

MINUTES OF AGM FOR 2022



How it all Began

Guglielmo Marconi

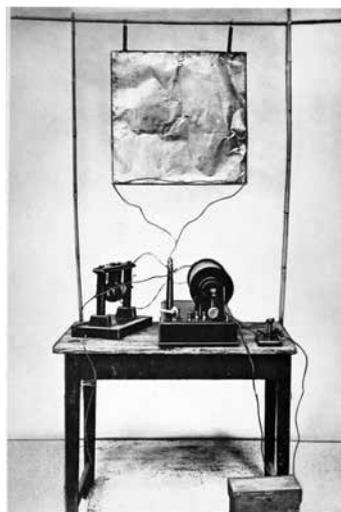
In 1894, the young Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi began working on the idea of building long distance wireless transmission systems

With these improvements the system was capable of transmitting signals up to 2 miles (3.2 km) and over hills. Marconi's experimental apparatus proved to be the first engineering-complete, commercially successful radio transmission system.

Marconi's apparatus is also credited with saving the 700 people who survived the tragic Titanic disaster:

In 1898, Marconi opened his "wireless" factory in the former silk-works at Hall Street, Chelmsford, England, employing around 60 people..

Marconi would go on to win the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1909.



Marconi's first transmitter incorporated a monopole antenna. It consisted of an elevated copper sheet (top) connected to a Righi spark gap (left), invented by Augusto Righi in the 1890s, powered by an induction coil (center) with a telegraph key (right) to switch it on and off to spell out text messages in Morse code.

CREDITS

Report compiled by Carol Owens
Produced by Christina Hamilton
Designed by Albert Barber

PICTURES

Cover: OB Coms vehicle 60's
Back Cover: Marconi's first transmitter
All other Photos by Jonathan Smith

Minutes of the AGM 2022



1. Opening of the meeting and Chairman's welcome

Chairman Albert Barber welcomed all attendees to the meeting, both those in the venue at Friends Meeting House and those online. Last year's AGM had worked well in this hybrid format, with members from across the country able to join online. He welcomed Darren Smart, Communications and Engagement Manager Cardiff. One of his responsibilities is Prospero. Thirty-five members plus the Committee attended in person, with 227 watching the live stream.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 5th October 2021

The Chairman said that it was only 6 months since the last AGM at which James Duberly had spoken about the BBC Pension Trust Ltd. fund management. This time Catherine Claydon gave a brief view of the Scheme. Robert Seatter, Head of BBC History, also spoke about the BBC Centenary. In addition, Albert had obtained signed copies of Professor David Hendy's book, "The BBC: A People's History", which were on sale for £25 each.

3. Chairman's Annual Report 28th April 2022

The continuing success of Zoom Committee meetings, which also save on travel costs, meant that the team were continuing with them and is now planning fewer meetings in Broadcasting House. The Committee is focussed on supporting pensioners, saving them money, and celebrating our joint legacy and heritage. The Association also brings ideas and people together. There are links to the BEHP via Sue Malden, BECTU, Tech Ops reminiscences via member Bernie Newnham, and representatives of the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners, Silverline, Age UK, and other pensioner groups. The phone line and voice-mail, which Sue Malden monitors provides support, sympathy in bereavement, and other queries about pensions. Christina Hamilton edits the monthly Newsletter and website. Leslie Huss-Smickler the Pensioner-Elected Trustee is also on the Committee. Thanks to the recent replies to our letter to members the database is fairly accurate in posting mailings and the Monthly e-mail newsletters.

*VLV works to promote high quality broadcasting which maintains the democratic and cultural traditions of the UK. The VLV supports the independence, integrity and secure funding of the BBC and the work of broadcasters and programme makers who demonstrate commitment to the principles of public service broadcasting.

