

12/3/04

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Views on the BBC

I could have used the internet but find plain old-fashioned writing a far easier prospect.

Yes, I have views regarding the BBC and would firstly like to say that my husband and I were not in favour of Greg Dyke going, in spite of the Hutton Report. The government keeps telling us it is a free country, a democracy, so in my view, the BBC should continue to use sources and information the public has a right to know about.

Regarding what I value about the BBC is its stance towards the government of the day, quality of programmes, variety, educational and debating programmes and its free from commercial advertising. The BBC serves the country locally and nationally very well and I would not swap it for Sky or any other highly commercialised station. As mentioned in the booklet, the BBC covers sports, the arts, educational, drama and entertainment very well.

My criticisms in these areas are wasting money on programmes such as Fame Academy or Pop Idol and I am not in favour of 2 or 3 presenters where one will do or the sharp increase of constant trailers which is a form of advertising. Other programmes I find wasteful of our money is sending the Gardening team and the DIY SOS team abroad when the BBC will not pay for the new series of SH and people like myself have to miss out because we do not have Sky, do not even want Sky and cannot afford it anyway.

Not listening to the radio due to not having the ideal reception in my kitchen I cannot comment on that side but suffice to say that Radio One became a 'switched off' along time ago with its stance on concentrating on what is in the charts only and not airing brand new talent. The World Service, Radio 2 and 4 are excellent but I do not know anything about Radio 5.

The BBC does respond well to internet usage by publishing websites to visit after the programmes and offer e-mail services, etc for the public to air their views.

Savings could be made from radio programmes, if the BBC studied figures to consider which stations are viable or not to run, taking into account that minority audiences have to be catered for too.

Going digital is the first big step but do not forget, us the receivers, do not have all the latest technology either. I do not even have Channel 5 and the area where I live is going to be the last for laying fibre optic cables. I have to put up with 'ghosting' during the summer when we have high pressure and often the loss of BBC1 altogether. Nothing can be done to improve our reception until the changes are made here ready for 2010 which is appalling in this time of technological advancement. During the summer months, I am not at all happy to

pay a license fee for programmes totally unwatchable on the signal just gives leaving a barely readable logo in the corner of the screen.

The news could be better and improved to Channel 4 standards and as for communities, etc with the multi channels creeping in, programmes aimed at say Muslims, Afro-Caribbeans or Indo-Asians could be put on one of those leaving the current channels as they are, providing mixed races are involved in debates, dramas and soaps or documentaries.

The BBC should continue to run its commercial arm and possibly extend it in the area mentioned in the leaflet. The revenue is important from this and should be wisely spent.

Personally, I find the license fee a struggle and strongly favour paying it monthly but should have options outside Direct Debit. It is a struggle for me to pay because of being in and out of work and currently the sole employee but on poverty wages, so the fee has to be looked at. Perhaps a monthly subscription would be better, but not all license fee payers have a bank account or access to a bank or Post office. The moral implications have to be looked into more to ascertain how people would pay.

Although this was a government decision, I am not in favour of everyone over the age of 75 getting a free tv license in spite of their financial circumstances. This should be a reduction for people on benefits, state pensions or income below a certain level which means subsidising by the latter way. When I was unemployed the television is the only source of viable entertainment I can have or use during those periods and still rely on it heavily, not having a car or enough spare cash to pursue other interests and activities. This is an issue the government should take on board too.

In no way do I wish politicians to step in and control the BBC. The governors did a very good job until the Hunter Report and I do not wish to see 2 separate boards. I am well alive in my view and recruit flamboyant people like Greg Dyke. Do not 'run scared' which I feel is now going to happen within the BBC.

Other ways I currently air my views is by weekly scoring programmes as a panelist for Quest, a programmes survey group and expecting the issue of the BBC will pop up in a future questionnaire.

Personally, I rely on BBC1, 2 and Channel 4 for my programmes because of the quality and content more than anything else, but admit we do not prefer its sporting commentary or news coverage/reporting, with a strong preference for Channel 4 for accuracy of reporting, impartiality. The BBC could improve that area more and look to save some money I consider a waste to keep fees down. If fees increase, please keep the cost to a minimum.

I hope my views are of some help and look forward to hearing/watching more on this. This is also a response to the recent TV programme debating 2 key issues the BBC has to look at. I would have written this out more professionally but do not have the spare time.

Yours faithfully,

*John Bourne*