

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

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD
BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE, LLANDAFF, CARDIFF
FRIDAY 5th SEPTEMBER 2008**

Present:

Audience Council Members

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

BBC Cymru Wales staff:

Menna Richards, Controller BBC Wales
Mark O'Callaghan, Head of News and Current Affairs (by phone for item 63)
Clare Hudson, Head of Programmes, English
Rhodri Talfan Davies, Head of Marketing, Communications and Audiences.

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.

In attendance

Mark Byford, Deputy Director General BBC (for items 63 and 64)
Gwenllïan Carr, National Manager Wales, Digital UK (for item 62)
Rhys Evans, Deputy Head of News and Current Affairs (for item 63)

58. APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Keith Jones
Cath Allen

59. TRUST BUSINESS (IN PRIVATE)

Report back from accountability events

There was consensus amongst Council members that the previous evening's dinner with opinion formers from organisations across Wales had been a successful event with the decision to focus on different themes at different tables having been the right one. Participants had responded very much as critical friends of the BBC with some of those present having expressed a desire to be approached directly in future to respond to consultations (particularly the younger participants). A desire to cooperate with the ACW on future accountability events had also been expressed. The Council recognised that levels of awareness of the ACW and BBC Trust were generally very low.

The Council were also informed that a very successful meeting had been held with representatives of the agricultural community in Llanwnnen in late July and were reminded that an account of the meeting was included amongst their papers.

Report back on ACW working party meeting on 4th September.

The Head of Governance and Accountability reported to Council that the Trust Unit's Deputy Director now line-managed the HGAs and was leading the Trust's work with the Audience Councils. He also reported on plans for two young people's outreach events which were in the pipeline for the coming months – to be held in Aberystwyth and Bangor. A document on the Council's outreach and communication activity had been prepared by the Wales Governance Team which would be circulated to the Council in the near future for discussion at the next meeting of Council in October.

Trust Business

The Trustee informed Council of some recent BBC Senior Management appointments.

OFCOM PSB Review - The Trustee reported back to Council that she had attended a seminar hosted by OFCOM in July and that a second set of proposals on PSB from OFCOM were expected during the coming weeks. She said that responses to those proposals would need to be carefully considered.

Response of BBC management to the Network News Impartiality Review – she informed Council that the Trust response to the final proposals from management was that they were an adequate response.

Network supply and Commissioning – Council were informed that the Trust had agreed the figures on Network commissioning outside London.

A report on the *economic impact of the BBC* had been received by the Trust, having been prepared by Price Waterhouse Cooper, and informed Council that this demonstrated that the BBC contributed significantly to the UK economy.

The ACW's response to three consultations – BBC Local PVT, 3g Syndication, and iPlayer pre-booking had been submitted and were amongst the Council's papers.

The Head of Governance and Accountability informed the Council that responses had been received from Controller BBC Three and Head of Future Media and Technology to questions raised by Council and were included in the Council's papers.

The Council recorded its strong appreciation of the BBC's coverage of the Olympic Games which it considered had been first class. The Council also said that coverage of the National Eisteddfod had been excellent.

The Council asked whether it might be possible for members to attend 'commissioning meetings' since it might be a means by which information could be increased? The Head of Governance and Accountability responded by saying enquiries would be made about the appropriateness of this and Council would be informed.

ACTION: HOGA

The Trust's Consultation on the Collection of the Licence Fee would be launched the following Monday and further information would be disseminated to Council members at the time of the consultation's launch the following week.

Management joined the meeting

60. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

They were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

61. REPORTS

The National Trustee

WOCC - She informed Council that the Window of Creative Competition Review had been completed and had shown that the scheme was working well on the whole. A good start had been made to the process with independent companies having done very well from the opportunities afforded by WOCC.

Release of Jam material - Council strongly commended the outcome of the review but reiterated its view that the release of material on the 'B' list should proceed as quickly as possible. The National Trustee commended the key role which the ACW had played in this process.

bbc.co.uk service review – The National Trustee reminded the Council that this service had far exceeded its stated budget, but said that the BBC Trust was now reasonably confident that its budget was now under control because of problems with the allocation of overheads.

