

British Parachute Association

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Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 17 February 2004 at 1630

at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Kieran Brady Chris Allen Calvin Blacker David Hickling Eddie Jones Ian Midgley Elizabeth Stoodley	Development Chairman Chairman of Council
In attendance:	Jon Gretton Lesley Gale John Hitchen Ian Marshall Martin Shuttleworth Jim White	Financial Administrator Editor, <i>Skydive Magazine</i> NCSO from item 5.2 Secretary-General from item 4
Observer:	Andrew Frew	
Apologies for absence:	Tony Butler Tony Goodman	Technical Officer

Item Minute

01/04 Minutes

Ian Midgley proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Tuesday 2 December 2003 be approved as a correct record.

Approved

02/04 Matters arising

2.1 Financial adviser affinity scheme (minute 37.1)

Jon Gretton reported that he had advised the financial services company that the BPA would not grant them access to its membership database, and that the company would be expected to pay for any advertisements or inserts it might wish to place in the BPA Magazine. On hearing this, the company had said that it saw no benefit to itself of involving the BPA as a partner in its proposed financial services affinity scheme.

No further action

2.2 Retrospective expenses claim by Tony Knight (minute 43)

The Chairman reported that he had discussed the matter with Tony Knight since the last meeting, and had made it plain that the BPA, as a limited company, had a legal duty to comply with company accounting practices and policies. This made it impossible to pay expenses incurred in previous years during the current financial year. It was simply not within standard accounting practice to do this, and therefore not within the remit of the Development Committee to consider it.

Eddie Jones said that reference had been made at the last meeting to the invaluable contribution that Tony Knight had made, and continued to make, to the BPA, especially in his role as BPA liaison officer to the CAA. There could be little doubt that Tony Knight's diligent and sustained hard work in this role over the years had saved the BPA vastly more money than the total of his retrospective expenses claim. Had these expenses been claimed at the correct time, they would have been paid in full as they were a clear entitlement. The problem was simply that they could not be paid now, because it was too late. Therefore, Eddie Jones suggested that the BPA might pay Tony Knight a consultancy fee, not in any retrospective capacity but for future work in CAA liaison, etc. Tony Knight would suffer tax on any such fee whereas he would not have been taxed on expenses had he claimed them on time. But there was no way around this.

Ian Midgley supported Eddie Jones's suggestion, and formally proposed that the BPA should pay Tony Knight a consultancy fee for CAA work to be done in the future, that would be similar in amount to the retrospective expenses that Tony Knight had failed to claim, and therefore lost. Eddie Jones seconded this motion.

Carried unanimously

Kieran Brady said he would liaise with Tony Knight and Jon Gretton, BPA Financial Administrator, to arrange for this one-off payment to be made in such a manner that the BPA did not expose itself to any additional tax or other liability.

Action: Kieran Brady

03/04 Areas of responsibility 2004

The following areas of responsibility were agreed for 2004.

- Advertising - Kieran Brady
- UK Sport and Sport England - Ian Midgley
- BPA Regional Reps - Kieran Brady
- CCPR - Calvin Blacker
- Insurance - David Hickling

David Hickling said that insurance had recently become such a significant issue that he sought continuing support from others in this important area. Chris Allen suggested, and Calvin Blacker then proposed, that the ad hoc Insurance Committee, that had met several times during 2003, should now formally be established, to be chaired by the Development Committee member for the time being responsible for insurance. Eddie Jones seconded the proposal.

Carried unanimously

David Hickling was now, therefore, Chairman of the Insurance Committee. The exact name to call the Committee (eg it Committee, Subcommittee or Working party) would be decided in due course. The purpose here was simply formally to constitute what had previously been an ad hoc group.

04/04 Request by SkyVenture for a banner advertisement on the BPA website

Simon Ward had been invited to this meeting but had been unable to come because he was still convalescing from an accident last year. He had, however, spoken with the Chairman at the AGM.

The Committee had already decided (minute 41/03) that it could not offer a specially discounted advertising rate and to SkyVenture that the normal rate for skydiving-related advertisements would apply were the advertisement to be accepted. The question of whether or not to accept the SkyVenture advertisement was still under consideration.

This Committee carried responsibility for the terms of acceptance of advertisements to go on the BPA website. As such, it could accept or decline any advertisement. Discussion followed

on the pros and cons of accepting an advertisement for a UK wind tunnel in terms of its possible positive and negative effects on UK Drop Zones.

