

British Parachute Association

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The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 18 February 2003 at 1830
at the BPA Office, Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Chris Allen	Chairman
	Paul Applegate	
	Calvin Blacker	
	Kieran Brady	Development Chairman
	Ralph Fielding	
	Billy Gollan	
	David Hickling	
	Eddie Jones	Communications Chairman
	John Smyth	Vice Chairman/Competitions Chairman
	Jim White	
In attendance:	Tony Butler	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	Treasurer
	John Hitchen	NCSO
	Martin Shuttleworth	Secretary-General
Apologies for absence:	Natasha Higman	(for item 14)
	Nigel Holland	
	Ian Midgley	
	Ian Marshall	

Item Minute

06/03 Late arrival

The Chairman reported that Nigel Holland and Ian Marshall had telephoned to say they were en route to the meeting, but had been delayed by heavy traffic congestion caused by an accident near the M25/M1 junction. (*Note: In the event, they arrived just after the meeting had ended.*)

07/03 Minutes

The Council had before it four sets of minutes for approval.

7.1 EGM - Tuesday 3 December 2002

With the addition of the names of John Smyth and Jim White to the list of those present, David Hickling proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on Tuesday 3 December 2002 be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

7.2 Council meeting - Tuesday 3 December 2002

Kieran Brady proposed, and John Smyth seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Tuesday 3 December 2002 be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

7.3 AGM - Saturday 18 January 2003

Paul Applegate proposed, and Jim White seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Association's thirty-sixth Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 18 January 2003 be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

7.4 Inaugural Council meeting 2003 - Saturday 18 January 2003

With the name Calvin Blacker in place of the name Ian Marshall as the proposer to co-opt BCPA (on page 3 of the minutes), David Hickling proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Inaugural Council meeting 2003 should be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

08/03 Matters arising from the last ordinary Council meeting on 2 December 2002

8.1 Fliteline - page 2, minute 68

The Chairman reported that, as agreed, he had written to the Proprietor of Fliteline. The letter had been copied to Members of Council for information.

8.2 Competitions - World Cup 2002 entry fees - page 4, minute 69.4.1

In reply to a question from the Chairman, John Smyth confirmed that the entry fees for UK delegates to the World Cup 2002, which had been paid on their behalf by the BPA, were currently being reclaimed from individual members of the delegation, as this had been a self-funded event. This included 50% of the entry fee for 4-eay FS team *Quiksilva*, which had withdrawn before the meet, the other 50% of this team's entry fee having already been refunded by the organisers of the meet.

09/03 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees

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

9.1 Communications Committee meeting on 3 December 2002

The Chairman apologised that he had yet to liaise with Eddie Jones and Lesley Gale over the contract for Editorial Services for the current year. He would do so soon.

Kieran Brady proposed, and David Hickling seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 3 December 2002 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

9.2 Development Committee meeting on 3 December 2002

Kieran Brady proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 3 December 2002 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

9.3 Minutes of the STC meeting on Thursday 30 January 2003

Tony Butler had chaired this meeting in the absence of John Hitchen, who at the time had been UK Delegate at the annual IPC Plenary meeting taking place in Brazil. There were no questions on the minutes. Paul Applegate therefore proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that the minutes of the STC meeting held on 30 January 2003 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

9.4 Minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 11 February 2003

The following issues were discussed.

9.4.1 Canopy piloting competition

The Chairman expressed concern over the safety and liability issues connected with the discipline now officially termed 'Canopy Piloting' by IPC (and previously referred to within the BPA as 'Swoop Canopies'). John Smyth (Competitions Chairman) assured the Council that the Competitions Committee was fully cognisant of these issues, and was in close liaison with STC in drawing up a draft set of rules for a trial Regional competition in the UK.

9.4.2 WPC Mondial 2003 Gap, France: 7-14 September 2003

John Smyth apologised that reference to the appointment of a Head of Delegation had been left out of the minutes in error. The Competitions Committee had discussed the matter, but no decision had been made because the appointment was the prerogative of the Council. The Chairman asked that the Competitions Committee should consider the matter at its next meeting on 25 March, with a view to recommending a name to the next meeting of Council on 15 April; and for John Smyth to outline the nature of the role, particularly for the benefit of new Council members.

