

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



The Council

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 19 April 2005 at 1835

at the BPA Office, Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Chris Allen	Chairman
	Paul Applegate	
	Adrian Bond	
	Kieran Brady	Development Chairman
	Ralph Fielding	
	Eddie Jones	Communications Chairman
	Ian Marshall	
	John Page	
	Andy Scott	(from item 22.2)
	John Smyth	Vice Chairman/Competitions Chairman
	Elizabeth Stoodley	
	Jim White	
In attendance:	Tony Butler	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	Treasurer (from item 21.2)
	Bob Card	Vice President
	Lesley Gale	Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i>
	Lucie Fenton	<i>Skydive Magazine</i>
	David Hickling	Insurance Committee Chairman (to item 26)
	John Hitchen	NCSO
	Tony Knight	Liaison Officer with CAA (to item 27)
	Martin Shuttleworth	Secretary-General
Observers:	Caterina Augusta	
	Adam Jones	
	Bruce Johnson	
	Neil Lakin	
	Stuart Livett	
	Stuart Meacock	
	Will Major	
	Paul Moore	
	Dave Openshaw	
	Dirk Pecuch	
	Brian Poole	
	Ludwig Schmude	
Apologies for absence:	Tony Goodman	
	Nigel Holland	

Item Minute

19/05 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all those at the meeting, including Vice President Bob Card.

20/05 Minutes

Paul Applegate proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2005 be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

21/05 Matters arising

21.1 Trophy for outstanding achievement in the sport (minute 7.2)

The Chairman reported that he had now spoken with Jim Crocker, who had most kindly agreed to sponsor a trophy. The Chairman actioned the Office to research and find an appropriate trophy and an acceptable name for it.

Action: BPA Office

21.2 Royal Aero Club and Anti-Doping (minute 7.5)

The Chairman reported that he had been misled into believing that the Royal Aero Club (RAeC) had sent a letter to UK Sport questioning the relevance of anti-doping to airports. In fact, all that had existed was a draft letter from RAeC to FAI, which RAeC planned to copy to UK Sport. Having now seen the draft letter, the Chairman had been concerned to find some of its factual content had been inaccurate. He had therefore demanded of the RAeC Chairman that the BPA should be named as dissenting from this letter. The Chairman asked John Smyth, in his capacity as BPA Delegate to RAeC, kindly to ensure this was done.

Action: John Smyth, BPA Delegate to RAeC

21.3 Insurance coverage abroad (minute 7.6)

The Chairman confirmed that, with effect from 1 April 2005, the limit of insurance cover at non-BPA Affiliated Drop Zones abroad had been reduced from £2m to £100,000. Exactly as before, instructors and non-Affiliated Clubs were not covered.

21.4 UK Sport funding (minute 10)

The Chairman was pleased to announce that UK Sport had awarded the BPA an exchequer-funding grant of £25,000 for the year 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006. The funding was to be applied to the BPA Action Plan for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006. UK Sport were changing their conditions and arrangements for funding, and they had made clear that this was standstill funding (ie, the same amount as last year) under transitional arrangements between the old funding mechanism and the new one.

The BPA Action Plan, as submitted to UK Sport for grant-aid, was tabled. The Chairman said this was a living document and work on its targets should be high on the agendas of the Subcommittees during the relevant 12-month period. Targets in the current 2004/5 Action Plan were due to be completed by 30 June 2005.

21.5 Correspondence with the Royal Association for Deaf People (minute 17)

The Chairman had replied to the letter from the Royal Association for Deaf People that had been discussed at the last Council meeting, and a copy had been circulated to Members of the Council.