Chris Allen said that individuals' views on the affect of a wind tunnel on Drop Zones were a subjective matter. He suggested that the real issue before the Committee was that the SkyVenture wind tunnel had not yet been built. The Committee understood the promoters of the wind tunnel to be raising capital for its construction. The question was: if an advertisement (including any website linked from the advertisement) by SkyVenture on the BPA website were to encourage BPA Members to invest in the wind tunnel, might this be perceived by some as BPA endorsement for the investment?

Ian Midgley then proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that Kieran Brady should discuss with Simon Ward the wording of the proposed advertisement. Kieran Brady kindly agreed to do this, starting from the information that Simon Ward had already supplied.

Carried unanimously - Action: Kieran Brady

05/04 Development Action Plan 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005

The Chairman invited suggestions for targets to include in the draft Development Action Plan for the year 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005. The agreed draft would then be put forward for ratification by tonight's meeting of the full Council.

Weed Stoodley suggested a target on canopy handling education. Chris Allen said that this was already part of the work of STC's Canopy Handling Panel, as part of a broader brief. John Hitchen confirmed that this area came within STC, which was actively addressing it.

David Hickling raised the question of whether the BPA should again look at a personal accident insurance policy that might be taken up by Clubs & Centres for their jumpers. He said that this had been tried some years ago, but had not been entirely successful, and lessons had been learned. If tried again, Dave Hickling considered that such insurance might help to abate future big increases in the premiums for the BPA public liability insurance policy, by providing additional cover and thereby deflecting some claims. However, such insurance would be open to abuse - and it had been abused when the previous arrangements were in place - so it was necessary to tread carefully. After discussion, the Chairman suggested that Dave Hickling might wish to discuss the matter with the solicitor Tim Scorer, who had been involved with many of the claims that had been made on the BPA's public liability policy, and report back to the Insurance Committee (see minute 3).

Action: David Hickling

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that the four Development targets for 2004/5 that it wished to recommend to the full Council were as follows.

5.1 Start a new page on the BPA website to record National Skydiving records

Calvin Blacker said that, to the best of his knowledge, there was no consolidated list of UK national skydiving records, and almost certainly no list that was easily accessible to all. He therefore believed that it would be appropriate to start to build such a list to publicise the achievement of those who were on it, and to spur on skydivers to even greater achievements.

Calvin Blacker explained that intention was not laboriously to research all the relevant records in order to upload a comprehensive page on day 1. Rather, the idea was to list some of the most recent UK records - such as those established at the FS Nationals in 2003 - and invite Members to add to the list, after checking the veracity of record claims through an appropriate committee. It would of course first be important to decide on the types records that would be eligible to be recorded on the page, and those that would not. Therefore, considerable thought would be required in establishing the appropriate framework for the page. Calvin Blacker hoped that once the bones of the new page were posted on the BPA website, it would capture Members' imagination and the page would grow from humble beginnings to become an authoritative and inspiring source of information on UK skydiving records. The design of the page was not intended to be at all complicated, at least in year 1, and therefore it could be constructed in-house at the BPA Office and would not need to call on the more

specialist services of the BPA's website consultants. Hence the budget could be a modest one, of say £500, principally to cover staff time.

Calvin Blacker then proposed, and Ian Midgley seconded, that a Development Action Plan target for 2004/5 should be to start to build a webpage on the BPA website of UK national skydiving records - budget £500.

Carried unanimously

5.2 Host a meeting for Drop Zone Operators

At the suggestion of Chris Allen, Eddie Jones proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that a Development Action Plan target for 2004/5 should be to host a meeting for Drop Zone Operators to discuss with the Association matters of opportunity, interest and concern to the, and thereby improve two-way communication between the Association and those that operated Affiliated Centres.

Carried unanimously

5.3 Create a new role on the Development Committee as Media Officer

Chris Allen recalled the efforts of a number of people last September to secure media coverage of team *VMax* winning the World Championship at the Mondial. He had himself e-mailed the national press within half an hour of the victory. Nigel Holland, Calvin Blacker and the BPA Office had been among others that had sought media coverage or other recognition for this victory. He believed that, whilst all of these initiatives were good ones, the BPA's approach to the media might benefit from an element of co-ordination. Therefore, he suggested that the Development Committee might wish to consider, in its 2004/5 Action Plan, electing one of its number to the honorary post of BPA Media Officer, to work closely with members of this and other Committees and with the BPA Office to co-ordinate approaches to the media. This would not be likely to require any specific budget. In discussion, Elizabeth Stoodley indicated that she would be interested to take on this new role.

