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The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 25 June 2008 at 1900
at the BPA Office, Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	John Smyth MVO	-	Chairman
	Paul Applegate		
	Adrian Bond		
	Paul Ledden		
	John Page		
	Craig Poxon		
	Grant Richards		
	Andy Scott		
	Martin Soulsby		
	Weed Stoodley		
In attendance:	Kieran Brady	-	Pilots' Committee Chairman
	Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	Secretary-General
Apologies for absence:	Debbie Carter	-	Treasurer
	Lesley Gale	-	Editor, Skydive the Mag
	John Hitchen	-	NCSO
	John Horne	-	Vice Chairman
	David Ibbotson		
	Ian Marshall		
	Paul Moore		
	Alex Wilson		

Item Minute

41/08 Change of date

The Chairman reported that John Horne (Vice Chairman), in tendering his apologies for absence, had asked it to be noted that he considered the change from the original meeting date of Tuesday 17 June to be unhelpful. The original date had been agreed at the inaugural Council meeting at the start of the year, and John Horne had planned his work abroad and his holidays around it. This was why he had had to miss tonight's meeting, which he regretted.

42/08 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 April 2008 had been ratified electronically. The ratified minutes had been published on the BPA website on 15 May 2008, six weeks before the normal publication date of 27 June 2008. The Chairman thanked Council Members for their continuing help with this. The trial of electronic ratification of Council minutes would continue.

Action: BPA Office

43/08 Matters arising

43.1 Sport England: Significant areas for sports (minute 27.2)

Sport England had acknowledged receipt of the application, through the BPA, of four Affiliated Centres in England for recognition as Significant Areas for Sports (SASPs). Such recognition would confer on these Centres additional status that might help to protect and preserve their sites for the enjoyment of the sport in future years. Sport England had said they expected to

have processed the applications, and to add details to their website of any sport parachuting sites they had recognised, by the end of July 2008. The Office understood that any other Affiliated Centres in England that might wish to apply for similar recognition in the future could do so via the BPA.

Await update at next meeting

43.2 Sponsorship template (minute 27.4)

The Chairman thanked Claire Scott for kindly providing this template for use by the BPA as a guide to raise sponsorship. It had been circulated to the Competitions and Development Committees.

Action completed

43.3 Anti-Doping Policy and Rules (minute 38)

UK Sport had now placed sport parachuting outside its own domestic anti-doping testing programme and it therefore fell to the BPA to arrange such testing as required. UK Sport had provided details of a commercial company that offered such tests – which had to meet rigorous standards of conduct and procedure to ensure fairness and reliability. The Office was currently obtaining costs. The Competitions Committee had asked the Office to seek UK Sport's agreement on using the wording that the BPA 'may test' in place of 'will test' in BPA Form 220: Anti-Doping Policy and Rules. The suggested use of 'may test' was to follow a precedent of the wording in use by another sports NGB.

Action: BPA Office

44/08 Live Honda skydiving television advertisement on Channel 4 on Thursday 29 May

The Council congratulated the 18 BPA Members who had been involved in a Formation Skydive televised live on Channel 4 at 2010 on Thursday 29 May to advertise the new Honda Accord car.

The team comprised: *Formation skydivers:* Ian 'Milko' Hodgkinson, Phil Curtis, Marcus Beck, Sacha Chilton, Hannah Betts, Sarah Smith, Claire 'Sparky' Scott, Andy Scott, Kate Stephens, Chris Cook, Sophie Cook, Gareth Thomas, Andy Pook, Dave Ruffell, Amanda Kemp & Phil Hartree. *Freefall videographers:* Gary Wainwright & Tony Danbury.

The letters H-O-N-D-A had been spelt out in formation, timed to fit the advertising break. The Chairman said this broke new ground in live air-to-air television coverage of the sport, and was a tremendous fillip towards the goal of getting the sport televised. He said he had been glued to his seat as he had watched it live in his own home. As UK Delegate to IPC, he had already alerted IPC to this technical breakthrough, and he would use this stunning achievement as evidence of the coverage and exposure that could be achieved by our sport to encourage IPC to redouble its efforts to strive for television coverage of skydiving competitions. This would require variations to the rules to make the staging competitions more viewer-friendly.

