

British Parachute Association

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The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 19 February 2008 at 1910

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

Present:	John Smyth MVO	-	Chairman
	Paul Applegate		
	Adrian Bond		
	John Horne		
	David Ibbotson		
	Paul Ledden		
	Ian Marshall		
	Paul Moore		
	John Page		
	Craig Poxon		
	Grant Richards		
	Andy Scott		
	Martin Soulsby		
	Weed Stoodley		
In attendance:	Kieran Brady	-	Pilots' Cttee Chairman (to item 19)
	Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
	Jim Crocker	-	Vice President (to item 13.6)
	Debbie Carter	-	Treasurer (to item 14.2)
	Jon Gretton	-	Financial Administrator (to item 14.2)
	John Hitchen	-	NCSO
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	Secretary-General
	Member ref item 14.1	-	(to item 14.1)
Apologies for absence:	Chris Allen	-	Vice President
	Alex Wilson		

Item Minute

11/08 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all present to the first full Council meeting of the New Year. He thanked the Council for electing him as Chairman, and said he was looking forward with excitement and enthusiasm to what he was sure would be a dynamic year. The Vice Chairman mirrored these sentiments.

The Chairman expressed the Council's condolences to the family and friends of Darryl 'Daz' Gardiner, a BPA Member who had been the first soldier to die on active service this year, and said he would set down these sentiments in writing in a letter to them.

Action: Chairman

The Council also wished good luck to Council Member Alex Wilson who was currently serving overseas.

12/08 Minutes

12.1 EGM - Tuesday 4 December 2007

Paul Applegate proposed, and Grant Richards seconded, a motion that the minutes of the EGM held on Tuesday 4 December 2007 should be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

12.2 Council meeting Tuesday 4 December 2007

Ian Marshall proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Tuesday 4 December 2007 should be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

12.3 41st AGM - Saturday 12 January 2008

The Council decided to delete the second paragraph of minute 91.2 in the draft minutes. At the request of Weed Stoodley, a paragraph was added to minute 93.4. With these variations, Andy Scott then proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Association's forty-first Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 12 January 2008 be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

12.4 Inaugural Council meeting 2007 - Saturday 12 January 2008

After the correction of two typographical errors, Martin Soulsby proposed, and Andy Scott seconded, a motion that the minutes of the inaugural meeting of Council 2008 held on Saturday 12 January 2008 should be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

13/08 Matters arising from the above minutes

13.1 Sport England: Significant areas for sports (SASPs) (minute 91.1/07)

To date, only four Affiliated Centres had provided the information required by Sport England for the BPA Office to seek registration for them as SASPs. The Office had therefore sent out a reminder to those Centres that had not yet replied.

Ongoing

13.2 Memorandum & Articles of Association (minute 91.2/07)

The AGM had passed the special resolution to update Article 47 (AGM 2 minute 2). The Development Committee was to undertake a review of the Memorandum & Articles of Association with a view to preparing an updated draft in the new format introduced by the Companies Act 2006. This would include provision for electronic communication with Members on the formal business of the Association. The Chairman asked that the whole Council should have input and consider the requirements for this important governing document, and any feedback or suggestions would be considered in preparing the draft update.

Action: Individual Council Members / Development Committee

13.3 Royal Aero Club awards 2007 (minute 96/07)

Jim Crocker (Vice President and Alternate Delegate to RAeC) spoke to an e-mail that he had written to the Council when he had first read this minute. He was concerned that the minute might be read to imply that more of the BPA's nominees for Royal Aero Club Awards might have been successful had either the present BPA Chairman John Smyth, who was BPA Delegate to RAeC, or himself Jim Crocker, as BPA Alternate Delegate to RAeC, been present at the RAeC Medals and Awards Committee. He wished to assure the Council that this was absolutely not the case. He and John Smyth had made the strongest possible case for the BPA nominees in advance of the meeting. The RAeC had received a particularly large number of high quality nominations for a limited number of awards, and it had unfortunately not been possible for all nominations to be successful on this occasion.

