

British Parachute Association

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Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 25 June 2008 at 1630
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Craig Poxon Paul Applegate Adrian Bond Paul Ledden John Page Grant Richards	Development Chairman
In attendance:	Kieran Brady Tony Butler Jon Gretton Martin Shuttleworth Andy Scott Martin Soulsby Weed Stoodley	Insurance Working Group Technical Officer Financial Administrator Secretary-General (from item 27.3) Co-opted Co-opted
Apologies for absence:	Becca Armstrong Debbie Carter John Hitchen John Horne David Ibbotson Paul Moore Rich Rust	Media Co-Ordinator Treasurer NCSO Media Co-ordinator

Item Minute

22/08 Minutes

Adrian Bond proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday 22 April 2008 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

23/08 Matters arising

23.1 Media Co-ordinators (minute 16.1)

The Chairman confirmed that Becca Armstrong and Rich Rust were now jointly in office as BPA Media Co-ordinators. Their report would be considered later in the meeting (see minute 24.4).

23.2 Carriage of parachuting kit by commercial airlines (minute 16.2)

John Page reported that it was proving challenging to get a response from British Airways (BA). He was trying to encourage BA officially to recognise sport parachute kit as sporting equipment. Such recognition would enable kit to be carried in addition to normal personal baggage allowance. The BA website listed the sporting equipment that BA recognised at baggage > sporting equipment. The Committee noted a reply from BA to a BPA Member who belonged to the BA Executive Club. John Page asked that BPA Members who were also Members of the BA Executive Club, including Gold and Silver card holders, should advise him of their Executive Club numbers so he could continue to lobby BA to progress our request.

Ongoing

John Page was pleased to report that Ryanair had confirmed that sport parachute kit could be carried on their flights. However, they would charge for this, as with any baggage.

23.3 Update to Memorandum & Articles of Association (minute 16.3)

Weed Stoodley reported that drafting updated Articles was a complex and detailed task. It was also one of interpretation because, to some extent, it depended on what the BPA itself wanted. There were templates and other organisations' Articles to use as a guide, but there remained room for discretion as to what should be included and what should be left out. For example, the recent Articles of another sports NGB included much detail about directorships that was not included in the present – and much older – BPA Memorandum & Articles. Whether this was because times had moved on, and inclusion of detail about directorships was now best current practice, or whether it was a matter for individual organisations to decide on how much detail they wished to put into their Articles, she could not yet say for certain. In any case, her understanding was that there would be a default to company law of anything not specifically covered by the Articles.

The current Memorandum and Articles were silent about categories of Member entitled to vote. Weed Stoodley and the Office had drafted new Articles to reflect established BPA practice and these would be included in the draft, which she hoped to have available for the next meeting.

Action: Weed Stoodley & BPA Office

Martin Shuttleworth said the BPA was not ploughing a lone furrow and it would be useful at some stage to norm reference the draft by seeking external advice. He noted that Jim Crocker had kindly offered to cast a legal eye over the draft, which would also be extremely helpful.

23.4 Media form for first-time jumpers (minute 17.4)

This new form, suggested and developed by Paul Ledden, had now been e-mailed to Clubs & Centres and uploaded to the Media page of the BPA website. It encouraged first-time jumpers to contact their local media about their experience. Paul Ledden said that ideally a copy of the form needed to be given to freefall videographers to present to first-time jumpers with the DVD of their jump.

Weed Stoodley asked that her suggestion of including the form, or something similar, at the back of the next reprint of the Starter Mag, should be referred to the Communications Committee.

Action: Refer to Communications Committee

23.5 Application of the Airkix Fund (minute 18)

The Committee considered the application of the Airkix Fund, which stood at £1420. After discussion, the Committee agreed on the general principle to suggest to Simon Ward of the Airkix wind tunnel that the Airkix Fund should be used to enhance training materials. The Committee believed that Simon Ward was supportive of such an approach, and the detail was left for negotiation with him and consideration at the next meeting. To this end, Martin Soulsby and John Page would also consult Mark Bayada, who had chaired the BPA's Canopy Handling working group.

Action: Next meeting

23.6 Possible new proposal from the Airkix wind tunnel (minute 18)

Martin Soulsby reported that the Airkix wind tunnel had not at present secured local authority planning permission to extend its opening hours. As the tunnel's possible new proposal to the BPA had been contingent on this, there was no new proposal to consider at least for the time being.

No further action

23.7 BPA Affiliation and course fees (minute 19.2)

Tony Butler confirmed that the adjustments to the fees set out in minute 19.2 had been made.

Completed

24/08 Reports on areas of responsibility

24.1 UK Sport / Sport England / Sport England Regions

John Horne, who looked after this area, was not present at this afternoon's meeting because he had arranged his diary around last Tuesday's the original date for this meeting, and had found that the change of date now clashed with an overseas commitment he had already arranged.