Andy Scott (Competitions Chairman) had been one of the Honda team and the Council gave him, as a representative of all 19 in the team, a hearty round of applause.

Andy Scott described how professional the team had been, and the excitement of the jump. He paid tribute to Phil Curtis for making the organisational arrangements with Honda through their advertising agency during the 4 to 5 weeks preceding the televised jump. The advertisement had been seen by some 2.5 million viewers on live transmission, together with more than 1 million, still counting, subsequent views on the Internet. Honda had taken advertising in newspapers to promote viewership of the live skydiving advertisement, under its campaign strapline 'Difficult is worth doing'.

Andy Scott thanked Craig Poxon for making an analysis of traffic to the BPA website, which had recorded a peak shortly after the Honda advertisement had been transmitted. Andy Scott said that he had spoken to a number of tandems at his local Drop Zone after he advertisement had been broadcast, and they said that seeing it had encouraged them to try parachuting.

Craig Poxon proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion to award a BPA Certificate of Merit to all members of the team on the Honda formation skydive for services in promoting skydiving.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman said he planned to include a video of the skydive in his Review of the Year at the AGM at the Hinckley Island Hotel on Saturday 10 January 2009.

Andy Scott reported that Phil Curtis had negotiated with the team and Honda that, instead of the team receiving royalties for future use of the video, the money would be put together as a donation to further the sport. This magnanimous gesture appeared likely to result in a significant donation from Honda, which the Competitions Committee had decided would be earmarked to be divided equally to fund coaching for the top teams in FS Rookie and A Class from this year's Nationals. The Council expressed its gratitude and admiration to the team for this noble gesture.

Craig Poxon noted with sadness that the aircraft used for the jump, which had taken place over Spain, had crashed on the following day with the loss of life of London-based BPA Member Germano Da Silva, who had selflessly stayed in the aircraft to help others exit by parachute. The Council gave their condolences.

45/08 Update on bad debtors

45.1 Debt A

The Chairman reported that debt A (minute 30 refers) had now been settled, and the BPA Membership of the former debtor re-instated in accordance with legal advice. However, the BPA had incurred legal costs of £1398.25 in recovering the debt, which on legal advice it was reasonable for the BPA to reclaim from the Member concerned, and if it was not paid, again to consider suspending their membership if necessary. A letter (circulated) had been sent to the Member, on re-instatement, to set this out.

The Member concerned had lobbied Council Members by telephone to seek the immediate re-instatement of his Membership for the weekend following the Thursday on which the Office had received a third party cheque on settlement of the debt. This had had the potential to strain communication between Council Members and the Office, and Tony Butler asked that Council Members, in situations such as this, should check on the position with the office before responding to lobbying. The point here was that recovery of the debt had gone to law (hence the recovery costs) and therefore the Office, in properly discharging the matter, had to first to obtain approval from the BPA's lawyer, and not unreasonably – given the background to, and duration of this case – wait for the cheque to clear, before re-instating Membership. The Chairman had personally kept the Council up-to-date on the matter by e-mail. Legal clearance had taken two working days and cheque clearance about a week, allowing the Member's reinstatement in time for the following weekend.

The Council asked the Office to issue the Member with an invoice for the cost of recovering the debt, as above.

Action: BPA Office (Jon Gretton)

45.2 Debt B

Jon Gretton (BPA Financial Administrator) had circulated a paper to update the Council on Debt B (minute 14.2 of the Council meeting on 19 February 2008 refers). This was proving difficult to recover as the former Member concerned had wound up their limited company, which owed the debt. The former Member also owed a debt to a Drop Zone Operator, who said he held his own judgement against the debtor, and had kindly offered to try to help the BPA to recover its debt.

Ongoing

45.3 Aged debtors list

Appended to Jon Gretton's paper (minute 30.2) was an aged debtors list for debts exceeding 30 days. There were 16 current entries, 6 of which were for less than £100. Adrian Bond asked why the debtors were being allowed additional time. Tony Butler said there was no cause for concern, except for Debt B above. He asked the Council not to tighten the BPA's

credit control because all the debtors were Affiliated Centres, and nearly all the debts were for Student P6 memberships sold through Affiliated Centres that had been trading reliably with the BPA for many years. He was confident that these routine debts would soon be paid and the Council accepted this assurance.

