

S4C Authority Bulletin May 2000

This Bulletin reports on the Authority's most recent business meeting, which was held on 28 April 2000 in Cardiff.

Investors in People

It was reported that the Investors in People award had been won by S4C and it was confirmed that the Channel was the first television broadcaster in Britain to receive it. Investors in People is the national standard used to measure levels of good practice for improving upon an organisation's success through its workforce. The Authority congratulated S4C's staff on their success and recognised their efforts in putting in place the necessary improvements to enable the winning of the award. It was confirmed that the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport had accepted an invitation to present the award at S4C on 5 May 2000.

Meeting between the S4C Authority and TAC (Independent Welsh Producers)

The Authority reviewed its meeting with the TAC Council the previous evening at S4C headquarters, Llanishen, Cardiff. The Authority believed that the meeting had been valuable and very worthwhile. It gave the Authority the opportunity to hear at first hand some of the concerns of independent companies and, in turn, the Authority had the opportunity to explain its strategy and vision for the future. The Authority agreed that there was a need to ensure that seminars similar to that held in March at Gregynog for independent companies were held on an annual basis. It was clear that this had been a good forum for S4C's officers to explain the Channel's plans and to invite TAC and the independent companies to offer their comments and contribute their own ideas in respect of future developments. The Authority agreed that it was equally important for Members to meet with the TAC Council annually in order to develop such discussions at a strategic level.

Launch of S4C Charity Appeal

The Authority noted that S4C's charity appeal for this year, in aid of the NSPCC, was launched during the *Heno* programme broadcast on 10 April 2000. Also, attention was drawn to the fact that Shelter Cymru, during a launch held by them on 19 April 2000, had shown a video recently produced as part of S4C's policy in support of the voluntary sector. Appreciation had been voiced on the evening expressing how valuable such videos were to them.

Use of English in Welsh Language Programmes

Reference was made to the fact that S4C's officers had renewed internal discussions on the use of English in S4C's Welsh language programmes in response to draft results of the first phase of an analysis presented by the Compliance Group. In order to ensure the possibility of foreseeing the language content of any evening's viewing in its entirety a process of central review based on information given to commissioning editors has been established. The full report will be presented in July.

The Miracle Maker

An update was given on the success of the *The Miracle Maker*. The film had since been shown in over a hundred cinemas across Britain. It was noted that the Archbishop of Canterbury had spoken warmly of the film in his address on Palm Sunday.

In addition, the statistics following the televising of *The Miracle Maker* by ABC in the United States of America on Easter Sunday were very good indeed, these were:

- Number of viewers: 15 million
- Ranking of film for the age 18-49 across the United States: 1st
- Ranking of film for all viewers across the United States: 2nd
- Number of e-mails received by ABC following the broadcast: 1,000 (by comparison the number usually received is 20-30)
- Position on Amazon's DVD order list: 5th

ABC were exceptionally happy with the response to the film and had since expressed their wish to broadcast it annually.

Sponsorship

A report was received relating to applications for sponsorship received from three organisations. Following consideration and discussion of the three applications, the Authority decided that sponsorship should be awarded as follows:

- Wales Youth Drama Course - £2,000
- Mid Wales Opera Company - £5,000
- Wales in Cannes - £3,000.

Tender for Monitoring The S4C Programme Service

The S4C Authority is the regulatory body for S4C and it must ensure that the programme service complies with the relevant regulatory codes and other statutory requirements as specified by the Broadcasting Acts. Some years ago, the Authority established a procedure whereby daily monitoring of S4C's Welsh language programmes (and consideration of compliance issues arising from rescheduling Channel 4 programmes on S4C on analogue) is provided by an outside body as a result of a tendering process. Since the present contract was to expire at the end of August 2000, it had been necessary to again put out to tender the provision of the monitoring service for the next three years. A Panel was established, chaired by the Authority Member, Janet Lewis-Jones, to undertake the necessary work. The Authority received a report on the outcome of that process.

Two applications had been received in response to the advertisement placed in the press and the Authority was given an outline of the differences between them. It was reported that the Panel, following a process of assessing the tenders, holding interviews, and then seeking further written details, had decided that the contract should be offered to the consortium of The Thomson Foundation, The University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and the National Library of Wales.

When this matter arose, the Chair, Elan Closs Stephens, declared an interest in respect of her employment by the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and confirmed that she had taken no part in the above process.

Draft Annual Report and Accounts 1999

The Members held a detailed discussion on the draft text placed before them in respect of the Annual Report 1999 together with the draft accounts for that year. The content and accounts were approved. It is intended to publish the Annual Report and Accounts in June 2000.

Corporate Planning

The Authority received two reports in respect of the corporate planning system. The first reported on progress made against the Corporate Plan 2000 during the first quarter of the year. The second outlined some policy assumptions for the Authority to consider as a basis for the Corporate Plan 2001-2005. The Authority noted the very good progress made to date on the Plan for 2000 and decided that further discussion should be held on the policy assumptions for 2001-2005 at its next meeting.

Other Matters

The Authority also discussed and noted reports on:

- the latest meeting of the Audit Committee
- S4C's programme performance
- quarterly report on S4C's commercial activities
- work of the Compliance Group
- complaints
- S4C's financial position
- mileage rates.

Next Meeting

The S4C Authority's next public meeting will be held at 7.00 pm on Thursday, 25 May, at Celtica, Machynlleth. Its business meeting will be held on the following day, also in Machynlleth.