



Meeting of the BBC Wales Committee

BBC Wales, Central Square, Cardiff

MINUTES

17th September 2024

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Introduction, minutes of previous Wales Committee
2. Director, BBC Wales Report
3. Director, BBC Nations Report
4. English Language Television and iPlayer Commissioning Plans
5. Sports Rights
6. Audiences
7. Finance
8. Editorial Reviews
9. AOB and close

ATTENDANCE

Members:

- Michael Plaut, Non-executive Director (Member for Wales) (Chair)
- Michael Smyth, Non-executive Director
- Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director, Nations
- Rhuanedd Richards, Director, BBC Wales
- Rhys Evans, Head of Corporate Affairs and Public Policy, BBC Wales

With:

- Samir Shah, Chairman, BBC Board (items 1-6)
- Kate Phillips, Commissioning Director, Unscripted
- Mark Grinnell, Executive Lead (*secretary*)
- Richard Armstrong, CRBA Director, Sport (item 5)
- Carolyn Hit, Senior Head of Content Production, Wales (items 4,5,6)
- Nick Andrews, Senior Head of Content Commissioning, Wales (items 4,5,6)
- Gareth Davies, Senior Head of Marketing (*for item 6*)
- Dafydd Meredydd, Senior Head of Content Production, BBC Radio Cymru (item 6)
- Nia Morgan, Senior Finance Business Partner (for item 7)
- Peter Johnston, Director of Complaints/Editorial Reviews (item 8)

BBC WALES COMMITTEE MINUTES

17th September 2024

7. Introduction, minutes of previous Wales Committee

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the Committee.
- 1.2 The Chair gave an account of his first months in office, meeting key stakeholders and audiences at BBC Wales events including the National Eisteddfod, Royal Wales Agricultural Show and at BBC sites and events in Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, Bangor and Wrexham.
- 1.3 The Chair congratulated the BBC Wales News team on coverage of the General Election.
- 1.4 The Chair congratulated the BBC Wales Director for her ordination as a member of the Gorsedd of the Bards, in recognition of her distinguished contribution to the Welsh nation, the language, and its culture.
- 1.5 The minutes from the 4th June Committee were approved with no conflict.

2. Director, Wales report

- 2.1 The Director congratulated the Chair on his appointment as member for Wales and for his personal support and constructive challenge.
- 2.2 The Director welcome the BBC Board Chair to Wales for the meeting.
- 2.3 The Committee heard about the summer of live events coverage, including the Olympics, the Paralympics.
- 2.4 The Committee heard about the editorial coverage of the General Election. BBC Wales covered the campaign in two languages across digital, TV and radio services. On election night, there was a full TV election programme with detailed coverage and analysis of the results for BBC One Wales, as well as for S4C and for morning radio and digital consumers.
- 2.5 Coverage of the Royal Welsh Show was carried across BBC Wales and network services, featuring over 40 hours on radio and TV as well as having comprehensive online

coverage. Radio 4's *Farming Today* and BBC Sounds' *Terry Walton's Plotcast* also recorded episodes at the new Horticultural Village's EcoDome.

- 2.6 At the National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd, BBC Wales broadcast over 100 hours of content.
- 2.7 The Wynne Evans Summer Tour of seaside resorts on BBC Radio Wales visited locations from Llandudno to Barry Island, via Aberystwyth and Tenby
- 2.8 The Director paid tribute to the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Their six concerts during the Proms ranged Verdi to Prokofiev to Murray Gold's music for *Doctor Who*.
- 2.9 Recent co-commissions including *Saving Lives in Cardiff* and the documentary on Strictly Coming Dancing's Amy Dowden's cancer journey, along with some other new titles, has increased audience consumption on the BBC iPlayer.
- 2.10 The BBC Wales drama, *Lost Boys and Fairies* won Best European Fiction award in the Festival de la Fiction in La Rochelle.
- 2.11 The Committee received an update on the work to meet the BBC Wales savings targets. There is a voluntary redundancy scheme open to staff.
- 2.12 The *Cardiff Singer of the World* competition will see a gala concert held in 2025 with St David's Hall in Cardiff remaining closed during this period pending the start of building works.
- 2.13 Content highlights for the year ahead include the comedy, *Death Valley* and the drama, *Mr Burton* as well as the *Gavin and Stacey's Christmas Special*.

3. Nations Director's report

- 3.1 Announcements relating to savings have been made across the Nations division.
- 3.2 The BBC hopes to meet the savings targets through Voluntary Redundancy where possible.
- 3.3 The Director outlined proposed changes to the Local Democracy Reporter Scheme, the contract for which would be retendered at an increased value.

- 3.4 The Committee heard about the latest Across the UK developments.
- 3.5 The Committee discussed S4C and the possibility of giving the broadcaster more prominence on the BBC iPlayer, in addition to their own player, *Clic*.
- 3.6 Work is underway to regulate the cadence of high impact portrayal in each of the devolved nations, to make sure there is a regular flow of portrayal content. This work will complete by the end of October.

4. English Language television commissioning plans

- 4.1 The Committee discussed the Commissioning Framework used in Wales which is designed to maintain linear audiences while growing digital consumption.
- 4.1 The BBC is moving from iPlayer being a catch-up service to a digital first service.
- 4.3 The majority of the budget is focused on high-impact scripted and unscripted content.
- 4.4 Co-Commissioning deals need to work for both Welsh audiences and the production sector.
- 4.5 The Committee heard an outline of future productions which are being commissioned.

5. Sports

- 5.1 The Committee heard an overview of sport rights relating to Wales.
- 5.2 Digital growth is an important part of the future sport strategy for Wales.
- 5.3 Digital also enables less mainstream sports to have an outlet along side some of the big National moments.
- 5.4 The Committee discussed the key sports rights contract expiry dates with the renewal roadmap; including the Women's Euro's across all platforms. The Committee noted this would be an opportunity to increase the visibility of Women's sport across the BBC brands.
- 5.5 Sport progress would be discussed in a future Committee.

6. Audiences

- 6.1 Audiences to BBC content in Wales score the same or above UK average.
- 6.2 The 'chosen often' metric for Wales is ten points above the UK average primarily driven by audio consumption.
- 6.3 Local and Nations radio stations reach about 7 million listeners per week.

7. Finance

- 7.1 The Committee noted the latest finance report and forecast relating to BBC Wales.
- 7.2 The BBC Radio Cymru 2 launch means an increase of broadcast hours on this channel.
- 7.3 The Across the UK initiative has led to an increased staff headcount at BBC Wales.

8. Editorial Reviews

- 8.1 The Committee heard about the most recent Editorial review into the theme of Migration.
- 8.2 Further staff engagement sessions would be arranged locally.
- 8.3 There would now be a review of portrayal and representation. Directors have met with the authors and there will be a nation by nation session to meet the authors and have a general conversation about the topic. Authors will want to hear from relevant stakeholders.
- 8.4 Impartiality Champions are in place in Wales.

9. AOB

- 9.1 The Chair thanked the Committee members and everyone who had contributed to the meeting.
- 9.2 A date for the next meeting would be communicated.
- 9.3 There were no other matters arising.

Meeting Closed.