



Meeting of the BBC Wales Committee
BBC Wales, Central Square, Cardiff
MINUTES

4th June 2024

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Introduction, minutes of previous Wales Committee, ARA approval
2. Director, BBC Wales Report
3. Director, BBC Nations Report
4. Audiences
5. Finance
6. AOB and close

ATTENDANCE

Members:

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

With:

- Gareth Davies, Senior Head of Marketing (*for item 4*)
- Mark Grinnell, Executive Lead (*secretary*)
- Nia Morgan, Senior Finance Business Partner (*for item 5*)
- Kate Phillips, Commissioning Director, Unscripted.

BBC WALES COMMITTEE MINUTES

4th June 2024

1. Introduction, minutes of previous Wales Committee and ARA approval

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and congratulated Michael Plaut on his appointment as member for Wales and Chair of the Committee.
- 2.1 The minutes of the last Committee meeting (21st February 2024) were approved with no new conflicts arising.
- 2.2 The text for the Annual Report and Accounts was approved.

2. Director, BBC Wales, Report

- 2.3 The Director congratulated the Non-executive Director for Wales on his appointment.
- 2.4 The Director outlined editorial coverage plans for the General Election campaign, including abidance by impartiality rules and the calibrated exposure of major and minor parties.
- 2.5 There would be a significant commitment to pan-UK presence in the General Election coverage.
- 2.6 The Committee heard how Election content would be produced on all platforms and for S4C, with online, social media and engaging the larger number of first time voters being the priorities.
- 2.7 *Lost Boys and Fairies* has launched on iPlayer and Broadcast. This is a three-part adoption story written by Welsh author, Daf James.
- 2.8 *Mammoth*, the first BBC Wales and Network co-commissioned comedy, has been re-commissioned for eight episodes and a Christmas special.
- 2.9 Network television highlights include the current season of *Doctor Who*, and the announcement of the *Gavin and Stacey* Christmas special.
- 2.10 RAJAR audience figures were stable for both BBC Radio Wales and Radio Cymru.
- 2.11 Radio broadcast teams had visited the Urdd Eisteddfod in Meifod and would attend the Royal Welsh and the National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd.
- 2.12 The next Wales Committee would hear a review on digital sport plans from the Chair of the working group.
- 2.13 The Director would circulate to members a summary of the results of the BBC staff survey for Wales.
- 2.14 There would be a meeting between the BBC Wales and S4C management teams to discuss the working relationship beyond the commitments set out in legislation.
- 2.15 Training would be undertaken for ten BBC Wales 'impartiality champions'.
- 2.16 The Celtic Media Festival is taking place in Cardiff. Colleagues from BBC Radio Nan Gaidhael are broadcasting from Central Square. Other events include a Senedd reception and an event at Clwb Ifor Bach.

3. Director, BBC Nations, Report

- 3.1 The Director highlighted the success of Across the UK in portrayal of the regions of England and the devolved Nations. There is a challenge to sustain this content in the next financial year.
- 3.2 There would be a further savings challenge on top of the existing financial targets.
- 3.3 The size of the savings plan across BBC Wales is yet to be decided.
- 3.4 There is a piece of work underway to integrate online products into a single customer experience rather than the current use of multiple apps.

4. Audiences

- 4.1 The Committee heard a summary of the audience performance of BBC Wales content.
- 4.2 The Committee noted the positive outperformance of BBC audio listening in Wales compared to other nations.
- 4.3 BBC Wales had met audience targets in 2023/2024 financial year. Portrayal content had over indexed within Wales.
- 4.4 The number of weekly active accounts accessing BBC Wales content on iPlayer during 23/24 financial year was the highest ever. This performance was reliant on co-commissions with Network, particularly drama.
- 4.5 Emphasis on audio growth in Wales is to grow digital podcast listening.
- 4.6 Viewing of television news in Wales is performing on target despite a decline of linear viewing overall.
- 4.7 The new Member for Wales would attend an Audiences *Virtual in Person* (VIP) session to hear views of audiences in Wales after the meeting.

5. Finance

- 5.1 The committee reviewed the annual report and accounts draft figures.
- 5.2 The headcount figures reported in the annual report includes an average readout across the year and reflects the Public Service staff based in Wales and employed by the BBC. It does not include staff employed by commercial subsidiaries, Studios and Studio-Works. It does not include freelance and casual headcount.
- 5.3 In previous financial years, the ARA disclosure also included a table showing the average number of people directly employed to support the service produced in Wales.

7. AOB

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

Meeting closed