

THE PRESS STANDARDS BOARD OF FINANCE LIMITED

Strictly private and confidential

Minutes of meeting of Directors
held at Halton House, 20/23 Holborn,
London, on Monday, 15 December 2008
at 11am.

PRESENT: Tim Bowdler (Chairman), Guy Black, Nicholas Coleridge, Paul Dacre, Clive Milner, David Newell, Jim Raeburn and Jonathan Shephard.

IN ATTENDANCE: Tim Toulmin (PCC Director) for item 4.

1. **APOLOGIES :** Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Robin Burgess and Simon Fairclough.
2. **MINUTES:** The minutes of the Directors' meeting held on 30 October 2008, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and were approved.
3. **MATTERS ARISING:**
 - 3.01 **Review of PressBoF and PCC Articles of Association:** It was agreed that draft rule changes should be prepared and circulated for consideration at the next scheduled Board meeting.
 - 3.02 **Appointment of new PCC Chairman:** The Chairman confirmed that Baroness Buscombe would take up her appointment with effect from 1 April 2009.
 - 3.03 **Dinner for retiring Chairman:** It was agreed that the Secretary should organise a dinner in honour of Sir Christopher Meyer, most probably in late March.
 - 3.04 **PCC Director:**
 - 3.05 **Northern & Shell plc (Express Newspapers):** The Chairman reported that he would be meeting Richard Desmond on 20 January regarding the payment of registration fees to PressBoF.

It was recommended that at least until then the PCC should continue to deal with complaints against the company's publications.
 - 3.06 **PCC remit – online only publications:** It was noted that the views of the PPA on the proposals considered at the previous meeting were awaited. The matter would be further considered at the next meeting.

3.07 PCC 2009 Budget: The Secretary reported that following a constructive and helpful meeting with the Business Sub-Committee Tim Toulmin had confirmed savings of £50,000 leaving the budget for 2009 unchanged from the current year.

It was suggested that PressBoF should engage with the new Chairman to determine projected expenditure over a three year period.

4. CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO PRESS STANDARDS, PRIVACY AND LIBEL:

The Board, having discussed how PressBoF should respond to the Committee's new inquiry, agreed that an outline industry submission tabled by Guy Black should be developed and circulated for discussion in early January with the objective of obtaining the support of the trade associations and major publishers for the core content. Various items of information or input were agreed for inclusion on the draft submission:

1. A detailed timeline of events in the McCann case to be prepared with PCC input.
2. Explain how the McCann's might have benefited from using the services of the PCC.
3. Any lessons learned and acted on by the industry in light of the McCann case.
4. A positive statement on how PressBoF and the PCC have dealt with the Northern & Shell situation in the absence of the company paying registration fees.
5. PCC should endeavour to draw up a comparison of the number of cases going before the courts against those handled by the PCC.
6. Newspaper Society and individual companies to provide industry examples of the impact of conditional fee agreements.
7. Guy Black and David Newell with input from media lawyers to obtain examples of the chilling effect of libel law on press reporting.
8. Examples of internet problems in relation to the Contempt of Court Act 1982.
9. The difficult times faced by the industry should be underlined.

It was agreed that a sub-committee comprising Guy Black, David Newell and the Secretary with input from Paul Dacre as needed should finalise the detailed drafting of the submission. Copies of both PressBoF and PCC submissions should be sent to Baroness Buscombe and media lawyer witnesses for public hearings would be identified by Guy Black and David Newell.

5. **TREASURY COMMITTEE:** It was noted that as part of its inquiry seeking to identify lessons from the banking crisis the Committee had invited evidence on "the role of the media in financial stability and whether financial journalists should operate under any form of reporting restrictions during banking crises".

The Board having noted a statement by the Newspaper Society agreed that it was appropriate for the trade associations to respond rather than PressBoF or the PCC.

6. **CODE COMMITTEE:** The Board noted the minutes of the meeting of the Code Committee held on 6 November, copies of which had been previously circulated.

It was agreed to proceed with a printed version of the Editors' Codebook subject to costs being covered by committed demand.

7. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Board noted the Treasurer's Report as at 11 December (tabled).

8. **OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS:** It was agreed that the Chairman would canvass views on a question raised by Paul Dacre on whether PressBoF should retain Sir Christopher Meyer's services in some way.

9. **NEXT MEETING:** The Secretary would circulate possible dates.