



## British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association

Dear Accuracy Pilots,

Over the last year, the Accuracy Panel has been dealing with a safeguarding issue which involved a police investigation into a pilot and their relationship with a 15-year-old accuracy judge of the opposite sex.

Although the incident did not occur at a BHPA organised event, the pilot was asked not to attend BHPA squad accuracy events during investigations. The pilot complied with this request.

The Police investigation resulted in a decision that no further action should be taken. This decision was upheld following a request to reconsider it under the Victim's Right to Review scheme. There is no provision to permit a second review. The matter is closed.

Co-incidentally, at the same time, the BHPA reviewed and updated its safeguarding policies as part of a planned policy review.

Following the conclusion of the Police investigation, a discussion was held involving a member of the BHPA Exec., the Accuracy Panel, the parent of the judge and the pilot. It was decided that since the pilot had not been charged with any offence, no further action would be taken.

Despite this, the Accuracy Panel has become aware of concerns regarding behaviour between the two individuals at more than one event. The Accuracy Panel reminded all pilots of the standards that were expected of them and also presented the updated BHPA safeguarding policy to the pilots at the first available opportunity.

At the BHPA Paragliding Accuracy Nationals in July 2024 it became apparent that individuals closely involved in these events had shared confidential information about the case and were unhappy with the conclusion of the Police investigation and had taken it upon themselves to take the matter further.

As Accuracy Panel chair, I committed to review the situation after the competition; to that end the Chair of the BHPA, BHPA Company Secretary and Safeguarding Officer, and Competitions Director were invited to an extraordinary accuracy panel meeting.

The outcome of the meeting was as follows:

- It was confirmed that the BHPA Exec. considers the matter closed.
- The BHPA has a duty of care to all its members.
- The actions of the individuals unhappy with the outcome were considered to be a breach of the Paragliding Accuracy Squad Code of Conduct, could cause reputational harm with international pilots attending the competition and, at the very least, could bring the BHPA and/or Accuracy paragliding into disrepute.

The Accuracy Panel chair was actioned to produce this open letter to all accuracy pilots.

Kind Regards,

Mark Bignell, BHPA Accuracy Panel Chair.