46/08 Ratification of minutes of Committees

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

46.1 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 22 April 2008

John Page proposed, and Martin Soulsby seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 22 April 2008 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

46.2 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 22 April 2008

Paul Applegate proposed, and Craig Poxon seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 22 February 2008 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

Arising from the minutes, the Chairman highlighted the Communications Committee's decision to put out to tender the contract to edit and produce *Skydive the Mag* for the next period following expiry of the current contract in June 2009 (Communications minute 12). Adrian Bond (Communications Chairman) explained that the Committee had been unanimous in its decision, which would start to be taken forward later this year. He confirmed that Lesley Gale, Editor, had been involved in all the Committee's discussions. The purpose of the exercise was to benchmark the contract, which was important for any organisation to assure that it was receiving best value when awarding contracts. The Chairman asked if the new arrangement had had a demotivating effect on Lesley Gale. Adrian Bond said that Lesley Gale had expressed concerns, and that the Committee had talked these through with her and sought to reassure her. He did not know if there would be any other bidders, but the Committee was of course aware of Lesley Gale's strong track record in editing and producing the Magazine, and of the cost savings she had made, which would count strongly in her favour.

John Page said that this needed to be considered in terms of good business practice. He was familiar with fixed-term contracts in other spheres of commerce. He said that companies awarding contracts were constantly putting out feelers to benchmark these contracts in the marketplace to ensure that they were achieving best value. He believed that the BPA could leave itself open to criticism if it did not adopt such a widespread and sensible approach.

Craig Poxon reported on a poster on UKS who had asked whether there might be any interest in a new skydiving magazine in the UK that was not linked with the BPA so that topics outside the scope of the BPA could be covered. Andy Scott said that it was not entirely clear what content was being proposed, or whether there would be sufficient to fill another Magazine bearing in mind the excellent coverage of skydiving by *Skydive the Mag*.

Tony Butler believed that it was the suddenness of the decision to put out the next BPA Magazine contract to tender, rather than the nature of the tendering process, that had perhaps come as a surprise. The Chairman concluded by asking the Communications Committee to remain mindful of human factors and goodwill within the context of its business-led approach.

46.3 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 5 June 2008

STC minute 4(v) reported on a breach of the Operations Manual by four tandem instructors who had been jumping a Skyvan and who had failed to connect up their students before the aircraft had taken off and had had the students sitting next to the in the aircraft unattached. STC considered that disciplinary procedures should be invoked but considered the BPA Tribunal system now in place to be a costly and timely procedure.

Tony Butler reported that he had discussed the disciplinary procedures with Vice President Chris Allen, who had originally drafted them. This had proven to be fruitful, as there was a

way in which, should the respondent/s (those whose actions were the subject of a Panel of Inquiry) and the Panel agree, the Panel might itself take disciplinary action. This would avoid the need for the Panel to put forward its recommendations to a Tribunal. As such, it would avoid the additional time, cost, delay and expense of convening a Tribunal, although that option would remain open. In practice, a shortened version of the disciplinary procedures such as this might be most likely to be effective when the respondents admitted guilt and willingly accepted the Panel's sanction as proportionate.

Arising from the discussion with Chris Allen, additional wording (tabled) had been drafted to add to paragraph 2.9 of BPA Form 256 – Tribunal proceedings, rules and procedures. The Council considered this wording. Paul Ledden proposed, and Weed Stoodley seconded, a motion that the wording 'grossly disproportionate' should be clarified by the addition of 'in terms of leniency or severity'.

Carried unanimously

The Council also decided to clarify the term 'the disciplinary action' with 'the stated disciplinary action'.

John Page then proposed, and Andy Scott seconded, a motion that the additional wording to paragraph 9 of BPA Form 256 – Tribunal proceedings, rules and procedures, should be adopted as follows:

2.9 [Add] If the Panel of Inquiry makes recommendations for disciplinary action, and the Panel believes it to be appropriate in the circumstances, the Panel may offer the respondent/s the opportunity for the stated disciplinary action to be taken by the Panel. Should the respondent/s reject the offer, a Tribunal shall be convened to decide the matter. Should the relevant Committee consider the Panel of Inquiry's recommendations to be grossly disproportionate in terms of leniency or severity, it may appeal to the Council for a Tribunal to be convened.

