
MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING
Held on Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at 10.30 a.m.
Via Video Conference Call

Present: Lord Edward Faulks (Chairman)
Lara Fielden
Charles Garside
Eddie Gray
Matthew Lohn
Ian MacGregor
Brendan McGinty
Barry McIlheney
Mehmuda Mian
Ruth Sawtell
Claire Singers
Martin Trepte

Attending: Charlotte Dewar – Chief Executive Officer
Rosemary Douce – Standards Officer
Vikki Julian – Head of Communications
Michelle Kuhler – PA/minute taker
Tonia Milton – Head of Systems
Lauren Sloan – Head of Complaints

1. Welcome and Apologies

There were no apologies received. The Chairman welcomed Asmita Naik, newly appointed Complaints Committee member, and Geraldine Allinson, a member of the independent Appointment Panel, as observers to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 September 2020 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report – oral

The Chairman noted that the new lockdown was a setback, but the staff continued to work well in difficult circumstances.

He noted that the budget process for 2021 was under way. He and the Chief Executive had met with members of the Regulatory Funding Company. While IPSO was aware of the challenges currently faced by the industry, it was essential that it continue to fulfil its functions in the public interest. No final conclusion had been reached and the Board would be updated.

6. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive updated the Board on the Islam guidance, noting that it was very close to release. The press release was ready and included supportive comments from a community group and an editor who had been included in the consultation process. The Chief Executive congratulated the Head of Communications for her efforts in bringing the project to a positive conclusion.

The trans research would also be published shortly, and certainly before Christmas.

She provided a brief update on Covid working: group meetings in person would no longer be possible, but staff would be encouraged to meet up one-to-one.

She notified Board members that IPSO had received notice of an application for a judicial review and explained the background.

The Board were updated on the outcome of the triannual consultation on the terms of the Editors' Code of Practice and asked for their approval to a proposed change arising from this to Clause 2 (Privacy).

The Board approved the proposed changes to the Editors' Code of Practice.

The Board were asked to approve proposed membership of its subcommittees.

The Board approved the IPSO Subcommittee membership.

After briefly noting the results of the recent quarterly staff survey, the Chief Executive then took questions from the Board.

7. Complaints Report

The Head of Complaints introduced her report. Since the last meeting, IPSO had not had a significant multiple complaints, although small multiples continued to occur. This had been helpful in the context of a transition within the complaints staff. She noted that Complaints Officer Thomas Moseley had left IPSO, one Complaints Officer was currently working part time, and the Senior Complaints Officer was scheduled to leave in December. Two new Complaints Officers had been recruited with start dates to be confirmed.

The Head of Complaints took questions from the Board.

The Board noted the report.

8. External Affairs Report

The Head of Communications updated the Board on some of the key points from the report, including a recent audit of traffic and use of the IPSO website.

The Head of Communications took questions from the Board.

The Board noted the report.

9. Finance and performance at IPSO

The Chief Executive introduced the reports, informing the Board that an expected increase in legal spending had occurred in October.

She noted that she and the Chairman had met the Regulatory Funding Company. It was a positive meeting at which members of the RFC reiterated the importance of IPSO's independence and financial security. The Chief Executive had begun preparing a budget for 2021. She took the Board through a broad overview of the proposals.

The Chief Executive took questions from the Board.

The Board noted the reports.

10. Risk reporting

The Chief Executive introduced her report, informing the Board that the register has now been divided up into two separate sections, strategic and governance risk. The aim for future meetings would be for the full Board to focus on strategic risks although comments on all points were welcome.

The Chief Executive received feedback from the Board including a request for greater detail on assurance.

The Board noted the reports.

11. Global digital publishers

The Standards Officer introduced the item to the Board. She informed the Board that the paper had arisen out of discussions held with the Liaison Committee about the operation of the global jurisdiction change to IPSO's Regulations.

The Board agreed with the principle that further steps should be taken to inform readers about global digital publisher status. It declined the Executive's proposal that it should issue a requirement for publishers to include a reference to this on their websites and asked the Executive to approach publishers on a consensual basis in the first instance. If publishers were not willing to do so it would consider whether a requirement were necessary and appropriate.

12. Staffing

Members of the Executive staff left the meeting, with the exception of the Chief Executive and Head of Complaints. The Board held a confidential discussion about staffing changes.

13. Any other business

There was none.

14. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as being 8 December 2020.

Michelle Kuhler

PA to Chairman and CEO