

British Parachute Association

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Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 14 August 2007 at 1430
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Robin Durie	Chairman
	John Horne	
	Eddie Jones	Chairman of Council
	Grant Richards	
	Mike Rust	
	Weed Stoodley	
In attendance:	Paul Applegate	Technical Officer
	Tony Butler	Financial Administrator (from item 23.2)
	Jon Gretton	Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee (to item 24.1)
	David Hickling	NCSO
	John Hitchen	Vice Chairman of Council & Competitions Chairman (from item 24.1)
	John Page	Secretary-General
	Martin Shuttleworth	
Apologies for absence:	Adrian Bond	Communications Chairman
	Debbie Carter	Treasurer
	Lesley Gale	Editor, <i>Skydive the Mag</i>
	David Ibbotson	
	Paul Ledden	
	Paul Moore	
	Julian Storey	Media Co-ordinator
	Alex Wilson	
Observers:	Kieran Brady	
	Craig Poxon	
	Jason Thompson	

Item	Minute
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22/07	<u>Minutes</u>
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Grant Richards proposed, and John Horne seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday 12 June 2007 should be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

23/07	<u>Matters arising</u>
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	<u>23.1 The Airkix Fund (minute 18.1)</u>
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The Chairman said that he and John Page had not yet had the opportunity to meet with Simon Ward of the Airkix wind tunnel, who had been out of the country, to discuss the progress of the Airkix Fund. He was therefore not yet in a position to report on how much had accrued in the Fund. Eddie Jones said that he understood that there might not be as much in the Fund to date

as people had hoped. Craig Poxon said that Members were asking about the actual figure. The Chairman said he would find out and report back to the next meeting. He said that Airkix and the BPA had entered into the arrangement to promote the Airkix Fund for a year, and there would be a review of progress before the end of that period to help to decide on what to do after it.

Action: Next meeting

23.2 Credit card charges (minute 18.2)

This action had been completed.

Completed

24/07 Reports on areas of responsibility

24.1 Insurance

David Hickling (Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee) said he had asked for correspondence (circulated) between BPA Member David Turner and the Chairman of Council to stop because he feared it was at risk of pre-empting discussions by the Insurance Subcommittee.

He reported that the Insurance Subcommittee was still working to secure the same type of umbrella insurance cover next year as Members enjoyed this year. The Subcommittee was open to quotations from any broker who could offer a reasonable proposition. He stressed that the Subcommittee considered insurance not to be simply an annual policy, but as a building block for a longer-term relationship with an insurer. The Subcommittee was not seeking any significant variations to the structure of the insurance, such as differential premiums for different groups of members. The next insurance year would be from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009, and the earliest that quotations could reasonably be expected was in late November 2007 in time for Provisional Student and Temporary Membership premiums to be put to the EGM on Tuesday 4 December 2007. From the insurers' point of view, this was a very early quote because it was more than five months before the new insurance year was due to begin.

A meeting of Drop Zone Operators was to be convened by the BPA to discuss insurance. The correspondence initiated by David Turner with the Chairman of Council outlined part of the background to this. The meeting was planned to take place in Leicester at a date to be arranged in early September. The date and venue would be published on the BPA website with a statement that it would be open to any BPA Member who wished to attend. The intention was to run the meeting in the style of an open forum, to let DZ Operators have their say. The BPA's insurance broker would be in attendance for part of the meeting. It would report back through the Insurance Subcommittee.

Ongoing

24.2 CCPR

The Chairman reported that Adrian Bond was again submitting the bid for a grant from CCPR's Improvement Fund for Sports, with a slight variation based on feedback from the first time the bid had been submitted.

Await response from CCPR

24.3 Sport England

The BPA had applied to Sport England for all Affiliated in Drop Zones in England to be registered under Sport England's scheme to recognise Significant Areas for Sports. This was being done to seek greater recognition, and hence protection, of parachute centres. (The Sport England scheme did not currently extend to the analogous sports agencies covering the other home nations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, or to the Channel Islands.)

Await response from Sport England

24.2 Media

The Chairman read aloud a short update on media activities received from Julian Storey (Media Co-ordinator) by e-mail. A copy of an article on skydiving in the British Midland in-flight magazine, as a result of work by Julian Storey, was passed around the table. Weed Stoodley said that as well as the 'everyday' human-focused good news stories from Clubs & Centres of the "granny skydives to raise funds for cats' home" type that Julian Storey had referred to in his e-mail, there was much good news on the competitions front such as at the Nationals and internationally such as Team Outbreak's Silver Medal in the World Cup in Stupino. She believed that there were good opportunities for positive publicity on this front.

Action: Julian Storey

Martin Shuttleworth said the old cliché was true, that a picture was worth a thousand words. The BPA Office dealt in words, but *Skydive the Mag* dealt in pictures too. He asked whether there was any potential to consider extending the Editorial Services Contract for the Magazine,

perhaps on a trial basis, to include some clearly defined element of publicity to the wider media. The Chairman referred this question for consideration by the Communications Committee.

Action: Refer to Communications Committee

25/07 Development Action Plan: 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

25.1 Research methods of membership recruitment and retention

The Chairman said that work on Membership recruitment and retention fell principally to Clubs & Centres. Paul Moore had put forward a suggestion to allow cheaper first year Membership of the BPA for new jumpers, to ease the hit in the pocket of progressing to freefall. David Hickling said that although the suggestion was a good idea, it would unfortunately be likely to prove unworkable. He believed that it could disadvantage some jumpers and would lead to a significant loss of revenue to the BPA. Lost revenue would have to be made up elsewhere - Tony Butler estimated that about £2 would need to be added to each Provisional Student Membership to make up the shortfall. Further, the present system offered clear paper trail. David Hickling said that he did not believe a reduction in BPA Membership subscription for new jumpers would tempt many into freefall who had not already decided to do it: the main motivation was desire to become a solo jumper, and the financial hurdle was not the main determinant.

