

# British Parachute Association

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## Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on  
**Tuesday 17 April 2007 at 1610**  
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

<b>Present:</b>	Robin Durie Adrian Bond David Hickling  John Horne David Ibbotson Eddie Jones Paul Ledden Paul Moore John Page Grant Richards Weed Stoodley	Development Chairman  (to item 13.2) Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee  Chairman of Council
<b>In attendance:</b>	Paul Applegate Kieran Brady Tony Butler Jon Gretton John Hitchen Ian Marshall Martin Shuttleworth	Technical Officer Financial Administrator NCSO  Secretary-General
<b>Apologies for absence:</b>	Mike Rust Julian Storey Alex Wilson	Media Co-ordinator
<b>Observers:</b>	Karen Farr Craig Poxon	(from item 13.3)

Item	Minute
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11/07	<b><u>Minutes</u></b>
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With deletion of the name of Alex Wilson, which had been included in error in the list of those present, John Horne proposed, and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday 13 February 2007 should be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

**Approved**

12/07	<b><u>Matters arising</u></b>
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	<b><u>12.1 The Airkix Fund (minute 4.1)</u></b>
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The Chairman and John Page (Competitions Chairman) were due to meet Simon Ward of Airkix Milton Keynes next week about the Airkix Fund.

**Action: Development Chairman & John Page**

### **12.2 “Dragon’s Den” proposal by David Turner (minute 4.3)**

The Chairman said he had spoken with David Turner about this. In the Chairman’s view, it was a good idea as a private commercial initiative, but not directly relevant to the BPA as the National Governing Body of the Sport. He thought that David Turner might consider placing an advertisement for other dragons (potential investors in commercial skydiving projects) in *Skydive Magazine*. After a brief discussion, the Committee agreed that the Chairman should speak to David Turner to wish him well with his project, but to say that it was essentially an independent commercial activity rather than one in which it would be appropriate for the BPA to play an active role.

**Action: Chairman**

### **12.3 Development Action Plan 2006/7 (minute 4.4)**

#### **12.3.1 Enhance income streams (minute 4.4.1)**

The work of the Income Streams Working Group was continuing, following on from a springboard paper by Paul Moore.

**Ongoing**

#### **12.3.2 Run more safety evenings (minute 4.4.2)**

The availability of grants for Clubs & Centres to run safety evenings had been further publicised at the meeting of the Drop Zone Operators’ Forum (minute 12.5). It was disappointing that as yet no Clubs or Centres had applied for a grant during the current Action Plan year. It was an important target and the Committee was keen to include a target in the next Action Plan, for 2007/8, on a similar theme (minute 14.2) although the application criteria would need to be broadened with the aim of encouraging applications.

**Action: Recast for the Development Action Plan 2007/8**

### **12.4 Funding application through CCPR to Sport England (minute 5.3)**

Adrian Bond and Paul Ledden reported that they had put in a BPA funding application, through CCPR, to the Sport England Impact and Improvement Fund. This had funding available to meet a specific target to increase the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by adults and young people from priority groups. The bid had been based on encouraging young people aged 16+ from inner cities to take up skydiving. Although the concept had been well received, the bid had unfortunately not been successful because of issues surrounding sustainability with regard to the practicalities and costs of transporting participants from their homes to a skydiving centre, which would usually be in a rural area perhaps at some distance from their home city. The debrief letter from Sport England mentioned wind tunnels, for skydiving simulation, as a possible alternative the BPA might wish to consider in any future bids of this nature. The letter clearly assumed that wind tunnels came in scope to the BPA, which they did not.

The Chairman thanked Adrian Bond and Paul Ledden for their work on this project, and believed that the experience of formulating a bid of this nature would be useful for the future. It was not easy to predict when the next opportunity to bid for funding may become available. It was in the nature of such things that they often came up at short notice and sometimes, as in this case, towards the end of the funding body’s financial year. All the BPA could do was to keep its eyes and ears open and be responsive to opportunity, as it had been in this case.

### **12.5 Drop Zone Operators’ Forum 2007 (minute 7)**

The BPA had convened a meeting of the Drop Zone Operators’ Forum, chaired by the Development Chairman, on Thursday 12 April. 15 DZs had been represented, with about 35 participants in all, including the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Development Chairman, Insurance Chairman and staff. The venue, Leicester Tigers’ Football Ground Hospitality Suite, and the lunch had been kindly sponsored by the Army Parachute Association.

Ian Roseninge (DZO, Peterlee Parachute Centre) had made an informative presentation about how he had mustered support and expertise to defeat the threat of a wind turbine being built close to his Drop Zone. He offered to advise any other DZ that may find itself in a similar situation in future. He also advised on proactive measures that DZs should take to lessen the risk of incursion by wind turbines. During the afternoon, the Development Chairman had led a brainstorming session on how to increase student retention rates, in which many good ideas had

been shared between DZs. There had been considerable discussion on insurance matters, and the day had concluded with an open forum in which DZOs had raised a wide range of topics. Analysis of the feedback forms showed that the DZOs had considered the meeting to be useful, and that they believed the BPA should convene meetings of this nature again in future.

