

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

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT
BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE, CARDIFF
FRIDAY 13 MAY 2011**

Present:

Audience Council Members:

Elan Closs Stephens (Chair and National Trustee for Wales),
Nicola Branson,
Andy Carter,
Bethan Darwin,
Pamela Hunt,
Aled Jones-Griffith,
Ruth Marks,
Suma Pugh,
Teresa Rees,
Ceri Stradling.

BBC Cymru Wales staff:

Cathryn Allen, BBC Cymru Wales Head of Broadcast Development, (for items 30-32)
Adrian Davies, BBC Cymru Wales Acting Head of Programmes, English (for items 30-32)
Mark O'Callaghan, BBC Cymru Wales Head of News and Current Affairs (for items 30-32)
Geoff Williams, BBC Cymru Wales Head of Sport (for item 32).

Also in attendance:

Phil Harrold, Head of Governance, BBC Trust
Gareth Tuck, Senior Strategy Advisor, BBC Trust (for item 33).

Governance and Accountability Wales, BBC Trust, staff:

Karl Davies, Head of Governance and Accountability Cymru Wales,
Sîon Brynach, Accountability Adviser, Cymru Wales,
Siân Pitman, Departmental Assistant, Governance & Accountability Cymru Wales.

**28. APOLOGIES, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS OF
INTEREST**

Robert Humphreys,
Sharon Mainwaring,
Alex McMillan,
Keith Jones, Director BBC Cymru Wales
Rhodri Talfan Davies, BBC Cymru Wales Head of Strategy and Communication.

The Council welcomed new members, Bethan Darwin, Ruth Marks, Suma Pugh and Ceri Stradling to their first meeting of Council.

Under declarations of interest Aled Jones-Griffith said that he had recently been in discussions with *Its My Shout* which was mentioned in the meeting papers.

29. TRUST BUSINESS (IN PRIVATE)

National Trustee's report on recent Trust Business.

The National Trustee said that Lord Patten had begun his role as Trust Chairman at the beginning of May and had given interviews on Radio 4's *Today* programme and BBC Two's *Newsnight*. He had given every impression of being a critical friend to the BBC and a champion of the values of Public Service Broadcasting.

There had also been a discussion on the BBC's budget which this year did not yet reflect the *Delivering Quality First* (DQF) cuts. The DQF process involved a process that had generated many ideas. Some of the more concrete ideas would be coming to the Trust in July, with a subsequent public consultation.

The outcome of the March 2011 referendum had silenced the previous criticism that the BBC had given too much space to the 'No' campaign. Since then the National Assembly elections had also taken place with an announcement expected imminently on the membership of Carwyn Jones' Cabinet.

Report back on previous evening's engagement event

As well as the previous evening's event, the Council also noted the reports of the events which had taken place in Dyffryn Nantlle in early April. The Council said the report was an excellent reflection of the messages arising from both meetings. They also said that both meetings had been very worthwhile and that the messages heard at them were important for Radio Cymru in particular – with one being that the station appeared to be having difficulty keeping audiences even before the effects of possible DQF cuts.

The National Trustee said that one of the great things about the meetings had been that the events had been very focused on the one locality and led by one of the Council members. She considered it to be a model for the Council's future activity. The Council also heard that one response locally following the meeting had been a sense of gratitude that the BBC had come to them- in a relatively remote area - and that this had provided a significant boost to the BBC and Audience Council's profile in that locality.

Turning to the previous evening's event with the Chwarae Teg Women's Forum members and the event with the young Somalis from Cardiff in March, HoG&AW said that the Somali representatives had greatly appreciated both the opportunity to talk to the Council and the positive hearing they had been given. A return visit to the community in Butetown would be organised in the near future. It was also the case that opportunities for cooperating with Theatre Wales – a suggestion made at the event - were being explored.

The Council asked whether other suggestions made at the event with the Somali community – in particular the idea of cooperating with the BBC on digitising the Butetown historical archive – had been progressed and HoG&AW said that he had begun exploring possibilities with the National Library of Wales.

The Council agreed that a small group be established to consider outreach and communication activity of the Council and HoG&AW said that he would seek to convene a meeting of the group during the coming weeks.

The Council made reference to some of the Network News related issues that had been raised during recent events, and HoG&AW informed the Council that Director of News Helen Boaden would be attending the Council's July meeting.

Wales Annual Review document.

The Council approved the ACW Wales Annual Review document.

Trust Service Review of Radio 5 Live.

The National Trustee informed Council that this would be launched shortly. The Council decided to establish a small group from within the Council's membership to draft a response to the Service Review for subsequent consideration by the Council. HoG&AW said he would be convening that group shortly. One event related to the Service Review would be a joint one-day conference for Council members in London on 14th June.

