

**BBC Audience Council for Wales
Cyngor Cynulleidfa Cymru y BBC**

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT
THE CONRAH HOTEL, CHANCERY, ABERYSTWYTH
FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2008**

Present:

Audience Council Members

Janet Lewis Jones (Chair and National Trustee for Wales)
Andy Carter
Dafydd Whittall
Alex McMillan
Nicola Branson
Jane James
Carl Cooper
Sangeet Bhullar
Arun Midha

BBC Cymru Wales staff:

Menna Richards, Controller BBC Wales
Mark O'Callaghan, Head of News and Current Affairs
Clare Hudson, Head of Programmes, English
Keith Jones, Head of Programmes, Welsh and New Media
Cath Allen, Head of Broadcast Development
Suzanne Hay, Education & Community Manager, BBC National Orchestra
of Wales, (for item 82)

Governance and Accountability Wales, BBC Trust, staff:

Karl Davies, Head of Governance and Accountability Cymru Wales
Siôn Brynach, Accountability Adviser, Cymru Wales
Clair Baguley, Departmental Assistant, Governance & Accountability
Cymru Wales
Jared Walters, Team Assistant, Governance & Accountability Cymru
Wales.

76. APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Teresa Rees
Roy Grant
Dennis Gethin
Rhodri Talfan Davies, Head of Marketing, Communications and
Audiences, BBC Cymru Wales.

77. TRUST BUSINESS (IN PRIVATE)

Jonathan Ross Programme Radio 2

The Council discussed the recent editorial breaches on the Jonathan Ross Radio 2 programme, and invited comments from the Council. Members of Council repeated some of the comments they had heard from members of the BBC's audiences and there was consensus that Jonathan Ross' comments to Andrew Sachs had lacked taste and decency, and were offensive. There was a perception that the matter of his salary had

been a catalyst in the escalation of the story. The Council emphasised that at every one of its public meetings and outreach events during recent months, members of the audience had expressed concern at the size of Ross' salary, despite many of them being fans of his 'edgy' style.

Council emphasised that many audience members had seen it largely as a story which had been over-emphasised by the press, with only a handful of people having initially complained. However, Council also recognised a perception that the BBC had been slow to react to comments that were entirely unacceptable.

That National Trustee informed Council that the Trust continued to consider the matter.

Ofcom PSB Review

The National Trustee referred to the Ofcom PSB Review Phase 2 proposals observing that they were very similar to those released in the initial document and consequently that the Council's previously expressed views were equally applicable to the latest proposals. A significant amount of work was being conducted on the BBC and Trust's response at present.

The Council asked the National Trustee to bear in mind any impact the proposals in the Ofcom PSB Review Phase 2 might have in Wales. The National Trustee reminded Council that the Welsh Assembly Government Heritage Minister had established an advisory committee which had been asked to report by December. Its membership was Huw Jones, Geraint Talfan Davies, Kevin Morgan and Julie Barton. She informed the Council that she had been involved in private conversations with some members of the group and that they had formally met the Controller BBC Cymru Wales. The brief of the group was essentially to consider the adequacy of the English language PSB TV provision in Wales.

Ho&GAW conveyed the thanks of the Trust Unit's Deputy Director to the Council for its hospitality at the previous meeting and said that he had appreciated their comments and input into the discussion on the Ofcom PSB review.

Correspondents' Blogs

The National Trustee informed the Council that the Trust had received a briefing recently on the way in which the BBC had covered the recent financial situation in the UK and beyond, including the matter of BBC Correspondents' blogs. She told Council that the Trust had been assured that all blogs were subject to the BBC's usual Editorial Guidelines.

DAB

Referring to DAB, she said that the Channel 4's decision to withdraw from DAB had been a blow to the medium and that the situation was looking increasingly complex.

Review of Licence Fee Collection

The Council asked about the review of licence fee collection. The National Trustee said that work was progressing on this, that the closing date for accepting submissions was 28th November, and that evidence already received was proving interesting. She encouraged Council members to make the review known.

Audience Priorities for 2009-10

The Council discussed possible Audience Priorities for 2009-10 and decided upon the following to present to the BBC Trust:

- That the implementation of BBC management's proposals for dealing with the issues raised in the Impartiality Review on Network News & Current Affairs coverage of devolved matters be carefully monitored by the BBC Trust.
- That the full implementation of the recommendations of the Network Supply Review on television commissioning Network programming from out of London, completed by BBC management in 2008, be monitored in order to ensure their fulfilment within the timescale given.
- That the BBC, within the constraints upon it, should ensure the provision of universal access to Wales' national radio stations, BBC Radio Cymru and BBC Radio Wales on DAB and FM across the whole of Wales.
- That the portrayal of Wales and other parts of the UK outside the M25, in Network programming be significantly improved to ensure that the whole of the country is represented across the range of BBC programming.
- That the Trust address the commissioning of music and audio from outside London to ensure that it is spread across the country in a way that reflects the distribution of the population within the UK.

