



**S4C Board Meeting Minute
16 July 2020 - Zoom meeting**

Meeting No. 441

Present:

Non-Executive Board Members:

Rhodri Williams	(Chairman)
Owen Derbyshire	(Board Member)
Anita George	(Board member)
Hugh Hesketh Evans	(Board member)

Executive Members:

Owen Evans	(Chief Executive)
Elin Morris	(Chief Operating Officer)
Amanda Rees	(Director of Content)

Also present:

S4C staff:

Gwyn Williams	(Director of Communications)
Sharon Winogorski	(Chief Finance Officer) – item 5
Catrin Whitmore	(Head of Human Resources) – item 3
Catrin Hughes Roberts	(Director of Partnerships) – item 3
Owain Lloyd	(Board Secretary)
Bethan C. Williams	(Assistant to the Board Secretary)

External:

Morgan Lloyd

Apologies:

Siân Lewis (Board Member)

STANDING ISSUES:

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of S4C's Unitary Board.

The Chairman asked any members with an interest in the business of the meeting to declare their interest.

See the Register of Interests in S4C's Unitary Board section of the S4C website for general statements.

2. Chairman's Report

RhW gave an oral report. He reported that he is to meet with the DCMS Minister, John Whittingdale MP.

3. Chief Executive's Report

OE presented his monthly report including the issues below.

Covid-19

[Summary: OE gave an update. The sector had responded well to the situation. By now guidance has been published on the production site to ensure safe working.

With regard to insurance arrangements, discussions were continuing between the DCMS and the Treasury. OLI was talking to DCMS in the afternoon to check on the latest position. Drama production was the biggest problem and a risk to S4C. It was noted that Un Bore Mercher has been able to restart filming as they have insurance but in general, productions find it difficult to ensure adequate insurance.]

Financial support for businesses by the UK and Wales Government was mentioned. A number of the large companies had placed their staff on furlough, for example. OE noted that there were no concerns about any large company, and he was confident that they were alright. But medium-sized companies were perhaps of more concern.

BBC Statutory Supply

[Summary: It was noted that BBC and BBC Cymru/Wales officers were discussing the issue of the statutory programme supply to S4C by the BBC in the light of Covid-19.

OD asked whether DCMS officials had yet formally confirmed that there would be separate discussions with S4C as part of the Licence Fee process? OLI said that we are awaiting confirmation from them.]

A vision of how S4C will operate in the future

[Summary: EM presented the paper. The plans to re-open our offices in Carmarthen and Caernarfon, and the move to Central Square, have given us the opportunity to look anew at how S4C will operate in the future and use the offices that we have. We shall take into account what we have learned during the lockdown period, the feedback from the staff survey and how the attitudes of people and organisations in general have changed recently towards working in offices.]

CW said that it was important in looking to the future that we learn from our experience over the past months and recognise that people's attitude generally to working full time in an office has changed. Working from home had enabled S4C to continue to work successfully. Many had found it easier to carry out their work, welcoming flexible working. On the other hand, social contacts were important to people and also the need to physically work together was essential for some processes. Internal communication had also improved with managers engaging more with staff.

OD agreed, but noted the danger of staff losing creative discussions. AR believed that there were several different cultures within S4C, and the needs of each department would need to be considered. OD noted the need for consistency between departments at the same time. AG suggested that some form of hybrid model could be looked at.

4. **Reports from the Committees**

Content Committee

[Summary: OD presented the main points from the Content Committee. The meeting discussed the BBC, the latest from the sector, and the commissioners gave presentations on Sport, Children and Digital News. As part of this, ideas about the Content Curator were discussed.

OD noted that the standard of the reports was very good and that the Committee was beginning to take a more strategic approach. AR said that the level of discussion and scrutiny had been a great help to the team to focus on the future.]

Audit Committee

OLI reported that the Audit Committee had focused primarily on the co-location project with the BBC.

Report from the Commercial Board

EM reported from the Commercial Board held on 8 July. Among the topics discussed were a report on advertising by Sky, including the adverts for charities. There had also been a discussion about adverts on Clic. It was noted that Dawn MacPhail was leaving Sky after years of working with S4C. It was agreed that a letter of appreciation should be sent to her on behalf of the Board.

[Summary: NAO officers joined the meeting to present the Audit of the Commercial Accounts.]

5. **Financial Report - period ending March 2020.**

ShW presented the report.

It was noted that there was no need to use the reserve in the end but it was useful that the discussions with the DCMS had taken place in terms of the process, and the fact that S4C is not in the same position as the BBC in its handling of the reserve. Discussions would need to continue this year as well as for the reason that the whole settlement will come from the Licence Fee from 2022 onwards.

Quarter 1 Report

[Summary: ShW reported on the quarter and reported some savings as there was less travel and subsistence and events had been cancelled. ShW asked if the Board was happy to transfer the savings to the Content Budget. The Board agreed.]

6. **Annual Report**

The Board was updated on progress with the Annual Report.

7. **Report on the Operational Objectives 2019/20**

[Summary: An update was presented on S4C's Operational Objectives for 2019/20. AG felt that this was a very useful document, with the answers to the questions clearly set out. It was agreed that OE should present the Operational Objectives for 2020-21 to the Board at the September meeting.]

