

# British Parachute Association

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## Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Tuesday 3 December 2002 at 1410**

at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

<b>Present:</b>	Kieran Brady	-	Committee Chairman
	Paul Applegate		
	Eddie Jones		
	Craig Poxon		
<b>In attendance:</b>	Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
	Lesley Gale	-	Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i>
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	Secretary-General
	Sue Waterfield	-	Administration Secretary
<b>Apologies for absence:</b>	John Hitchen		
	Ian Midgley		

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### Item Minute

#### 32/02 Minutes

Paul Applegate proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 22 October 2002 should be approved.

**Approved**

#### 33/02 Matters arising

##### 33.1 Affiliated Clubs and Centres and Associated Organisations pages (minute 28.3)

Lesley Gale said she would bring the proposed new page layout to the next meeting.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

##### 33.2 Magazine budget (minute 28.5)

Lesley Gale tabled the budget with the same figures as before, but in the revised layout that had been requested at the last meeting. Paul Applegate proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the budget figures should be accepted.

**Carried**

There was extensive discussion about the format of the budget, particularly the apportionment of 'one-off' expenditure and recurring expenditure. The Chairman said he would set out for Lesley Gale, outside the meeting, a template for the preparation of future years' budgets that would take in the Committee's observations on how the budget might most clearly be presented. The purpose was simply to set out the budget in such a way that it was easy for non-financial specialists to understand it. Lesley Gale thanked the Committee for its guidance.

There followed discussion about the increase in the editorial contract fee of £656 or 8% per issue, compared with the previous financial year. The increase totalled £3936 over the contract period of one year. Eddie Jones asked how this increase was justified. Lesley Gale said the 8% increase comprised increased editorial staff costs of 5% and general cost increases of 3%. She explained that the workload on the Magazine and its website had increased significantly. To

help discharge this workload, Lesley Gale said she now had more help from her assistant Bev Fairhurst, who was carrying out a broader range of duties with more responsibility than when Lesley Gale had first appointed her last year. This was therefore the reason for that component of the increase in the editorial contract fee.

Eddie Jones then proposed, and Craig Poxon agreed, that the increase of £3936 in the editorial contract fee for the Magazine should be approved.

**Carried**

In response to a request from Lesley Gale, Craig Poxon proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the budgeted increase that Lesley Gale proposed to pay to Bev Fairhurst, now approved, could be backdated to the start of the contract period on 1 October.

**Carried**

Lesley Gale tabled a financial statement of the Magazine's actual performance against budget for the current financial year, 2002/3. This showed performance well within budget.

The Committee believed that the Magazine had now attained an appropriate size, in terms of its number of pages, and had now reached a steady state. Lesley Gale said that she still wanted further to improve the Magazine incrementally, but agreed that the major developments had already been undertaken to get the magazine where it was today. In view of this, Lesley Gale asked whether there was still a need for a separate Communications Committee, or whether oversight of the communications function should now revert to the Development Committee? The Chairman asked all Committee members to think about this.

The Chairman said he would check with BPA Chairman Chris Allen about the progress of signing the Editorial Contract for the current year (October 2002 to October 2003).

### **33.3 Criteria for inclusion in Club News (minute 30)**

The Chairman thanked Lesley Gale for the help she had given in bringing this matter to a mutually satisfactory conclusion for all parties. There was now a section within the *Club News* feature for organisations such as *POPS* and *Team Pumpkin* that were not BPA Affiliated Clubs or Centres.

### **34/02 Report on Skydive Magazine**

Lesley Gale tabled a report on the content of the December 2002 and February 2003 issues of *Skydive Magazine*. The Committee was satisfied with the planned content, and thanked Lesley Gale for the report.

As it had been decided (minute 28.3) to adopt a new, briefer, format for the listing of Associated Organisations in the Magazine, the Chairman was keen to ensure that the Associated Organisations were fully cognisant of this at the time of their renewal of Association, and ahead of the first appearance of the listing in the new format in the Magazine. Tony Butler said that the re-Association forms were about to be sent out, and he agreed to review the form with Lesley Gale ahead of their issue to ensure that they were clear about the new format of listing to be used in the Magazine from April 2003.

**Action: Tony Butler**

There followed a brief discussion about the Magazine Open Forum to be held on AGM Day on Saturday 18 January 2003, and who should chair it. The consensus of the Committee was that it should ideally be chaired by Lesley Gale or by a Member of the Communications Committee. The Chairman regretted that he would not personally be able to attend because, as was perhaps inevitable on such a busy day, there were clashes of events being held at the same time, and he had to attend the Pilots' meeting that would be taking place concurrently.

### **35/02 Report on website development**

Paul Applegate reported that the BPA had received a request for an online check facility for Riggers' ratings, similar to the 'Member Check' facility that was already in place. However, he said this had been an isolated request - from a Rigger living in New Caledonia near Australia - and it would be easier for him simply to request information by e-mail from the BPA office. Craig

Poxon believed that such a facility could be introduced if it was needed, but that there was little point in developing a new facility unless there was some sustained demand.

Martin Shuttleworth said that he had received occasional reports from members who had been unable satisfactorily to print certain BPA Forms they had downloaded from the BPA website. These tended to be the minority of forms with precise alignment of lines and boxes to fill in - the majority of forms printed satisfactorily. The problem was because of the limitations of the 'Word' document format - a better alternative would be Portable document format, known as 'pdf'. However, it was technically a pain to convert documents from 'Word' to 'pdf' as many errors of alignment and omission were often introduced by the technical limitations of the conversion process. As a result, converted documents had to be meticulously re-checked word-by-word to identify all of the errors caused by the conversion process. He said he would monitor any further requests for documents to be made available in pdf.

The Chairman said that it was clear that, unlike the Magazine, the BPA website had not yet reached a steady state, and that there were a number of potential further developments of functionality in prospect.

**36/02 BPA calendar**

Darren Connaghan, a BPA Member, had suggested that the BPA might publish a skydiving calendar, as he had been unable to obtain one elsewhere. Craig Poxon supported this idea, providing it would at least break even. It was too late to progress this idea for 2003, but the Chairman wondered whether it might be possible for a 2004 calendar to be included in or with the Magazine late next year - but it would clearly depend on the cost, of which he had no idea. Lesley Gale said she would look at possible costs. She had been pleased to note that the Competitions Committee had published the majority of next year's domestic competitions dates early this year - before the end of November - and therefore wondered whether any BPA calendar might include the 2004 competitions dates, which would make it even more relevant to Members.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

**37/02 Action Plan: 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004**

The Chairman invited the Committee to consider possible Communications targets for next year's Action Plan. The Chairman emphasised that targets had to be necessary, realistic and achievable within the Association's finite resources, and cautioned against the temptation of dreaming up expensive targets for the sake of it.

**38/02 Dates of next meetings**

Informal Action Plan meeting after the inaugural Council meeting on Saturday 18 January 2003 at the Hanover Hotel, Hinckley. First ordinary meeting to be held at 1400 at the BPA Office, Leicester, on the day of the Council meeting (to be arranged) in February 2003.

Lesley Gale suggested that it might be helpful for one of the Committee meetings next year to be held at the Magazine office so that Committee Members could see how the Magazine was produced.

The meeting closed at 1620.