22/05 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees

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

22.1 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 15 February 2005

In the absence of any questions or requests for clarification, Kieran Brady (Development Chairman) and Ralph Fielding seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 15 February 2005 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

22.2 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 15 February 2005

In the absence of any questions or requests for clarification, Eddie Jones (Communications Chairman) and Adrian Bond seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 15 February 2005 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

22.3 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 24 February 2005

Elizabeth Stoodley asked for further information on the new Canopy Handling Progression System and how it would be phased in. The Chairman outlined the arrangements and said that phasing-in would be at the discretion of CCIs, and that there would be a transitional period. The CH1 and CH2 grades would become mandatory from June 2005. CCIs would be responsible for identifying and signing-up coaches and also for identifying potential coaches to be trained. The Chairman said he hoped that, within the next 3 to 5 years, there would be a canopy school at every DZ. The safety evenings being sponsored in the 2005/6 Development Committee Action Plan might well contribute to this. Tony Butler confirmed that the CH manuals, forms, etc were soon to be circulated to all CCIs, and he would ensure that a copy of all the documentation was circulated to the Council. An article was planned for the June magazine to publicise the new arrangements to the membership. Andy Scott, who had just returned from the USA, reported that the current World Champion in Canopy Piloting thought the new BPA Canopy Handling system was 'great'. Ian Marshall proposed a vote of thanks to the Canopy Handling Panel for their hard work on the development of the new BPA CH System.

Paul Applegate proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion that the minutes of the STC meeting held on 25 February 2005 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

22.4 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 14 April 2005

Kieran Brady referred to the second paragraph on page 4 of the minutes, concerning a tandem instructor who had had 9 malfunctions during his 2000 tandem descents. In 2001, STC had agreed that any further incidents of a similar nature should be brought to the attention of STC. The tandem instructor had recently had an incident with a bag lock. The CCI concerned said he did not consider this warranted grounding the tandem instructor, and STC had accepted that. Kieran Brady said he wished he had spoken against this at the STC meeting on 14 April, because the decision not to ground the tandem instructor concerned him.

After discussion, the consensus was that as no-one on STC had raised any objection at the time, despite the STC Chairman having specifically asked for any - the Council should accept the view of STC. The Chairman advised Kieran Brady to report his view to the next meeting of STC. In the meantime, John Hitchen agreed to contact the CCI involved to advise him that Kieran Brady had raised a concern at the Council.

Action: John Hitchen

Andy Scott asked a question about a high altitude jump (STC minute 3, page 3) and John Hitchen said that he had put Brian McGill in touch with the organisers.

The Chairman referred to the bottom two paragraphs on page 13 of the STC minutes, concerning a request for an individual to be given his CSI and tandem rating back after not having jumped for over a year and previous to that having had to re-qualify for both these ratings. The minutes recorded that STC had voted narrowly in favour of this, with 4 votes including 1 by proxy in favour, 3 against and 7 abstentions. Elizabeth Stoodley said that it was not reassuring to have such a narrow vote in favour, with so many abstentions, on a safety committee. The Chairman said that concerns had been expressed to him by more than one person that this had been a bad decision. Tony Knight said he now regretted that he had abstained from the vote at STC. He said he believed that if the matter were to come before STC again, the outcome would be likely to be different.

Eddie Jones proposed, and John Smyth seconded, a motion that the minute relating to the above item should **not** be ratified.

Carried unanimously

The effect of the Council not ratifying this item would be to refer it back to STC for further consideration at its next meeting.

Refer back to STC

John Page then proposed, and Elizabeth Stoodley seconded, a motion that the minutes of the STC meeting held on 14 April 2005 should be ratified except for the decision contained at the bottom of page 13 and top of page 14.

Ratified, except for the item stated

John Hitchen then left the room to telephone those concerned to advise them about the unratified item. He later returned to the meeting when he had done this, and reported that the CCI was content that the matter should come before STC again.

22.3 Competitions Committee meeting held on Tuesday 1 March 2005

John Smyth (Competitions Chairman) summarised the key points from the minutes. The Council congratulated Paul Rossouw, who had won silver in the intermediate category of the second World Cup in Canopy Piloting held in February at Lake Wales, USA. He would be awarded a Certificate of Achievement.

There followed a discussion about the funding plan (Competitions Committee minute 13). The wording stated that a national champion team (or individual, in the case of Style & Accuracy) that had been selected in the normal manner at the Selection Nationals, **may** be further considered for funding on their performance at the World Cup. The Chairman suggested that the performance criteria for funding at the World Cup should be higher than the established criteria of 'fourth place or better at the last World Championships' that applied at the Selection Nationals, since the World Cup was held later and jumpers would therefore be expected to be further advanced in their training for WPC 2006 by then. Otherwise, he feared that the updated funding criteria might be seen as offering a 'second chance Sunday'.

