

British Parachute Association

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Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 15 August 2006 at 1630
at the BPA Offices, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

Present:	Kieran Brady John Horne Eddie Jones Mark Maynard Paul Moore Mike Rust Elizabeth Stoodley	Chairman
In attendance:	Paul Applegate Adrian Bond Tony Butler Debbie Carter Jon Gretton David Hickling Andy Scott Martin Shuttleworth Julian Storey	Co-opted Technical Officer Treasurer (co-opted) Financial Administrator Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee (co-opted, to item 25) (from end of item 26) Secretary-General Media Co-ordinator (co-opted, from item 25.2)
Apologies for absence:	John Hitchen Tony Goodman John Page	NCSO

Item Minute

23/06 Minutes

Elizabeth Stoodley proposed, and Eddie Jones seconded, a motion that the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Tuesday 13 June 2006 be approved as a correct record.

Approved

24/06 Matters arising

24.1 Skydiving display material for the Bedford wind tunnel (minute 17.1)

Lesley Gale had supplied posters on skydiving, which would be framed for display in the Bodyflight Bedford wind tunnel. The Chairman said that Simon Ward had asked for copies for display at the Airkix wind tunnel in Milton Keynes. The Chairman said he would pass the posters to Geordie Page.

Action: Chairman / John Page / Lesley Gale (duplicate set)

24.2 Display team links on the BPA website (minute 17.2)

A section for BPA Registered Display Teams had been added to the 'Links' page of the BPA website.

24.3 Support and encourage Clubs & Centres to run safety evenings (minute 19.3)

Elizabeth Stoodley had re-drafted the letter to Clubs & Centres to encourage them to hold Safety Evenings, and to apply for BPA grants of £100 to help with the travel and subsistence expenses of bringing in an expert speaker. The initiative was being continued in the new Action Plan year 2006/7 that had begun on 1 July 2006 (minute 28.2). The Committee discussed the letter and finalised the draft to be issued from the Office to Clubs & Centres to encourage them to host safety evenings / events.

Action: BPA Office

25/06 Reports on areas of responsibility

25.1 Insurance

David Hickling (Chairman, Insurance Subcommittee) reported that he had yet to receive a definitive response from the potential new brokers that he had met at the BPA Office in May, although they had requested additional information, which was being supplied. The existing brokers had recently reported that the current trend was encouraging, but of course this good run could end abruptly at any time should a large claim be received. Tony Butler was keeping a record of the number of foreign jumpers visiting the UK so that statistics could be compiled for the insurers. There was a possibility that, on the wave of this positive trend, if the number of foreign jumpers was not too large, it might be possible to negotiate with the insurers cover under the BPA policy for experienced foreign jumpers visiting UK Clubs & Centres.

David Hickling said he was concerned that some seeking a wholesale change in the BPA's insurance arrangements appeared almost to want change for its own sake. The risk was that this might destroy, irrevocably, the BPA's existing policy that had been carefully evolved over many years very closely to match to the Association's needs. It offered the opportunity, as suggested above, to become an even closer match if cover for visiting experienced foreign jumpers could be negotiated into the policy, as was the will of the AGM 2006 which resolved that this should be done for visiting experienced German jumpers.

In answer to a question from John Horne, Tony Butler said that there were around 70 claims or potential claims still open on the files. The files could not be closed for 5 years. A significant contributory factor to the positive trend of fewer claims or potential claims was the safety and training work going on at Clubs & Centres including further improvements to the rules and operating procedures, and the development of proactive risk assessment in the sport. Tony Butler urged caution in that, as a rule of thumb, a large claim had historically arisen about every three years, which was approximately the time that the BPA's policy had been placed with the current underwriting syndicate. Two potentially costly Member to Member claims, both of which had arisen within the last five years, were still being actively pursued. The Chairman said that even cases that were dropped, or which were successful for the BPA, could give rise to high legal costs, which had to be covered by the policy.

David Hickling reported that all but one BPA Affiliated Drop Zones to which he had spoken, had indicated that they wished to retain insurance cover under the BPA's 'umbrella' policy. The Chairman said this had also been the clear message from last year's Drop Zone Operators' Forum. Paul More confirmed that his own Drop Zone at Bad Lippspringe wished to remain within the BPA insurance policy.

