



## Meeting of the BBC Board

### MINUTES

21 September 2022  
Via Video Conference

#### ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
2. Chairman's Introduction
3. Minutes and Matters Arising
4. Committee Reports
5. Executive and Director-General's Report
6. Regulatory Matters
7. World Service and WS2020 Annual Performance Review
8. AOB

## **ATTENDANCE**

### Present

- Richard Sharp Chairman
- Tim Davie Director-General (apart from item 4.6)
- 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
- Ian Hargreaves Non-executive director
- Charlotte Moore Chief Content Officer (apart from 4.6)
- Nicholas Serota Non-executive director
- Leigh Tavaziva Group Chief Operating Officer
- Deborah Turness CEO, News and Current Affairs (apart from 4.6)

Apologies: Elan Closs Stephens

### With

- Phil Harrold Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke Secretary to the Board
- Gautam Rangarajan Director, Strategy (items 5 onward)
- Rhodri Talfan Davies Director, Nations (item 5)
- Craig Parfitt Chief Financial Officer (item 5)
- Tom Fussell CEO, BBC Studios (item 5)
- Clare Sumner Director, Policy (item 6)
- Chris Rowsell Controller, Regulation (item 6)
- Claire Rooney Head of Audience Research, World Service (item 7)
- Phil Kemp Controller, Group News Strategy (item 7)

## BOARD MINUTES 21 SEPTEMBER 2022

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

- 1.1 Elan Closs Stephens was an apology for this meeting.
- 1.2 There were no conflicts of interest declared.

### **2 Chairman's Introduction**

- 2.1 The Chairman opened the meeting by commending the Executive for the BBC's coverage of the death of The Queen and commemoration programming along with its live broadcast of the state funeral. He noted that this Board meeting would be shorter than usual as time had been set aside for discussion on future strategy the following day. However, a significant discussion on financial planning for the inflationary environment would take place under the Executive and Director-General's Reports. Ongoing work on commercial governance and membership of the Commercial Board was taking place and would return to the next meeting of the Board.
- 2.2 The Chairman welcomed Deborah Turness, the new CEO, News and Current Affairs, and member of the Board to her first meeting.
- 2.3 The Board received and discussed a presentation by the CEO, News and Current Affairs on the strategic priorities for the division in the coming months.

### **3. Minutes and Matters Arising**

- 3.1 The minutes from the 21 July Board meeting were approved.
- 3.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising paper.

### **4. Committee Reports**

#### *Commercial Board*

- 4.1 The Board noted a report on the most recent meeting of the Commercial Board which had been circulated in advance.
- 4.2 The Chair of Commercial Board provided a summary of key points from management and financial reporting, as well as an update on the recruitment of new non-executives

for the Board. Directors discussed the production of the long-term plan for BBC Studios, which would return to the full Board at a later date. The Chair of Commercial Board provided Directors with a briefing on the agreement that had been signed with Disney, within the terms agreed at the July meeting of the Board, regarding future series of *Doctor Who*.

#### *Nominations Committee: Re-appointment of an Executive Board Member*

- 4.3 Nominations Committee had submitted a recommendation to re-appoint Leigh Tavaziva, Chief Operating Officer, as an executive member of the Board for a further two years on the completion of her current appointment term.
- 4.4 The Board approved the recommendation and re-appointed Leigh Tavaziva, Chief Operating Officer, from 1 February 2023 until 31 January 2025.

#### *Board Resolution: Authorised Banking Signatories*

- 4.5 The Board approved a resolution updating the authorised signatories required for the BBC's banking facility agreement.

#### *Non-executive Session – Tim Westwood Investigation*

- 4.6 The Director-General and Executive members of the Board (apart from the Chief Operating Officer) left the room while non-executives received a briefing on progress with the investigation of allegations against Tim Westwood while he was being employed by the BBC, from the Senior Independent Director and the COO. A further briefing would take place at the October Board meeting.

