

British Parachute Association

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The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 19 August 2008 at 1847

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

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

Item Minute

59/08 Chair

The Chairman, who was working outside the UK, had invited the Vice Chairman to Chair this meeting. Accordingly, John Horne took the Chair.

60/08 Congratulations

The Chairman and Council congratulated British World Champions Team Bodyflight Storm - Hannah Betts, Claire 'Sparky' Scott, Kate Stephens, Sarah Smith, and freefall videographer Gary 'Swoop' Wainwright, who had taken Gold in the 4-way women's Formation Skydiving at the World Parachuting Championships in Formation Skydiving held in Maubeuge, France, on 9-14 August 2008.

The meeting next congratulated Team Volairkix - Mike Carpenter, Adam Mattacola and freefall videographer Andy Newell - who had won Bronze in Freefly at the World Championships in Artistic Skydiving also held in Maubeuge on the same dates.

The Council recorded its grateful appreciation to all of the teams who had been part of the British Delegation at this year's FS and Artistics World Championships, and to those in British Delegations for this year's World Championships in other disciplines which had either already been held or were yet to take place.

Two of the members of Bodyflight Storm, Claire 'Sparky' Scott and Kate Stephens, were already Life Members of the BPA as they had been part of previous British World Champion teams. Ian Marshall proposed, and Alex Wilson seconded, a motion that the Council should now confer the honour of Life Membership of the BPA, in recognition of their supreme achievement, on Hannah Betts, Sarah Smith, and Gary 'Swoop' Wainwright.

Carried unanimously

Weed Stoodley next proposed, and Andy Scott seconded, a motion to award Certificates of Merit to Members of Teams Bodyflight Storm and Volairkix.

Carried unanimously

An e-mail of thanks to the BPA (circulated) had been received from Andy Newell on behalf of himself and his team-mates.

Andy Scott reported that Martin Soulsby, who had been the British Delegation Manager at WPC Maubeuge, had done a superb job in dealing with a raft of logistical and administrative problems - most notably relating to living accommodation – that had plagued other delegations. Paul Applegate proposed, and Craig Poxon seconded, a vote of thanks to Martin Soulsby for his skill and dedication in the role of Delegation Manager under trying circumstances.

Vote of thanks to Martin Soulsby

61/08 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25 June 2008 had been ratified electronically. The ratified minutes had been published on the BPA website on 14 July 2008, over a month earlier than the normal date of publication, which would have been 22 August 2008. The Chairman thanked Council Members and staff for their continuing help with this. The trial of electronic ratification of Council minutes would continue.

For the sake of the record, Andy Scott proposed, and Grant Richards seconded, a motion that the minutes had been ratified by e-mail as a true record.

Ratified

62/08 Matters arising

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

A representative from Sport England's Headquarters in London had visited the BPA Office on 25 July to hone the applications by four BPA Affiliated Centres for recognition as Significant Areas for Sports (SASPs). The criteria that had to be met for such recognition were set by Sport England, which was also responsible for determining the acceptance or otherwise of applications by sports venues submitted through their NGB.

One BPA Affiliated Centre had applied for recognition as a National SASP, whilst the other three had applied for recognition as Regional SASPs. One of the benefits of recognition as a SASP was that it might help to safeguard future use of the site for the sport. As a result of the meeting, further specific information had been requested by the BPA from the applicant Centres. The BPA Office now had a better grasp of the SASP criteria, which related to the uniqueness and irreplaceability of a given site. The BPA Office understood that it remained open to other Affiliated Centres in England to apply to Sport England, through the BPA, for recognition as a SASP. The outcome of the four current applications by Affiliated Centres would not be known until the additional information had been received and evaluated by Sport England. The BPA Office also understood that no exactly parallel scheme was presently offered by the other home country sports councils in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Ongoing

62.2 Sponsorship template (minute 27.4)

The template kindly provided by Claire Scott would be used to update the 'sponsorship' page of the BPA website in due course. This could not be done immediately because it was additional work over and above that to which the Office had already committed itself. This significant existing commitment would be taking up all staff time available for website work until the new website was up and running.

