

British Parachute Association

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Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 19 April 2005 at 1630
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Kieran Brady	Development Chairman
	Chris Allen	Chairman of Council (from mid-item 15)
	Adrian Bond	
	Ralph Fielding	
	Eddie Jones	
	John Page	
In attendance:	Elizabeth Stoodley	Media Co-ordinator
	Paul Applegate	
	Jon Gretton	Financial Administrator
	John Hitchen	NCSO
	Martin Shuttleworth	Secretary-General
	John Smyth	Competitions Chairman (from mid-item 15)
Apologies for absence:	Nick Ward	Centrepages (for item 13.1)
	Tony Butler	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	Treasurer
	Tony Goodman	

Item Minute

09/05 Minutes

Elizabeth Stoodley proposed, and Ralph Fielding seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Tuesday 15 February 2005 be approved as a correct record.

Approved

10/05 Matter arising: Freely manual (minute 5.2)

Elizabeth Stoodley was keen to see this manual completed and had offered to help to co-ordinate work on the remaining section, for FF2. John Hitchen reported that Paul Floyd, who had written the FF1 section, was now back in the UK and would be pleased to speak to Elizabeth Stoodley about the FF2 section. Elizabeth Stoodley reported that Nigel Holland, Artistic Disciplines Rep on the Competitions Committee, had put her in touch with Andy Newell who might also be able to help. In discussion, the Chairman confirmed that a coaching qualification would be a by-product of the manual, as had been the case with manuals produced for other disciplines. He believed it would be helpful for Paul Floyd to see a copy of coaching application forms for other disciplines, as the form to be developed for Freely should be in a similar format. The Chairman confirmed that all material for the manual would go forward, in draft, for consideration by STC and would be published only after STC approval.

Action: Elizabeth Stoodley

11/05 Insurance (minute 7)

An item on insurance relating to local experienced German national jumpers at the RAPA Bad Lippspringe Drop Zone would be considered at the meeting of the full Council this evening.

12/05 Reports on areas of responsibility

12.1 Media

Elizabeth Stoodley reported that (i) Seven Seas Cod Liver Oil were running a competition for active 70-year-olds to help mark the 70th anniversary of the company, and (ii) a charity running an event at Hibaldstow had sought advice on optimising media coverage, which she had provided. Lesley Gale said that *Skydive Magazine* continued to receive a number of requests and enquiries from the media, which the Magazine passed on to the most appropriate person or organisation.

13/05 BPA website

13.1 Web hosting

Nick Ward from the web design and consultancy company Centrepages was in attendance for this item. Correspondence had been circulated about problems that Centrepages were experiencing with the web hosting company following its takeover in autumn 2004 by another company. Since the takeover, the web hosting service had deteriorated significantly such that it was no longer dependable. This had impacted on the quality of service provided by the dynamic pages on the BPA website.

Nick Ward suggested that the best solution would be to change hosts. This would entail significant re-programming of the 'back end' of the BPA website. The cost of this work would normally be about £2000 but Centrepages was willing to do it for £600, which he said was below cost price, because it valued the BPA as a client. The re-engineering would make the BPA website more portable in the event that there was a need in future to change hosts again. The actual switch away from the current web hosts, when it came, would involve some downtime of the BPA website. Nick Ward estimated this as 38 hours at the most.

The Committee was disappointed to hear of these difficulties. In discussion with Nick Ward it was clarified that the present web hosting company did not provide clients with a service level agreement. He said that in the past, before their takeover, they had provided a very good service but a search of the web would reveal many other customers who had been similarly disappointed the decline in service provided by the present web hosting company. Unfortunately, there was no evidence that an improvement was planned and therefore the best advice he could give the BPA was to change web hosts. The owners of many other websites were doing the same.

Eddie Jones proposed, and John Page seconded, that the BPA website should be re-engineered by Centrepages at a cost of £600 and moved to a new web host as soon as practicable; and that the *Skydive Magazine* website (which required less work to move) should be similarly moved to the same new web host as the BPA website.

Carried unanimously

It was noted that the menu system on the BPA website worked only on Internet Explorer, and not on other browsers such as Firefox and Apple Mac's Safari, among others. Nick Ward said that it should be possible to rectify this as part of the re-engineering. A BPA Member with web expertise had helpfully emailed in some coding for this, which the BPA Office had passed on to Centrepages.