The Competitions Committee had carried unanimously a motion that a Delegation Manager would be required, and that John Smyth should be appointed to this role. He had accepted, subject to ratification by the Council (by ratification of the relevant minute). Further, the Competitions Committee had suggested that a funding allocation of up to a maximum of £1.5K should be provided to enable the Delegation Manager to carry out his duties. John Smyth had suggested that this funding should be drawn from the British Team Fund. He outlined to the Council how various initiatives he was pursuing for sponsorship in kind could be expected to reduce the actual expenditure to significantly below the maximum figure.

9.4.3 FAI Controller, Russia and Croatia

John Smyth, on behalf of the Competitions Committee, congratulated John Hitchen on his recent appointment as FAI Controller for IPC parachuting competitions in Russia and Croatia, which would include WPC 2004.

9.4.4 First British Para-ski Team

John Smyth called the Council's attention to the item in the Competitions Committee minutes which noted that Ian Anderson, a BPA Member who ran the Territorial Army 4th Battalion Parachute Display Team, was part of the first-ever British team to compete in a world Para-ski championship. John Smyth would inform Council of the Para-ski competition results in due course.

9.4.5 Ratification of minutes

John Smyth then proposed, and Jim White seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Competitions Committee held on 11 February 2003 be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

10/03 Reports on meetings held earlier today

10.1 Communications Committee

Eddie Jones (Communications Chairman) reported that this afternoon's first Communications Committee meeting of the new session had been devoted to considering and finalising the Committee's Action Plan for 2003/4. The Committee's plan was now ready to put forward to the full Council for ratification (minute 11.2).

10.2 Development Committee

Kieran Brady (Development Chairman) summarised the main business at the Development Committee meeting held this afternoon. A draft letter to Drop Zone Operators, concerning Employers' Liability Insurance, had been approved for issue from the BPA Office. Tim Porter had offered to produce a Freefly Manual - which was an outstanding item on the current year's Action Plan - to the agreed budget and timescale; and the Committee had decided to

ask him to take on this project. The individual portfolios of members of the Committee had been agreed for the year. The Committee had agreed to the purchase of a new photocopier for the BPA Office, the old one now being life-expired. Finally, items had been considered for possible inclusion in the Development Action Plan for 2003/4, and an agreed draft plan had been drawn up which the Committee would have pleasure to recommend to the full Council later in this meeting (minute 11.3).

The Chairman reported that, in actioning a target in the current year's Development Action Plan, John Hitchen had kindly liaised with colleague delegates from other nations at the recent IPC meeting on the BPA's suggestion that skydiving might apply to become recognised as a Paralympic sport. Of twelve responses to a written summary of this idea, eleven nations had indicated they were in favour, with only one (Portugal) against. The Chairman said that the BPA would now carry out further research on the application requirements and procedure, with a view to our delegate putting forward a formal proposal to the next IPC plenary meeting, to be held from 28 January to 1 February 2004.

11/03 Action Plan: 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004

Draft Action Plan matrices, setting out proposed targets with associated budgets, had been circulated ahead of the meeting for safety and training, competitions and administration. Draft matrices for communications and development, resulting from the meetings of these committees held earlier today, were tabled.

The Chairman explained that the consolidated Action Plan, comprising the targets (once agreed) in each area, would be sent to the UK Sports Council (UKSC) during March as a bid for funding. The outcome was normally made known by UKSC during May. The Plan was being compiled on the expectation that, as in previous years, an element of funding would be forthcoming from UKSC. The Chairman also wished to make it clear to the Council, that this was the plan for the year, regardless of the level of funding supplied by UKSC, and that the only reason to re-view the plan would be if no funding at all were made available from UKSC. Even in that eventuality, it would probably still be best to stick to the plan as it was, unless it was deemed that the goals were unattainable in the light of what the BPA could afford to allocate purely from its own internal resources.

The Chairman explained that the tight timetable for collation, sub-editing and printing of the consolidated document for submission to UK Sport meant there would not be time to circulate a final draft of the consolidated document to members of the Council. He asked for the usual discretion that had applied in previous years to edit and link the explanatory wording in such a way as to come over most clearly to UK Sport, in terminology they would most easily understand. Neither the substance of the targets, nor the budgets here allocated, would be altered. Copies of the Action Plan, as submitted to UK sport, would be available at the April Council meeting.