However, Martin Shuttleworth of the BPA Office was able to give an update. He reported that non-Olympic sports had naturally been concerned by the government's policy of funding Olympic programmes in preference to non-Olympic sports as a consequence of London winning the bid to host the 2012 Olympics. Diana King, General Secretary of the Royal Aero Club, had made a forthright point to Gerry Sutcliffe, the Sports Minister, at the CCPR annual conference. The Minister had indicated that the government believed it would win back support in grassroots sport with an initiative to improve clubs' infrastructure, facilities and coaching. This would be unveiled in the coming weeks as the result of refocusing the strategy of Sport England. The Office said it had been difficult to fathom the implications of Sport England's new focus to sport parachuting, and it had sought further information. The BPA response to Sport England's strategy consultation had been that there was a need for Sport England (and the other home country sports councils) to promote choice and diversity in sport. This was so that the bigger, higher-profile Olympic sports did not muscle out other sports from public consciousness, public support and public funding.

24.2 CCPR

Adrian Bond reported that a sum of £1022.29 was due to be payable to the BPA to support grassroots sport from the BingoLotto pilot programme that had run earlier this year. To date, two Affiliated Centres had signed up to the BingoLotto Buddy Programme for its re-launch in September 2008.

24.3 Insurance

The Chairman reported that the Insurance Working Group had held its first meeting earlier today. Its composition (minute 3) was: Craig Poxon (Development Chairman), Grant Richards, Paul Moore, David Hickling and Kieran Brady. The group worked in liaison with BPA staff. There had been some confusion about who was to chair the group. After discussion, John Page proposed, and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion that David Hickling, who had chaired the former Insurance Subcommittee to which the present Insurance Working Group was the successor, should be invited chair the group so it could benefit from his greatly valued expertise. This would help to provide the continuity that was such an important consideration in dealing with the complexity of the subject and the delicacy of negotiations with the insurers.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman said he would be delighted to invite David Hickling to chair the Insurance Working Group.

Action: Chairman

John Horne had been in correspondence with the Chairman and others about possible measures to help Members to progress in the sport by easing the financial burden of progression, which he believed was holding back some Members. Tony Butler said that he had discussed one option with John Horne that the BPA could explore without the need to involve the insurers. This was a trial to allow an individual to hold, as they progressed, one provisional and one temporary membership or two temporary memberships instead of the present limit of only one of either kind. This would help to defer the more expensive conversion to full Membership to early freefall, rather than at the transition between static line and first freefall as at present. In answer to a question from Grant Richards, Tony Butler indicated that the same approach could be adopted for AFF level 2.

Tony Butler reported that the rate of insurance payable on conversion to Full Membership was now calculated on the basis of the number of months remaining of the current membership year. This saved money for those who converted during the year, as previously the insurers had levied the full annual insurance premium.

The Chairman suggested that ideas for measures to encourage progression should be discussed in more detail at the next meeting, when John Horne would be present. John Page said he had seen nothing in writing about the ideas and he would appreciate them being outlined in a paper. The Chairman said he was sure that John Horne would be pleased to prepare a short paper for circulation ahead of the next meeting to summarise his proposals.

Action: John Horne / Next meeting

24.4 Media

The Chairman reported that Becca Armstrong and Rich Rust had made a sterling start as Joint BPA Media Co-ordinators (minute 23.1) and he congratulated them both. They had e-mailed him a report on their activities in helping to promote the sport through the media, and also on answering enquiries they had received from the Media, including from the production company of the *Big Brother* television series. With the live formation Skydiving Honda advertisement on Channel 4 in May, and the Archbishop of York jumping a tandem at Langar to raise money for families of soldiers injured in Afghanistan, it had been an exceptionally busy period with positive, high profile exposures for the sport.

25/08 The BPA Shop

The Chairman apologised to Grant Richards of UK Parachute Services Ltd, holders of the franchise to operate the BPA Shop, for not specifically calling to his attention in advance that this item was on the agenda for today's meeting. Grant Richards said that had he been aware of this, he would have been able to do more preparation.

The Chairman invited Grant Richards to outline the recent history of the BPA Shop. Grant Richards explained that, when he and his business partner, Jason Thompson, had bought UK Parachute Services Ltd (UKPS), the Attleborough, Norfolk, Drop Zone, the BPA Shop had been part of that because the Shop had been operated by UKPS. An administrator, who had now left, had looked after the BPA Shop, which was effectively a telephone and Internet-based operation. Previously, Tony Knight had run the BPA Shop for many years, with a percentage of sales going to the BPA for the use of its name.

Grant Richards said that when Tony Knight had sold his business to UKPS about three years ago, some Council Members at the time had expressed concern that the BPA Shop had apparently been included as part of the package. But this had not been the case: it was the business that ran the BPA Shop that had been sold. The Development Committee at the time had sought to formalise the BPA's arrangement with the operators of the BPA Shop, because there had been no formal written contract in place with Tony Knight. Kieran Brady had been acting for the BPA in these negotiations, which he said had stumbled over issues about stock inventory because the BPA had been concerned about possible liability if parachute equipment was sold in its name. The Office said that the latest document they had was of a draft letter of agreement dated 17 February 2006, but this had not progressed to signature stage..