Management joined the meeting

78. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record. HoG&AW informed Council that proposals had now been accepted for monitoring the outcome of the Network News impartiality review and that these would be circulated to Council members shortly.

HoG&AW also informed Council that the review of services for young people was indeed broader than the individual services to which reference was made.

79. REPORTS

National Trustee – she said that the two key issues considered recently were Ofcom PSB review and the Brand/Ross Radio 2 editorial breaches. She also extended her congratulations to Controller Wales on her promotion to being a BBC Director and said that the structural changes were significant.

Controller Wales – She informed Council that she had met the National Assembly's task group to consider PSB television provision in Wales.

She informed Council that the BBC Director General would be meeting the Welsh Assembly Government Heritage Minister shortly.

She informed Council that Jay Hunt, Controller of BBC One had recently visited Cardiff and had given an illuminating presentation. HoG&AW informed Council that Controller BBC One had been invited to attend a future meeting of the Audience Council.

Board Report - Head of Broadcast Development informed Council that the Wrexham *Here for You* residency had elicited a high level of interest and a wide age range of visitors, with genuine interest being expressed at new technological developments and *Coal House at War* related materials.

She informed Council that the latest RAJAR figures had been published for Radio Wales and that while reach was down share was up. Further work was being done to look at the situation a year after the introduction of schedule changes for Radio Wales. The Council commended the consistency of presenters on Radio Wales' morning and evening news programmes.

Head of Programmes (Welsh) and New Media informed Council that Radio Cymru's output was now available on iPlayer.

The Council expressed its high praise for the coverage of the USA Presidential election by Wales based journalists in both English and Welsh which had presented a different perspective on the event. The Council praised in particular Dewi Llwyd's programme travelling across the USA from Cardiff on the Pacific Coast to Bangor in Pennsylvania which had been an excellent programme providing new insights on issues relating to the US Presidential election, but expressed its disappointment that the audience figures had been relatively low – possibly because of the time within S4C's schedule that the programmes had been transmitted.

The Council asked Head of Programmes Welsh about coverage of the Wales v Germany football match, transmitted on both BBC Wales and BBC Three, with the two services using different commentators, suggesting this did not represent good value for money for the licence fee payer. Head of Programmes Welsh responded saying that it had been suggested that Wales' commentators could be used, but that this had not been taken up.

The Council observed that the loss of the rights to broadcast the Heineken Cup rugby competition had been a huge disappointment in Wales. The Council asked for BBC Head of Sport to be invited to a future meeting on the Council so that these and other matters could be discussed with him.

ACTION: HoG&AW

Announcement on Network TV Commissioning outside London: Planning For Creative Growth. Presentation by Head of Programmes English

The key headlines were:

- that investment in Wales would double by 2016
- *Crimewatch* to move to Wales and *Casualty* possibly to move to Wales
- Additional Growth in Factual and in Drama
- Increased opportunities for Drama

Referring to Network TV Drama Head of Programmes English said that Wales was now seen as growing on past and present successes and that shows like *Pobol y Cwm* and *Belonging* had supported talent growth, but that the advent of *Casualty* would create a year-round sustainable base for drama in Wales – which could support a drama village approach with opportunities to develop other drama. A decision on moving *Casualty* to

Wales would be made within the next few months and a key factor would be value for money.

Factual and Music were also growing on past successes such as *Tribe*, *The Museum* and *Young Musician Of The Year*. Moving *Crimewatch* to Wales also emphasised Wales' strength in popular journalism show in programmes such as *X Ray* and the *One Show*.

Opportunities would be available to develop other series and single films across all four TV networks including Daytime television and BBC 3. The merged Factual and Music Department provided a strong cross-platform cross-genre, creative team. Head of Programmes English also informed Council that the New Media Department was already seen as producing cutting edge work because of its involvement with *Doctor Who*, *The Sarah Jane Adventures* and *Merlin*. While there were no concrete targets for growth as yet but the Department had expressed the desire to develop new multi-media 'products'.