Action: BPA Office

62.3 Anti-Doping Policy and Rules (minute 43.3)

The cost of anti-doping testing to the rigorous quality standards required had been advised by the testing company to whom the BPA had been referred by UK Sport. It was around £500 per test. The Office was seeking 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.

Ongoing

63/08 Update on bad debtors (minute 45)

63.1 Debt A (minute 45.1)

As reported in minute 45.1, Debt A had now been paid. However, the BPA's legal costs in recovering it were still in the process of being reclaimed from the former debtor, whose BPA Membership had been re-instated on settlement of the debt. These costs had amounted to £1398.25. Jon Gretton (Financial Administrator) reported that the Member concerned was reimbursing the BPA its costs in weekly instalments. £400 had been repaid to date.

63.2 Debt B (minute 45.2)

Debt B was owed by a limited company that no longer existed, which had used to operate an Affiliated Centre. The amount of the debt was approximately £3,800 (revised figure) for the supply of provisional student memberships. The company also owed money to another Drop Zone Operator, who was trying to recover it and who had kindly offered to help the BPA to recover the debt owed to the Association. Debbie Carter (Treasurer) said that because the debt was owed by a company that had no assets, the only legal action that the BPA could take - against the directors of the former company - would be likely to involve considerable cost, with no guarantee of success. Therefore, moral arm-twisting was the most practicable option at present. Debbie Carter pointed out that although the debt had not, at least to date, been recovered, it had not been forgotten and would be first in our considerations should the individual concerned wish to resume any association with sport parachuting.

Continue to monitor

63.3 Aged debtors list (minute 45.3)

In reply to a question from Weed Stoodley, Debbie Carter (Treasurer) reported that, pursuant to the considerations reported in minute 45.3, it was her intention to call to the Council's attention only those aged debtors who fell outside the BPA's normal parameters for settlement.

63.4 AGM 2010 (minute 50)

The Office reported that it had contacted the alternative venues suggested by the Council in minute 50 but these were either over budget or not available. Further negotiations had been held with the 4-star Hilton Blackpool and the deal they were now offering was broadly similar in price to that offered by the 4-star Hinckley Island Hotel, allowing for year-on-year inflation. The Office was now about to sign, on behalf of the Council, the contract with the Blackpool Hilton for the AGM to be held on Saturday 16 January 2010.

Action: BPA Office

63.5 Commemorative plaque (minute 54.1)

As the Chairman was currently out of the UK, it was not yet known whether his diary would allow him to represent the BPA the official unveiling of the plaque to commemorate John Hampton's parachute descent from a hot air balloon near Cheltenham in 1838. The unveiling would take place at Montpellier Gardens in Cheltenham, on the occasion of its 170th anniversary on Friday 3 October 2008, at 1500. As this was the last Council meeting before the event, the Council decided, in the event of John Smyth not being available, to accept the kind offers by Andy Scott (Competitions Chairman) - who had family ties with Cheltenham - and Paul Applegate (Riggers' Chairman) to represent the BPA.

The Office reported that Cheltenham Civic Society had also enquired about the possibility of arranging a commemorative parachute descent. The Office had enquired of the Silver Stars Parachute Display Team who were based in nearby Cirencester. Tony Goodman of Silver Stars, who was a former BPA Council Member, had kindly agreed in principle to arrange this. The Council were delighted, and expressed their grateful thanks to Tony Goodman and Silver

Stars for a kind gesture for the good of the sport that would be sure to increase the media profile of this unique event.

The Office would liaise with John Smyth on his return to the UK to confirm his availability. If he was not available, the Office would inform Andy Scott and Paul Applegate. It would also continue to liaise with the Cheltenham Civic Society.

Action: BPA Office

63.6 Letter from J B McGeechan, BPA Member 101261 (minute 54.2)

The Chairman reported that a reply (circulated) had been received from Mr McGeechan, which he would take under any other business (minute 72).

