

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

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT
BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE, LLANDAFF, CARDIFF
FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2009**

Present:

Audience Council Members

Janet Lewis Jones (Chair and National Trustee for Wales)
Roy Grant
Jane James
Teresa Rees
Alex McMillan
Nicola Branson
Arun Midha
Dafydd Whittall

BBC Cymru Wales staff:

Menna Richards, Controller BBC Cymru Wales
Keith Jones, Head of Programmes, Welsh and New Media
Cath Allen, Head of Broadcast Development
Rhodri Talfan Davies, Head of Marketing, Communications and Audiences,
Mark O'Callaghan, Head of News and Current Affairs

BBC Staff:

Tim Davie, BBC Director Audio & Music (for item 16)

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.

10. APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dennis Gethin,
Andrew Carter,
Carl Cooper,
Sangeet Bhullar,
Clare Hudson, Head of Programmes, English, BBC Cymru Wales.

11. TRUST BUSINESS (IN PRIVATE)

The National Trustee discussed the recent publication of the Phase Two OFCOM PSB report and Lord Carter's *Digital Britain* report. She said that it appeared at present that the Government and regulators were looking to the BBC for answers to a wide range of problems.

She informed Council that the BBC was being genuinely open in its discussions with Channel 4 regarding a possible partnership between BBC World Wide and Channel 4 though things were not particularly easy for BBC Worldwide at present.

She also informed Council that the coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict was difficult for the BBC with a major concern being the safety of staff on the ground.

The coverage of US Presidential inauguration ceremony had attracted large audiences.

The launch of the BBC Farsi service had been a success with significant take up amongst Iranians.

Project Kangaroo had been halted by the Competition Commission and this was now being considered afresh albeit that the broadcasting landscape was changing very rapidly.

The Head of Governance and Accountability (HoG&AW) informed Council that the Trust's Maximising Audience Council Effectiveness project had identified consistency for the Councils' Annual Reviews as one priority. The Deputy Director of the Trust Unit had recently circulated a note encouraging greater consistency of style and suggesting the production of a smaller more general leaflet targeted at the general public alongside the Reviews aimed at opinion formers. Clarification was being sought on these points and the structure of the Annual Review was likely to be similar to past Annual Reviews.

HoG&AW also informed the Council that the BBC's film strategy was one area that was being reviewed later this year where the Council's input would be welcomed.

The Council's attention was drawn to the report which had been sent on behalf of Council following the work they had done in appraising improvements following last year's Impartiality Review of Network News coverage of the UK's nations and regions and this would now be considered by the Trust's Editorial Standards Committee.

The Council was informed of the draft timetable for their planned Awayday scheduled for 2nd April. This would begin at 1pm and included sessions with the Trust Unit Deputy Director and Controller Wales.

HoG&AW also informed Council that work was underway on planning the Council's outreach work for the coming year, with an eye to the Trust's work plan and AC priorities adopted by the Trust, and the Council's sub-group would be meeting shortly with a view to bringing proposals to the full Council in March. He also informed Council that the Trust's Work Plan was now open to consultation and that a draft response from Council would be circulated for Council to consider during the coming days.

Two Audience Council conferences were being planned for 2009 and would be held in June and October. These would consider Generally Accepted Standards and Portrayal.

The National Trustee informed Council that its response to the Local Video Public Value Test Provisional Conclusions had been carefully noted and this matter would be considered again by the Trust at its next meeting.

Those members of Council who had represented Council at the Trust's Audience Council Day emphasised that it had been a well constructed event. DAB and FM coverage problems appeared to have been understood and the Council's concerns regarding the 'purpose gap' in local coverage also appeared to be well understood. Portrayal of the whole of the UK in Network services was something which was touched upon, and it was important that this was understood in a sophisticated way rather than relying on outmoded stereotypes in

addressing issues of portrayal. On this matter, Council articulated its perception that writers often made proposals which they expected might be commissioned and so the responsibility was on the shoulders of commissioners as well as writers to improve portrayal.

management joined the meeting

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were agreed as a full and accurate record of the previous meeting.

HoG&AW informed Council that the suggestion they had made regarding the Quarterly Audience Insight Report (QAIR) had been accepted and would be incorporated into future reports.

The Council asked Controller Wales about proposals for a more local news service. She informed Council that significant proposals had been developed by BBC Cymru Wales and would be presented by the BBC Executive to the BBC Trust in due course. The National Trustee also informed Council that she had been given the opportunity to attend the Trust committee (of which she wasn't a member) which had considered the submissions to the Local Video consultation to ensure that the ACW's strength of feeling was appreciated. This committee would be reporting to the full Trust at its meeting in February.

