

# British Parachute Association

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## Safety & Training Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Thursday 1 February 2018 at 1900**

at BPA HQ, Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester LE2 9TF

<b>Present:</b>	Jeff Montgomery	-	Chair STC/STO
	Mark Bayada	-	APA
	Richard Wheatley	-	Skydive Langar
	Matty Holford	-	JSPW(N)
	Pete Sizer	-	Skydive Headcorn
	Ryan Mancey	-	Go Skydive
	Ian Roseninge	-	Peterlee
	Brucie Johnson	-	Blue Skies
	Rob Spour	-	Target Skysports
	Mike Rust	-	SCC Ltd
	Kieran Brady	-	Skydive Strathallan
	Paul Yeoman	-	Black Knights
	Sara Orton	-	Skydive GB
<b>Apologies:</b>	Dennis Buchanan, Andy Duncan, Stuart Meacock, Iain Anderson, Jason Farrant, Andy Clark, Dave Wood, Jay Webster.		
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Tony Butler	-	Chief Operating Officer
	John Hitchen	-	Vice Chair STC
	Paul Applegate	-	Chair Riggers' Subcommittee/Council
	Trudy Kemp	-	Assistant to COO/STC
<b>Observers:</b>	Gary Stevens, Rick Boardman, Dave Major, Les Cooper, John Boxall, Steve Saunders, Karen Saunders, Andy Pointer, Gary Small, Noel Purcell.		

### Declarations of interest

The Chair invited declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda for this meeting. Paul Yeoman declared an interest in Item 8 of the Agenda.

### ITEM MINUTE

#### 1. MINUTES OF THE STC MEETING OF 16 NOVEMBER 2017

It was proposed by Brucie Johnson and seconded by Matty Holford that the Minutes of the STC Meeting of 16 November 2017 be accepted as a true record.

**Carried Unanimously**

#### 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF 16 NOVEMBER 2017

**Page 3, Item 6 - (Report of Panel of Inquiry – Carl Marsh Fatality)**. The Chair reported that it had been agreed at the last STC meeting that a Working Group would be formed to consider the recommendations of the Panel. At the same meeting it was also requested that if anyone wished to volunteer for the Working Group they should contact HQ. Only one person has volunteered so far. The Chair stated that two Recommendations from the Panel would be covered under item 7 of the agenda.

### **3. RIGGERS' SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF 16 NOVEMBER 2017**

Paul Applegate (Chair, Riggers' Subcommittee) stated that he had nothing to report from the previous meeting.

It was therefore proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Richard Wheatley that the Minutes of the Riggers' Subcommittee meeting of 16 November 2017 be accepted.

**Carried Unanimously**

Paul Applegate stated that he had nothing to report from the Riggers' Subcommittee meeting held this afternoon.

### **4. PILOTS' SIG MEETING OF THE 27 JANUARY 2018**

The Chair reported that the Notes from the Pilots' SIG Meeting of the 27 January 2018 had been circulated earlier in the week. He stated that the notes were for information only, unless any STC members had any questions. There were no actions for STC to consider within the notes.

### **5. INCIDENT/INJURY REPORTS – RÉSUMÉ**

- i) There had been 4 Student Injury reports received since the last STC meeting. All males. All were on landing.
- ii) Since the last meeting there had been 4 Injury reports received for 'A' Licence parachutists or above. 3 males and 1 female. All the injuries were on landing.
- iii) There had been 4 Student Malfunction/Deployment Problem reports received since the last meeting. 2 males and 2 females.
- iv) There had been 8 Malfunction/Deployment Problem reports received for 'A' Licence parachutists or above. 7 males and 1 female.
- v) Since the last STC there had been 5 Tandem Injury reports received. 2 male and 3 females.
- vi) There had been 3 Tandem Malfunction/Deployment Problem reports received.
- vii) A report had been received of an AAD firing, following a collision on a Tracking jump. The jump was a five-way tracking jump, which included a TR coach. Four of the jumpers were in a straight line towards the end of the dive. The lead was on his belly, with the rear 3 jumpers tracking on their backs. The other jumper was some way off on his belly. On break-off the lead jumper slowed and 'corked' slightly. As the others slowed 2 of them made contact, one with his head hitting the other's leg. The one jumper then became disoriented by the collision. He described it as being unable to co-ordinate the movements of his limbs in order to pull. He was then aware that his AAD had deployed his reserve. The jumper did not remember most of the canopy flight and only became aware just prior to landing. He was not injured on landing.

The Chief Instructor who was present this evening stated that in his opinion had the group had been tracking in a 'V' formation instead in a line this incident may not have happened. However, the jump was well briefed prior to taking place.

