

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



Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 7 December 2004 at 1430
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Eddie Jones Paul Applegate Calvin Blacker Kieran Brady David Hickling Elizabeth Stoodley	Committee Chairman
In attendance:	Lesley Gale John Hitchen Martin Shuttleworth	Editor, <i>Skydive</i> Magazine NCSO Secretary-General
Apologies for absence:	Tony Butler Tony Goodman	Technical Officer

Item Minute

40/04 Minutes

Paul Applegate proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 19 October 2004 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

41/04 Matter arising

41.1 Membership questionnaire and canopy handling (minute 37)

Lesley Gale confirmed that she was considering including an article on canopy handling in a future issue of the Magazine. This arose from consideration at the last meeting of questions on canopy handling for the membership survey questionnaire.

42/04 Report on Skydive Magazine

42.1 Editorial report

Lesley Gale tabled her Editorial Report that covered the December 2004 issue and planned content for the February 2005 issue.

The December issue comprised 88 pages and was the largest issue ever. A good yield from advertising had supported three additional pages of editorial content. Discussion followed about the ratio of advertising to editorial content. Lesley Gale explained that in fact there were more editorial pages than ever in the December issue but that BPA Members may perceive there was more advertising since most advertisements are now on double facing pages. Lesley Gale gave a verbal estimate and said she would provide written confirmation to the next meeting on both the current ratio and any trends over time.

Action: Lesley Gale

The DZ map had been updated in the December issue.

The Chairman said that the December Magazine was another excellent issue and he was also pleased with the BPA Calendar that had been distributed with it, free-of-charge to Members. The December Magazine had been on time, on 2 December as per the schedule, and the postal service had been quicker in early December than it had ever been for the mid-December publication date in earlier years.

Lesley Gale reported that the Magazine was running to budget.

The Committee confirmed that it was happy with the rough overview of the planned content of the February 2005 issue of the Magazine. This was, as always, subject to variation nearer the issue date on the basis of the amount and quality of material submitted for each planned feature. The delivery date was 12 February 2005, which was later in the month than the other issues because of the need to include the membership renewal form, which could not be printed until the subscription rates had been agreed by the AGM. Paul Applegate asked how much it would cost to bind in the membership renewal form. In discussion, the Committee reached a consensus that the additional cost could not be justified, and it also took into account Lesley Gale's concern that binding in the renewal form would harm the appearance of the centrefold of the Magazine. David Hickling concluded by saying that he did not believe it would make any practical difference to renewal rates whether the renewal form was bound in the Magazine or included, as was custom and practice, as a loose insert.

42.2 BPA Calendar 2005

The Committee was pleased with the BPA Calendar 2005, and awaited feedback from Members. Last year, the calendar had cost about £4.2K but this year the cost to the BPA would be lower because income from the sale of advertising space would help to offset the cost (last year's calendar, being the first, had carried no advertising). Lesley Gale said that having the previous year's calendar available had made it easier to gain support from advertisers. Income from the sale of advertising space in the calendar was expected to cover half or more of the cost of the calendar, but the final figures would not be available until the next meeting because invoices were still being paid. Lesley Gale confirmed she would present the financial outturn on the calendar to the next meeting.

Action: Lesley Gale

Kieran Brady said that some Members had voiced opinions to him against the policy of including advertising in the calendar. The Chairman said that for the BPA to fund the calendar in full, as it had done in the first year, had been an indulgence; and to spend that sum every year would be unrealistic. Advertisements generated income to help offset the cost of the calendar: and some people took the view that the support of advertisers brought additional respectability to the publication and confirmed it to be at the heart of the skydiving community. Elizabeth Stoodley recognised that there were different views on the merits or otherwise of having advertisements in the calendar but she believed the key issue was to explain to Members the contribution of advertising in reducing the amount of BPA funds needed to produce and distribute the calendar.

42.3 Advertisement for training in New Zealand in the Magazine

The Committee discussed advertisements in the Magazine for skydiving training and qualifications in New Zealand. A copy of a brochure about one New Zealand-based qualification, a Diploma in Commercial Skydiving, was tabled. After discussion it was agreed that the Committee should consider including a disclaimer statement in the Magazine to say that skydiving training and qualifications obtained outside the UK might not necessarily equate to the BPA system of ratings. There was also discussion about whether any such wording should appear near to any advertisement to which it might relate, or elsewhere in the Magazine, such as on the contents page. A further suggestion was for a more general disclaimer might be to say that the Magazine and the BPA did not endorse any product or service advertised. The Chairman asked the office to draft a possible form of words for consideration at the next meeting.