Carried unanimously

Other items arising from consideration of the STC minutes were:

- The Council recorded its thanks to Tony Knight (Chairman of the Pilots' Working Group) for his hard work and dedication in compiling the new BPA Pilots' Manual, which had now been published and would shortly be available as a link from the 'Stay safe' page of the BPA website <http://www.bpa.org.uk/safety.htm>
- Andy Scott was pleased to report that a Member had returned their AAD cutter to Vigil for modification and had received it back free of charge except for the cost of postage.

John Page then proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the STC meeting held on 5 June 2008 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

Weed Stoodley said there had been a lack of consistency between Council and STC minutes in whether or not parties were named in the case of a wrongful or alleged wrongful act or omission of some kind, for example a bad debtor or a breach of the Operations Manual. The Chairman said the policy was never deliberately to identify any Member whose reputation might be damaged. Paul Ledden said he was aware of other membership bodies that reported the findings of their disciplinary procedures and published their judgments, including where appropriate disciplinary action taken against members whom they named. The Chairman asked Council Members to consider this point and for it to be noted as an item for discussion at the next meeting.

Action: Next meeting

46.4 Competitions Committee meeting held on Thursday 1 May 2008

Paul Applegate proposed, and Andy Scott seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 1 May 2008, should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

46.5 Competitions Committee meeting held on Wednesday 4 June 2008

Andy Scott highlighted a number of items in the minutes and then proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 4 June 2008, including variations by John Hitchen and Ian Marshall (circulated in advance) and Martin Soulsby (reported by Andy Scott) held on 4 June 2008, should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

The Chairman of Council reported that he had been invited by IPC to be a member of the Jury at the 2nd FAI World Canopy Piloting Championships to be held at Wonderboom Airport, South Africa from 18-23 November 2008. Andy Scott confirmed that Paul Moore, and not now John Hitchen as had originally been planned, would be UK Head of Delegation and Delegation Manager for this meet. This had been by mutual agreement in order that Paul Moore could investigate judging equipment at the world meet as the Competitions Committee was planning to purchase such equipment for use at UK competitions, and more than one system was available. It was important to purchase the optimal system for our needs, and it required research and networking to help come to the right decision.

47/08 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier today

47.1 Communications Committee

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

- been pleased to receive a suggestion from Kieran Brady (Chairman, Pilots' Committee) who had kindly offered to sponsor a prize competition in the Mag for the first jumper to jump out of all generally available UK registered aircraft for skydiving;
- agreed to recommend to the Council to accept a quotation for £950 +VAT from Hayes Computing Solutions Ltd (Hcoms, the contractor for the new BPA website) for a new Mag website, to preserve its own distinctive identity and URL (web address), as an additional phase of the work they were doing for the BPA website. This made their quote a cost-effective solution. Adrian Bond proposed, and Martin Soulsby seconded, a motion that this recommendation should be accepted by the Council;

Carried unanimously

- agreed to the first commercial advertisement on the Mag website, to be placed by Mercedes;
- agreed to renew the existing libel insurance cover for the Mag, Mag website and BPA website.

Adrian Bond then projected images of the new BPA website, which was now under development by Hcoms, and outlined the new navigation tabs that would be used. These which had been developed by a communications working party meeting this morning and reviewed by the Communications Committee this afternoon. The aim was to make it easier for visitors to the site – whether Members, the general public or other users such as researchers and journalists – to find what they were looking for more quickly and easily. The Council was impressed with the new approach, and John Page made a suggestion to help to improve contrast quality on the title wording on the home page.

Adrian Bond then proposed, and John Page seconded, acceptance of the new website in principle, subject to ongoing development to finalise the site for view by the Council and then to go live this summer as the first stage of the four-stage new website and database project.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman thanked Adrian Bond for his report and said he was pleased to see the progress on development of the front-end of the new BPA website.

