

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 14 June 2005 at 1900

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

Present:	Chris Allen	Chairman
	Paul Applegate	
	Adrian Bond	
	Ralph Fielding	
	Eddie Jones	Communications Chairman
	Ian Marshall	
	John Page	
	Andy Scott	
	John Smyth	Vice Chairman/Competitions Chairman (to item 37)
	Elizabeth Stoodley	
In attendance:	Tony Butler	Technical Officer
	Debbie Carter	Treasurer
	Lesley Gale	Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i>
	John Hitchen	NCSO
	Martin Shuttleworth	Secretary-General
Apologies for absence:	Kieran Brady	Development Chairman
	Tony Goodman	
	Nigel Holland	
	Jim White	

Item Minute

32/05 Minutes

John Page proposed, and John Smyth seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2005 be approved as a correct record. This carried unanimously.

Approved

33/05 Matters arising

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

Jim Crocker had kindly agreed to be the benefactor of a new BPA trophy to be awarded for outstanding achievement in the sport. The office had obtained information on traditional silver-plated trophy cups. The Chairman believed that the award might be made even more special by commissioning a bespoke trophy in a design specific to skydiving. John Page suggested that the design might perhaps incorporate or be based on the BPA logo. In discussion, the consensus was that the idea of a bespoke trophy should be explored, and that one line of research might be to contact university or college art and design departments. The Council specified that the material from which the trophy would be made would have to be durable, so that metal was preferred to glass. Another idea was the possibility of purchasing a ceremonial sword as a trophy, along the lines of the Excalibur sword presented at the World Championships, or the Skysurfing sword awarded at the Nationals. Ralph Fielding said he had a contact for a sword manufacturer that he would pass to the office.

The Chairman asked the office to explore these options, including the cost, and report back to the next meeting.

Action: BPA Office

33.2 Royal Aero Club (minute 25)

John Hitchen reported on his findings that it would not be possible for the BPA to associate directly with FAI (the World Airports Federation). This was because FAI's rules stipulated that, in countries where there was an National Aero Club (NAC), it was only possible for National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of individual airports to associate with FAI through their NAC. In the UK, the NAC was the Royal Aero Club. This meant that the only route for a UK airports NGB to be recognised by the FAI, which was necessary to participate in international competitions and to be properly recognised internationally, was through the Royal Aero Club. The Chairman thanked John Hitchen for this information, and asked him kindly to investigate further to determine how long ago this rule had been established by FAI, and its precise wording in FAI's statutes, bye-laws or other constitutional document.

Action: John Hitchen

With regard to nominations for the immediate-past RAeC awards, Ian Marshall said he had been surprised to learn that the parachutists who had been granted an award by the RAeC on the recommendation of its Awards Committee without the customary prior nomination by the BPA, had not themselves known that their names were being put forward. He believed that this added further weight to the Council's decision (minute 25) that the BPA would not support any nominations for RAeC awards that had not been made through the appropriate National Governing Body.

33.3 Insurance at the Rhine Army Parachute Association (RAPA) Drop Zone at Bad Lippspringe in Germany (minute 26)

The Chairman said that the Council had been copied into the correspondence to date with (1) Gerstmann & Diehl, a firm of German solicitors; (2) Major Paul Moore, Commandant of RAPA; and (iii) Niels Hansen of POPS. He reported that Paul Moore had not, to date, provided the BPA with an MoD-signed letter of indemnity.

The Chairman was waiting to hear from the German solicitors on a number of points he had raised in reply to their original letter. The Chairman said that, in his opinion, the BPA should consider itself as still being under the threat of legal action.

Elizabeth Stoodley then proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion to extend, until the next Council meeting on 16 August 2005, the concession granted to Paul Moore in minute 26, viz: due to the special circumstances at RAPA, 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.

Carried unanimously

33.4 Panel of Inquiry into flying operations at Skydive St Andrews (minute 27)

A hard copy of an email from Jim White, addressed to the Council and dated 14 June, was tabled. The Chairman invited comment. Jim White had criticised as biased the Council's decision to let Tony Knight speak at the last meeting. However, the Chairman confirmed that, in his capacity as the duly appointed Chairman of a BPA Panel of Inquiry, Tony Knight had the right to address the Council in this official capacity, if he so wished.

