

## S4C Authority Bulletin - August 2002

Set out below are the main points raised during the S4C Authority's discussions at its meeting on 26 July 2002.

### **Thanks**

The Chairman thanked the Members for their support and kindness during the last few months whilst she was recuperating after surgery. She noted that the open meetings at Wrexham and Barry had been successful under the skilful leadership of Nic Parry and Cefin Campbell. She appreciated the fact that Huw Wynne-Griffith had been keeping a watchful eye on financial and commercial developments as Chairman of the Audit Committee, and thanked Janet Lewis-Jones especially for chairing the two previous Authority meetings and for the extra support given by her during this period, which included appearing before the Joint Scrutiny Committee on the Communications Bill.

### **Sympathy**

The Chairman referred to the recent tragic death of Gethin Rhys Williams, a young actor who appeared on the *Rownd a Rownd* programme. Members expressed their profound sadness and extended their sympathy to family and friends. The Chief Executive had already written to the family on behalf of S4C.

### **S4C Charity Appeal**

It was deemed that the special week set aside to raise money for the charity Shelter had been successful and effective with a series of different events arranged. For the first time, a number of programmes had been scheduled to coincide with the campaign, whereas in the past only *Heno* had been involved. It was felt that there had been far more awareness and general interest in the appeal this year and the comments from Shelter itself had been very favourable since they felt that they had received a fair amount of attention. Whilst noting this, Members voiced their opinion that the two programmes *Ar y Stryd* had been powerful and very notable ones. The Head of Marketing and the departmental staff also were thanked for their hard work throughout the campaign week. No information was available yet with regard to the total amount of money raised.

### **Comprehensive Spending Review**

The Chairman referred to a letter which she had received from the DCMS Secretary of State which referred to the fact that the Department had secured an increase of 7% during the new public spending round recently announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The letter did not give any indication of who would benefit from this increase but it was hoped that S4C would hear the result of its application for further funding by October.

## **BSC Annual Report**

Every Member of the Authority had received a copy of this report and attention was drawn to the increase in the number of matters concerning S4C which had come to the attention of the BSC. This was something which needed keeping an eye on and was, of course, a matter which would be relevant with regard to the new OFCOM body. The announcement made that week that Lord David Currie would be the Chairman of OFCOM was also noted.

## **Strategy Review**

The Chief Executive led Members through a detailed paper which introduced a number of strategic considerations. This was a preliminary paper and the Authority was not required to make decisions regarding any particular matter during this meeting. There was a fair amount of further work for officers to embark upon and a further paper would be presented during the autumn term which would contain more definite conclusions. However, the paper gave Members the opportunity to present comments on the general direction of work presently being undertaken. A lengthy and broad discussion ensued and one or two aspects were agreed upon where the Authority wished for more information to be made available in the autumn.

## **Publication of the Annual Report**

It was noted that the 2001 Annual Report and Accounts had been published on 2 July 2002. The intention was to present a report on matters which arose following the publication to be brought before the Authority in its next meeting.

## **Review of Welsh Language Guidelines**

Members gave consideration to draft Welsh language guidelines for producers. Apart from a few small changes, it was agreed to invite comments on the guidelines from external bodies before the Authority gave them its final seal of approval.

## **S4C's Response to the Communications Bill**

The Authority considered a paper which summarised the latest situation concerning the clauses in the Communications Bill which involved S4C and its response to them. A number of issues which arose from this were discussed, especially those which involved the S4C's commercial powers. It was noted that discussions with the DCMS on the Bill would continue throughout the summer.

## **Corporate Plan 2002-04 – Half Yearly Review**

Members noted the performance to date against targets set in the plan. Special note was made of the fact that the BARB system had not produced dependable figures during this period.

## **Compliance: *Nwci***

The Authority's attention was drawn in its meeting in June to some aspects of the *Nwci* series and specifically to three scenes from the programme. Members postponed making a decision

on this matter because they felt that they needed to watch the whole series in order to be able to consider and respond to the points raised, i.e.: whether the specific examples broke the guidelines; and should a public broadcaster commission such a programme bearing in mind the dangers of degradation and exploitation. Having watched the series in its entirety, Members held further discussions on these elements.

***Agreed:***

- (a) Although the Authority would not wish to see too many series such as *Nwci* being broadcast on S4C, there was no objection to the Channel commissioning such series and, although one or two specific examples gave Members cause for concern, it was not thought that they degraded. Indeed it was good that such issues were being discussed in the Welsh language.
- (b) Whilst the series in general would not have exceeded the expectations of the audience, the three clips brought to the attention of the Authority by the Compliance Group - especially the item on pornographic magazines - came very close to breaking the guidelines. Concerns were voiced too about other items during the series, i.e. a pole dancing scene and one which showed a lad dusting.
- (c) The Authority's comments should be conveyed to the producers.

**Sponsorship**

The Authority considered a paper which set out details of four applications for sponsorship and recommendations were discussed.

***Agreed:***

- (a) Ffresh [*The Chairman expressed an interest in this matter and did not participate in the discussion nor the decision.*] - That a grant of £500 be given towards this event.
- (b) Westminster Media Forum – That this application should be given further consideration.
- (c) Tredegar Development Trust – That no sponsorship be given; staff to give personal support only.
- (ch) Theatr Gwynedd [*Nic Parry, Authority Member, expressed an interest in this matter and did not participate in the discussion nor the decision.*] – That a grant of £1,000 be given to sponsor the programme for next year.

**Our Language: Its Future - Welsh Language Policy Review - Assembly's Culture and Education Committees**

Consideration was given to the paper which summarised the main findings of the language policy review which had been published by the Assembly's Culture and Education Committees on 9 July and to the implications of the review with regard to S4C. Furthermore, a copy of the full report was circulated. It was felt that it was important that S4C, as a body independent of the Assembly, should continue to emphasise its exceedingly important role of working as a partner to attract children and young people and learners to the language.

**Presentation given by the Director of Animation**

A short presentation was given by the Director of Animation which contained a report on developments in the field of animation since the more comprehensive presentation given by him to the Authority back in March. He referred specifically to the following:

- *Cartoon Forum* – He mentioned that this would be held at Y Faenol, Caernarfon. This was the largest media event of its kind in the European Union; it was a £1 million event which would take place over 4 days. This was a co-production forum, with 87 entries, 7 of which were sponsored by S4C. The Assembly's Culture Minister, Jenny Randerson, would present the 'Cartoon d'Or' on the Saturday evening.
- *Animated Tales of the World* - Reference was made to this 26 country production and mention was made that the intention now was to produce a further 13 tales.
- *Mabinogi* – This was a 100 minute film which began and ended with 'live action', the rest of the film being in a 2D animated style. The film would be premiered during the autumn. Reference was made to the fact that a programme 'Making the Mabinogi' was being produced, and that a graphic novel was also being published.
- *Shakespeare Plays for Schools* – It was explained that plans had been further developed in order to expand this project. 100 schools in 11 locations in Wales would be participating this year, with a Gala Night being held at the New Theatre, Cardiff during November where the four best plays would be staged. Plans were being made for the next two years where the project would take place in venues in each region of Britain. It was hoped that the DCMS would offer sponsorship for the scheme and the Royal Shakespeare Company had also agreed to hold workshops.

## **Other Issues**

The following issues were also discussed/noted:

- Chief Executive's Report - Matters for information
- Programmes Report
- Financial Report
- Complaints Report
- Report and Minutes of the Compliance Group held on 12 July 2002.
- Viewers' Hotline Report
- Research Report
- Report of S4C Masnachol's Managing Director.