

# British Parachute Association

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## Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on  
**Tuesday 19 August 2008 at 1406**  
at the BPA Office, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester

<b>Present:</b>	Craig Poxon Paul Applegate John Horne David Ibbotson Paul Ledden Paul Moore Grant Richards	Development Chairman
<b>In attendance:</b>	Tony Butler Jon Gretton David Hickling  John Hitchen Martin Shuttleworth Weed Stoodley	Technical Officer Financial Administrator Chairman, Insurance Working Group (to item 34) NCSO Secretary-General Co-opted
<b>Apologies for absence:</b>	Adrian Bond Debbie Carter John Page Martin Soulsby	Treasurer

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### Item Minute

#### 31/08 Minutes

Paul Applegate proposed, and Paul Ledden seconded, a motion that the minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Wednesday 25 June 2008 should be approved as a correct record.

**Approved**

#### 32/08 Matters arising

##### 32.1 Carriage of parachuting kit by commercial airlines (minute 23.2)

As John Page was not present to give an update, this item was deferred for consideration at the next meeting. The Committee noted that, as a result of rising fuel prices, Ryanair had significantly increased its charge for baggage, which included sports equipment.

**Action: BPA Office**

##### 32.2 Update of the Memorandum & Articles of Association (minute 23.3)

Weed Stoodley and Martin Shuttleworth had circulated in advance a report on progress to date, and spoke to the report.

The BPA's current Articles did not state which categories of Member were entitled to vote. However, this had been established by custom and practice, and Weed Stoodley, with assistance from the Office, had set out a table (circulated in advance) that recorded the position. The Committee agreed that this table (a copy of which is appended to these minutes) should be allocated a number as a BPA Form and published on the BPA website.

The table codified the principle that the governance of the Association was under the control of its Full Members, ie those who had met the requirements for admission as (or, in BPA parlance, conversion to become) Full Members and were in good standing (ie, had paid their current year's membership subscription). Qualified Associate and Life Members were also included as voting members. Provisional Members (Student Members and Temporary Members) were not entitled to vote. The category of Pilot Members generated some discussion. Pilot Membership in effect related to a register of authorised pilots of parachuting aircraft. Some pilots were Full BPA Members in their own right, in which case they had a vote. Other pilots, however, were Pilot Members only and for this they paid a subscription of £20 for two years, which was a fraction of the annual subscription for Full Members. In constitutional terms, therefore, it was clear that Pilot Members did not have a vote in the governance of the Association (unless they were also Full Members).

Further discussion elucidated that the exclusive entitlement of voting members was to play any part in the electoral process – that is to stand, propose, second or vote in an election of the Association's Council of Management; and to attend General Meetings. Entitlement to attend General Meetings generated further discussion. There was a difference between the legal entitlement of voting members to attend a BPA General meeting (or a BPA Council or Committee meeting other than an in-camera session), and the 'open doors' policy that the Council chose to operate, at its own discretion, for non-voting Members and guests. Only voting members were entitled to vote at General Meetings (the AGM and the EGM), but as entry to these meetings was not regulated, the question arose of how to exercise control over who cast a vote. One possible solution was that voting Members should hold up their Membership cards when voting. In practice, General Meetings were attended mainly by voting Members, and proof of entitlement to vote was likely to matter only on close votes.

Martin Shuttleworth urged the Committee to bear in mind that the BPA was not ploughing a lone furrow and that its provisions for voting were typical of third sector member-run associations. The voting arrangements were already well established within the BPA through custom and practice, but it appeared that the Memorandum & Articles of Association had simply not been updated many years ago when various different categories of Membership had been introduced, because the Articles referred only to 'Members'. Updating the Articles was therefore, in relation to voting arrangements, simply a matter of documenting the existing position.

Weed Stoodley cited some of the other issues that had arisen in working on the updated Articles, several of which she proposed to refer to Jim Crocker, a Vice President, who had kindly offered to give a legal opinion. Her written report also covered how the proposed variations might best be put to an AGM, for ease of understanding. She said that, in view of the complexity of the work, the target date to put the variations to the AGM (having first been approved first by this Committee and then by the full Council, and then circulated to voting Members, probably as an insert to the Mag) would be January 2010. However, a progress report could be provided to next year's AGM, on 10 January 2009, to outline the planned variations.

Apart from setting out in writing which categories of Member were entitled to vote, the other main update would be to allow electronic communication with Members on matters of formal Association business such as notices of, and documents for, General Meetings (the AGM and EGM). This would need to comply with the provisions of the Companies Act 1996, which allowed a new format for companies' Articles, including provision for electronic communications where agreed at a General Meeting. Weed Stoodley said that revision of the Articles had been triggered by the call for the provision of electronic communications with Members, and this had led to the desirability of updating the Articles and aligning them with current best practice as set out in the Companies Act 2006.

