

My responses to your 'Key Questions' are:-

23/3/04

1. What I value most about the BBC is its freedom from having to attract advertisers. Frankly, I avoid watching commercial TV if possible; the interruptions for adverts are so annoying - I always get the feeling that the programmes are a vehicle for the adverts and not steam for their own merit. I value the BBC's impartiality (recognised throughout the world), and its wide spread of music and serious topics, especially on radio.
2. It must keep abreast of technology but not go too far (or fast) ahead of the public.
3. The services are generally fine, to satisfy all tastes - although a certain coarseness and dumbing down has been noticeable of late. (I watched the Catherine Tate Show the other night - and had to endure a grandmother f...king ad bludging - and this at 9.45 pm, the so-called 'threshold' hour!)

4. The BBC should continue its commercial operations but as a relative sideline only, so that profit-making is not the overriding consideration.
5. The licence fee system is the best method I can suggest. (It's really very cheap for what we get).
6. I really am not able to comment on this.
7. I suppose, following Hutton, the Governors' role should be split into internal supervision and safeguarding the public interest.
8. Parliament should appoint an "arms-length" body to oversee "safeguarding the public interest" (cf. 7 above). This body should consult the public periodically (say every 2 years) on how the BBC is doing (like the present consultation).

(Signed) J. Colner

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