Various retention incentives offered by different Clubs & Centres were then discussed. One centre reported an excellent 54% retention rate of AFF students, and said that it had not come across resistance because of BPA Membership costs. Another incentive was the sliding insurance premium that the BPA had last year secured from the insurance company for conversions.

Tony Butler said that the Insurance Subcommittee could consider the suggestion of a cheaper conversion or a cheaper first year, and would need to talk to the insurance company about it. Eddie Jones said that trying to convince the insurance company to reduce the cost of insurance was a long-term goal. The Chairman said there was an opportunity for this and related matters to be discussed at the insurance meeting with Drop Zone Operators that the BPA was planning for a date to be arranged in early September (minute 24.1). Meanwhile, he referred this item to the Insurance Subcommittee for further consideration.

Action: Refer to Insurance Subcommittee

25.2 Investigate replacement of reduced exchequer funding

John Horne reported that the two skydivers who worked in the City that he had briefed had come forward with some ideas for income generation. Not all were likely to be entirely applicable to skydiving, but could prove a useful springboard for discussion by the Income Streams Subcommittee.

Action: Refer to Income Streams Subcommittee

25.3 Support and encourage Clubs & Centres to run more safety events

Applications would again be invited through the Magazine. The CCI of Target Skysports had expressed an interest, but he had been in hospital recently and this may well have delayed the application for a grant.

Ongoing

25.4 Research functional (back-end) development of the BPA website for members and the general public

The Chairman and Adrian Bond (Communications Chairman) were liaising over this target. It needed to relate to the re-development of the front-end of the BPA website that was being overseen by the Communications Committee, which had launched a 'front-end BPA website design' competition on p19 of the August 2007 issue of *Skydive the Mag*.

Action: Development Chairman & Adrian Bond

25.5 Progress towards achieving targets

Kieran Brady said that experience had shown that it was desirable to task one person with progressing each of the above development targets. That way, it was more likely that the targets would be achieved. The Chairman said this would be considered at the next meeting, in the light of progress at that time.

Action: Next meeting

26/07 Cametrix competitions scoring system

The Chairman invited John Page (Competitions Chairman) to brief the Development Committee on a matter that had been referred to it by the Competitions Committee. This concerned the Cametrix skydiving competitions scoring system, which was being developed in the UK as an alternative to the existing Omniskore system. The new Cametrix system had been demonstrated to the Competitions Committee at the start of the season and the Committee had encouraged it to be trialled at various BPA domestic competitions. As a result of feedback from this, Cametrix was being further developed. An important issue that had come up was that it did not presently show live scores and there was no live feed available.

John Page said that Omniskore was expensive to hire and that, perhaps as a result of this, the Danish NGB for sport parachuting had decided to buy into Omniskore. The question was, now that we had a new competitions scoring system being developed here in the UK, which was being used at BPA competitions, did the BPA wish to consider approaching the developers of Cametrix to seek to buy into it?

Tony Butler said that the BPA unfortunately could not boast a strong track record of investing in new equipment developments such as this. This was because the moment the BPA bought into something, Clubs & Centres expected it to be provided to them free of charge. The result was that the BPA's investment, which might have looked good on paper before it was made, was paradoxically, by the very fact of it being a BPA investment, now no longer anything like as promising. Another factor he asked the Committee to bear in mind was that technology-based products such as this might quickly become dated, and soon need further investment to keep up-to-date. John Hitchen reported that IPC had frequently discussed the idea of it buying its own equipment such as Omniskore but, perhaps for the same sort of reasons, had never done so,

The Chairman summarised the view around the table that the Competitions Committee should continue to monitor the development of the Cametrix skydiving competitions scoring system with interest. However, at least at this stage, the BPA should not seek any form of financial involvement in its development.

Refer back to Competitions Committee

27/07 UK Skydiving non-competition records

A few years ago, a 'UK skydiving records' page had been added to the BPA website. This included a records claim form, which required validation of the record by a CCI, judge or similar. Completed forms were submitted to the BPA Office. However, experience had shown that it was desirable for record claims to be put through some sort of further validation process, rather than being posted straight on the BPA website without someone with a knowledge of the appropriate discipline or type of skydiving taking a look at the claim first. For skydiving records in competition, this was being arranged through the Competitions Committee. However, claims could also be made for records that were nothing to do with competitions, and this was why the matter was being raised here with the Development Committee.

The Chairman suggested that the Council might formally appoint a 'record keeper', although this might imply the need to research existing records from an historical perspective, which was beyond the question being raised here. John Page said he believed there may be more benefit from other approaches to the relatively straightforward task of giving the 'once over' to new records claims. So far as new competitions records claims were concerned, this was likely to fall to the appropriate discipline representatives. This in effect meant that the task would be shared out between most members of the Competitions Committee. The historical perspective was of course important, but posting a new record on the BPA website was akin to laying down the gauntlet and if others had bettered it, it was likely we would soon know - this is precisely what had happened recently when an 'unvetted' record had been posted on the BPA website, giving rise to the present discussion.

The Chairman asked those around the table to give this matter some thought with a view to further consideration at the next meeting.

Action: Next meeting

28/07 Date of next meeting

Tuesdays 9 October and 4 December 2007 at 1600 at the BPA Office, Leicester.

The meeting closed at 1610.