13. REPORTS

National Trustee

She said that several recent Government and regulatory reports had articulated further expectations of the BBC in addressing problems in areas such as DAB, broadband, and the future of Public Service Broadcasting .

She also mentioned the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal and the Director General's decision not to allow it to be broadcast on the BBC's channels. She said that the Trust would shortly be considering the complaints which had been received regarding this decision.

Controller Wales said that a significant number of complaints had also been received in Wales regarding the Director General's decision not to allow the broadcast of the DEC appeal with one questions being whether BBC Wales could decide unilaterally to broadcast the appeal. Controller Wales said that this was a matter for the whole BBC and not something upon which BBC Cymru Wales could make a decision.

Council members made the point that the BBC had rarely been under such scrutiny – with cases such as those regarding Ross/Brand, Carol Thatcher and the DEC appeal all adding to the negativity some sections of the public felt towards the BBC. Council said that this was an increasingly significant danger and to be deeply regretted.

Controller Wales

She informed Council that the opening events for Hoddinott Hall had been hugely successful. The reaction of the Orchestra and the audience had been very positive. The Council paid tribute to BBC Wales management who had driven this project to completion despite significant difficulties. Controller Wales said that one positive development was the collaborations which were already coming to fruition with other companies resident in the Wales Millennium Centre such as dance company Diversions.

She informed Council that she had recently given evidence to the National Assembly's Culture Committee.

Board Report

Head of Broadcast Development informed Council that RAJAR figures had recently been received which showed that Radio Wales' listening figures were improving. Ruth Jones had given a significant boost to these figures as had Roy Noble's afternoon show.

Head of Programmes Welsh informed Council that RAJAR figures showed that Radio Cymru's audience figures had also improved during the last quarter. Some programmes had shown an increase year on year e.g. Dewi Llwyd's Sunday morning programme and *Camp Lawn*.

Council asked whether there had been a reaction to the bullying story line in *Pobol y Cwm?* Head of Programmes Welsh said that many young people had reacted very positively to this story line but that complaints had also been received, with some believing the storyline to be too difficult. Council also asked whether figures were known regarding the use of the Welsh interface of the iPlayer. Management said that this was not known.

Hospital 24 had been a significant TV success and had resulted in high audiences, which had rewarded the bold scheduling decision.

The Council praised the recent promotional broadcasts regarding the forthcoming Six Nations Rugby tournament.

14. PRESENTATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE BBC IN WALES 2008/09

Controller Wales said that her report would address the ways in which the BBC in Cymru Wales had fulfilled the BBC's Public Purposes.

Beginning with *Sustaining Citizenship and Civil Society* she said that News and Current Affairs was key in this sphere. *Wales Today* had an average audience of 250,000 giving a share of 27% - performance on a par with other 6.30pm news broadcasts across the UK. During 2008 550,000 people (20%) had tuned into *Wales Today* each week. Audience appreciation for the programme was at 81, a point ahead of the UK average.

Newyddion continued to be a cornerstone of S4C's weekday schedule and was now attracting almost twice as many viewers as it did 6 years ago, averaging 35,000 viewers.

Current Affairs TV programmes also contributed substantially to the understanding of viewers on key issues of the day with subjects covered during 2008 including hospital cleanliness and drug resistant hospital infections, the safety record of foreign truckers, bovine TB and the cleanliness standards of abattoirs.

Turning to *Promoting Education and Learning*, Controller Wales said that BBC Cymru Wales continued to promote this Purpose through formal learning provisions such as *Bobinogi*, *Campyfan* and *TGAU bitesize*, but also through learning by entertainment with programmes such as *Mosgito*. *Mastermind Plant Cymru* also contributed to this purpose, as well as demonstrating the way in which a BBC brand could be extended positively.

Coal House at War had also been educational as well as entertaining. The series had achieved audiences of 230,000 and an Appreciation Index of 87 having been particularly appealing to the key but elusive 25-44 age group.

Not in My Nature had been another ambitious multiplatform programme which had appealed to the 25-44 age group as well as contributing to the promotion of education and learning.

Making reference to the Purpose of *Stimulating Creativity and Cultural Excellence* she said that everything done by BBC Wales contributed to this Purpose but that one highlight had been the BBC's rugby coverage. *Scrum V Six Nations* on Sunday evenings had proved very successful, and had complemented the weekly Friday night *Scrum V live* programme which regularly delivered high audiences.

