

BBC Charter Review Consultation  
Department of Culture, Media and Sport  
2 - 4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5DH

Dear Sir

For many people, the name Britain conjures up images of the Changing of the Guard, Big Ben, the pub, cricket, beer, fish and chips, the class system or red double-decker buses.

But for me, *the BBC* is the very essence of Britishness. It stands alone, a unique institution envied throughout the world, the product of dedicated men and women whose purpose is not to accumulate vast profits but to produce high quality programmes for the information, education and entertainment of listeners and viewers for more than eighty years.

Through the years of the second world war it exerted an overwhelming influence in unifying the people of this country. Its significance at that crucial time was impossible to exaggerate. Everyone listened to Churchill's speeches on the wireless. And to Tommy Handley.

In the post-war years the BBC has moved with the times yet maintained the high standards which we have become accustomed to despite competition from more and more commercial channels which, by their very nature, favour programmes of a popular nature.

If the BBC's pre-eminence is to continue in the changing environment, the essential role of the Governors must be preserved. The Governors must ensure that the BBC provides

accurate and impartial news,  
a forum for political debate,  
services not covered by commercial channels,  
programmes free from religious, ethnic and cultural discrimination,  
programmes available across the whole of the UK,  
educational programmes dealing with subject matter  
beyond the school curriculum,  
children's programmes free of advertising,  
an environment which encourages original productions  
and independent producers,  
a balance of in-house and outside productions,

and, above all, they must guard the BBC's independence from political and religious interference.

I fear that those who argue that the licence fee cannot be sustained indefinitely may be right; a tax on all TV viewers including those whose needs are entirely met by commercial channels obliges them to subsidize those whose preference is for the BBC. Paying for the BBC out of general taxation does not avoid the problem entirely but might be acceptable if its freedom from government interference can still be guaranteed. Funding by subscription eliminates the problem but would burden the BBC with fluctuating income rather than the more predictable income from the licence fee which the present system offers. But whichever solution is finally chosen, the BBC must not, on any account, be funded by advertising revenue. This would destroy the Corporation's unique qualities. The absence of interruptions to serious programmes on radio and TV by crass advertisements is just one of the BBC's distinguishing features. The need to attract high viewing figures to justify advertising income leads to 'dumbing down' of programme quality.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Cutting'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' at the beginning.

D Cutting (Mr)