There followed some discussion. It was felt by CIs present that a TR Coach must ensure that jumpers are suitably qualified for a planned tracking jump and that also their brief should include procedures for avoiding possible collisions.

- viii) There had been 8 'off landings' reports received since the last meeting.

- ix) Three reports had been received of items coming off jumpers on exit, in free fall or on deployment. 1 tube, 1 GoPro and 1 camera ring-sight.

## **6. REPORT OF PANEL OF INQUIRY – INCIDENT AT RAF WESTON ON THE GREEN**

This item was held 'in camera'. All observers apart from IEs and the person involved left the room.

The Chair of the Panel – Richard Wheatley was present and was able to answer any questions.

The Chair reported that a Panel of Inquiry had been formed to investigate a packing incident at RAF Weston on the Green. The Panel Report had been circulated to CIs with the Agenda for STC. He stated that an Equipment Related Incident Report was submitted to the BPA by the Chief Instructor (CI) of RAF Weston on the Green, detailing information relating to an error which had been brought to his attention on one of their parachute systems during a routine six-month inspection.

It was noted in the report that whilst the inspection was being conducted, the packer informed the CI that he had noticed that the left steering line on the reserve parachute had not been routed through the slider grommet. The last time that reserve had been packed before this inspection, was on the 12 April 2017 and it was packed by a BPA Advanced Rigger. The parachute system involved was owned and maintained by RAF Weston on the Green.

The equipment had been assembled in August of 2014 and subsequently packed a further 5 times.

The Advanced Rigger was the only person who had previously packed that reserve parachute since it was placed in to service.

The Panel of Inquiry was instigated by the BPA COO & STO on the 30th November 2017 and consisted of Richard Wheatley, Richard Green and Hans Donner.

The Panel fully investigated the incident and came to three possible scenarios;

- a. The equipment was interfered with at some stage to create the appearance that the equipment was incorrectly assembled.
- b. The equipment was originally assembled incorrectly and that at subsequent repacks the equipment was not inspected or repacked as per the BPA requirements.
- c. The equipment in question had been assembled incorrectly in August 2014 and had then subsequently been inspected and repacked 5 further times. At each repack the error had not been identified or rectified.

In considering the possible scenarios, the Panel concluded that on the evidence provided, it was not possible in the Panel's opinion to fully and firmly conclude, or suggest, that the equipment had been subject to a repeated and systematic negligent inspection technique or packing process.

The Panel Report included the following Recommendations and Summary:

It is the normal remit of any BPA Panel of Inquiry to look at the issue of any disciplinary action that needs to be taken against individuals or organisations for breaches of rules such as the BPA Operations Manual or local SOP's. In this case no such breaches were evident.

It is noted that regardless of how this incident occurred, no one was injured as a result of this equipment being used. The Panel are also aware that there have been cases where qualified jumpers have mistakenly used main parachutes of a higher performance level than the one involved with one or both steering lines routed outside of the slider. Whilst this can produce uneven or unsymmetrical opening characteristics, it is accepted by the Panel that this is evidence that if this reserve had been used, it is likely to have opened successfully and safely.

The evidence provided by those involved was insufficient to lead to any absolute conclusions.

The Panel felt that based on the considerable reserve packing experience of the Advanced Rigger, to recommend any form of disciplinary action based on just one equipment related Incident Report would be an unsound and unsafe judgement.

It is felt that any such judgment would not stand up to the scrutiny of the BPA, its Safety and Training Committee or any independent Tribunal system.

It is the opinion of the Panel that this report be kept on file at the BPA and should be considered if any further Equipment Related Reports are filed in relation to the packing or work of the Advanced Packer. Should further incidents come to light then this may produce evidence to suggest there is a case relating to systematic negligence to be answered. If this is the case, then the BPA should consider the formation of a new Panel of Inquiry to both relook at this report and any additional information that has arisen.

It is also the Panel's job to provide any observations or recommendations to the BPA or BPA PTO's as to any safety improvements that it feels could be made.

Analysing the minutes of BPA Riggers' Subcommittee and STC meetings over the last 15 years show very few rigging related Panel of Inquiries or investigations.

Many of the reserve packing related Panels of Inquiry or disciplinary actions have required the packer to have their packing reassessed by an Advanced Rigger. It is noted that recently introduced changes to the BPA Operations Manual to renew any and all Advanced Packer (AP) ratings now require an audit of this sort to take place.

In summary, the Panel provide the following observations to the BPA and its Committees and Council:

- a. The Panel considered the recent changes to the requirements for the annual renewal of an AP rating to be a valuable improvement in safety. This new audit requirement will mean anyone who holds an AP rating will have to have at least one repack inspected by a BPA Advanced Rigger or CI.

