



Meeting of the BBC Board

MINUTES

18 June 2020
Held Via Video Conference

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
2. Minutes from the 14 and 21 May Meetings
3. Executive Reports
4. Maida Vale Property Update
5. Over 75s Policy Implementation
6. PSB Review
7. Risk Review
8. *EastEnders*
9. BritBox Update
10. Committee Reports
11. AOB

BOARD MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Present

- David Clementi Chairman
- Tony Hall Director-General
- Tim Davie Chief Executive Officer, BBC Studios
- Shirley Garrod Non-executive director
- Tanni Grey-Thompson Non-executive director
- Ian Hargreaves Non-executive director
- Tom Ilube Non-executive director
- Ken MacQuarrie Director, Nations and Regions
- Steve Morrison Non-executive director
- Nicholas Serota Non-executive director
- Elan Closs Stephens Non-executive director
- Ashley Steel Non-executive director
- Fran Unsworth Director, News and Current Affairs

Apologies: There were no apologies

With

- Phil Harrold Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke Secretary to the Board
- Glyn Isherwood Chief Financial Officer
- Bob Shennan Group Managing Director (items 1-7)
- Gautam Rangarajan Director, Strategy (items 1-9)
- Charlotte Moore Director, Content (items 1-3 and 8)
- James Purnell Director, Radio & Education (items 1-4)
- David Jordan Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (items 1-3)
- Peter O’Kane Director, ISOC (item 5)
- Matthew Postgate Chief Technology and Product Officer (item 5)
- Clare Sumner Director, Policy (items 5-6)
- Balram Veliath Director, Quality, Risk and Assurance (item 7)
- Ralph Lee Director, Content(BBC Studios) (item 8)
- Jon Sen Executive Producer, *EastEnders* (item 8)
- Kate Oakes Head of Continuing Drama (item 8)
- Bal Samra Group Commercial Director (item 9)
- Reemah Sakaan Group Director, ITV SVOD (item 9)

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

1.1 There were no apologies.

2. Minutes from the 14 and 21 May Board Meeting

2.1 The minutes from the 14 and 21 May Board meetings were approved.

2.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising paper and updates on the actions from the last meeting.

3. Executive Reports

3.1 The Director-General briefed the Board on key issues over the month. There had been some thoughtful and moving responses to the issues raised by George Floyd's murder and the Black Lives Matter movement on air, and an ongoing dialogue with staff members about what it means for the BBC. Whilst the BBC was clearly not impartial on racism, staff had been engaged on issues around impartiality, campaigning and protest, and key points from the Editorial Guidelines to help clarify the position had been circulated. A significant new initiative on creative diversity would be announced in the following week.

3.2 In editorial highlights, the first ever Premier League match to be screened on the BBC, Bournemouth v Crystal Palace, would be broadcast on Saturday evening. The creativity and innovation of programme teams had enabled the Proms season to be reinvented for 2020 and a *Glastonbury Experience* had been planned to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Festival. And as part of the 'Culture in Quarantine' season, the first Royal Opera House concerts since the lockdown would be broadcast on the BBC.

3.3 The Board noted a business continuity update. Planning for the return of more staff to BBC buildings was progressing well. It was likely that the current social distancing restrictions would allow for a 10-11% occupancy rate.

3.4 The halt on production during the pandemic had resulted in the likelihood that a number of Ofcom national and regional production quotas would be missed this year. Ofcom had been informed. Production was starting to return; filming had already begun on both *Top Gear* and *EastEnders*. However, there was still a high level of risk around both original productions and programme supply for the Autumn and Winter season. A plan to mitigate this would come to the next meeting of the Board.

BOARD MINUTES

- 3.5 The Chief Financial Officer provided an update on licence fee income, progress with meeting financial targets and the forecast outlook for the rest of the year.
- 3.6 The Board noted the Editorial Standards Report.

