
Council

Minutes of a special virtual meeting by Microsoft Teams Saturday 28 March 2020 at 13:00

Present on Teams:	Craig Poxon	-	Chair
	Mary Barratt		
	Mark Bayada	-	MDC Chair
	Adrian Bond	-	Vice Chair
	Jack Davies		
	Kate Lindsley		
	Natasha Higman	-	Treasurer
	Sam Lee	-	EPC Chair
	Simon Soper		
In attendance on Teams:	Liz Ashley	-	Editor, Skydive the Mag
	Tony Butler	-	Chief Operating Officer
	Angel Fernandez	-	Communications Manager
	Rees Herrod	-	Wright Hassall (Legal Adviser)
	(to item 29)		
	John Hitchen	-	Vice President
	(for part of meeting only due to connectivity issues)		
	Jeff Montgomery	-	Safety & Technical Officer & STC Chair
	Lise Moore	-	Finance Manager
	Martin Shuttleworth	-	Secretary-General (Secretary)
	Martin Soulsby	-	Vice President
Apology for absence:	Paul Applegate		
Observers:	Kieran Brady	-	Skydive Strathallan
	Alex Busby-Hicks	-	Skydive Tilstock
	Mike Carruthers	-	Skydive Northwest
	Bryn Chaffe	-	Sky High
	Martin Crossley	-	North London Skydiving Centre
	Jeremy Denning	-	Army Parachute Association
	Mike Evans	-	Sky High
	Ady Green	-	RAFSPA
	Martin Harris	-	London Parachute School
	Jane Hopkins	-	Skydive Headcorn
	Pete Marsden	-	Skydive Isle of Wight
	Pete Mather	-	Sky High
	Grant Richards	-	UK Parachuting
	Mally Richardson	-	Skydive Jersey
	Helen Simpson	-	RAFSPA
	'Sports Parachute Secretary'	-	?
	James Swallow	-	Skydive Hibaldstow
	John Taylor	-	?
	Gareth Thomas	-	Skydive Langar
	Jason Thompson	-	UK Parachuting
	Paul Yeoman	-	Black Knights
	Chris Wood	-	Cornish Parachute Club
	Dave Wood	-	Cornish Parachute Club

Item Minute

26/20 Second special meeting

This second special virtual meeting had been convened to consider the effect on the sport of government advice and control measures to slow the spread of the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister had announced a 'national lockdown' on the evening of Monday 23 March with instructions to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Rees Herrod, Corporate Law Solicitor at Wright Hassall, British Skydiving's legal advisers, had advised on the powers of Council in a paper issued with the agenda, and he was in attendance at this meeting.

27/20 Declarations of interest

As set out in minute 20, Mark Bayada and Simon Soper had each declared an interest as both were employees of Affiliated Parachute Training Organisations. Therefore, they would not vote on any business affecting PTOs. It had been agreed (minute 20) that other Council members who may work on a part-time, casual or self-employed basis at Affiliated PTOs, where this was not their primary source of income, would not be deemed to be conflicted. This meeting was quorate (per Article 19.5 a quorum was five or more voting members).

28/20 Minutes

COUNCIL APPROVED the minutes of the first special virtual meeting on Saturday 21 March 2020 as a correct record. Matters arising were covered on the agenda of today's meeting.

29/20 Requests from Affiliated PTOs for financial support

The Chair had received several written requests from Affiliated PTOs for financial support for their business during the national lockdown ordered by the government on Monday 23 March. These had been shared in Council SharePoint. One letter had been written on behalf of several PTOs, who had established a network.

The Chair invited representatives of Drop Zone Operators to speak to their correspondence. Some PTOs were in urgent need of cash to avoid their going to the wall. Initiatives from government, financial institutions and various public and community agencies to help business were unlikely to provide a remedy soon enough. The PTOs were therefore turning to British Skydiving.

The Chair said Council was determined to do the right thing. The scope of action by Council was regulated by the powers enshrined in British Skydiving's governing instrument, the Articles of Association. Council had to justify actions it took to the membership at each AGM.

The meeting then went in camera for Council to consider the PTOs' requests. Vice Presidents and staff remained in the meeting.

There was extensive consideration of options for Council to do the right thing within the powers conferred on it by the Articles. The legal adviser said he was satisfied that Council understood its duties and was acting within its powers. Those powers could reasonably be interpreted as including providing financial assistance, especially at this time of national emergency, to help to prevent private limited companies with objects related to those of British Skydiving from going into administration.