The Panel would ask those completing these renewal audits that if they are inspecting an already packed reserve that they should also be sure that good practice is being followed in respect of inspection processes used by that packer.

BPA Form 302 - Requirements & Guidelines for renewing Advanced Packer Ratings states - *"The AR or CI should also audit at least one reserve pack of the AP by either disassembling a pack job (if the AP is current) or by supervising a complete repack."*

- b. It is accepted that unintentional mistakes can be made. If a parachute system is assembled and then subsequently inspected and repacked by a different person this introduces a higher degree of certainty that the equipment is suitable for use. It is recognised that some Centres have limited access to Advanced Packers or Riggers but in order to reduce the risk that any packing errors become systematic or go undetected, CI's may wish to consider that where possible a reserve system is not always packed by the same individual.

The Committee noted the Report of the Panel together with their observations.

Much discussion took place. It was generally felt by those present that such a fundamental error by the packer was not likely, as the reserve had been packed at least 5 times by the packer.

It was commented that at some PTOs where reserves are packed CCTV is in operation. It was also suggested that occasionally some reserve re-packs are carried out by someone other than the regular packer.

The COO stated that he would be writing to PTOs for consideration of the Panel's observations and will emphasise the importance of having third party assurance in relation to reserve packing and that PTOs audit themselves in this area as well.

The meeting then resumed in open session.

## 7. **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BPA OPERATIONS MANUAL**

The Chair stated that at the last STC meeting it was agreed that a Working Group (WG) be formed to consider the recommendation of the Panel of Inquiry following the death of Carl Marsh. At this time a WG is yet to be formed. The Chair stated that he would still welcome more Advanced Instructors to volunteer to be members of the WG. In the meantime, it was felt it worth addressing two of the recommendations at this STC meeting, as they involve minor proposed changes to the Operations Manual. The two Panel Recommendations are:

- a. Require clearance to pack 'CF equipment' should be added to the requirements for CF1 grade. This requirement should be included in the BPA Operations Manual and CF Manual.
- b. Amend the BPA Operations Manual requirement to act as a DZ Controller to include a full briefing by the CI on their PTO Incident and Fatality Procedures, including the location of first aid kits and fire extinguishers (as appropriate) and details of incident response policy.

Much discussion ensued regarding recommendation (a) above. It was felt that the term 'CF equipment' was not clear enough and that if it was to be incorporated into the Operations Manual it was 'modified' equipment that was meant. The COO decided to withdraw the proposal and refer it back to the WG when it is formed.

The Suggested Operations Manual amendment for the Panel proposal (b) above, was considered by the meeting. The suggested amendment was:

### **SECTION 1 (CONDUCT AND CONTROL OF SPORT PARACHUTING), Paragraph 4 (Ground Control Organisation), sub-para 4.3.2.** be changed to read:

- 4.3.2. The DZ Controller must be a nominated BPA 'B' Licence parachutist or above who has been fully briefed on his/her responsibilities and duties, including incident and fatality procedures, for the specific activities of the day and must be in place whilst parachuting is in progress.

It was proposed by Ian Rosenvinge and seconded by Ryan Mancey that the above proposed BPA Operations Manual amendment be accepted.

**Carried Unanimously**

## 8. **PROPOSED NEW DZ/PLA**

A proposal from Steve Saunders had been circulated with the Agenda requesting that Shobdon Aerodrome, Leominster, Hereford, HR6 9NR, be cleared for parachuting. Shobdon had been used for parachuting in the past and was last cleared by STC in April 2015. However, the proposed operation at the time did not commence operations.

The DZ/PLA had been inspected by the COO on the 19 January 2018, who supported the proposal. The proposed operation would be for Skydive Shobdon.

Permission was sought for Tandem parachuting and 'C' Licence parachutists and above with the following restrictions:

- a. Cleared for Tandem Parachuting and 'C' Licensed parachutists and above.
- b. All Tandem Instructors must have a minimum of 250 Tandem descents, of proven ability and cleared by the CI.
- c. Tandem reserve drills will be carried out monthly.
- d. Because of a water hazard, off the airfield, all parachutists (including Tandem Students and Tandem Instructors) will wear buddy buoys floatation devices at all times. The Tandem briefing must include full instructions on how to use the floatation device, in the event of a water landing. Full details of the water hazard drills and procedures are included in the PTO SOPs, extracts below
- e. All skydivers must not intentionally over fly the water hazard.
- f. No Parachuting will take place unless the CI or a nominated AI is present.
- g. In the event of a crosswind the wind limit will reduce to 15kts and one group per pass.