The Chairman said that the two BPA Members whose nominations had not been successful on this occasion had been contacted either by himself or Ian Marshall, and that they had understood the position. He said that, quite simply, we had done our best.

Weed Stoodley said that she had not read into the wording of minute 96 any criticism of our representatives on RAeC. Kieran Brady said that he had spoken to Eddie Jones, BPA Chairman 2007, and Eddie Jones had confirmed that no such inference had been intended. Jim Crocker said that he was grateful for Council's comments and support.

13.4 Council 2008 election (minute 103/07)

The Office reported that the Electoral Reform Society's (ERS) charges had been £578 over budget (£4853 compared with their estimate of £4275). The cost overrun had been because the candidate information brochure had been more expensive than forecast to print and distribute. ERS had advised that this was because the nomination statements had not had a word limit of, say, 100 or 150 words that they had advised was standard practice for many of the elections that they administered. The Council discussed ERS's suggestion of a word limit to nomination texts but did not see the case for it. There had been a lot of blank space in the candidate information brochure and the Council believed that ERS could have laid out the content more economically to reduce the cost.

13.5 Dates for Council meetings 2008 (minute 2/08)

After discussion, the Council confirmed the provisional date and venue for its August meeting as 1930 on Tuesday 19 August 2008 at the BPA Office. The suggestion had been made that a Council meeting might be held on a summer Saturday on a Drop Zone, but this was considered impracticable because many Council Members would be likely to be taking part in the sport at such a time. The Council wished to interact with the membership as much as possible, and considered that it might for example be appropriate for the Competitions Committee to consider scheduling one of its meetings at a Drop Zone whilst it was hosting, for example, a Grand Prix.

Action: Refer to Competitions Committee

13.6 Co-opted members (minute 4/08)

Jim Crocker spoke to a letter he had written to the Council, which had been circulated by e-mail, concerning co-options to the Council. He said that when Members had offered themselves to the Membership for election to the Council, but had not been successful in polling a sufficient number of votes to secure a seat, the Council should not in his view co-opt those individuals as Members of Council since to do so would be against the democratic will of the Membership.

Weed Stoodley said that the Memorandum & Articles of Association gave the Council the power to co-opt anyone whom the Council believed could be advantageous to its work. Candidates for the Council had been among the few in the Membership who had put themselves forward for the service of the Association in the first place, and in her view it would be unfair to seek to shackle them.

Kieran Brady said he believed that this issue had arisen because of an Internet skydiving forum. He said that if individuals believed they needed the title of a co-opted Member of Council, their motivation was for the wrong reason. He himself would not accept a co-option to Council if invited! Weed Stoodley said that it was unfortunate that personal comments by a few on an Internet discussion forum could apparently build a momentum and turn the tide on individuals who were doing much-needed and valuable work for the Association. She said it was a sad day that this had been put forward, and in her view entirely the wrong attitude to adopt to those who had stood for election to the Council. In particular, use of the term 'rejected' jarred with her. Paul Ledden agreed. Weed Stoodley said that, taking into account the size of the voting Membership and the number of votes cast for each candidate, the plain fact was that the majority of the Membership had not voted for *any* of the elected Council Members!

The Chairman stated that no one had been co-opted onto last year's Council who had stood for election but had been unsuccessful in securing a seat, but there had been such co-option to Committees of the Council.

Lesley Gale believed there was a distinction to be made between candidates who had never been voted on to Council, for example because they were not well-enough known by the Membership, and those who had served on the Council and had not been re-elected. Andy Scott said co-option was about skills not personalities, and the Chairman agreed. Jim Crocker said that his letter had not been directed to any particular individual, and that he was not familiar with the Internet website that had been mentioned.

A letter to the Council dated 18 February from Chris Allen, a Vice President, had been circulated. It related in part to this item and Jim Crocker said he wished to discuss the letter privately with Chris Allen, to which the Council agreed.