Making reference to comedy drama, she said that *High Hopes* continued to appeal, was now delivering a very good audience and gaining an extremely high Appreciation Index rating of 90 for its final series. *Coming Home* had followed a number of people in discovering their roots and *Welsh Greats* had featured contemporary Welsh celebrities exploring the lives of key figures in their particular field of excellence.

The depiction of seven days in the life of Wales's largest hospital, the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff, in *Hospital 24/7* had proved popular and had appeared in the 10:35pm slot each night for a week during January 2009, gaining a share of 25%.

Network successes had also relied heavily on local excellence included *Doctor Who*, *The One Show*, *Amazon*, *Torchwood* and *Young Musician of the Year*.

The Doctor Who studio tours during autumn 2008 had raised tens of thousand of pounds for the Children in Need charity and had provided an opportunity for hundreds of lucky winners to visit the *Doctor Who* set.

January 2009 had been the time at which the BBC Hoddinott Hall had been opened and promised to be a huge future source of cultural excellence.

Making reference to the Purpose of *Representing the UK, its Nations Regions and Communities*, Controller Wales said that several Network series now offered representation of Wales to some degree included *Torchwood*, *The One Show*, and *Coast*.

BBC Cymru Wales provided a range of national series to Wales and to areas within Wales, complementing and supplementing the Network provision across the three main platforms.

The BBC Trust's Impartiality Review on Reporting the Nations and Regions (King) report had highlighted deficiencies in Network News coverage of the Nations. Since then there has been much closer cooperation between Wales and UK news teams encompassing newsgathering and contributions from specialist correspondents.

Perceptions of BBC Wales as the national broadcaster for Wales had increased steadily from 33% eight years ago to the current level of 62%.

She said that approval of the BBC was higher in Wales than in England and much higher than Scotland and NI.

Turning to the Purpose of *Bringing the UK to the World and the World to the UK* she informed Council that *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* have been sold to around 40 countries, raising the profile of Wales across the world.

The US presidential election had also received substantial coverage across all news outlets. *America 08: Dewi Llwyd ar Daith* had provided a personal and landmark account of the views of Welsh-speaking Americans across the USA from California to Maine in the run up to November 2008's election.

The BBC's online services continued to provide worldwide access to news from Wales with a significant number of users based overseas.

Addressing the last of the BBC's Purposes, she said that *Delivering to the Public the Benefit of Emerging Communications Technologies and Services* had also been addressed with 89% of people in Wales now having digital TV - the highest level of any of the UK's four nations. Wales now had a category of its own on the BBC iPlayer's interface, ensuring access to most of the BBC's cleared output initially broadcast on BBC TV, S4C, Radio Wales or Radio Cymru. Much of BBC Cymru Wales' Welsh language TV output was also available on S4C's *Clic Service*.

However, Controller Wales said that some significant problems remained in the context of communication technologies in Wales. She said that DAB coverage of BBC Cymru Wales's radio output remained patchy in much of north and mid Wales.

The Council thanked the Controller and asked which area she still considered the most challenging? Controller said that the matter of portrayal was still the greatest challenge faced by Wales. She said that it would be a key issue during the coming year – to work with Network colleagues to ensure better portrayal of Wales in Radio and TV Network output.

The Council responded by saying that this was a matter which had been raised with some force at the Trust's Audience Council Day and reiterated that there was need for cooperation to ensure that the danger that writers would write with a view to being commissioned was avoided. Controller Wales responded by saying that her experience of writers suggested that they wrote what they wanted to write about rather than being constrained by the preconceptions of Network Commissioners. However, she reminded Council that Network Commissioners did have significant targets they had to fulfil. Collaboration and forging understanding relationships with commissioners was important.

The Council asked whether - with the opening of Hoddinott Hall and Wales continuing to be a BBC centre of musical excellence - whether there were additional opportunities for BBC Cymru Wales to provide more music output for Network? Controller Wales said that opportunities of that kind were being explored at present.

The Council asked whether the promotional film they had seen as part of the Controller's presentation could be more widely used to make audiences aware of the range of output and quality of services being provided by BBC Cymru Wales? Controller Wales said she agreed that opportunities should be sought to present the range of services more widely. Head of Marketing Communication and Audiences also said that this would be a focus for the coming year. The Council reiterated its perception that there was a danger that it was taken too much for granted that audiences were aware of the range and quality of the provision from the BBC in Wales.

The Council said that it had a responsibility too to ensure that audiences were aware of what was being provided by the BBC and agreed that opportunities should be sought in future at its own outreach events to make audiences aware of the BBC's offering.