John Smyth said he entirely understood, and shared, the view of those who believed it important to keep the status quo. He said the updated wording that would apply this year was based on precedent – such as the funding of VMax – and that no funding could ever be guaranteed. The focus was clear and unequivocal on the pursuit of excellence to achieve peak, world-class performance. In no way was the funding plan to be seen as any dilution of the performance needed to achieve funding, which remained as demanding as ever. Andy Scott confirmed that the funding plan remained true to the Action Plan, and that the updated wording would serve only to focus the national teams' attention even more strongly on the World Cup.

The Chairman asked that the discussion, and the concerns that had given rise to it, should be reported back to the Competitions Committee so that, although the funding plan was being ratified by the Council, the Committee should be aware that it had stretched the interpretation of the Action Plan as far as it was possible to go.

Action: Report to Competitions Committee

John Smyth proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 1 March 2005 be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

23/05 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier today

23.1 Communications Committee

Eddie Jones (Communications Chairman) reported that the Communications Committee had:

- received the April 2005 issue of *Skydive Magazine*, with which it had been pleased;
- sanctioned a print run of 45,000 copies of an updated *Freedom of the Skies* brochure, now 4 pages instead of 8 pages but still A4 size, glossy and in colour, intended for

use by Clubs & Centres etc, who would continue to be able to purchase copies from the BPA, at a new, lower, price of 12p per copy;

- established that Warners (the mailing house) should have a stock of 15,000 Starter Magazines, which should be sufficient for the 2005 season. Thereafter, an update was planned.

23.2 Development Committee

Kieran Brady (Development Chairman) reported that the Development Committee had:

- heard a report from Centrepages, the website consultants used by the BPA, about the significant deterioration in the web hosting service by the present hosting company since it had been the subject of a commercial takeover over last autumn, and agreed that the BPA website could be moved to a different host at a discounted charge of £600 by Centrepages for re-engineering the 'back end' of the site;
- considered the possible marketing relationship between the BPA and the planned new UK wind tunnels, and agreed to continue to liaise with Simon Ward of Sky Venture following his visit to the December 2004 meeting of the Committee ;
- commissioned an asbestos survey of the BPA Office at a cost of approximately £400-£450 to help ensure compliance with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 1992;
- agreed to prepare a formal contract between the BPA and the new owners of the franchise for the BPA Shop, with the kind offer of advice from the Chairman of Council on the form of words appropriate to such a document;
- agreed to a proposal by Adrian Bond to re-launch the BPA Affinity Credit Card by making an investment designed to pay back over a period of two to five years.

24/05 Reports from Club Representatives

Tony Goodman had circulated a letter setting outlining the dates and venues of his planned visits. The Chairman commended this approach to other Club Reps.

25/05 Report on Royal Aero Club Activities

RAeC and anti-doping had already been covered under matters arising (minute 21.2 refers).

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to RAeC) reported the BPA's concerns over nominations to the RAeC Medals Award Committee being made independently of member bodies. The RAeC Council had considered this view but had decided that the Medals Committee itself was the quality assurance stage and that it would continue to welcome nominations from individuals as well as from member bodies.

John Smyth said that he did not believe that what the RAeC Council had decided would act as a sufficient safeguard against the possibility of frivolous applications. Ian Marshall therefore proposed, and Kieran Brady seconded, a motion that the BPA would not support any nominations for RAeC awards that had not been made through the appropriate National Governing Body.

Carried unanimously – Action: John Smyth

The new method of calculating member bodies' subscriptions to RAeC, which had resulted in an 11% increase in subscription payable by the BPA, was noted. The BPA Council accepted it because it understood that other RAeC member bodies had suffered even higher percentage increases. The Chairman asked John Hitchen to investigate whether it might be possible for the BPA to associate directly with FAI and not have to go through the RAeC.