The Chairman thanked Jim Crocker for his contribution, and Jim Crocker left the meeting.

13.7 Mick Riley MBE (minute 7/08)

The Chairman reported that he had written a personal letter of congratulation to Mick Riley, BPA Member 971936, on his being awarded the MBE for raising charity funds to support the relief of testicular cancer.

14/08 Update on bad debtors

14.1 Debt A

Andy Scott proposed, and John Horne seconded, a motion that this item should take place in camera. The vote was: For – 12, Against – 1 (David Ibbotson).

Carried

Accordingly, Council Members and staff remained and others left the room, except for the bad debtor, who was present.

The Chairman said that the Member concerned now owed the BPA £7968.47 for the purchase of provisional student memberships by his Drop Zone. The Member had denied liability but the courts had held that it was his personal debt and had awarded the BPA judgment for the full amount plus costs. A memorandum from Jon Gretton, Financial Administrator, had been circulated and a copy was provided to the Member concerned.

The Member said he could not afford to pay and that he had other debts and was on the verge of bankruptcy. The Member then left the room whilst the Council discussed the matter.

Grant Richards proposed, and Andy Scott seconded, that, in view of its fiduciary duties to the whole Membership, the only proper option open to the Council was to let the civil justice system take its course for the recovery of the debt to the Association.

Carried unanimously

Adrian Bond then proposed, and John Horne seconded, a motion to suspend the Member's Membership until such time as the debt was paid in full.

Carried unanimously

The Member concerned was then invited back into the room and the Chairman informed him of the Council's decision. The Chairman expressed the regret of the Council that it had come to this with a fellow skydiver whom the Chairman and many Members of the Council had known personally for many years. The Member said he was disappointed at the Council's decision because it put at risk the future of the centre at which he was currently working. He then left the meeting.

14.2 Debt B

Jon Gretton reported that a former DZO owed the BPA approximately £3,500 for the supply of provisional student memberships. The Operator had been a limited company. The BPA's solicitor had come to a dead end because the company had no assets. The individual was not a Member and therefore the only option was to pursue the debt through the courts, which Debbie Carter confirmed was being done. The Council declared the individual ineligible for Membership until the debt was paid in full.

15/08 Applications for Re-Affiliation

15.1 Skydive Brid Ltd

Clair Armstrong, sole Director of Skydive Brid Ltd, had been invited to attend tonight's meeting but she had said could not as she was on a BPA instructors course. The staff had no issues about the application.

David Ibbotson proposed, and Weed Stoodley seconded, a motion that the Re-Affiliation of Skydive Brid Ltd, with Clair Armstrong as sole Director, should be approved.

Carried unanimously

15.2 Peterborough Parachute Centre Ltd trading as Skydive Airkix

Andy Scott proposed, and Martin Soulsby seconded, a motion that Re-Affiliation of PPC Ltd trading as Skydive Airkix, with Directors David Turner (managing) and Simon Ward (non-executive) should be approved.

Carried unanimously

Tony Butler said he would double check with Skydive Airkix that the information on their Re-Affiliation form was complete, because a third Director had been reported in the February issue of 'Skydive the Mag'. **[Note:** Skydive Airkix have confirmed that the form is correct.]

16/08 Council Minutes

A letter to the Council by Jim Crocker had sparked discussion about the late issue of draft Council minutes. The Office had been under-staffed for much of last year but late in the year the staffing level had been restored to establishment, although the knock-on effect of work that had slipped from earlier in the year to December, together with the earlier AGM this January, had caused the December minutes to be late. Weed Stoodley (Staff Liaison Officer) asked if the present staffing arrangements were adequate and the Office confirmed that they were.

John Horne called attention to his paper last April that had called for the electronic ratification of Council minutes (minute 34/07 of the Council meeting on 17 April 2007) and the Council's resolution to do this, amended by minute 57.1 of the meeting on 14 August 2007 to a 2/3 response in favour of ratification, providing no Council Member had requested any substantive change. He asked why this had failed, and the Office said it had indeed been tried and was rather that it had not yet succeeded.

