

S4C Board

Meeting 479

10:00, 17 July 2025

Yr Egin, Carmarthen

SUMMARY OF MINUTES

Members present:

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

Others present:

- Llinos Priestland [LIP], Executive Officer to Board Secretary
- Geraint Pugh [GP], Board Secretary
- Mali Williams [MW], Head of Public Affairs (for item 3)
- Manon Edwards Ahir [MAE], Director of Communications and Marketing (for item 4)
- Eilir Jones [EJ], Head of Audience Research (for item 4)
- Endaf Griffiths [EG], Wavehill (for item 5)
- Rhys Maher [RhM], Wavehill (for item 5)
- Nadine Beaton [NB], Director of People and Culture (for item 6)

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Gwenllian Lansdown Davies [GLD], Non-Executive Member

1.	Declarations of interest and apologies The Chair asked any Member with an interest in the business of the meeting to declare their interest. GB declared that the Farmers' Union of Wales is sponsoring S4C's coverage of this year's Royal Welsh Show. Everyone's attention was drawn to S4C's Culture Code at the beginning of the meeting.	
2.	Chairman's Update. The Chair referred to the report which outlined the meetings he had held since the last board meeting. He also shared additional information with Members about meetings he had attended in recent days, which included one-to-one meetings with: • Lewis Knights of the National Audit Office; and • Robert Specterman-Green of the DCMS.	

	It was also reported that the quarterly meeting between S4C and the DCMS was held in Cardiff on Tuesday 15 July. During the meeting, the process that the DCMS will follow for the revision of the BBC Charter was discussed, and how S4C will contribute to this process. The Chair had recently met with Dr Ioan Rees from Sycol to discuss his work with S4C to strengthen the internal culture and provide training for staff. Dr Ioan's intention is to start a new programme of training with S4C staff in September. Following her discussion with Dr Ioan, the Chair had asked him to submit a report to the Board in the spring, in conjunction with the Director of People and Culture, outlining the work carried out over the past year along with the results of the pulse surveys. Over the past few weeks the Chairman had visited various production companies that supply content to S4C. Members were encouraged to arrange similar visits, preferably in consultation with the Secretary to ensure awareness of any visits that might take place. [MW joined the meeting]	
3.	2030 Strategy As GE presented the 2030 Strategy, it was noted that the Board had already seen a draft of the skeleton at its last meeting. MW was praised for her work – with the help of GE and GP – in converting the skeleton into a document ready for publication. The importance of ensuring that the Strategy engages with stakeholders and brings people together was discussed. The partnership with production companies was emphasised, and that the regular meetings between S4C and TAC are crucial in this regard. It was noted that the Strategy would be shared with TAC prior to its publication. Questions were raised about the prominence of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion elements of the Strategy. Although there are references to them in the internal action plan supporting the Strategy, the need to clearly communicate the relevant principles in new external communication was recognised. It was also discussed whether the Strategy should include a more strategic reference to the long-term impact of Artificial Intelligence. It has been confirmed that S4C will publish guidance on Artificial Intelligence in September for the sector. It was stressed that sub-strategies will emerge from this new Strategy. Asked when the Content sub-strategy will be presented to the Board – they replied that this will happen in October. Questions were asked about the plans for the publication of the Strategy. It was noted that holding an event at the National Eisteddfod would have been a good idea in terms of visibility and public engagement, but the timing was challenging. It was suggested that holding a specific event in the Autumn, with an invitation to key stakeholders, would be a more realistic and effective option. Resolution: To approve the Strategy, on the understanding that there will be minor changes as a result of the feedback received, and that the final draft will be shared with Board members. [MW left the meeting]	

4.	[EJ and MEA joined the meeting] Discussion on S4C content viewing figures EJ presented the paper on how S4C measures viewing figures, mentioning the main aspects. It was noted that S4C, like other broadcasters, has been grappling with how to measure performance across different platforms. The integrity of BARB measures was discussed. While BARB provides the standard way to measure viewing figures in the industry, some producers feel that their viewership numbers are higher than the reported figures. It is recognised that BARB's current measurement systems can lead to extremes, and therefore S4C chooses to look at average viewership across series rather than each episode individually, as well as analysis across age groups. BARB, meanwhile, is investigating the measurement of viewing in alternative modes across various digital platforms – but this process is still ongoing. It was also noted that S4C does not rely solely on BARB data to assess content performance – several additional monitoring methods are used. These include a response panel, phone calls from viewers, and social media engagement. While there has been a marked increase in engagement with Welsh language content across platforms, the need for more robust impact measures was emphasised. There is also a need to promote Welsh language content better, ensuring clear information about programmes and their broadcast times. This is essential to increase visibility and to encourage more viewing across all age groups. It was also discussed how the new Strategy aims to attract broad audiences, without over-emphasising one group over another. In terms of digital content only, it was confirmed that S4C has viewing data from Clic and iPlayer, with work underway to include other platforms such as YouTube. The Audience Research Team also continues to explore better measurement methods to evaluate content performance across a wider range of platforms. [EJ and MEA left the meeting]	
5.	[EG and RM joined the meeting on Teams] Outcome of Wavehill's Economic and Social Impact Assessment EG and RM presented their slides, noting that Michael Pang – who led the economic modelling work – was unable to attend, and therefore not all technical questions could be fully answered. Data from S4C and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) was used to measure S4C's contribution and economic impact in 2024–25. The main change since the previous study in 2022–23 was that a baseline is now available, which allowed for a direct comparison between the results of the Wavehill assessments. Although the assumptions changed slightly between these assessments, the input-output model remained constant.	