Controller Wales Report

Controller Wales informed Council of the very sad news that Bob Humphreys had died a short time previously, which had been a real shock to his BBC colleagues.

She informed Council that the coverage of the National Eisteddfod had been particularly good this year, with the on-line material having been very extensive. The Council affirmed the views of the Controller and agreed that the BBC's coverage of the Eisteddfod had been superb. One council member expressed the view that the Executive Producer's contribution had been truly significant. The Controller also informed Council that protests had taken place regarding the Radio Cymru schedule changes at the Eisteddfod. .

The Controller reminded Council of the contribution of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales to the BBC Proms, which had been very significant.

She paid tribute to the contribution of the three BBC Wales staff who had attended the Olympic Games in Beijing, and had produced coverage which had been remarkable both in terms of the breadth and depth of what they had managed to generate.

She informed Council that she had held a first meeting with the new National Assembly Culture Minister.

The Council were informed that Hoddinott Hall was on the verge of being handed over to the BBC by the building developers and was on schedule to be officially opened in early 2009.

The Council asked about the coverage being given by BBC Wales to the Paralympic Games and was informed that a programme was being made about the athletes from Wales at the Olympic and Paralympic games, and that the Paralympics would be covered by BBC Wales News.

Board Report

The Council informed management that they were looking forward to the *Torchwood* radio drama which was to be broadcast to coincide with the commissioning of the Large Hadron Collider at the CERN facility in Switzerland.

The Council turned to the matter of the presentation of the Trust's reports – which made reference to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – but failed to make reference to England. It was suggested that the Trust Unit should consider this matter. The use of the term 'non-white' was also queried.

62. DIGITAL SWITCHOVER IN WALES

Gwenllïan Carr, National Manager Wales Digital UK was welcomed to the meeting. She informed the Council that Digital UK was an independent non-profit organisation to assist people with Digital switchover, which involved the BBC, ITV, S4C, Channel Four, Five, Teletext and National Grid Wireless.

At present only around 60% of homes in Wales could receive the digital signal using conventional terrestrial transmission methods, but that it would be strengthened at digital switchover thus increasing the coverage.

She informed Council that the nature of Wales' topography meant that the scale of coverage presented a complex picture. Digital switchover would occur between August 2009 and early 2010.

The Council were informed that levels of awareness were high in Wales and that a Digital UK tour of Wales presently underway was expected to raise further the levels of awareness regarding the dates for digital switchover in Wales.

Focusing on west Wales, she informed Council that the switchover would occur in August – September 2009 and a local group would begin its work in September 2008. In north Wales the switchover would occur in the fourth quarter of 2009. In mid and south east Wales the switchover would occur in the first quarter of 2010 with the exact date for the switchover being announced early in 2009.

Key issues related to digital switchover were identified as

1. Freeview not being available in significant parts of Wales. At present 60% of the population of Wales were able to receive the Freeview signal but post switchover this would increase to 97.8%
2. Only 57% of the Wales population are able to receive all six multiplexes. This will increase to 73% after switchover – this means that 27% of homes in Wales will receive fewer services.
3. Some parts of Wales especially in the north east receive a stronger signal from other TV regions (Central or Granada) making it easier to tune in to services other than those from Wales.
4. A number of people in north east Wales chose to turn their aerial towards Granada to receive local news from Liverpool and Manchester. Another issue was that it seemed likely that all six multiplexes might only be available through the signal from transmitters outside Wales.
5. AMs and MPs were very vocal on these issues
6. There was a need to ensure that all TVs in the home were ready for digital and not just the main set
7. There was a need to ensure that recording equipment would work after digital switchover had occurred.

It was essential for people to be aware of the options available to customers as digital switchover approached and be able to decide on what was appropriate for them.

She informed Council of the work that was also being done by Digital Outreach Ltd, an amalgam of charities that assisted older people, those who were socially isolated, with sensory, mobility or dexterity impairments, with mental health or learning difficulties, or who were not fluent in Welsh or English. Their involvement would assist with the outreach work related to digital switchover and help people with the practicalities of digital switchover.

