

S4C Board

Meeting 477

14:00, 21 May 2025

Room 4D, Central Square, Cardiff

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
- Gwenllian Lansdown Davies [GLD], Non-Executive Member
- Wyn Innes [WI], Non-Executive Member
- Llion Iwan [LL], Chief Content Officer (virtual)
- Elin Morris [HM], Chief Operating Officer
- Denise Lewis Poulton [DLP], Non-Executive Member
- Betsan Powys [BP], Non-Executive Member
- Catryn Ramasut [CR], Non-Executive Member

Others in attendance:

- Nadine Beaton [NB], Director of People and Culture – until item 5
- Manon Edwards Ahir [MEA], Director of Communications and Marketing
- Iestyn Morris [IM], Head of Legal and Business Affairs
- Llinos Priestland [LIP], Executive Officer to Board Secretary
- Geraint Pugh [GP], Board Secretary
- Mali Williams [MW], Head of Public Affairs
- Sharon Winogorski [ShW], Chief Finance Officer
- Eilir Jones [EJ], Head of Audience Research (virtual) – for item 5

1.	Declarations of interests and apologies The Chair thanked GB for his work as interim Chair during the previous 13 months, recognising his valuable contribution. She also welcomed the new Non-Executive Members to the Board, expressing that she was looking forward to their future contributions. The Chair asked any members with an interest in the business of the meeting to declare their interest. No interest was declared.	
2.	Chair's update The Chair outlined the various meetings she had attended during her first three weeks in the post, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1:1 meetings with all Board members.• Addressing Yr Egin staff on 01 May, as well as all S4C staff during a Staff Meeting in Central Square and virtually on 07 May.• The visit of Deputy Minister Steph Peacock MP to S4C and Boom Cymru on 14 May.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appearing before Senedd Cymru's Culture Committee on the morning of 21 May. <p>Decision: To include a future written report on the meetings the Chair has attended since the previous Board meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>Senior Leadership Team Report</p> <p>GE presented the report, with other members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) presenting the elements for which they had responsibility. GE began by asking for feedback on the report's format, putting particular emphasis on the views of new members to ensure that it met their needs.</p> <p>The report offered an update on topics including: Content (recent highlights, the latest monthly dashboard, and audience feedback); Communications and Marketing; People and Culture; Finance; Risk; and S4C Commercial.</p> <p>Since the last meeting of the Board, some S4C staff have been on a visit to TG4, taking the opportunity to forge valuable relationships. This was welcomed, noting that it would be useful for the Board to have a better understanding of the similarities and differences between S4C and TG4.</p> <p>Decision: Invite Alan Esslemont (former Chief Executive of TG4) to speak to the Board.</p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <p>There was a discussion about the status of the five main companies that provide content to S4C, and the need to support the growth of smaller companies. GE noted that there is a positive relationship between S4C and TAC, noting that S4C is involved with companies of all sizes. It was emphasised that the fundamental principle is commissioning based on the idea and the ability to communicate. Recently, co-productions between companies of different sizes have been encouraged, as well as promoting staff sharing.</p> <p>Recently, DE visited some of the production companies that provide content for S4C. The need for all Board members to go out to meet the different companies when they are in the relevant areas was emphasised.</p> <p>Since starting as Chief Content Officer, LLI had been reviewing what S4C is commissioning. In order to offer an element of certainty to the sector, he was considering commissioning two series at a time, but with a suitable 'break clause'. LLI was also keen to take commissioning decisions earlier, and draw on the data available to S4C as part of the decision.</p> <p>GE reported that some elements of the sector, particularly the smaller companies, had felt that they were not receiving any feedback from S4C after their content was broadcast. LLI has now introduced a procedure whereby meetings are scheduled in good time, to be held about a month after the final broadcast.</p>	

