



Meeting of the BBC Board

MINUTES

16 October 2025
Quay House, Media City, Salford

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Chair's Introduction
2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
3. Minutes and Matters Arising
4. Board Reports
5. Executive and Director-General Report
6. Culture Review Update
7. Consolidated Group Business Services
8. Engaging Younger Audiences
9. Licence Fee Unit Re-procurement
10. AOB

ATTENDANCE

Present

- Samir Shah Chair
- Tim Davie Director-General
- Shumeet Banerji Non-executive director
- Robbie Gibb Non-executive director
- Muriel Gray Non-executive director
- Chris Jones Non-executive director
- Michael Plaut Non-executive director
- Michael Smyth Non-executive director
- Marinella Soldi Non-executive director
- Leigh Tavaziva Group Chief Operating Officer
- Caroline Thomson Non-executive Director
- Deborah Turness CEO News and Current Affairs

Apologies: Damon Buffini

With

- Paul Oldfield Chief of Staff to Chair and Director-General
- Chris Sandford Company Secretary
- Jo Clarke Secretary to the Board
- Kate Phillips Chief Content Officer
- David Jordan Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (item 5)
- Peter Johnston Director, Editorial Reviews and Complaints (item 5)
- John Curbishley Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer (item 5, and 7-8)
- Nick North Director, Audiences (item 5)
- Uzair Qadeer Chief People Officer (item 6)
- Deborah Copeland Director, Internal Communications and Engagement (items 6)
- Geraint Crwys-Williams Director, Operations (item 7)
- Sarah Calcott Chief Operating Officer, COO Group (item 7)
- Storm Fagan Chief Product Officer (item 7)
- JP Petranca BCG (item 7)
- Colin Light PwC (item 7)
- Rebecca Wallace Strategy Director (item 8)
- Amar Amratia Head of Strategy, Content (items 8)

Alice Macandrew

Director, Corporate Affairs (item 8)

Kerris Bright

Chief Customer Officer (item 9)

Shirley Cameron

Director of Revenue Management (item 9)

BOARD MINUTES 16 OCTOBER 2025

1. Chair's Introduction

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Board to its October meeting in Salford. The main business of the day would include an update on the implementation of the findings of the Culture Review, the plan for the transformation of the BBC Group operating model and a session on younger audiences. An opportunity would also be made available for discussion of an email on editorial matters which had been sent to the Board by Michael Prescott, a previous external editorial adviser to the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee.

2. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1 Damon Buffini had provided his apologies for this meeting.
- 2.2 No conflicts of interest were declared in addition to those already recorded.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

- 3.1 The Minutes from the 26 June Board meeting were approved.
- 3.2 The Board noted the Matters Arising.
- 3.3 The Board noted that the Board meeting on 28 January would now take place in Salford.

4. Board Business and Reports

Commercial Board Report

- 4.1 The Board noted a report from the Commercial Board's September meeting. The Board noted that the current dividend policy would be reviewed as part of this year's budget process.

Sub-committee Reports

- 4.2 The Board noted written reports from the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee, the Nominations and Governance Committee, the Remuneration and People Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee. There were also written reports from the England and Northern Ireland Committees.

4.3 The Board noted an update from the Director-General on the recruitment of a Group Chief Financial Officer.

4.4 The Board noted an update from the Chair on the recruitment of leadership for the planned thematic review of coverage of the Israel/Gaza war.

5. Executive and Director-General Report

5.1 The Director-General opened the session by briefing the Board on the results of the questionnaire sent to BBC account holders. There was clear support for the BBC's mission and its independence from Government. Only 17 per cent of respondents had raised the licence fee as a matter of concern. Over half a million individual comments had been received and teams would be assessing these responses and all the data received.

5.2 The Board noted an update on recent content highlights including the profile of *Celebrity Traitors*, which had launched with an audience of 11.8 million people. Directors also discussed the critical and popular success of *Blue Lights* and other recent drama from the Nations such as *The Guest* and *Death Valley*; the undercover *Panorama* on Charing Cross Police station; and, Radio Four's *The Fort*.

5.3 The Board noted an update on the EBU's preparations for next year's Eurovision.

5.4 The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on finance and operations. Work had been taking place to ensure that the physical security of buildings and personal security arrangements were fit for purpose.

Quarterly Performance Report

5.5 The Board discussed the quarterly performance report. Directors discussed the audience performance data: It had been a challenging period in audience performance with the metrics for young adults in particular under pressure. In response a plan for 16-24 year olds audiences had been developed by the Executive for discussion later in the agenda. Directors also discussed audience perception scores, which had reduced this quarter.

5.6 The Board noted the quarterly performance data for financial and operational performance, including critical projects and the risk dashboard.

5.7 The Board noted the editorial standards report.

Editorial Matters

- 5.8 The Board considered an email sent to its directors by Michael Prescott, a previous external editorial adviser to the Editorial Guidelines Committee, which expressed dissatisfaction with the Committee's handling of a number of editorial matters.
- 5.9 The Board discussed the email and a full range of views was expressed. It was agreed that the Chair would meet with Mr Prescott on behalf of the Board to listen to his concerns and gather further feedback as a first step. The Chair would report back to the Board following the meeting.
- 5.10 The Board agreed that the outcome of the current effectiveness review of the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee should return to the next meeting of the Board.

6. Culture Review Update

- 6.1 The Board discussed an update on the implementation of the culture review work.

7. Consolidated Group Business Services

- 7.1 The Board considered an update on the on the Consolidated Group Business Services (CGBS) programme, which was designed to transform the BBC's technology, operating model and cost base, following Board approval in principle for the project in April.
- 7.2 The Board discussed progress with the work, which had now been developed into two proposals on media technology and group business services, and the Executive's recommendations for next steps.
- 7.3 The Board endorsed the recommendations for further development, noting that a full business case for both proposals would be brought back to the Board for approval.

8. Plan for 16-24s

- 8.1 The Board discussed the challenges with weekly reach figures for young audiences and considered the executive action plan for 2025-26, which included a number of programming and marketing in-year interventions.
- 8.2 The Board discussed the competition for youth attention from social media and video services such as TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, and the potential impact of making more BBC content available on those platforms.

8.3 The Board noted that the effectiveness of the interventions would be assessed through the annual audience performance review and reported back to the Board.

Charter Engagement for Young Audiences

8.4 The Board noted the plans to engage with young people as part of the BBC’s Charter renewal process.

9. Licence Fee Unit

[redacted for the purposes of commercial confidentiality]

9.1 The Board was asked to approve a mandate to agree the extension (subject to contract) of the current Capita Licence Fee Collection Contract to 2030, with delegated authority to the Director-General and Group Chief Operating Officer.

9.2 The Board discussed the terms of the contract extension and the need for continuity during the period.

9.3 The Board approved the terms of the mandate.

10 AOB

10.1 The Board was briefed on a matter of reputational risk as part of the Board’s escalation protocol.

Approved by the Board: _____ (Chair)

_____ (Date)