13.2 Safety webpage

Tony Butler, Technical Officer, had circulated a paper in which he had asked the Committee to approve a new document that he wished to see made available on the 'Stay safe' page on the BPA website. It was entitled *How safe is sport parachuting?* and comprised statistics on jump, injury and fatality numbers with a commentary by Dr John Carter, BPA Medical Adviser. Tony Butler reported that the CAA had commented on a draft, and their suggestions had now been incorporated. Although the solicitor to the BPA's insurers had initially been cautious

about the publication of such data, he had now accepted that the information was in the public domain anyway and no longer had any objection to publication.

Tony Butler said it was important that, for the voluntary acceptance of risk – as in any sport – those accepting the risk should know the magnitude and nature of the risk to which they were considering exposing themselves. This was known as ‘informed consent’. By publishing the document on the BPA website, the Association would be taking a reasonable and responsible step appropriate for a National Sports Governing Body, to which the public naturally looked as an authoritative source of accurate and reliable data.

The Committee agreed that the document *How safe is sport parachuting?* should be published on the BPA website, by a link from the ‘Stay safe’ page and possibly also from other pages.

Action: BPA Office

14/05 DZ Operators’ meeting

The Chairman reported that the Drop Zone Operators’ meeting held on 8 March 2005 had been successful, with 16 Affiliated Clubs & Centres represented. Many of those present had indicated that they would like the BPA to organise an annual meeting of DZ Operators, or even two meetings a year. The feedback questionnaire had not indicated any negatives, apart from the size of the meeting room being too compact. He said that the challenge for a future DZ Operators’ Forum would be the topics. This year, there had been a lot of interest in insurance, which was the main topic of the morning session, but the same theme could not sensibly be repeated next year. The Committee agreed that later this year it would consider a DZO Forum for 2006. The consensus was that one meeting a year would be sufficient – to have two could risk diluting the content and reducing the quality of the event.

Action: Bring forward in autumn 2005

15/05 Development Action Plan: 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005

The Chairman confirmed that, now that the DZ Operators’ Forum (minute 14) had been held, The Committee had completed all of its actions in the Development Action Plan 2004/5.

Action Plan Completed

16/05 Wind tunnels and the BPA

Minute 45/04 recorded the visit to the meeting of the Development Committee held on 7 December 2004 by Simon Ward of Sky Venture. The Committee now resumed its discussions on the relationship between the BPA and the two new wind tunnels that were being planned to open in the UK.

Simon Ward, representing one of the wind tunnels, had left two open-ended questions to which the answer would be in the form of suggestions. Kieran Brady believed that the Committee should turn this around, and ask Simon Ward what he was seeking from the BPA.

Lesley Gale suggested that copies of the newly updated *Freedom of the Skies* brochure might be made available at the wind tunnels to encourage those who had experienced a wind tunnel to try sport parachuting as ‘the real thing’. To encourage the wind tunnels to make available the BPA brochure, they might be offered a free advertisement in *Skydive Magazine*. Adrian Bond suggested mutual links on the BPA website and the wind tunnel companies’ websites.

The Chairman believed that the *Freedom of the Skies* brochure was a more detailed and expensive publication than was appropriate for point of sale promotion at wind tunnels. Instead, he favoured the format of the single A4 sheet gate-folded into three, which (as had been pointed out at the DZO Forum) was now the standard-size format for tourist and sporting attractions of all kinds.

The Chairman reflected that the BPA acquired its Members from parachute centres. He said that the nearest two or three parachute centres to the wind tunnels would be likely to pick up new jumpers from them. But this Committee was tasked with making a decision for all Clubs & Centres, and on behalf of the whole BPA Membership. The wind tunnels’ customers were

not therefore the BPA's prospective customers as much as parachute centres' prospective customers.

Eddie Jones suggested that the Committee should invite Simon Ward and Paul Meyer, his counterpart from the proposed Bedford wind tunnel, to set out firm proposals on what they might be seeking from the BPA, with the comment that, as always, the Committee would welcome any suggestions that would increase participation in sport parachuting. Kieran Brady said that to this should be added that the Committee may consider, if requested, putting promotional material for sport parachuting on site at the wind tunnels. Further, that a single-sheet A4, gatefold leaflet had been considered a possibility if the wind tunnel operators believed that such a leaflet would be an effective method of marketing to their customers. A further suggestion from the Committee was the possible sale of skydiving jump vouchers at the wind tunnels.

The Committee asked Eddie Jones to speak along the above lines to Simon Ward of Sky Venture, the company planning to operate the proposed Milton Keynes wind tunnel, and to Paul Mayer of Bodyflight, the company planning to operate the proposed Bedford wind tunnel.

Action: Eddie Jones

Kieran Brady noted that the Committee did not have much remaining in its current budget for a new leaflet, but said that any costings should not be drawn up unless and until the operators of the planned wind tunnels had been consulted about the idea of such a leaflet.