Council then considered the targets in each draft matrix in turn.

11.1 Safety and training targets

11.1.1 Increase the number of tandem instructors from 190 to 210 -Budget £15K

*11.1.2 Develop guidelines for BPA Clubs & Centres on conducting Risk Assessments
Budget £5K*

11.1.3 Train Club & Centre personnel in the conduct of Risk Assessments - Budget £10K

11.1.4 Review and update current canopy handling instruction techniques - Budget £10K

Targets 11.1.1 to 11.1.4 inclusive were proposed by Kieran Brady and seconded by David Hickling.

Carried unanimously

11.2 Communications targets

- 11.2.1 *Produce a BPA Calendar - Budget £5K*
- 11.2.2 *Add a secure e-commerce facility to the Magazine Website for magazine subscriptions - Budget £500*
- 11.2.3 *Update the 'DZ Focus' pages, convert the format, and post on the Magazine BPA websites - Budget £2.5K*
- 11.2.4 *Update the Magazine website with each issue of the Magazine - Budget £750*
- 11.2.5 *Develop an advertisement page on the BPA website to match teams and members wanting to find a place in a team - Budget £500*
- 11.2.6 *Develop, with the assistance of the Competitions Committee, a coaching page on the BPA website to be interactive during the summer months June to September - Budget set up £1K, servicing £200 per month, total £1,800*

Targets 11.2.1 to 11.2.6 inclusive were proposed by Eddie Jones and seconded by Paul Applegate.

Carried unanimously

11.3 Development targets

- 11.3.1 *Produce a "History of the BPA" display for the BPA Office - Budget £3K*
- 11.3.2 *Re-design the homepage of the BPA website - Budget £800*
- 11.3.3 *Add a page of information on travel insurance to the BPA website - Budget £500*

In addition, the Development Committee proposed to set aside a further budget for the year. This was a contingency budget of £10K. It would be made available, at the discretion of the Development Committee and subject of course to ratification by the full Council, to support any FS large formation record attempts that may approach the BPA for sponsorship during the year. A number of such formation record attempts were known to be in prospect: but none, at this early stage, was sufficiently definite for the Development Committee to feel confident in voting a budget allocation to any particular project. Kieran Brady (Development Chairman) repeated the position he had stated last year that ad hoc requests for sponsorship could not reasonably be considered if there were no budget available. It was reasonably foreseeable that one or more such requests might be made to the BPA during the 2003/4 Action Plan period. Therefore, the Development Committee believed it to be appropriate to set aside a contingency budget now. He emphasised that this was strictly a contingency budget: no guarantee was implied as to whether or not any particular application for sponsorship would be successful - that depended on the case made by any application/s received.

After considerable discussion, the Chairman summarised the Council's position in supporting the allocation of a contingency budget of £10K to the Development Committee to sponsor FS large formation record attempts. However, this would not be set out as a formal target in the Action Plan because it was not sufficiently definite for presentation to UK Sport.

Targets 11.3.1 to 11.3.3 inclusive, together with the provision of a contingency budget for the Development Committee of £10K for the possible sponsorship of FS large formation record attempts during the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004, were proposed by Kieran Brady and seconded by David Hickling.

Carried unanimously

11.4 Competitions targets

- 11.4.1 *(a) Further enhance the skills of Junior and Intermediate Athletes by running more Skills Coaching Roadshows in all disciplines; and (b) Increase the number, and improve the skills, of women skydivers in competitions by running at least two Skills Coaching Roadshows exclusively by, and for, women - Budget for (a) and (b) combined £20K*
- 11.4.2 *Make the UK self-sufficient as a Nation in Judges at all levels in all disciplines - Budget £5K*

John Smyth emphasised that the total budget allocation for competitions of £25K was considerably lower than in recent years. As such, it was a prudent budget. He called attention to the special note in the accompanying text, which stated that the 2003/4 competitions budget was lower than usual, so the BPA could save funds to send our National teams to the World Air Games in 2005. Members of the UK Delegation for WPC 2004 would therefore have to expect to be self-funded, unless external sponsorship could be secured. This position was a consequence of IPC's decision to hold world championships every year from 2003-6, instead of every other year, as had previously been the pattern.

