



## Meeting of the BBC Board

### MINUTES

16 September 2019  
Broadcasting House, London, W1A 1AA

#### ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
2. Minutes from the 18 July Board Meeting
3. Executive Reports
4. iPlayer Update
5. Commercial Matters
6. Licence Fee
7. Committee Reports
8. AOB

## ATTENDANCE

### Present

- David Clementi            Chairman
- Tony Hall                 Director-General
- Tim Davie                Chief Executive Officer, BBC Studios
- Shirley Garrood         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
- Nicholas Serota        Non-executive director
- Elan Closs Stephens    Non-executive director
- Ashley Steel            Non-executive director
- Fran Unsworth         Director, News and Current Affairs

Apologies: Steve Morrison

### With

- Phil Harrold            Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke                Secretariat Manager
- Glyn Isherwood        Chief Financial Officer
- Bob Shennan            Group Managing Director
- Gautam Rangarajan    Director, Strategy (items 1-4)
- David Jordan            Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (items 1-3)
- James Purnell         Director, Radio and Education (items 1-3)
- Balram Veliath         Director, Quality, Risk and Assurance (items 1-3)
- Kerris Bright          Chief Customer Officer (items 4 and 6)
- Dan McGolpin         Commissioning Controller (item 4)
- Marcus Arthur         CEO, UKTV (item 5)
- Clare Sumner          Director, Policy (item 6)
- Pipa Doubtfire         Head of Licence Fee Unit (item 6)

**I. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest**

1.1 Steve Morrison was an apology.

**2. Minutes from the 18 July Board Meetings**

2.1 The minutes from the 18 July were approved.

2.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising.

**3. Executive Reports**

3.1 The Director-General reported on the highlights of the summer output. It had been a highly successful and diverse Proms season, culminating with *The Last Night of The Proms* which had been widely covered in the press. *Peaky Blinders* had returned to BBC One's Sunday night drama slot and the new season of *Strictly Come Dancing* had launched.

3.2 Preparation was underway for a possible General Election. The Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee had met to consider a draft set of Election Guidelines prior to the Board meeting. Online news and political programming was proving very popular with audiences and the *Today* programme and the *Ten O'Clock News* were on strong form.

3.3 The Board noted that as a result of the Spending Review announced on 4th September, the funding for the World Service W2020 programme had been extended for another year to April 2021.

3.4 The Director-General briefed the Board on the recent senior leadership meeting at Olympic Park, Stratford, which had considered the BBC's audience and financial challenges.

3.5 The Director, Content, provided an update on performance. iPlayer had had a strong summer, bucking the usual seasonal trend, particularly with regard to reach figures which were up significantly on the year for young audiences and all adults. The content driving the figures included *Killing Eve*, *Top Gear*, *The Planets*, *Glastonbury* and the *FIFA Women's World Cup*. The new series of *Peaky Blinders* was driving audiences, notably younger viewers, to the previous series which were available as box sets on iPlayer.

- 3.6 The Director, Radio and Education, provided an update on performance. The latest RAJAR figures had been released, with some churn following recent schedule changes resulting in some low figures for BBC Radio. Within that, there were some positive figures for Radio 1's revamped breakfast show, which had grown to 9.56m up 3% on the year. 1Xtra saw record numbers for breakfast, and 5 Live continued its strong performance.
- 3.7 The Director, News and Current Affairs provided an update on performance. Audiences were extremely engaged with political developments, as shown by the growing audience for BBC Parliament which had reached 2.5 million over the previous week. The new *Newsnight* team had more than doubled the average nightly audience and the new *Andrew Neil Show* was also doing well. In Current Affairs highlights, *Spotlight On The Troubles: A Secret History* was a major documentary from the Spotlight team in Northern Ireland to mark the 50th Anniversary of the start of the Troubles.
- 3.8 The Director, Nations and Regions, provided an update on audiences and activities. BBC Northern Ireland provided extensive coverage of the 148th Open Championship at Royal Portrush, performing strongly across all platforms and reaching over one-fifth of the local population. BBC Wales drama *Keeping Faith* returned to BBC One in late July, with the first episode attracting an average audience of 4m viewers across the UK. BBC England had provided extensive coverage of the Whaley Bridge dam evacuation, with multiple radio, TV and online services coming together to inform and support the community throughout.
- 3.10 The Chief Executive Officer, BBC Studios provided an update on performance. BBC Studios had fielded a strong presence at the Edinburgh TV Festival this year, launching new content and third-party commissions. Key priorities going forward included securing and retaining the right talent and developing the strength of the content pipeline, particularly with regard to rights ownership.
- 3.11 The Board noted the Editorial Standards Report. Response times were within target for all stages of the complaints process.
- 3.12 The Board considered the Operational Performance Report, which included updates on the BBC's critical projects and outstanding pay queries. The Board received a report from the Chief Finance Officer which set out the latest financial position against budget forecasts. Directors also discussed an update on the BBC's future financial strategy ahead of the first Budget discussion which was scheduled for the Board in October.