One other addition it would be appropriate to make to the Articles was a statement that elected Members of Council are the Directors of British Parachute Association Ltd. This had always been the case, but it was not plainly stated in the current Memorandum & Articles.

The Chairman thanked Weed Stoodley and the Office for their work on updating the BPA's Articles.

**Ongoing**

### **32.3 Chairmanship of the Insurance Working Group (minute 24.3)**

The Chairman reported that, pursuant to minute 24.3, he had invited David Hickling to remain as Chairman of the Insurance Working Group (formerly the Insurance Subcommittee) and David Hickling had kindly agreed. David Hickling said that, whilst he was happy to continue in this capacity for the time being for the sake of continuity, he genuinely believed that the Chair should be occupied by an elected Member of Council and urged the Committee to work to such a position. The Chairman noted that, to that end, Grant Richards had already expressed an interest but this was his first year on the Working Party. The Committee thanked David Hickling for kindly agreeing to continue so that the Association could still benefit from his extensive experience and understanding of the difficult, complicated and usually thankless task of arranging insurance cover for our sport. David Hickling said that the role of Insurance Chairman between meetings was principally as a figurehead and overseer, and that considerable expertise together with a significant amount of the work during each year's renewal cycle resided with the BPA's employed staff.

Grant Richards was liaising with a broker in preparation for a quotation for next year's insurance. The broker had requested a copy of the bordereau (claims log) and Grant Richards would supply this under the usual confidentiality arrangements.

## **33/08 Reports on areas of responsibility**

### **33.1 UK Sport / Sport England / Sport England Regions**

John Horne reported that there had been a possibility of the Sports Minister attending an airsports event, but that the dates had not proven to be conducive to invite him to the August Nationals because he had been in Beijing for the Olympics. The Royal Aero Club was co-ordinating the invitation, and it now looked as though dates in September or later in the year were being considered. Unfortunately there was no high-profile skydiving event in the diary during those months to which it might be appropriate to invite the Minister.

John Horne said that Sport England was formulating a new strategy, much of which appeared to focus on the funding of local sports clubs. There did not appear to be a great deal in it that would be likely directly to benefit sport parachuting, but John Horne would maintain his watching brief to identify any opportunities that may arise.

There was nothing to report from the BPA's representatives to the Sport England Regions.

### **33.2 CCPR**

Funding of £1022.29 had now been received with thanks from Bingo Lotto through CCPR. This had been applied to Skills Coaching Roadshows for non-seniors organised by the Competitions Committee in partnership with host Clubs & Centres. Andy Scott (Competitions Chairman) had obtained some publicity photographs of skydivers with the Bingo Lotto logo for publicity, as requested by CCPR. The Bingo Lotto programme was to be re-launched in the autumn, and some Drop Zones had expressed an interest in the 'Bingo Lotto Buddy Scheme', where they could benefit from each ticket they sold. Adrian Bond was continuing to look after Bingo Lotto as part of his brief as BPA liaison officer with CCPR. **[Note:** Information from CCPR received subsequent to the meeting gave a revised the Bingo Lotto re-launch date of February 2009.]

### **33.3 Insurance**

David Hickling (Insurance Chairman) reported that he planned to contact a broker who had approached the BPA earlier in the year to explore whether he might be able to obtain a quote or quotes for next year's insurance. Two other brokers, who quoted last year with prices from different underwriters, were also believed to be likely to quote again. Grant Richards was in liaison with one of them. David Hickling said that the nature of the insurance required for our sport meant that it was a small and specialist market, but he was pleased that it appeared likely that this year the BPA would again be able to secure several quotations from which to select the best value cover for the Membership.

### **33.4 Media**

The Committee expressed its gratitude for the hard work of Becca Armstrong and Rich Rust, BPA Media Co-ordinators, particularly in relation to this year's World Parachuting Championships. Good news stories included the World Champion Gold won by British 4-way FS

women's team Bodyflight Storm and the World Bronze brought home by the British Freely team Volairkix. Gaining publicity had been more difficult because of the overlap of dates with the Olympics. However, it was still early days and often regional or national media would pick up stories from local media. Weed Stoodley said that Rich Rust and Becca Armstrong were to be congratulated on the excellent job they were doing and the Committee wholeheartedly agreed.