Andy Scott noted that Jim White had expressed concern about the reference in minute 27 to the need to update and improve the BPA's disciplinary procedure to make it 'less amenable to attempts to derail it'. Jim White had asked in his email whether this meant that an individual would not be permitted to defend himself or herself if investigated. Andy Scott said that what the minute was highlighting was that the procedure would be made more robust and less amenable to undue interference in due process. He believed that Jim White should have no cause for concern, and was pleased to note that Jim White had said he welcomed the planned review of the procedures.

The Chairman confirmed that he had already prepared a draft of a suggested new disciplinary procedure, which he had recently sent to BPA staff for comment. The Chairman envisaged that, allowing for his work commitments, which were heaviest during the summer, the draft would be in a form ready for submission for consideration by the Council at the October 2005 meeting.

33.5 Cornish Parachute Club (minute 29.1)

The Council had decided on a start date for Affiliation of 1 January 2006. Tony Butler reported that the Club wished to start operations for two weeks in August 2005. Andy Scott therefore proposed, and Ian Marshall seconded, a motion that the start date for Affiliation of the Cornish Parachute Club should be brought forward to 1 August 2005.

Carried unanimously

34/05 Royal Aero Club

John Smyth (BPA Delegate to RAeC) reported that the RAeC Council was due to meet next Tuesday, 21 June. As the BPA's delegate to this meeting, he would follow up the actions set out in minute 25 from the BPA Council meeting on 19 April (as there had not been a meeting of the RAeC Council since then).

The Chairman had been in correspondence with Marc Asquith, RAeC Chairman. It now appeared that the RAeC had not in fact sent to FAI their planned letter questioning the relevance of anti-doping, or certain aspects of it, to airsports. However, our Chairman was concerned that the RAeC had not been, and might not be, transparently clear in making a distinction between any RAeC apparently ambivalent view of anti-doping and the BPA's long-established and well-documented position of being fully signed up to the UK Sport anti-doping code and rules and its international analogue, the World Anti-Doping Agency Code. This was a sensitive and important issue for the BPA as the BPA's funding from UK Sport depended, inter alia, on adherence to the UK Sport anti-doping code. The Chairman asked John Smyth kindly to ensure that the BPA was named as against any proposal that gave anything less than full and complete support to the UK Sport national and WADA international anti-doping codes and rules. The BPA remained steadfast in its support for drug-free sport.

Action: John Smyth

35/05 Ratification of minutes of Subcommittees

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

35.1 Competitions Committee meeting held on Wednesday 27 April 2005

John Smyth (Competitions Chairman) highlighted an issue from the minutes about third party insurance cover for the members of the national delegation at world meets, which had reduced from £2m to £100K on 1 April 2005 in accordance with changes to the BPA insurance policy on that date. The Chairman said that £100K was still a higher limit of cover than provided by most other national sport parachuting associations. It was up to individual competitors to decide for themselves whether they needed additional third party insurance cover or not. What the BPA did insist on, however, was that members of the National Team should purchase medical insurance including cover for repatriation to the UK in the event of a serious accident or emergency.

John Smyth then proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Competitions Committee meeting held on 27 April 2005 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

35.2 Competitions Committee meeting held on Tuesday 7 June 2005

John Smyth called attention to an item in the minutes in which an anti-doping information officer at UK Sport had given erroneous information to a BPA competitor. John Smyth had since spoken by telephone to the information officer's senior at UK Sport, who had apologised. John Smyth intended to follow this up with a letter to UK Sport requesting that they should send a written apology together with correct information to the BPA competitor.

The Chairman noted that the minutes stated, in contradiction to the previous Competitions minutes, that the rules for the Speed 8 Nationals would be as for last year. Andy Scott confirmed there had been an issue over grips that would be clarified in this year's rules.

Action: Andy Scott

John Smyth highlighted the minute concerning a written complaint he had received from the host Drop Zone Operator about the conduct of Nigel Holland (Artistic Disciplines Rep) at the Freely Grand Prix held at Langar from 30 April – 2 May. The DZO had also complained about Sue Skull, Artistics Judge. John Smyth said the complaint against Sue Skull had centred on procedural omissions.

Nigel Holland had not been present at the meeting of the Competitions Committee at which the letter from the DZO had been discussed, although he had sent an email to the Committee in which he had provided additional information. The Chairman noted that Nigel Holland was not present tonight. John Smyth suggested that a line should be drawn under the matter, but Elizabeth Stoodley believed that it would be appropriate for the Competitions Committee to reconsider what action should be taken. The Council therefore referred this matter back to the Competitions Committee for further consideration.