63.7 Planning application for a waste transfer facility opposite the BPA Office (minute 54.3)

The Office had attended the Leicestershire County Council Development Control and Regulatory Board held at County Hall on 14 August, for the determination of an application for a change of use of an existing industrial unit in Wharf Way, directly opposite the BPA Office, to a waste transfer facility. An oral objection had been made at that meeting on behalf of the BPA and two other neighbouring businesses. This followed the written objection that the BPA had already lodged (minute 54.3). Many other owners and occupiers of neighbouring domestic and industrial premises had also lodged written objections and there had also been a petition. The outcome had been that the County Council had granted a two-year permission for the waste transfer facility to operate on the site. Figures suggested that some 20 lorry movements (presumably skips) an hour were anticipated, which may equate to 140 a day, or 37,000 a year, or one every 3 minutes. Hours of site operation were to be 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays and 0700 to 1300 on Saturdays. A number of conditions had been attached to the two-year permission, which the planning authority would use to determine the compliance of the operation and monitor the level of disturbance to neighbours, particularly through noise. The objectors had formed the impression that the application had 'ticked all the right boxes' in terms of national, regional and local waste management policies and the planned operations had been designated to take place in existing buildings, rather than in the open as was apparently often the case for such sites, which had helped to secure the planning consent.

The Chairman said the decision meant that the value of the BPA Office, as freehold premises, would drop. The Council thanked the Office for the work it had done in objecting to this change of use. The Council asked the Office to continue to monitor the situation and liaise with neighbours.

Action: BPA Office

63.8 Carbon offsetting (minute 54.4)

Weed Stoodley reiterated her concern that carbon offsetting (raised by Steven Baker, BPA Member 1013814) was part of the broader issue of environmental management in the sport and not simply a matter to refer to our National Aero Club, the RAeC, and our international governing body, FAI/IPC (as the Chairman had already agreed to do, minute 54.4 refers). She believed that skydiving in the UK, on its own initiative, should be proactive in assessing and managing its impact on the environment. The Council noted this and suggested that the subject should be included in the list of items for discussion at the Drop Zone Owners' and Operators' meeting that the Development Committee was planning to arrange this autumn (minute 68.2.1).

Action: Include on agenda for DZOs meeting

63.4 Staff pension arrangements (minute 55)

Weed Stoodley (Staff Liaison Officer) reported that, pursuant to minute 55, she had asked the Office to contact other Sports NGBs to find out about their staff pension arrangements as one of the inputs to a review of the current BPA arrangements to be conducted by the Employment Committee.

Action: Employment Committee

64/08 Publication of disciplinary decisions

This item arose from a discussion at the last meeting, initiated by Weed Stoodley, about inconsistent treatment on the reporting of Members who were the subject of disciplinary

procedures or who were debtors to the Association. Sometimes it might be possible to identify the Member concerned indirectly through the attendance list at the head of the minutes, for example from the list of observers. On other occasions a term such as 'Member X' had been used.

Paul Ledden had pointed out that other Associations, including other Sports NGBs, published their disciplinary decisions, including the names of Members who had been found guilty of a disciplinary offence and been given a disciplinary sanction. He had asked why the BPA did not do this. In discussion, Paul Ledden was asked whether he was advocating a 'name and shame' policy. He said this was absolutely the wrong way of looking at it – the purpose was to ensure that justice was seen to be done. It was part of the normal public reporting of any regulatory organisation.

The Chairman advised the Council that, before it took a decision, it would be prudent to refer the question for a view from (i) STC, and (ii) Chris Allen, the BPA Vice President who had written the BPA's disciplinary procedures. The Council agreed to seek these inputs and further to consider the matter once they had been received.

Action: Refer for views from (i) STC & (ii) Chris Allen, BPA Vice President

65/08 Accounts for the financial year 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

The draft audited accounts had been circulated with the agenda. Debbie Carter (Treasurer) reported that income for the year had fallen from £700,506 to £694,241, largely due to a fall in membership numbers. Expenditure had been similar to last year, except for competitions, which had increased as nearly £50,300 had been paid during this period to teams that had met the BPA's strict performance criteria for team funding. The Council noted a covering memorandum from Jon Gretton (Financial Administrator) concerning an additional item of expenditure for the Magazine that that had still to be included in the accounts, which would mean that the overall surplus to be carried forward for the Association as a whole was £73,555.

Debbie Carter reported that the draft accounts had been audited, and were now being presented to the Council for approval, still in draft, for publication to the Membership with the October issue of *Skydive the Mag* for formal adoption at the EGM on 2 December 2008.