8. **Action Points**

Jeremy Evas would be holding a session for S4C staff in September.

The National Library Project – they had reconsidered their position and now believe that it is too much of a long-term burden, and a waste of resources, to build a new store for items that have already been digitised.

Board Meeting Dates 2021 – RhW indicated his intention to reduce the number of meetings during the year. That would then free up members for strategic conversations.

9. **Welsh Language Standards Annual Report**

The Board was content with the Report.

Following Jeremy Evas' presentation and the discussion about the term 'fluent' as part of our e-mails, EM had asked the Welsh Language Commissioner's officials if we are obliged to note the fluency of our staff. OD believed we should not spend too much energy on the matter and that a direct discussion with the Commissioner might be required.

10. **Board Membership**

Officers were asked if there was an update on the advertising process for new Members. The DCMS had informed OLI that the advertising was supposed to take place this month.

11. **Staff remuneration discussions**

Staff remuneration is usually discussed during this period, but with the uncertainty regarding Covid-19 and co-location etc., it was recommended that the discussions should be delayed until September, with any changes backdated to August.

12. **Presentation - S4C's Purpose and Pillars**

Morgan Lloyd gave a presentation on the purpose and pillars of S4C for the future. Discussions with some of the Board and the management team had fed into this work.

OD thanked him for the presentation which was interesting and drew many ideas together. He agreed with the findings and asked further about the relationship between S4C as a public broadcaster and the promotion of the Welsh language. MLI believed that S4C was not a traditional PSM and that it was necessary to be radical, but with a clear purpose to inspire people. A traditional PSM model tends to limit things. Giving a platform for the language was the important factor.

OD agreed with the purpose. AR felt that a broad-church purpose was needed and for S4C to appeal to everyone in Wales including non-Welsh speakers. Encouraging people to use the language and using a variety of ways to help the language thrive was important. AG was keen for the language to be more natural. A missionary approach was needed, and AG agreed with a broader purpose. S4C should not just be a television channel and that mindset needed to change. The aim was not to campaign for the language but to help the language thrive.

There was a discussion about commissioning English language material. AR considered that this was an important question but believed that the linear channel should be retained for Welsh language content serving the core audience. But with the concept of a content curator, there was the potential for S4C to adopt a missionary approach in terms of the language and to experiment, particularly with some genres such as sport where we can bring a wider audience to the service. OD agreed and said that S4C should represent all the people of Wales.

MLI felt that S4C's purpose should be to help the language thrive. That could not be done with only Welsh speakers. The whole nation needed to feel ownership of the language.

There was further discussion about how S4C is perceived in mixed-language families, and GW noted that the channel is not the first choice in bilingual homes, but rather a supplementary channel after the BBC and ITV. If the purpose was to help the language thrive, OD asked how that could be measured. MLI believed that success would be more people using and learning the language, and a positive feeling towards the language. It would certainly be necessary to look at metrics and go further than BARB to understand the complex picture. OD noted that this would be a major project. AR noted that it would be possible to take advantage of the fact that S4C was 40 in 2022, perhaps creating a drama or series of dramas tracing the history.

RhW asked how best to take this work forward? Further discussion would be required at the Awayday but there was no reason not to continue with the work in the meantime. As this was so fundamental to the organisation, OE said that he was keen to discuss it with the staff next. This would then enable the Management Team to refine the plans before reporting back to the Board in September where they would be the starting point for the discussion about the 2022 Strategy. AG agreed that it is extremely important to have the buy-in of staff who will ultimately administer the strategy. RhW reiterated the need to seek the views of staff along the way, and not to present the strategy as something that has already been decided.

13. **Strategy 2022**

OE took the Board through a presentation on the 2022 Strategy as the basis for the Awayday in September.

OD agreed that the presentation provided a good structure for the discussion in September. He said that there were so many things to discuss and that careful consideration needed to be given to creating the time and space to do so without too many presentations and too much detail. It was clear that partnerships were important but there was a need to understand what success

would be and how to measure that. It was agreed that a full discussion would be held in September about the exact future direction of S4C. AG was keen to receive any papers over the summer period given the importance of the discussion.

AR wanted to try to agree the principles of the service, with questions around some elements of the service, and how the linear service might look in the future. RhW suggested that there was a need to think about what content we want and on which platform. But the importance of understanding our audience and the risk of moving too quickly to a new scheme was noted.

AG felt that the content over the Covid-19 period had helped to attract more interest and excitement. AR noted that there were successes over the lockdown but with the core audience rather than anyone else. However, some archive programmes had done exceptionally well over this period such as Tipyn o Stâd.

AR believed that S4C had more courage in the past in terms of content. OD thought Hansh was a good example of pushing the boundaries. EM agreed that the Hansh brand regularly pushes the boundaries, but that there needs to be a strong brand for all strands of the service.

It was agreed to hold an Awayday at the end of September with the focus on the 22 Strategy.

14. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 June 2020**

The minutes of meeting number 440 held on 18 June 2020 were presented.

The minutes were approved by the Board.

15. **Matters Arising**

No matters arising from the minutes were discussed.

16. **Register of Decisions and Action Points**

The register was noted.

17. **Any Other Business**

No further matters were discussed.