British Skydiving had financial reserves, of which only part was currently, or could be, made available short-term, as cash. Part of the reserves were in longer-term investments. Where these could be cashed in early, before the end of their fixed term, the capital invested may suffer a significant loss through selling at or near the bottom of the market.

The Treasurer and Finance Manager had put financial spreadsheets including a cashflow forecast in Council SharePoint. The Treasurer outlined financial considerations including liquidity and cashflow. Possible options for reducing expenditure included furloughing staff under the government's Job Retention Scheme (minute 31), not publishing the June issue of Skydive the Mag, and ceasing investment in elite performance ('sponsorship') and supporting competitions by providing judges, for a certain period. These and other options for the financial stewardship of British Skydiving were all considerations for future Council meetings, not for today.

COUNCIL AGREED:

(i) to offer emergency secured loans on a commercially suitable basis for Affiliated PTOs that were constituted as private limited companies and were in the most immediate financial difficulty. Council's current understanding was that five or six might be in such a position. Loan applications would be considered on a case-by-case basis on submission of a suitable business case, stating the amount of the loan that was sought, what it would be used for, and how it was proposed the loan should be secured. Appropriate security would be such as the personal assets of the directors of the applicant PTOs. Applicant PTOs would need to demonstrate that they were likely to continue as a going concern when normal times resumed, so they could repay the loan. Proposed by the Chair, seconded by Jack Davies and carried, including one proxy vote, with those elected members who were conflicted (minute 27) and the Treasurer abstaining from voting.

(ii) to designate a group of business and financial specialists from Council Members and staff to advise Council on loan applications received from those Affiliated PTOs in the most urgent need. The group would be chaired by the Treasurer and would comprise the Vice Chair, and Finance Manager with the COO on hand to provide any contextual information that might be helpful to the group. Both this group, and full Council, would be able to call on independent external expertise as and when appropriate. Other members of the Finance Committee could be included at the Treasurer's discretion. This group would also advise Council on the terms and conditions that should attach to emergency loans including how they should be secured, the duration of the loan, rate of interest, and repayment terms. Loan agreements would be drawn up by, or subject to independent checking, by a competent external professional.

Action: Treasurer, Vice Chair, Finance Manager

The Chair adjourned the meeting briefly before resumption as an open session with observers (Affiliated PTOs) in attendance. He then outlined Council's decision as set out in (i) above and there was a brief discussion with some PTOs in attendance.

30/20 Members

30.1 Full Members

The COO confirmed he had reached agreement with the insurers for jumping members to be credited pro-rata with the insurance element of their renewal subscription for **next** year's membership renewal, from 1 April **2021**, in respect of the downtime suffered this year during the national lockdown when no skydiving was taking place. Council thanked the insurers for this.

Council, at its meeting next week, would consider applying the same criterion to the British Skydiving element of the membership subscription from 1 April **2021**, for members who renewed in a timely manner this year, 2020. This would ensure that no member was disadvantaged by the current government-enforced downtime in all sport and recreational activities, including skydiving. The COO would report back to next week's meeting on this suggestion, to enable Council to make an informed decision. He would also liaise with Graham Spicer, PIMS Consultant, about contacting PIMS supplier Eudonet to develop pro-rata'd renewal pricing in accordance with any such arrangements Council decided.

Action: COO

The COO said that members who renewed in a timely manner would help British Skydiving's cashflow, which could in turn help Affiliated PTOs in immediate financial/cashflow difficulty to survive (minute 29).

Members who delayed their renewal until later in the year when jumping had resumed, would not be disadvantaged either as they would be eligible to pay a pro-rata subscription (covering both the British Skydiving and insurance elements) for the remainder of the subscription year 2020-1. Such members would not be eligible for the discount in the following membership year to which those whose membership had continued uninterrupted would be entitled.

30.2 Members with ratings

On 24 March, the STO had written to members with ratings (copy circulated) to set out arrangements for ratings renewal. The COO reported that there were a few Chief Instructors (CIs) who themselves had yet to renew, which they needed to do before they could sign off the ratings of other members for renewal. He and the STO were liaising with these CIs.

Kieran Brady (Strathallan) sought clarification about any special arrangements that might apply to the expiry date of tandem instructor medicals, The COO said he would consult with the Medical Adviser on this and report back in due course. He would also consult with the

Aviation Adviser on pilot licensing and medical arrangements. CAA had recently announced special arrangements for commercial pilots but not yet for private pilots.