	The study found that the impact of S4C's GVA (Gross Value Added) decreased in real terms, mainly due to the impact of inflation and fixed income from the licence fee for two years from April 2022, which reduced the actual value of the public investment. They asked whether GVA included indirect benefits for public bodies (such as S4C's contribution to the education sector in Wales). A case study was identified on <i>Adnodd</i> in the report, which highlights the strategic partnership between them and S4C to co-develop educational content. While it is not possible to determine the financial value of this, the narrative is positive. A question was also raised about S4C's role in promoting the Welsh language. Although there is no clear quantification approach, Wavehill's previous assessment confirmed that the Welsh language situation would be weaker without S4C's contribution, and that assessment has not changed in that respect. It was suggested that the linguistic dimension should be woven into the case studies in the new report, reflecting S4C's official status as a Cymraeg 2050 partner (via a Memorandum of Understanding). This underlines a significant and strategic contribution to the Welsh language, including supporting Welsh strongholds through direct investment and job creation. Reference was made to the UK Government's emphasis on the principle of 'place-making', and how S4C contributes directly to that vision was noted. In Wavehill's previous report, an analysis method called '<i>location quotients</i>' was used to examine the geographical distribution of S4C's activity. It was noted that that pattern had not changed significantly since then – and similarly, the distribution of S4C staff homes has remained relatively constant. The Secretary explained the next steps: a draft report of Wavehill's narrative report already existed, but further input from S4C staff was needed before sharing it with the Board. The report is due to be published in the autumn, coinciding with the timetable for contributing to discussions on the BBC's charter review and public broadcasting funding arrangements in the UK. [EG and RM left the meeting]	
6.	[NB joined the meeting] Salary Settlement 2025–26 NB presented her paper which had been presented to the Remuneration Committee on 09 July 2025. During that meeting, the Committee recommended that the Board approve a 3.1% pay settlement for staff (including freelance staff) for 2025–26. NB reported that she had had positive discussions with Bectu about the proposed settlement – and the further commitments Bectu had enquired about from S4C as part of the settlement, including in relation to the introduction of salary development arrangements. Bectu would recommend that their members accept the settlement by vote over the next few weeks. Resolution: To approve the proposed salary settlement. [NB left the meeting]	
7.	Reports from the Board's committees	

	The minutes of the meetings of the following Committees were tabled, and the chairmen were invited to draw the attention of the Board to any relevant matters that had not already been mentioned during this meeting. • Commercial Group Board (held on 25/06/25) • Audit and Risk Committee (held on 27/06/25) • Remuneration Committee (held on 09/07/25) • Cases Committee <u>Commercial Group Board</u> During the discussion on 25 June 2026, the need to revise the Commercial Strategy was identified. The Chief Executive had initiated internal discussions regarding the future trajectory of the Commercial Strategy, and recommendations would be presented for discussion during a Strategic Day in September 2025. <u>Audit and Risk Committee</u> It was noted that the National Audit Office (NAO) had formally completed the external audit, and S4C's Annual Report and Accounts for 2024–25 was published earlier that morning. It was now planned to hold a meeting between S4C officials and the NAO in the autumn to identify what lessons need to be learned for the next external audit.	
8.	Reports to be approved / noted without the need for discussion The following reports were shared with Board members, with a request that members notify the Chair or Secretary in advance if they wished to discuss any of them in detail. If no such request had been received, any proposed action was approved in accordance with the recommendation in the report itself. <u>U.S. report</u> The report was noted. <u>Implementation of the Language Standards during 2024-25</u> Resolution: The Report was approved for publication. <u>Annual Health and Safety Update</u> The report was noted. <u>People and Culture Statistics</u> The report was noted. <u>Minutes of previous meetings</u> Resolution: To approve the minutes of meeting 478, held on 27/06/2025. <u>Action Points</u>	

	The update on Board and Committee action points was noted.	
9.	Any other matter, and evaluating the meeting against S4C's Culture Code DLP led a brief evaluation of how the Board had upheld the values of the Culture Code during the meeting. Everyone was thanked for holding good discussions and keeping up to date. <u>Chief Technical Officer</u> Interviews for Chief Technical Officer will be held on 29 July 2025. As there was a possibility that the successful individual would become a member of the Senior Leadership Team, a Non-Executive Member of the Board was requested to be on the appointment panel. The Non-Executive Members were asked to notify the Secretary of their availability as soon as possible.	