



Meeting 2007A of the BHPA Executive Council

Meeting held on Saturday 13th January, 2007 at the Quorn Grange Hotel, Quorn, Leicestershire.

These notes of the Minutes are not to be taken as a full record of the Meeting of the Directors of BHPA Ltd.

Present:

Marc Asquith
Ed Cunliffe
Paul Dancey
Rustam Davar
Edi Geczi
Martin Heywood
Angus Pinkerton
Steve Walsh

In attendance:

Jennie Burdett
Mark Dale
Joe Schofield
Dave Thompson

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Apologies were received from John Aldridge, Sean Lovatt and John Welch.

Martin said there was a lot to get through on the agenda but Officers' Reports should not take too long as nothing much had changed since reports were given at the AGM.

ITEM 2: MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Meeting 2006B - 22 September, 2006

The minutes were approved without amendment.

AGM - 2 December, 2006.

Subject to the correction of some spelling errors the minutes were approved.

ITEM 3: MATTERS ARISING

2004 - C18 Closed

2005 - A2 Continuing.

2006 - A11 Closed

2006 - A13 Closed

2006 - B1 Closed

2006 - B2 Mark Dale reported that the law in respect of Child Protection had changed and if our schools are taking under eighteens, then it appears that we must have a policy. Otherwise, we may have to say that nobody under the age of eighteen can participate.

Members agreed that it is important that we have young people taking up our sport and if necessary we will have to produce a CPP. Mark is having a meeting with the NSPCC Sports Advisory Unit next month and will report back. Continuing.

2006 - B3 Martin said he had followed up the possibility of getting a Treasurer via an organisation that places volunteers. Our request is now on their website and we must wait to see if anyone is interested. If we do not get a result from this then we will do a search of our own database. Closed.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A1) Jennie Burdett to search

membership database for accountants etc.

2006 - B4 Closed

2006 - B5 Continuing

2006 - B6 Closed

2006 - B7 Closed

2006 - B8 Closed

2006 - B9 Closed

2006 - B10 Martin had been in touch with Tom Hardie re the sites database but there had been no progress. It was felt that this situation had been going on for too long and if it could not be resolved we would have to start a new database. Closed.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A2) Steve Walsh to get the sites database situation resolved.

2006 - B11 More Pilot Handbooks have been printed and the BHPA Shop has good stocks. Closed.

Edi asked if the new edition of the PHB could have more diagrams and Joe said he would be happy to look at this if Edi could let him have details of where he thought diagrams would be useful.

2006 - B12 Mark said he had received an email from Paul Mahoney re paramotor AP ratings and he would copy this to Ed Cunliffe. Ed, Paul and Michel Carnet had all been working on this. Continuing.

2006 - B13 Closed.

ITEM 4: SPORT & LEISURE AVIATION SHOW

Attendance figures for the last five years show that there has been a significant drop in the number of BHPA members going to the show and Martin said the Exec needs to decide where we go from here.

Mark said the first thing to decide is why we put the show on. Is it for the members, to make money or to sign up new members.

The costs of the show were discussed although some aspects of this are difficult to quantify, such as Stef's time. It was noted that although we have a BHPA employee working on the show organisation, the BMAA have a volunteer. This means that our costs are considerably higher than theirs.

It was felt that the marketing of the show had not been sufficient and if this could be improved upon for this year, we may increase attendance. Marc Asquith suggested that Skywings could play a bigger part in promoting the show. In response, Joe

said his report was deliberate, he did not want to say that the show was even bigger and better when it was patently clear that it was not bigger.

The attendance figures included a number for PFA members and Exec queried why this was on there. Did it mean that PFA members showing their membership card were also getting a discount the same as BHPA and BMAA members?

There followed numerous suggestions as to how we could improve the attendance figures for our own members, such as a free ticket printed in Skywings and discounted parking fees.

