Meeting of the BBC Board

MINUTES

23 April 2026
Broadcasting House, London W1

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest
2. Minutes and Matters Arising from 19 March Board Meeting
3. Board Reports
4. Four Nations Committee Update
5. Executive Reporting
6. Opening our Platforms
7. Charter Review
8. Culture Review Update
9. FOI Briefing
10. Finance Case
11. AOB

ATTENDANCE

Present

- Samir Shah — Chair
- Rhodri Talfan Davies — Interim Director-General
- Damon Buffini — Non-executive Director
- Jody Ford — Non-executive Director
- Robbie Gibb — Non-executive Director
- Muriel Gray — Non-executive Director
- Chris Jones — Non-executive Director
- Bérangère Michel — Group Chief Finance Officer
- Michael Plaut — Non-executive Director
- Michael Smyth — Non-executive Director
- Marinella Soldi — Non-executive Director
- Leigh Tavaziva — Group Chief Operating Officer
- Caroline Thomson — Senior Independent Director

Apologies:

None

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
Rhuanedd Richards	Interim Director, Nations (item 4 - 5)
Jonathan Munro	Interim CEO News and Current Affairs (item 5)
Tom Fussell	CEO Studios (item 5a - 6)
Nick North	Director, Audiences (item 5a)
John Curbishley	Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer (items 5a - 7)
David Jordan	Director, Editorial Policy and Standards (item 5a)
David Moody	Director, Strategy, BBC Studios (item 6)
Sophie Garnham	CRBA Director (item 6)
Jo Sherlock	Group Rights and Commercial Director (item 6)
Rebecca Wallace	Strategy Director (item 6 and 7)
Iain Bundred	Director of Policy and Public Affairs (item 7)
Kate Biggs	Controller, Policy (item 7)

Alice Macandrew	Corporate Affairs Director (item 7)
Uzair Qadeer	Chief People Officer (item 8)
JM Frost	Senior Project Director (item 8)
Sarah Gregory	HR Director (item 8)
Sarah Jones	Group General Counsel (item 9)
Brigit Morris	Head of Legal, FOI and Compliance (item 9)

BOARD MINUTES 23 APRIL 2026

1. Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

1.1 There were no apologies for this meeting.

1.2 No conflicts of interest were declared in addition to those already recorded.

2. Minutes from 19 March Meeting

2.1 The Board approved the minutes from the 19 March Board meetings, subject to two drafting amendments. They would be published on 23 June in line with the publication schedule.

Matters Arising

2.2 The Board noted the matters arising paper.

3. Board Reports

Sub-committee Reports

3.1 The Board noted written reports from the Wales and Scotland Committees.

Arrangements for Chairing Commercial Board

[Marinella Soldi left the meeting for discussion of this item]

3.2 The Board noted that Nominations Committee discussed arrangements for the future chairing of the Commercial Board at its most recent meeting. To support this, the Chair had also held discussion with members of Commercial Board.

3.3 The Board approved a six-month extension to Marinella Soldi’s term of appointment on the Board and her appointment as Interim Chair of Commercial Board.

External Editorial Advisers

3.4 Following a competitive recruitment process, Nominations Committee recommended that the Board appoint Adam Baxter and Alexandra Evans as the new external Editorial Advisers to the Editorial Standards Committee.

3.5 The Board approved the appointments of Adam Baxter and Alexandra Evans as external Editorial Advisers to the Editorial Standards Committee for a period of two years from the commencement of their appointments.

4. Joint Nations Committee

4.1 The annual meeting of the four Nations Committees had taken place in Glasgow on 26 March. The Director, Nations provided an overview on the business discussed, which had focussed on the challenges of covering the upcoming Elections; increasing technical innovation and how to embed new tools into local reporting; and the constrained financial environment.

4.2 Nations Board members opened the discussion by raising the key challenges for their areas. Directors discussed the relationship between network and local news. They emphasised the importance of accuracy in reporting the Nations, whilst also recognising improvements in integrating network and local resource to avoid duplication and better reflect local audiences. Directors also discussed the new commissioning model.

