

S4C Board

Meeting 480

10:00, 23 October 2025

Yr Egin, Carmarthen

SUMMARY OF MINUTES

Members in attendance:

- Delyth Evans [DE], Chair of the Board
- Geraint Evans [GE], Chief Executive
- Guto Bebb [GB], Non-Executive Member
- Dyfrig Davies [DD], Non-Executive Member
- Suzy Davies [SuD], Non-Executive Member
- Wyn Innes [WI], Non-Executive Member
- Llion Iwan [LII], Chief Content Officer (item 2 onwards)
- Elin Morris [HM], Chief Operating Officer (item 2 onwards)
- Denise Lewis Poulton [DLP], Non-Executive Member
- Betsan Powys [BP], Non-Executive Member
- Gwenllian Lansdown Davies [GLD], Non-Executive Member

Others in attendance:

- Llinos Priestland [LLP], Executive Officer to Board Secretary
- Sue Butler [SB], Head of Sport (for item 6)
- Eilir Jones [EJ], Head of Audience Research (for item 5) – virtual
- Iestyn Morris [IM], Head of Legal (for item 3) – virtual
- Elinor Price [EP], Finance Manager (for item 7)
- Mali Williams [MW], Head of Public Affairs (for items 4 and 5)

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Geraint Pugh [GP], Board Secretary
- Catryn Ramasut [CR], Non-Executive Member

1.	Declarations of interests and apologies The Chair asked any member who had an interest in the business of the meeting to declare their interest. No interest was declared. Everyone's attention was drawn to S4C's Culture Code at the beginning of the meeting.	
2.	Update from the Chair and Chief Executive The Chair referred to the report which outlined the meetings that had taken place since the last Board meeting. The Chief Executive was invited to update the Board on various matters not included in the papers for the Meeting. <u>BBC Programme Plan</u>	

	<p>The Chief Executive reported that S4C is continuing to discuss arrangements for the 2026–27 Programme Plan with the BBC. As a result of the Media Act 2024, the BBC is no longer required to provide a certain number of hours of content to S4C, and therefore alternative arrangements can be agreed.</p> <p>With this in mind, it was suggested that a wider discussion on this issue was needed within the Board, and it was asked by when a final decision would be required by S4C on any alternative agreement. The BBC responded noting that it was keen to submit proposals to its Management Team in November, and is currently considering which proposal is to be submitted. It was suggested that a formal proposal should be brought back to the S4C Board in December.</p> <p>Decision: A full paper to be presented to the Board in December on the arrangements for the future programme plan.</p> <p><u>Training in the Sector</u></p> <p>Following the discussion regarding training supported by S4C during the Board’s Strategic Day, the People and Culture Department are currently collating information to be published on the website. A copy of the information will be shared with the Board.</p> <p>Decision: Publish a list of the training programmes supported by S4C on the website, and share a copy with the Board.</p>	
3.	<p>[IM joined the meeting over Teams]</p> <p>Reflecting on the legal settlement</p> <p>Following the announcement on 10 October 2025 regarding the settlement between Siân Doyle, Rhodri Williams and S4C – which brought SD’s legal proceedings to a close, without any admission of liability – the Chair felt that this was an opportunity for the Board to reflect on the settlement and on the events in 2023.</p> <p>IM was thanked for his work on the cases over the past few months, and the Case Committee (with SuD, IM and GP as members) for facilitating the process on behalf of the Board in an effective and proportionate manner.</p> <p>The Chair referred to a paper by GP which outlined the steps taken since 2023 to strengthen S4C’s governance arrangements and overall resilience; and thanks GB, as interim Chair of the Board at the time, and the Senior Leadership Team were thanked for their work during that period.</p> <p>The settlement was welcomed as a step towards drawing a line under the past. It was noted that the culture at S4C is now in a much stronger place, but the need to remain vigilant against any decline in internal culture was emphasised.</p> <p>The importance of continuing to work to restore the faith of staff and the sector was emphasised. While the current governance arrangements are sound, there is a need to ensure that they work effectively and become ingrained culturally.</p> <p>The Chief Executive noted how important it was for the Senior Leadership Team to embrace challenge from Board members, while also emphasising the need to recognise the expertise and responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team in leading on day-to-day operational matters.</p>	

