

# British Parachute Association

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## Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Tuesday 2 December 2003 at 1600**

at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

<b>Present:</b>	Kieran Brady Chris Allen Calvin Blacker Ralph Fielding Billy Gollan Eddie Jones Ian Midgley	Development Chairman Chairman of Council (from item 38.3)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Tony Butler Jon Gretton Lesley Gale John Hitchen Martin Shuttleworth Kate Stephens Nick Ward	Technical Officer Financial Administrator Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i> / Brit Chicks NCSO Secretary-General Brit Chicks (for item 44) Centrepages (for item 40)
<b>Observer:</b>	Dr John Carter	
<b>Apologies for absence:</b>	Debbie Carter David Hickling	Treasurer

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### Item Minute

**36/03 Minutes**

Eddie Jones proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Tuesday 21 October 2003 be approved as a correct record.

**Approved**

**37/03 Matters arising**

**37.1 Financial adviser affinity scheme (minute 34)**

Jon Gretton said he had a meeting next week about a possible financial adviser affinity scheme. The scheme could result in commission income for the BPA, in a similar way to the existing credit card scheme with the Royal Bank of Scotland. The Committee believed that if any such scheme were to be considered, it should be on the basis that the financial services company paid for advertising in the BPA Magazine, on the BPA website, or elsewhere. The Committee agreed that Jon Gretton should discuss legal considerations with Chris Allen, BPA Chairman, and come back to the Committee if it appeared that the proposals were worthy of detailed consideration.

**Action: BPA Office (Jon Gretton)**

### **38/03 Reports**

#### **38.1 Sport England**

Ralph Fielding said he had a copy of Sport England's Annual Accounts, if anyone wished to see it.

#### **38.2 CCPR**

Calvin Blacker reported that he had reviewed the information on CCPR's "Rural delivery review" and had concluded that it did not contain any major issues for sport parachuting, and therefore no BPA attendance at the review meeting had been necessary.

#### **38.3 Insurance**

The Chairman reported that the brokers had yet to submit quotations for the BPA insurance policy for the year beginning on 1 April 2004. Tonight's EGM would not, therefore, be able to consider the premiums for the following membership year, as was the normal practice. Present indications suggested a sizeable increase in premiums would be likely, with one forecast of a tripling in price. The underwriters had said that, taking account of the premiums paid together with the claims history over the last ten years, they had lost money on the BPA account and that a correction of the accounting ratios, by means of a significantly higher premium, would therefore now be necessary.

### **39/03 Development Action Plan 2003/4**

#### **39.1 Target 1: History of parachuting and the BPA**

Martin Shuttleworth confirmed that this was a longer-term project, which it was hoped to start after the peak workload building up to the AGM.

**In progress**

#### **39.2 Target 2: New homepage for the BPA website**

**Achieved**

#### **39.3 Target 3: New team contacts webpage**

**Achieved**

#### **39.4 Target 4: Add an interactive coaching page to the BPA website**

Content for two or three new pages was being sought over the winter with the aim of building a small bank of pages to go live during summer 2004. The future of the Coaching Webpage would then be reviewed in the light of this and next season's experiences, both in procuring the content and in the use of the interactive facility by the membership.

**In progress**

#### **39.5 Target 5: Add a page of information on travel insurance to the BPA website**

Work on this target was currently in progress. It was on schedule for completion for the June 2004 target date.

**In progress**

### **40/03 Development of the BPA website**

The Chairman introduced Nick Ward of Centrepages Ltd, which provided technical services for the BPA website, who was in attendance for this item. Nick Ward reported that navigation of the site by means of the top bar, which had predated Centrepages' involvement, worked satisfactorily on windows, but did not work on certain other user systems, which probably accounted for only about 5% of users. However, it was frustrating for those who could not navigate by the top bar, although a notice was now in place on the front page recommending navigation via the site map instead. Nick Ward suggested that an aim that the Committee might wish to consider for the future might be to replace the top navigation bar with a navigation system that would function on all browsers.

Pages on the BPA website in the direct control of the BPA office had now been converted from a blue background to a white background. This appeared to have been well received, judging by feedback from members at the time of the change. It only remained for the dynamic pages (such as the diary of events and the classifieds page) that were hosted by Centrepages, to be updated to the white background. Centrepages proposed therefore to submit a quotation for this work ahead of the Committee's meeting to consider possible Action Plan targets for the next year (2004/5).

Nick Ward then made two suggestions for further development of the BPA website, as follows.