Action: BPA Office / Next meeting

42.4 Magazine website

Lesley Gale said that the most popular part of the magazine website was the one that contained the archive of past articles. She was considering making a suggestion to the next meeting that more articles should be made available on the Magazine website in pdf file format. If this proved

to be successful, the next stage might be to make entire issues of the Magazine available in pdf format. This would not be expensive, because the preparation of pdf files was already an integral part of the production process for the Magazine. The Chairman invited Lesley Gale to set out her proposal, with the appropriate budget figures, for consideration at the next meeting.

Action: Lesley Gale / Next meeting

43/04 Communications budget 2005/6

The Chairman said that the Magazine had its own budget. The Magazine budget for the current year, 2004/5, had been approved at the last meeting (minute 35.2). The Magazine would continue to have its own budget next year, 2005/6. It was, however, necessary to consider other projects that came under this Committee as part of the overall budget for the Association that would be set by the full Council.

Kieran Brady said that it was foreseeable that funding support to the BPA from UK Sport would dry up. If it were to be claimed that the Magazine had made a profit, Members would be rightly concerned because of the Magazine subscription cost within their BPA membership subscription. The reality was that, if advertising income to the Magazine was greater than forecast, the cost of the Magazine to the BPA would be under budget.

Kieran Brady said that the Magazine would need either to have a break-even budget for 2005/6 or to have a contingency budget. A budget for the Starter Magazine and for a BPA Calendar, if it were decided to publish one for 2006, would need to be agreed. Lesley Gale said that the Magazine, Starter Magazine and Calendar (if there was to be one for 2006) all came in her view within the definition of routine expenditure and in fact had already been included in the Association's forecast running costs for 2005/6 prepared by Jon Gretton, BPA Financial Administrator, for the Council. These projects had therefore already been accounted for and should not have to bid for a share of the Association's surplus under the new budgeting arrangements being put in place by the Council. Lesley Gale said she had discussed this with Jon Gretton, who had confirmed the position as above.

44/04 'Freedom of the Skies' brochure

The BPA's *Freedom of the Skies* brochure had been produced in 1998 and reprinted once. Existing stocks were forecast to run out in mid to late 2005. Lesley Gale said that, because of the move to digital print, the printers no longer retained the film for this brochure and in any case could not work now from film. Because of this, it would be cheaper to start again rather than to consider a reprint. In starting again, the first question to ask was whether the brochure was still needed, and if so, whether its format and content was still appropriate?

Kieran Brady said that the brochure continued to provide a valuable service to a number of Drop Zones, including some of the smaller ones that did not print their own publicity.

Lesley Gale reminded the Committee that only minor variations had been made for the earlier reprint, and some of the content was now dated. David Hickling mentioned the Royal Mail postal size regulations as a factor to be borne in mind in thinking about the format of any new brochure. The Chairman asked Lesley Gale kindly to prepare some suggestions, with outline costs, for consideration at the next meeting.

Action: Lesley Gale / Next meeting

In the meantime, the Chairman asked the office to provide information on how many copies of the brochure (which was sold on request to Drop Zones and Associated Organisations) had been used, and which DZs etc had purchased them, over the last three years. Individual copies were also sent from the BPA Office in response to enquiries received from the public, although the number had reduced over the last few years as more people had gone online to get information from the BPA website.

Action: BPA Office

45/04 Communications Action Plan targets for 2004/5

45.1 Publish a BPA skydiving calendar 2005

Achieved, on budget - probably considerably better than budget (final figures were not yet available) - and on time.

Achieved

45.2 Conduct a membership survey by questionnaire

The Chairman reported that he was currently drafting the BPA membership survey questionnaire 2005 and thanked all who had suggested questions.

Ongoing

46/04 Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be of the 2005 Communications Committee, at a date to be arranged at the AGM on the same day as the Council meeting, with the Communications Committee meeting starting at 1430.

The Chairman thanked all Members of the Committee for their contributions during the year, and wished David Hickling and Calvin Blacker well for the future as they had decided to stand down from the BPA Council at the AGM.

The meeting closed at 1625.