

S4C Authority Bulletin - April 2002

Set out below are the main points raised during the S4C Authority's discussions during its meeting on 27 March 2002.

S4C Charity Appeal

It was reported that Shelter Cymru had been chosen as the charity that S4C's Appeal would support during 2002. Also, in light of their strong applications, a decision had also been taken that the Appeal would support the two charities Ty Gobaith and Ty Hafan in 2003. This would also provide the opportunity to change the timetable for advertising and choosing the charity to be supported in 2004.

Meeting with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

The Chair reported on the meeting she, the Chief Executive and the Secretary had with the Secretary for State. She was given a full picture of S4C's activities before detailed discussions were held on S4C's application for additional funding. No clear indication was given as to whether the application was likely to be successful or not. It was mentioned that the timetable for the funding round had slipped somewhat but the Secretary of State said that she would write to S4C in due course.

Pro-Life Alliance

A report was given on the adjudication of the Court of Appeal on the case that the Pro-Life Alliance had brought against the broadcasters following their decision to refuse to show pictures of the party's political broadcast. The Court of Appeal adjudicated (in a judgement that ran to 26 pages) against the broadcasters stating that freedom of speech considerations should override matters of taste and decency. Consideration was now being given to presenting an appeal to the House of Lords. Should the judgement stand, it would raise very interesting questions for the future.

Viewing Figures

A report was given on the discussions with BARB, RSMB and ART regarding S4C's serious concerns about the accuracy of the viewing figures that it was receiving.

Cylch yr Iaith

A paper was considered which offered comments on, and responded to, the report sent to Members of the Authority by Cylch yr Iaith in relation to the standard of the language within S4C's Welsh language programmes. It was clear that S4C and Cylch yr Iaith took very different standpoints on this subject. S4C's officers would prepare a response to send to Cylch yr Iaith on behalf of the Authority.

Relocating S4C's Headquarters

The discussion that began in the last meeting on relocating S4C's headquarters continued. After careful consideration and having weighed up all the views expressed it was decided that under the present circumstances, and in light of its statutory responsibilities, it was not practical to relocate S4C's headquarters as such, but that officers be asked whether it would be possible to devolve some of the administrative work over a period of time where that would contribute to maintaining, promoting and strengthening the Channel's position and consistent with achieving best value from the money available.

Annual Report 2001 – Themes/Outline

A paper which presented the core information that would form the basis of the Annual Report 2001 was considered. The range of programmes broadcast during the year was noted as well as the effect that the foot and mouth disease had on some productions during 2001. The Authority was satisfied with that presented and noted that there would be another opportunity to comment when a full draft of the Report would be presented for consideration at the next meeting.

Compliance

The Compliance Group's report arising from its meeting on 8 March 2002 was considered. In particular, the Authority was asked to consider a matter of compliance arising from an item that appeared on *Wedi 6* (19 February 2002) on the subject of cannabis, broadcast from a cannabis cafe in Stockport. Having noted the wording of S4C's guidelines regarding programme treatment of the subject of drugs, and also considering the item in its entirety – including the link from the studio – the Authority agreed that it should give its support to this particular item on *Wedi 6*. It also supported the importance of holding a responsible discussion on this subject on S4C's service more generally.

Other Matters

In addition, the following matters were discussed/noted:

- Chief Executive's Report – Matters for information
- National Assembly's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: S4C's Response to the Review of the Welsh Language
- Complaints Report
- Compliance Group Minutes - 8 March 2002
- Viewers' Hotline Report
- Research Report.
- Programme Services Report
- Financial Report
- Report of the Managing Director of S4C Masnachol