Action: John Hitchen

26/05 Insurance at the Rhine Army Parachute Association (RAPA) Drop Zone at Bad Lipp Springs in Germany

A letter from Paul Moore (Commandant, RAPA) and email correspondence from BPA Member Ludwig Schmude, a jumper at bad Lipp Springs, had been circulated with the agenda. Also circulated in advance had been email representations from other experienced German jumpers who were members of DFV (the German National Governing Body for Sport Parachuting) who jumped at bad Lipp Springs. Paul Moore, Ludwig Schmude and others were in attendance for this item.

There was an offer from a German insurance company to increase the limit of the policy held by local experienced DFV Members who jumped at Bad Lipp Springs to an equivalent amount in Euros to match the £2m cover of the BPA policy. However, this had not satisfied the BPA's insurers because the German policy covered only the jumper, whereas the BPA policy covered many other parties too, including the Centre and the BPA itself. It was therefore important that the Club, the BPA and others had the protection of an insurance policy, otherwise they would be exposed to an uninsured risk that might have the potential to bankrupt them.

David Hickling (Insurance Subcommittee) said it was a given that a BPA Club or Centre had to have BPA insurance. The simple fact was that the BPA could not afford to put itself at risk, and act against the specific professional advice of its insurers, however much it might sympathise with the position of RAPA and the local experienced German jumpers. There was no lack of will on the part of the BPA, but there was lack of a way.

Following from points raised with Paul Moore by Kieran Brady, the Chairman said that the BPA's insurers had always said that they would be prepared to accept a letter from the UK Ministry of Defence that indemnified the BPA against any actions arising from operations at RAPA Bad Lipp Springs. However, at a meeting in October 2005 the senior claims officer from the MoD had clearly stated that RAPA was not in a position to issue any such indemnity. However, Paul Moore believed that it might yet be possible for RAPA to provide the BPA with a letter of indemnity, and he said he would be pleased to investigate this further.

The Chairman then asked for an in-camera session of the Council, and those who were not Members of Council (apart from employed BPA staff) left the meeting room.

The Council brainstormed possible ways forward. The Council was keen to help RAPA, but it also bore on its shoulders a heavy responsibility to protect the interests of the rest of the BPA Membership, which would not benefit from any concession that would leave other parties, including the BPA itself, open to an uninsured risk.

Tony Butler suggested that the BPA Insurance Committee might look at a method of circumventing this issue that left the BPA insured but not the Club.

Eddie Jones proposed, and John Page seconded, that the status quo (as per the decision in minute 70/04) should stand and that (i) RAPA should be invited to provide the BPA with a MoD-signed letter of indemnity; and (ii) the BPA Insurance Committee should be tasked with considering in detail Tony Butler's suggestion of a possible arrangement whereby the BPA might be insured, but not the Club.

Kieran Brady made a counter-proposal to accept Tony Butler's suggestion, subject to securing the agreement of the insurers. This proposal failed to find a seconder.

Eddie Jones's proposal was then voted on and carried unanimously.

Carried unanimously

Kieran Brady then proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that – due to the special circumstances at RAPA Bad Lipp Springs – the Council would, exceptionally, authorise Paul Moore, at his discretion, to issue more than one BPA Temporary Membership to any

individual experienced German national jumper at his Drop Zone, until the question of insurance was further considered at the next Council meeting to be held on 14 June 2005.

Carried unanimously

The Chairman then ended the in-camera session, invited those who had left the meeting to rejoin, and then summarised the position to all present.

(Note: Immediately after the meeting, Ludwig Schmude handed the Chairman a letter from Gerstmann & Diehl, a firm of German solicitors, threatening the BPA with legal action.)

27/05 Panel of Inquiry into flying operations at Skydive St Andrews

The Chairman called attention to an email (circulated) from Sandy Barnett of Skydive St Andrews in which he stated that he had decided not to appeal to the Council against STC's decision following a Panel of Inquiry into flying operations at Skydive St Andrews. The Chairman said that the appeal process was now over, and STC's decision stood.

Tony Knight, who had chaired the Panel of Inquiry, was present and the Chairman invited questions from the Council, of which there were none. Tony Knight asked to address the Council. He then reported that the work of this panel had been long and difficult. Once the Panel's report had been circulated, prior to its consideration by STC, he said that a fairly determined effort to interfere with its due process had been made by several persons, including the current CCI of a military parachute centre and his chief pilot.

