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PRESS RECOGNITION PANEL

**Minutes of the 22nd meeting of the Press Recognition Panel Board
held on 23 August 2016 held at 9 – 10 Portland Place, London W1B 1PR**

Present: Dr David Wolfe QC (Chair), Harry Cayton, Emma Gilpin-Jacobs, Carolyn Regan, Harry Rich and Tim Suter

In attendance: Susie Uppal (Chief Executive), Holly Perry (Head of Governance), Paul Nezandonyi (Head of Communications and Stakeholder Management), Camilla Capotorto (Business and Research Officer), Patrick Reeve (Temporary Application Manager) (paragraphs 11 to 17), Caroline Roberts (Head of Regulatory Affairs), Simon Edward (Regulatory Affairs Manager), Megan Archer (JS2 Ltd) (to paragraph 30) and Adam Gibbs (JS2 Ltd) (to paragraph 30)

BOARD MEETING – CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

Paragraphs 1-10 redacted

BOARD MEETING – PUBLIC SESSION

Welcome

11. The Chair **welcomed** Members and attendees to the 22nd meeting of the Press Recognition Panel Board.
12. The Chair also **welcomed** the individuals who were in attendance, who had indicated that they were happy to be named as having been present:

From IMPRESS:

- Walter Merricks, Chair
- Jonathan Heawood, Chief Executive Officer
- Ed Proctor, Chief Operating Officer
- Rachel Knight, Consultant Head of Business Development
- Iain Christie, Board Member
- Máire Messenger Davies, Board Member
- Fiona Davis-Coleman, PR and Communications Consultant
- David Robinson, Board Member

- Deborah Arnott, Board Member
- Brigit Morris, Policy and Complaints Officer

Other attendees:

- Greg Callus, FT Editorial Complaints Commissioner
- James Connal, Capital PR
- Simon Carne, Business Consultant
- Freddy Mayhew, Press Gazette
- Gez Sagar, BBM Campaigns
- Nathan Sparkes, Hacked Off
- Dr Evan Harris, Hacked Off
- Professor Julian Petley, Brunel University London and NUJ
- Natalie Davis, Head of Press Policy, DCMS
- Natalie Fairchild, Student, De Montfort University
- Mandy Cormack, member of the public
- Peter Wright, Associated Newspapers
- Ed Taylor, Head of Corporate Affairs, Telegraph Media Group
- Owen Meredith, Head of Public Affairs, PPA
- Matt Rogerson, Head of Public Policy, GNM
- Sashy Nathan, 89up
- Pdraig Reidy, 89up
- Chris Clark, Make Public
- Chris Elliott, ethical journalism network / consultant to IMPRESS
- Paul Sinker, NMA
- Dominic Harris, Press Association
- Anthony Longden, freelance journalist and media consultant
- Grace Ogden, Hacked Off
- Bella Ritche, Hacked Off
- Marilys Flajoliet, Hacked Off
- Max Templer, Britain Thinks
- Anthony Smith, Member of the Public (Hacked Off member)
- David Alden, Member of the Public (Hacked Off member)
- Tom Kelly, Daily Mail

13. The Chair **proposed** to take the agenda items for the public session out of order, starting with the IMPRESS application for recognition.

IMPRESS application for recognition – Paper PRP42(16)

14. The Chair thanked everyone who was in attendance for showing such an interest in the PRP's work, and reminded attendees that this was a meeting of the Board that was open to the public, not a public meeting. There

would, as was standard for PRP Board meetings, be an opportunity for questions at the end of the meeting.

15. The Chair proceeded to make an announcement, which was subsequently published on the PRP's website:

In the confidential session of our meeting this morning the Board had its first opportunity to discuss as a Board what further action, if any, it should take in the light of correspondence received in the last few days, in particular from organisations including the News Media Association, Associated Newspapers, 89up, the Professional Publishers Association, and the Scottish Newspaper Society.

Those organisations made points about the processes we have followed to IMPRESS' application.

Before turning to how we propose to act on those points, I would remind people that we operate and are governed by the Royal Charter. It leaves it to the Board to decide on how to discharge its function. The Board decided at the outset it would operate as openly and transparently as possible. With that in mind, in 2015 when developing guidance on our policy and procedures for processing applications we consulted generally on our proposals, and also on our proposals for additional indicators to provide additional guidance on the recognition criteria.

This year, when developing our procedures for cyclical and ad hoc reviews we consulted generally on our proposals. We have also undertaken a call for information (not seeking general comment or views but seeking information which might not otherwise be available to us) on the IMPRESS application for recognition; which we repeated when they materially amended their application.

Most recently, we have been consulting widely as part of the preparation for the report which we will later in the year lay before Parliament and the Scottish Parliament, as required by the Charter.

It has not however been our practice to undertake such specific additional consultations or seek additional public input when we consider how to interpret elements of the Charter, as we must do.

In particular, on an almost daily basis the PRP reaches a view on the legal meaning and requirement of one or other aspect of the Charter - it is after all our governing document. We then act on the view we reach, sometimes, but not always, specifically also setting out in public our view on the point in

question. That is entirely different from the situation where we are considering and developing Board policy/procedures, on which we have, as above, undertaken specific consultations or when processing a specific recognition application in relation to the factual contents of which we have issued a call for information.

