

## **S4C Authority Bulletin - January 2002**

Set out below are the main points raised during the S4C Authority's discussions at its meeting on 21 December 2001.

### **Football**

It was noted that discussions with the BBC had led to an agreement that League of Wales football would be broadcast on Sunday afternoons as part of the *Y Clwb* programme.

### **BAFTA Awards**

Reference was made to the fact that '*Aunt Tiger*', one of the tales in the Animated Tales of the World series, had won one of the categories in the British BAFTA Awards. All those involved were congratulated on this success.

### **Farmers Union of Wales Award**

It was reported that S4C had won the Shepherd's Crook award from FUW for its special contribution to rural life. This recognised the value of programmes such as *Cefn Gwlad*, *Rasus*, and in particular, *Ffermio* - especially during the difficult period of the foot and mouth outbreak. The prize is normally given to an individual, but this time it was felt that S4C as an organisation deserved recognition and praise. The Shepherd's Crook was presented by Bob Parry, President of the Farmers Union of Wales, and Carwyn James, the Assembly Minister for Agriculture was also present.

### **A Meeting with the Secretary of State for Wales**

It was reported that the meeting arranged for 17 December had been postponed due to the funeral of Ray Powell MP on that day. Arrangements were being made to reorganise the meeting for the beginning of January.

### **Meeting with the Minister for Tourism, Film and Television**

- (a) The Chief Executive reported on the meeting between the Chair, the Secretary and himself with Dr Kim Howells, MP, together with senior civil servants in the DCMS on 6 December 2001 to discuss S4C's bid for additional funding. A useful meeting was held and the hope was that the bid would be successful in the public spending round that would start in February.
- (b) In the same meeting with Kim Howells MP, a number of issues relating to the Communications Bill intended to be published in spring 2002 were raised. S4C had already presented a case for the extension of its powers to offer S4C2 as a public service under the responsibility of the Authority. A useful discussion was also held about the importance of ensuring a proper place for Welsh programmes on the EPGs of the new digital platforms. A particular issue arose in relation to S4C's Planned Plant programmes on the Sky Kids Channel EPG. The Minister agreed to look into these issues further.

## **The New Programme Schedule**

Reference was made to the fact that the new schedule would be in operation from January 2002. Members were reminded that there would be an increase in the time given to children's programmes. Also *Heno* would be disappearing and the new programme *Wedi Chwech* would be shown in its place. Members looked forward to seeing the response to it.

## **Christmas Programmes**

Attention was drawn to the programmes to be seen over the Christmas period and in particular to *Eldra*, a charming film considered to be highly suitable for broadcast on Christmas Day.

## **Financial Report**

The Director of Finance's report was received on the financial situation up to the end of November 2001. Since the report was written, S4C had learned, that the figure for inflation in November was 0.9%. This meant that S4C would be receiving £1 million less from the DCMS in 2002 than it had anticipated. This would create a tighter financial situation in 2002 and a close eye would have to be kept on the budget over the next year; it also meant that some things which it had been hoped to do, would not now be able to happen.

## **Corporate Plan 2002-04**

The Corporate Plan for the three years commencing 2002 was submitted to the Authority. The Authority agreed in the last meeting to the strategic framework of the Plan and Members were now asked to agree to the specific targets for 2002. The targets were discussed and it was agreed that the Corporate Plan should be agreed for 2002-2004 on condition that the Members' comments were reflected in the final version.

[*Note:* The Corporate Plan has now been published and is available on the S4C Website]

## **Authority Work Programme for 2002**

The Authority agreed that the proposed work programme for the year 2002 was acceptable.

## **Report of the Compliance Group**

The Authority accepted the report from the Compliance Group emanating from the meeting on 11 December 2001. Specifically, issues of compliance arising from the *Llwyth o Docs* series were discussed:

(a) **Family Viewing –**

- (i) The Group had considered a number of clips from this series which was broadcast at 8.30pm. The Authority's attention was drawn to two clips in particular as examples of the subject matter of the Group's discussion, namely: one scene of a sexual nature and the other involving cruelty to animals. What the Compliance Group was asking the Authority to consider was: whether *Llwyth o Docs* had broken the guidelines in terms of what was suitable for family viewing before 9.00pm
- (ii) A careful discussion was held, focussing on the two specific clips which were viewed. Various opinions were expressed by Members concerning the two scenes. Having weighed up all the viewpoints expressed, it was agreed:
  - that the scene involving the picture of the naked girl broke the guidelines since it was beyond the expectations of the viewer as part of a programme broadcast before 9.00pm. As a result, the Chief Executive and the Director of Programmes should communicate the nature of the Members concerns to the commissioners and through them to the production team.
  - the scene involving the vet and her treatment of the sheep did not break the guidelines in terms of broadcasting requirements before 9.00pm and the watershed, but it had gone right up against the boundaries.

(b) **Portrayal of a Black Character –**

- (i) The Compliance Group suggested that the portrayal of a black character raised different questions. Firstly, is it now acceptable for a white actor to play the part of a black man by using make-up, and secondly, was the nature of the character portrayed acceptable? As the Members discussed the matter in question it became evident that this was a complicated issue and something which demanded more detailed attention.
- (ii) ***It was agreed:*** that before Members came to any decision, S4C's officers/commissioners should be given an opportunity to explain their point of view on this issue by presenting a paper to the next meeting of the Authority in January.

**A presentation by the Head of Research and the Managing Director of S4C Commercial**

The Managing Director of S4C Masnachol began the presentation by explaining briefly the nature of broadcasters in the United States of America, Germany, Italy, Spain, France and the way in which digital television (terrestrial, satellite and cable) was developing in those countries and also to what extent the different broadcasters relied on advertising income. Several graphs were shown reflecting how it was anticipated that Wales would compare with the rest of the United Kingdom and the other countries in Europe, in terms of developments of the various platforms, from now up until 2010.

Carys Evans, the Head of S4C Research, moved the presentation forward by explaining the present situation in terms of how many households and how many Welsh speakers receive digital and how many of these were receiving satellite, cable or terrestrial. She expanded on the type of people who were more likely to be in multi-channel households. She also explained the negative impact on viewing figures, not only for S4C but also on the viewing patterns for BBC1, BBC2 and ITV in multi-channel households, with viewing figures for cable and satellite channels increasing.

Members expressed their appreciation of the presentation. It had given context to the reduction in the viewing figures which S4C had seen recently and provided very useful background information for the special meeting which the Authority would be holding in March.

### **Other Matters**

The following matters were also discussed/noted:

- The report of the Chief Executive - Matters for Information
- Complaints Report
- The minutes of the Compliance Group held on 11 February 2001
- Report from the Viewers' Hotline
- Research Report – The performance of the service against targets
- Report of S4C Masnachol's Managing Director.