**Action complete for 2007**

### **12.6 Credit card charges (minute 8)**

Jon Gretton (BPA Financial Administrator) reported that he had raised the issue of credit card charges with the BPA's bank manager, who had agreed to look into this. The bank's current charge was 2% of the transaction amount, which came to about £5K a year in credit card fees that the BPA had to pay to the bank. Jon Gretton said that an even higher percentage of Members were paying their subscriptions by credit card this year. However, the bank also charged for payments received by cheque. The only way to avoid a bank charge was if a Member paid by debit card. After discussion of whether the BPA should levy a surcharge to Members who paid their subscription by credit card, the Committee came to the consensus that this would not be at all Member-friendly and that renewal was painful enough on the pocket as it was. The BPA, like most service providers, would continue to absorb bank charges. However, the Committee looked forward to a successful outcome of Jon Gretton's negotiation with the bank to reduce these charges if at all possible.

**Ongoing**

## **13/07 Reports on areas of responsibility**

### **13.1 Central Council of Physical Recreation**

Adrian Bond had been unable to attend the last CCPR Outdoor Pursuits Division meeting, but the Development Chairman had attended instead. The Chairman said that he had been made to feel welcome, and that the other sports were pleased to see skydiving represented (a representative from the Royal Aero Club had been present). He had formed the impression that many of those at the meeting had been regular attendees. A few issues affecting airsports had come up, including portable transponders. What had struck him during the day, listening to the issues affecting other outdoor sports, was that the BPA was a mature association with a well-established infrastructure. He said he believed it would be helpful for the BPA to attend CCPR meetings (2 per year, plus the CCPR AGM) wherever possible, as it would probably help to build links with other sporting associations for mutual benefit.

### **13.2 Insurance**

David Hickling (Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee) said that he was continuing to seek a clear mandate from the Council, through this Committee, on the desired future direction of BPA Insurance. Insurance had been discussed at length at the Drop Zone Operators' meeting held on Thursday 12 April, and there had been two meetings of the Insurance Subcommittee since the last meeting of the Development Committee. This had brought forward many ideas and suggestions and it was likely that these might crystallise within the next two months into at least one new option, which would then need to be thoroughly investigated and researched.

**Ongoing**

David Hickling reported that the key ideas that had been raised by DZ Operators at their recent meeting had been:

- Reassigning the insurance premium paid by Members more closely to the level of insurance risk presented by Members in that particular group. David Hickling said that the administration of this would be time-consuming and could itself push up the cost of insurance. If instructors were charged a significantly higher premium because they were perceived to present a higher risk, it could price instructors out of the sport. He said that there might however be scope to consider the implications of a more modest weighting of the instructors' premium so that non-instructors could see that instructors were making some extra contribution to the cost of insurance. A related suggestion was to charge differential insurance premiums to tandem students and RAPS/AFF students. DZs that did a large number of tandems believed they were disadvantaged, because there were few significant insurance claims on tandems. John Hitchen reminded the Council that there was always the potential of a significant claim arising from a tandem jump.

- Introducing a sliding scale of cost for Provisional Student Membership, according to the number of such memberships purchased by any particular Centre. This idea had not been widely supported by other DZOs.
- The DZOs meeting had been in favour of retaining the present umbrella insurance policy but with consideration given to reducing the limit of cover from £2m to £25K. One consequence of such a change would be to oblige individual DZs to cover their own liabilities. This might entail DZs ensuring, by putting in place appropriate company structures, that their key assets were protected from possible claims. It might also encourage the uptake by jumpers of personal accident insurance. A new personal accident insurance scheme for skydivers had recently been launched by Finch Commercial Insurers who were currently promoting it widely to student and experienced skydivers alike. The Chairman said that this would be a huge cultural change in how we deal with insurance in skydiving and questioned whether it would really be in the best interests of DZs and the sport in general. Further investigation would no doubt reveal the advantages and disadvantages of any such change.

Paul Moore had suggested to the Insurance Subcommittee, subsequent to the DZ Operators' meeting but triggered by discussions at it, that the validity of a student provisional membership should be extended to 31 March irrespective of what the jumper was doing. This would allow the jumper to progress in the sport on that ticket. There would be a loss to the BPA of about £60 or £70 per jumper on conversion, which could be offset by increasing the price of the 35,000 student provisional memberships issued every year by say £1 or £2 each. Paul Moore said that such an arrangement would make administration simpler for DZs and would help retention in the sport.

David Hickling concluded by saying that he had eventually succeeded in securing a substantially lower insurance quotation, but unfortunately it had come in too late for consideration for the current year. It did, however, prove that there was an insurance market that was responsive to the BPA's needs. The Insurance Subcommittee was actively seeking to enlarge that market.