Correspondence had been circulated accusing the Panel and its Chairman of bias and misinformation. The Chairman of the Panel had invited the author to present his views formally to the Panel or to bring his complaints to STC. The author had not bothered to reply to this invitation but had continued in his attempts to undermine the Panel process. The CCI involved had used the correspondence in an attempt to solicit proxy votes against the Panel's recommendations from members who were abroad and who could not have been acquainted with the facts of the case.

Tony Knight said that these actions were at best regretful and at worst disgraceful. It had resulted in the CAA becoming involved in order to verify the legal and technical validity of the Panel's observations, which the CAA had indeed done.

The Chairman thanked Tony Knight, the other Members of this Panel, and the Chairman and Members of all Panels for carrying out a difficult job under often trying circumstances. Panel Members put in many long hours of hard work for no payment. The BPA Council was sincerely grateful to the Panels of Inquiry and recognised and fully acknowledged their work.

The Chairman also conveyed the thanks of the Council to Tony Knight personally. No new evidence had subsequently been produced to call the Panel's report into question and the accusations of bias and misinformation had not stood up to any test. This Council owed a great debt of thanks to Tony Knight and his colleague Members of the panel for carrying on irrespective of the mud throwing, brickbats and barracking.

The Chairman also thanked John Hitchen for rising above numerous allegations that had been levelled against him as part of the same negative campaign. These had included allegations of bias in his chairing of STC meetings, which the Chairman himself could attest – having attended nearly all the STC meetings this year to report on the work of the Canopy Panel – that John Hitchen had acted at all times with the highest degree of integrity, professionalism and fairness.

In summary, the Chairman said that he intended personally to review the BPA's disciplinary procedure on operational matters with a view to formulating a set of proposals that would update and improve the procedure, and make it less amenable to attempts to derail it.

Action: Chairman

28/05 Applications for Re-Affiliation

The following applications for Re-Affiliation had been circulated.

27.1 JSPC Lippspringe

Change of CCI to Dave Openshaw. Proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Jim White.

Carried unanimously

27.2 Peterborough Parachute Centre

Change of CCI to Stuart Meacock. Proposed by Kieran Brady and seconded by John Page.

Carried unanimously

27.3 Scottish Parachute Club

Change of CCI to Kieran Brady. Proposed by Ian Marshall, seconded by Ralph Fielding. The vote was all in favour except for an abstention by Kieran Brady.

Carried

29/05 Applications for Affiliation

The following applications had been circulated with the agenda.

29.1 Cornish Parachute Club

The application had been circulated with the agenda. Tony Butler reported that the PLA and DZ had been cleared by STC last week, and that the Centre did not wish to operate until 1 March 2006. If Affiliation was given now, it would lapse if the Centre did not operate for a six-month period. The start date of Affiliation was therefore proposed by Kieran Brady, and seconded by Eddie Jones, as 1 January 2006.

Carried unanimously

29.2 Skydive London

Tony Butler reported that there was no problem with the DZ, which was presently cleared for operation by Skydive Swindon. He understood that Chris Francis of Skydive Swindon had agreed to Skydive London operating there, but the BPA had not yet received notification of this in writing. Therefore, the official position was that Skydive Swindon remained as a BPA Affiliated Centre based at this DZ. The Council could not affiliate another Centre at the same DZ until and unless Skydive Swindon had formally relinquished its operation of the DZ.

Kieran Brady therefore proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that Skydive London should be Affiliated on the basis of Skydive Swindon advising the BPA in writing that they were no longer operating this DZ.

Carried unanimously

30/05 Application for Association: Skydive Spain (Skydive Leasing SL trading as Skydive Spain)

The application had been circulated with the agenda. Proposed by Kieran Brady, seconded by Eddie Jones.

Carried unanimously

31/05 Dates of future meetings in 2005

Tuesdays 14 June, 16 August, 11 October and 6 December (after the EGM) at 1830 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester.

The meeting closed at 2205.