At the suggestion of Andy Scott (Competitions Chairman), under the main heading 'Competition costs' on page 6 of the accounts, the Council changed the wording 'Formation Skydiving, Freestyle and Skysurfing' to read 'Team funding' as this was a more accurate description. The Council also asked Jon Gretton (Financial Administrator) to apportion the grant from UK Sport, shown on page 9, as 80% for competitions and 20% for safety.

Craig Poxon said that feedback from Members had indicated that many, perhaps a majority, did not understand the accounts, and that many of the figures meant little or nothing to them. He asked whether there was any way in which the accounts could be made easier to understand for the average Member, who was not a financial specialist.

Debbie Carter replied that anecdotal evidence suggested that perhaps as much as 90% of the Membership did not study the accounts in any detail. Publication of the financial accounts was a statutory requirement, and the format used by the BPA contained far more detail than was legally required. Her previous experience, over the years, was that the format of presentation could be adjusted within certain limits but that it was unlikely to result in a significant number of Members getting more out of the document, because at the end of the day it had to meet statutory financial reporting requirements.

Weed Stoodley then proposed, and David Ibbotson seconded, a motion that the Council approve the draft accounts (with the variations set out above) for publication to the Membership and to go forward for consideration for formal adoption by the EGM on Tuesday 2 December 2008 at 1830.

Carried unanimously

Debbie Carter thanked Jon Gretton for preparing full draft accounts, and the auditors for auditing them, within only seven weeks of the financial year-end. The Council gave a vote of thanks to Jon Gretton, the auditors and to Debbie Carter, for their hard work to achieve this.

Weed Stoodley sounded a note of caution in that by working so quickly, she believed it left little time to get an input from all of the BPA's functional areas on any accounting adjustments that might be necessary to attribute expenditure to the correct financial year.

66/08 Accounts headings / accounting codes

Weed Stoodley picked up Craig Poxon's point that, in general, most Members probably did not understand the accounts. To this end, she had been working with Jon Gretton, the Chairs of Committees and other BPA staff to seek to review some of the accounts headings and accounting codes to make them clearer and more relevant. This would result in more useful management accounting information being available to the Council and its Committees. Their consideration of this new accounting information and its integration into their decision-making processes would, she believed, help better to explain the financial aspects of the Association to the Membership. She was therefore seeking to review the format and layout of the accounts so they better dovetailed with the BPA's committee structure and the specific functional areas for which each committee was responsible. This approach could then inform an updated format for the published financial accounts, which would still of course need to meet relevant statutory requirements for financial reporting.

Debbie Carter said that the present accounting format had evolved over many years to serve several different purposes. A major consideration in the past had always been the financial reporting requirements of UK Sport in relation to their exchequer grant. However, with the switch of UK Sport funding to Olympic Sports, this offered us more scope to format the accounts in a different way in the future. Another consideration was the accounting software used at the BPA Office. This was in her view not necessarily the most flexible tool available and she believed there may be benefit in switching to Sage software, which had now become de facto the standard business accounting package. She therefore believed that the wider picture should be considered. Any variations would, she believed, take around 18 months to work through. The interface of the accounting package with the new BPA membership database with an online renewals facility that was being developed by Hayes Computing Solutions Ltd also needed to be considered.

After further discussion, the Chairman suggested, and the Council agreed, that the Treasurer and the Financial Administrator should meet with Weed Stoodley, the Competitions Chairman and the Secretary-General to discuss how to take this forward, and to what timescale; and to report back to the Council.

Action: Treasurer, Weed Stoodley, Competitions Chairman, BPA Office

67/08 Ratification of minutes of Committees

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

67.1 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 25 June 2008

Craig Poxon proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 25 June 2008 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

67.2 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 22 April 2008

Grant Richards proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 25 June 2008 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

67.3 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 31 July 2008

The draft STC minutes (circulated) had omitted the name of Paul Applegate in the list of those present. This was corrected.

Weed Stoodley called attention to what she considered to be ambiguous wording of the fifth and final paragraph of minute 7(a) on page 6, concerning the outcome of a Panel of Inquiry into a tandem incident at Netheravon. After discussion, the paragraph in question was

deleted and a new paragraph, which addressed the concern that she had raised, was agreed by the Council for inclusion in its place.

