



Meeting of the BBC Board

MINUTES

27 February 2025
Broadcasting House, London

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Chair's Introduction
2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
3. Minutes and Matters Arising
4. Board Statement on Gaza Documentary
5. Board Reports
6. Executive and Director-General Report
7. Budget
8. AOB

ATTENDANCE

Present

• Samir Shah	Chair
• Tim Davie	Director-General
• Shumeet Banerji	Non-executive director
• Damon Buffini	Non-executive director
• Robbie Gibb	Non-executive director
• Muriel Gray	Non-executive director
• Chris Jones	Non-executive director
• Michael Plaut	Non-executive director
• Nicholas Serota	Non-executive director
• Michael Smyth	Non-executive director
• Marinella Soldi	Non-executive director
• Leigh Tavaziva	Group Chief Operating Officer
• Deborah Turness	CEO, News and Current Affairs

Apologies: None

With

Paul Oldfield	Chief of Staff to the Chair and Director-General
Chris Sandford	Company Secretary
Jo Clarke	Secretary to the Board
Richard Burgess	Director, News (item 4)
Alice Macandrew	Director, Corporate Affairs (item 4)
David Jordan	Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (item 4)
Alan Dickson	Chief Financial Officer (items 6 and 7)
Rhodri Talfan Davies	Director, Nations (items 6 and 7)
Gautam Rangarajan	Director, Strategy and Performance (items 6 and 7)
Tom Fussell	CEO, BBC Studios (items 6 and 7)
Rhona Burns	Finance Director (item 7)
Holly King	Group Financial Controller (item 7)
Amanda Jones	CFO, BBC Studios (item 7)
Kerris Bright	Chief Customer officer (item 7)
Shirley Cameron	Director of Revenue (item 7)

BOARD MINUTES 27 FEBRUARY 2025

1. Chair's Introduction

- 1.1 The Chair introduced Charlotte Moore, Chief Content Officer, who announced her resignation from the Board. Board members thanked Charlotte for her outstanding contribution to the work of the BBC.
- 1.2 The Chair informed the Board the first item of substantive business would now be consideration of initial fact-finding work on the programme "*Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone*", which he had asked News to undertake following the discovery that the narrator of the film was the son of a Hamas official.

2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1 No apologies had been received.
- 2.2 No conflicts of interest were declared in addition to those already recorded.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

- 3.1 The Minutes from the 22 January Board meeting were approved.
- 3.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising.

4. Report on Gaza: How to Survive a War Zone

- 4.1 The Board was briefed on the work of the initial fact-finding exercise by the CEO, News and the Director, News Content. The work had identified serious flaws in the making of the programme, some of which had been made by the production company, Hoyo Films, and some by the BBC in a failure of its compliance process. The Board was clear that although the programme was made by an independent production company, who were commissioned to deliver a fully compliant documentary, the BBC had ultimate editorial responsibility for this programme as broadcast. The CEO News and Current Affairs apologised for the damage caused, including the potential harm to audience trust in BBC programming.
- 4.2 The Board discussed the planned next steps. The Director-General had asked for complaints on the matter to be fast-tracked to the Executive Complaints Unit, in line

with the complaints framework. Alongside this a full fact-finding review would be undertaken by the Director, Editorial Reviews and Complaints. The Board also asked for an audit of Hoyo's financial accounting with regard to the programme to be included within its scope.

- 4.3 The Board agreed the next steps, and approved a statement for publication.

5. Board Reports

Commercial Board

- 5.1 The Board noted a written report from the Commercial Board.

Sub-committee Reports

- 5.2 The Board noted and discussed written reports from the Remuneration and England Committees.

Respect at Work Update

- 5.3 The Board noted an update on the Workplace Culture Review.

Appointment of a Non-executive to the Board

- 5.4 The Board approved a recommendation from Nominations Committee to appoint Caroline Thomson as a Non-executive Director to the Board from 3 April 2025, for a period of 4 years.
- 5.5 The Board noted that with the departure of Nicholas Serota a new Senior Independent Director would need to be appointed. Clause 21(3) of the Charter stated that the SID must be selected by the non-executive members of the Board, with the agreement of the Secretary of State. The non-executives of the Board agreed that Caroline Thomson should be appointed to the position. A letter would be sent to the Secretary of State.

6. Executive Reporting

Executive and Director-General Report

- 6.1 The Director-General introduced the report by updating the Board on the publication of the Tim Westwood Review.
- 6.2 Audience performance had been strong over the quarter to date, including good results for local radio in England which had seen a significant increase on the quarter (+7%),

taking its reach to 4.9 million people. Directors discussed the positive progress of the content strategy for England.

- 6.3 The 40th anniversary celebrations for *EastEnders* had aired this month, including a live episode and an episode which used audience voting to decide the outcome of a storyline.
- 6.4 The Chief Operating Officer provided an update to the Board. An external review was being conducted of the management of Bullying and Harassment cases with an interim report to be provided to the Executive. A learnings exercise on the conduct of reviews would come to a future Board meeting.

iPlayer Strategy

- 6.5 The Board noted an update on iPlayer strategy.

7. Budget 2025-26

- 7.1 The Board reviewed the 2025/26 Group Budget and financial plan to 2027/28 ahead of its formal approval in March, in order to challenge any underpinning assumptions and provide guidance.
- 7.2 Directors focussed the discussion on five key areas: revenue; strategic investments; cash/debt forecasts and sensitivities; PSB savings and cross group capital flows and strategic ambition. The Board discussed and challenged the assumptions around the later years of the plan, and agreed that more work would be needed on options to increase available capital in the period. The Executive were asked to conduct further analysis on this, for consideration.
- 7.3 The Board noted that a session on the strategic alignment of the BBC commercial and public service sides would take place at the April awayday. The Budget pack would be updated and returned for approval in March.

Licence Fee Collection Plan

- 7.4 As part of the oversight arrangements through which the Board meets its obligation under the Charter to ensure “that arrangements for the collection of the licence fee are efficient, appropriate and proportionate” (paragraph 20 (7) (b)) Directors considered a paper setting out the key elements of the 2025/26 plan for licence fee collection.
- 7.5 The Board considered the plan for collection which included current performance, budget assumptions and the collection environment; the optimisation of Licences in force in terms of volume and revenue and the ways to improve the customer experience.

7.6 Directors discussed the simple payment plan; field visits and the No Licence Needed category and evasion.

7.7 The Board approved the Licence Fee Collection Plan for 2025-26.

8 Local Strategy

8.1 This item was postponed.

9. AOB

9.1 There was no other business.