

My Ref: BBC Charter Consultation – L002

BBC Charter Review Consultation
Dept for Culture, Media and Sport
2 – 4 Cockspur St
London, SW1Y-5DH

24th March'04

Dear Sir

BBC CHARTER REVIEW

You are seeking views on the above. My comments follow:-

1. The BBC must be allowed to remain largely as it is. It must never be downgraded to a similar type of role as exists with Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in the USA. No Government, no matter its colour, should have the opportunity to use the BBC as its Ministry for Propaganda. It must remain as a provider of information, entertainment and education just as set out by Reith all those years ago.

2. The TV Licence Fee must be reviewed and take account of peoples ability to pay as it is impossible for people on low-incomes, especially single parent families. Also what hope of this Governments' commitment to *Social Inclusion* when Income Support does not cover basic needs and requirements e.g. Council Tax, clothing, heating food etc. Either benefit levels must be increased or exemptions given but no matter what is chosen it must be based on ability to pay. What is the point of making people criminals just because they are poor and on low benefits or pensions?

2a. If the Licence Fee is to continue then those involved in enforcement must be brought to heel. They must be given very strict guidelines within which to operate. They should also be told that they have no right to demand entry to anyone's home without a properly obtained warrant (there was the case of an 87 year old lady who was so scared and traumatised by the TV Licence peoples threatening letters that she bought a TV Licence even though she did not have a TV – this must stop).

2b. The level of licence fee must also be changed to reflect the level of service provided e.g. Here we are only able to receive BBC1, BBC2, Grampian and Ch4. No Ch5 or any of the Freeview Digital services and I have been told we are never likely to. Now this happens in other parts of the country as well so why should we pay for services we cannot get?

2c. An alternative to the licence fee would be for the BBC to be funded out of general taxation. The level of funding would be decided at time of Charter renewal and would be a fixed figure and increased each year in line with inflation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would have no say in how much the BBC would get other than to announce the actual annual increase. This would have the immediate advantage of taking account of ability to pay.

3. In keeping with 2c the present Governors would be replaced by Trustees who would be elected on a strictly proportional basis and include people from all strands of society not just from the so called great and good as at present.

4. The Director General should be appointed from an advertised position and not a political appointee.

5. The BBC must continue to be allowed to be at the forefront of broadcast engineering development (in all its many guises). Let's not forget that some of the major advances in broadcast technology have come about as a result of BBC Engineering R & D.

6. From a purely Scottish prospective there must be a Scottish Six. I and many like me are fed up hearing about problems in English schools, hospitals etc, we are fed up hearing statistics for England and Wales but no Scottish comparative and we are fed up hearing about English rugby, football and cricket.

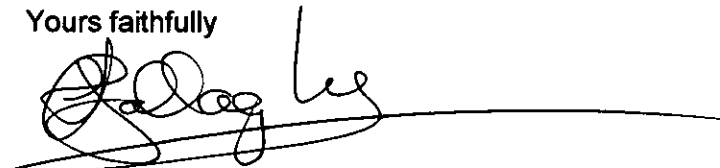
In Scotland on BBC Radio Scotland we have two excellent news programmes which shadow Radio 4, they are Good Morning Scotland and News Drive. These programmes draw much of their reports from the audio of the TV reports shown during the 18:30hrs to 19:00hrs opt out, with one exception they cover much, much more Scottish news as well as International matters.

I am so cheesed off with the current six I do what most of the people I know do. At 18:00hrs we switch to Grampian or STV for the Local, International and Scottish news and at 18:30hrs we switch to BBC Scotland for the same thing. There are many international items which have a direct bearing on Scotland but seem to be of no interest to England though it does not matter the other way round.

Though it's nothing to do with this review it might come as a bit of a surprise to all you in London but ITV's National News suffers from the very same faults!!!

Finally I do not wish to see any further deterioration of programmes and this includes all service providers. I do not want to help line the pockets still further of a certain perceived to be an over bearing, rude and greedy colonial. If this came to pass I would simply throw my TV in the Voe!!!

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C.L. Gallagher', written over a horizontal line.

C.L. Gallagher (Mr)