

RTÉ Audience Council
Meeting held on Thursday 14 July 2011 at 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. in RTÉ

Communique

Attendance: Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh (Chairperson); Gerry Ellis; Donal O'Grady; Robin O'Sullivan; Mary Stuart; Clare Watson; Deirdre Carroll; Gary Hastings; Rachel Holstead; Bríd O'Brien

Apologies: Joe Little (RTÉ Board representative); Alan Smith

In Attendance: Beverly Hanly, Secretary to the RTÉ Audience Council
Adrian Moynes, RTÉ Group Secretary
Sinead Casey, Manager Strategic Developments & Special Projects TV
Isabel Charleton, Head of Presentation & Access Services TV

Bríd O'Brien was welcomed to her first meeting.

It was noted that two members of the Council had been written to by the Secretary informing them that under Section 2.4 of the Standing Orders they had now automatically ceased to be members. They were offered the opportunity to have extenuating circumstances considered by the Board of RTÉ but neither took up this invitation. The RTÉ Board will now proceed to appoint replacements.

The recent death of Aindreas Ó Gallchóir, Iarcheannaire, RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta and formerly Assistant Controller, Television was noted and condolences expressed to his wife and family.

Saorview / DTT

The Council received a comprehensive presentation from Sinead Casey on the Saorview project. She outlined the current publicity campaign and the ongoing plans in place to ensure everyone affected will be aware of what steps they need to take to ensure they continue to have a television service after Digital Switchover in 2012. A number of questions which had been raised at previous meetings were answered in the course of this presentation.

Access to programmes by means of subtitles, Irish Sign Language interpretation, and Audio Description continues to be a concern to the Council and Isabel Charleton updated the Council on developments in this regard. While expressing some disappointment that certain deadlines had not been met, the progress to date was acknowledged.

The Council will be kept informed of developments in all of the above areas.

Communique

The Communique of the meeting of 26 May 2011 was agreed.

It was noted that the Annual Report had been submitted on time and had included the proposal contained in the *Audience Council, RTÉ and the analysis of the Media* paper which had been tabled at the meeting. This proposal will now be considered by the RTÉ Executive.

Confirmation had been received since the last meeting that RTÉ TV Sport does provide live sub-titling of commentary on many but not all live events.

The problems with RTÉ Player had been resolved by direct contact.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary updated the Council on developments since the last meeting, including: a briefing on the initial meeting that had been held between the Chairman and Secretary of the Council and the Group Secretary of RTÉ, and the Chairperson of the BBCNI Audience Council and the Head of Governance & Accountability BBCNI; an update on the *Voluntary Early Retirement & Redundancy Facility* and a *Voluntary Severance Facility* currently on offer to staff and in particular the impact, if any, of this on programming; the RTÉ Annual Report 2010 which had been published the previous day.

Members' Issues

The Council has now been in office for one year and has familiarised itself with the workings of a number of areas in the organisation. Therefore, the Chairperson is of the view that the Council should now set itself a proactive programme of work for the coming year. He asked members to prepare a list of practical proposals/suggestions for consideration at the next meeting, including suggestions as to how the Council might interact directly with sections of the RTÉ audience, within the terms set out in the statute. In the discussion that followed, possible methods for interacting with different categories of young people were identified. Where appropriate, suggestions/proposals agreed by the Council will be brought to the attention of the RTÉ Board.

Dates of Future Meeting

It was noted that under the Broadcasting Act 2009 there is a requirement for the Audience Council to meet with (a) the Board of RTÉ and (b) the Director General once a year and both these meetings will take place before 30 December 2011.

The following dates for meetings for the remainder of 2011 were agreed:

Thursday 1 September 2011 at 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Thursday, 27 October 2011 at 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Thursday, 15 December 2011 – time TBC. This meeting will incorporate the meeting with the RTÉ Board.

Signed: _____
Chairperson