	<p>There was a desire on the part of the Board to meet with the commissioners in the company of LLI, in order to gain a better understanding of their views and expectations.</p> <p>Decision: Invite the commissioners (with the Chief Content Officer) to join the Board at the 'Away Day' meeting in September 2025 to discuss the content strategy.</p> <p>It was suggested that it would be beneficial to add a narrative to the Monthly Audience Dashboard in to make the results easier to interpret. This was agreed, as the Board would be expected to spend more time considering these dashboards in the future.</p> <p>Decision: Review the format of the monthly content performance dashboards, to add a clearer narrative to help better understand the results.</p> <p>It was asked if S4C had personas reflecting the viewing data and what it shows. It was answered that S4C has personas, including those used for marketing their content. Nevertheless, there were mixed feelings about the value of personas, and that the Marketing and Communications department now focuses on cohorts and audiences, paying particular attention to numerous trends such as C2DEs, young people, and the 25-44 age group.</p> <p><u>Communications and Marketing</u></p> <p>MEA cited the success of the Cyw Christmas Show. It was asked if S4C was doing enough to promote its content through schools. MEA replied that S4C has an education officer who liaises with schools, but there is more that can be done in this area.</p> <p>It was suggested that a specific strategy was needed for Cyw, as this is where S4C nurtures and expands its audiences. It was also emphasised that Cyw plays a key role in terms of language strategy, particularly in terms of promoting the use of the Welsh language at home.</p> <p><u>People and Culture</u></p> <p>NB presented the main findings of the Pulse Survey, noting that significant progress has been made since last time. It was noted that further analysis was needed, followed by the creation of a 'You say, we do' action plan. A copy of this plan would be shared with the Board.</p> <p>Currently, the Pulse survey does not record which department someone works in, which means it is not possible to identify whether there are specific areas of the business facing problems. It was explained that this was to reassure staff they could not be identified from their answers.</p> <p>It was suggested that presenting similar results in graph form in future would facilitate the effective identification of trends.</p> <p>Decision: Complete feedback analysis from the latest Pulse Survey, and create an action plan to share with the Board at the next meeting.</p>	
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4.	<p>2030 Strategy</p> <p>Since the update provided to the Board on 13 March 2025, the Senior Leadership Team had continued to develop the new corporate strategy for the period 2025–30.</p> <p>GE presented the latest version of the 2030 Strategy, along with a series of supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision for 2030; • Proposed timetable for the approval and publication of the 2030 Strategy; and • Review of the 2022–27 Strategy, to be shared with DCMS. <p>The draft strategy was discussed by the Board, and the key themes for the next draft were identified.</p> <p>Decision: Continue to develop the new strategy, responding to the feedback received during the meeting.</p>	
5.	<p>[EJ joined the meeting, and NB left the meeting]</p> <p>Review of S4C's content performance during the previous year</p> <p>Ofcom requires S4C to publish a Programme Policy Statement at the beginning of each year, and to publish a Programme Policy Review at the end of the year in question. S4C's Programme Policy Statement for 2025–26 was approved by the Board on 13 March 2025.</p> <p>LLI presented the draft version of the Programme Policy Review for 2024–25. In doing so, he noted that there has been significant growth in the digital element, but that most of the production sector is still operating on a linear model basis.</p> <p>LLI also stressed the need to encourage a greater variety of voices and stories, as many recent ideas have been too similar. It was suggested that production companies should recruit more widely, and that diversity targets need to be set both on-screen and behind the screen. S4C should also try to incentivise companies to bring new people into the sector.</p> <p>EJ presented the performance scoreboards for April – December 2024. The data offered an insight into each program's contribution and its reach among different audiences. It was noted that data for the last quarter of the year had not yet been analysed.</p> <p>It was asked if S4C was confident about the reliability of the figures. EJ explained that S4C is dependent on BARB data because more than 80% of viewing is on the linear service, and is the best information currently available.</p> <p>The impact of changes to BARB panel membership during the year was discussed. It was noted that S4C had asked to include more young people in the sample, but this had led to regular viewers being replaced by individuals who were not watching regularly. Although the sample continued to be</p>	

	<p>representative of the demographics of Wales – because the panel's results were weighted – there was a possibility of less accuracy in certain age groups.</p> <p>The lack of reference to hourly cost was highlighted, suggesting that it would be useful to have a clear measure of value and impact within the programmes' budgets.</p> <p>Decision: Consider adding information on the 'cost per hour' of content to the content performance scoreboards.</p> <p>Decision: The Programme Policy Review for 2024–25 has been approved for publication on the S4C website (following the addition of a snippet on child content).</p> <p>[EJ left the meeting]</p>	
6.	<p>Reports from the Board's 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 matters that had not already been mentioned during this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Group Board (held on 30/04/25); and the • Case Committee (record of recent discussions) <p><u>Commercial Group Board</u></p> <p>GE noted that the Commercial Group Board had held a strategic meeting in Central Square on 19 May 2025. The need to reconsider the strategic direction of the Growth Fund was recognised, as investment had not succeeded as planned due to changes in circumstances. In addition, there was a desire to expand how S4C benefits from its flagship brands, such as Cyw.</p> <p>It was asked when the Commercial Group Board's financial reports will be submitted to the Board. It was noted that annual financial statements, along with quarterly financial updates, are provided in accordance with standing orders.</p>	
7.	<p>Reports to be approved / noted without the need for discussion</p> <p>The following reports were shared with Board members, with a request that members inform the Chair or Secretary in advance if they wished to discuss any of them in detail. If no such request was received, any proposed action was approved in accordance with the recommendation in the report itself.</p> <p><u>Consider the 'Active Company Presumption' aspect (for the 2024–25 Annual Report)</u></p> <p>Decision: To approve the 'Active Company Presumption' report (for the 2024–25 Annual Report).</p> <p><u>Minutes of previous meeting</u></p>	

	<p>Decision: To approve the minutes of meeting 476, held on 13/03/2025.</p> <p><u>Action Points</u></p> <p>The update on the Action Points of the Board and the Committees was noted.</p> <p><u>Decisions between meetings</u></p> <p>The decisions taken by correspondence since the last meeting were formally noted, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Action Plan following the Capital Law report has now been delivered; • The alternative arrangements for updating the Board and the Senior Leadership Team on the current legal proceedings were agreed; • Amendments to the Travel and Subsistence Policy were approved; • Further amendments to the Board Members' Code of Practice were approved; • A Protocol for Emergency Communications was approved; and <p><u>Work Programme</u></p> <p>The Board's work programme for the next 12 months was noted.</p> <p>It was suggested that it was essential for the Board to have a clear overview of the progress being made with the EDI strategy.</p>	
8.	<p>Any other business, and evaluating the meeting against S4C's Code of Culture</p> <p>DE led a brief evaluation of how the Board had upheld the values of the Code of Culture during the meeting. Everyone was thanked for holding good discussions and punctuality.</p>	