Council said that one thing which had been interesting was the high awareness of the station, but the low reach in Wales of Radio 5 Live. Its availability on AM and DAB only clearly raised some reception issues, but suggested too that the low reach might be because of the excellence of the sport coverage of Radio Cymru and Radio Wales.

Report on BBC Executive's Audibility project

The Council noted the report which had been produced and commended the conclusions. One of the outstanding issues highlighted in the report was the importance of the issue for a wide age range of listeners and viewers. The Council commended the approach of the BBC Executive in working with the VLV and RNID on the project. The number of responses also suggested the work had been undertaken in a robust way. The Council commended the report and said that they considered the conclusions heartening. It also said that it would be helpful if this information were also shared with RNID Cymru and older people's groups around Wales, who regularly raised these issues at events. HoG&AW said that he expected that RNID Cymru had received a copy of the report from RNID UK since they were a partner in the project.

One concern raised by Council was that the solutions mooted appeared to be predominantly technical solutions but that it was important that other issues, such as the diction of actors, were also considered by programme makers. It was important

for the information to be shared widely with the TV production sector and with those training people to work in the media.

The Council raised a question regarding subtitling and HoG&AW was asked about levels of subtitling by the BBC. HoG&AW said he would report back on this at a future meeting.

ACTION:HoG&AW

The Council also asked whether they could get more information about the follow-up process and HoG&AW was asked to let the Council know about this at a future meeting.

ACTION:HoG&AW

BBC Trust Workplan 2011/12

BBC Trust Head of Governance & Secretariat presented the BBC Trust Workplan 2011/12 to the Council. He said that a significant focus of the year would be the Executive's *Delivering Quality First* project. Another important focus would be the new Chairman's request for a review of BBC Governance as he started in post. He informed Council that the Trust was coming to the end of the first five year cycle of reviewing each of the BBC's twenty-seven services. Value for money was a key part of the Trust's work too.

DQF would be the key part of the Trust's work during the coming months. The BBC Executive would be bringing initial conclusions to the Trust shortly. It was inevitable that a 16% real terms cut in income would result in difficult choices for the BBC. It would be important for the Councils to be involved in these discussions, not least in the wider consultations on services, likely to take place later in the year.

The Council's attention was drawn to the commitment in the Workplan regarding the roll-out of DAB provision and also the place given to Audience Priorities – drawn up by the Audience Councils.

Trust meeting in Cardiff during June

The National Trustee informed the Council of the dates and events scheduled around the Trust meeting in Cardiff on 22nd and 23rd June. The Council was also told that on the 10th and 11th October the Trust's joint Audience Councils' conference would be held and members were asked to note these dates in their diaries.

BBC Cymru Wales board members joined the meeting

30. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record the meeting held on 18th March 2011. Under matters arising – as well as the matters addressed previously during the meeting – the Council said that it welcomed the cap of 10% on the quota of Radio Cymru commissions from the independent sector since it felt there was a difference in the quality of programmes produced by independent companies compared to the BBC. Executive representatives responded saying that programmes were Executive Produced by the BBC and should be of equal quality to in-house productions, and specific examples were requested from Council members of

perceived differences in quality. The National Trustee said that at a recent meeting with the Radio Independents Group they had said that they were keen to be doing more work for the BBC, bringing new areas of expertise to the stations' output. BBC Wales Board of Management members said that it was the case that Editor Radio Cymru was keen to see more independent production companies developing in Wales but that this took time.

The Council said that it would also welcome some exploration of having a presence itself at the Urdd and National Eisteddfodau. HoG&AW said he would explore the costs and staffing implications of this and report back to Council.

ACTION: HoG&AW.

31. REPORTS

National Trustee

The National Trustee said that Sir Michael Lyons had come to the end of his term of office and Lord Patten had taken up the post of Chairman at the beginning of May.

A report on the *Delivering Quality First* process would be taken at the July Trust meeting.

She said that the emerging findings of the National Radio Stations Service Review had been considered recently at a meeting of the Trust's Audience and Performance Committee.

Turning to S4C she said that the Parliamentary Welsh Affairs Select Committee report had been published recently. The report had emphasised the importance of both the Welsh language and S4C to the whole UK. Huw Jones had been nominated for the post of Chair of S4C and would appear before a joint pre-appointment hearing of the Culture Media and Sport and Welsh Affairs Commons Select Committees in the near future.

