

# British Parachute Association

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## The Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on  
**Tuesday 18 June 2002 at 1830**  
at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester

<b>Present:</b>	Chris Allen	-	Chairman
	Paul Applegate		
	Kieran Brady	-	Communications Chairman
	David Hickling		
	Eddie Jones		
	Ian Marshall		
	Ian Midgley	-	Development Chairman
	John Smyth	-	Vice Chairman/ Competitions Chairman
	Craig Poxon		
	Jim White		(from part-way through item 31)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	-	Treasurer
	John Hitchen	-	NCSO / STC Chairman
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	National Administrator
	Lucie Wood		Development Officer
	a man, a woman, a CCI )		item 31 only
	and two observers )		

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## Item Minute

### 31/02 Admission of a Member to a CSBI course

The Chairman welcomed those present and said that he intended to take this item first. It followed directly from a decision of the Council at its meeting on Tuesday 19 February 2002 (Minute 19: Misconduct, refers). Three people (here referred to as 'the parties') and two observers of theirs, were in attendance specifically for the item. Because of its sensitive nature, the three parties will be referred to in these minutes as (i) a man, (ii) a woman and (iii) a CCI. Both the man and the woman are BPA Members at the CCI's Centre.

A confidential 33-page dossier of correspondence and witness statements was tabled, together with a letter that the Chairman had today received from one of the witnesses. The dossier had been posted to the parties in advance, and they had tonight been provided with a copy of that letter. The Chairman asked Council Members to read the dossier and approximately 15 minutes' of reading time was allowed for this purpose.

The Chairman summarised the position by reference to minute 19 and highlighted extracts from the dossier. The man had been convicted in court and fined for assault occasioning actual bodily harm and aggravated assault on the woman at a hotel after a Christmas Dinner Dance organised by the Centre in December 2000. This matter was now closed. However, reference had been made in one of the witness statements (by witness A) to the man's "habit of pinching females on their bottoms". The man had, some months later, been recommended

by his CCI for admission to a CSBI course. On learning of this, the woman who had been the victim of the assault had written to the BPA to say that if the man were to become an instructor she "feared not only for myself but the safety of future students". However, in the letter from witness A tabled tonight, the witness had stated that "I do not wish anything I recorded in my statement to be held against [the man] in his bid to become an instructor. ... Some of what I said about bottom pinching was exaggerated...". The Council at its meeting on 19 February (minute 19) had resolved that the man would not be accepted on an instructor course; but that it would be open for the CCI, if they wished to pursue their recommendation, to attend a meeting of the Council to state their case. The Chairman now invited the CCI to do this.

The CCI stated that they had known the man for approximately five years and that he was of good character. The assault had been an isolated incident, after he had taken drink, which he now deeply regretted and wished to put behind him. The CCI had a petition in support of the man being admitted to a CSBI course, which the CCI said had been signed by every instructor at the Centre, together with pilots and others. The CCI said there was total opposition at the Centre to the man being barred from an instructor course. The CCI believed that, should the man become an instructor, there were no grounds to fear for the wellbeing of female students under his instruction. The CCI assured the Council that, in the improbable event that there should in future be harassment of any woman by the man, he would immediately be barred from the Centre.

The Chairman invited the man to speak. He refuted any allegations of misconduct at the Centre and said that in his dealings with others he was courteous and respectful. He looked forward to approaching the duties of an instructor in the same professional manner, and would be a credit both to his Centre and the BPA.

The Chairman then invited the woman to speak. She said that the man had not been courteous and respectful when he had assaulted her. She said that he had groped her on two different social occasions, so the groping had not been an isolated incident. She noted that, in a letter in the dossier, the CCI had accused her of a "vindictive attempt to extract revenge on [the man]". The woman totally refuted this.

Kieran Brady then asked the man and the woman whether they would recognise and abide by the decision of the Council in this matter. They both indicated that they would. The Chairman then asked the parties to adjourn to another room, and the next part of the meeting was held in camera.

As a result of the in camera discussions, David Hickling proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, the following motion. The Council respects and accepts the judgment of the CCI in the matter of recommending that the man should be admitted to a CSBI course. Bearing in mind that the incident in which he was involved was now 18 months ago, and there have been no further reported incidents, he should therefore be offered a place on the next available CSBI course.

**Carried unanimously**

The Chairman then invited the parties to re-join the meeting and informed them of Council's decision. The CCI and the man thanked the Council. The man assured the Council that it would not regret its decision. Kieran Brady urged all parties to try to put the incident behind them. The parties then left the meeting.

### **32/02 Minutes**

Paul Applegate proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the previously circulated minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 23 April 2002, should be accepted as a true record. This carried unanimously.