47.2 Development Committee

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

- appointed Members Becca Armstrong and Rich Rust as volunteer BPA Media Co-ordinators, and congratulated both on having made a sterling start;
- heard that Ryanair now recognise sport parachute equipment (but charge it as baggage to carry it on their flights);
- published a form developed by Paul Ledden to encourage first-time jumpers to tell their local media about their experience;
- received a report from Weed Stoodley on her continuing work, with the help of Martin Shuttleworth at the Office, on the complicated task of drafting updated BPA Articles of Association in the new format facilitated by the Companies Act 2006;
- agreed on the general principle to suggest to Simon Ward of the Airkix wind tunnel that the Airkix Fund, which stood at £1,420, should be applied to the enhancement of training materials – the Committee believed that Simon Ward was supportive of such an approach, and the detail was left for negotiation and consideration at the next meeting;
- received a report from the first meeting this year of the Insurance Working Group (formerly the Insurance Subcommittee) and decided to invite David Hickling to remain as Chairman to help to assure continuity in this important and complex area;
- been delighted to hear that, by signing up to be part of CCPR's involvement in the BingoLotto pilot, the BPA's share of the proceeds was £1022.29;
- noted an idea from John Horne, which the Committee would invite him to set out in a paper, that may help to improve student retention and conversion rates;
- held a useful and very open discussion with Grant Richards (whose company with Jason Thompson, UK Parachute Services Ltd, currently operated the BPA Shop) on the past, present and possible future of the BPA Shop. He apologised to Grant Richards that discussion of this item had not been flagged up in advance, other than by means of the last set of Committee minutes;
- completed work on the 2007/8 Action Plan that would finish on 30 June 2008, and started work on the new Development Action Plan for the year from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009;
- considered a paper from the Office about online voting, with reference to the planned online voting facility on the new BPA website. The paper had raised logistical issues about how to dovetail an online voting system with the paper system that the Office understood company law to continue to require the BPA to offer to voting Members. It had also raised an ethical question about the involvement of staff, who as employees of the Association were stakeholders, in the administration of a BPA election. The Development Committee believed that it may be prudent to liaise with the website developers Hcoms to seek to revise the order of staging the development of the new website by now scheduling online renewals before online voting. In the meantime, if the number of candidates for Council 2009 meant that there was a need for an election later this year, the Development Committee may recommend the use of Electoral Reform Services, who had provided a good and reasonably cost-effective service for the last election;
- thanked Claire Scott of team Bodyflight Storm for kindly providing the team's template for securing sponsorship, and allowing the BPA to adapt this to seek sponsorship for

the sport. The template would help to inform an update of the content in the sponsorship page of the BPA website.

The Chairman thanked Craig Poxon for such a comprehensive report.

48/08 Action Plan budgets 2008/9

Action Plan targets for 2008/9 had been agreed at the last meeting (minute 33.2). Shortly after that meeting, the Office had circulated a paper dated 25 April entitled 'Action plan budgets'. This had included a copy of back minute 60/04 about budgeting from the Council meeting held on Tuesday 19 October 2004 and minute 71/04, also about budgeting, from the Council meeting held on Tuesday 7 December 2004. Also circulated had been a copy of minute 68/98 from the Council meeting on 20 October 1998 on voting procedures relating to the allocation of BPA funds, and a copy of minute 72/98 from the Council meeting held on 15 December 1998 on the same subject.

The paper suggested that, as future Action Plans were no longer being prepared as a document to bid to UK Sport for exchequer funding, but purely as documents to shape the work of the BPA, the targets on safety & training and administration should in future be allocated to BPA running costs such that Action Plan funding, and therefore budgeting, covered only the functional areas of Competitions, Communications and Development.

This approach had been adopted in the final draft of the Action Plan, including budget allocations, that had been circulated by e-mail last week. The Council was content with this. A special budget for the new BPA website was needed for the cost of the new BPA website. The Council agreed to a budget of £6K, with an nominal allocation of £3K each to the Communications and Development Committees, which were overseeing, respectively, (i) the front end appearance and (ii) ease of navigability and the back-end functionality of the new site.