Action: COO

The COO said that, as online renewal was not available for Joint Members this year, Joint Members with ratings to renew should scan their completed paper membership renewal forms to membership services, who would renew the Joint Members on PIMS. This would then allow access to online ratings renewal in the normal way.

30.3 Student Provisional Members

Jane Hopkins (Headcorn) asked the COO to consider some sort of latitude for student provisional memberships where the student might not be able to complete their training during a year because of the national lockdown. The COO said he expected there may be likely to be relatively few student members finding themselves in this position, although it depended on how long the lockdown continued. He said he would be pleased to consider the matter and discuss it with the insurers. He would report back in due course.

Action: COO

30.4 Skydive the Mag

A paper by the Editor had been circulated with the agenda. Parts of the editorial content of the April issue, including Club News contributions, that were looking forward to the new season, had had to be substantially re-written. The Mag was due to go to press on Monday 30 March and postal distribution arrangements were currently reported as operating as normal. The Editor was seeking to include key decisions from this meeting as stop press. The Chair thanked the Editor and our publishing partners Warners for going the extra mile to provide an up-to-date Mag to members that reflected these exceptional times.

30.5 Digital communications

The Communications Manager reported that activity had increased by around 35% on our main social media channel, Facebook. He had added a new 'social distance learning' page to the British Skydiving website that offered members a compendium of resources to continue to engage with the sport during this period of national lockdown. Already some CIs and others had suggested additional resources for the page, which had developed a great community feel. The Communications Manager welcomed all suggestions and ideas from members: this was a time to be innovative and creative. The Skydive the Mag YouTube channel offered a range of videos, including seminars presented at Skydive the Expo over the last few years.

For PTOs, the online forum / bulletin board established by the Communications Manager continued as a repository to post and share information about business support schemes from government, financial institutions and various official and community agencies. In response to a question, the Chair reported that the free-of-charge version of the bulletin board software had been used.

The Chair was planning to make a statement to members by way of an update on decisions taken by Council at this meeting. It was possible that this could be as a video statement, which could be followed by a question and answer session on Facebook Live.

30.6 Mondial 2020

The Mondial 2020 was scheduled to take place in Tanay, Russia, from 11-21 August 2020. This was shortly after the close of the now-postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Naturally the question on everyone's lips was, would the Mondial also be postponed?

The Chair reported on liaison between John Smyth MVO, UK Delegate to the International Skydiving Commission (ISC), who had forwarded correspondence (circulated) from the President of ISC which stated that the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) currently planned to review the position at the end of May. Meanwhile, ISC had invited feedback from national delegations. Sam Lee (Chair, Élite Performance Committee, EPC) reported on feedback to date from his circulation of this request to our GBR competitors.

COUNCIL AGREED the recommendation of the EPC Chair to continue with provisional registrations to the Mondial 2020 and await the outcome of ISC's review at the end of May. No registration fees were due until June.

The EPC Chair said there was no current need for a special meeting of EPC ahead of its next scheduled meeting, which would now be virtual, on Tuesday 5 May at 15:00.

[Secretary's note: EPC subsequently arranged a special virtual meeting for 16:00 on Wednesday 1 April to consider various scenarios that might arise should the Mondial 2020 be postponed or cancelled.]

Mark Bayada noted the need to formulate a plan for teams in training whenever we came out of the national lockdown, including arrangements for teams under sponsorship contracts with British Skydiving.

31/20 British Skydiving staff

The COO reported that, by mutual agreement, the posts of two members of staff were currently furloughed and applications would be made for them under the government's Job Retention Scheme. The situation for other staff posts was being kept under review. Some staff were at present exceptionally busy, working a seven-day week, although this was likely to settle back the longer the national lockdown continued. Staff working from home were holding daily video meetings by Microsoft Teams.

32/20 Chair's thanks

The Chair thanked Council Members and staff for their continuing hard work, patience and understanding as we all worked together to do the right thing for our members. Council and staff thanked the Chair for his unstinting commitment during the unprecedented times the country and the world were now in, and for orchestrating the technical arrangements for today's virtual meeting which had been the largest virtual meeting ever held by British Skydiving.

33/20 Dates of future meetings

The next virtual special meeting was agreed for one week's time, Saturday 4 April 2020 at 13:00 by Microsoft Teams.

Previously scheduled meetings were for Tuesdays at British Skydiving HQ, Leicester LE2 9TF: 16 June, 15 September and 24 November. However, physical meetings were suspended whilst government restrictions on social distancing remained, so these dates were now reserved for virtual meetings by Microsoft Teams.

The meeting closed at 15:25 (duration 2:25).