<https://www.vlv.org.uk>

We produce the AGM Annual Report which is online and posted to members as is the Christmas Newsletter, which from feedback is much appreciated. Carol Owens is a link with the Royal Television Society, and, incidentally, takes records of our Committee meetings. The Association is not political but keeps in touch with changes in the Media. The Chairman is a member and attends the Voice of the Listener and Viewer (VLV)* meetings, which are more political. The Voice of the Listener and Viewer recently featured a presentation by DG Tim Davie. Speakers have included David Attenborough, MPs and other notables in the media and Politics. The Association is unique in that it brings different elements together in connections from Pension matters to Personal Welfare, the Media and Pensions. The Association also has a good relationship with the BBC Pensions Trust with its CEO John Cullen and its Chair, Catherine Claydon. We also have good relations with the BBC Pensions & Benefits Centre in Cardiff who administer payments in conjunction with the Trust, The BBC Visitor Scheme and the BBC itself. This means our relationship with them is helpful and constructive to members. It has been a help to members when otherwise they may not know who to talk to when the excellent Phone service in Cardiff is not appropriate. The Committee hopes to plan an Event later in the year celebrating the camaraderie of the BBC. It will be at a London venue. The Committee has considered re-starting Regional meetings although they had had poor attendance except when linked with other groups such as reunion lunches. One in Glasgow earlier had worked well. We know that BBC's legacy extends to the English language, for example Goon Show words such as "needlenaddlenoo!" David Attenborough and the NHU's impact on the environment; Morecambe and Wise on entertainment. Radio audience numbers are currently high, with BBC News respected throughout the world. To remember the past and look to the future the Association has a wider mission to build more connections, including our 100 Voices. The Chairman thanked the Committee for their ideas and commitment in Zoom meetings once a month over the past two years, with an Action Tracker and the Minutes, by Committee member Carol Owens, which help to keep the team on course. The Committee is not a full-time job, but it's busy.

4. Treasurer's report

Treasurer Alan Bilyard was unable to attend the meeting as he was not well, but the Chairman wished him well and read out a letter from him:

"My apologies for my absence today due to incapacity but I hope the meeting goes well and that everyone will enjoy being together again. I will join other members watching the meeting on-line.

"We would like to thank all members for their continued support and payment of subscriptions especially during the last difficult couple of years. The accounts have now been audited, distributed and printed in the AGM booklet (page 4) which has been sent to every member.

The figures are similar to the last couple of years and I am pleased to say that they are in a healthy state." - Alan Bilyard

In summary:

Income for the year ended 2021 was	£26,254
Expenditure for 2021 was	£21,005
Leaving a surplus for the year of	£ 5,249
Bank Balances at close of 2021 were:	

Current account	£23,181
Provision	£44,785
Total at bank	£67,966

Travel and accommodation costs were low, but printing was up. Alan saw no need for a rise in subscriptions as the account had a healthy balance overall. The last mailing had included a useful form regarding membership payments which has been successful. Chairman Albert asked for members to propose adoption of his report and the Treasurer's report.

Adoption of Items 3 and 4:

Proposed by: Bill Douglas

Seconded by: Jean Nunn

Approval: Unanimous



Leslie Huss-Smickler and John Cullen C.E.O. BBC Pension Trust Ltd.

5. Matters arising and Questions:

A member asked whether the Committee knew about the events at Riverside Studios, with photo displays and a series of lectures? Albert said he did know, and incidentally the Committee is negotiating to hold an Event there. He had been asked about the "On Air Sign" as Riverside were unclear what it looked like at Riverside Studios when the BBC were there. A member went to see the unveiling of the plaque, commenting that Riverside has interest in its heritage of the BBC. There have been lectures on Verity Lambert, Dr Who etc. Albert said he was in contact with Matt Irvine about Dr Who. David Allen said there used to be a plaque one foot above ground saying "No performing animals or children beyond this point". There was a question about the auditor for the Association Accounts, and this was later clarified as having been Lawrence Symonds, to be noted in these minutes. The final question was about membership numbers, which are just over 2000, with 1500 able to access Mailchimp and the other 500 not on email. Albert said it was great to see so many people at today's meeting, and online.

6. BBCPA Members Offers.

Leslie Huss-Smickler gave a detailed presentation on the Offers available to members. He opened by saying that one discount can actually cover the entire cost of membership, and it is always worth checking the website for current rates and codes.