The Council praised the very effective Current Affairs output which had been of great importance for those members of the audience who were not well off or were unwell. In particular the Council highlighted the *Week in Week Out* programmes on hospital cleanliness and standards in abattoirs. The Council said that the confidence of many viewers had been boosted to challenge current standards and to expect higher ones.

15. PRESENTATION ON THE BBC PROGRAMMING PLAN FOR S4C 1009-10 & FINAL REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF BBC PROGRAMMING ON S4C 2008

Head of Programmes Welsh informed Council that the objectives for the programming plan were to demonstrate the BBC's commitment to Welsh language television and support for S4C, to build audience approval of the BBC's programme contribution to S4C, to strengthen the bond with audiences across the BBC's Welsh language services and finally to provide programmes that were distinctive within the S4C schedule saying that it was very important for the programmes supplied by the BBC to S4C to stand out as quality provision.

The editorial strategy was to prioritise genres that served the BBC's Public Purposes and to take advantage of established production strengths within BBC Cymru Wales, BBC Network contracts and commissions (such as that for the Six Nations Rugby Tournament) and technological innovation.

In addressing the BBC's Public Purposes and *Sustaining Citizenship and Civil Society* in particular he made reference to News and Current Affairs. The News provision fulfilled a core Public Purpose, was impartial, fair and accurate and addressed a broad agenda – Wales, UK and the world. News and Current Affairs programmes included *Newyddion*, *Yr Wythnos*, *CF99*, *Pawb a'i Farn* and *Taro 9*.

Turning to *Promoting Education and Learning* Head of Programmes Welsh made reference to factual and learning output observing that *Mosgito* - a magazine programme for 10-15 year olds alongside the *Newsround* style programme, *Ffeil*, had now gained a significant audience. *O Flaen dy Lygaid* had also developed to be a well established documentary strand, within which timely and distinctive special programmes were also produced which fulfilled this Purpose.

Making reference to the Purpose of *Stimulating creativity and Cultural Excellence* he said that this encompassed Drama, Entertainment, Arts, Music and Sport. *Pobol y Cwm* continued to be S4C's most popular programme and *Mastermind Cymru*, which had been made possible through the adoption of a BBC programme format, had also proved to be very popular. This was also true for the programming from major sports and cultural events where Sports rights and in-house production skills and values were maximised.

He informed Council that in the very near future the BBC would be significantly expanding its news provision for S4C, launching an enhanced news service on S4C on 5th May, with 4 additional bulletins throughout the day beginning with an additional news bulletin at 13:30 and ending with a bulletin at 22:30.

Turning to the BBC's relationship with S4C since 1982, Head of Programmes Welsh said the BBC has supplied at least 520 hours per annum of programming to S4C (known as "the 10 hours" of provision each week). In 2009, the overall cost of this provision would be approx.

£25m and there would be close to 650 hours of programming by the BBC on S4C. The BBC's programme supply to S4C was shaped by two mechanisms, one statutory, the other a voluntary agreement between the BBC Trust and the S4C Authority (the Strategic Partnership). The Strategic Partnership agreement recognised both the BBC's responsibilities and S4C's responsibilities.

He said that the BBC's programming supply to S4C in 2009 in various genres would be:

	Hours
Arts	62
Factual	7
Drama	96
Education & Learning	48
Music	7
News & CA	354
Sport	104

Council formally approved the programming plan 2009-10 and performance of BBC programming on S4C during 2008.

S4C's submission to the Ofcom PSB Review

Council were informed that S4C had suggested in its submission to the Ofcom PSB Review consultation that it could appoint a news provider to provide both English and Welsh language news (replacing BBC Wales' current service). They had refused to elaborate on the detail of their proposal or make public their submission to the Review. In its report Ofcom said:

"...a proposal submitted by S4C in which the channel might appoint a news provider for both its Welsh-language news (currently provided by the BBC) and an English language news for Wales on whichever channel is the agreed carrier."

BBC Cymru Wales management confirmed that there had been no discussion with the BBC/BBC Trust before this proposal had emerged. Once this matter had reached the public domain, S4C had issued a press release which had said:

"It is timely to consider Welsh language news provision on S4C, though this is not a reflection the service currently provide by BBC Wales for S4C"

The Council expressed its disappointment at the way in which the debate was being conducted. The Council believed that this was a matter which could have a profound impact on the whole life of Wales. It expressed concern that the wider audience might not appreciate its enormous importance, as the Council did from its knowledge of the BBC and of its public service broadcasting duties in Welsh and English in Wales.