Andy Scott reported that the Competitions Committee was looking at better granularity of budgets. Ian Marshall had requested clarification about how any budget underspends should be treated at the end of the financial year. Weed Stoodley said there were financial accounting considerations. Any money not spent had to appear in the profit and loss accounts unless it was put in an accrual against a specific item. Funds were only available as shown in the profit and loss account. She cautioned against the risk of carrying budgets forward from year to year, which could result in allocating pots of money that may or may not be available when they were called upon, perhaps some years later. This would not mean that the money had disappeared – it would purely be an artefact of a mismatch on paper between budgeting and financial accounting. Budgeting and annual financial accounting therefore needed to be considered together, and to work as an integrated whole, not two separate systems because this would not work and it would simply lead to confusion.

Andy Scott recognised the need to ensure good accounting practice whilst at the same time confirming the availability of funds. He suggested that it would be better to allocate funding in a different way. The Competitions Committee, because of the two-year cycle of World Championships, effectively had a two year budget cycle with a higher financial need arising every other year. Andy Scott said that, to cope with this, the current Action Plan saw a carry over of budget from one financial year to the next, but that this was not in his view the best solution. With more realistic budget figures, and the agreement of the Council to do so, he believed that a more accurate spend could be forecast and applied by recognising the two-year competitions cycle as the foundation for future competitions budgets.

The Chairman said he saw no reason why budgets should not be formulated to cover more than one financial year.

The Chairman asked Weed Stoodley kindly to continue to liaise with Jon Gretton, BPA Financial Administrator. This was with a view to formulating a policy that everyone could understand and that would help the Committees to monitor and manage their budgets and report them to the membership whilst at the same time meeting the requirements of financial accounting.

Action: Weed Stoodley & Jon Gretton

The Chairman also asked that the Competitions Committee should carry out a simple scoping exercise to plan their strategy over the next two-year cycle and to identify the associated budget requirements. Competitions budgets varied significantly from year to year because of the cycle of alternating on and off years. He believed that this should have a bearing on annual budget allocation and that there may be a more effective approach than continuing with a set annual share of the overall BPA budget when it was known that the Committee's needs would vary significantly from year to year. If the annual budget more closely matched the known needs for each year in question, it may well avoid the need to carry over a large chunk of the Competitions budget from one financial year to the next.

Action: Competitions Committee

The Chairman said his view was that expenditure on the pursuit of excellence in competitions paid dividends in increasing participation in the sport, including at entrant and grassroots level. The now long-established and extremely successful Skills Coaching Roadshow programme made a direct connection, at Clubs & Centres across all regions of the UK, where top skydivers including our World and National Champions nurtured the grass roots of the sport. This was a virtuous cycle where expenditure at the top fed directly back to the grass roots.

49/08 Period of tenure on Council

John Horne (Vice Chairman of Council) had circulated a discussion paper setting out ideas for a possible extension of the period of service for elected members of Council from one to three years. His paper noted that it had been suggested by many people over the years that the current practice of annual elections for all fifteen seats on the Council promoted a lack of continuity within the Association. The paper stimulated a discussion in which the reasons advanced in the paper for such a change were appreciated, as was a reason to leave things as they were, namely that several Council Members around the table stated they would never have stood for election on the first occasion had their initial period of tenure been for three years instead of one year. Any change to a three-year period of tenure on the Council might therefore restrict the pool of talent available for the governance of the Association, which would be a backward step.

A compromise of a two-year period of service was suggested. If a longer period of service was to be considered, it raised questions about perhaps a percentage of seats coming up for election each year (say 5 seats each year, taking in all 15 over a three-year cycle) and transitional measures that might apply to get from where we are now to any new arrangements. In short, there was considerable depth to this item and the Chairman said the Council could not do it full justice tonight. John Horne had indeed recognised this, as his paper was headed 'discussion paper'. It had certainly been true to that name!

The Chairman asked the Development Committee kindly to take forward consideration of this item with John Horne, who was a Member of that Committee, and to report back to the full Council with recommendations in due course. He was aware that the update to the Memorandum & Articles of Association, in which the Development Committee was currently engaged, offered an appropriate point at which to put any change that might be recommended to the Membership at a General Meeting. But for now that was assuming too much, because more detailed consideration was needed on the pros and cons of any variation to the present annual election to each of the 15 seats on the Council.

