

# British Parachute Association

5 Wharf Way  
Glen Parva  
Leicester  
LE2 9TF

Tel: 0116 278 5271  
Fax: 0116 247 7662  
e-mail: skydive@bpa.org.uk  
www.bpa.org.uk



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## Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Tuesday 17 February 2004 at 1415**

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

<b>Present:</b>	Eddie Jones Chris Allen Calvin Blacker Kieran Brady David Hickling Ian Midgley Elizabeth Stoodley	Committee Chairman Chairman of Council (from item 3.5)  (from item 3.5)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Lesley Gale John Hitchen Martin Shuttleworth	Editor, <i>Skydive</i> Magazine NCSO Secretary-General
<b>Observer:</b>	Andrew Frew	
<b>Apologies for absence:</b>	Paul Applegate Tony Butler Tony Goodman	Technical Officer

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### Item Minute

#### 01/04 Minutes

Lesley Gale pointed out an error in item 36.2 'In-house update of the Magazine website' in the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2003. This wrongly stated that portable document format (pdf) files typically had large file sizes. What had actually been said was that pdf documents usually had small file sizes, but the Adobe Reader program needed to read them had a large file size. With this correction, Kieran Brady proposed, and Ian Midgley seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2 December 2003 should be approved as a correct record.

**Approved**

#### 02/04 Matters arising

##### 2.1 Contract for Editorial Services, October 2003 to October 2004 (minute 34.1)

Martin Shuttleworth said he would check whether the contract had been signed and returned.

**Action: BPA Office**

##### 2.2 Telephone number of Strathallan (minute 34.3)

Kieran Brady reported that there remained an error in the listing of Strathallan's telephone number in the February issue of the Magazine. Although the correct number appeared in the body of the text, there was still a missing digit in the heading. Lesley Gale apologised and said she would correct it.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

### **2.3 Photograph for the BPA Membership Card 2004 (minute 37)**

Lesley Gale had kindly supplied a photograph for use on the BPA Membership card.

### **03/04 Communications Action Plan: 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005**

The Chairman invited ideas for targets to be considered for the Communications Action Plan for the year 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005. Suggestions would be discussed, with a view to putting forward costed recommendations to the full Council at its meeting this evening.

#### **3.1 Start a new page on the BPA website to record National Skydiving records**

Calvin Blacker tabled a paper that suggested the creation of a new page on the BPA website to record and promote UK National Skydiving records. The Committee was supportive of this idea. However, as the Development Committee had oversight of the BPA website, the Committee asked Calvin Blacker kindly to propose this idea to The Development Committee, which he agreed to do.

**Action: Refer to the Development Committee**

#### **3.2 Publish a Magazine article on Drug-free sport**

Elizabeth Stoodley suggested a Magazine article on the effects of drugs and alcohol on health and jumping. The Committee supported this idea, providing the article was compiled by an authoritative source such as for example Dr John Carter, BPA Medical Adviser. However, the Committee considered that it was not a strategic issue for the Action Plan but something that could be progressed with Lesley Gale in the usual way for ideas for articles for the Magazine.

**Action: Elizabeth Stoodley to discuss with Lesley Gale**

#### **3.3 Produce and distribute a promotional DVD on skydiving**

Elizabeth Stoodley suggested that the BPA might consider producing a promotional DVD on skydiving. This might be targeted at attracting potential first-time jumpers. In discussion, the Chairman said that recruitment of first-time jumpers was principally the responsibility of each Club or Centre. Many already had their own promotional videos and DVDs and he believed that it would be difficult to get agreement on the content of a single such item that most Centres might be likely to use. In practice, he believed that Clubs and Centres would prefer to use their own material and might see a BPA DVD as giving publicity to other Clubs and Centres, which might discourage them from handing it out. The Committee also considered the likely high production costs, estimated to be around £20K, and the probability that a DVD of this nature might take around a year to make. Once the production costs of the content had been met, the Committee believed that DVDs manufactured in bulk would probably have a cost of as little as 25p per copy, depending on the quantity ordered.

Lesley Gale reported that low remaining stock levels on the Starter Mag indicated that a reprint would be required this year, the last reprint having been in 2002. She asked whether the Committee wished her to consider the possibility of publishing the Starter Mag as a DVD, which could then include some live action footage. The Committee was cautious about the possibility of transferring the Starter Mag from hard copy to DVD for two reasons: (1) a hard copy Magazine was designed to catch the reader's attention and could be read on the spot, whereas a DVD had to be played through a DVD player, thereby possibly losing an element of immediacy; (2) there seemed to be so many DVDs given out these days that recipients of a skydiving DVD might consider it to be simply another freebie to add to the stack they had possibly already got. That said, the use of skydiving footage on a DVD was a feature that the print medium could never offer, and such footage was particularly appropriate to skydiving as a sport. The Chairman therefore asked Lesley Gale kindly to bear in mind this discussion when she came to consider the update and reprint of the Starter Mag. He also asked that the reprint of the Starter Mag should be an agenda item for the next meeting.

