

British Parachute Association

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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 19 August 2003 at 1400
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present: Eddie Jones - Committee Chairman
Paul Applegate
Calvin Blacker
Kieran Brady
Billy Gollan
Ian Midgley

In attendance: Tony Butler - Technical Officer
Lesley Gale - Editor, *Skydive Magazine*
John Hitchen - NCSO
Martin Shuttleworth - Secretary-General
Sue Waterfield - Administration Secretary

Apologies for absence: Ralph Fielding
David Hickling

Item Minute

20/03 Minutes

Calvin Blacker proposed, and Billy Gollan seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 17 June 2003 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

21/03 Matters arising

21.1 Advertisement by a military centre in the Magazine (minute 17.1)

A copy of a letter dated 15 July had been circulated, from Group Captain J Lamonte of RAF Brize Norton to Peterborough Parachute Centre (PPC). This was in reply to a letter from PPC concerning RAFSPA's advertisement in Skydive Magazine for June 2003 (minute 17.1 refers). The Chairman read aloud extracts from Group Captain Lamonte's letter, which stated that the appearance of the advertisement, notwithstanding the 16 year-old agreement that military centres would not advertise, had been 'a one-off misunderstanding and it will not happen again'. The Committee was satisfied that this drew a line under the matter.

21.2 Secure online Magazine subscription facility (minute 18.1)

Lesley Gale reported that Centrepages (a website design company) had prepared a test page with the new e-commerce facility, and was now liaising with Jon Gretton (BPA financial Administrator) to set up the bank details. The page was undergoing trials and was on target to be online by the time of the October meeting. Lesley Gale said she would forward the test page to Committee Members before it went live on the Magazine website.

Action: Lesley Gale

21.3 More economic updates of the Magazine Website (minute 18.2)

Lesley Gale reported that this was on target for the October or December 2003 issue of the Magazine.

21.4 Electronic DZ Focus (minute 18.3)

Lesley Gale said she would obtain a quotation from Centrepages for this project.

Action: Lesley Gale

22/03 Report on Skydive Magazine

22.1 August 2003 issue

Lesley Gale's report on the Magazine had been circulated with the agenda. She confirmed that the August 2003 issue had been published on time, and its content had been dominated by British events because there was so much news from such a busy season. She reminded the Committee that it would be difficult or impossible to achieve such a high percentage of British content during the winter months. Calvin Blacker congratulated Lesley Gale on the article on canopy testing, which he said had been well written and imaginatively presented. Lesley Gale said she hoped this article might be the beginning of a series, based on test jumps that were now being lined up with different canopies.

Paul Applegate noted that some of the published photographs from the Classics Nationals were a little fuzzy. Lesley Gale said that the quality of images was, as she frequently said, often a problem. The published photographs had been the best available to the Magazine.

Lesley Gale thanked the Committee for encouraging her to use British shots on Magazine covers - these had proved to be popular with the membership.

Finally, Lesley Gale confirmed that the August issue had been web-printed. This had saved about 5% on printing costs. The Chairman then thanked Lesley Gale for another good issue.

22.2 October 2003 issue

The Committee noted a summary of the principal features planned for the October 2003 issue.

22.3 Budget

The Magazine budget for the year ended 30 June 2003 had been circulated in advance. The outturn was a loss of £4,297 compared with a budgeted loss of £3,224. This meant that actual performance had been £1073 below budget. Lesley Gale said that this represented only 0.7% on the Magazine's turnover of £138K, and was more than offset by the profit of £3582 carried forward from last year. She tabled a history of the financial performance of the Magazine for each financial year from 1995-6 to 2002-3 which showed this to be only the second year that a loss had been made, and that cumulatively over the eight years, the Magazine was in profit.

Lesley Gale said that the fall of £1073 below budget in the financial year 2002-3 had been because the rate of growth in subscription income had slowed, and the cost of printing (including minutes) and overseas distribution had increased. Measures were now in place to help to reduce these costs, such as the switch to the more economic web printing for the Magazine (minute 22.1 above), and new arrangements for distribution of the Magazine outside the UK.

Lesley Gale tabled her proposed Magazine budget for the current financial year, 2003/4. This showed a budgeted profit of £1,142. Kieran Brady noted that the budget was for a profit and said that all heads of BPA expenditure would be likely to come under even greater scrutiny consequent on the predicted large rise in the premiums for the BPA's third party insurance cover from April 2004. This would be likely to feed through as a corresponding increase in BPA subscription rates, which meant that all possible means of keeping membership costs down would have to be explored. He mentioned this because the Magazine was one of the areas of membership expenditure. The Committee agreed to bear this in mind and to consider the proposed budget at its next meeting.

23/03 Magazine website update

Lesley Gale reported that Colin Bridges (Editorial and Website Co-ordinator) had settled in well and was making an excellent contribution. He was looking after the website and had renamed the 'feedback' button 'contact', which was now considered to be more appropriate.

24/03 BPA Calendar 2004

Lesley Gale presented a file with photographs she had shortlisted for possible inclusion in the BPA calendar 2004. She reported that, in response to a notice she had placed in the Magazine (minute 16.1), she had received 23 submissions, of variable quality. The Committee then selected those photographs it considered most appropriate for inclusion in the calendar based on the quality of the photographs and the need to achieve balance in the material chosen for inclusion. Lesley Gale said she would send out to the Committee a summary of what it had selected as a further check for balance.

Action: Lesley Gale

25/03 World Record Attempt in Thailand - January 2004

Lesley Gale reported that she had been invited to take part in a world record attempt in Thailand. Unfortunately, the date clashed with the BPA AGM to be held on Saturday 24 January 2004. She asked whether she could be excused attendance at the AGM to take part in the world record attempt. In discussion it was noted that the Magazine Open Forums over the years at the AGM had now addressed most of the issues that the members wished to raise. A Magazine stand at the exhibition, although always welcome, was not essential every year because the Magazine was so well known by the membership. Therefore, the Committee agreed to Lesley Gale's request and wished her well in the world record attempt in Thailand in January 2004.

26/03 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays at 1400 at the BPA Office, Glen Para, Leicester (ahead of meetings of the Development Committee for those involved, at 1600; and the Council at 1830): 21 October and 2 December.

The meeting closed at 1520.