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

[paragraph 5.3 redacted for commercial confidentiality]

- 5.1 The Director-General opened his session by reflecting on coverage of the Queen's death and Funeral during what had been an historic period for the country. Every part of the organisation had contributed to the BBC's coverage and plans had been executed with great confidence and control. The Director-General paid tribute to Huw Edwards and Nicholas Witchell, as well as presenting teams across BBC output. The Events team in BBC Studios had delivered a vast amount of intricate ceremonial events with innovation, clarity and style. Audience engagement levels had been high and sustained. In the week to 15 September, at least 9 in 10 people in the UK had turned to the BBC – 42 million viewers on TV and over 85 million browsers online as people accessed content on multiple devices. Global audiences added another 95 million visitors to the UK numbers. Overall, complaints were low. Some complaints had been received regarding the decision not to go ahead with the *Last Night of the*

*Proms*, which had been a finely drawn judgement impacted by the level of outside broadcast resource as well as tonal considerations.

- 5.2 The Board noted an update on the recent DCMS Select Committee and engagement with new ministers at DCMS, while mid-term review interview sessions had been continuing.
- 5.3 There had been very strong coverage of events over the summer, including the Women's Euros and the Commonwealth Games.
- 5.4 There was a strong content line up for the Autumn, including *Frozen Planet II* and the return of *Strictly Come Dancing*, however, the decline in linear viewing was impacting all broadcasters. The Board discussed the most recent audience performance analysis, which showed that whilst reach was still high hours of time spent with the BBC were under challenge.
- 5.5 The Board noted a briefing on progress with planning for Eurovision 2023. The process for selecting the host city was well underway with an announcement due ahead of the next Board meeting.
- 5.6 The Chief Operating Officer provided a report on financial and operational issues. The finance report included the July year to date position and the latest 2022/23 full year forecast. In operational updates, the Board noted and approved the BBC's exit from the Digital Production Partnership, along with the other public service broadcasters as it transitioned to a commercial company. The Board noted that a procurement process had begun for an operator for TV Licensing's simple payment plan scheme.
- 5.7 The Director-General and Executive Report was noted.

#### *Finance and Budget Update*

- 5.8 The Board discussed a Financial Update report as part of the preparation for the annual budget process. This included an update of the inflationary challenges impacting the organisation and the actions needed to mitigate the risk.

#### *Commercial Matters*

[paragraph 5.9 redacted for future publication]

5.9

- 5.10 The Board approved the recommendation to delegate approval of the final agreement with the Trustee to the Group Chief Operating Officer.

## **6. Regulatory Matters**

### *iPlayer PIT*

- 6.1 The Charter requires that the Board must consider proposals for material changes to the UK Public Services, and must assess both the public value and impact on competition of such proposals. As such the BBC Board must decide whether our proposals for expanding the content on BBC iPlayer meet the Public Interest Test. The Board considered a paper summarising the responses to the BBC's consultation; audience research; and economic modelling, and which proposed that the changes satisfied the Public Interest Test.
- 6.2 The Board approved the Public Interest Test for the further expansion of content on iPlayer.

### *Regulatory Update: Changes to News and Other Matters*

- 6.3 The Board noted a paper providing an update to the Board on the regulatory issues related to the News channel changes, Ofcom's consultation for modernising the Operating Licence, the response to Ofcom's BBC Studios review, and the expansion of local online news in England and Radio Cymru 2.

## **7 World Service and WS2020 Annual Performance Review**

- 7.1 The Board discussed a paper providing an update on the performance of the World Service for 2021/22. It also provided an update on the WS2020 expansion programme, including a draft Annual Statement. These documents are both for onward submission to the Foreign Secretary.
- 7.2 Directors noted that the BBC's International News Services reached record levels in 2021/22, with a weekly audience of 458 million people, an increase of 2 million from 2020/21 in spite of last year's big audience increase that derived from the Covid crisis. The World Service delivered a weekly audience of 365 million, up 1 million from 2020/21 and above the reach target of 364 million people by 2022. The increasing ability to deliver services via digital had been an important driver of growth. The Board noted that the World Service was on track to meet its targets regarding young audiences, but there were challenges in meeting targets for female audiences, which Directors discussed.
- 7.3 The Board approved the report on the annual performance of the World Service and the WS2020 Annual Statement, for onward submission to the Foreign Secretary.

## **8 AOB**

8.1 There was no other business.