**Action: Lesley Gale / Next Meeting**

#### **3.4 Use Portable Document Format (pdf) files on the Magazine website**

Lesley Gale suggested a possible Action Plan target of developing the Magazine website to publish portable document format (pdf) files of each issue of the Magazine. This would enable the whole of the Magazine to be published electronically, rather than just key features and news items as at present. Moreover, it would save on the cost of updating the website because the pdf files would already have been prepared to print the Magazine. In discussion, concerns were

expressed about whether switching to pdf files might limit accessibility to the electronic version of the Magazine for members who did not have the Adobe Reader software necessary to read such files, nor the ability to download such a large program file (20Mb) from the web. On the other hand, it was recognised that more and more documents were now available from the web in pdf format, which was becoming a universal standard for document transfer because it could include a wide variety of text, photographs and illustrations. The Chairman summarised the consensus of the Committee which was that a phased move to pdf files was probably a natural development for the Magazine website, and could be progressed by Lesley Gale at the time she judged it to be most appropriate. It would require careful monitoring of feedback from Members to ensure that problems of inaccessibility were not widely generated. The Committee did not consider it as a strategic target for the Action Plan, but thanked Lesley Gale for bringing up the issue and for helping to ensure that the Magazine kept up-to-date with developments in communications technology.

### **3.5 Produce and distribute a BPA skydiving calendar 2005**

Eddie Jones said that he had received considerable positive feedback about the BPA Calendar 2004 that had been issued free of charge to Members as an insert to *Skydive Mag* in December 2003. He therefore proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion to produce a BPA skydiving calendar for 2005, and to seek sponsorship to contribute to, and if possible cover, the cost. However, for prudence, a budget of £5K (the same as for last year) should be attached to this target, in case sponsorship could not be secured.

**Carried unanimously**

Lesley Gale tabled a copy of the USPA Skydiving Calendar 2004 for the Committee's information. Elizabeth Stoodley asked why the BPA Calendar 2004 had not been made available for sale. Lesley Gale explained that the photographs supplied for the calendar had been submitted on the understanding that the calendar was not for commercial gain but was to be issued free-of-charge to BPA Members. The position would remain unchanged even if sponsorship were to be obtained for the BPA 2005 Calendar.

### **3.6 Membership survey 2005 by questionnaire**

The Chairman proposed, and Ian Midgley seconded, a motion that a budget of £1,200 should be set aside to conduct a membership survey by questionnaire. The questionnaire would be printed as an additional part of the membership renewal form for 2005 (to encourage response) and be issued as an insert to *Skydive Magazine* for February 2005.

**Carried unanimously**

### **3.7 Summary of Communications Action Plan targets 2004/5**

The Chairman thanked Members of the Committee for their ideas and contributions to the discussion. He summarised the two Communications targets 2004/5 (minutes 3.5 and 3.6 above) that would now go forward for ratification by the Council, viz:

- 1 BPA Skydiving calendar 2005, budget £5K; and
- 2 Membership survey 2005 by questionnaire 2005, budget £1.2K.

### **04/04 Magazine publication dates**

Lesley Gale tabled her proposed new schedule of publication dates for the Magazine. The publication months remained the same, but with an earlier arrival date to the reader - by the first weekend of the month of publication, instead of by the 16th of the month as at present, except for the February issue which would arrive by 14 February. The later publication date of the February issue was to allow sufficient time after the renewal subscription rate was set (at the AGM in late January) for the membership renewal forms to be printed for insertion to the February issue. Lesley Gale explained that the earlier publication date that she was proposing for the other five issues was in line with publishing industry practice for magazines to come out at the start of the month, not half way through as at present. A particular benefit for the December issue would be that it would be able to catch the Christmas advertising market, which the old publication date had missed.

The Committee satisfied itself that the new schedule of publication dates would have no effect on the publication of BPA minutes, apart from making them available slightly earlier than before.

David Hickling then proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the new schedule of publication dates for Skydive Magazine, as set out above, should be approved.

**Carried unanimously**

The Committee left it to Lesley Gale to decide whether to implement the new schedule with the April or June 2004 issue.

#### **05/04 Report on Skydive Magazine**

Lesley Gale tabled her Editorial Report to the Committee. It covered, inter alia, the February 2004 issue and planned articles and features for the April 2004 issue.

##### **5.1 February 2004 issue**

The Chairman of Council said that he was aware of certain adverse comment from Members about the feature on the *FlyBoyz* Film Festival at Perris Valley. The problem they had with the feature was that it had been written by someone who was neither a BPA Member nor a jumper, and that it may have come over to some as almost an advertorial for disc jockeying. Kieran Brady said that, in his opinion, the article was 'a bit wild' but that it was not in any way insulting and therefore of no harm. Lesley Gale said she was sorry to hear of negative reaction because other articles had, from time to time, been contributed by non-Members and even non-jumpers, where they had something interesting to say in relation to the sport, as she believed to be the case here.