John Horne proposed, and Martin Soulsby seconded, a motion to try again this year, with the additional specification that Council Members should be asked to respond within seven days to the e-mailing of the unratified draft minutes, after the Chairman had first approved the draft document for issue. Paul Ledden made a counter proposal to carry on with the traditional arrangement for ratification around the table at the beginning of the next meeting. The vote on the counter-proposal was taken first and was: For – 2, against – 10, Abstention – 1 (John Page). A vote on John Horne's original proposal was then taken and the result was: For – 11, Against – 1 (Paul Ledden) , Abstentions – 1 (John Page).

Carried – Action: BPA Office

There followed a discussion about a document management system that would allow Council Members each to annotate and comment on a single source document, so that all could see each others' suggested variations. Craig Poxon said this was a longer-term issue as it required specific software, whereas the use of e-mail for the electronic ratification of Council minutes, leading to the earlier publication of ratified minutes to the Membership, was achievable now.

17/08 Report on IPC Plenary Meeting, January 2008

John Hitchen's delegate report on the 56th Annual IPC Plenary meeting held in Paris from 23-27 January 2008 had been circulated in advance.

The Chairman reported that a vacancy had arisen for a second Vice President of IPC and he had been invited to stand for nomination for this position, which carried a seat on the IPC bureau. However, IPC rules meant that only IPC Delegates were eligible for nomination. With the agreement of John Hitchen, IPC Delegate, and through the good offices of Diana King, General Secretary of the RAEc, the National Aero Club of the UK, John Hitchen and the Chairman, who had been the UK Alternate Delegate to IPC, had swapped their roles during the course of the IPC meeting such that John Smyth became the UK Delegate to IPC and John Hitchen the UK Alternate Delegate. John Smyth had then been elected as a Vice President of IPC. The Council congratulated him on his election to this influential role.

In response to a question from Andy Scott, the Chairman said that the French proposal to IPC to hold an IPC-recognised competition in a wind tunnel had been referred back to the appropriate IPC Committee for further consideration of its implications.

18/08 Ratification of minutes of Committees

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

18.1 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 4 December 2007

Adrian Bond (who had chaired the meeting) proposed, and Grant Richards seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 4 December 2007 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

18.2 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 4 December 2007

Paul Applegate proposed, and Paul Ledden seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 4 December 2007 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

18.3 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 7 February 2008

Kieran Brady (Pilots' Committee Chairman) spoke to notices and letters he had circulated in advance on oxygen in parachute aircraft and TAWS, and said he would be pleased to supply further information to any Member who may care to contact him. John Hitchen (STC Chairman) thanked Kieran Brady and the Members of his Pilots' Committee for the important work they were doing and for their helpful briefing notes. Kieran Brady in turn thanked Dr John Carter, BPA Medical Adviser, for his valuable input to this work.

Weed Stoodley expressed her concern at individual permissions given by STC against the Operations Manual for pilots of parachute aircraft not to fly after reaching the age of 70. Weed Stoodley said that the Operations Manual (Section 9 Flying, Para 1 Pilots, Subpara 1.1.3 Age) stated 'No pilot will be permitted to fly after reaching the age of 70 years'. She said that this rule was not qualified by the word 'normally'. John Hitchen and Kieran Brady said that STC had always anticipated that a number of individual permissions would be given.

John Hitchen called attention to the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) for persons coming into contact with vulnerable groups, which could affect sport parachute instructors, for instance in training or coaching young people of 16 and 17 years old. The ISA had arisen out of the provisions of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the new arrangements for which it would be responsible would start to be phased in this year. Details of how the new legislation might affect the provision of skydiving training services had yet to be clarified. Some Members of STC had expressed concern about the additional costs and administration the new provisions would occasion. However, the BPA technical staff believed that the BPA should embrace the new provisions. Andy Scott (Competitions Chairman) said the new provisions would also be likely to affect competitions coaches, and asked that a note be put in 'Skydive the Mag' to call their attention to the matter.