Discounts and offers mentioned as available to members:

For a full list of current offers visit the Members area of the website: www.bbcpa.org.uk

- CCIS** Car insurance, contents and building insurance, and travel insurance, but different from the BBC 50 Plus Travel insurance offer. There is a dedicated phone line to provide quotes, with no set-up fee or charge for mid year changes. CCIS is a non-profit organisation with income donated to charities.
- CSSC** Part funded by the Cabinet Office, for a monthly subscription of £4.05 members can benefit from a wide variety of benefits, including free and unlimited access for two adults and up to 6 children to all English Heritage, Welsh Cadw and National Trust for Scotland sites, Kew Gardens for the member and up to 3 children, with the 2nd adult paying half price, discounts at selected high street shops and supermarkets (including online), a free Taste Card and much more.
- CostCo** A favourite feature, as a members-only warehouse like a large department store but at wholesale prices. BBCPA Members are Eligible for Costco membership - a membership only warehouse offering a wide range of products at wholesale prices.
- Cotswold Outdoor** 10% discount on full priced items.
- Hospital and Medical Care Association** Private Medical Insurance at group rates of premium. Plus 5% off the first year's premium.
- Fred Olson** 10% off the first cruise and 5% of subsequent cruises. These discounts are in addition to any other discounts offered by Fred.Olsen Cruises.
- Mirthy** Over 100 live online events each month and more than 250 recorded online events - suitable for the over 65s. Basic membership costs £2.99 per event; Unlimited membership costs £4.99 per month and gives unlimited access to all events. Some events are free to non-members. There is a free three months unlimited membership trial offer.
- Hotpoint Privilege** A members only purchase club where members can purchase Hotpoint, Indesit and Whirlpool appliances at substantial discounts, with free delivery
- Radio Times** A six month subscription to Radio Times for £49 (£1.88 per issue). Renewal subscriptions at the same price, provided accessed through dedicated phone line.*
- Roberts Radio** 10% discount off full priced items.
- Ruark Radio** 10% discount off full priced items.
- Rohan** 10% discount off full priced outdoor clothing and equipment.
- Simply Health** A Health Cash Plan giving cashback on dental, optical, physiotherapist, chiropody and other health related services. It includes unlimited 24/7 online video GP appointments and 24/7 counselling and advice service.
- Travel Insurance** This is an annual Travel Insurance for members over age 50. There is no declaration of medical condition required but members must be "fit to travel". Once a scheme member there is no upper age limit, provided cover is not lapsed.

The Chairman thanked Leslie and said members get great value from the discounts. Leslie said if anyone knew of other organisations where we might get discounts for our members to get in touch with him. <https://bbcpa.org.uk/contact>

7. Comments and Questions:

There was a question from a member who had been phoned the day before and told to set up direct debit. Leslie advised checking the website for the number, and if more than £49 is taken to let us know. Another member said he gets charged annually for Radio Times and does pay by direct debit. Leslie cautioned that they might be paying more, and to check carefully. Someone else said you could get Radio Times free if you joined and were able to pick a copy each week from the BBC Club West 1 Club.

8. 100 Voices Project and 9. 100 Objects

David Allen explained that anyone can contribute to 100 Voices, and members should look at the website page which has featured recordings @ <https://100voices.bbcpa.org.uk/> We are half way through the 100. The search facility enabled by YouTube's automatic subtitle transcription is very powerful, opening up the Collection. David played a selection of clips, the first from Sheila Innes who talked about the World Service and Polish staff cutting their ties off and setting scripts on fire. There was a clip from Neville Withers in Film Traffic, about meeting Richard Dimbleby and Paul Fox in a narrow Lime Grove corridor. Finally, the unmistakable voice of David Attenborough talked about his initial application rejection, then first training lecture with chalk circles on a blackboard and no access to studios. David Allen asked for anyone who was interested in contributing to get in touch, regardless of location: interviews have been recorded as far away as Shetland. Some are surprising, like the woman who painted scenery and did court portraits. Let us know via the website or in the meeting.

9. Motions and questions

There were no new motions or further questions from members at this point. Albert Barber said he hoped that the meeting attendees had got the picture of a Committee that was moving on, using members' suggestions to help make us even better, and create an image to be proud of.

10. Election of Committee 2022-23 *

The Committee Stands Down
The Committee's proposed re-election was put to the membership.
Proposed by: Robin Hall Seconded by: Ian Todd
Approved: Unanimous

The Constitution requires that members of the Committee stand down and may offer themselves for re-election.

11. Questions:

There was a question about a member Don Smith*, and whether anyone had heard from him as the member was concerned for his welfare. Bernie Newnham said that as far as he knew, Don was OK but had no recent information. There was a further question about Maurice Maguire, and Albert reported that he was taking Royal College of Organist's exams but might return to the Committee at some point. This marked the end of the formal AGM business.