**Approved**

## **33/02 Matters arising**

### **33.1 BPA representative to Sport England Northern Region (minute 23.2)**

The Office had contacted Chris Francis, who had kindly agreed to be the BPA's representative to Sport England's Northern Region.

### **33.2 BPA Action Plan: 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 (minute 23.3)**

The Chairman reported that UK Sport had written to say they would provide grant-aid [from Exchequer funding] to the BPA of £40K for the Action Plan year from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 inclusive. UK Sport had specified that £20K of this should be spent on the Safety and Training targets set out in the Action Plan; and the remaining £20K on the Competitions targets. The Chairman congratulated the BPA Council and its Subcommittees on their hard work in devising and developing the targets in the Action Plan, and the Office for documenting them as a bid to UK Sport.

## **34/02 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees**

The minutes of each of the following meetings had been circulated in advance.

### **34.1 Development Committee meeting on 23 April 2002**

Kieran Brady proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 23 April 2002 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

**Ratified**

### **34.2 Communications Committee meeting on 23 April 2002**

Kieran Brady proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 23 April 2002 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

**Ratified**

### **34.3 Competitions Committee meeting on 29 May 2002**

There was one main item arising from the above minutes for consideration by the Council, as follows.

#### **34.3.1 Application for re-instatement by a former judge**

A letter dated 27 May from a former BPA judge, had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The former judge had had their Associate Membership (and judges' ratings) withdrawn on 11 July 2001 following their arrest at a club/airfield car park and subsequent conviction and custodial sentence for the possession of a class A controlled drug with the intent to supply. The withdrawal of Membership had been in accordance with the requirements of the BPA Operations Manual, Section 11, Paragraph 2, Subparagraph 4.

In the letter to the Council of 27 May 2002, the former judge stated that they had now been punished and rehabilitated and offered sincere apologies for the position in which they had put the BPA. The former judge now sought re-instatement of their BPA Membership, and judge's ratings. John Smyth said that the letter, although addressed to the full Council, had been given preliminary consideration by the Competitions Committee, and he believed that the former judge had the support of some other judges in making the application for re-instatement.

There followed considerable discussion, in which the following issues were raised:

- Protection of the membership
- Breach of trust
- Exclusion of illegal substances from the sport
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Eddie Jones then proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion that (i) the former judge's application for re-instatement of their BPA Membership and BPA judges' ratings be declined;

and (ii) the Council resolved not to consider any further application from this former judge for a period of ten years starting from the date of the conviction.

**Carried unanimously**

#### **34.3 2. Minutes**

John Smyth proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 29 May should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

**Ratified**

#### **34.4 Minutes of the STC meeting on Thursday 6 June 2002**

John Hitchen (Chairman, STC), said it was his sad duty to inform the Council of a fatal accident at Hinton in which Philip Cheasley, a parachutist, had collided with a glider. Both he and the glider pilot had unfortunately been killed. Investigations were underway.

John Hitchen then called attention to a variation to the minutes of the STC meeting held on 6 June 2002. This concerned minute 8 (c) ii, paragraph 2, which had been corrected to read as follows: *'The Committee had also discussed and accepted a request from Mike Rust that the new Vector container be accepted for Student parachuting once it had been evaluated by Kim Newton and an Advanced Instructor who is AFF rated. The equipment would only be used by the North London Parachute Centre.'*

With the above variation, David Hicking proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of STC on Thursday 6 June 2002 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

**Ratified**

### **35/02 Reports on meetings held earlier today**

#### **35.1 Communications Committee**

Kieran Brady reported that the usual meeting of the Communications Committee had not taken place today because Lesley Gale had been on holiday. One urgent item had, however, been considered. The Committee had agreed to pay an outstanding invoice for the Magazine website, which Bristol Web Factory had submitted late. The invoice had been the subject of some negotiation, and Lesley Gale had secured a 10% reduction on the original sum of the invoice.

#### **35.2 Development Committee**

Ian Midgley reported on two items that his Committee had considered:

##### **35.2.1 The possibility of establishing a BPA Members' Benevolent Fund**

The Development Committee planned to consider the possible establishment of a BPA Members' Benevolent Fund. The aim of any such fund would be to help to alleviate cases of hardship among BPA Members. Contributions to the Fund might be sought on the annual Membership Renewal Form. Applications for payments from the Fund, to those suffering hardship, could be considered by the Council in accordance with guidelines that would be published. Kieran Brady had kindly offered to consider the terms of reference that might apply to any such fund. The Chairman said that a feasibility study on the possible establishment of a BPA Members' Benevolent Fund would make an appropriate target for the Development Committee's Action Plan Matrix for 2003. He asked that, whatever preliminary work was done before then, this item should be included as a target in next year's Action Plan.