The Chairman thanked David Hickling for his continuing hard work on the complexities of insurance. David Hickling then thanked the Committee for their attention and left the meeting.

### **13.3 Media**

Julian Storey was continuing his work as BPA Media Co-ordinator and would report to the next meeting.

**Action: Next meeting**

## **14/07 Development Action Plan: 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008**

### **14.1 Discussion**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Action Plan 2007/8 was not, as previous Action Plans had been, a bid document. Rather, it was to be submitted to UK Sport as part of the compliance requirements for UK Sport's already-confirmed exchequer funding grant to the BPA of £25K. The Action Plan could therefore be thought of as a business plan. The Chairman said that he recognised the limitations in the plan's one-year timeframe. Targets could, however, be a staging post on the way to achieving a longer-term objective.

To meet the timetable required by UK Sport, and to have in place a finalised Action Plan in time for the start of the year on 1 July 2007, it was necessary for this Committee to recommend the Development Action Plan for approval by the full Council tonight.

The Chairman said that it appeared to him that the work of the Development Committee covered three broad areas: membership (numbers, retention, services); standards across the sport; and financial reserves. His suggestions for areas to consider about membership were: online membership renewal and online services; online surveys; online voting; reducing the initial financial barrier to becoming a full Member; methods of converting more tandem students into skydivers. Paul Ledden said that an important issue for him was to seek to move away from the stereotype of a skydiver as a white macho male and boost participation of under-represented groups in the sport with regard to gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

Enhancement of the BPA website was discussed. The Communications Committee was considering the front-end design of the website. To complement this, the Development Committee would consider development of the back-end functionality for the possible development of new online services such as renewals, surveys and voting. An important issue in considering online renewals was the interface between the BPA membership database and the website, the two at present being entirely separate.

Turning to standards, the Chairman said he would like to suggest that the concept of safety evenings be extended to safety weekends. The events could then include coaching, packing, videography and new disciplines within the sport. There followed a discussion with John Hitchen about the delineation between the work of the Development Committee and STC on standards in the sport. The idea of preceding the BPA AGM by a safety day was discussed, and Tony Butler recalled how an instructors' convention had used to be held the day before the AGM, but that it had been discontinued because of dwindling numbers. Instead, Tony Butler now wrote to all instructors to encourage them to attend relevant presentations on AGM day itself.

The development of fiscal resources for the sport involved being able to formulate bids for funding at short notice, as we had heard earlier in this meeting (minute 12.4), and closer liaison with other non-Olympic sports about the withdrawal of public funding in favour of Olympic sports. Internally, the Chairman said he would like to suggest that the BPA should make a nominal charge to instructors for the ongoing support they received from the BPA during the year. John Horne said that the Income Streams Subcommittee was considering how to increase the BPA's income. One area under consideration was the greater exploitation of commercial opportunities based on the expertise and knowledge base within the Association. There were many other areas worthy of examination too, of which one was the possibility of lending money to Members to enable them to purchase skydiving gear. The Chairman said that figures he had seen suggested that there could be as much as another £34K per annum of income generated from the general public. The important thing was that it should not be a single point approach.

Kieran Brady said that increasing the BPA's income was important because more skydivers wished to take part in competitive skydiving yet there was a diminishing amount of public funding, to be reduced to zero in 2009. The Chairman confirmed that the reduction in public funding for the sport did not impact on the BPA's sustainability, but on competitions funding, meaning that there would be less money available to train our top national teams to represent GB at the World Championships and other top international events.

The Chairman drew the strands of the discussion together to yield the following four Development Action Plan targets, to which the Committee agreed the budget allocation for each target as set out below.

#### **14.2 Development Action Plan Targets 2007/8**

1. Research methods of membership recruitment and retention – budget £1K
2. Investigate replacement of reduced exchequer funding – budget £500
3. Support and encourage Clubs & Centres to run more safety events – budget £1K
4. Research functional (back-end) development of the BPA website for members and the general public – budget £1K.

**Action: Recommend to the Council**

#### **15/07 Significant areas for sports**

As a result of a local contact that Ian Rosenvinge of Peterlee Parachute Centre had made with Sport England's North East Region, the BPA has asked for and received information on Sport England's arrangements for recording details of Significant Areas for Sports (SASPs). One of the by-products of this was that it marked out areas designated for particular sports. Although such designation did not afford any additional legal protection, it would be likely to help dissuade developers from encroaching on these sites. The Chairman said that the matter had been raised at the DZ Operators' Forum (minute 12.5), which had been keen to proceed as it could only be to the benefit of the sport. The consensus around the table was of support for designating

parachuting drop zones as significant sites to help to safeguard them for the future. The Chairman said that the matter would be considered by the full Council tonight so no formal decision was required at this meeting. This would include finding out whether the other home country sports councils offered similar schemes to record significant areas for sports in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**Action: Refer to the full Council**

**16/07 Dates of next meetings**

Tuesdays at 1600 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 12 June, 14 August, 9 October and 4 December 2007.

The meeting closed at 1810.