



BPA Council & Committees: Protocols for papers

Following the standard committee protocols set out below, which are broadly common to most committee-run associations, will help to make the most efficient and effective use of valuable meeting time in reaching informed decisions. The default method of circulation of agendas and papers etc is in electronic form. The meaning of the term 'tabling' includes transmission by electronic communication on the day of a meeting.

This paper has been written to cover protocol at most formal /structured meetings, although variations may apply to certain BPA Committees. For example, the regulatory and investigatory nature of the Safety & Training Committee (STC) and its subcommittees means that they may routinely from time to time need to take late papers on urgent business.

- 1 It is good practice usually to have a paper, however short, to accompany each agenda item. Even a sentence or two of explanation for the agenda can be helpful (but note that the agenda, unlike supporting papers, is routinely published on the BPA website - so it should not contain any confidential or restricted information or personal data, etc). This enables Council/Committee members to reflect on, and where appropriate to research or consult on, the matter in advance. In turn this should lead to a more focused - and, in an ideal world, shorter - discussion around the table before an informed decision is taken. As agendas are published, it enables the membership to know the items of business to be discussed so members can make representations should they so wish (this is a separate subject, not covered here).
- 2 Supporting papers should, wherever possible, be issued with the agenda (the Secretary will be pleased to advise on the schedule for preparation of the agenda, see para 6). In any case, papers should be issued at least several days in advance of the meeting. For example, for a meeting on a Tuesday, papers should normally be issued at the latest by the preceding Friday.
- 3 For most Committees, tabling papers at a meeting, other than in exceptional circumstances, is not good practice. Council/Committee members may not have time to read them, or to digest, reflect and consult on them. Catching colleagues and staff short by tabling a late paper does not normally bode well for a quality discussion and decision.
- 4 Substantive items of business should always be set out on the agenda. 'Any other business' (AOB) at the end of the agenda should be used only for pre-notified items that the Chair has agreed to take (notified by the AOB date often set out on the agenda). However, use of AOB to mop up tidbits without forewarning at the end of a meeting is common practice in the BPA, subject always to the Chair's discretion, and this has not usually presented a problem. Other than when an immediate decision is required for reasons outwith the Council's/Committee's control, the procedurally correct way for a Chair to deal with an un-notified substantive item of AOB is to ask for it to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.
- 5 BPA Council and all its Committees have a Secretary. Correspondence, including papers, should normally be sent to the Secretary, among whose duties it is to draft the agenda for the next meeting for the approval of the Chair, including any papers/correspondence received, and arrange to circulate the agenda and any supporting papers/correspondence to all members of the Council/Committee. (Please note that others, including the Vice Presidents, Editor and staff are also included on the Council circulation list, and that the Chair of Council receives all papers of all Committees.) Correspondence and papers addressed to an individual on the Council/Committee (for example, Chair or Discipline Rep) are just that, and it is the responsibility of that individual to ask their Committee Secretary at the BPA Office to circulate it to the Council/Committee if this is really who the correspondence/paper is

for. Only when correspondence/papers are circulated through the Secretary is there a proper official record at the BPA Office and can it be deemed to be an official committee paper or correspondence.

- 6 A Council/Committee member who wishes an item to be considered for inclusion on the next agenda should notify the Secretary in good time before the next agenda is due. The decision on the content of an agenda is the Chair's, though it is of course open to be questioned, and therefore may need to be justified to the satisfaction of the Council/Committee, at the meeting.

Normal timetable for issue of agendas, etc

Agendas, together with supporting papers, are normally issued with one clear week between the date of issue of the agenda and the week of the meeting. Agenda items should be notified to both Chair and Secretary of the meeting as they arise, but preferably by no later than by Monday in the week of issue of the agenda. (The Secretary's role is to draft the agenda, the Chair's role is to approve it for issue by the Secretary. The content and order of the agenda is ultimately the responsibility of the Chair.)

Oral reports from Chairs of Committees to meetings of full Council later on the same day

Chairs of Committee meetings held during the afternoon of Council meetings should report orally to full Council on the main points that arose at their Committee meeting. If they miss out anything significant, other Committee members should help them out!

Description of Co-opted roles - how these are decided, etc.

Governed always by the relevant terms of reference, co-option is where the Council or one of its Committees decides it needs regular access to expertise or knowledge that is not available among its elected/voting members, or to fulfil a role that none of the elected/voting members has agreed to take on.

Council or one of its committees may therefore decide to co-opt an individual as a (usually non-voting) member of the Committee to fulfil this role - examples are the current (and longstanding!) co-option of the Treasurer to the Council and the (again current and longstanding) co-option of the Judges' Co-ordinator some Discipline Reps to the Competitions Committee. Co-optees are voted on in the normal manner of any motion to a Committee. Co-optees to Council are voted on at the inaugural meeting each year, but may be voted on (or off) at any time. Co-options to Committees are subject to ratification by full Council in the normal manner.

Sometimes co-optees may be ex officio, which means by virtue of their position. Examples are that the Treasurer is co-opted ex officio as a member of the Development Committee, and the Editor of BPA *Skydive the Mag* is co-opted ex officio as member of the Communications Committee.

BPA documents that may be helpful

Downloadable from the 'About us' page on the BPA website:

- BPA Articles of Association (covers Council composition & terms of reference)
- BPA Exposition and Schedule of Approval by the Civil Aviation Authority

BPA forms (Form 178 and terms of reference are downloadable from the BPA website):

- Form 160 STC Terms of Reference
- Form 174 Development Committee Terms of Reference
- Form 178 Duties and responsibilities of Members of BPA Council / Directors of BPA Ltd
- Form 191 Communications Committee Terms of Reference
- Form 218 Role description - Judges Co-ordinator
- Form 219 Role description - BPA Discipline Reps
- Form 278 Competitions Committee Terms of Reference

The above forms etc are available at meetings of the Committees concerned, on request from the BPA Office. Enter 'current' in the forms search box on bpa.org.uk for a complete list of current forms showing which are downloadable.