Action: Refer to Development Committee

50/08 AGM 2010

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. It was clear that, after about ten years at the Hinckley Island Hotel, the membership wanted a change because each year was too samey. Venue bookings had always to be made well in advance and the next AGM had already been booked at the Hinckley Island for Saturday 10 January 2010 (which was a week earlier than our preferred date, which was not available). However, the time was now due to settle the arrangements for 2010 and the Office put considerable time effort into investigating alternative venues both on its own and with the help of a venues agency.

Andy Scott reported on feedback from the membership of his local DZ who were against a return to the current Hinckley venue in 2010. The Chairman asked the Council if a change of venue was appropriate for the AGM in 2010 and the answer was a resounding yes.

There were relatively few venues that could offer all the function rooms and bedrooms required under one roof. Such venues tended to be large hotels, which were often expensive, usually considerably more expensive than the Hinckley Island. However, another 4 star hotel that offered a package that appeared to be within broadly the same price band as the Hinckley Island was the Hilton Hotel in Blackpool. Adrian Bond, who happened to live in Lancashire, had recently made a facilities visit there and had negotiated down on the price of some items, including a small discount on bar prices.

The consensus was that a venue in Central England would be preferred because it would be geographically nearer to the majority of the membership. However, no suitable venue in this region had been identified. Center Parcs of Sherwood, Notts, and Butlins Skegness were suggested around the table. The Council asked the Office to check with these venues for price and availability. If neither was appropriate, the Council decided to give Blackpool a try. John Page said that it would be a very different venue in that at Hinckley the AGM was more or less a captive audience as the hotel occupied rather an isolated site. The Blackpool Hilton, on the North Promenade, was in a town full of bed and breakfasts, clubs and bars. The local environment was therefore a sharp contrast from that of the hotel in Hinckley.

Action: BPA Office

[Note: Neither of the suggested alternative venues is practicable, therefore a booking is being pursued with the Blackpool Hilton for the AGM on Saturday 16 January 2010.]

51/08 Europe Air Sports

In Paul Moore's absence, this standing agenda item was held over until the next meeting.

52/08 Report from Club Representatives

There were no reports from Club representatives.

53/08 Report on Royal Aero Club

The Chairman, in his capacity as BPA delegate to the Royal Aero Club, reported that Lesley Gale would not be able to attend the RAeC Awards Ceremony next Wednesday, 2 July, and he would therefore collect her Bronze Medal on her behalf. It would be presented to Lesley Gale at the next BPA AGM to be held at the Hinckley Island Hotel on Saturday 10 January 2009.

Action: Chairman

54/08 Correspondence

54.1 Commemorative plaque

Further to minute 39.1 of the meeting on 22 April, P G Newcombe of Cheltenham Civic Society had written on 22 May (copy circulated) to confirm the wording, and arrangements for the official unveiling, of the plaque to commemorate John Hampton's parachute descent in 1838. The unveiling would take place at the site of the descent, at Montpellier Gardens in Cheltenham, on the occasion of its 170th anniversary on Friday 3 October 2008, at 1500. The BPA's logo would appear as co-funder of the plaque. The Chairman or his nominee/s would attend to represent the BPA. The Chairman asked that the Office should notify Lesley Gale, Editor of *Skydive the Mag*, and Becca Armstrong and Rich Rust, BPA Media Co-ordinators.

Action: BPA Office

54.2 Letter from J B McGeechan, BPA Member 101261

A letter to the Council dated 12 May from BPA Member J B McGeechan LLB Dip LP, had been circulated. It suggested that the BPA might be in breach of Article 82 of the European Union Treaty (abuse of a dominant market position) by requiring Members to subscribe to *Skydive the Mag* as a part of their BPA membership subscription. The Chairman had taken legal advice from several sources, and had already circulated the first draft of a suggested reply, and he reported verbally on a few variations to further improve the draft.

