



S4C Board Meeting Minute
18 March 2020 – Skype Meeting

Meeting No. 436

Present:

Non-executive Board Members:

Rhodri Williams	(Chairman Designate)
Anita George	(Member of the Board)
Owen Derbyshire	(Member of the Board)

**Shadow Unitary Board
Executive Members:**

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

S4C Staff:	Gwyn Williams	(Director of Communications)
	Eilir Jones	(Head of Research)
	Catrin Whitmore	(Head of Human Resources)
	Owain Lloyd	(Board Secretary)
	Bethan C. Williams	(Assistant to the Board Secretary)

Apologies:	Hugh Hesketh Evans	(Interim Chairman)
	Siân Lewis	(Member of the Board)

1. **Welcome and Declaration of interest**

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting of the S4C Unitary Board.

He asked any member with an interest in the business of the meeting to declare their interest.

No declarations were received.

See the Register of Interests under the Board section on the S4C website for general declarations.

2. **The impact of COVID-19**

EM explained that S4C's Coronavirus Plan was in place and regularly revised. There were three main topics, namely:

- 1) Staff and the workplace;
- 2) Technical and broadcasting;
- 3) Content.

The Management Team and others meet for a discussion daily at 9 a.m. using Skype. There was also a morning call with the BBC. The majority of S4C's staff were

now working from home apart from those in the broadcasting and technical teams working from Parc Tŷ Glas.

It was agreed that the Board should be kept regularly updated on the progress and main occurrences of the week.

AR outlined the impact of COVID-19 on the service's content and schedules to date. She explained that there was much work looking at the potential impact on the schedules in the short, medium and long term. There was a plan in place, but the situation was changing rapidly at the moment.

[Summary: There was already an impact on the schedules due to the cancellation of sporting events and to productions having to stop or being postponed. In the medium term, the cancellation of the events over the summer would have a significant impact on the schedules.

There was a discussion about replacing the lost hours over the long term and the opportunity to experiment with the service during this period. The commissioning team was already looking for ideas to fill in the gaps.

The priority was to provide a service for the audience that will ensure that up-to-date information on the current situation is available to them, that offers ideas and support to the audience on how to cope and, finally, that offers entertainment and diversion for them.]

The importance of engaging and communicating with the audience was noted - in order to explain what S4C is doing to maintain the service and what is on offer during this time. It was also agreed that more needed to be done during this period to promote S4C Clic including the use of promos focusing on Clic itself as a service.

3. **Budget and Content 2020/21 & 2021/22**

[Summary: In light of the developments with COVID-19 since the paper was written on the subject above, it has been necessary to re-look at the options outlined. The unprecedented current situation presents challenges but also provides opportunities to experiment with the service. The work is ongoing.]

4. **Potential 'Lockdown' effect on S4C**

The potential implications of any lockdown on S4C and the challenge to keep the service going were discussed. Discussions were needed with the DCMS and the Welsh Government regarding the impact of a lockdown in Cardiff on broadcasting the service.

[Summary: It was essential to ensure that S4C, like the BBC and other broadcasters, was an exception to the "lockdown" and that essential staff, including our suppliers' staff, are able to continue to travel and to work at specific buildings such as Parc Tŷ Glas. In terms of the output, S4C should focus specifically on News services, "People" programmes, such as Prynawn Da and Heno, Children's programmes and Education programmes. In addition, we should provide the means to watch a large number of programmes, such as Box Sets.]

5. **Co-location Project**

OE joined the meeting following a call with BBC Wales. It was noted that as a result of COVID-19 the BBC has decided that some of its technical staff need to move back to Parc Tŷ Glas and Llandaf from Central Square. It is hoped that this will assist with

keeping S4C and the BBC channels on air. Some of the work will continue in Central Square but inevitably work on the project will slow down. Owen had agreed with the BBC that the clear priority was to keep our broadcasting systems working.

It was agreed that there was a need to consider and discuss with the BBC whether there is the means/requirement for some of the staff who were due to leave over the coming months to stay on.

OE and AR would also need to discuss priorities with Rhodri Talfan Davies and Siân Gwynedd of BBC Wales.

6. **The Sector**

[Summary: Regular messages will be sent to the sector as well as holding a meeting with the production companies over Skype in the coming weeks. S4C was looking at what government support was available to companies. The Chief Executive had already written to Ken Skates MS, Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales.]

7. **Reach**

[Summary: E] presented a paper on the Reach during the current period. As might be expected, news was performing well but the absence of sport was having an impact. It was agreed that it would be impossible to quantify the impact of the new schedule because of the current context.]

8. **Any Other Business**

No other issues were discussed.

During this crisis, RhW noted that it would be sensible for Members to get in touch regularly and to ask any questions by e-mail if anything arises.