

27th March, 2, 1994.

Department of Culture, Media & Sport,
2-4, Cockspur Lane,
London.

BBC Charter Renewal public consultation.

Dear Sirs,

The BBC's unique contribution to society is in its radio services, which are of better quality than its television services, which are in general not as good as they once were.

I am interested in the funding of the BBC and the problems caused by the TV licensing system. These problems are particularly acute in the case of those who do not possess television sets.

Today large numbers of television channels can be received from various sources,

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only a handful of them from the BBC but we still have to pay the BBC through the licence fee, which increases year by year. Many people do not watch any BBC programmes at all but still have to pay this fee. It is also possible for people without a television set to listen to all the BBC radio programmes and

pay nothing at all towards their production

The body TV LicensingTM exists to collect outstanding licence fees. This is a profit-driven commercial organization with the power of the law behind it and is known to target non-payers among the poorer members of society. It also harasses non-viewers and appears to disbelieve any assertion that a particular household does not own a television set.

The BBC's source of funding should be changed. Public service broadcasting should be supported by taxation, when everyone would pay. This would bring it into line with other publicly-available resources.

There are now other devices for watching

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television, e.g. mobile phones and computers, making the licence fee increasingly unenforceable. Also, without the licence fee, there would be no more need for TV LicensingTM and a great deal of money would be saved by not having to use this agency.

In the Charter Review consultation document, it is stated that services should be "free" and "freely available" to the public. As things are, they are not, because of the licence fee, and no other TV services are "free", either. With funding through taxation, the "free" aspect would be obtained.

I think the BBC Charter should not be renewed in the form it now exists. Far more thought should also be given as much to the quality of what the BBC supplies as to its funding.

The BBC is too complacent about its place in people's affections. It needs to change to regain some of the respect it has latterly lost.

Yours faithfully
Margaret Bennett.