Rustam suggested moving the show to somewhere like Earls Court as, looking at demographics, the majority of our members are in the South East.

Joe referred to an article he had received from Andy Shaw for the next Skywings. In the article Andy argues for a hang gliding/paragliding village at one of the big shows. If we did this we would not need to put on our own show. Martin felt that this was a very good idea and that we would be more likely to get new members from such an event. It would also make it easier for us to control the costs. However, there was a general feeling that it is too late this year to do anything other than run our show at the NEC again. Angus pointed out that we need a change of emphasis; our own show is more about selling kit than getting new members and the thing we need to do most is to get more members. Having a village at one of the big shows would mean that we would be seen by thousands of potential members.

Marc said that what we need is a manager to oversee the work and make some decisions. Martin agreed that not having someone in charge of marketing the event had been a problem.

After much discussion there was a vote on whether the show should be held at the NEC and members voted in favour of carrying on for another year.

Edi and Rustam volunteered to get involved with the management of the show and to look at having a village in one of the other shows in 2008.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A3) Edi Geczi and Rustam Davar to look at other options for the BHPA show / AGM for the winter of 2008/09 and report back to Exec.

Angus added that if we get a really good offer from another show we may have to make a decision before we know the results from our own show this year.

Members agreed that the BMAA should be kept in the loop so that we do not leave them in a difficult position. If we do go to a bigger show they may want to do the same.

ITEM 5: NEW MEMBERS

5.1 Martin explained that member numbers are falling and he had had to go to the insurers in December to get the minimum premium reduced. He had managed to get it reduced but if member numbers do not pick up we will be using our reserves to pay the insurance premium. Dave said that historically we have paid little attention to getting young people into the sport and youth is where development and new members will come from. The fault is partly ours because we have done nothing about it, and partly because of the ANO which restricts what under-sixteens are allowed to do. Dave believes that BHPA should be lobbying to get the CAA to reduce the age restriction. If it could be reduced from sixteen to fourteen, so that fourteen year olds could get a CP, it would make a huge difference to our sport and given that we are going to have to deal with the CPP issue anyway, we have nothing to lose.

Edi agreed with Dave's views and referred to a presentation he had given to a group of under-sixteens. They had all been very keen to fly but unfortunately it was not possible. If we can find a way to get these youngsters flying then our membership numbers will increase substantially.

Angus suggested that this should be pursued but warned of the possibility that the CAA may revoke the exemption for parasailing that we currently have. However, Mark did not think that this was likely to be a problem.

Members agreed that we should try to get the age restriction changed.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A4) Marc Asquith to approach CCA and liaise with Angus Pinkerton re CAA.

5.2 The meeting then discussed how to get university clubs going again. The Association used to have many such clubs but

these have gradually dwindled away and now we have none.

To get a club started it needs a group of students who are interested to approach the Students' Union and set the club up. Funding is not a problem, the difficult part is getting the group together in the first place.

Freshers' Week is in September and it was agreed that we should try to get our schools to have a presence there. Edi suggested that a leaflet should be sent to our schools explaining how the system works and it could also be a topic for the Instructors' Workshop. Another suggestion was for posters to be sent to universities for their sports notice boards.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A5) Mark Dale and Dave Thompson to follow up on university clubs.

ITEM 6: BHPA SIMULATOR

66.1 Mark informed the meeting that the new BHPA simulator, which had proved to be very popular at the NEC, would easily be damaged if we allowed it to be collected, transported and used by lots of different people. In his opinion we should seek some volunteers to be responsible for the equipment and to take it to shows etc.

This was agreed.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A6) Joe Schofield to put an item in Skywings asking for volunteers to run the simulator.

6.2 Mark then went on to say that Exec needs to make a decision about a hang glider simulator. The person working on the project at Hull University will be leaving shortly so this will be our last opportunity.

Members agreed that a hang glider simulator should be acquired while we have the chance.