Paul Applegate then proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion that the minutes (amended as above) of the STC meeting held on 31 July 2008 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

On an STC matter that had arisen since the STC meeting, Craig Poxon reported that a Member had asked him to raise the issue of [another] Member who was a tandem instructor who had been subject to disciplinary action and who had subsequently taken an examiner's course. Tony Butler said there was no rule to say that a tandem instructor who had been disciplined could not take an examiner's course. It could, however, have been proscribed as part of the disciplinary decision, but in this case, no such prohibition had been made. John Hitchen said he was aware of the situation, and had not awarded an examiner's rating to the individual concerned. Craig Poxon asked whether the Council was content that a Member who had been found guilty and punished for a lapse of judgment to be put in a position of an examiner, judging other Members. John Hitchen said that, to the best of his belief, the Panel of Inquiry would have known that the individual might wish to take an examiner's course, and would have borne this in mind in their deliberations. The Panel had therefore suspended the individual's tandem instructor rating and John Hitchen had not allowed him to examine the tandem instructors on the course.

67.4 Competitions Committee meeting held on Thursday 23 July 2008

Andy Scott (Competitions Chairman) highlighted main points from the minutes, and corrected the wording of Competitions minute 58.10 in the draft to say that Craig Poxon was to be the camera operator on the 4-way CF team going to WPC 2008, and that a second 2-way team was to be invited.

67.4.1 Bingo Lotto funding for Skills Coaching Roadshows

Andy Scott thanked Adrian Bond who, in his capacity as BPA liaison officer to CCPR, had identified the potential and encouraged the BPA to sign up to CCPR's Bingo Lotto initiative to generate funding for grass roots sport. The pilot phase of Bingo Lotto earlier this year had resulted in funding to the BPA of £1022.29, which was being used to run additional Skills Coaching Roadshows for non-seniors. This new source of funding was especially welcome in the light of UK Sport switching exchequer funding to Olympic Sports.

67.4.2 FS & Artistics Nationals 2009-11

Andy Scott called attention to the Competitions Committee's recommendation to the Council, in Competitions minute 61, that the bid from Target Skysports to host the FS and Artistics Nationals for the three year period 2009, 2010 and 2011 inclusive, should be accepted. An invitation to bid had been issued to all Affiliated Centres. One Centre had expressed an interest in hosting future competitions but had not been in a position to bid for the three-year period set out in the bid specification. Only one bid had been received for this, which had been the Target bid, a copy of which had been circulated to Council Members with the agenda. The Competitions Committee had carefully considered the bid and had deemed the content of the bid to be appropriate and acceptable, indeed it had been an excellent bid, and on this basis the Committee was recommending acceptance to the Council. Andy Scott said that the Competitions Committee usually decided on bids itself under the delegated authority of the Council. However, as a 3 year hosting agreement was a new to the BPA, he believed it to be appropriate in the interests of clarity and transparency that the full Council should take the decision – in the same way that, after the Committee had consulted with Affiliated Centres, the Committee had submitted the 3-year bid form in final draft to the Council for approval before it had been issued.

Andy Scott then proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion that the bid by Target Skysports, Hibaldstow, to host the British Open Nationals in Formation Skydiving and Artistics Events for the three years 2009, 2010 and 2011, should be accepted.

Carried unanimously

67.4 3 Ratification of minutes

Andy Scott proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 23 July 2008, with the correction to minute 58.10 as set out at the head of this item, should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

68/08 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier today

68.1 Communications Committee

Craig Poxon (who had chaired this afternoon's meeting of the Communications Committee in the absence of Adrian Bond, Communications Chairman) reported that, at the meeting, the Communications Committee had:

- noted progress on the construction of the new BPA website, which was due to go live next month;
- received and been invited to comment on the strategy issues within a written update, from Martin Soulsby in absentia, on the historical image project for which he was hoping to secure a Heritage Lottery Grant;
- noted the outturn to the Magazine budget for the financial year ended 30 June 2008;
- considered the Magazine budget for the current financial year and accepted this as a working document to be considered in more detail for formal approval at the next meeting when Adrian Bond and Lesley Gale (who had prepared the budget) would be present;
- considered the tendering process for the editorial services contract for the Magazine to run from June 2009, after expiry of the current contract. Grant Richards had volunteered to assist Adrian Bond in formulating the tender documentation. The Committee was also considering possible outcomes of the tendering process to cover every foreseeable eventuality. This was important because an invitation to tender for the Magazine was a new process, albeit based on other tenders such as that for the new BPA website, in accordance with the BPA's well-established policy of seeking best value for the Membership.