5. Executive Reporting

Executive Report

5.1 The Board noted that it had been a stronger quarter for audiences, driven by high quality content. *The Traitors* had attracted an average audience of 12 million people per episode; the opening episode of *Small Prophets* drew nearly 8 million people in its first week and the Winter Olympics had seen an eight-fold increase in reach.

5.2 The need for a new cost-savings programme had been communicated to Staff. The Interim Director-General had held an all Staff call to explain the financial situation and take questions.

5.3 The Board noted an update from the Chief Operating Officer including a status update on the East Bank project.

Quarterly Performance Report

5.4 The Board considered the audience performance data for the quarter. It had been the best quarter of the year for Audience Scorecard performance with 14 of the 30 metrics green. Strong content across all genres was the key driver, along with a high level of audience engagement with News stories. In January-March, universality remained strong; depth metrics performed better and global reach was well ahead of its target, driven by international news coverage. Overall online reach and accounts were at record levels with seven out of 10 people using online services; this increase had been driven by the Winter Olympics digital offering and a strong iPlayer performance.

5.5 However, overall audience performance had not been replicated among young adults. Directors discussed the fragmenting youth audience and the challenges of attracting young people to the BBC, particularly given their greater preference for short-form content. Directors agreed that a briefing on how the brand power metric was comprised would be useful.

5.6 The Board considered the Finance and Operations quarterly performance update. Directors noted a briefing on HR issues, including the safety and security of News teams in the Middle East.

5.7 The Board noted an update on the commercial services from the CEO of BBC Studios. In the US, BritBox International was performing ahead of target; *Bluey* was now the most streamed show, and BBC Select had become the third biggest documentary service.

5.8 The Board noted the Editorial Standards Report. The Executive Complaints Unit had issued an upheld adjudication regarding the broadcast of the BAFTAs. Complaints volumes were currently at a historically low level.

6. Opening Our Platforms

6.1 The Board considered a paper providing an update on current plans to open BBC platforms to select third-party content. Directors noted the work taking place to develop appropriate approaches to hosting third-party content and progress with establishing strategic content partnerships.

6.2 The Board endorsed the direction of the work. A further update would come to the July meeting of the Board.

7. Charter Review

7.1 The Board noted an update on Charter Review. This included the planned work programme over the summer and proposed governance arrangements to manage the Board approval process, where required.

7.2 The Board approved the work programme and next steps. The finalisation of the 10-year financial forecast was delegated to Chris Jones, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Bérangère Michel, Chief Financial Officer. It would be shared with the Board ahead of submission to HM Treasury.

8. Culture Review Update

8.1 The Board considered a paper which provided an update on the Culture Transformation programme, which was established the previous year, following the publication of the *Respect at Work* review. It covered progress to date, year one impact and early outcomes, key risks and issues, and the latest view of progress against high-level KPIs for each workstream. It also set out high-level priorities for year two of the programme.

8.2 The Board discussed the update, noting that the programme was not yet fully implemented with the resolution hub still to start operation. Directors agreed that a further round of staff communications would be useful to demonstrate positive progress and increase staff confidence in the changes. The Board discussed how commissioners were supporting the roll-out of cultural change requirements in independent production companies working with the BBC, and the impact of the cost-savings programme on the resource available to the team.

9. FOI Briefing

9.1 The Board received a briefing from the Group General Counsel on the BBC's obligations and practices under FOI law.

POTUS Legal Case

9.2 The Board received an update on the legal action being brought by the President of the United States. It was agreed that any Board members planning to travel to the United States in future should request advice from the BBC's legal team.

10. Finance Cases

10.1 The Board approved the extension of existing travel contracts until March 2028 to facilitate a full, compliant competitive re-procurement process to run across 2026–27.

11 AOB

11.1 There was no other business.