6.3 Marketing was then discussed and Rustam wondered whether we should advertise in magazines for men, such as Loaded or Stuff. He felt that we should be targeting people with disposable income and make more of an effort to attract women into the sport.

Dave replied that the best advertising is articles with pictures, ads in a magazines do not generally work well. Sponsoring a journalist to do a two day taster at a school was suggested.

Rustam agreed to think about marketing and to contact David Wootton to ensure that he was not going over old ground.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A7) Rustam Davar to contact David Wootton re marketing.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A8) Edi Geczi to speak to Andrew Rastall re marketing.

6.4 The meeting then considered whether any changes could be made in regard to training to enable schools to get students through more quickly. However, Dave warned there could be no changes without making it more of a risk.

Edi said that the BMAA get paramotor pilots through in two weeks. Mark replied that FSC plan to get together with paramotor instructors next month to see if the syllabus can be improved, i.e. cut it down so that the schools can get them through more quickly.

If we want to be a paramotor association we have to make our system easier to get through. At the moment it takes three years to get someone qualified to take people out on to a hill and teach them to paraglide but paramotoring is not as complex as paragliding, it is taught on flat ground in calm weather. FSC will therefore be considering a paramotor flat field only course which should qualify them for a paramotor flat field licence after ten days. Our current system is over the top for this kind of operation.

Edi expressed concern that people are being passed out without being sufficiently qualified and the standard is actually going down. Mark replied that we cannot train people until they are absolutely safe.

Dave added that one of the fundamental factors that we have no control over is the weather. In order to get and keep members we need to get them through quicker but FSC will have to investigate the safety aspects of quicker qualification.

6.5 Marc asked about the small paragliders and hang gliders used for speed riding and Angus said the FSC Development Panel was already looking at this and it may bring in some new

members. At the moment these people are signing up as Development Pilots and registering prototypes..

6.6 Angus said that the idea that in today's world we are going to get back to the numbers we had before is very unlikely because there are so many other sports in competition. When hang gliding had a large membership there were very few other adrenalin sports around. These days, people try one sport after another but do not necessarily get hooked on any.

6.7 The possibility of a tandem training syllabus for people who do not have the time to wait around on a hill was suggested. Angus said that if Edi could come up with a syllabus then FSC would look at it, however in the USA, where this had been tried, it had resulted in instructor deaths and now low and slow is considered to be the best way. Students do a couple of days on low tows before going on to the hills.

Martin said that it should not be too difficult for schools to approach a farmer in order to be able to do some low level winching from a flat field. It would not need a huge area, just enough for students to be airborne.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A9) Mark Dale and Dave Thompson to make schools aware that they can use small areas to start training students on low tows.

6.8 Edi pointed out that most fifty year olds are very fit and healthy these days and therefore, as well as trying to encourage youngsters into the sport, we should be targeting older people with disposable income. Rustam added that Skywings should also be trying to get advertising from financial companies, pension providers etc. Our membership demographic is increasing so we should be advertising products that apply to them.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A10) Joe Schofield to speak to Colin Fargher re advertising geared to older members.

ITEM 7: BRADWELL EDGE

Steve Walsh informed the meeting that Bradwell Edge is going up for sale and he gave members some background information. A planning application for a car park had been refused because it would change the nature of the site and the National Park had asked the land owner to stop the flying.

After discussion members were broadly in favour of making an interest free, fully repayable, loan to the club for purchase of the land should this be necessary. It was also agreed that any decision regarding a loan would be made by the whole Exec and not the F&GP alone.

ITEM 8: AAIB

Now that the AAIB have taken over the investigation of fatal pg/hg accidents, we need a procedure to get our Incident Reports published. Mark reported that the BGA have a complicated system of links between their own website and the AAIB website but he wondered whether we should publish on our own website and forget the links.

Martin felt that the reports should be on the BHPA website but not so prominent that they would frighten off potential members. All agreed.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A11) Dave Thompson to liaise with Sean Lovatt re putting IRs on the website.

