evidence available to the Council, it appeared to be in breach of its conditions of Affiliation to the BPA on the basis of (i) not having landowners' permission to operate, (ii) not having a CCI, and (iii) owing an unpaid debt to the BPA.

Carried unanimously

Alex Wilson then proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that if Swansea Skydiving Ltd was struck off from the BPA's roll of Affiliated Centres, the application for Affiliation by Swansea Skydiving, submitted by Carl Williams, should be approved, subject to Carl Williams providing the BPA with written evidence of landowners' permission.

Carried unanimously

Weed Stoodley noted that this was the second occasion recently in which an Affiliated Centre had accrued a significant debt to the BPA. She asked for, and received from Tony Butler, an assurance that the BPA's credit control procedures were sufficiently robust.

51/07 Survival Equipment Services Ltd – Airborne Training

The Council had received a letter dated 5 June from Survival Equipment Services Ltd, which sought the approval and recommendation of the BPA in order for the Civil Aviation Authority to accept the SES Airborne Training Operations Manual. The Council considered that military re-enactment parachuting of the kind in which SES Airborne Training and the ParaDaks display team was involved was not sport parachuting as defined by the BPA. As such it did not come in scope to the BPA as the National Governing Body for Sport Parachuting.

Alex Wilson therefore proposed, and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion that, with regret, the BPA was unfortunately not in a position to progress SES Airborne Training's request, as it fell outside the BPA's remit; and that the Council should suggest to SES Airborne Training that it should deal directly with the Civil Aviation Authority as other non-sport parachuting groups had done in the past.

Ian Marshall made a counter-proposal that the BPA should take up SES Airborne Training's request for a meeting. This failed to find a seconder.

A vote was therefore taken on the original proposal, that, with regret, the BPA was not in a position to progress SES Airborne Training's request. The vote was:

For – 9 Against – 3

Carried

52/07 Letter from Craig Poxon

A paper copy of an e-mailed letter to the Council from Craig Poxon, dated 1 June, had been circulated. This asked the Council to require the Chairman to provide Craig Poxon with a copy of his written statement about the Chairman's personal statement as a candidate for the Chair at the inaugural Council meeting on AGM Day. Craig Poxon was present as an observer tonight, and the Chairman invited him to summarise his request.

The Chairman said that he had declined to provide a copy because he did not wish to elongate the issue, as he had already explained this to Craig Poxon. After further discussion, John Page requested that the matter should be considered in camera and the Chairman asked non-Members of Council (except staff) to leave the room. A further discussion then took place. There was no proposal to direct the Chairman to show the letter to Craig Poxon. The view around the table was that it would be entirely inappropriate for the Council to seek to direct the Chairman in this matter. However, the consensus was that the Council would welcome it should the Chairman decide, of his own volition, to show Craig Poxon the letter.

Non-members of Council then re-joined the meeting and the Chairman reported to Craig Poxon that the Council had decided not to require him (the Chairman) to show Craig Poxon a copy of the document. However, the Chairman said that he would consider making a written reply to Craig Poxon.

Action: Chairman

53/07 FAI Gökçen Medal

John Hitchen reported that the President of IPC had called for nominations for FAI's Gökçen Medal and had suggested that the BPA, through our National Aero Club (NAC), might wish to consider nominating the late Taz Causer in recognition of her skydiving achievements. John Page proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the BPA should prepare a nomination for Taz Causer for the FAI Gökçen Medal, and forward this to the RAeC, with a request for them formally to endorse the nomination and submit it to FAI.

Carried unanimously – Action: BPA Office

54/07 John Page

On behalf of the Council and the whole Membership, the Chairman congratulated John Page on his recent marriage to Zena. John Page thanked the Council and Members for the cards and letters they had received wishing them well.

55/07 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays at 1830 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 14 August, 9 October and 4 December 2007 (after the EGM).

The meeting closed at 2205.