Further discussion then took place regarding a specific example of a marketing link-up that Simon Ward had suggested at the meeting on 7 December 2004. This was for free tunnel time for BPA Members who brought with them three paying friends. The Committee considered that an offer of this nature would place an undue onus on Members who wished to benefit from the free tunnel time to rustle up three paying friends. In effect, it was a 'buy three, get one free' offer. No proposal was forthcoming to accept it in its present form.

Chris Allen reported that training in wind tunnels was *not* covered by the BPA insurance policy and he asked that coaches and instructors should be made aware of this.

Action: BPA Office

17/05 Asbestos survey of the BPA Office

Martin Shuttleworth reported that regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 had created a new legal duty, now in force, to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises. The first step towards compliance was to commission an asbestos survey. Elizabeth Stoodley suggested that this should be done in-house. In discussion it was noted that specialist external expertise would be helpful in assuring the reliability of a survey, which was important because control of asbestos in its premises was a legal duty on the BPA.

Eddie Jones therefore proposed, and Ralph Fielding seconded, a motion that the BPA should commission an asbestos survey from a competent external contractor, for which a budget of up to £450 would be available (the budget being based on four quotations already obtained by the office).

Carried

18/05 Contract with the BPA Shop

The Chairman had received a letter from the BPA Shop following the change of directors of the company that runs the shop under franchise from the BPA. This company, UK Parachute Services Ltd, also ran the Attleborough, Norfolk, Drop Zone that had been sold by Tony Knight to the new Directors Grant Thompson and Jason Richards.

Chris Allen said that it was important for this Committee to put the BPA's dealings with the BPA Shop on a firm contractual footing. The recent change in ownership of UK Parachute Services Ltd gave an ideal opportunity to do this. He said it had been unfortunate for the company operating the shop to have been sold without the BPA knowing until very close to the date of the sale. He was also concerned at reports he had heard from a source in the USA that the BPA Shop was now selling harnesses. It had never been the BPA's intention

that the BPA Shop would compete with commercial outlets in the sale of parachute equipment. For these and other reasons, it was sensible business practice both for the BPA and the new owners of UK Parachute Services Ltd to put the BPA shop franchise on a clear contractual footing.

The Committee agreed, and the Chairman asked Chris Allen whether he would be prepared to help draft a suitable contract for discussion. Chris Allen agreed to help, and John Hitchen and Tony Butler said they would brief him on the nature and purpose of the BPA Shop as agreed when Tony Knight had taken on responsibility for operating it.

John Page then proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion to accept Chris Allen's kind offer to draft a form of words for a franchise agreement between the BPA and UK Parachute Services Ltd, for discussion with the latter, to govern the operation of the BPA Shop.

Carried unanimously

19/05 BPA Affinity Credit Card

Adrian Bond made an audio visual presentation with notes (tabled) on the potential for a re-launch of the BPA Affinity Credit Card. This followed detailed research and investigation he had undertaken with the card issuers, using his own knowledge and expertise in this field. He thanked Jon Gretton, BPA Financial Administrator, for his help during the project, which was one of the Development Action Plan Targets for the year 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006.

The presentation indicated that, for an outlay on marketing, the BPA could expect to receive returns significantly higher than the marketing spend, as follows:

year 1 £3.5k outlay, projected £16.6k return
year 2 a lesser outlay to be defined, projected return up to £32k.

The marketing would include advertising/flyers in *Skydive Magazine*, *Skydive Starter Magazine* and promotion at Drop Zones. It would not involve renting or selling the BPA's Membership Database to the card issuer, or to any other party, since this had been discussed before and it had been established that it was the policy of the Council *not* to sell or rent the database.

In answer to a question from Chris Allen, Adrian Bond said that the BPA would not be affected by regulation by the Financial Services Authority because it was acting only to refer potential customers to the card issuer, MBNA. MBNA was regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

After discussion, the Chairman said he believed this to be a project worth pursuing. Adrian Bond had put forward a commendable plan and had used his knowledge and expertise of the financial services sector to set out realistic goals and costings. Although, as with any business venture, there was always an element of risk, a good plan had been produced that appeared to be likely to succeed and therefore deserved support.

Adrian Bond therefore proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion to re-launch the BPA Affinity Credit Card according to the costed plan that Adrian Bond had set out.

Carried unanimously – Action: Adrian Bond

The Chairman thanked Adrian Bond for the time and effort he had clearly put in to preparing the plan, and for presenting it so clearly to the meeting.

20/05 Dates of future meetings in 2005

Tuesdays at 1630 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 14 June, 16 August, 11 October and 6 December.

The meeting closed at 1800.