BBC Cymru Wales Executive Board report

A key recent news story had been the Wales election and its aftermath despite the election campaign having not been particularly lively, possibly because of a lack of impetus following the March referendum on greater primary legislative powers for the National Assembly. Radio Wales' coverage had brought voices from across Wales to the coverage as had *Newyddion*'s activity. On the night of the election, coverage had come from outside the Senedd building in Cardiff Bay. Headlines had included the Plaid Cymru result, the departure of Welsh Conservatives leader Nick Bourne from the National Assembly, ironically following the success of his party at the elections and consequently the search for a new Conservative Party leader in Wales.

Wales Head of News and Current Affairs said that Network had given a fair amount of coverage to the National Assembly election campaign with Betsan Powys having provided news items twice a week to either the Six or Ten o'clock Network News programmes each week of the campaign. The Council asked him whether the outcome of the Scottish Parliamentary election would make it more difficult to get

coverage from Wales onto Network News. Head of News said it continued to be important for Wales to keep pushing news stories from Wales to Network.

The Council were informed that *Doctor Who*'s latest season had just launched with the main event at Olympia in London, but other launches having also taken place in St Athan and Wrexham since filming had occurred there.

Outstanding recent programmes included one about the process of adopting a child and also Rhod Gilbert's output. *Let's play with the Orchestra*, on the orchestra's outreach work with children with special needs had also been a great programme. Looking to the future *Egypt: What lies beneath*, to be screened shortly promised to be spectacular. There had been awards successes with 32 BAFTA Cymru nominations and 11 nominations in UK BAFTA awards for BBC Cymru Wales.

Recently released RAJAR figures had demonstrated that Radio Cymru and Radio Wales' audiences were relatively stable.

A BBC office and studio had opened recently in Wrexham with the facilities of a high standard. HoG&AW said that he hoped the Council could visit the centre when it held a meeting in north-east Wales in September.

32. PRESENTATION BY GEOFF WILLIAMS BBC CYMRU WALES HEAD OF SPORT

BBC Wales Head of Sport was welcomed to the meeting and informed the Council that his Department's annual output included over 225 hours TV (in-house), over 75 hours of TV production commissioned from independent companies, almost 1000 hours of radio, and on-line material about sport in Wales. It had a budget of £9.5m during the 2010-11 financial year. He said sport was a crucial driver and deliverer of the BBC Purposes. He said that the goal of the Department was to cover a range of sport, the major ones being soccer and rugby, but also more specialist sports.

Scrum V was the Department's leading brand that was used on radio, TV and online. Live coverage of rugby matches on Friday evening, *Scrum V Live* performed very well, with an average audience of 164,000. *Scrum V Highlights* also attracted a good audience of 120,000. *Clwb Rygbi* generated what were S4C's highest audiences, with an average audience of 87,000.

Radio audiences were more complicated but average radio audiences to sport during the final quarter of 2010 had totalled over 62,000 listeners each week. The Council was shown some examples of the TV and Radio sport output of the Department.

On-line was also important and the websites had some notable recent successes including an exclusive video and text interview with Gavin Henson. The annual growth for those websites was 33%. It was the case however that the bespoke Welsh language sport site had been discontinued, though sport coverage on the Welsh language news sites would be boosted.

One problem was that the BBC Wales Sport website was dependent on London for resolving technical issues and it was of concern that Wales' profile was might not now be immediately obvious as an option on a proposed BBC Sport web-site front page as part of an upcoming site wide redesign.

Audience interaction was important to the Department's work including the *Unsung Sporting Hero Award*. Social media was becoming increasingly important to the department in this context with an increasing number of followers.

Sport had also been a key element in Radio Wales' nomination in 2010 for the Sony station of the year award.

Turning to talent and diversity he said it was important for authoritative voices to be heard presenting sport and he said that the Department was proactively trying to improve the representation of women in the presenters. To help develop talent the Department had introduced a work experience scheme for young people, trying to encourage Welsh speaking talent for the future among the goals.

Current Network sport rights purchases had included the Six Nations rugby tournament (until end of 2013), coverage of football league matches (until end of 2011-12 season). The BBC also held the broadcasting rights to Magners League rugby (shared with S4C – to July 2014), domestic rugby (such as Swalec Cup), some Wales away football internationals, the autumn rugby internationals and the 2011 Rugby World Cup (on Radio Cymru only). The BBC also held some rights to the Heineken cup, Wales and home and international football matches, the football league and FA cup, cricket, snooker, bowls and Welsh amateur boxing. The BBC also held rights to some horse racing such as the Welsh National horse race.

Turning to other challenges he said that distribution for Radio Wales was a key challenge and cited the example that not all Wrexham Football Club supporters were able to hear commentary on Wrexham games.

HD was also a challenge and there were cost implications to being able to offer HD sport coverage in future.

