

Minutes
Regional Audience Council for BBC East Midlands
BBC Radio Leicester
Wednesday 09 April 2008 at 6pm

Present: Philippa Denton - Chair
 Tracey Davenport - Deputy Chair
 Glennis Taylor
 Katharine Stewart
 Nigel Hallam
 Paul Dickerson
 Lillian Nevin
 Jonathan English
 Del Shorley

BBC Staff Present:

Aziz Rashid
Kate Squire
Carol Webster

Apologies: Steve Kemp
 Andy Zadora
 Sarah McCann
 Samson Aye Aki
 Pip Ostell

1. Welcome and introductions:

The Chair welcomed members including the new members attending their first meeting. She also welcomed and thanked Kate for hosting the meeting. She asked members to introduce themselves.

The Chair informed the meeting that Thalej had resigned due to pressure of work and that Tracey had agreed to be deputy chair.

2. Minutes of previous meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on February 6 were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising.

3. Programme and Service Review:

The White Season:

White Girl

All members had watched the programmes and one had watched twice. There was a mixture of views expressed. One member found the programme miserable and depressing and did not like the language and violence. Another said the programme's portrayal of the dysfunctional white British family and the positive Muslim family made them feel uncomfortable and ashamed to be white British. They felt that this was unfair.

Most members remarked that this was excellent drama, well acted, well produced and a brave piece of television, the sort of thing the BBC should do. They felt that the portrayal was accurate and reflected real life. Most people said they learnt from the programme and that it helped to demystify Islam.

The majority had enjoyed the programme, although some would not have normally watched and would not watch again. One member felt that the ending was a bit "Hollywoodised" and too neatly packaged, while another liked the 'hope' that the ending gave. A few members discussed the programme with their networks; one said a friend remarked that his "eyes had been opened to the issues".

The programme was assessed to have met all six Public Purposes.

The Poles are Coming

Members felt that this was a light hearted look at the issues and discussed if this approach detracted or added to the programme.

It was concluded that the programme showed a clear reflection of current society.

Members would have liked more exploration of the view that Poles are taking jobs from the British and some factual evidence presented to back up the suggestion that British people did not want the jobs the Poles were doing. They would also have liked some information on how Polish culture is influencing white British people. One member was surprised that the series went out on BBC2 and would have expected it on BBC4.

One member remarked that it reminded them of the 50s and 60s when people were arriving from the Caribbean, although she felt that this time the conditions were better. She felt that it was a bit like history repeating itself and said that it brought back bad memories for her.

Members talked about the knock-on effects that were not covered in the programme and which would have been more thought provoking, but were not easy to show in a light hearted programme.

Most members felt the programme was well made, but would have liked to know how many of the white British people offered work had actually refused.

<p>ACTION: Ask if anyone said they would have taken the jobs offered – white British. How many people watched?</p>

A few members watched three of the other programmes in the series:

Last Orders:

Members were disappointed with this; felt it was too long and depressing.

Rivers of Blood:

This put issues into context for some members. The speech was very powerful.

All White in Barking:

Members felt this programme was lightweight; the theme was lost and appeared focused on getting people to make hostile comments about their neighbours.

Service Licences:**CBBC:**

All members in the breakout group had watched some CBBC and felt that the quality of drama was very good; the *Sarah Jane Adventures* and *Tracey Beaker* were mentioned as examples. They felt that *Newsround* is very good, is clear in not assuming previous knowledge, and that mainstream news could be presented in the same way. It also has a good website. The Keep Safe web page was also praised.

Members felt that the service licence was met.

The stated age group for this service licence is 6 – 12 years of age. However it was felt that children in the upper part of the age group grow out of CBBC earlier than 12 and there is little available for 12 – 16 year olds, already identified as a hard to reach audience. Although BBC Switch is designed for this group, most members were not aware of how to find it. On leaving CBBC, this early teens age group seem to gravitate towards soaps and programmes such as *Waterloo Road* which they relate to.

Cbeebies:

Three out of the four members in the breakout group had watched some *Cbeebies*.

Members saw a breadth of programmes but asked why older children in this group were watching during the day when they should be at school. One member who had spoken to a teacher in her network said that programmes were linked to education and material from Cbeebies was used in lesson plans. The schedule had underlying issues that helped to educate.

Members felt that it is important for the BBC to make high quality, home based programmes using English voices. Members talked to friends, family and colleagues (one had consulted her church mothers group) and had had good feedback from them. Parents and professionals said that children learnt a lot from the programmes.

