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Communications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 19 April 2005 at 1430
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Eddie Jones Paul Applegate Adrian Bond Kieran Brady Ralph Fielding John Page Elizabeth Stoodley	Committee Chairman
In attendance:	Tony Butler Lesley Gale John Hitchen Lucie Fenton Sue Moran Martin Shuttleworth	Technical Officer Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i> NCSO <i>Skydive Magazine</i> Administration Secretary Secretary-General
Apology for absence:	Tony Goodman	

Item Minute

08/05 Minutes
Ralph Fielding proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on Tuesday 15 February 2005 should be approved as a correct record.

Approved

09/05 Matters arising

9.1 Disclaimer the Magazine (minute 2.3)

Lesley Gale confirmed that the agreed disclaimer would go in the Magazine about the need to check with a CCI the UK equivalence of training and qualifications obtained outside the UK. The disclaimer would go on the same page as the notes about helmets and altimeters, near the front of the Magazine.

Action completed

9.2 Starter Magazine update (minute 3.3)

Lesley Gale reported on a disparity between Warners' records, which showed there to be only 5000 copies of the *Skydive Starter Magazine* left in stock, and the BPA office records, which suggested that 15,000 copies remained. Assuming the 'missing' 10,000 copies could be traced by Warners, this would give a sufficient stock to allow the update to be printed at this time next year. However, if the 5,000 stock were correct - which intuitively did not appear to be likely - the update would need to be printed between the June and August magazines this year.

In discussion, the view of the Committee was that the Starter Magazine was still very relevant and that a simple reprint may be all that was needed. Lesley Gale reminded the Committee of different views expressed from within the Membership on whether or not paid advertising should

be taken in the Starter Magazine. Kieran Brady said that a glance at the Starter Magazine budget showed there to be an open and shut case for taking advertising for this magazine, not least because the magazine was issued free of charge and had no other significant source of income. The Chairman said that the question should be re-visited in December 2005, at the start of planning for the reprint or update.

Action: Bring forward in December 2005

9.3 Online subscriptions update (minute 4.4)

This had been circulated.

Action completed

10/05 Report on Skydive Magazine

10.1 Editorial report

Lesley Gale tabled her editorial report. The Chairman invited comment on the April issue. Elizabeth Stoodley reported that some Members she had spoken to had considered there to have been too much Club News, but others had liked it. This probably suggested that the amount was about right. The Chairman said that a view he had often heard was that there was too much about everybody else's Club! Elizabeth Stoodley had also had the view expressed to her that the obituaries in the Magazine were not always appropriate and that sometimes jumpers did not know, or occasionally even know of, the deceased. Kieran Brady said that obituaries in the Magazine were, in his experience, usually greatly appreciated by those who had known the deceased. Eddie Jones said that anyone who stayed in the sport for 5 or 10 years would, almost inevitably, come across an obituary for someone they knew. Lesley Gale said that if the BPA Magazine did not run these obituaries, who would? Kieran Brady believed that, as a generalisation, it was easier for younger Members to criticise the obituaries but Members who had been around longer took a more appreciative view. The longer obituaries often documented important contributions to the sport, which were interesting in their own right.

The Chairman said that the general consensus was that the April Magazine had been another good issue with a wide variety of articles and features. Kieran Brady said he was not sure why the Young Eagles (under 16s swimming-pool based simulation of skydiving) had been featured.

10.2 Magazine website

Lesley Gale reported that, as per the Action Plan, pdf files of the February and April 2005 issues were now available on the Magazine website. The pdfs were available in low resolution for speed of downloading, and high resolution for high quality print. Feedback from the Membership was awaited. Although there was no data on how often files were being downloaded from the Magazine website, membership survey questionnaire returns analysed to date suggested that, so far at least, about half the Membership used the Magazine website, and half did not. Eddie Jones urged caution in seeking to interpret the results of the questionnaire when only about 700 had been analysed to date: the picture could easily change as more returns were analysed.