Grant Richards said that, to be frank, he and Jason Thompson would rather not have the BPA Shop, because they no longer had an administrator in post to run it. If the BPA wished to put the franchise contract for the BPA Shop out to tender, they would have no problem in selling on the inventory to the successful bidder. Grant Richards said that he clearly recognised that the potential for the BPA Shop to generate income for the BPA, including new or enhanced revenue streams through improved merchandising, was not being exploited at present.

Weed Stoodley said she had noted from the BPA accounts that there appeared to be no current income to the BPA from the BPA Shop.

The Chairman thanked Grant Richards for his helpful and candid insight and said the matter would be further discussed at the next meeting when income streams were considered.

Action: Next meeting

26/08 Development Action Plan: 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

The Chairman thanked the Committee for its work on the current Action Plan, which was now drawing to a close as the Action Plan year would end on 30 June 2008. Several of the targets in

the new Action Plan, starting on 1 July 2008 (minute 27), ran on from targets in the current year. This allowed progressive steps to be taken to achieve longer-term goals.

27/08 Development Action Plan: 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009

The targets for the new Action Plan year had been agreed (minute 28) and ratified by the full Council. The budget was subject to approval by the Council at its meeting tonight. The Council had agreed to provide additional funding for target 1, to improve the back-end functionality of the BPA website (the Communications Committee was looking after the appearance and navigation routes, ie the front-end or user interface. The contract to develop both had been awarded by the Council to Hayes Computer Services (Hcoms) Ltd (minute 19.4) and the work was being progressed as an integrated whole

27.1 Improve the functionality of BPA website to provide more and better services to Members and the wider public

A paper from the Office about the arrangements for online voting had been circulated in advance. This called attention to two points: (i) the ethical issue of staff, as BPA stakeholders, being asked to administer BPA Council elections – in particular that, however diligent, they were inexorably a 'soft target' for rumour, innuendo and criticism; and (ii) the logistical challenge of dovetailing the proposed in-house online system using the BPA website with the complementary paper-based system. The Office understood, under the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, the BPA was obliged to offer Members a traditional postal voting system as an alternative to online voting. Questions included how PIN numbers for online voting would be generated and issued, and how de-duplication between online voting and ballot papers would be carried out. The former procedures used for ballot cards without an online option would no longer hold for elections with an option to vote by post or online.

The Chairman said the issues raised warranted detailed consideration. In the first instance, he asked that the technical issues about the interface between online voting and the paper system should be raised with Graham Hayes of Hcoms who was designing the online system.

Action: BPA Office

Grant Richards suggested that it may be appropriate to ask Hcoms to consider changing the order of the stages of development of the new BPA website so that online membership renewal was developed before online voting, not the other way around as had originally been envisaged. The Committee agreed and asked the Office to liaise with Hcoms about this.

Action: BPA Office

Should an election be required for Council 2009 (in the event that there were more candidates than the 15 available seats, which would not be known until nominations closed at a date in October to be announced), the Chairman suggested, and the Committee agreed, that the default position would be to again to use Electoral Reform Services (ERS).

Noted

27.2 Pilot implementation of selected new funding stream/s

The Chairman reported that he was continuing to work on the development of a tandem agency website for possible use by the BPA. He noted that UKS had expressed an interest in selling tandems, and believed was to help to cover the costs of running their website. The Committee noted that Stu Ferguson had kindly indicated that UKS would consider donating a percentage of any tandem sales to the BPA, and wondered whether it might be appropriate to ask established tandem booking agencies to consider doing the same.

New funding streams would be considered at the next meeting, when John Horne, who was co-ordinating this item, would be present.

Action: Next meeting

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

The availability of these grants to Affiliated Centres would be publicised to them.

Action: BPA Office

27.4 Increase media coverage of skydiving in local UK media

The target of issuing the new media contact form to first-time jumpers had been achieved (minute 23.4). The Committee noted that it might be difficult to secure feedback as the BPA did not employ a press cuttings agency but anecdotal evidence may come in during the year.

Ongoing

27.5 Research the promotion of the sport to young people

Martin Soulsby was co-ordinating this activity, which would be considered at the next meeting.

Action: Martin Soulsby / Next meeting

28/08 Sponsorship template

The Chairman thanked Claire Scott of Team Bodyflight Storm for kindly providing a copy of the sponsorship template that the team used. This would be used to help to update the sponsorship page on the BPA website.

Action: BPA Office

29/08 BPA Credit card

Adrian Bond proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion to spend £300 to cover the cost of inserting a leaflet into *Skydive the Mag* to promote the availability of the BPA credit card. The Committee noted Adrian Bond's caution that the BPA might not get this money back.

Carried unanimously

Adrian Bond said that if the mailing succeeded in achieving an uptake of another 80 or 90 new cardholders, it could be used as leverage with the issuers, MBNA Bank Europe plc, to get an image of skydiving on the card. If this could be done, it might help to increase uptake still further.

30/08 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays at 1600 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester: 19 August, 7 October and 2 December 2008.

The meeting closed at 1830