Ian Midgley therefore proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that a Development Action Plan target for 2004/5 should be to appoint a member of the Development Committee to the honorary post of BPA Media Officer to co-ordinate approaches to the media from across the BPA, for which no special budget would be required.

Carried unanimously

5.4 Improve the quantity and quality of media coverage of UK skydiving

Related to item 5.3 above, Martin Shuttleworth recalled a problem that last year had been particularly acute, namely that it was difficult to get media coverage of good news in skydiving, although bad news was nearly always covered. With this in mind, he suggested a more proactive approach by calling for, and co-ordinating, assistance from Members with professional expertise in various fields of communication to maximise the effectiveness of contacts in, and approaches to, the media. A small budget, of say £250, might attach to this target. Chris Allen said this sounded like a good idea, and one that might be broadened to seek Members with skills in other areas that they might be willing to offer gratis to the BPA for particular projects - a sort of 'skills bank'.

Eddie Jones therefore proposed, and Calvin Blacker seconded, a motion that a Development Action Plan target for 2004/5 should be to seek to improve the quality and quantity media coverage of UK skydiving by calling for assistance from Members with professional expertise in the various fields of communication, budget £250.

Carried unanimously

The Committee supported Chris Allen's suggestion to include, in the call for assistance from Members, other fields of expertise apart from communications skills, and that the final wording of the target should if possible be developed to reflect this.

06/04 Progress with the current year's Development Action Plan, 2003/4

6.1 Target 1: History of parachuting and the BPA

This remained a longer-term project, which might roll over into the next Action Plan year.

In progress

6.2 Target 2: New homepage for the BPA website

Achieved

6.3 Target 3: New team contacts webpage

Achieved

6.4 Target 4: Add an interactive coaching page to the BPA website

Content for two or three new pages was continuing to be sought over the winter with the aim of building a small bank of pages to go live during summer 2004. The future of the Coaching Webpage would then be reviewed in the light of this and next season's experiences, both in procuring the content and in the use of the interactive facility by the membership.

In progress

6.5 Target 5: Add a page of information on travel insurance to the BPA website

Research had now been carried out and draft text for the new page was being prepared. It would be circulated to the Committee ahead of the next meeting.

In progress

07/04 Investments

The Chairman reported that the BPA's investments had recently matured. These provided the Association with financial underpinning and he believed that they should be re-invested to continue to provide the membership with the security of a strong Association. Debbie Carter (Treasurer) briefly summarised key the issues, including return on capital, interest and access that needed to be considered in relation to investments.

Ian Midgley therefore proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the matured funds should be prudently re-invested in such a manner as to give the best likely investment returns together with access to some of the funding in the event that access might be needed.

Carried unanimously

The Committee asked Jon Gretton, BPA Financial Administrator, to consult with Debbie Carter and outside investment advisers in deciding on the most appropriate investment vehicles to meet the above strategy set by the Committee.

John Hitchen suggested that it might be worthwhile for the BPA to consider opening an account in US dollars in view of the current favourable exchange rate with sterling, especially since payments in US dollars would have to be made for the World Cup 2005 in Arizona. The Chairman therefore proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion to ask Jon Gretton to liaise with John Smyth, Competitions Chairman, in order to estimate the likely competitions spend in US dollars, and then to investigate whether establishing an account in US dollars for this sum might bring any benefit to the BPA in view of the current favourable exchange rate. If so, Jon Gretton should report back to the Chairman as soon as possible because the favourable exchange rate might not last.

Carried unanimously

08/04 CCPR

Calvin Blacker reported that CCPR had issued a consultation document about changes in vetting procedures by the Criminal Records Bureau. He had consulted with the BPA Chairman on this and had concluded that it was not necessary for the BPA to make a response.

09/04 Dates of future meetings

Tuesdays at 1600 at the BPA Office, Leicester: 20 April, 15 June, 24 August*, 19 October and 7 December (after the EGM).

* Subsequently changed to this new date consequent on a change of the Council meeting from the original date of 17 August.

The meeting closed at 1750.