END OF AGM BUSINESS

BREAK FOR TEA AND BISCUITS

**Subsequently we learned that Don Smith has recently died. A brief notice about Don's recent death has been issued by Radio Times: <https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/radio-times-photographer-don-smith-dies-tribute/> Don was a well respected photographer for Radio Times.*

12. Address: Your BBC Pension by Catherine Claydon, Chair of BBC Pension Trust Ltd.



Catherine Claydon Chair of the BBC Pension Trust Ltd.

Chairman Albert Barber introduced Catherine Claydon and explained that she had to leave early so would not have time for questions. Any queries could be submitted on paper for later follow-up.

Catherine explained that she was the Chair of the Fund; heard a lot about the Pensioners Association from Leslie Huss-Smickler; and liked our activities. The Trust is not doing Pensioner Liaison meetings currently but this meeting was inspiring and a lot could be learned from it. She explained her background in finance and pensions, and that she is now an Independent Pensioner Trustee having previously served with BT, Unilever, British Steel and Barclays amongst others. The BBC Pension Trust is a company, and the Trustees are Directors. There are 4 member-nominated trustees, 4 company-nominated trustees and 3 independents of which she is one.

The goal of the Trust is to ensure all beneficiaries receive the benefits they are entitled to under the Scheme. It monitors the balance, provision for future costs, holds assets on trust and ensures proper administration of the scheme. She has been struck by the positive feedback received, and sees that the team does a superb job. There is a Formal Valuation (like a financial health check) every three years, but it goes on all the time too, looking at the funding, investment, and covenant. They use a prudent forecast, with diverse investment and an appropriate level of risk. The aim is to achieve full funding with limited reliance on the sponsor while decreasing the volatility of the funding level. The covenant means that if assets under-perform, they may have to ask the sponsoring employer to bridge the gap, but can they afford it?

The financial health looks at the funding to reduce the deficit, which is also reviewed every three years and is steadily improving, but a new negotiation is coming up. The last valuation targeted being fully funded by December 2028.

There is an outstanding investment team under James Duberly. An annual look at comparable funds shows the BBC at the higher end of returns. Some lower performing funds may have less investment challenges. The BBC team has reduced risk to steadily match to liabilities, investing in infrastructure, like giant greenhouse investments. The covenant also monitors key developments eg: the Licence Fee. For responsible investments, The fund has a policy giving environmental, social and corporate guidance. There is a focus on climate, aiming at Net Zero by 2050.

There will be winners and losers in the new world economy. The Trust will publish more this year. A new Pensions Regulator Code (PRC) is being brought in, setting out what good looks like, with proposed targets and standards. The BBC is largely there, with its highest score of 94%. Looking forward, there will be the triennial valuation, funding plans, and a longevity risk review. Investment will be responsible, addressing climate change, with the long-term strategy being reviewed after the valuation. The governance and regulation will be looked at considering the new PRC requirements. Catherine concluded by saying that she would love to attend another meeting as an audience member, and to get to know some pensioners.

Albert thanked Catherine and said she had to leave for another meeting.

II. Questions and Notes

After Catherine's departure Bernie Newnham asked that, given that Ms Claydon had said that investment is doing well, what are they buying? He was advised to look at the BBC Pensions website @ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mypension/about-the-scheme/top-20-investments/> See below:

Top equity Investments at 31 March 2021

Investment Holding £m

Does not include any assets held in pooled funds.

1	Taiwan Semiconductor Ltd	49.9	11	FaceBook Inc	46.2
2	Samsung Electronics Co Ltd	42.4	12	Micron Technology Inc	27.2
3	Tencent Holdings Ltd	41.3	13	Daimler AG	27.2
4	Amazon.com inc	39.7	14	ASML Holding NV	26.9
5	Meituan Dianping	38.2	15	Kering	26.4
6	Alibaba Group Holding Ltd	43.3	16	Unitedhealth Group Inc	26.1
7	Tesla Motors Inc	35.7	17	Microsoft Corporation	26.1
8	Alphabet Inc	48.9	18	Netflix Inc	24.9
9	Pinduoduo Inc	33.0	19	Nvidia Corporation	21.7
10	Illumina Inc	30.7	20	Apple Inc	21.5

Another member stated that the 2050 target for Net Zero was too slow, and he wanted to formally record his disappointment. Another person asked if there is any requirement to invest in UK government bonds, to which Leslie replied no there isn't.