16. DEVELOPMENTS IN BBC AUDIO AND MUSIC IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEBATE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE BBC AND PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

Director Audio and Music informed Council that 56% of all radio listening was to BBC radio stations with 43% being to commercial radio stations. The reach achieved by BBC Radio stations was to 65% of the population and 33.52 million people listened to BBC Radio output with 29.92 million listening to BBC Network Radio. The quality of the BBC's radio programmes was made evident in the Appreciation Index rating achieved with 97% of

programmes achieving AIs above 70. Council was informed that the BBC did better than commercial radio stations in every genre measured for quality. The BBC's audio budgets were themselves exceptionally lean but Director Audio and Music said that the economic situation for commercial operators appeared bleak with advertising revenue quickly diminishing.

BBC Director Audio and Music said that the challenge was to be as creative as possible. Creative ambition and distinctiveness was critical for future success and was made evident in such output as the BBC Proms which had seen an increase of 1m in its audience for *The Last Night of the Proms*, with 12 million people tuning in to some Proms output and 48 concerts having been sold out.

He said that another goal was to create focal points in the schedules, and as an example made reference to *Big Bang Day* which coincided with the switch on of the Large Hadron Collider at the CERN scientific research institute. A full schedule of programmes had been prepared and had resulted too in 1.7m people visiting the related website and 72,000 downloading the audio podcast of a special episode of drama *Torchwood*.

Another goal was to move beyond basic 'entertainment' radio and this goal was being achieved through programmes such as Radio 1's *Newsbeat* which had a reach of 9 million. Radio 1 also attracted a 0.9m weekly unique users to its website.

Looking to the future, Director Audio and Music outlined some of his priorities to Council, saying that they were divided into three broad areas – creativity, interactivity and digital distribution. Starting with creativity he said that strong and innovative plans were in place for 2009 and that he placed a great emphasis on having continuous improvement efficiencies underwritten early in the process of setting budgets. He said that work had recently begun on thinking about the next three years, and other major strategy work was also underway.

In the area of interactivity Director Audio and Music said that a priority for him was to agree final budgets with the BBC Trust and deliver new websites which would continue the trials in the sphere of syndication and visualisation which had already been introduced. He also said that he was hoping to agree on the next steps for Music development.

Turning to digital distribution Director Audio and Music informed the Council that he was keen to agree the investment necessary to improve the coverage of the DAB provision as part of a broader discussion on Public Service Broadcasting, but was also hoping to work with the broadcasting industry more widely on developing visual aspects to the output in areas such as the development of an Electronic Programme Guide for radio. The Council was informed that 8m requests were made each month for radio material which was now available on the iPlayer.

He said that industry leadership and partnership would be another major piece of work for the Division in the near future.

Turning his attention to Network Radio, he said that reach and share were higher in Wales than in any other of the UK's nations and that around 50 different programmes were produced for Network Radio in Wales. Amongst these *Composer of the Week* on Radio 3 had the highest AI rating of any programme on radio in the UK. He said that 11 Radio 4 afternoon plays would be from Wales during 2008-09 including a radio drama version of *Torchwood*.

Council asked Director A&M about plans for improving DAB and FM coverage in Wales. He agreed that this was a major concern. He said that the BBC would not agree to any digital switchover radio plan which did not improve DAB coverage. There were plans to improve coverage of the UK-wide multiplexes in the near future. Discussions were underway on possible partnerships and on the possibility of making Wales' radio stations available on the UK-wide BBC multiplex.

Council made the point that progress should be made as soon as possible on this matter and would welcome a commitment to this occurring before digital radio switchover. Director of A&M responded that the difficulty was that the necessary capital outlay to address this matter was significant and so couldn't make a commitment on this at present. However, there was momentum on this matter and reassured Council that there could be developments on this issue in the not too distant future.

Council also expressed its enthusiasm for the whole idea of an iPlayer / on-demand / on-line archive and said that it considered this to be a very welcome emphasis for the future.

17. PRIORITY ISSUES FOR THE BBC TRUST

- I. S4C's plans for the news in Wales. ACW discussed S4C's reported but unpublished proposals for finding an alternative provider for the Welsh language news service currently provided by the BBC. The Council is deeply concerned about the implications of this - more than any other issue since the Council was established - and urges the Trust to act swiftly and clearly.

18. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council was reminded that its next meeting would be on 6th March 2009 at BBC Broadcasting House, Cardiff and a private dinner for the Council would be held on the evening of 5th March.