

S4C Authority Bulletin - February 2001

Sympathy

Members noted with sadness the death of Mr Glyn Jones, Conductor of the Pendyrus Male Voice Choir.

Honours

The Chair reported that she had written to Mr Alwyn Humphreys on behalf of the Authority congratulating him on receiving an MBE for his contribution to the Morryston Male Voice Choir.

Cymru'n Creu

Reference was made to the report produced by the Assembly, which was originally instigated by the Culture Committee chaired by Cynog Dafis, AM, and was now being taken forward by the Assembly Culture Minister, Jenny Randerson, AM. It was reported that the crux of the report was that groups and institutions in Wales should be brought together in order to ensure that products and services from Wales were given the highest possible profile when major events, such as the FA Cup, were held in Wales. It was agreed that S4C should accept any invitation to join such a group.

S4C Charitable Appeal

The Chair reported that the Interviewing Panel had decided on the charity to be supported by S4C in 2001. The charity chosen was the British Heart Foundation. The two charities to benefit from having a video produced for them were Home Start and Blaenau Ffestiniog Women's Aid.

Meeting with the Liberal Democrats

It was noted that a very good meeting had been held with members of the Liberal Democrats, amongst them was Richard Livsey, MP, President of the Liberal Democrats in Wales and Mike German, AM, Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economic Development.

Select Committee on Welsh Affairs

It was reported that the Chair, the Chief Executive and the Managing Director of S4C Masnachol had appeared before the Select Committee to give evidence in their investigation on 'Wales in the World'. Reference was also made to the presentation given to the Committee the previous evening.

Appointment of Members on S4C Authority

The Chair drew the attention to the fact that the closing date for receipt of applications for two new Members of the Authority had passed. The Assembly was now making arrangements to draw up a short list. However, it had become apparent that it would be at least two if not three months before the Members appointed would join the Authority. It was felt that this was most unfortunate given the importance of the next few months for the Authority in light of the White Paper on Communications. The Chair had, therefore, asked Peter Davies and Janice Rowlands whether they would be willing to serve on the Authority for a further three months. They had very kindly acceded to this request. This was, however, a matter for the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Chair was awaiting a reply to a letter she had recently sent to him asking for his agreement to this proposal.

Report of the Director of Programmes

The report of the Director of Programmes was received. Members' debate focussed on the Programme Requirements document due to be published in a week's time. It was agreed that the document was acceptable and that it reflected the spirit, which the Authority wished to convey. The introduction to the document was particularly valuable as it provided guidance to independent producers on S4C's aims in respect of its programme service.

General Election: Political Broadcasts

The Secretary reported on the position in respect of political broadcasts for the next General Election. Members were asked to agree on the allocation of political broadcasts for the main political parties during the General Election campaign. They were also asked to approve one element of the S4C Programme Guidelines relating to the treatment that should be given to the various parties in respect of specific constituencies during the General Election.

Report of the Compliance Group

The Secretary presented the report of the Compliance Group emanating from the meeting held on 12 January 2001. Discussion focussed specifically on the following matters:

Llafur Cariad – The Group's comments in relation to the bad language used in the series *Llafur Cariad* was noted. Members supported the comments made about the importance of providing warnings prior to transmission in such cases, even if they occur after the watershed.

- (a) This series had been brought to the Authority's attention by the Compliance Group so that Members could consider concerns about privacy and permission to broadcast. The Group were concerned that interviewing young people about sensitive issues in an impromptu manner when they had obviously been drinking fairly heavily and broadcasting replies that, when sober, they may not have wished to become public, intrudes upon people's privacy without there being any public interest to justify so doing. As a result of these concerns, it had been decided to refer the matter to the Authority for its consideration.
- (b) **Agreed:** After viewing relevant clips from the series and discussing in some detail the contributions made by the young people -
 - (i) that the interviews were just within the boundaries of acceptability
 - (ii) although the Authority was not asked to consider the issue of taste, that it should be noted that it would have been more appropriate to broadcast the series later in the evening (it was noted that the new policy of starting to broadcast in the 10.30 p.m. slot would ease matters in this respect)
 - (iii) to confirm that there was no requirement for production companies, at present, to obtain written permission to broadcast such interviews.

S4C Current Affairs Programmes

Arising from consideration of compliance matters, reference was made to the adjudication of the Broadcasting Standards Commission on *Taro Naw* to be published in its Bulletin Number 39 and the forthcoming complaint from Carmarthenshire County Council (referred to in the Authority's January Bulletin). It was asked, if, as a result, there was any cause for concern about the journalistic standards and methods used in current affairs programmes such as *Taro Naw* and *Y Byd ar Bedwar*. Several different views were expressed relating to this matter but it was accepted that a broader range of evidence was needed to prove any suggestion that the standards were not what they should be.

Register of Interests - Authority Members

Members considered a list prepared on the basis of declarations of interest they made in January 2001. It was agreed that the list was complete and correct, and that on the basis of the procedure agreed last year, it should be published on the S4C web-site, with copies being made available for public inspection at S4C offices at Cardiff and Caernarfon.

Presentation on the work of the Finance Department

The Director of Finance gave a presentation to the Authority on the work of her department. She referred to two sections, Corporate Finance and Programme Finance, and explained with which other departments and bodies these sections dealt. She went on to provide an outline of the work of her department. This included budget preparation and monitoring, holding finance meetings with all departments, processing a very large number of invoices, providing bi-monthly reports on programme budgets, and salary administration. She also explained the work of the finance department in respect of companies contracted to produce programmes for S4C, the work of administering all payments payable to programme contributors in respect of repeats. In concluding the presentation, she referred to future targets and key issues, including, for example, best value and the increasing use of software/electronic means of exchanging information. Members thanked the Director of Finance for a very interesting and informative presentation, and expressed their appreciation of the huge amount of highly detailed work undertaken by the Finance Department.

Other Matters

The following matters were also discussed or noted:

- Financial Report
- Report of the Chief Executive – Matters for information
- Corporate Plan 2001-03
- Complaints Report
- Minutes of the meeting of the Compliance Group held on 12 January 2001.
- Report of the Viewers' Hotline
- Research Report
- Report of S4C Masnachol's Managing Director

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