

Telegraph suitor Marshall to quit board of GB News owner

Sir Paul Marshall, the hedge fund tycoon, is preparing to step down from the board of GB News' parent company as he eyes a renewed bid to acquire The Daily Telegraph.

Sky News has learned that Sir Paul, the co-founder of Marshall Wace and largest shareholder in the television news channel, is expected to hand over his board seat at All Perspectives to Lord Agnew, chair of the UnHerd Ventures vehicle he bankrolls.

A source close to Sir Paul insisted on Thursday that no decision had been taken and that it remained possible that he would ultimately remain on the All Perspectives board.

If confirmed, the timing of Sir Paul's exit from the board of GB News' owner would be significant, coming at around the point that a second auction of two of Britain's most influential newspaper titles is launched.

He was among the bidders for the Telegraph last autumn, and had hired investment bankers to advise him, when Abu Dhabi-backed RedBird IMI effectively hijacked the auction by repaying more than £1bn of debt owed to Lloyds Banking Group by the Barclay family – the long-standing proprietors of the Telegraph and Spectator.

RedBird IMI's acquisition of the media assets has been stymied by the government's decision to amend legislation that would block ownership of UK newspapers by investors connected to foreign states.

It is now engaging bankers from Raine and Robey Warshaw to conduct a further auction.

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Sir Paul is likely to be among the bidders when a new process gets underway, with Lord Rothermere, the Daily Mail owner, also expected to bid.

The potential board changes at All Perspectives come as GB News prepares to make an unspecified number of job cuts as part of a corporate reorganisation.

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Employees were informed about a round of prospective redundancies at a meeting on Tuesday, according to insiders.

GB News remains heavily loss-making, although it has been gaining momentum with its audience figures in recent months, boosted in particular by the former UKIP leader Nigel Farage's role as a presenter on the channel.

Accounts filed at Companies House last month disclosed that it made a pre-tax loss of £42.4m in its latest financial year, up from £30.8m the year before.

Sir Paul has pumped tens of millions of pounds into the company since GB News' launch in 2021.

The channel competes with Sky News, the BBC and other broadcast and digital news providers.

It has been at loggerheads for months with Ofcom, the media regulator, over its use of prominent politicians as presenters.

Ofcom concluded last month that GB News had breached impartiality rules, but that it would not impose sanctions.

In December, Sky News revealed that All Perspectives was in talks to raise roughly £30m in new funding from investors.

It was unclear whether the new capital would be structured as conventional equity or as a convertible loan.

At the time, Angelos Frangopoulos, GB News' chief executive, said: "GB News is in an accelerated growth phase, beating targets across its platforms.

"We are always evaluating strategic and investment opportunities."

GB News's other shareholders include Legatum Ventures, while former prime minister Boris Johnson recently joined GB News'

on-screen line-up.

In 2022, one of the channel's original shareholders, the US media giant Discovery, sold its 25% stake for £8m.

It had acquired the shareholding in 2020, prior to GB News' launch, for £20m, implying a 60% reduction in the company's value at the time.

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Spokespeople for GB News and Sir Paul declined to comment on Thursday.