
MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING
Held on Tuesday 9th February 2021 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
Jane Debois – Head of Standards and Regulation
Vikki Julian – Head of Communications
Michelle Kuhler – PA/minute taker
Tonia Milton – Head of Systems
Lauren Sloan – Head of Complaints

1. Welcome and Apologies

No apologies were received. The Chairman welcomed Jane Debois as IPSO's new Head of Standards and Regulation.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2020 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report – oral

The Chairman informed the Board that Alastair Machray, former editor of the Liverpool Echo, had been appointed to IPSO's Complaints Committee, from a highly competitive field. The Nominations Committee were confident that he would make a valuable member of the Complaints Committee.

6. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive updated the Board on current recruitment. IPSO would shortly be advertising for a Chair and member for the Appointment Panel. Recruitment for a new receptionist was under way.

The Chief Executive also notified the Board that a potential claimant for judicial review had been denied permission to proceed. The Chief Executive noted that the relevant complaints were still under investigation.

The annual statement process for 2020 annual statements was under way, and publishers would be asked to submit by 28 April 2021. As with the 2019 statement, IPSO recognised the pressure on publishers, particularly small publishers, and would work with them to ensure that they were able to fulfill their regulatory obligations.

The results of the quarterly staff survey continued to be positive.

The Chief Executive took comments and questions from the Board, which noted the report.

7. Complaints Report

The Head of Complaints highlighted that with the arrival of a new Complaints Officer in January, the team was fully staffed. The team's priorities had changed with more focus on the rejected complaints, whilst maintaining our training on investigated complaints, through weekly sessions and meetings.

The Board noted the report.

8. External Affairs Report

The Head of Communications noted that her report covered a particularly busy period for external meetings.

She discussed steps IPSO is taking to address the challenge of Covid reporting, which included publishing case studies of relevant complaints and highlighting relevant material on IPSO's website.

The Board discussed IPSO's involvement in work done by the Royal United Services Institute on reporting of terrorism and the status of potential guidelines to be produced on this issue. The Head of Communications confirmed that these would be presented alongside other external resources on the website.

The Head of Communications and Chief Executive responded to questions from Board members about external meetings noted in the report.

The Board noted the report.

9. Risk reporting at IPSO

The Chief Executive updated the Board on changes to the risk register.

The Board noted the reports.

10. Finance and Budget reports

The Chief Executive presented the finance reports to the Board.

The Chairman requested the Board's approval for a repayment of £50,000 on the concessionary loan held by the Regulatory Funding Company.

The Board members authorised the loan repayment.

The Chairman and Chief Executive took questions from the Board on the reports.

The Board noted the reports.

11. IPSO 2021 strategy

The Chief Executive noted that in circumstances of significant uncertainty, the Board had agreed a strategy in June 2020 that was intended to run to June 2021. She now proposed a refreshed strategy intended to run to the end of 2021, alongside a revised set of activities intended to support the strategy.

The Chief Executive took questions and input from the Board.

The Board approved the 2021 strategy.

12. 2020 Staff Survey

All IPSO staff, except for the Chief Executive, left the meeting for the item.

13. Any other business

There was no other business.

14. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as being 30 March 2021.

Michelle Kuhler

PA to Chairman and CEO