



## Meeting of the BBC Board

### MINUTES

25 April 2023  
Quay House, Media City, Salford

#### ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
2. Minutes and Matters Arising
3. Board Business and Reports
4. Executive and Director-General's Report
5. iPlayer Update
6. Quarterly Performance Report
7. Audio Production
8. Mid Term Review
9. AOB

## **ATTENDANCE**

### Present

- Richard Sharp Chairman
- Tim Davie Director-General
- Shumeet Banerji Non-executive director
- Damon Buffini Non-executive director
- Shirley Garrood Non-executive Director
- Robbie Gibb Non-executive director
- Muriel Gray Non-executive director
- Charlotte Moore Chief Content Officer
- Nicholas Serota Non-executive director
- Elan Closs Stephens Non-executive director
- Leigh Tavaziva Group Chief Operating Officer
- Deborah Turness CEO, News and Current Affairs

Apologies: None

### With

- Phil Harrold Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke Secretary to the Board
- Gautam Rangarajan Director, Strategy (items 4 onward)
- Rhodri Talfan Davies Director, Nations (items 4 and 6)
- David Jordan Director, Editorial Standards and Policy (items 4a and 6)
- Alan Dickson Chief Financial Officer (items 4 and 6)
- Dan McGolpin Director, iPlayer and Channels (item 5)
- Storm Fagan Chief Product Officer (item 5)
- Tom Fussell CEO, BBC Studios (items 6 and 7)
- Clare Sumner Director, Policy (item 8)

## BOARD MINUTES 25 APRIL 2023

### 1. **Apologies and Conflicts of Interest**

- 1.1 There were no apologies.
- 1.2 There were no conflicts of interest declared in addition to those already recorded.

### 2. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

- 2.1 The minutes from the 28 February and 21 March Board meetings were approved.
- 2.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising paper, including the revised publication date of the TV Licence Gender Disparity Report.

### 3. **Board Business and Reports**

- 3.1 The Board noted written reports on the most recent meetings of the Wales and Northern Ireland Committees; the Commercial Board; and, the Audit and Risk Committee; which had been circulated in advance.
- 3.2 The Board discussed the reports. Directors discussed issues arising from the Audit and Risk Committee, including the situation with BBC India and cyber security risk. Directors noted that the Quarterly Performance Report in July would feature new metrics on cyber security and agreed that the new Head of Information Security should attend the Board for that session. Directors discussed Commercial Board and its strategic alignment with the public service. Directors noted that the Commercial Board's content strategy would come to the Board once it had been approved in the Autumn.

#### *Further Thematic Reviews: Update*

- 3.3 The Board noted a progress update on the identification of co-chairs for the Thematic Review of BBC Coverage of Migration and its terms of reference. Directors noted that the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee recommended that Madeleine Sumption and Samir Shah should be the co-leads of the review.
- 3.4 The Board approved Madeleine Sumption and Samir Shah as co-chairs of the review and its terms of reference.

### *Pension Trustee Appointment*

- 3.4 Under the BBC Pension Scheme Trust Deed and Rules and the Matters Reserved for the Board (Corporate Governance), Independent Trustees are appointed by the BBC Pension Trust Ltd Board, with the approval of the BBC. The Board considered a recommendation from the BBC Pension Trust for the appointment of an Independent Trustee to its Board.
- 3.5 The Board approved the appointment of Emma Osborne as an Independent Trustee for a period of three years from 1 September 2023.

### *Minute Publication Schedule*

- 3.6 The Board approved a recommendation reducing the time period between the approval and publication of committee minutes from two months to two weeks in order to improve transparency.

## **4. Executive and Director-General's Report**

- 4.1 The Director-General opened his session by highlighting the strength of the BBC's current content offer. A number of programmes were proving appealing to younger audiences including *Race Across the World*, *Waterloo Road* and *The Apprentice*. New drama *Blue Lights* had developed as a sleeper hit and David Attenborough's *Wild Isles* had achieved audiences of 10-11 million viewers. Directors discussed the reasons for dropping *AutumnWatch* from natural history programming.
- 4.2 The Board noted an update on the launch of the News Channel and discussed how the audience performance of the new service would be measured. Directors also discussed how the viewing of BBC News over social media expanded its reach.
- 4.3 The Board noted an update on the changes to BBC Local services and how industrial relations and stakeholder concerns were being managed.
- 4.4 The coming weeks included high profile events for the BBC. The Board noted the extent of the planning being undertaken for both the Coronation and coverage of related events and the *Eurovision Song Contest*.
- 4.5 Work was taking place to assure alternative funding models for the BBC Singers following discussion with a number of stakeholders.
- 4.6 The staff survey was about to conclude and the next round of myConversation had taken place, ensuring every member of staff had a performance conversation with their manager.

- 4.7 The Chief Operating Officer provided a report on financial and operational issues. The Board noted that Information and Cyber Security continued to be a core focus for the Technology Group. The teams had placed a renewed focus on incident response rehearsal and were continuing to work with third parties and government agencies to ensure best practice and access to enhanced threat assessments.
- 4.8 The Chief Operating Officer briefed the Board on the dispute with Arqiva following the August 2021 fire at the Bilsdale transmitter station.
- 4.9 The Board noted updates on staff safety and security featuring updates on the situation in Ukraine; the arrest of BBC Persian staff in Libya; and the ongoing tax investigations in India, which had widened to include compliance with foreign ownership rules. A compliance audit of all international bureaux would be undertaken.
- 4.10 The Chief Operating Officer provided a briefing on the investigation into Tim Westwood while he was employed by the BBC.
- 4.11 The Executive and Director-General's Report was noted.

#### *Social Media Review*

- 4.12 The Board noted an update on progress with the Social Media Review. John Hardie, a former CEO of ITN was leading the review and would interview a wide range of staff and stakeholders. It was expected that the report would be completed by the summer.

#### *Finance Cases*

- 4.13 The Board considered two finance cases relating to the Elstree site and the re-procurement of its Business Process Outsource contract.
- 4.14 The Board delegated approval of the finance cases to the Board Finance Approvals Committee, which would report back to the next meeting of the Board.

### **5. iPlayer**

- 5.1 The Board noted a quarterly update on iPlayer performance. Full year targets for signed-in accounts and consumption had been met following iPlayer's best ever quarter and best ever year.
- 5.2 The Board discussed how to increase the granularity of reporting data and plans for further product development.

## **6 Quarterly Performance Report**

- 6.1 The Board noted and discussed the audience performance assessment for the quarter January to March 2023.
- 6.2 The Board noted and discussed the market intelligence report, which this month contained a deep-dive on the local news market. Directors agreed that a separate briefing session on the topic should be scheduled.
- 6.3 The Board noted the operational and financial update, which included financial reporting from both the public service and commercial operations.
- 6.4 The Board noted a summary of progress with critical projects, including the East Bank project and Across the UK. Directors also received an update on critical strategic and operational risks; noting that the strategic risk review would come to the Board in June. The reporting pack now also included an overview of pan-BBC safeguarding measures.
- 6.5 The Board noted the Editorial Standards and Complaints report.

## **7 Review of Speech Audio Production**

- 7.1 The Board considered an update on the outcomes of the Review of In-House Speech Audio which had been undertaken by the Executive.

## **8 Mid – Term Review**

- 8.1 The Board considered an update on the Mid-Term Review process being undertaken by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

## **9. AOB**

- 9.1 There was no other business.
- 9.2 Non-executive members took part in a private session.