**34/08 Application of the Airkix Fund**

Further to discussion at the last meeting (minute 23.5), Martin Soulsby reported in absentia that he had contacted Brian Vacher about a possible canopy handling video that the money in the Airkix Fund (£1420) could be used to produce. Tony Butler reminded the Committee that Martin Soulsby and John Page had also kindly agreed to contact Mark Bayada, who had chaired the BPA's Canopy Handling Working Group. The Chairman said he would duly remind Martin Soulsby and John Page.

***Action: Martin Soulsby & John Page***

The Committee also considered the need for an update of photographs of malfunctions for training purposes. The Chairman said that this was a possible target for next year's Development Action Plan and asked that it should be brought forward at the February 2009 meeting at which the Action Plan would be formulated.

***Bring forward to February 2009 meeting***

**35/08 Membership recruitment and retention initiative**

John Horne had circulated a paper in advance on a membership recruitment and retention initiative. He had developed this paper following consultation and earlier general discussions. He outlined his proposal. The recruitment and retention initiative comprised two distinct strands:

**(i) Student Provisional Members**

Conversion from Student Provisional (or, occasionally, Temporary) to Full Membership was currently required before the jumper made their first freefall descent, AFF level 2 or wished to jump beyond the one-month validity of a Temporary Membership. Conversion represented a significant financial hurdle that might be a disincentive to continue in a sport in which they still had very limited experience.

**(ii) Experienced jumpers**

It was well known that some non-novice jumpers (who may have trained abroad) had consciously made a decision to do most of their jumps outside the UK, and were therefore reluctant to pay the annual subscription for BPA Full Membership for what might be only occasional jumps during the summer. Whilst Temporary Membership would appear to suit this group, it lasted for only one month and current policy was to allow an individual to hold only one such membership a year.

John Horne said that whereas it was obviously an aspiration for the BPA to encourage jumpers to upgrade to take out Full Membership, there was an opportunity to encourage and incentivise this transition by adopting a slightly more flexible approach. He said that the BPA could highlight the benefits and advantages of Full Membership (eligibility for licences, ratings, the BPA magazine, voting rights, etc) whilst allowing, at an early stage, a little more flexibility in the conditions for certain categories of Membership. He said that this initiative was directed purely at those who were not already Full Members.

The Committee discussed John Horne's paper and supported the thinking behind it. David Ibbotson said that looking after students should be the main issue. If the initiative was to be fanned out to experienced jumpers, were there any statistics on how many experienced jumpers were likely to take up this new scheme, if introduced? The Chairman said there were no statistics but purely anecdotal evidence suggested that a number of British skydivers now only jumped abroad, and he believed that such an initiative was worth trying to seek to encourage them to jump again in the UK. Tony Butler noted that the statistics on the number of licences issued suggested that the market was not particularly price sensitive. Nevertheless, he said that if the new initiative was not tried out, the outcome would never be known. But he believed that the opportunities and benefits of the initiative would need to be explained to Clubs & Centres. The potential advantages cited by John Horne were:

- students would be further down the road of their training before having to pay the Full Member subscription, and having achieved Freefall status may be more incentivized to continue in the Sport;
- any progression beyond student status (A licence) would automatically require conversion to Full Membership, as licences may only be held by Full Members;
- UK-based jumpers who were inclined to jump abroad would be able to jump in this country (for two months) and having jumped at a UK Centre might be more inclined to take out Full Membership;
- jumpers from abroad may jump here for longer and more often, perhaps encouraging jumpers to enter/attend more competitions/boogies in the UK;
- no change would be required to the current BPA insurance premium or policy.

John Horne recognised that there may be disadvantages, among which might be Full Members ' seeking to exploit the flexibility by 'trading down' to Temporary Membership as a shorter and cheaper option. However, the option would not be open to existing or recent Full Members – this was a detail that had still to be worked on in formulating precise conditions for the initiative. Also, monitoring of membership status may hold drawbacks for DZ Operators.

John Horne proposed, and Paul Moore seconded, a motion that this Committee should recommended to tonight's meeting of the full Council, in principle and subject to formulating the detail, that there should be a 12 or 24 month trial of a more flexible approach whereby an individual who did not already hold Full Membership would be eligible to take out up to two Temporary Memberships, or one Student Provisional and One Temporary Membership, during a 12 month period.

**Carried unanimously**

**36/08 Development Action Plan: 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009**

**36.1 Improve the functionality of BPA website to provide more and better services to Members and the wider public**

Graham Hayes of Hayes Computing Solutions Ltd (Hcoms), the BPA's new website and database development consultants, had not yet progressed development of an online voting facility on the new BPA website. This would now be a later phase of development of the website, after the facility for online membership renewals had been introduced (minute 27.1 refers) .