68.2 Development Committee

68.2.1 Report of the Development Committee

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

- received a progress report from Weed Stoodley and Martin Shuttleworth on updating the BPA Memorandum & Articles of Association. The target date to put the draft updated document before the Membership for consideration for approval was at the AGM on 16 January 2010, with the draft being circulated in advance;
- specifically, Weed Stoodley had drawn up a table of the various categories of Membership of the BPA - Full, Life, Qualified Associate, Student Provisional, Temporary and Pilot - together with the benefits and entitlements, such as the BPA magazine and insurance cover, to which an individual holding each category of membership was entitled. The table had also set out which categories of Member were entitled to vote. The table would be posted on the BPA website.

Action: BPA Office

The table recorded established custom and practice, which had not been set out in a document of this nature before. The preparation of such a document was necessary to inform the update of the Memorandum & Articles, and the Committee was grateful to Weed Stoodley for the work she had done in compiling it;

- thanked David Hickling for kindly accepting the Committee's invitation for him to remain as Chairman of the Insurance Working Group. David Hickling said that,

although he was willing to continue in this role, he believed that the Group should be chaired by an elected Member of Council;

- following Adrian Bond's success in securing Bingo Lotto funding for grassroots sport that had been applied to support BPA Skills Coaching Roadshows (minute 67.4.1), the Committee thanked Andy Scott who had kindly responded to a request from CCPR to supply photographs of our sport featuring the Bingo Lotto logo and associated promotional material. Such photographs had now been supplied to CCPR;
- thanked the BPA Media Co-ordinators, Becca Armstrong and Rich Rust, for their continuing hard work in maintaining a flow of skydiving good news stories to the media;
- received a written report in absentia from Martin Soulsby, on discussions he had had with Brian Vacher about application of the Airkix Fund in production of a canopy handling video. The Committee asked that Martin Soulsby should also discuss the project with Mark Bayada, who had chaired the BPA canopy Handling Working Group;
- confirmed plans to hold a meeting for Drop Zone Owners and Operators this autumn (date and venue to be confirmed). The Chairman of Council had indicated he would be delighted to chair this, subject to his availability on the date;
- in response to a referral from the Council (Council minute 56), debated the case for putting to the Membership at a General Meeting that the period of election on Council should be extended from one year to three years. Under such a model, one third of the 15-strong Council would retire by rotation each year, and be eligible to stand for re-election.

In summary, the Committee recognised that there might be benefits for the BPA in a three-year period of tenure on Council. The principal benefit was the assurance of continuity, because no more than 5 seats would come up for election at any one time (excluding any casual vacancies). With the existing one-year tenure, all 15 seats came up for election each year and it was possible that a majority, and even possible - although unlikely - that all 15, of the seats could change at one time, leading to major change and possibly an element of discontinuity in the policy of the Association between one year and a next. A hallmark of a successful third sector member-run governing body was arguably evolution not revolution.

However, this had to be weighed against the likelihood that potential new nominees to Council might be dissuaded from standing if it would be for a three-year period of office. This might significantly reduce the potential pool of new talent available to the Association as elected Members of Council. Such an outcome would be against the Council's long-established policy of encouraging Members to stand for election to Council. On balance, the benefit of assured continuity from a three-year period of tenure on Council (which had never yet really materialised as a problem) was overshadowed by the major disadvantage of a significant disincentive to potential new nominees to stand for election to Council. Hence there had been no proposal to change the status quo of annual election of all 15 seats on the Council;

- considered, and was now recommending in principle to the full Council, an initiative proposed by John Horne to promote retention and progression. The Council next considered this in more detail.