Action: Competitions Committee

With regard to the presentation of prizes at the FS Nationals, the Chairman said the Competitions Committee's minutes were correct to record that he, as Chairman of Council, would not be available because he had his own business to run that was most demanding of his time at weekends in high summer. He endorsed the Competitions Committee's suggestion that a BPA Vice President should be invited; and further suggested that the host Drop Zone might invite local dignitaries such as the mayor or prominent local business leaders. This might have the knock-on benefit of helping the DZ cement relations with its local community.

Action: Competitions Committee

35.3 Development Committee meeting on Tuesday 19 April 2005

In the absence of any questions or requests for clarification, Eddie Jones (acting Development Chairman, in Kieran Brady's absence) proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on 19 April 2005 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

35.4 Communications Committee meeting on Tuesday 19 April 2005

In the absence of any questions or requests for clarification, Eddie Jones (Communications Chairman) and Ralph Fielding seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 19 April 2005 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

35.5 Safety and Training Committee meeting on Thursday 9 June 2005

John Hitchen (STC Chairman) said it was his sad duty to report the fatality of Peter Shaw aged 74, an experienced jumper with over 1000 jumps, at NWPC Cark on 21 May. The Council asked that its condolences should be passed on to Peter Shaw's family. John Hitchen reported that STC had recommended that a Panel of Inquiry should not be established following this fatality.

The Chairman again thanked STC and its Canopy Handling Working Group on behalf of the Council for the development of the new BPA canopy handling system that had been in place since 1 June and had been extremely well received. He also thanked Lesley Gale for sourcing the majority of photographs in the new CH and CP Manuals, and in the article on the new Canopy Handling System that appeared in the June 2005 issue of *Skydive Magazine*. The printers of the manuals, Stylaprint Ltd, had done an exceptionally good job on the manuals and had dramatically cut down on the anticipated time to get the job done whilst delivering a high quality product. Eddie Jones therefore proposed, and Ralph Fielding seconded, that the Council should award a Certificate of Appreciation to Andrew Venum, Managing Director of Stylaprint.

Action: BPA Office

John Page then proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that the minutes of the STC meeting held on 7 June 2005 should be ratified. This carried unanimously.

Ratified

36/05 Reports on Committee meetings held earlier today

36.1 Communications Committee

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

- reviewed the June 2005 issue of the Magazine and found it to have been well received; and agreed on an outline of the planned content of the August 2005 issue
- asked for costings to be obtained for a handbill leaflet to promote skydiving
- confirmed that only BPA Affiliated Drop Zones and individuals or organisations with specific permission have entitlement to use the BPA logo – this had reference to evidence that had come to light that a site or sites on the Internet appeared to be using the BPA logo without authorisation. The office had been tasked to get in touch with these organisations.

36.2 Development Committee

Eddie Jones (acting Development Chairman, in Kieran Brady's absence) reported that the Development Committee had:

- discussed proposals from the operators of the proposed UK wind tunnels relating to their relationship with the BPA with particular reference to promotion and marketing
- agreed guidelines to inform development of a formal franchise agreement/contract between the BPA and UK Parachute Services Ltd, operators of the BPA Shop
- received an update from Adrian Bond on the re-launch of the BPA Affinity Credit Card.

37/05 Reports from Club Representatives

37.1 Positive feedback

Andy Scott (Club Rep – Central) had circulated a report on his visits to four different Clubs and his discussions with BPA members on a visit to Eloy during May. He said that many of the Members with whom he had spoken had been delighted by the free-of-charge Canopy Handling and Canopy Piloting handbooks (manuals) that the BPA had recently published. This appreciation had extended beyond the UK, because the Danish Parachute Association had indicated they wished to base their CH coaching on ours. Andy Scott said that he was continuing to receive positive feedback about the BPA Skills Coaching Roadshow programme.

Andy Scott said it was, however, in the nature of things that more negative comments and criticisms were itemised in his written report, since it was these that needed to be the focus of the Council's attention.