ITEM 9: STATISTICAL REVIEW

Rustam is working with a small team to look at the statistical information from the membership database and come up with some answers as to why we have such a high turnover of members. He had produced a list of questions that would be looked at and these were discussed by the meeting.

It was clear from the information that Rustam already had that the number of instructors had decreased dramatically in the last five years. He suggested that in terms of the decline of h/g and p/g it may be worth talking to other associations in Europe and the USA.

Dave said he is convinced that the weather is a major factor in why our sport is in decline.

Rustam then suggested that BHPA should have Sites Guides such as they have available in Europe but it was

explained that when this had been tried before many of the clubs were vehemently against it. However, after further consideration it was felt that this was sometime ago and maybe things had changed since then.

FOR ACTION: (2007 - A12) Joe Schofield to look at publishing something on sites in Skywings.

Paul mentioned that Sean Lovatt is planning to resurrect the National Sites Database so maybe clubs would agree to putting articles in Skywings too.

ITEM 10: STAFF SALARY REVIEW

The staff salary review would be dealt with by the F&GP as usual.

ITEM 11: REPORTS

Due to time constraints Martin restricted this to additional points not already submitted in writing and concerning major points/decisions required only.

11.1 Treasurer

Marc said he expected the accounts for the year to show a loss of between £15k and £30k but added that whilst he is concerned, he does not feel there is any need to panic as we have good reserves. We do, however, need to focus over the coming years on how we are going to improve the situation by cutting costs and increasing membership figures.

The insurance is still a big problem and we need to make sure that our good record continues for several more years. Martin said we are not yet in a position to be able to shop around but we have got the safety sorted and there are very few claims these days.

11.2 FSC

With regard to lightweight microlights, BHPA policy has always been: if it has wheels then it is nothing to do with us. The question now is are we going to apply the same policy to paragliders with wheels? If we do that, these people will simply go and join the BMAA. No decision could be made at this time and members were asked to think about this before the next meeting.

ITEM 12: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 It was agreed that in future all Agendas and reports etc.. for Exec meetings would be distributed by email.

12.2 A grant of £350 was approved towards costs of the Instructor Workshop.

ITEM 13: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held early on in the summer.

ACTIONS - OPENED, CONTINUING

WHO	NUMBER	WHAT	STATUS
All Exec	2005 - A2	Email Job Description and photo to Sean.	Continuing
Mark Dale	2006 - B2	Produce wording of choices available to schools in regard to CPP.	Continuing
Martin Heywood/ John Aldridge	2006 - B5	Soften wording of Mark' PPG paper.	Continuing
Ed Cunliffe	2006 - B12	Liaise with Mark Dale re AP ratings for SPHG.	Continuing
Jennie Burdett	2007 - A1	Search membership database for accountants etc.	Opened
Marc Asquith	2007 - A2	Get sites database issue resolved.	Opened
Edi Geczi/ Rustam Davar	2007 - A3	Explore options for BHPA show / AGM.	Opened
Marc Asquith	2007 - A4	Approach CCPR and liaise with Angus Pinkerton re CAA.	Opened
Mark Dale	2007 - A5	Follow up on university clubs.	Opened
Joe Schofield	2007 - A6	Publish request for volunteer to run simulator.	Opened
Rustam Davar	2007 - A7	Contact David Wootton re marketing.	Opened
Edi Geczi	2007 - A8	Speak to Andrew Rastall re marketing.	Opened
Mark Dale/ Dave Thompson	2007 - A9	Make schools aware of the benefits of starting training using tow.	Opened
Joe Schofield	2007 - A10	Speak to Colin Fargher re advertising geared to older members.	Opened
Dave Thompson	2007 - A11	Liaise with Sean Lovatt re publishing IRs on website.	Opened
Joe Schofield	2007 - A12	Look a publishing articles on sites in Skywings.	Opened