13. Keynote address by Robert Seatter, Head of History, BBC



Robert Seatter (right) talking to Khalid Iqbal (Left) (Committee Member)

The final session was a presentation by Robert Seatter, Head of History at the BBC, who spoke about the Centenary as 100 years of our BBC, and thanked the audience for helping to build it. He had recently been to Bologna to collect the Marconi Award for the BBC, looking back to the turn of the last century and Guglielmo Marconi's experimentation. By the early 1920's Marconi convinced the British government to launch radio in a naval context, saying in 1929 "I must leave to your imaginations the use which may be made of these new powers. They will probably be as wonderful as anything of which we have experience today".

2022 will be a year of celebration, public engagement, dedicated programming, looking forward with learning at its heart, with history and interpretation, and academic partnership. 1953 was the Coronation of Elizabeth the Second, an event of post-war glamour watched by 22 million people. This year there are landmark events as well as the Jubilee; such as Music with Glastonbury and the Proms; Sport with the Commonwealth Games. David Dimbleby will present "A Very British History"; Connie Huq will present "Here's one I made earlier". Past Rewind will dip into the radio archive. There will be dancing, sport, and Dr. Who will be used as a metaphor for BBC re-invention.

Learning will be at its heart, opening the archive for education. There is a project called "Share your Stories" in secondary schools, creating the next generation of story-tellers. The first round was in February; the next will be in September. Robert showed a video of presentations in schools. The idea is to help build relationships and impact positively on lives. There is a project with the Science and Media Museum at Bradford called "Switched on"; there are 1000 digitised Objects; showcases and trails in London and Manchester. The BBC100 website offers History and Interpretation, with a dynamic time-line, 100 Objects, 100 Faces and 100 Voices. They are looking for more audience memories.

100 Objects includes technology, props, costumes and buildings. The Dalek was inspired by a pepperpot. They represent key events and diverse stories, such as Madhur Jaffrey's Indian Cookery Book, and David Bowie's audition panel report saying that he lacked character. David Attenborough's rejected first application was also shown. For Children's TV, "Bill and Ben" and "Blue Peter" feature, and the "Strictly" glitter ball is for everyone.

100 Faces draws from 7 million photos in the BBC collection, and the theme is how broadcasting creates celebrity.

100 Voices includes Frank Gillard's long interviews from the 1950's. Robert asked Professor Hendy what to do with them and he advised putting them in the context of social history and BBC impact. It is a rich interpretation. The BBC version of 100 Voices focusses on leadership, while the Pensioners' Association version largely looks at the workers. Chairman Albert said that it was important to hang on to memories. In another video, David Hendy said that oral history gets straight to personalities, including for example a Malcolm Muggeridge interview with Lord Reith, and an interview with Grace Wyndham Goldie where viewers can note the voices, tone, and how the speakers tell stories. Professor Hendy has a network of academics looking at various social themes. His book took 8 years to write. Robert has written another book, "100 BBC Moments"; there is a quiz book, and another book for children. The academic link is with the University of Sussex, and there will be a "Being Human" festival in November this year. The final celebratory offer is a 50 pence coin from the Royal Mint, in gold, silver or bronze.

Robert said that the anniversary can be used to remind the public what the BBC is about, and the video trailer "This is Our BBC" had been developed to give the message. Albert affirmed that it included BBC moments known by the audience, and Robert said that the Association audience had been shaped by the BBC. Other audiences such as Bournemouth University had not heard of Ronnie Corbett, for example. It is important to start with contemporary images. The BBC is more esteemed abroad than at home, through the World Service, and people like Cathy Flower.

There was an audience question about how to influence the Secretary of State, which was deferred for this meeting. Someone else commented that science had been missed out, but Robert explained that there was a whole oral history project on science. A member thanked him for mentioning Cathy Flower and Robert said that he had worked with her. There were no more questions.

Chairman Albert said that Robert is key to opening up the BBC to the public, and that we will have a very different BBC in 30 years' time. It is something precious, and we must not lose it. He thanked Robert for his presentation, and closed the meeting.

END OF MEETING