The reply pointed out that the BPA had a duty of care to communicate with its Members on, inter alia, safety and training matters and these were covered, together with other news and information about the sport, in the Magazine. The fact that the nominal cost of the Magazine was itemized in a breakdown of the overall subscription (as was the insurance element) did not imply that the Magazine was optional – it was merely to be transparent in accounting for the application by the Association of revenue from membership subscriptions. The Chairman noted that, in the online membership survey conducted this spring, a resounding 89.5% of the Membership said that the BPA should continue to produce a Magazine. The Council thanked the Chairman for researching and drafting the reply, which the meeting fully endorsed to be sent.

Action: Chairman

54.3 Planning application for a waste transfer facility opposite the BPA Office

A copy of a planning notification had been circulated dated 29 April by Leicestershire County Council relating to a application they had received for a change of use of an existing industrial unit in Wharf Way to a waste transfer facility. The Office had liaised with its commercial and domestic neighbours and had lodged a written objection on behalf of the Association (copy circulated).

54.4 Carbon offsetting

A copy of an e-mail dated 15 May from Steven Baker, BPA Member 1013814, had been circulated in advance. In the e-mail, he had said he believed there would be increasing pressure to reduce the carbon footprint of the sport, and asked what action the BPA may be planning to achieve this. Weed Stoodley reported that another sport she had been dealing with already had in place some stringent and wide-ranging regulations relating to the wider issue of environmental impact. She said that perhaps, in the not too distant future, the BPA would need to be proactive in such areas. The Chairman said that the sport parachuting was one of the fraternity of airports and that the issue of carbon offsetting was one that should properly be referred to the National Aero Club, the Royal Aero Club of the UK, and the international airports governing body, FAI/IPC. He would therefore refer the matter to these bodies for consideration.

Action: Chairman

55/08 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 Committee, which had met immediately before the Council meeting. John Page then proposed, and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion to accept the Employment Committee's recommendation that the pay of BPA staff should be increased by 3.5% effective from 1 July 2008. A member of staff had also raised a point about pension contribution rates, and the Council asked the Employment Committee to look at this and report back.

The Council recognised that the introduction of the new BPA database and website over the next year might, during its introductory stages, place significant additional demands on staff both in terms of bedding in the new system, re-training and adapting to variations to established working methods. It was impossible to predict specific issues that might arise, but the Council agreed to review the affect of the new system on staff workloads during the period when the new system was being introduced. In the event that it generated significant extra work or caused disruption to working hours for staff in the short term, the Council agreed that it might consider a modest one-off additional payment to staff in recognition of this. In steady state, the new database and the online renewals that would go with it should reduce the administrative workload of the Office, especially the peak at renewal time. However, there was potentially a lot of work to get from where we are now to that utopian vision, and the Council, as a responsible employer, wished to recognise the possibility that it might place significant additional demands on the staff to get from here to there.

Non-members of Council, including staff, then returned. The Chairman announced the Council's decision on the staff pay increase. On behalf of the staff, Tony Butler thanked the Council.

56/08 Cost of fuel

Andy Scott reported that the cost of fuel and its effect on jump prices had been raised as a thread on UKS. He suggested it might be helpful to publish an article in *Skydive the Mag* about the cost of running a Drop Zone. However, the Drop Zone Operators present did not consider that it would be practicable to write an article that would be relevant to all Drop Zones as they had as many differences as similarities. Kieran Brady (Chairman, Pilots' Committee) reported that CAA was planning to remove an aircraft fuel duty subsidy in 2009 and other changes were in the pipeline that might have an affect on aircraft operating costs. Weed Stoodley asked whether it might be possible for DZs to buy fuel more economically through a syndicate. Craig Poxon said that this had been suggested on UKS but had not been pursued.

The Chairman said this was an item that might be discussed at a Drop Zone Operators' meeting and asked the Development Committee kindly to liaise with DZOs on if they wanted a meeting and whether they had any input to it.

Refer to Development Committee

57/08 Car mileage allowance

The Office reported on a request from Ian Marshall for the BPA to review its mileage rates for private cars used on BPA business in the light of the increase in fuel prices. The Chairman said this would be considered at the next meeting in the light of any recommendation from the Development Committee.

Action: Development Committee / Next meeting

58/08 Dates of next meetings

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

The meeting closed at 2300.