Action: BPA Office / Editor

Tony Butler said that the BPA would disseminate guidelines on registration, etc, once the arrangements were clear. The ISA was not yet accepting applications for registration.

Action: BPA Office

John Page proposed, and David Ibbotson seconded, a motion that the minutes of the STC meeting held on 7 February 2008 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

18.4 Competitions Committee meeting held on Wednesday 23 January 2008

Kieran Brady asked Andy Scott (Competitions Chairman) about the Council's policy on how the BPA was to fund the National Teams consequent on the loss of UK Sport Exchequer funding from next year. Andy Scott said that the Council needed to consider the BPA's overall budget and suggested that this might be done at the next meeting, to which the Chairman agreed.

Action: Next meeting

The Chairman said that the Development Committee's Income Streams Working Party was developing ideas for alternative income streams to replace UK Sport funding. He believed it would be appropriate for the Competitions and Development Chairmen to liaise on budget issues outside the meeting to present a joint overview to the Council.

Action: Competitions Chairman & Development Chairman

The Chairman believed the BPA's over-riding strategy should continue to be the pursuit of excellence, and making sure this fed back to nourish the grass roots of the sport for the next generation.

Andy Scott said that his wife, Claire Scott, had developed several documents that had been successful in securing corporate sponsorship for National and World Champion teams of which she had been part, and which he believed she would be happy to share with the BPA by way of a template. The Chairman was grateful for this kind offer.

Action: Andy Scott

Andy Scott called attention to a suggestion that had been put forward at the Competitions Committee by James Swallow of Target Skysports that the interest of potential sponsors and the media could be improved by the BPA awarding the hosting of the FS and Artistic Nationals to the same Centre for 3 years instead of on an annual bid as at present. The paper that James Swallow had presented to the Competitions Committee had been circulated in advance to the full Council for information. Andy Scott said he fully appreciated that other Affiliated Clubs & Centres may have view on this. After discussion of some possible advantages and disadvantages, the Council invited Andy Scott to consult with Affiliated Clubs & Centres on the suggestion, and report back.

Action: Competitions Chairman

Paul Moore (Competitions Vice Chairman) reported that he had written to John Page, Competitions Chairman 2007, concerning the release of the first tranche of funding to a funded team last December. The total amount of this funding had been agreed by the Council but the amount of the first tranche, and the documentation from the team that had triggered its release, had only been received by John Page as Chairman. John Page had replied to Paul Moore by letter explaining why he had authorised the payment. He then apologised for any misunderstanding caused and said that he believed that he was acting on the delegated authority of the Committee. Paul Moore said he was content that the matter had been resolved.

Andy Scott said that a new target would be included in the Competitions Action Plan for 2008/9 – coaching the coaches, to help them further develop their coaching skills.

The Chairman reported that IPC had issued a form to all NACs to request the nomination of available FAI-rated judges, and nationally rated judges to attend a training seminar, in respect of the WPCs 2008 in Canopy Formation and Canopy Piloting, and the World Cup 2008 in Vertical Formation Skydiving. The dates and venues for these meets had been decided at the IPC Plenary meeting only last month, and therefore they had not been included in the normal call for judges' form that had been lodged with IPC last December. The Chairman

asked the Office to liaise with Kate Charters, BPA Judges' Co-ordinator, to ensure that the new form was appropriately completed with details of available UK judges and returned on time to the Chair of the IPC judges' Committee.

Action: BPA Office

Andy Scott then proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 23 January 2008 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

19/08 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier today

19.1 Communications Committee

Adrian Bond (Communications Chairman) reported that, at the meeting held earlier today, the Communications Committee had:

- completed negotiations with Lesley Gale on renewal of the Editorial Services Contract for 'Skydive the Mag';
- monitored progress towards achieving targets in the current Communications Action Plan for 2007/8, which was satisfactory – including the BPA's first electronic membership survey, which was now online at the BPA website - and had started work on formulating the Action Plan for 2008/9, for recommendation to the next meeting of the full Council;
- acknowledged the website UKSkydiver.co.uk as an unofficial, independent, external online forum for skydivers in the UK. The BPA is not responsible for the content of external websites.