	[IM left the meeting]	
4.	<p>[MW joined the meeting]</p> <p>Content Sub-Strategy</p> <p>As an introduction to the item, the CEO stated that it is crucial to get this strategy right, as it is essential for the delivery of the corporate strategy. He outlined that LLI has a clear vision embedded within the different genres, and that MW's contribution has been key to ensuring that the work links effectively to the wider corporate strategy.</p> <p>LLI introduced the sub-strategy noting that elements of it were already in place, such as advertising the tender package for digital content ideas. He said this was an important step towards supporting the development of the sector, offering assurance over a two-year period to enable companies to strengthen and develop their teams for the future.</p> <p>A question was asked about the sector's readiness to respond to the demands associated with a digital-first transition. It was explained that the intention is to share the strategy with the sector, including clear operational details. There would also need to be clear about how we will measure the success of the sub-strategy.</p> <p>When discussing the sub-strategy, it was noted that the meaning of 'digital first' needs to be clarified, particularly in terms of spend on quality content. The historical perception that digital content is cheaper and of low quality still exists, and there is clearly room to correct this narrative in the sub-strategy.</p> <p>It was also suggested that honesty is needed about the fact that some commissions will need to be abandoned in order to free up money to invest in new content. This is essential to enable the transformation of the sector.</p> <p>It was recognised that training for the sector has been inconsistent over the years, and strategic investment is needed to address this. The strategy will not succeed unless the sector is able to respond positively. In that regard, a clear signal would be needed that change is essential, but that S4C is ready to transform alongside the sector, investing in skills development.</p> <p>Clear communication would be an essential element of implementing the new sub-strategy. In terms of our traditional audience, there is a danger that they will misinterpret the strategy as ignoring them, as we try to attract new audiences. It is also important that the commissioners have a consistent and clear understanding of the objectives of the sub-strategy, in order to be able to put it into practice and offer guidance to the sector.</p> <p>At the end of the discussion, it was noted in the approval of the 2030 Strategy earlier this year that a series of sub-strategies would provide greater practical precision. It was questioned whether the draft sub-strategy achieves this aim, and whether there are concrete elements that could be strengthened – such as setting clear targets for working with smaller companies or describing what the sector should look like by 2030? It was also suggested that the link with S4C's Education Sub-Strategy should be made more prominent, in order to show coherence and a wider context.</p> <p>LLI was invited to reflect on the comments and feedback of Board members, and present a revised version of the sub-strategy at the December meeting.</p>	

	<p>Decision: Review the draft version based on the Board's feedback and present a revised version at the December meeting.</p> <p>A sector meeting is scheduled for early November, and there will be an opportunity to start a discussion about strategic direction at that time. As the emphasis on digital content has long been communicated by S4C to the sector, the new direction should not come as a surprise to them. It was therefore agreed that there is no obstacle to LLI presenting the vision at the next sector meeting, even if the strategy has not yet been finally approved by the Board.</p>	
5.	<p>[EJ joined the meeting]</p> <p>Metrics of the 2030 Strategy</p> <p>GE presented the paper, noting that some of the metrics developed to track progress against the 2030 Strategy were focused on maintenance rather than growth or expansion, in order to reflect the challenges facing public broadcasters in the current landscape.</p> <p>It was also stressed that when setting longer-term targets, it is difficult to predict in detail what will be realistic in five years' time, as the context can change significantly. As a result, it is anticipated that the appropriateness of the targets will need to be reviewed during the period of the 2030 Strategy. Nevertheless, the paper offers a clear direction that shows the strategic intention for the future.</p> <p>It was noted that S4C has different audiences – those who work internally, current viewers, and individuals who do not watch S4C but influence funding decisions. It is likely that the latter group will not understand the wider context of the channel's operation, and therefore quantitative metrics will be essential for communicating effectively with them, demonstrating the value and impact of S4C in a clear and measurable way.</p> <p>It was asked what were the five key metrics that the Board would like the Senior Leadership Team to present to them, and how often they wanted to receive a dashboard in order to gain an overview over the delivery of the corporate strategy. It was felt that quarterly reporting to the Board would be excessive, and that reporting every six months would be sufficient.</p> <p>Decision: Approve the overall metrics framework and note the action plan, on the understanding that further work is needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce the number of metrics and strengthen the focus on the main strategic metrics; and • consider how to measure the impact of S4C content in schools and geographical audiences. <p>Decision: Report on the metrics twice a year instead of quarterly.</p> <p>[EJ and MW left the meeting]</p>	
6.	<p>[SB joined the meeting]</p> <p>Presentation by Sue Butler, Sports Commissioner</p>	