After recasting of some of the detailed explanatory wording, targets 11.4.1 and 11.4.2 were proposed by John Smyth and seconded by Kieran Brady.

Carried unanimously

11.5 Administration targets

- 11.5.1 *Upgrade to Broadband Internet and e-mail access at the BPA Office - Budget £3K*
- 11.5.2 *Repair the cracked ceiling and redecorate the Board Room, and refurbish a downstairs toilet, at the BPA Office - Budget £4K*
- 11.5.3 *Explore the applicability of 'Learn Direct' courses to the training and continuing personal development of staff at the BPA Office - Budget £500*
- 11.5.4 *Qualify a member of administrative staff in basic (GCSE) law - Budget £150.*

Targets 11.1.1 to 11.1.4 inclusive were proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Ralph Fielding.

Carried unanimously

12/03 Reports from Club Representatives

There were no reports from Club Representatives.

13/03 Report on Royal Aero Club Activities

John Smyth reported that he had attended, in his capacity as BPA Delegate, a meeting of the Council of the Royal Aero Club held in London on 15 January. At that meeting he had been delighted that RAeC awards had been confirmed for the two Members he had nominated last on behalf of our Council year. They were Ronnie O'Brien, CCI of Peterborough Parachute Centre, Sibson, who had been awarded the RAeC Diploma for his services to sport parachuting; and Debbie Carter, BPA Treasurer for over a decade, for her contribution to running this important area of the Association and therefore the sport. Both were due to receive their awards at a presentation ceremony in London that was due to take place on 3 April, possibly in the House of Lords.

The Chairman asked that our Council's heartiest congratulations, and those of the Association as a whole, should be conveyed to the two recipients, one of whom (Debbie Carter) was here at the meeting tonight.

John Smyth then reported on further intensive work being undertaken by RAeC in response to the new European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which had been established to harmonise the regulation of air sports across Europe. The RAeC was co-ordinating a concerted response, on behalf of all UK airsports, to challenge a raft of proposals for increased pan-

European regulation. These proposals, if implemented, would have a significant negative impact on sport parachuting. John Smyth then placed on record, on behalf of the Association, his most grateful thanks to Tony Butler, BPA Technical Officer, and Tony Knight, BPA Liaison Officer to the CAA, for the tremendous amount of detailed work they had undertaken in considering the proposed regulatory changes for parachuting and in marshalling the often complex technical case against them.

Tony Butler then summarised some of the proposed pan-European regulatory changes, and warned that those mooted to date might prove to be the first of many more in the pipeline for the future. One was to reduce the height of controlled airspace from the present 24,000 feet in the UK to around 9,000 or 9,500 feet. 80% of parachuting took place from above this height, and the effects of bringing controlled airspace down to this height would mean, in effect, that parachute pilots were to all intents and purposes subject to the same regulation as commercial pilots. In short, this would be likely to price a significant amount of parachuting activity out of business. Tony Butler repeated what he had said before, that in his view the work now being carried out by RAeC, and co-ordinated on their behalf by David Roberts, to make concerted UK representation on the future regulation of airports in Europe, was the most valuable project that the RAeC had ever undertaken.

John Smyth reported that RAeC had requested its constituent associations, including the BPA, to pay a 7.94% increase on its membership subscription for 2003, from last year's fee of £4,307 to this year's fee of £4,648. This was against the background of no increase at all last year, and a lower-than-inflation increase the year before. In view of the important work that RAeC was now carrying out, John Smyth hoped that the BPA Council would be amenable to this 'catch-up' in the RAeC's fees. John Hitchen confirmed that the BPA needed to remain in membership of RAeC in order to participate in FAI/IPC competitions, as the FAI would deal officially with only one airports organisation per nation - and in the case of the UK, this was the Royal Aero Club.

John Smyth then proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion to approve expenditure of £4,648 for the 2003 membership fee to the Royal Aero Club.

Carried unanimously

14/03 Proposal from Brit Chicks for a skydivers' benevolent fund

This item had been briefly considered at the meeting on 2 December 2002 (minute 75 refers). The Council had decided to bring it forward for further consideration at this meeting, thereby to allow time to consider and take advice upon the issues it raised. The Chairman reported that Natasha Higman (who had been the co-author, with Lisa James, of the letter sent to the Council about the proposal to establish a skydivers' benevolent fund that had arisen at *Brit Chicks*), had intended to be present tonight but had telephoned to say she had 'flu.