37.2 Use of in camera sessions at meetings

Some Members had commented to Andy Scott at what they perceived to be the increasing use by the Council of in-camera sessions. The Chairman said that in-camera sessions did not in his view happen very often. In-camera sessions were an entirely normal part of standard procedure used by committees in a wide panoply of public and membership organisations. Their purpose was to ensure that the elected members with the responsibility of a vote could talk and act freely as the elected body to reach informed decisions, without influence from, or causing embarrassment to, others whom their decisions could affect. For instance, an item of business later in this meeting was the annual staff salary review. It was right and proper for the staff and other non-elected attendees to leave the room whilst the Council considered the Employment Subcommittee's recommendations on the matter.

Likewise, in disciplinary matters, it was only proper that the parties involved in a dispute should leave the room whilst the Council or STC held an in-camera session to decide on the outcome. This was similar in many ways to the operation of a magistrates' court in the justice system, which usually deliberated on their own, ie in camera.

A third example of the use of an in camera session was when discussing matters about which the Association was under threat of legal action, as it was at the moment on a matter relating to the insurance of certain jumpers at one particular Drop Zone (minute 33.3).

Andy Scott said that the Members who had raised concern over the Council's use of in camera sessions had expressed concern over 'hidden agendas'. The Chairman said that all votes in in-camera sessions were recorded, and the decisions fully explained in the minutes. During his time as Chairman, Council meetings had got shorter and the minutes had got longer – hardly the conditions for hidden agendas to flourish.

37.3 Funding and sponsorship of competition teams

Andy Scott reported on the frustration voiced to him by Dane Kenny, a FS competitor, that the BPA's funding criteria (as set out in the rules for the Selection Nationals 2005) were 'so high as both to preclude all existing teams and actively discourage up-and-coming teams'. Dane Kenny wanted to see the criteria dropped, and/or the BPA to find other funding streams not tied to 'unrealistic' UK Sport criteria so that there was something for up-and-coming teams.

The Chairman said he understood these concerns. The BPA had put in place a hugely successful programme of Skills Coaching Roadshows in all disciplines, but perhaps none had been better supported and more obviously successful than in FS, where they had encouraged more up-and-coming teams as evidenced by record entries in last year's FS Nationals and a hotly competitive Grand Prix. Funding of senior teams was, as the competitors had realised, determined by the requirements of UK Sport, which gave the BPA a public exchequer grant of £20K for competitions (and £5K for safety and training). The simple fact was that UK Sport's policy was to fund medals. This obliged the BPA to adopt world-class selection criteria (performance equal or better to a realistically-contested fourth place at the last world meet), otherwise the BPA's funding from UK Sport would be cut. It was not in the gift of this Council to vote funding, all or part from the UK Sport exchequer grant, on lower performance criteria.

The question of alternative funding sources was the perennial question of how to obtain sponsorship. Competitors often perceived there to be a lack of effort or will by the BPA to secure sponsorship, but the fact was that years of effort had enabled the BPA to reach a mature understanding of the market for sponsorship in sport parachuting. The position was this:

- most sponsorship required some *personal* involvement in the sport
- sponsors usually wanted an athlete or team to come first
- most sponsors wanted something in return – they needed a sound business case to justify their spend
- skydiving was not a big enough sport to be in the top league for corporate sponsorship
- corporate sponsors tended to work to a 5 year plan, whereas teams typically had a 3 year plan
- the Council had in the past directed the office to pursue sponsorship. The outcome had suggested that an office-based procurer of sponsorship was a contradiction in terms – to stand a realistic chance of success, sponsorship had to be sought in the field
- the Council had in the past paid specialist companies to try to secure sponsorship, but had ended up paying the companies more than the amount of sponsorship obtained
- small sponsorship deals from team members' employers, equipment manufacturers / other companies within the skydiving sector, and companies geographically local to the

team, had proved to be the most achievable form of sponsorship. Although each such deal may be modest in itself, every little helped, and a number of small deals together could begin to provide valuable support

- it may often be more realistic to seek sponsorship of a particular competition or event rather than an athlete or team. An event gave the sponsor a focus, for example to put up their banners and distribute publicity material or samples.

Council Members, including especially Members of the Competitions Committee, were ever alert to the chance of securing sponsorship and were regularly making contacts and following up leads. The BPA had a brochure for potential sponsors, and sponsorship opportunities were advertised on the BPA website.