Lesley Gale also referred to web hosting issues that had been called to her attention by Centrepages, the web consultancy company used for both the Magazine website and the BPA website. Nick Ward of Centrepages was due to attend the meeting of the Development Committee later this afternoon to set out the position, as it affected the BPA website more.

11/05 'Freedom of the Skies' brochure

Lesley Gale tabled a proof of the completely updated *Freedom of the Skies* brochure, which was now 4pp A4. Copies had been circulated to the Committee in advance, and their comments incorporated (except a suggestion by Adrian Bond for a change in the name of the brochure, which might be difficult because it was so well-known by its existing name: Adrian Bond confirmed that he was happy with this.) An idea from the DZ Operators' Forum meeting held on 8 March, for a smaller A4 gatefold leaflet, was discussed. However, it was believed that most DZs that used the brochure were broadly happy with the present A4 size, because they could put their own publicity inside to make a neat package.

After careful consideration of costing options for different weights of paper and print runs that Lesley Gale had obtained from the printer, Ralph Fielding proposed, and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion to print 45,000 copies of the new *Freedom of the Skies* brochure on 175 gsm paper,

and to make a unit cost of 12p for resale to those Affiliated DZs that wished to purchase copies in bulk.

Carried unanimously

12/05 Communications Action Plan targets for 2004/5

12.1 Publish a BPA skydiving calendar 2005

Achieved

12.2 Conduct a membership survey by questionnaire

Sue Moran at the BPA Office was currently analysing the completed questionnaire returns. She had circulated some preliminary findings, but the Chairman repeated his warning that this was based only on the sample analysed to date. Questionnaires were still being returned, and the final results should not be assumed from the sample to date.

In this questionnaire, unlike the one in 2002, there had been a comments box. This allowed Members to write anything they wished. Although not as easy to analyse as multiple-choice answers, the comments gave the opportunity for a different type of feedback, which had already proved to be valuable.

The Chairman tabled a document he had prepared of the comments from comments boxes in questionnaires analysed to date. Some comments had highlighted that Members of RAPA and CCSPC Cyprus had not received their Membership renewal forms and BPA calendars. Lesley Gale said that the decision had been taken some time ago to leave calendars out of overseas mailings of the Magazine, but it had been an oversight that BFPO addresses had been treated as an overseas and not a UK mailing. This could now be rectified. There remained the issue of what to do about mailings to RAPA and CCSPC members who did not have a BFPO address – this might be addressed by sending the calendars in bulk to the Centres.

Action: Lesley Gale

The Chairman highlighted a few of the comments, which he said should be answered through the minutes. This was because the comments had been submitted anonymously (except for the few comments where the writer had chosen to sign his or her name in the comments box). Anonymity was guaranteed because the completed questionnaires were removed from the renewal forms on arrival in the office, and processed entirely separately by different BPA staff.

One question that had been made in the comments box was 'How many record-breaking attempts have been funded by the BPA?'. The answer was one, the *Brit 100*, which the BPA funded to the tune of about £5K. The *Brit Chicks 2002* record had not been funded directly by the BPA, although the BPA had supported training with £2K as part of its Skills Coaching Roadshow programme.

The Chairman asked Committee Members to take away the list of comments and identify any further issues raised that would benefit from an answer through the minutes. This might include, for example, comments about why an online renewal facility for Membership renewal was not available (Eddie Jones noted that the online subscription facility on the Magazine website was the BPA's first toe-in-the-water of e-commerce, and it appeared to be working well). Comments or questions requiring an answer would then be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: All Committee Members, and to go on the next agenda

The Chairman said that he greatly appreciated the many encouraging and positive comments that Members had put in the comments box. He said he did not expect the analysis of returned questionnaires to be completed until the end of the summer.

Achieved

13/05 Dates of future meetings in 2005

Tuesdays at 1430 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 14 June, 16 August, 11 October and 6 December.

The meeting closed at 1635.