	<p>In introducing SB, GE outlined how important sport is to S4C, noting that sport can attract a wider audience. He also emphasised the value of partnerships and relationships with various stakeholders in the world of sport.</p> <p>SB presented the current situation in relation to sport on S4C, as well as the plans for the next period. She then went on to discuss the challenges facing sport on S4C.</p> <p>It was noted that sport plays a key role in the way S4C is valued by audiences who do not normally watch S4C content or content in Welsh.</p> <p>There was a discussion about identifying niche sports that S4C could own, creating unique opportunities to attract new audiences. The importance of having reliable data on which sports are of interest to young people was also noted, in order to inform content decisions and broadcast strategy. The aim is to use this information to extend S4C's reach among new audiences.</p> <p>The importance of storytelling around the game was noted, including the creation of shortform content to accompany sporting events. However, the question was raised as to how to ensure that this content reaches wider audiences, as there are currently only around 15K followers on S4C Sport social accounts. It was explained why collaboration with other organisations and leading individuals is so important, in order to extend the reach and ensure greater coverage of S4C's content.</p> <p>SB was thanked for her interesting and informative presentation.</p> <p>[SB and GLD left the meeting]</p>	
7.	<p>[EP joined the meeting]</p> <p>Quarterly financial report (Q1)</p> <p>EP presented the report outlining the main highlights, noting that income and expenditure would likely match by the end of the year.</p> <p>[GB left the meeting]</p> <p>The Board was asked whether it receives a consolidated balance sheet for Grŵp S4C. It was explained that the Board normally receives management accounts for the public side, and receives a copy of the separate management accounts which go to the Commercial Group Board (which were included in the annexes to the Board's meeting papers).</p> <p>Decision: Note the report, and approve the budget transfers included in the report.</p> <p>[EP left the meeting]</p>	
8.	<p>Reports from Board committees</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings of the following Committees were presented, and the chairs were invited to draw the Board's attention to any relevant issues that had not already been mentioned during this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Group Board (held on 25/06/25) • Audit and Risk Committee (held on 27/06/25) 	

	<p><u>Commercial Group Board</u></p> <p>In the wake of the Media Act 2024, permission from the Secretary of State will be required for any new commercial investments that go beyond S4C's existing activity. It was noted that co-productions remain an acceptable activity, but that further clarity will be required regarding any other commercial investments.</p> <p>While the new legislation simplifies some aspects, a Memorandum of Understanding will need to be agreed with the DCMS regarding the new approval process which will replace the more complex process of using a Statutory Instrument.</p> <p>S4C has been working with the DCMS to ensure that this Memorandum is in place by 01 January 2026, when the relevant clause of the new legislation comes into force. However, the organisation is still awaiting receipt of a draft from DCMS before discussing the content and giving feedback.</p> <p>The importance of S4C being clear about the purpose and objectives of its commercial arm was emphasised when discussing the proposed Memorandum with the DCMS.</p> <p><u>Audit and Risk Committee</u></p> <p>The Committee received an update on the project to replace BSM software. It was noted that there were a number of risks associated with the process, and S4C is currently appointing a project manager to lead on this work.</p>	
9.	<p>Reports to be approved/noted without the need for discussion</p> <p>The following reports were shared with the members of the Board, with a request that the members inform the Chairman or Secretary in advance if they wished to discuss any of them in detail. If such a request was not received, any proposed action was approved in line with the recommendation in the report itself.</p> <p><u>Senior Leadership Team Report</u></p> <p>The report was noted.</p> <p><u>Commercial Group quarterly financial report (Q 1)</u></p> <p>The report was noted.</p> <p><u>Meeting dates 2026–27</u></p> <p>The dates were noted.</p> <p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u></p> <p>Decision: To approve the minutes of meeting 479, held on 17/07/2025.</p> <p><u>Action Points</u></p> <p>The update on the Board's action points was noted.</p>	

	<p><u>Decisions between meetings</u></p> <p>The decision taken by correspondence since the last meeting was formally noted, namely:</p> <p>All Board members agreed on 19 September 2025 to appoint DD as a Lead Independent Member. DD will serve in the role from September 22, 2025 until the end of his term as a non-executive member of the Board.</p> <p><u>Work Programme</u></p> <p>The Board's work programme for the next 12 months was outlined.</p>	
10.	<p>Any other business, and evaluating the meeting against S4C's Culture Code</p> <p><u>Duration of the meeting</u></p> <p>The Chair felt that time had been limited again during the meeting. The question was raised as to which option Board members would prefer – to have an extended recess over lunch, or to continue without a recess in order to finish earlier. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to extend the duration of the meeting, including a lunch break, if the agenda called for this.</p> <p>Decision: Circulate a WhatsApp message to Board members to seek views on the length and structure of future meetings.</p> <p><u>S4C and TAC Conference</u></p> <p>The S4C and TAC conference will be held in Cardiff on 05 and 06 November 2025, jointly organised to coincide with S4C's 43rd birthday. People are welcome to drop in to various sessions during the event. It was noted that the full schedule will be shared with the Board in due course.</p>	