David Hickling said that the BPA was incredibly fortunate that the BPA insurance policy covered us in every respect, providing we abided by our own published rules. If we could negotiate cover for visiting foreign jumpers, this would be a significant and positive development in the continuing evolution of the policy. But he warned that any move away from the unified format of the current policy, towards fragmentation of insurance for different groups within the BPA, could leave the sport facing both higher costs and gaps in insurance cover that could leave it worryingly exposed.

The Chairman thanked David Hickling for this update. David Hickling then left the meeting.

25.2 Media

25.2.1 Report on Media activities

Julian Storey (Honorary Media Co-ordinator) said that the local press around the UK had a hunger for stories of charity skydives, or skydives by 'unusual' people. He circulated an example about staff from a supermarket on a charity skydive. He said that only two Centres kept him regularly supplied with information. He was trying to encourage more Centres to do so, and had produced a news report form for this purpose. Stories of this nature gave the sport and its Centres free publicity and were readily taken up by many local papers because it appealed to them as something different and exciting.

Julian Storey said he had spent considerable time on sending out news releases to the media on the women's 4-way Formation Skydiving World Champions *Team Airkix*. He had issued press releases widely to both the national and local media. Unfortunately, the timing had happened to coincide with major news coverage of the alleged terrorist plot that had paralysed UK airports. This big story had tended to drown out other news, especially in the national media.

The Chairman wished Julian Storey well with the positive media coverage he was generating for skydiving, following the good start made by Elizabeth Stoodley whom he had succeeded as Media Co-ordinator earlier this year.

25.2.2 Media Co-ordinator (minute 18.2)

The Chairman invited Julian Storey to comment on the issue set out at minute 18.2 of the last meeting, at which he had not been present. Julian Storey said that the press in his local area had run a story about his being dropped as a local councillor because he had not attended a sufficient number of meetings, but he had retained his payment as a councillor for work done as most of this was outside meetings. An unverified source had called this to the attention of the BPA. Julian Storey said that there had been no allegation of impropriety, dishonesty or wrongdoing. One report had mentioned his unpaid role as BPA Media Co-ordinator, but he said that this reference was not of his instigation.

John Horne asked whether Julian Storey agreed that the volunteer appointed as BPA Media Co-ordinator should be unbiased and non-partisan, which he did. John Horne then asked Julian Storey whether he had been instrumental in starting an inquiry into a BPA Drop Zone. Julian Storey said that he had not, although he was aware that some had wrongly suggested otherwise. John Horne sought and received Julian Storey's assurance that, were this allegation subsequently proven, Julian Storey would resign as BPA Media Co-ordinator.

The Chairman thanked Julian Storey for his explanation. He said that the Committee, and the Association in general, always strove to maintain the highest standard of integrity. Part of that integrity was not to pay too much heed to allegations that might be motivated by ill feeling. There was a need to work as a team, and much work to be done on the publicity front. The Chairman thanked Julian Storey for his activities in this area.

26/06 The Airkix Fund

The Chairman reported on a meeting that he and John Smyth had had with Simon Ward, Chief Executive of the Airkix wind tunnel in Milton Keynes. A report on the meeting by Simon Ward, entitled 'The Airkix Fund', had been circulated and in the Chairman's view was a fairly accurate record of what had been discussed. The Chairman said that he had asked Simon Ward not to complain about the length of time consideration of the proposal appeared to have taken, because what was being discussed now was a different proposal from the original one, many months ago, made before the Airkix wind tunnel had been built. He said that John Smyth had not shared this view.

The proposal from Simon Ward was to offer to BPA Members a discounted price of £20 instead of the normal price of £110 for 10 minutes' tunnel time (VAT may need to be added to £20) provided the BPA Member brought with them three participating friends, who would each receive a discount of approximately 15% on the basic Airkix 'Kix Start' experience. The £20 revenue collected from each BPA Member participating in the Offer would be credited to the

Airkix Fund for the promotion of skydiving, which would be paid to, and administered by, the BPA.