The Chairman said he considered Gary Wainright's article on videoing tandems (pp26-29) to be an excellent feature, particularly for those who were just starting out on videoing tandems. However, he was uncomfortable with the pun at the end of Gary Wainright's list of Top Tips (p29) which read 'Never sacrifice safety to get a cool angle (unless it is really cool)'. Lesley Gale agreed, on reflection, that it had been inappropriate to publish a tongue-in-cheek remark about safety.

##### **5.2 Budget**

Lesley Gale gave an update on performance against budget for the Magazine. Mailing costs were running at 8% over budget but this had been more than offset by the revenue on advertising sales at 13% above budget. The total expenditure in the financial year to date had therefore been just over £41K compared with a budget of £44K, so performance was nearly £3K better than budget.

#### **06/04 Update on achievement of targets in the Communications Action Plan for 2003/4**

##### **6.1 Secure online Magazine subscription facility**

**Target achieved**

##### **6.2 In-house update of Magazine website**

Lesley Gale reported that Colin Bridges (Editorial and Website Co-ordinator for the Magazine) had received one day's training that had equipped him to carry out much more in-house work on the Magazine website. Provision for further training of up to two more days had been included in the budget of £750. It was not yet clear whether or not more training would be required further down the line.

**On target**

##### **6.3 Electronic Drop Zone focus**

Requests had recently been made to invite two Clubs and Centres to submit material for the preparation of new pages. If this proved to be satisfactory, the same form of invitation - a questionnaire - would be issued to all other Affiliated Clubs and Centres.

Nick Ward, of the Leicester-based web design and consultancy firm Centrepages, had confirmed that they would create a new page for each Club or Centre from the material the Centres themselves supplied. Further, Centrepages would update each page with material supplied by the Club or Centre for a period of three years, all within the previously agreed overall project budget of £2,500. A page containing a form would be made available where Clubs and Centres could go to fill in any changes or updates to their own section; this page would then be forwarded to Centrepages who would update that Centre's webpage accordingly. This would effectively

allow centres to make their own updates in an easy manner without requiring specialist website training or knowledge.

**On target**

#### **6.4 Publish a BPA skydiving calendar 2004**

**Target achieved**

##### **07/04 Letter from Empuriabrava**

The Chairman had received a letter from Peter Jones at Empuriabrava. It asked the Committee to consider authorising the publication of more information in the Overseas Associated Drop Zones list in the Magazine. After discussion, the Committee decided that unfortunately it was unable to accede to this request because the established policy of the Committee was that Overseas Associated Drop Zones would be listed in the format currently in use. The Chairman would reply accordingly to Peter Jones.

**Action: Chairman**

##### **08/04 Request from Humberside Police Press Office**

A request had been circulated from the Press Officer of Humberside Police. This was for a statement from the Police about the Stephen Hilder murder investigation to be posted on the BPA's website. The Chairman of Council had considered the BPA website to be an inappropriate medium for this message because it was a portal for the sport to the outside world, whereas the target audience was the BPA Membership. He had therefore referred the matter to this Committee to consider whether the BPA Magazine or the Magazine website might publish the police statement. The Chairman said that a number of Committee Members, including Paul Applegate, had already commented to him outside the meeting that the wording of the police statement, particularly the final paragraph, was infelicitous. Although the passage that gave rise to this concern had been given as a quotation from the officer leading the enquiry, it was not known whether these had been his actual words or whether they had been paraphrased in the statement. Either way, the Committee believed the tenor to be inappropriate and that it would be unlikely to further the progress of the investigation were the statement to be published in its present form.

However, the Committee remained keen to assist the investigation. The Chairman of Council indicated that he would be willing to speak to Humberside Police to convey the Committee's concerns and seek to negotiate a shorter notice, and one without the quotation, for publication in the April issue of *Skydive Magazine*. Ian Midgley proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that the Chairman of Council should be invited to do this, and the Chairman of Council agreed to do it.

**Carried unanimously**

##### **09/04 Communication of requirements to jump**

Elizabeth Stoodley said she had noticed that the criteria set out for people to make a skydive tended to be different in the advertising and promotional material published by different booking agencies. She wondered whether this might indicate that the BPA was not communicating its requirements clearly. Kieran Brady said that the BPA's requirements, as set out in the Operations Manual, were in effect the minimum requirements. It was open to any Club, Centre, booking agency or other party involved to put in place their own more stringent specifications, which meant that they were still operating within the BPA's requirements. The variation in criteria was therefore a reflection of this, rather than of any difficulty in interpreting the provisions set out BPA's Operations Manual. Elizabeth Stoodley thanked Kieran Brady for this clarification.

##### **10/04 Equipment missing from Spain**

John Hitchen reported that a notice had been circulated about the loss, through theft, of 40 sets of parachuting equipment from Spain. Lesley Gale said that if she was supplied with the information, she would arrange for it to be posted on the Magazine website.

**Action: Lesley Gale**

##### **11/04 Dates of future meetings**

Tuesdays at 1400 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 20 April, 15 June, 24 August\*, 19 October and 7 December (after the EGM). \* Subsequently changed to this new date consequent on a change of date of the Council meeting from the original date of 17 August.

The meeting closed at 1620.