There remained issues to resolve about dovetailing online voting with the parallel paper-based system that the Office understood companies law to oblige the BPA to continue to offer those voting Members who preferred to use the traditional ballot card or paper. This meant that, for this year at least, the only practicable way in which the BPA could again offer online voting together with a paper-based alternative (as had been successfully introduced last year) would be by repeating the same arrangements as then, namely contracting out administration of the election to Electoral Reform Services. It would not be known until the cut-off date for nominations for Council 2009 [on Thursday 23 October 2008] whether an election would be triggered, the trigger being more nominees than the 15 available seats.

**Ongoing**

**36.2 Pilot implementation of selected new funding stream/s**

**36.2.1 Possible BPA tandem agency**

The Chairman reported that he was continuing to work on the development of a tandem agency website for possible use by the BPA.

**Action: Chairman**

**36.2.2 BPA Shop**

Grant Richards reported that the BPA Shop, which was franchised to UK Parachute Services Ltd (UKPS), which ran the Attleborough, Norfolk, Drop Zone with his business partner Jason Thompson, passed to the BPA 10% of net sales on all BPA branded items and 15% on jump vouchers. The demand for jump vouchers was modest – 24 had been sold in 2007 and 12 to date this year. The BPA Shop was a low-key operation. There was fair interest in BPA-branded

logbooks and students' handbooks were quite popular. However, some of the stock, such as the red jogging bottoms with the BPA logo, were perhaps not the height of current fashion.

Grant Richards said that that UKPS had no formal written agreement with the BPA to run the BPA Shop, although he acknowledged that discussions had taken place with the BPA in 2005/6 when UKPS had bought the Drop Zone from which the BPA Shop had already been run for many years. At that time, everything had been new to Grant Richards and Jason Thompson and they had merely continued with the previous established arrangements. The Office had a copy of the wording of a possible draft agreement between the BPA and UKPS but this had not at the time progressed to be signed.

Grant Richards said that he, wearing both his BPA and UKPS hats, recognised that the BPA Shop was likely to have significant unfulfilled potential. There were various options to take it forward. He believed the next step was to identify and evaluate these options.

The Chairman therefore invited John Horne, who was spearheading the target to diversify and enhance the BPA's income streams, together with Paul Moore if available, to discuss the potential of the BPA Shop with Grant Richards and Jason Thompson of UKPS. The Office provided a copy of the draft of the possible written agreement that had been prepared in February 2006, and the Chairman said that the Committee looked forward to hearing the outcome of the discussion at the next meeting.

**Action: John Horne & Paul Moore**

### **36.3 Support and encourage Clubs & Centres to run more safety events**

The availability of these grants to Affiliated Centres would be promoted by a letter to Drop Zones and a reminder at the Drop Zone Owners' and Operators' meeting planned for this autumn (see minute 38).

**Action: BPA Office**

### **36.4 Increase media coverage of skydiving in local UK media**

The target of issuing the new media contact form to first-time jumpers had been achieved (minute 23.4).

The Office had received feedback of an item that had appeared in a local newspaper that had been generated from an initial contact by a first-time jumper using the new media form. The Office said that, without the high cost of the BPA engaging a press cuttings agency - or these days, its electronic equivalent - feedback was difficult to obtain, because it relied on the jumper letting the Office know that the media had covered their jump.

Paul Ledden asked that the media form for first-time jumpers, which was downloadable from the media page of the BPA website, should be allocated a BPA Form number and uploaded to the Forms page of the website too.

**Action: BPA Office / Target achieved**

### **36.5 Research the promotion of the sport to young people**

The Office reported that the Royal Aero Club had sent an e-mail regarding a schools initiative by London-based Flying Aces Ltd, who were the FAI's media partners. Flying Aces had a long-term objective of raising the profile and understanding of airsports to such a level that it became included in the formal curriculum for all secondary school students. Flying Aces was already working with one state-run school near London that had agreed to run a trial programme for this. The RAeC had invited its member associations, including the BPA, to become involved.

The Committee noted that this appeared to tie in with the already-agreed Action Plan target of researching promotion of the sport to young people, which Martin Soulsby was co-ordinating. Therefore, the Committee asked that, subject to consultation by the Office with John Smyth in his capacity as BPA delegate to RAeC, the invitation from RAeC should be forwarded to Martin Soulsby for the BPA's response and, if he judged it to be appropriate, involvement. The Committee was supportive in principle of an initiative of this nature.

**Action: Martin Soulsby**

Weed Stoodley noted that Lesley Gale, Editor of *Skydive the Mag*, had recently had a book about skydiving published for young readers, and she believed that it would be wonderful if the BPA could try to get a copy into every school.