The independent sector would also have opportunities arising from the Network Supply Review – *Amazon* with Bruce Parry and *Rivers* with Griff Rhys Jones demonstrated past factual successes for the independent sector. These programmes fell within the Ofcom criteria for out of London and were genuinely made in Wales. There was much activity around the independent sector and it was important that there the good stories regarding the independent sector arising from the Network Supply Review were heard.

In the past production spend had been focussed on London – but in future 50% of spend would be outside London. Wales's past achievements had provided a platform for the future but there was still a need to continue to find great stories, great writers, great talent to achieve this objective and a need to look afresh at the matter of the portrayal of Wales.

Other challenges included the existing strands being resistant to moving, and this required a lot of work to develop relationships. Reaction in the BBC's English Regions had been negative to the Network Supply Review since the Nations and Salford were perceived as having benefitted disproportionately. There remained a need to balance in-house and independent aspirations in Wales to get ensure the best outcome and also a need for partnerships and mutual support.

The Council asked about whether additional resources were being made available to support this development. Head of Programmes English said that further resources would be forthcoming but that the present economic climate would have an impact on the BBC as on all other economic sectors.

The Council were informed that significant work was being done to ensure that the spend arising from the Network Supply Review would increase on an upward slope and wouldn't be subject to peaks and troughs. The Council expressed its concern that the MINIMUM spend in Wales be 5%.

80. PRESENTATION BY HEAD OF NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

Head Of News and Current Affairs informed Council that he was responsible for 270 staff producing output on three platforms. He began his presentation by showing the Council examples of News and Current Affairs' material.

He informed Council about the investigation undertaken by *Week in Week* out into meat hygiene which had resulted in an investigation by the Meat Hygiene Service.

Referring to the coverage of the USA Presidential elections, he informed Council that the Welsh language provision had also resulted in English language output on programmes such as *Wales Today*. It had also been exceptionally cost effective in that Owain Clark had shot and edited all his own material and sent the video material back to Wales across the internet thus saving on satellite costs.

Head of News and Current Affairs also said that the credit crunch was being covered in some depth and was generating a significant level of debate.

Turning to *BBC Local* he told Council that the outcome of the PVT was expected during the coming month. Some preparation was already taking place with pilots on the north east Wales site. Stories with a local angle but of a wider interest had proved successful – e.g. Local Authorities extinguishing street lamps because of their financial settlement, and the Remembrance Sunday march in Newbridge.

BBC Local would offer a regional as opposed to an ultra local coverage. A BBC Local area would actually cover several local newspaper circulation areas and would not only provide links to the local newspapers, but would also provide free material and training for these papers' journalists.

BBC Trust Network News Impartiality review – Head of News and Current Affairs outlined the action that was being taken to address some of the issues raised including:

- Big Stories Day – specific days when issues were looked at in greater depth on a UK-wide basis.
- Network and nations clusters – monthly meeting of specialist correspondents
- Placements – London staff coming to Wales and Wales staff going to London.
- Training (editorial leaders' workshops)
- Devolution enforcer appointed

Since the publication of the impartiality report around 70 stories (more than double a similar period in the past) from Wales had appeared on Network News e.g. first anniversary of the 'One Wales' coalition, first meeting of the All-Wales Convention. He also said that the labelling of stories to mark their relevance to different nations was very much improved but it was still important to keep an eye on this matter and that it would be important to review this matter in a year's time.

The Council asked whether the proportion of stories from Wales which had increased included programmes such as *Today* and *Newsnight*? Head of News confirmed that these programmes were included.

The Council commended the improvements in labelling – but also said that this *modus operandi* still left a vacuum where the situation in other parts of the UK was not explained. Head of News agreed, but said that increasingly Network News was covering the four nations.

81. BBC CYMRU WALES 6 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2008-09

Controller Wales said that approval measures showed the public's approval of what the BBC was doing and that the gap between BBC approval and BBC Wales was now the least it had ever been. Approval of the licence fee remained the lowest measure in Wales, but was higher than it had been in the past. Approval for BBC Wales had improved significantly over previous years.

Addressing the market context Controller Wales said that digital switchover was only months away and Wales would be the first digital-only nation in 18 months time. 90% of people in Wales now had digital TV, still highest of any of the UK's four nations.

BBC One remained the most popular channel in Wales with total BBC reach in Wales remaining at 85% (ITV 1 reach in Wales being 71%). *Wales Today* remained very important in terms of generating audiences for BBC Wales. Sport also remained important with coverage of the Olympics and Paralympics having been significant.

BBC Wales Output on BBC One – the goal was to improve on Network Share, to gain high audiences and a high appreciation index, but also a good performance within a particular age range e.g. *Not in My Nature* had performed very well within the target 45-64 age group.