- 1 Consider developing the "Category 8 - What next?" page as an animated Flash presentation. 'Flash' could be thought of as a kind of advanced PowerPoint graphics program. Nick Ward gave an example of how effective Flash could be as a presentation tool by referring to the CAA website - [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk). The CAA website included a Flash presentation called 'the journey' that illustrated step-by-step the process of taking a flight on a commercial airline. He invited Committee members to visit the CAA website and try out 'the journey' at their leisure, and think about the applicability of this form of sequential animated presentation to an update of the "Category 8 - What next?" page of the BPA website. The likely ball-park cost of originating Flash graphics for 'Category 8 - What next?' would be between £500 and £1000, depending on the amount of storyboard planning that the Committee could undertake by way of briefing Centrepages, who would then develop the technical Flash animation.
- 2 It was now possible to publish video files on the web, and the possible application to this to the BPA website may be something that the Committee may wish to consider by way of future development of the BPA website.

The Chairman then asked Nick Ward about the process for routine updates of the new electronic Drop Zone Focus, which was under development as a Communications Action Plan Target in the current year. The Chairman asked whether the project could be designed such that Drop Zones could update their own page, perhaps by means of a password and with a facility for changes to be seen by the BPA Office before posting - rather like the existing arrangements for the classified advertisements webpage and the interactive coaching webpage. Nick Ward said he believed that this could be done, and was hopeful that it could be inclusive to the original budget for the project, although he would need to consult with colleagues before he could say for certain.

There being no further questions from the Committee about the BPA website, the Chairman thanked Nick Ward for his attendance, and Nick Ward left the meeting.

#### **41/03 Request by SkyVenture for a banner advertisement on the BPA website**

Simon Ward had written to request advertising space on the BPA website for SkyVenture. He had said *"Given that there seems to be quite a bit of spare space at this time, and given also that the BPA has constant free use of my photography for both web and Magazine, I would be exceedingly grateful for a similar pricing arrangement"*.

The Committee then discussed Simon Ward's request in some detail. The Committee was most grateful to Simon Ward for the use of his excellent photographs on the BPA website and in Skydive Magazine. However, the Committee believed that it would be an unwise decision to agree to a gratis, or giving a specially discounted rate for, a commercial advertisement on that basis. The BPA was a not-for-profit members' organisation and without the generous voluntary contributions from the membership, of time, skill, and expertise of various kinds, the BPA would be nothing. If the Committee were to agree to a gratis or specially discounted rate for a commercial advertisement in return for an individual's contribution to the Association - of whatever kind - then this would be likely to set an precedent that this Committee, or its successors, might well come to have cause to regret. The valuable contribution to the BPA of Simon Ward's skill and expertise as a photographer was greatly appreciated and publicly acknowledged in the credits on both the BPA website and in Skydive Magazine. But it was important not to confuse this highly valued voluntary personal contribution by Simon Ward with commercial advertising for the SkyVenture wind tunnel. Ian Midgley therefore proposed, and Billy Gollan seconded, a motion that the Committee should not agree to a gratis or specially discounted rate for a SkyVenture advertisement on the BPA website.

**Carried unanimously**

A second strand of discussion followed. This concerned the Committee's present understanding of the nature of the SkyVenture advertisement with its proposed electronic hyperlink to the SkyVenture website. The Committee understood SkyVenture to be in the process of raising capital for its proposed wind tunnel at Milton Keynes. If this understanding was correct, it might be seen by some as an appeal for funds from the BPA Membership. Were such an advertisement to appear on the BPA website, it might appear to the casual visitor to the website that the BPA, by displaying the advertisement, was in some way encouraging or endorsing the investment of funds by the Membership.

The Chairman believed the best way to progress this issue, and to determine whether or not the assumptions made by the Committee in this discussion were correct or not, would be to invite Simon Ward to the next meeting to discuss the matter directly with him. The Committee agreed that this was an excellent idea, and that such an invitation should be extended to Simon Ward.

**42/03 Request for authority to make a pdf file of *Freedom of the Skies***

The Committee had received a request from Andy Parkin of *Skydive Zone* to use portable document format (pdf) scans he had made of the BPA's *Freedom of the Skies* brochure on his organisation's website. In discussion, it was noted that the brochure had been specifically designed for professional printing as a glossy colour brochure and that the quality of the black background that characterised the document might suffer if an electronic copy were to be downloaded from the web and printed on a home computer. It was for this reason that the document was not downloadable from the BPA website. Further, *Skydive Zone* was not, as an organisation, formally associated with the BPA and therefore it might be unintentionally misleading to visitors to its site if a BPA document were to be downloadable from it, as they might think that the company was associated with the BPA. For the above reasons, Ian Midgley proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that the Committee, with regret, could *not* agree to a pdf file of the BPA's *Freedom of the Skies* brochure featuring on Andy Parkin's organisation's website.