Annual Performance Review

- 3.7 The Board discussed the annual full year performance review undertaken by the Executive Committee.
- 3.8 Directors noted that overall the BBC reached nine in ten adults each week and eight in ten 16-34s and under 16s. BBC iPlayer continued to perform well and now almost made up for the falls in linear TV viewing for all audiences, including 16-34s; BBC Sounds had a strong full first year and beat all of its targets; BBC News remained the UK's number one news service, and the development of the Scotland channel had reached more viewers on average each week in Scotland than any other TV channel outside BBC One, Two, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5. The Board agreed that it was a strong performance but more remained to be done to reach underserved audiences, particularly among younger audiences.

EHRC Update

- 3.9 The Board noted an update on the EHRC investigation.

England Strategy Implementation

- 3.10 The Board noted an update on the implementation of the England Strategy, which was being adapted to incorporate learnings from the coronavirus pandemic. A further update would be distributed to the Board ahead of the next meeting.

4 Maida Vale Property Update

- 4.1 The Board noted an update on the listing of the Maida Vale site and the possible impact on its sale value.
- 4.2 The Board agreed that a strong appeal should be made against elements of the listing and in order to get them amended. Directors noted that a report on the outcome of the appeal, the overall impact on the value to the BBC of Maida Vale and of options for the building going forward would return to the Board at a later date.
- 4.3 The Board noted that an assessment of the financial implications of the listing of Maida Vale on the BBC's finances, including the impact on the East Bank programme, would also return to the Board.

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5 Over 75s Policy Implementation

- 5.1 The Board was keeping its decision under review. It noted the progress made on the over 75s programme to date and discussed implementation issues. Directors noted that the programme would request the Board to make a decision in July on whether or not to proceed with 1st August start date for implementation.

P2020 Cost Update

- 5.2 The Board noted an update on the cost of implementing the over 75s policy resulting from the re-planning due to the impact of Covid-19 on the programme.

6 PSB Review

- 6.1 The Board considered a paper which provided a briefing on the proposed approach to Ofcom's PSB Review and the revised timetable.

7. Risk Review

- 7.1 The Board was asked to review and consider the top risks in the corporate risk review.
- 7.2 The Board noted that risk management metrics and targets were reported to the BBC Audit and Risk Committee on a quarterly basis. In addition, the BBC's Executive Committee had also reviewed the paper.
- 7.3 The Board discussed the risks and their severity, along with possible mitigating actions. It was clear that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic had caused a number of the risks to increase in severity.
- 7.4 The Board discussed the risks to overseas operations and requested that a paper on the World Service come to the Board later in the year.

8 *EastEnders*

- 8.1 The Board welcomed Ralph Lee, Director Content BBC Studios, Kate Oates, Head of Continuing Drama and Jon Sen, the Executive Producer for *EastEnders* to the meeting.
- 8.2 The Board received a presentation on the programme which covered its audience profile, its creative renewal strategy and the plans for it to return to production following the coronavirus pandemic.

BOARD MINUTES

9 BritBox Update

- 9.1 The Board welcomed Reemah Sakaan, Group Director, ITV SVOD, to the meeting.
- 9.2 The Board received a presentation on the performance of BritBox, both domestically and overseas.

10 Committee Reports

- 10.1 The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on its most recent meeting. Items included for discussion were the year-end reporting in preparation for the Annual Report and Accounts; updates on critical projects; the risk report, and internal audit plans for the coming year.
- 10.2 The Chair of the Wales Committee reported on its most recent meeting. Rhodri Williams, the Chair of S4C, had joined the Committee for a discussion session. Other items for discussion had included the Director Wales Report, audience performance and approval of the Committee Report for this year's Annual Report.

11 AOB

- 11.1 The Board noted that Tony Hall would take up his position as Chairman of the National Gallery on 1 July 2020. Directors confirmed that they were content with the start date and that his Chairmanship of the National Gallery would run in parallel with the remainder of his term as Director-General.