**37/08 Period of tenure on Council**

In response to a referral from the Council (Council minute 56) supported by a paper (previously circulated) by John Horne, the Committee debated the case for putting to the Membership at a General Meeting that the period of election on Council should be extended from one year to three years. Under such a model, one third of the 15-strong Council would retire by rotation each year, and be eligible to stand for re-election.

The Committee recognised that there might be benefits for the BPA in a three-year period of tenure on Council. The principal benefit was the assurance of continuity, because no more than 5 seats would come up for election at any one time (excluding any casual vacancies). With the existing one-year period of election, all 15 seats came up for election each year and it was possible that a majority, and even possible although unlikely that all 15, of the seats could change at one time, leading to major change and possibly an element of discontinuity in the policy of the Association between one year and the next. A hallmark of a successful third sector member-run governing body was arguably evolution not revolution.

There were also possibly benefits to the individual who served as a Council Member for a three-year period in terms of continuity. For a new, first-time Council Member, the first year often presented quite a steep learning curve. It was often only in the second year, when the cycle turned again, that a new Council Member would be likely to be fully confident with the procedures and protocols such that he or she would be in a position to make an effective contribution. In a third year, the Council Member might begin to see the outcomes of longer-term policy initiatives that they had taken part in formulating.

However, this had to be weighed against the likelihood that potential new nominees to Council might be dissuaded from standing if it would be for a three-year period of office. This might significantly reduce the potential pool of new talent available to the Association as elected Members of its governing Council. This was against the Council's long-established policy of encouraging Members to stand for election to Council.

On balance, the benefit of assured continuity from a three-year period of tenure on Council (which had never yet really materialised as a problem) was overshadowed by the major disadvantage of what the Committee believed would be a significant disincentive to potential new nominees to stand for election to Council.

Paul Ledden summed up the Committee's position by saying that the theory of a 3-year tenure on Council appeared on paper to be compelling, but human factors made it unworkable in the real world.

Therefore, there was no proposal to change the status quo of annual election of all 15 seats on the Council.

**No further action**

**38/08 Meeting for Drop Zone Owners and Operators**

This item had been referred to the Committee by the full Council (Council minute 56) arising from discussion of the cost of aircraft fuel. The Committee decided to call a meeting for Drop Zone Owners and Operators in autumn 2008. Paul Moore proposed, and David Ibbotson seconded, a date of Wednesday 29 October 2008 at a venue to be arranged.

**Carried unanimously**

[**Note:** Subsequent to the meeting, it was established that neither the Chairman of Council or the Technical Officer would be available on that date so, after further consultation, a new date of Tuesday 11 November was settled upon.]

The Office would issue a call notice setting out agenda items that had already been identified, and inviting DZOs themselves to submit agenda items.

**Action: BPA Office**

**39/08 Car mileage allowance**

David Ibbotson proposed, and Paul Applegate seconded, a motion that in the light of the recent increase in the cost of fuel, the mileage rates paid for own car use on BPA business (members' rate and staff rate) should each increase by 3p per mile.

**Carried unanimously**

**40/08 Dates of next meetings**

Tuesdays at 1600 at the BPA Office, Glen Parva, Leicester: 7 October and 2 December 2008.

The meeting closed at 1635

**Appendix****Categories of BPA Membership and their entitlements**

Category	Description	Vote	Insurance	Mag	Payment	Period
Full Member	Renewal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	To 31 March
	New (1-7) New Full Membership					
	Conv (1-7) Converting from Temp or Provisional Student			share one copy	Yes (discount for 1 Mag between 2)	
	Joint / Joint 2 –Full Membership but shared Mag					
Life Member	Currently, an honour conferred by Council on to Full Members who have made an exceptional contribution to the sport	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	To 31 March
Qualified Associate Member	Non Jumping Membership ie Riggers etc, and given to Judges free of charge (Judges pay for own top up should they wish to jump)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes or No	To 31 March
Temporary Member	Temporary membership (ie visitor/student) (Non EU or EU without relevant paperwork)	No	Yes	No	Yes	1 month from date of issue
Provisional Student Member	Student – ie for Tandem//Cat System 1 <sup>st</sup> F/F/AFF level 1	No	Yes	No	Yes	12 months from date of issue
Pilot Member	For Pilots (non jumping, register of pilots of aircraft for sport parachuting)	No	No	No	Yes (nominal fee)	To 31 March the year after next
Non-member Magazine subscriber	Given BPA number for admin of Mag mailings only	No	No	Yes	Yes	12 months from date of subscription

Ratified by the Council on 7 October 2008