68.2.2 Recruitment and retention initiative

The recruitment and retention initiative comprised two strands:

(i) Student Provisional Members

Conversion from Student Provisional (or, occasionally, Temporary) to Full Membership was currently required before the jumper made their first freefall descent, AFF level 2 or wished to jump beyond the one-month validity of a Temporary

Membership. Conversion represented a significant financial hurdle that might be a disincentive to continue in a sport in which they still had very limited experience.

(ii) Experienced jumpers

It was well known that some non-novice jumpers (who may have trained abroad) had consciously made a decision to do most of their jumps outside the UK, and were therefore reluctant to pay the annual subscription for BPA Full Membership for what might be only occasional jumps during the summer. Whilst Temporary Membership would appear to suit this group, it lasted for only one month and current policy was to allow an individual to hold only one such membership a year.

John Horne had said in his paper to the Development Committee that whereas it was obviously an aspiration for the BPA to encourage jumpers to upgrade to take out Full Membership, there was an opportunity to encourage and incentivise this transition by adopting a slightly more flexible approach. He said that the BPA could highlight the benefits and advantages of Full Membership (eligibility for licences, ratings, the BPA magazine, voting rights, etc) whilst allowing, at an early stage, a little more flexibility in the conditions for certain categories of Membership. He said that this initiative was directed purely at those who were not already Full Members.

John Horne's proposal - which the Development Committee supported and recommended to the full Council in principle and subject to formulating the detail - was that there should be a 12 or 24 month trial of a more flexible approach whereby an individual who did not already hold Full Membership would be eligible to take out up to two Temporary Memberships, or one Student Provisional and One Temporary Membership, during a 12 month period.

The potential advantages cited by John Horne were:

- students would be further down the road of their training before having to pay the Full Member subscription, and having achieved Freefall status may be more incentivized to continue in the Sport;
- any progression beyond student status (A licence) would automatically require conversion to Full Membership, as licences may only be held by Full Members;
- UK-based jumpers who were inclined to jump abroad would be able to jump in this country (for two months) and having jumped at a UK Centre might be more inclined to take out Full Membership;
- jumpers from abroad may jump here for longer and more often, perhaps encouraging jumpers to enter/attend more competitions/boogies in the UK;
- no change would be required to the current BPA insurance premium or policy.

John Horne, from the Chair, recognised that there may be disadvantages, among which might be Full Members ' seeking to exploit the flexibility by 'trading down' to Temporary Membership as a shorter and cheaper option. However, the option would not be open to existing or recent Full Members – this was a detail that had to be worked on in formulating precise conditions for the initiative. Also, monitoring of membership status might hold drawbacks for DZ Operators.

The Council received the proposal warmly and Grant Richards proposed, and Craig Poxon seconded, a motion that the Council supported the initiative in principle and tasked the Development Committee, in association with the BPA Office, to draw up a detailed schedule and conditions for a specified trial period, and report this back to the full Council for ratification before it was implemented.

Carried unanimously

The Council also asked the Development Committee to consult with DZ Operators about this initiative. A good opportunity to do this would be at the planned meeting for Drop Zone

Owners' and Operators' that the Development Committee planned to hold on a date to be arranged this autumn.

Action: Development Committee / BPA Office

68.2.3 Car mileage

On the recommendation of the Development Committee, Weed Stoodley proposed, and Paul Ledden seconded, a motion that, in the light of increased fuel prices, there should be an increase of 3p per mile to the member and staff rates for car journeys on BPA business made on and after 1 September 2008.

Carried unanimously

69/08 Reports from Club Representatives

Adrian Bond had circulated a report in absentia on his discussions with jumpers at Target Skysports, Hibaldstow, about the format of AGM Day. Craig Poxon said it was a helpful document, which made some interesting suggestions. One of these, for a montage of video highlights of the year, seemed to be particularly appropriate for such a spectacular year as 2008, which had included the Honda Formation Skydive (minute 44), Team Storm winning the World Championships (minute 60), and Team Volairkix's World Bronze Medal (also minute 60). Andy Scott kindly agreed to investigate whether it might be possible for a top skydiving videographer to compile such a montage.

