

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 21 August 2001 at 1415
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present: Kieran Brady - Committee Chairman
Paul Applegate
Ian Midgley
Craig Poxon
Lofty Thomas

In attendance: Tony Butler - Technical Officer
Lesley Gale - Editor, Skydive Magazine
Beverly Fairhurst - Skydive Magazine
John Hitchen - NCSO
Martin Shuttleworth - National Administrator
Sue Waterfield - Administration Secretary
Lucie Wood - Development Officer

Item Minute

22/01 **Minutes**

Ian Midgley proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 June 2001 should be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

23/01 **Matter arising: Editorial contract (minute 18)**

The Chairman said that the figures for editorial expenses were not yet available. He therefore suggested that finalising the new Editorial Contract should be held over until the next meeting. Lesley Gale and the Committee agreed that the duration of the existing Editorial Contract should be extended until then.

Action: Next Meeting

24/01 **Skydive Magazine**

Lesley Gale reported that the Magazine had made a profit of £8K in the financial year ended on 30 June 2001. It had also grown in size. The Magazine had recorded a similar profit last year. Over the last two years it had therefore made a profit of £16K.

After discussion, Ian Midgley proposed, and Lofty Thomas seconded, the following motion. The Magazine and the Starter Magazine should be separated out in the BPA's accounts. This would take effect from this year's accounts, which were now in draft.

Carried unanimously

The August issue had comprised 84 pages - the most ever. It had included a full report on the British Skydiving Team at the World Air Games in Spain. Ian Midgley said it had been a good issue.

The August issue had also included a double page of non-core advertising by Rover MG cars. The cost to the advertiser had been about £500 per page (exact figure to be confirmed). Kieran Brady had met a member who had not realised how advertising helped to pay for extra editorial pages. Lesley Gale agreed to mention this in a future issue. There was then a discussion about advertising in the Magazine. It was noted that late advertisements could often be fitted in. Advertising inserts that could be booked even later, after the Magazine had gone to press. Part of the higher cost of inserts was to cover the postage for the extra weight.

The August Magazine had been the first to be printed by web instead of sheet feed. Web printing cost less for runs over 5,000 and gave a better finish. It printed 8 pages at once, so could be used only when the number of pages was a multiple of 8.

Lesley Gale had circulated a list of planned features for the October issue. This was noted. She introduced Beverly Fairhurst, the new Editorial Assistant. Lesley Gale reported that Mike Gorman had updated the mailsort to include new postcodes. The mailsort still left out a few addresses. Also, some additional data for the Magazine was needed from the membership database. She would raise both points when she met Mike Gorman next week.

25/01 Starter Magazine

It was now clear that stocks of the Starter Magazine would last at least until early next season. There was therefore plenty of time to plan changes to a second issue, to be printed probably in March 2002. Lesley Gale had circulated an outline of three options. They ranged from option 1 for minor changes, to option 3 for major changes. Option 3 included four more pages for an introduction to the sport and its disciplines.

Lesley Gale tabled feedback on the Starter Magazine from a survey of DZ Operators. There was then a discussion about advertising from overseas DZs, which was presently accepted. One Affiliated DZ Operator had said this was why he did not issue the Starter Magazine at his Drop Zone. The Committee noted that 25 of the 28 BPA Affiliated Drop Zones were issuing the Starter Magazine, and 95% of readers liked it. BPA Membership had gone up this year, and Lesley Gale said that the Starter Magazine might have helped. She said that if advertisements by overseas DZs were no longer allowed in the Starter Magazine, goodwill might be lost. This could cause a loss of income to the main Magazine.

After discussion, the Committee asked Lesley Gale to prepare a cost for Option 1, essential revisions only. This should include projected advertising income, with a note of how much was expected from advertising by overseas DZs.

Action: Lesley Gale

Advertising space would need to be re-sold, as previous sales had covered only the first print run. The advertisement for the BPA Shop on the outside back cover had been free of charge. Lesley Gale would check the contract for the BPA Shop with Tony Knight to see if this would also apply to a reprint.

The Committee was generally happy with the editorial content of the Starter Magazine. It supported the article on *Coping with Fear*, which a few experienced jumpers had questioned. With regard to technical points on certain photographs, Ian Midgley said essential changes should be made. However, the Starter Magazine was for first-time jumpers. Experienced jumpers, if they looked hard enough, might always be able to find something wrong in a few of the many photographs that had been used.

26/01 BPA Website

A copy of an invoice from ZCT Ltd, the website hosts, was tabled. With it was a plan for development of the BPA website.

Kieran Brady noted that the cost of the website was much higher than for Strathallan's website. He asked why this should be. In discussion, three reasons were given.

- 1 There were technical differences between the two sites - the BPA site was more complex.
- 2 Strathallan's website relied on much voluntary work.
- 3 The first hosts of the BPA website had used a program that, unintentionally, had made it difficult for others to update the site.

Kieran Brady asked Craig Poxon to compare the BPA and Strathallan websites and set out the difference in simple terms.

Action: Craig Poxon

Ian Midgley said that more of the BPA website was now being maintained and updated from the office. A new, user-friendly, program had been installed. This would lower the cost of upkeep and routine updates next year and beyond.

27/01 Magazine Website

A report by ZCT Ltd had been circulated on the development of the Magazine Website. It included a proposed new site search facility and a secure credit card link for magazine-only subscriptions. Ian Midgley supported the idea of increasing Magazine subscription rates by about 15% to meet the cost of the secure link. This could provide useful experience if the BPA were to think about online membership renewal in future.

The cost of the Magazine website during the current year was estimated to be about £3K. Ian Midgley noted this was £1K over the agreed budget of £2K. He said it was important to keep to the budget. The Chairman said that if any more expenditure was considered, it could come from the profit on the Magazine. There would be no need to vote any extra funds.

Ian Midgley proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, the following motion. Lesley Gale should ask ZCT Ltd what could be done within the previously agreed budget of £2K for hosting and upgrading the Magazine Website until the end of March.

Carried unanimously Action: Lesley Gale

Lesley Gale said that savings might be made if Magazine staff could update the website for each issue of the Magazine. This could save up to £250 a time. The Chairman asked her to let the Committee know as soon as possible what ZCT could do within the budget.

(Note: At the Council meeting that followed, Ian Midgley clarified that the budget of £2K was for the financial year ending on 30 June 2002. He noted that there might therefore be an overspend. Kieran Brady confirmed at the Council meeting that any agreed overspend could come from the Magazine budget.)

28/01 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 23 October 2001 at 1400 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester.

The meeting closed at 1530.