#### *Finance, Commercial and Operations Quarterly Report*

- 3.13 The Board noted the Finance, Commercial and Operations Quarterly Report.

### *No-deal Brexit Planning*

- 3.14 The Board considered a paper setting out the BBC's preparation for a 'no-deal' Brexit. Directors noted that mitigation plans had been developed across five key risk areas, which covered the most significant pan-BBC areas of inherent risk previously identified and presented to the Board in December 2018.

## **4 iPlayer Update**

- 4.1 The Board received a presentation on progress with the iPlayer strategy.

## **5. Commercial Matters**

### *UKTV Commercial Stretch Plan*

- 5.1 The Board considered a paper which provided an update on the delivery of the Lead Deal Plan and UKTV's short-term performance and presented a commercial stretch plan. The paper also set out a number of operational options for discussion, which would need to be considered within the context of the BBC Group's routes to market strategy.
- 5.2 Directors discussed the update. The Board noted that UKTV had performed ahead of expectations during the period and it was anticipated that the stretch plan would provide additional income. It was also likely that further synergies would also be identified in the future. The Commercial Holdings Board had been involved in overseeing the project and would take a further update in six months.

### *BBC Studios: Lines of Business*

- 5.3 The Board considered an update on the BBC's progress in changing its Ofcom reporting for BBC Studios. As agreed by the Board following the Commercial Review the number of lines of business in BBC Studios were being changed from five to two. It was also planned to revise the public commitments made at the time of the BBC Studios-Worldwide merger in April 2018 to align with the proposed new reporting structure.

### *Revised Financial Delegation Framework for Commercial Holdings Board*

- 5.4 The Board approved the revised financial delegation framework for Commercial Holdings Board.

## *Revised Commercial Holdings Board Terms of Reference*

- 5.5 The Board approved the revised Commercial Holdings Board Terms of Reference, which reflected changes to its membership structure and secretariat support, as well as more tightly defining its responsibilities.

## **6 Licence Fee**

### *Licence Fee Policy and the Crown Dependencies*

- 6.1 The Board considered a paper setting out a proposed approach to reaching a decision on the age related licence fee concession for the Crown Dependencies, namely the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The decision the Board took in June, to provide the concession to people aged 75 or over and in receipt of Pension Credit, only applies to the UK. The paper recommended an appropriate consultation in the Crown Dependencies.
- 6.2 The Board approved the recommended approach.

### *Licence Fee: Simpler Payment Plan*

[paragraph 6.5 redacted for future publication]

- 6.3 The Board noted that the Licence Fee Unit had been trialling a new payment instalment scheme for the TV licence, the Simple Payment Plan, aimed at supporting those customers facing the most difficulty in paying the licence fee. Directors considered a paper summarising the findings of the trial and recommending next steps.
- 6.4 The Board discussed the paper. Directors noted the confirmation that the roll-out of the new plan was not dependent on the modernisation of the Licence Fee Unit's campaign management system.
- 6.5 **The Board approved the recommendation to rollout the Simple Payment Plan, using the same eligibility criteria used in the trial.**

## **7 Committee Reports**

- 7.1 The Chair of the Remuneration Committee reported on the most recent meeting of the Committee. Items for discussion had included the pay structure in the commercial businesses and the Gender Pay Gap Report for BBC Studios.

- 7.2 The Chair of the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee reported on its most recent meeting. The Committee had discussed and approved the draft Election Guidelines, subject to any amendments which might arise from the consultation period. The Committee had agreed that the final version of the Guidelines would be signed off by the Chairman of the Committee and the Director-General.
- 7.3 The Chair of the Commercial Holdings Board reported on its latest meeting. Items for discussion had included UKTV performance and the governance structure for BritBox.

*Draft Election Guidelines*

- 7.4 The Board noted the draft Election Guidelines which had been approved, subject to consultation, by the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee.

**8 AOB**

- 8.1 The Chairman informed the Board that its next annual review would be undertaken by Christopher Saul.
- 8.2 The Company Secretary confirmed that December meeting of the Board would be held in Cardiff.

Approved by the Board: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairman)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)