The Council were informed of the details of the Targeted Help Scheme which was being implemented jointly by the UK government and the BBC. This would help the elderly, people with severe disabilities and those registered blind or partially sighted.

The Council was informed that the digital 'tick' was becoming a recognised consumer protection symbol both for digital equipment, for retailers, and for accredited aerial installers and was now being applied also to consumer advice teams including local authority trading standards teams and charities.

She informed Council that the Digital UK website was very comprehensive and provided a wide range of resources. Print, Braille and audio resources were available and being disseminated. The Council asked whether schools were being used as a channel to communicate switchover messages and National Manager Digital UK confirmed that schools were indeed being targeted and used for this purpose. She expressed her gratitude for the assistance which had been afforded by the BBC and looked forward to this cooperation continuing.

63. PRESENTATION ON THE BBC MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE IMPARTIALITY REVIEW OF NETWORK COVERAGE OF THE NATIONS.

Mark Byford, Deputy Director General of the BBC was welcomed to the meeting and said that the Impartiality Review and Trust report had been accepted in full by BBC News. It was accepted by BBC News that the devolution of political power within the UK represented a transformational constitutional change, and that research showed that the majority of the BBC audiences were interested in knowing what was happening in other areas of the UK.

The Review recognised that the BBC's news was impartial in its political coverage – which had been crucial for the BBC to retain its credibility. The key concern identified by management following the publication of the Trust's Impartiality Review was the matter of accuracy. Secondly, there was an acceptance too that there was too much news coverage of political activities at Westminster, coverage of the south-east of England and a failure to carry out adequate comparisons of the political situations in the various nations of the UK. Thirdly, there was recognition that BBC Network News had missed key opportunities the prime example having been Network News' failure to give any coverage to the coalition discussion which took place in the aftermath of the National Assembly for Wales' elections in May 2007.

In the initial management response, the BBC had recognised that it should be in step with the constitutional changes as they took place and that it needed to provide coverage which reflected the range and diversity that existed within the UK.

He said that he hoped that the Council was aware that changes were already being introduced with changes implemented being a requirement. He said that it was now mandatory that stories made clear to which part of the UK the story was relevant. It had been established that the BBC Journalism Board that sets the overall BBC journalist strategy, would now meet in each of the UK's nations at least once a year with a particular focus on devolved issues related to that nation at that meeting.

BBC News has been set as a number one objective the reporting of the UK – better policy comparisons, better labelling and richer coverage. Each member of staff within

the division would be required to attend a workshop and each editor would also be required to undertake training and development to increase their knowledge of devolution.

He informed Council that a key goal for him was to move coverage away from day-to-day matters and towards reporting the 'tectonic plate' shifts which were occurring in the UK. He wanted the Network correspondents in the individual nations to concentrate more on how devolution was being made manifest

Subject specialists would also be required in future to cooperate closely with journalists in the nations - meeting with them at least once every three months. Each individual Current Affairs Network programme would also be required to have devolution champions. The Deputy Head of News and Current Affairs, Wales, confirmed that regular meetings were now taking place between Nick Robinson and the political editors in the UK's constituent nations, which had led to a significant increase in the number of political stories from the Nations covered on Network News.

The *Democracy Live* politics portal project would be an exciting innovation that would be introduced early in the New Year and all the UK's national assemblies / parliaments would be given equal prominence and availability. Search terms and political themes would be means of accessing multi-media material.

Making reference to knowledge building and training the Deputy Director General informed Council that a great deal of training had been provided for journalists as devolution was first taking place in the late 90s but that there was now a clear need to introduce a new training programme on devolution. He also said that a new on-line glossary of terminology would be introduced which would be a very useful tool for journalists.

Each major Network editor would also be required to spend a week at a Newsroom in one of the national news rooms to see what happened there and this would be monitored by the Journalism Board in a formal way on a quarterly basis. He also committed to providing copies of the regular progress reports tabled at meetings of the Journalism Board on implementing the targets set in the Executive's response to the Impartiality Review to the Audience Council and to providing a formal report to the Trust in January 2009.