He also said that in relation to football there were problems such as portraying the national side, because of limited broadcasting rights. This was also the case in terms of providing on-going future coverage of Cardiff and Swansea football teams should they manage to reach the Premier League.

Geographical coverage was an issue, since there wasn't as much sporting activity in mid Wales because of a smaller and less dense population than in other parts of Wales.

Sports Wales had a specific remit to address minority sport and tried to do this regularly. There was wide-spread recognition that the foundation of the sport coverage was the quality of the journalism provided from within the Department.

Looking to the future he said that the London Olympic Games in 2012 would be a big event with the Olympics' first events taking place in Wales.

The Council said that post 2013 it would be important for BBC and S4C to coordinate sporting acquisitions. Head of Sport said that there were already on-going discussions with S4C exploring possible synergies such as in coverage of the forthcoming Rugby World Cup.

The Council said that it recognised the quality of the sport coverage provided, but asked whether there was too much emphasis on rugby in the BBC Cymru Wales schedules. Head of Sport said that this apparent imbalance was partly because of the BBC holding broadcasting rights to rugby but not football and that there had been significant work done during recent years to provide greater coverage of football. The coverage of the Football League of Wales was sometimes lost however because of all the other sports activity covered. He said work was underway to see whether improvements could be made in terms of boosting the profile of on-line results following League of Wales football matches.

The Council raised its concern regarding Hazel Irvine's interview with John Higgins following his recent victory at the World Snooker Championship - the interviewer having pursued the recent death of John Higgins' father, leading to the player breaking down on screen and having to be consoled by his wife and two young children.

Head of Sport said that his view was that it was a key requirement to develop relationships with sportspeople so as to enable interviews at key moments. The Council commended this approach and said it also warmly welcomed the approach of the Sports Department in terms of developing women presenters and coverage of women's sport. The Council also applauded the approach of the Department in identifying and drawing attention of the public at large to the unsung heroes of sport – who could of course be of any age or sex and at grass roots level as well as elite level.

33. EMERGING FINDINGS FROM THE SERVICE REVIEW OF RADIO WALES AND RADIO CYMRU.

Senior Adviser BBC Trust strategy team was welcomed to the meeting. He explained the process of the Service Review including quantitative research, public consultation and submissions such as the Council's own submission to the consultation. The final report of the Service Review was scheduled for publication in September. The Review had, on the whole, found both stations to be fulfilling the Public Purposes and to be distinctive.

There were challenges and questions, including the possible impact on both stations of the outcome of *Delivering Quality First*, the age profiles of the audiences of both stations, whether the music played on Radio Wales was distinctive enough and whether the geographical spread of the listeners of both stations was as it should be and whether there were greater opportunities for collaboration, both between the two radio stations and also with others.

The Council emphasised that Radio Cymru was a unique service and that the budgets of both stations were already relatively small, so that it was difficult to see where further budget cuts could be made without having a significant impact on the quality and range of output. For Radio Cymru listeners there was nowhere else to go for Welsh language national radio.

The Council also expressed concern regarding the democratic deficit that already existed in Wales and said any cuts to the budgets of the stations – and the News and Current Affairs Department – could lead to the situation being exacerbated. The Council emphasised the issues regarding distribution of Radio Wales and Radio Cymru, rehearsed many times before. It said that it was a real issue in a nation which was poorly served as a result of the dearth of Wales-wide newspapers. Radio Wales and Radio Cymru's contribution to the Citizenship and Civil society Purpose was pivotal. It wasn't just News and Politics coverage that contributed, but also the music output and the use of presenters by attracting people to the stations and thus drawing them to the speech content. The stations were important in terms of public information through such vehicles as phone-ins.

The issue of the stations playing more distinctive and varied music from Wales or in Welsh was raised by Council, with an example of a comment from the Council's recent outreach event at Talyssarn cited – “*you can almost set your watch to Radio Cymru's daily playlist*”.

The Council raised the difference between the budgets of Radio Wales / Radio Cymru which were around £12m each and that of Radio Scotland which was twice as high. The Senior Adviser informed the Council that this was by no means as straightforward as it might appear since it was difficult to compare like for like. However, a part of the Review would be financial benchmarking so that future value for money could be assessed.

34. PRIORITY ISSUES FOR BBC TRUST

- The Council expressed its concern that navigation to Wales sport content from the front page of the BBC Sport website had become more difficult following a recent redesign of the Network Sport website and suggested links to the sport content of the 4 nations of the UK to be made available on the BBC Sport home page
- The Council considered that the new political landscape across the UK following recent elections in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland put a new emphasis on the need for Network News to better reflect the variations across the nations of the UK in policy terms.

35. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council was reminded that its next meeting would be on Friday 15th July at BBC Broadcasting House, Cardiff.