Nevertheless, the Chairman acknowledged that there was a perception among the Membership, which Andy Scott had captured in his Club Reps' report, that the BPA was not doing enough to secure sponsorship. He therefore suggested that, in the next Action Plan, consideration should be given to appointing an honorary sponsorship officer. The person appointed could have a page on the BPA website to set out information on sponsorship and invite leads from the Membership. A similar perception by the Membership of the BPA not doing enough about publicity and media relations had been significantly improved by the appointment of a Member of Council, Elizabeth Stoodley, as honorary media co-ordinator. Elizabeth Stoodley thanked the Chairman for this acknowledgement of her work. She noted two further misconceptions that she had encountered: (i) that Council Members were paid a lot – in fact, Council members received no pay whatsoever; and (ii) that Council Members had little to do – this had been entirely the opposite of her own experience.

Action: Bring forward for consideration for the Development Committee Action Plan 2006/7

37.4 Publish settlement figures for insurance claims

Andy Scott said that a number of Members had asked for quantification of the BPA's settlement of insurance claims. This was against a background of increases in premium being justified by increasing payouts. The Chairman said that the vast majority of cases were settled out of court, and settlements were not in the public domain.

The Chairman noted that his annual report speech at the January 2005 AGM contained figures for the aggregate insurance payouts per year over the last few years. He said that the insurance company did not support the publication of a breakdown of these aggregate annual figures. The reason the insurers had given for their sensitivity was their fear that publication of itemised settlements would encourage more claims and push the premiums even higher.

Elizabeth Stoodley said she had attended the insurance open forum at the AGM, when the insurers had, perhaps surprisingly, been more forthcoming about claims figures. The Chairman said there was a significant difference between an informal discussion forum and publication in official minutes. The insurers were simply seeking to help and protect the Membership by not promulgating figures on individual settlements that might serve only to attract further claims.

37.5 Subsistence expenses

Andy Scott reported that concern had been expressed to him about the BPA's arrangements to pay a subsistence allowance of £25 per day (ie, for a 24 hour period) plus a mileage allowance to Coaching Roadshow Coaches and competition judges on approved BPA business. It appeared that the subsistence allowance was payable whether the actual out-of-pocket expenditure had been more or less than £25, and receipts were not required. The matter had been thrown into sharp focus by a recipient of subsistence and car mileage expenses apparently boasting in a DZ bar about 'having made hundreds of pounds from BPA expenses'.

The Chairman said that the expenses were hardly generous when compared with the typical rate of business expenses. Debbie Carter (Treasurer) confirmed that the current BPA mileage allowance fell well within the Inland Revenue's classification of 'not profitable'. Ian

Marshall reported on how difficult it was, particularly in Southern England, to find any overnight accommodation, for £25 or less. If the recipient of the £25 subsistence allowance chose to sleep in a tent or a van, that was their prerogative – they were still entitled to claim the allowance.

It appeared that the boasting over alleged 'profit' from expenses had been made without much maturity of thought. It was certainly true that the car mileage rate paid more than the cost of petrol, so that it might look like cash in hand. However, any such misconception would be quickly dispelled when the car needed insurance, new tyres, servicing and road tax.

Tony Butler reminded the meeting that some Council Members and some examiners on BPA courses put in few or no expenses claims. The Competitions Committee also had a policy of seeking to allocate judges to competitions as close as possible to where they lived, so keeping travelling expenses to a minimum.

The Chairman thanked the Council for the contributions from around the table. He said that if the BPA were to scrap the subsistence allowance in favour of a policy of paying actual out-of-pocket expenditure on submission of receipts, the cost to the BPA would be significantly higher both in the amount paid out and the cost of administration. No proposal was forthcoming to alter the status quo.

38/05 Application for Re-Affiliation

North London Parachute Centre Ltd (NLPC) had lodged an application for re-Affiliation consequent on a change of directors from David Harrison, who was no longer a director, to Mike Rust. Martin Crossley remained as Managing Director. The Chairman invited for any comments from Members or staff, of which there were none. Ian Marshall then proposed, and John Page seconded, a motion that NLPC's application for re-Affiliation should be approved.

Carried unanimously

39/05 Staff salary review

This item was held in camera with only the elected members of Council present: the staff and others left the room. The Chairman reported that a meeting of the Employment Subcommittee had recommended to the Council that BPA staff should be awarded a cost-of-living increase of 3% effective from 1 July 2005, the annual review date. Eddie Jones proposed this as a motion, and Elizabeth Stoodley seconded it.

Carried unanimously

The staff and others then returned to the meeting. The Chairman reported the Council's decision and Tony Butler thanked the Council on behalf of the staff.

40/05 Dates of future meetings in 2005

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

The meeting closed at 2050.