**Action: Development Committee**

##### **35.2.2 Article for the Magazine on the economics of the BPA**

Arising from a discussion about the results of the Membership Survey 2002 (minute 36 refers), Ian Midgley said that the Development Committee had decided that it would be useful to prepare an article for publication in the Mag about how the BPA's income was generated,

and how funds were spent. The rationale for this was that the Committee was a not entirely convinced that the average Member really understood the economics of the BPA (see minute 36 below). The article would be drafted by Kieran Brady in consultation with Ian Midgley, and others would be invited to make an input to ensure that it put forward a fair and balanced view across all areas of the Association's activities.

**Action: Development Committee**

**36/02 Membership survey 2002**

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman thanked Lucie Wood for her many hours of painstaking work in analysing the 1,256 completed and returned Membership Questionnaires. The questionnaire had been inserted with the Renewal Form to the February 2002 issue of the Mag.

The Chairman said that the analysis of the results (which had been circulated) had become available shortly before the press deadline for the June issue of the Mag. He had therefore decided that the results should be published without any commentary or interpretation. This was in order to give the Council the opportunity to discuss the results first.

Kieran Brady said that, whilst it was pleasing to note that the results of the survey had indicated that the majority of respondents appeared to be generally content with the policies and services of the BPA, he suspected that many Members did not fully understand the economics of where the BPA's funds came from, and how they were spent. For example, on competitions funding, he believed that many members were under the misapprehension that this money came from UK Sport, whereas in fact in recent years, the majority of competitions funding had come from the BPA's own reserves. Similarly, although the membership appeared to support the development of the BPA website and other forms of electronic communication, the Council had never set aside a budget specifically for this - again, it had meant dipping into reserves. From a business point of view, this propensity to dip into reserves was not in his opinion a practice to be encouraged. The Development Committee's decision to draft an article for the Mag to explain the BPA's principal sources of income and heads of expenditure would aim better to inform the membership of the reality of the economics of the BPA (notwithstanding that this information was routinely circulated in the Annual Accounts - however, the article would aim to highlight key features for non financial specialists in a way that might not be entirely appropriate in statutory accounts).

John Smyth said he was delighted that the majority of respondents had supported the current level of competitions funding, despite only 27% themselves being competitors. He said that the mission of the Competitions Committee was to encourage more of the Association's current estimated 72% of non-competitors to take part in competitions. Jim White said he was delighted to see the level of support for the BPA's Skills Coaching Roadshows for juniors and intermediates, which were clearly a success.

The response rate to the questionnaire had been approximately 25%; that is, one in four questionnaires had been completed and returned. This was generally believed to be a good response rate for a questionnaire of this nature. However, Eddie Jones said he would like to see it still higher, and suggested that the next questionnaire might be printed integral to the Renewal Form so that the Renewal Form could not be returned without the questionnaire. This idea was left on the table for consideration at the appropriate time. At the very least, Eddie Jones suggested that the 'check box' on the last page of the Renewal Form should be augmented to include a reminder to return the completed questionnaire. The idea of looking at the relative costs of replacing the hard copy questionnaire by an electronic version on the website was also mentioned as an idea for next time. Taking Kieran Brady's point about where the BPA's money comes from, and how it is spent, there was the suggestion to include pie charts to illustrate this in the next questionnaire, in a similar way to those that had been used in the annual accounts in the past.

Kieran Brady thought that the terms in which questions were phrased might have influenced the results. For instance, there was perhaps a tendency to agree with the premise of

questions on funding, unless what they were suggesting was obviously unreasonable. He also posed the “devil’s advocate” question of whether anything really useful had been revealed in exchange for the time and effort taken by the survey, both for Members to fill it in and for the BPA to analyse it.

The Chairman invited the Subcommittees to consider the parts of the survey that related to their own areas of operation over their coming meetings. He thanked Kieran Brady for his work in compiling the questions, and again thanked Lucie Wood for analysing the responses.

### **37/02 Club Reps**

Jim White (Joint Northern Rep) had visited NWPC, Cark, on 11/12 May, the same weekend as a FS Coaching Roadshow, as he also happened to be the Discipline Rep for FS. He had been able to answer a number of questions from the junior and intermediate teams he had met during his visit. The DZ had expressed an interest in running a New Age Roadshow, and he had forwarded this request to Paul Applegate and Nigel Holland (the New Age Discipline Rep and his Assistant).