Action: Andy Scott

Other suggestions including repeating seminars where Members had been unable to attend a particular seminar because of a clash of start times. The Chairman understood this wish, but believed that it might be too much to ask volunteer speakers to give their seminar twice on the same afternoon. Debbie Carter reminded the Council that it would be costly to use an audio visual company to video a seminar. There had also been some ideas put forward for new seminar topics, although some of these – such as 'How to become an instructor' - had featured in previous AGM Day programmes, albeit some years ago. The message was that seminars on popular topics such as this could usefully be included every few years, to reach a new audience.

Adrian Bond had kindly offered to be part of any working group that the Council or one of its Committees might to review the structure and format of the AGM. The Chairman thanked him for this, and asked any Council Member who wished to be involved kindly to contact Adrian Bond.

Action: Council Members

70/08 Report on Royal Aero Club

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to RAeC) was not present to give a report. However, the Chairman reminded Council Members that nominations for the annual RAeC awards would be due in November, and for this John Smyth usually required draft citations to reach him by no later than the end of October. Ian Marshall asked Council Members to consider nominations for FAI awards as well – the Office had details of the criteria and specifications for the portfolio of FAI awards.

Action: Council Members

Weed Stoodley said asked why the Council was not routinely made aware of the BPA nominees until after the RAeC had considered them. The Office understood that nominations needed to be treated with a certain amount of confidentiality so that RAeC could be the first to announce successful nominees. Putting forward a nomination to RAeC did not guarantee an award, and - rather as with nominations for public honours - a certain amount of discretion was appropriate. However, Weed Stoodley's point was that as nominations were being put forward in the name of the BPA, the Council should know whose names were being put forward, albeit that their names need not be published in the minutes at nomination stage. The Chairman said it would be appropriate to raise this point with John Smyth at the next meeting.

Action: Next meeting

71/08 Europe Air Sports

Paul Moore reported that the European Parachuting Union (EPU) had been accepted as a member of Europe Airsports. Dr Rainer 'Exi' Hoenle of DFV, the German Sport Parachuting NGB, was de facto Chair of EPU. He had been unwell recently, but Paul Moore was due to meet him during the next few weeks. EPU needed to formulate a charter, a governing

committee and terms and conditions for membership - and levy a membership subscription to the NGBs of constituent nations. Invitations to the sport parachuting NGBs across Europe had already been issued. Paul Moore reported that Jim Crocker, a BPA Vice President, had advised that it was essential for the BPA to remain closely involved with EAS/EPU to remain at the forefront of European developments, which could have significant implications for sport parachuting across Europe, including of course in the UK. Paul Moore would therefore continue to be proactive on behalf of the BPA. The Chairman thanked Paul Moore for the attention he was giving to the hugely significant developments in Europe.

Action: Paul Moore

72/08 Letter from J B McGeechan, BPA Member 101261

Further to minute 54.2, Mr J B McGeechan had responded to the Chairman's reply by sending another letter, dated 11 August, in which he had re-iterated the points in his first letter to which the Chairman had already replied. The Council confirmed that the Chairman's reply of 28 June to Mr McGeechan's first letter of 12 May fully and accurately reflected the view of the Council. It explained Council's policy that the BPA Magazine was an integral part of the benefits of Full Membership and that there was no provision for Members to opt out of receiving the Mag. It was part of the Association's duty of care to Members to keep them informed about the sport, not least with reference to the provision of news, education and information on safety and training.

The Chairman of this meeting (that is, the Vice Chairman of the Association) had taken further legal soundings on Mr McGeechan's second letter and had received precisely the same advice. The Chairman had two possible draft replies, a short one and a longer one kindly drafted by Jim Crocker, a Vice President; and he read aloud the key parts of each. The consensus around the table was to send the longer reply, which re-iterated the Chairman's original reply of 28 June and noted that 'we shall have to agree to disagree'. The Council was in no doubt that the vast majority of the Membership supported the Magazine and looked forward to each issue. It was part of the glue that held the skydiving community together, part of the identity and a celebration of our sport.

Action: Chairman

73/08 'Britain from Above' – BBC1

Weed Stoodley called attention to the appearance of UK Parachuting, Grant Richards and Jason Thompson's Drop Zone near Attleborough in Norfolk, on Andrew Marr's prime time BBC1 Sunday evening documentary series *Britain from Above*.

74/08 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays at 1830 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester: 7 October and 2 December 2008 (after the EGM).

The meeting closed at 2200.