**Carried unanimously**

**43/03 Retrospective expenses claim by Tony Knight**

Tony Knight had written a letter, dated 12 November 2003, stating that he had not claimed any expenses for his work for the BPA for some time, but would now like to claim back what he could. Tony Butler confirmed that the expenses concerned were all those to which Tony Knight had been properly entitled, at the time they were incurred, to claim in the normal manner. Tony Butler said Tony Knight had always indicated that he would be making such a claim, but had never before got around to doing it. The unusual feature of this request was, therefore, the long time delay in reclaiming some of the earlier expenses.

The Chairman confirmed that, for the portion of expenses incurred in the current financial year, Tony Knight should simply reclaim these in the usual manner. The matter for the Committee to consider was Tony Knight's request for the repayment of expenses from earlier years. A note had been circulated setting out a number of considerations from Debbie Carter, BPA Treasurer, who could not be present.

Chris Allen said that the matter would have to be carefully considered because the earlier expenses claims were out of time, and any decision should not risk setting a precedent. That said, it was universally recognised that Tony Knight had made an enormously important contribution to the BPA, particularly in his role as BPA liaison officer with the CAA. The Committee therefore needed to find a resolution to this issue that was equitable and well considered.

The Chairman asked if any member of the Committee believed that Tony Knight's unclaimed expenses from previous financial years should *not* be paid. All Committee members present confirmed that they believed Tony Knight's expenses *should* be paid.

However, the Committee strongly believed there was a need to remind Council Members and others who were entitled to claim expenses from the BPA about the need to submit claims on

time. The Committee wished to ensure that no further retrospective claims would come forward from anyone else in future years.

**Action: BPA Office (Jon Gretton)**

Ian Midgley then proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that Tony Knight should be asked to claim his current year's expenses in the normal manner. Tony Knight should then be asked to itemise his remaining expenses from earlier years and total these up. That total - the remaining amount - should then be considered at a future meeting so that the Committee could consider a way to pay it back.

**Carried unanimously**

The Chairman said that, once the sum involved was known, options that might be considered for repayment might include setting aside an appropriate figure in the budget for the next financial year. He agreed to liaise with Tony Knight to ask him to prepare the itemised list of expenses incurred in earlier years.

**Action: Chairman**

#### **44/03 Brit Chicks 2004 request for BPA Sponsorship**

The Chairman introduced Lesley Gale and Kate Stephens of *Brit Chicks 2004* who were in attendance to make a presentation to the Committee on the *Brit Chicks 2004* project, and to seek BPA sponsorship. An audio visual presentation was duly made of the plans for a 60-way women's record formation, including training and warm-up weekends, and a budget figure of £8,380 was set out as the amount sought from the BPA, which was the only sponsor being approached. The presentation was followed by questions from the Committee. Lesley Gale and Kate Stephens then left the room for the Committee to consider its decision.

The Committee had been impressed by the plans of *Brit Chicks 2004* and the quality of the presentation made tonight. On the question of sponsorship, the BPA was facing a potential huge increase in the cost of insurance (minute 38.3 refers) and the Committee considered that unfortunately, with the forecast level of increase, it was not in a position to recommend to the full Council that the BPA should sponsor *Brit Chicks 2004*.

Ian Midgley therefore proposed, and Ralph Fielding seconded, a motion that the Committee was unfortunately not in a position to take up *Brit Chicks 2004* on their invitation for the BPA to sponsor this project bearing in mind the forecast large increase in the cost of insurance next year.

**Carried unanimously**

The Chairman then invited Lesley Gale and Kate Stephens to return to the meeting. He thanked them again for their excellent presentation and informed them, with regret, that the Committee was not in a position to offer BPA sponsorship because of the forecast large rise in the cost of insurance next year. He expressed the hope that some of the participants in *Brit Chicks 2004* would nonetheless be able to benefit from the BPA's Skills Coaching Roadshow programme during summer 2004, even though the roadshows were not designed specifically for big formation coaching. He said that the Committee wished the *Brit Chicks 2004* organisers, and the participants, well in their endeavours and he hoped that their dedication and hard work would enable them to achieve the goals they had set for themselves.

#### **45/03 Date of next meeting**

This had been the last meeting of the present session. The Chairman thanked all Members of the Committee for their commitment and hard work during the year. He said that a Development Action Plan meeting, for those involved in next year's Development Committee, would be held immediately after the inaugural Council meeting on AGM Day, Saturday 24 January 2004, at the Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, Leicestershire.

The meeting closed at 1820.