Paul Ledden asked about profiling the Membership at renewal time. The Chairman said that he should feed in this suggestion to the Communications or Development Committee for consideration for their Action Plans for next year, which were now being formulated. The Membership renewal form for 2008/9 had already been issued.

19.2 Development Committee

Craig Poxon (Development Chairman) reported that, at the meeting held earlier today, the Communications Committee had:

- held a ballot to elect the six voting members of the Development Committee, and had allocated areas of responsibility on the Committee;
- replaced the former Insurance Subcommittee with an Insurance Working Group comprising Grant Richards, David Hickling, Kieran Brady and himself as Development Chairman, with the support of BPA staff;
- initiated a review and update of the BPA Memorandum & Articles of Association (minute 13.2) with a view to presenting these in the new format compatible with the Companies Act 2006;
- agreed to arrange discussion with Simon Ward of the Airkix wind tunnel about the future of the Airkix Fund;
- been pleased to learn that the BPA had been accepted as one of the CCPR member organisations to benefit from the proceeds of the new BingoLotto game as part of the initial trial period;
- agreed to advertise for a new volunteer to be BPA Media Co-ordinator;
- monitored progress on the current Development Action Plan for 2008/9 and had started work on formulating the Action Plan for 2008/9, for recommendation to the next meeting of the full Council. The Committee envisaged that the Development

Action Plan for next year would follow on naturally from the current plan, which included a number of targets to research or investigate possible developments. The plan for the next Action Plan year, starting on 1 July 2008, would move forward to implementation;

- received tenders through Grant Richards from two web companies to build a new BPA website with improved functionality, and had decided that, in view of the limited time available at today's meeting and the need for further information from each, a decision could not be taken today but the matter would be progressed as quickly as possible.

20/08 Europe Air Sports

Paul Moore reported that he would be representing the BPA at Europe Air Sports' AGM in Cologne on 15–16 March. He said he was sad to report an apparent lack of communication between other European Parachuting Union member nations, even though he had done all he could to encourage this. He would report back to the next meeting of Council.

21/08 Reports from Club Representatives

It was too early in the year for any Club reps' visits yet to have been made.

22/08 Report on Royal Aero Club

The Chairman reported in his capacity as BPA Delegate to RAeC that its next meeting would be the AGM in approximately two weeks' time. He apologised for an oversight from the last meeting of the BPA Council when he had intended to propose the RAeC annual subscription invoice to the BPA for approval. The year-on-year increase was 2%, less than the rate of inflation. John Hitchen reported that RAeC's own subscription to FAI had gone down, and asked why there was an increase payable by the BPA to RAeC. The Chairman said he believed that the answer lay in the cost of the extensive work RAeC was doing to help safeguard the interests of UK airsports against the threat of burdensome pan-European legislation. He said he would be pleased to check with RAeC to confirm that this was in fact the correct answer.

Action: Chairman

Andy Scott then proposed, and John Horne seconded, a motion that the RAeC subscription invoice should be paid.

Carried unanimously

23/08 Correspondence

An e-mail dated 14 January from Liz Warner, Member 692656, who was a BPA judge, had been circulated in which she requested that Council review its car mileage rates payable on official BPA business in the light of recent increases in fuel costs. Tony Butler reported that the increase of 8p to 45p a mile that Liz Warner was suggesting would cost the Association over £4K in respect of Council and Committee meetings alone. There was no proposal from the table to review the car mileage rates. Liz Warner had also said that in her view a formal Annual Dinner had represented better value than the buffet dinner this year. The Council noted this for planning for the next AGM.

24/08 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays at 1830 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester: 22 April, 17 June, 19 August, 7 October and 2 December (after the EGM).

The meeting closed at 2309.