BBC Wales Output on BBC Two and 2W – Events were important on BBC Two e.g. Royal Welsh Show. BBC Wales' programmes on BBC One and Two contributed +0.5 points to Network Share.

S4C – *Pobol y Cwm* remained by far the most popular part of S4C's peaktime schedule. *Newyddion* continued to increase its viewing figures. *Mosquito* had established itself well in S4C's early evening schedule. During Eisteddfod week all S4C's top 20 programmes were BBC productions.

Network TV and Radio – *Doctor Who* remained popular and attracted high audiences. *Torchwood* consolidated its position well on BBC Two and would be moving to BBC One in 2009. *Young Musician of the Year* had been a success as had *Amazon* with Bruce Parry, made by Indus.

Radio – strong drama had been produced for Radio 4 including an especially written episode of *Torchwood* to coincide the switch-on of the large Hadron collider at CERN in Geneva. A further commission of a *Torchwood* series for Radio 4 had been forthcoming. Work was continuing on programmes for Radio 3 as well as Huw Stephens and Bethan Elfyn who continued to broadcast *BBC Introducing ...* on Radio 1.

BBC Radio Wales – listener loyalty was improving and the station's age profile was gradually changing. This was being helped by a new Sunday schedule including *Good Morning Wales* on Sunday mornings being followed by *Ruth Jones' Sunday brunch* between 10am and 12 noon.

Radio Cymru – Controller said that it was too early to make any judgements on the station following the recent schedule changes.

New Media in Wales – BBC Wales’s Welsh and English sites continued to grow and be popular. The relaunch of the /wales and /cymru pages had a positive impact and Council members were reminded that the iPlayer now had a Welsh interface and included the BBC’s Welsh language output.

The new *Torchwood* website had proved to be very successful, in particular because of its new gaming content. The *National Eisteddfod* website had enabled users to customise the level of Welsh and English content to suit their own specific requirements. The site had 11,000 unique users and video streaming had proved very popular with an average of 22,000 daily video requests.

The Council asked how the data presented was used to demonstrate how the BBC’s Public Purposes were being fulfilled? The Controller responded by saying that there was no formal framework for doing this, but that the data presented clearly related to the BBC’s Purposes.

HoG&AW informed Council that the Trust Unit was doing work on this and that the Council would be receiving a presentation on this framework during its meeting in January.

82. PRESENTATION ON BBC NATIONAL ORCHESTRA FOR WALES OUTREACH AND EDUCATION WORK.

Education & Community Manager, BBC National Orchestra for Wales, informed the Council that the Orchestra had a national role – the only professional symphony orchestra in Wales and known not just for performances but also because of the relationship it had with communities across Wales. The orchestra’s performances were broadcast on Radio 3, Radio Wales and Radio Cymru as well as BBC Wales and Network TV – e.g. the Proms.

The orchestra was involved in the National Eisteddfod and local music events, and toured, acting as an ambassador for Wales overseas – such as the tour to the USA in 2007 and a tour of Spain scheduled for 2009.

The orchestra also recorded sound-tracks for programmes such as *Doctor Who* and recorded commercial CDs.

It also hosted music lessons and provided school concerts for pupils giving them a taste and an insight into the lives of professional musicians and introducing them to unforgettable musical experiences.

The orchestra was also in partnership with the National Youth Orchestra of Wales with the goal of encouraging the musicians of the future and making a real difference and also cooperated with Wales’ higher education establishments. Educating, informing and entertaining were at the heart of what the orchestra did.

Corwen and Ammanford were two towns where the orchestra had held residencies which had a lasting impact. There was also cooperation with Broadcast Development department during *Here for You* visits.

The Orchestra had also been involved in sessions to encourage amateur musicians to take up their instruments once again and sessions being arranged to encourage singing.

She informed Council that a big focus this autumn would be work with people with special needs. Two concerts were being hosted during the coming months. Past concerts of this kind had demonstrated the power of music to touch people deeply.

Making reference to the orchestra's new home in the Wales Millennium Centre - Hoddinott Hall - the Council was informed that it would be opened officially in January 2009. It would make a huge difference to the orchestra's work and enable the orchestra and chorus to rehearse together. The Grace Williams studio was part of the hall and would provide a space dedicated to education and outreach work.

83 PRIORITY ISSUES FOR BBC TRUST

The Council decided that the Audience Priorities should be its priority issues for the BBC Trust.

84. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council was reminded that its next meeting would be on 5th December at BBC Broadcasting House, Cardiff and a private dinner for the Council would be held on the evening of 4th December.