The website, especially the games available, was felt to be particularly good and members assessed that the service licence again met all the public purposes.

4. Chair's Reports

- Audience Council England meeting

The One Show: This has changed its identity from a regional magazine programme, but all agreed that it had improved vastly. Members queried the value of celebrities appearing to plug what they are doing, e.g. Edward Woodward promoting "The Bill" from another channel.

The HRLP replied that this item was of interest as Edward Woodward, his son and grandson all were appearing on the show.

Some members still felt there were too many reality shows and asked who the contestants on Nancy were; are they trained singers or aspiring volunteers?

Members remained concerned about several ongoing issues, notably the loss of the community buses, and the parachuting in of network news reporters instead of regional reporters to cover major stories such as the Ipswich murders.

The Chair passed on a request from the North West Council for feedback on programmes relating to Liverpool as the City of Culture.

- **Head of Region's Report:**

The HRLP's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and members were asked for questions or comment. There were none.

- **Local link members' feedback:**

There were no reports as all link members are new in their roles. They are Del Shorley for Radio Leicester, Jonathan English for Radio Nottingham and Nigel Hallam for Radio Derby. Del has met Kate at Radio Leicester. CW is arranging meetings for Jonathan and Nigel in the near future with their Managing Editors.

5. Trust Business

- **Trust Draft Work Plan:** CW explained that this was for information and asked for any feedback to be sent to her.
- **MACE Review:** PMD gave an update on the MACE review and asked for any comments or feedback to go also to CW.
- **RAC Support Review:** CW briefed members that this was part of the MACE review and there would be further updates later in the year.

6. Outreach:

- **Entertainment:** CW gave feedback on the recent family entertainment outreach event and explained that members would receive the report produced on this. There were two events held, one in Loughborough and the other in Oakham. Both were with families across three generations, and both went well.

8. Burning Issues/any other business

iPlayer issues were discussed. One member said that they were aware that shortly after transmission of a programme it was available for download on iPlayer and asked what the implications for the licence fee were.

Glennis asked about top slicing of the licence fee; this followed the James Purnell Oxford speech, suggesting that some of the licence fee should be used to finance Channel Four. The Chair explained that this is an ongoing debate as part of Ofcom's public service broadcasting review. Glennis also asked why the characters in *The Passion* didn't all speak with the same accent; James Nesbitt Irish accent spoiled it for her. A few others agreed.

Del said that he felt that the quality of BBC One had diminished due to the number of repeats currently being shown for example: *Who Do You Think You Are*, *The Vicar of Dibley*, *As Time Goes By* etc. He felt this was detrimental to the channel. It was agreed that this would be considered when the BBC One service licence was reviewed as this would stipulate the percentage of repeats permitted.

Katharine said that she would like to start a campaign to get Nottingham on the weather map during the weather reports. There was some discussion about whether Nottingham, Leicester or Derby should feature as the BBC is meant to be more regional and there is no East Midlands city shown at present. This was raised at the recent TV Centre visit and Darren Betts did mention the region on one occasion.

ACTION: Phillippa will raise this at the next ACE meeting
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Tracey asked Aziz if there were plans to do a community programme to address the issues around community hospitals closing. Aziz said that this would be covered in the *Politics Show*, and that there would be News and radio coverage and possibly a big debate groundswell type event.

Kate Squire updated the meeting of some planned events:

On Jul 5/6 *Roar* is coming to Leicester. She would welcome feedback on how the end of the football season is covered. There are plans for an Asian music programme in the late summer or early autumn and the response to how this is marketed would also be appreciated. *Silver Street* goes out daily at 2.45pm for 8 minutes, with an omnibus on Sunday at 10pm. The station has received a handful of complaints asking why it has an all Asian cast and she would like an RAC review on the programme.

9. Key Issues for ACE meeting

The Chair asked for any issues for ACE to be forwarded to her.

10. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18 June 2008 at 6pm

Venue: BBC Nottingham

Programmes for Review: *Made in England* – across all platforms (CW to send info)

Aziz's Maps (CW to send out with papers for meeting)

Silver Street from Radio Leicester

Endnote

[We aim to make as much of the minutes available as possible. However, there will be times when sections of the minutes will be withheld from publication. These will be kept to a minimum and clearly marked.]

The reasons for withholding information are consistent with the Freedom of Information Act which applies to some of the BBC's information. See www.bbc.co.uk/foi for further explanation.]