The Chairman had, however, been unable to agree to two specific requests made in the Airkix proposal document, viz:

- 1 The Development Chairman did not agree to giving over the cover of an issue of *Skydive Magazine* to promote the launch of the scheme to establish the Airkix Fund, because covers were not given over to advertising or promotional messages, even to the BPA's Affiliated Drop Zones that had each contributed thousands of pounds to the Association over the years in P6 memberships.
- 2 The Development Chairman said the BPA was unable to supply personal data on BPA Members (name, date of birth, membership number, etc) as this was governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 and the BPA had made it clear to Members that their personal data would not be made available to third parties, however carefully selected. A significant proportion of Members had signified that they would not consent to their data being made available to third parties even should the policy of the BPA Council change, so there was no scope for a membership list to be made available to Airkix. There was, however, a BPA Member Check facility on the BPA website which required the Member's name and date of birth to be entered to confirm current membership.

The meeting reconfirmed that 1 and 2 above accurately reflected the position of the Development Committee.

John Smyth had drafted an enthusiastic article for *Skydive Magazine* to help to launch the Airkix Fund, and had sought a telephone vote of the Council to approve it for publication. However, the Chairman said that there had been a misunderstanding in that he had said to John Smyth that the cost of an extraordinary Council meeting – around £2K – could not in his view be justified, it would be better to have a conference call. It had not been the Chairman's intention for anything to be published without consultation with Members of the Development Committee. The Chairman of Council had settled the matter by insisting that, since the proposal gave rise to so many issues that required consideration, the Airkix proposal should be subject to the due process by the Development Committee and Council in the normal way, which brought us back to today.

The Chairman of Council, who regretted that he could not be present for this meeting, had raised with the BPA Office a considerable number of points to report to this meeting for clarification or discussion, and these were now each considered in turn.

After discussion, the consensus of the Committee remained in favour of the proposal. Elizabeth Stoodley asked about the budget. She pointed out that, with costs including publicity and promotional materials and any legal costs to launch the Airkix Fund, the Fund would initially be at a deficit, with a number of costs to be paid before any income was generated. The Chairman said he thought that Simon Ward would want the BPA to meet this cost, although he believed that Simon Ward might be prepared to meet the cost of publicity leaflets to be inserted into the Mag.

Debbie Carter (Treasurer) agreed that a budget was necessary if the Committee wished to pursue the Airkix proposal. Paul Applegate said that a budget would show whether, for example, the BPA and Airkix both needed to make an initial contribution to the Airkix Fund, which they could recoup later once monies started to accrue in the Fund. Debbie Carter said that the cost of a colour poster and two Magazine inserts needed to be weighed against how many BPA Members needed to take up the Offer to recover those costs, before any available funds were generated.

Paul Moore said that, in addition to a budget, it was in his view necessary to formulate a draft contract to take forward an agreement in principle to an agreement in detail. Mark Maynard agreed, and said that consultation with Simon Ward over a draft contract would help to clarify matters of detail such as those that the Chairman of Council, and colleagues on this

Committee, had quite properly raised. Adrian Bond suggested that a subgroup might be formed of Committee Members with finance, legal and sales and marketing skills, to take the initiative forward.

The Chairman summarised the position as follows. The Development Committee continued support in principle for the Airkix proposal, and believed that it was now necessary to draw up a budget (including any upfront funding to meet the initial costs of publicity) and draft a contractual agreement between Airkix and the BPA in order to move forward. The Development Committee would be happy for the precise form of words in the contract to be agreed between the Chairman of Council and Simon Ward, as long as the Committee was kept fully informed of progress. The Chairman would report this to the full Council tonight.

Action: Report to Council

27/06 Review of the terms and conditions for BPA Associated Organisations

In view of a shortage of time, the Chairman deferred this item for consideration at the next meeting.

Action: Next meeting

28/06 Development Action Plan: 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007

28.1 Convene a subcommittee of the Development Committee to review and enhance the BPA's income streams following the projected end of UK Sport exchequer funding in 2009

The Chairman invited the previously agreed subcommittee comprising John Horne, Mark Maynard, Paul Moore together with, as available, the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Competitions, to meet to consider income streams for the BPA.

Action: Income Streams Subcommittee

28.2 Support and encourage Clubs & centres to run more safety evenings

See minute 24.3.

In progress

29/06 Dates of next meetings

Tuesdays at 1430 at the BPA Office: 10 October and 5 December 2006.

The meeting closed at 1610.