The Council thanked Mark Byford for his presentation and confirmed the importance of providing the on-line devolution glossary for journalists since one of the key issues raised regularly with Council was that terminology used on news programmes, in relation to Wales, was inaccurate.

The Council confirmed that it felt that BBC Network News had taken a significant step forward during recent months, but in commending the action plan the Council also recognised that there was a significant on-going challenge to 'mainstream' the key issues highlighted in the BBC Trust's Impartiality Review and in implementing BBC Management's Action plan. The Council also emphasised that devolution was an

on-going process and that changes would occur even as the action plan proposals were being implemented.

The Deputy Director General said he accepted devolution was an on-going process and was committed to reflecting the changes taking place – but that it was important to remain impartial and to reflect changes as they took place rather than to anticipate them.

Council reiterated the point regarding the importance of reflecting the four nations of the UK not just Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Westminster / south east of England.

Council recognised that a significant shift had occurred in attitude in a relatively short period of time. Three years ago, Council had been told by Director BBC News that some of the things which had now occurred were ‘too difficult’ to deliver. One matter that remained unresolved was whether Network News portrayed the reality of Wales as a bilingual nation.

The Deputy Director General said that he accepted that devolution extended beyond political institutions, that matters of identity were also part of the process, and agreed to look again at the matter of the portrayal of Wales as a bilingual nation.

Council also raised the issue of sport portrayal, the importance of giving equal treatment to all the national teams, and raised the particular issue of BBC News’ failure to use of the term ‘England and Wales Cricket board’. The Deputy Director General agreed that examples of inaccurate sports journalism remained far too common and that there was much to be done to resolve this.

He urged the Council to inform him about particular issues which they spotted and reiterated that the monitoring and progress reports tabled at meetings of the Journalism Board should be shared with the ACW.

64. PRESENTATION ON PROFILES, BBC GUIDE TO THE AUDIENCE FOR PROGRAMME MAKERS

Rhodri Talfan Davies, Head of Marketing Communication and Audiences BBC Wales gave a presentation to Council in which he outlined the BBC Wales *Profiles* scheme. This was an internally focused project which was intended as a means to assist programme makers to understand their audiences. He emphasised that it wasn’t the role of MCA to tell programme makers what to make, but rather to provide them with useful insights. There were four questions which had shaped the project:

- Which audiences were being reached?
- How were they being reached?
- Was media consumption changing and if so how quickly?
- Where were the BBC’s audiences being squeezed?

He informed the Council that over a five year period, radio and television usage had stayed relatively stable with on-line use increasing substantially. While there was a perception that things were shifting rapidly towards on-demand viewing, in fact linear

listening and viewing still represented the vast majority of media consumption. However, he informed the Council that while TV viewing overall might be resilient, channel loyalty was very much under threat and was decreasing as one went down the age range with almost 90% of those 65+ being reached by BBC One Wales each week but only 50% of those between 16-24. He informed the Council that TV wasn't the only platform where an age skew was apparent with all services, except the BBC's online services having older audiences. He also outlined the agreed target audiences for BBC Wales' services with an overall emphasis on targeting those in the 45-64 age range.

The strategy also sought to attract a young audience by adopting a fresher marketing approach. Council were shown several trails which had attracted younger audiences – including that for *Coal House*, *Not in My Nature*, the *Faenol Festival*, *X-Ray*, the National Eisteddfod and *The Six Nations Rugby Championship*.

Profiles packs had been prepared giving 'pen portraits' of 'archetypal' viewers, including their life-styles, not just their consumption of media, which sought to give programme makers a clearer feel for their target audiences, without being too prescriptive.

The Council congratulated him on the *Profiles* project and thanked him for his presentation.

65. PRIORITY ISSUES FOR BBC TRUST

The Council looked forward to receiving the outcome of the BBC Trust's Audience Council Committee's deliberations on the ways in which Audience Councils could continue to monitor BBC Network News' success or otherwise in implementing the BBC Management Action plan following the Trust's Impartiality Review on Network News coverage.

66. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council was reminded that its next meeting would be on 3rd October at BBC Broadcasting House, Cardiff and a private dinner for the Council would be held on the evening of 2nd October.