The Chairman then invited discussion of the request in the letter for assistance from the Council in establishing a skydivers' benevolent fund. David Hickling said that a skydivers' benevolent fund was a brilliant idea, but one fraught with danger in the legal and technical detail. Debbie Carter considered that it would be unlikely that any such fund would ever have sufficient resources to be effective. Also, she was concerned that the cost of establishing and maintaining the fund to the demanding and inflexible requirements of trust law would be an unreasonable burden on the Association, were it to become involved, and on the Trustees. Kieran Brady said he had approached the idea with an open mind, and had sought expert advice. The more he had discovered, the more he had realised the abundance of problems and pitfalls, and he entirely supported the views of David Hickling and Debbie Carter. Moreover, Kieran Brady said he understood that the cost of establishing a fund - including the legal tasks of drawing up and putting in place a trust deed - could be as high as £50K.

In summary, the Council fully supported the caring sentiments behind the idea of establishing a skydivers' benevolent fund, but believed the burden of trust law, under which any such scheme would have to operate, to be so great that it would be likely to make the fund costly and cumbersome to establish and to administer in steady state.

Kieran Brady then proposed, and David Hickling seconded, a motion that the Council should write to thank Natasha Higman and Lisa James for putting forward the idea of establishing a skydivers' benevolent fund, which had been fully considered by the Council. With regret, the Council had decided that it was unable to involve the BPA in any such fund for the reasons set out above.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman would write to Natasha Higman and Lisa James to advise them of the Council's position, and ask them kindly to convey it to their colleagues in *Brit Chicks*.

Action: Chairman

15/03 Para Youth proposal

The Chairman invited discussion on the hard copy of a recent e-mail from Rob Ames (tabled) entitled *Para Youth Proposal*. In outline, this involved ground training for young people aged from 5 to 16 years, being under the minimum age for making a parachute descent.

The Council was naturally keen to encourage young people who wish to take up skydiving when they are of an appropriate age to do so. However, John Smyth pointed out that any involvement by the BPA with the kind of activity proposed, for persons of the stated age group, would bring with it a raft of issues for the Association. These would include various safety, insurance and child protection measures, tailored to the age of the participants, none of which we have in place at present. John Smyth cautioned the Council that this would be likely to create a considerable burden of time and resources for the Association, both in establishing any new system and in maintaining it. As a Sports National Governing Body, as soon as the BPA became involved, simply by lending its name (or, as Rob Ames had subsequently requested, by extending its third party public liability insurance to cover the proposed *Para Youth* activities) significant obligations would attach to the BPA. These would call on the Association's limited resources that John Smyth believed would be better deployed in supporting the Action Plan targets that the Council had unanimously agreed earlier in this meeting.

The request for the BPA to become involved in the *Para Youth* project failed to find a proposer. The Chairman said he would write to Rob Ames to thank him for making the suggestion, and to advise him of the Council's position as summarised above.

Action: Chairman

16/03 Re-affiliation of Skydive St Andrews

The Council had before it Form 135, Application for Re-affiliation, from Skydive St Andrews. The form had been submitted because of a change of Directors. Bryan Dyas remained as a Director; Graham Harris had resigned as a Director; and Alan Wilkinson and Sandy Barnett were new Directors. There being no questions from members of the Council or the staff, Kieran Brady proposed, and Jim White seconded, a motion that Skydive St-Andrews' application for Re-affiliation to the BPA should be accepted.

Carried unanimously

17/03 Vice President, European Parachuting Union

The Chairman, on behalf of the entire Council, congratulated Tony Butler, BPA Technical Officer, on his recent election as Vice President of the European Parachuting Union. As already discussed (minute 13) there was a raft of newly proposed pan-European regulation that, if implemented, would have a highly detrimental affect on skydiving in the UK. This meant that the significance of a pan-European body to lobby to protect sport parachuting against the adverse affects of the proposed new regulations had increased enormously.

18/03 Dates of future meetings

Tuesdays at 1830 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester (following meetings of the Communications and Development Committees, for those involved, during the afternoon): 15 April, 17 June, 19 August, 21 October, 2 December (after the EGM).

The meeting closed at 1938.

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