However, the organisations I mention have raised a concern that the indicative view on the interpretation of aspects of the Charter which we expressed earlier in the summer after our second call for information might have prompted them or others to provide us with additional information about the IMPRESS application had it been known at the time of our second call for information.

Mindful of that, and keen to ensure that everybody has the fullest opportunity to respond so that we have the fullest possible basis to take a robust and independent decision on IMPRESS' application, the Board has today decided to defer its consideration of the IMPRESS application to allow a further 20 working day call for information. The call for information seeks additional information relating to IMPRESS' application as it now stands in the light of the indicative view on the interpretation of Charter criteria which we have previously provided.

We expect to open that process in the next few days. And the Board will consider responses at a further Board meeting at the earliest opportunity. We obviously regret any inconvenience today's decision will cause either to people here today or to others keen that we should make a swift decision on the application.

Our priority as a Board is to make a robust decision as required of us by the Royal Charter and we are proceeding accordingly. We will make that decision on the basis of full information and consideration of all issues as we reasonably can.

16. The Chair invited the members of the public who were in attendance to make any observations and to raise any questions.

Mandy Cormack, member of the public – commended the PRP on its openness and transparency in all its dealings and in spite of having travelled from the west country that morning, was supportive of the stance the PRP was taking

Peter Wright, Associated Newspapers – asked three separate questions:

- (a) why the PRP had decided to hold the meeting in August;
- (b) why it had given only two weeks' notice; and

- (c) why it considered more time was needed to make the decision on IMPRESS' application

The Chair responded that the decision to consider the application in August flowed directly from the published process timelines, and the Board's imperative to consider the application at the very earliest opportunity. The Board's meeting dates were published very far in advance on the PRP website. In relation to why more time was needed, the Board had had the opportunity in its confidential session earlier in the morning to consider, for the first time, the letters received from stakeholders – including Associated Newspapers. There was nothing more to say other than what had been explained in the statement.

17. The ordinary business of the Board subsequently resumed, with the following members of the public remaining in attendance:

- James Connal, Capital PR
- Nathan Sparkes, Hacked Off
- Paul Sinker, NMA
- Anthony Longden, freelance journalist and media consultant
- Marilys Flajoliet, Hacked Off
- Lidija Katic, member of the public

Declarations of interest

18. The Head of Governance reported that Emma Gilpin-Jacobs was no longer a trustee of Maidenhead Synagogue and that the register of interests on the PRP's website had been updated accordingly.

Minutes of the meetings held on 28 June 2016 and 8 May 2016, outstanding actions and matters arising

19. The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2016 were **approved**. The Chair would sign a copy of the minutes as a correct record.
20. The log of outstanding Board actions was **noted** and **agreed**.
21. The Board **noted** that there were no other matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Chief Executive's Report – August 2016 – Paper PRP40(16)

22. The Board received a paper which provided an update on executive activity

since the last Board meeting on 28 June 2016.

23. The following points were raised in discussion:
- the Chief Executive **reported** that in relation to staffing, Saima Ansari would be taking up the post of Executive Office Manager on 12 September, replacing Holly Perry who was due to leave the PRP on 21 September;
 - that other than the correspondence listed under paragraph 10 of the report, a number of other letters had been received, including from the News Media Association, Associated Newspapers, 89up, the Professional Publishers Association, and the Scottish Newspaper Society as referenced in the Chair's statement. Copies of all the correspondence and replies had been placed on the PRP's website;
 - the Chief Executive **reported** that she and the team had met Comis Technology Ltd, the PRP's outsourced IT providers, to consider the issues in relation to Egnyte. Comis were now investigating the issues and a further meeting was planned in early September to consider solutions to the problems that had been encountered.
24. The Board **noted** the contents of the Chief Executive's report.

Finance Report August 2016 – Paper PRP41(16)

25. The Board received a paper which provided an update on the financial position as at 31 July 2016. The Board **welcomed** Adam Gibbs of JS2 Ltd to the meeting.
26. The following points were raised in discussion:
- the Board **noted** the deficit for the period ended 31 July 2016, which was £239,312 against the forecast of £285,954 which had created a variance of £45,842;
 - the Board **noted** an explanation of why key variances had arisen, including from underspend in relation to the website and visuals and the accounting treatment of the rent free period, as detailed against the relevant budget lines;
 - the Board **noted** that an element of the contingency budget of £30,000 had now been utilised (£5,040, on legal fees).
27. The Board **noted** the latest financial position as at 31 July 2016.

Closing discussion

28. The Chair invited the members of the public who were in attendance to

make any observations and to raise any questions.

29. No further questions were raised.

Any other business

30. The Board formally **noted** the Finance Report for July 2016 which had been circulated by correspondence (Paper PRP37 (16) referred). There was no further business

BOARD MEETING – CONFIDENTIAL SESSION - RESUMED

Paragraphs 31-34 redacted

Meeting close

35. There was no further business.

Date and time of next meeting

36. The next scheduled meeting of the Board would take place on Tuesday 20 September 2016 at Mappin House, 4 Winsley Street, London W1W 8HF.

¹ The Audit and Risk Committee meeting was subsequently rescheduled to 24 October 2016, 16:00 to 17:30.