MINUTES OF THE BBC TRUST MEETING

Held on 19 July 2016
at BBC Birmingham

Present:

Items 68, 69, 71 – 75
Rona Fairhead       Chairman
Sir Roger Carr      Vice-Chairman
Sonita Alleyne     Trust member
Richard Ayre       Trust member
Mark Damazer       Trust member
Mark Florman       Trust member for England
Bill Matthews      Trust member for Scotland
Aideen McGinley    Trust member for Northern Ireland
Nick Prettejohn    Trust member
Elan Closs Stephens Trust member for Wales
Suzanna Taverne    Trust member
Lord Williams      Trust member

From the Trust Unit:

Alex Towers       Director, Trust
Kate Atkins       Chief Adviser, Governance
Frances Bryant    Adviser, England
Alison Gold       Head of Public Services Strategy
Kath MacLeod      Head of Communications
Fran O’Brien      Head of Editorial Standards
Tristan Pedelty   Head of Policy and Charter

From the BBC Executive:

Items 74, 75
Tony Hall         Director-General

Items 74 - 76
Anne Bulford      Deputy Director-General

Item 76
Joe Godwin        Director, BBC Midlands & BBC Academy

Items 74, 75
Phil Harrold      Company Secretary

Item 75
Fran Unsworth     Director, World Service Group
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MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

68.1 The Trust approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 as an accurate record of proceedings. It noted the matters arising from the meeting.

REPORTS FROM TRUST COMMITTEES

69.1 The Trust discussed and noted the reports of its July committee meetings.

69.2 Suzanna Taverne, Chairman of the Services Committee, said the committee had received an update from the Executive on the BBC’s joint venture between BBC America and AMC.

69.3 [redacted on grounds of commercial sensitivity]

69.4 Richard Ayre, Chairman of the Editorial Standards Committee, said the committee had agreed to the Executive’s request to allow Sports Personality of the Year to receive non-commercial sponsorship for the event in line with other BBC events, after agreeing it was in the public interest to do so. This would mean that the event could be taken to cities which did not have venues able to finance the event themselves through ticket sales.

ASIAN NETWORK LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

70.1 The Chairman, having regard to her role as Chairman-designate of the new BBC Board, withdrew from the meeting for this item, which was chaired by the Vice-Chairman.

70.2 Suzanna Taverne, Chairman of the Services Committee, said the Executive was proposing to remove programming in a range of South Asian languages from the Asian Network. The committee had discussed the proposed change with the Executive and considered that the change was not significant and did not require a public value test. However, before a final decision was taken, the committee had asked the Trust Unit to review some further research on the matter.

70.3 The Trust considered the recommendation from its Services Committee and decided that the proposed change to the Asian Network was not significant and accordingly approved the change without the need for further regulatory assessment.
71 **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

71.1 The Director, BBC Trust presented his report, which provided an overview of work undertaken by the Trust.

72 **CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE**

72.1 The Chairman noted that she would be meeting Karen Bradley, the new Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, later that day.

73 **CHARTER REVIEW**

73.1 The Director, BBC Trust provided an update on discussions with the Government on the drafting of the new BBC Charter and Agreement. With the substantial changes in Government, it was very unlikely that the draft Charter would be published before the summer recess.

73.2 The Director also briefed Trust members on the proposed transitional arrangements to a new system of BBC governance.

73.3 The Chairman provided an update on the establishment of the new BBC Board.

74 **DIRECTOR-GENERAL’S REPORT**

74.1 The Chairman welcomed the Executive to the meeting and the Trust congratulated Anne Bulford on her appointment as Deputy Director-General as part of changes to the BBC’s senior leadership team.

74.2 The Director-General briefed the Trust on the BBC’s coverage of the EU referendum – the focus of much recent news and current affairs output. This ranged from extended news bulletins to special programming such as *The Big Decision with Nick Robinson* and the *Great Debate* at Wembley. The BBC’s results coverage had attracted large audiences across TV, radio and online. The Director-General commended BBC journalists and news teams on their coverage of the referendum. He also noted the valuable role played by the Trust’s Audience Councils in providing feedback on the coverage.

74.3 The Director-General highlighted other recent BBC output, including coverage of the Euro 2016 football championships, the commemoration of the Battle of the Somme and the Glastonbury Festival. He noted the decision of Chris Evans to step down as presenter of *Top Gear*. 
The Deputy Director General briefed the Trust on progress against the recommendations in Dame Janet Smith’s review and noted that an update had been published alongside the BBC’s Annual Report and Accounts.

WORLD SERVICE GOVERNANCE

The Director, World Service Group sought approval for proposed new services following the conclusion of discussions with the Government over an additional investment in the World Service of £290 million over four years. She also sought approval to enter into an agreement with the Government, setting out the terms on which funding would be provided and the projects to be undertaken.

The Director, World Service Group said the proposals included new services in 11 languages, requiring the approval of both the Trust and the Foreign Secretary.

The Trust discussed and approved the new service proposals and associated targets and objectives. It also gave approval for the BBC to enter the agreement with the Government and for the consequential amendments to the World Service operating licence.

The Chairman left the meeting to attend an appointment with the Secretary of State. The Vice-Chairman chaired the rest of the meeting.

TRAINING REPORT

The Director, BBC Birmingham and BBC Academy presented the annual report on how the BBC had met its specific obligations for the training and development of staff and wider industry, as set out in the BBC Agreement.

Trust members noted that 2015/16 was a year of transition as the recommendations of a review of the Academy were implemented and following the Academy’s move to its new base at BBC Birmingham.

Members discussed with the Executive the range of training provided, the take-up of training among BBC staff and the wider industry, and the growth in online training.

The Trust approved the Executive’s report on the BBC’s arrangements for the training and retraining of BBC staff. The Trust also approved its own observations on the report and delegated authority to the Chairman to approve any final changes prior to publication.
77 **NATIONS NEWS AND RADIO SERVICE REVIEW**

77.1 The Trust’s Head of Public Services Strategy presented the draft final report on the service review of BBC nations’ news and radio services. The review had been led by the Trust’s Services Committee and the Trust members for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

77.2 Members agreed that these services were a very important part of the BBC’s overall news and radio offer to audiences in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They noted that audience reach was under pressure for many of the services and that online was playing a gradually more important role. There was a more acute challenge for the indigenous minority language services which had a smaller addressable audience.

77.3 The Trust approved the draft report and delegated authority to the members for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to approve any final changes prior to publication.

78 **STATISTICS IMPARTIALITY REVIEW**

78.1 The Trust’s Head of Editorial Standards presented the Trust’s draft conclusions of the impartiality review of the BBC’s use of statistics. The review had been led by the Trust’s Editorial Standards Committee and drew on audience research, content analysis, a report by the independent review panel and a response from the Executive.

78.2 The Trust noted the review’s conclusion that the BBC had great strengths in its reporting of statistics. However, it shared the independent panel’s view that the BBC sometimes fell short in its reporting of statistics and supported the introduction of initiatives to address this.

78.3 The Trust approved the draft conclusions to the review and noted the Executive’s response. It delegated authority to the Chairman of its Editorial Standards Committee to approve any final changes to its conclusions prior to publication.

79 **IR35 TAX LEGISLATION FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

79.1 The Trust noted the Executive’s planned approach to the Government’s consultation on changes to the IR35 tax legislation for the public sector.