On Saturday 15 June, Jim White had visited Peterlee Parachute Centre. He said it had been quiet day as there had been a England football match in the World Cup on television. The next day, he had visited British Skysports, Bridlington. The only point Bridlington had raised was that, whilst they were impressed with the Mag overall, they believed their Club was not getting the same coverage as some of the larger Clubs and Centres. They had said that their Club Rep sent a lot of articles and photographs to the Mag but the Club appeared to be restricted to only a small section in ‘Club News’. Kieran Brady said he believed that the Mag always endeavoured to treat all Clubs and Centres equitably, but obviously those hosting big events would normally expect to justify the most coverage. Any Club or Centre that had provided the Mag with material but felt it was not getting its fair share of exposure was welcome to contact the Communications Committee. However, Kieran Brady was aware that material was often trimmed for entirely justifiable editorial reasons. Jim White had passed Bridlington’s comments to Lesley Gale and trusted that this would lead to direct and constructive liaison between those most closely involved.

The Chairman thanked Jim White for his Club Reps’ visits, and for his hard work in organising and attending the FS Coaching Roadshows. The Chairman said he was pleased to have seen so many e-mails of appreciation about the Roadshows from junior and intermediate FS jumpers.

### **38/02 Report on the Royal Aero Club**

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to RAeC) reported that the Royal Aero Club was due to hold a Council meeting next week. The RAeC’s invoice to the BPA for the BPA’s annual subscription for the current year had yet to be received.

### **39/02 Applications for Re-Affiliation**

Copies of the three applications (38.1 to 38.3 inclusive) had been circulated in advance.

#### **39.1 Paragon Skydiving Club - change to new CCI Rob Noble-Nesbitt**

Kieran Brady proposed, and Ian Midgley seconded, a motion that the Re-Affiliation of Paragon Skydiving Club, with Rob Noble-Nesbitt as the new CCI, should be approved.

**Carried unanimously**

#### **39.2 RAPA - change to new CCI Mark Bayada**

Jim White proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the Re-Affiliation of RAPA, with Mark Bayada as the new CCI, should be approved.

**Carried unanimously**

### **39.3 Skydive Wales - change of name to Skydive Southwest**

This application by Carl Williams was for a change in name of his Centre from Skydive Wales to Skydive Southwest. It was consequent on the Centre's occasional operation at Silver Stars' DZ at South Cerney in Gloucestershire when Silver Stars were not themselves operating there. Ian Midgley proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the Re-Affiliation of Skydive Southwest should be approved on this basis.

**Carried unanimously**

### **39.4 Stirling Parachute Club: clarification of status**

In response to a question from Jim White, Kieran Brady explained that Skydive Strathallan had taken over the telephone number and office of the former Stirling Parachute Club, which was no longer operating, in order to take bookings for Strathallan. This had proved to be a successful venture, and consequently an advertisement for Stirling had recently been re-run in the local edition of the Yellow Pages.

## **40/02 Applications for Association**

Copies of the following applications had been circulated in advance.

### **40.1 Terminal Velocity (Director: Martin Harris)**

Ian Midgley proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the application for Association to the BPA by Terminal Velocity should be approved.

**Carried unanimously**

### **40.2 Perris Valley Skydiving, CA, USA**

Ian Midgley proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the application for Association to the BPA by Perris Valley Skydiving, California, USA, should be approved, subject to receipt of a letter from APA Netheravon to confirm that they would accept Perris Valley's students.

**Carried unanimously**

## **41/02 Expenses and staff salary review**

The staff present left the meeting for this item to be held in camera.

Ian Midgley (Staff Liaison Officer) proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that, with effect from the BPA's new financial year on 1 July 2002, expenses should be increased across the board by 3%, this being the current level of inflation.

**Carried unanimously**

Ian Midgley then proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the rates of pay for the BPA staff, having been the subject of a comparability exercise, be brought into line with the local market rates, taking into account the inflation-only rises that had been awarded over the last few years. This had led to the current BPA rates of pay lagging behind local market rates. To bring them to par meant an across the board increase of 10% for all staff, with effect from 1 July 2002.

**Carried unanimously**

Ian Midgley then informed the Council that he planned to take a look at the BPA's system of staff appraisal. The staff were then invited to re-join the meeting, whereupon the Council's decisions as set out in this minute was conveyed to them. Tony Butler thanked the Council on behalf of the staff.

## **42/02 Dates of future meetings in 2002**

Tuesdays at 1830 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 20 August, 22 October, 10 December (EGM & Council). Following meetings, for those involved, of the Communications Committee at 1400 and the Development Committee at 1600 at the same venue and on the same days.

The meeting closed at 2130

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