Some extracts from the SOPs were also presented to STC:

#### SOP section 10.0 Water Hazard Procedures

- a. All Floatation Devices will be inspected on a monthly basis at the same time as the tandem student harness these checks will be documented and signed for. (See check list at appendix "B") In addition the floatation devices will be serviced in line with the manufacturers recommendation or regulatory body.
- b. In the event of a water landing. The Tandem Student will initiate the briefed procedures for a water landing. Once in the water, tandem students will be detached/ unclipped/cut free with J knife as soon as possible and make their way to the edge of the Water hazard and exit the water safely. The Tandem instructor will need to cut away their main canopy and make their way to the edge of the Water hazard safely and exit the water.
- c. If a Tandem is under a reserve and ends up landing in the water the procedures are the same as above.
- d. All experienced skydivers or camera flyers will be fully briefed on water landing procedures. This will be recorded by the CI and in the skydiver's log book.
- e. If it is suspected there may be a possible water landing all parachuting will be suspended. DZC plus one assistant will take the DZ vehicle immediately to the Water hazard and deploy the flotation rings. (DZ Check list will ensure that access to the water hazard is available prior to parachuting commencing on a daily basis. See checklist at appendix "A").

#### Staffing SOP's section 9.0 Tandems

- a. TI's must be fully aware of the water procedures and be responsible for checking and securing their own floatation devices and that of their student. (See Check List Appendix "B")
- b. TI's must carry a J knife whilst completing tandem descents. This will be located on the back of the Student harness and fitted with a lanyard.

#### DZ Controller

- a. A Drop Zone Controller (DZC) will be appointed at the beginning of each day. (See Appendix "D") It will be his/her responsibility to ensure that the Drop Zone Control duties are fulfilled in accordance with the BPA Operations Manual and the CI. In addition, he/she will be a minimum of C licence they will ensure that everything is in place and correctly laid out. A check list for setting up and closing down the DZ is provided at appendix "A".
- b. If it is suspected there may be a possible water landing all parachuting will be suspended. DZC and one assistant will take the DZ vehicle straight to the water hazard and deploy the flotation rings.
- c. The DZC will ensure that parachuting is suspended when a possible conflict from any aircraft is suspected. Parachuting will only resume when the DZC is satisfied that the threat of conflict no longer exists.

It was proposed by Matty Holford and seconded by Sara Orton that the above request be accepted.

For: 12 (inc 1 x proxy)

Against: 0

Abstention: 1 (Paul Yeoman)

**Carried**

## **9. PERMISSIONS**

An e-mail from Richard Wheatley had been circulated with the Agenda requesting an extension to the TBI rating of Kate Lindsley. Richard had stated that Kate obtained her TBI rating in May of 2017 and subsequently attended a TI course at Langar in July of the same year. However, due to a shoulder strength issue Kate struggled with landing the Tandem canopy consistently and was unable to complete the course. Kate has used the time to increase her strength and physical readiness for the course. Kate would like to attend the TI course in September and so Richard was requesting a 6-month extension to her TBI rating to allow her to attend this course.

It was proposed by Richard Wheatley and seconded by Rob Spour that the above request be accepted.

For: 12 (inc: 1 x proxy)

Against: 1 (Matty Holford)

Abstention: 0

**Carried**

**10. A.O.B**

- i) Circulated to those present was a request from Ian Rosenvinge for himself and Paul Moore to become Category System Instructors (G). Ian had stated that they have both held CSI ratings for well in excess of the 3 years required and that they are both active in the sport.

It was proposed by Ian Rosenvinge and seconded by Mike Rust that the above request be accepted.

**Carried Unanimously**

- ii) Noel Purcell gave STC a résumé of the 2017 Tandem Safety Analysis presentation, which he had delivered at the BPA Tandem Instructor Personal Development & Safety Day at EMCC on Friday 26 January 2018.

Noel's presentation was comprehensive and was well received by those present.

The Chair thanked Noel Purcell for his presentation and for the work involved in producing the various stats.

Dates of Next Meetings:                      Thursdays 5 April, 31 May, 26 July, 13 September and 15 November  
at 1900 at BPA HQ

**Distribution:** Chairman BPA, Council, CIs, All Riggers, Advanced Packers, CAA, Editor – Skydive,  
File

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## **AMENDMENTS TO BPA OPERATIONS MANUAL**

At the STC meeting of the 1 February 2018 the following amendment was made to the BPA Operations Manual:

### **SECTION 1 (CONDUCT AND CONTROL OF SPORT PARACHUTING), Paragraph 4 (Ground Control Organisation), sub-para 4.3.2. change to read:**

4.3.2. The DZ Controller must be a nominated BPA 'B' Licence parachutist or above who has been fully briefed on his/her responsibilities and duties, including incident and fatality procedures, for the specific activities of the day and must be in place whilst parachuting is in progress.

Approved by Council 13 February 2018  
and published on 14 February 2018