



Meeting 2011C of the BHPA Executive Council

Meeting held on Thursday 14 July 2011 at the BHPA Office, 8 Merus Court, Meridian Business Park, Leicester, LE19 1RJ

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
Bill Bell
Chris Burns
Martin Heywood
John Nash
Angus Pinkerton
Steve Walsh

In attendance:

Jennie Burdett
Toby Colombe
John Stevenson
Adrian Thomas
Tom Payne (via video)

Apologies had been received from: Paul Dancey, Brett Janaway, Angus Langford, John Lawson, Steve Walsh and John Welch.

The Chairman explained that this meeting had been called for one purpose only; to discuss the BHPA response to the deaths at PWC and CIVL's response to suspend the use of Competition Class gliders in Cat 1 FAI comps, along with the recommendation to consider whether they should be used in Cat 2 and Nationals.

Calvo gave a brief history of events leading up to the two fatalities in the competition. The Open Class Working Group had introduced some new rules to improve safety and the pilots had all adhered to the rules. On the practice day there had been only one reserve deployment, which was quite reasonable given that there were 150 pilots. On task one of the competition there were two deployments, in benign conditions. The weather forecast for the second task was for reasonable thermal quality; the first fatality was shortly after the start gate opened. The glider suffered a full frontal collapse; both wing tips tucked into the lines and there was rapid rotation. The pilot died instantly. Following a second fatality during the same task CIVL have temporarily suspended the certification of Competition Class Paragliders.

Martin said this meeting must now decide what BHPA would support from here on, although it may only be possible to make an interim decision at this time.

Bill felt that we should go along with what CIVL are doing rather than trying to come up with a second set of rules and ending up with a conflict. Calvo pointed out that the CIVL review could take months as they would be consulting experts.

Marc said we need to come up with an interim set of rules to mirror what CIVL have said and he asked members of the Competitions Committee for their thoughts on possible solutions.

Adrian explained that the BPC is at St. Jean in three weeks time and 50 of the 148 pilots who have entered fly Open Class wings. All will have paid entry fees, travel and accommodation costs etc. The ideal solution from a sporting point of view would be to continue as before because we are in the middle of the National Championships. The three possible options are:

Option 1: Carry on as before.

Option 2: Go to Serial Class only.

Option 3: Open Class only for pilots who meet certain criteria.

The meeting then discussed the legal liability implications but Marc also pointed out that there is a moral responsibility. If we allow competition class gliders in our competitions and someone is killed, this would undoubtedly be seen as an irresponsible decision by BHPA.

Martin said we are not here to eliminate all risk but to ensure that these have been given proper consideration. He added that there are three levels to think about: 1. The Pilots, 2. The Organisers and Meet Directors, 3. The Association. He added that coincidentally he and Marc already had a meeting arranged with our insurers later that day and Open Class gliders would be discussed. Marc also said that we have a duty to our

insurers to inform them of any change of risk so we will have to raise this matter with them and explain the solution we have put in place. So, the solution we come up with has to tick the right boxes.

Various options were discussed and dismissed, and Bill said that there was really only one option, i.e. Serial Class. Calvo agreed that our competitions should be run as Serial Class while the CIVL ban is in place. Angus believed that the chances of the ban being lifted before the end of the European flying season were very slim.

It was agreed that the competition at St Jean will be Serial Class but future competitions will depend on whether the ban is still in place and what CIVL decide.

With regard to the 50 pilots with Open Class wings, Calvo said that this was a problem for the Competitions Committee to resolve. There was some discussion about whether these pilots would go out and buy a new Serial Class glider but Tom felt that this was unlikely as the pilots did not know what they would be flying next year. It was noted that as this is a CIVL matter everyone will have to wait for the plenary meeting in February.

It was agreed that BHPA competitions for the remainder of this season will only allow certified gliders and these must be flown within the certification criteria, without modification or ballast etc. The BHPA position will not change until the CIVL position changes.

If any of the 50 pilots with Open Class wings could not find a replacement glider their entry fees would be refunded. Adrian said that if 30 of the pilots were refunded then financially the competition would go from a surplus to a break even situation.

Toby asked about payments for flights and accommodation and Marc replied that unfortunately there is nothing we can do as it was a CIVL decision which we had to follow.

The meeting then went on to discuss the wording setting out the BHPA's position. Bill suggested "for the period of the ban, all competitions involving racing tasks will be limited to EN or LTF certified gliders". This was agreed and Martin would come up with a form of words for a notice to circulate.

The insurance aspect was then clarified. The ban only applied to competitions organised by the BHPA so pilots with registered but non-certified gliders would still be insured to fly them but not in competitions. Competitions organised under the auspices of the BHPA can only be Serial Class and competitions organised by BHPA members even at club level, who are relying on their BHPA insurance, also have to be Serial Class.

As far as the XC League is concerned, Marc said we do not organise this or tell the pilots what they should do, we only record the results. Hopefully this will not be affected. Bill said that if after reviewing their advice CIVL decide to ban Competition Class gliders, it could be a problem for the XC League. However, Calvo replied that CIVL cannot say that the gliders are unsafe but they could exclude them from their competitions on the grounds that they do not consider them safe in that environment.

Adrian reminded the meeting that there are lots of gliders that are not certified, such as those used in accuracy. Angus suggested that we should get in touch with CIVL to confirm that the ban does not include accuracy. Although accuracy gliders are not certified, they are not Competition Class.

Marc agreed that our statement needs to make it clear that accuracy, paramotoring and XCL are not included in the ban.

Martin would come up with the wording for a BHPA statement by tomorrow and Calvo would produce an answer for the 50 pilots who have entered Open Class gliders.