

Date: 6th March 2004

Response to questionnaire – Your BBC, Your Say.

What do you value most about the BBC

It's a value that is changing rapidly, so my first paragraph is of a BBC that broadcast to the Nation as a world leader in all classes of information and entertainment.

I will call it the "BBC that was"; in my view it was the natural first choice of viewing, because one had the confidence that the programme would be interesting, thought provoking, relaxing or adrenalin rushing ie. sport coverage. Drama productions were "top shop" in every respect from the costumes down to the atmosphere; one felt part of the action when watching the screen.

The value that I have at the time of writing, is one of total disappointment; the choice and variations of what is on offer is very limited and the attitude of production management is mind numbing in it's blatant assumption that there is a fee paying audience watching.

In general though, one has to say that the BBC still produces first class entertainment that is the envy of broadcast authorities throughout the world.

How should the BBC adapt to cope with change?

It should dedicate some of it's prime "air time" to educate and advise the public at large on the ramifications of changes in technology and the Pros and Cons of these changes as it affects different age/generation groups. In other words, to wean the public into watching and using, because it's better and more meaningful, not because it's about new technology.

It should not waste peoples time by "jazzing up" future productions with meaningless hyped up series, that only succeed in proving that the camera man can film out of focus in 2 second bursts with presenters standing on their heads. (you know what I mean)

What do you think of the television, radio and on-line services the BBC provides?

Again in general terms, the BBC produces some excellent material but certain programmes seem to be produced/copied under peer pressure from other channels. The BBC should always stand out as being totally unique in their productions and ensure that those productions are of the highest quality.

The BBC should always endeavour to lead the field in every aspect of programme services whatever the medium. This way it would gain and keep the respect of viewers, listeners and more important, competitive channels. It should never give way to pressure from government or other pressure groups in producing "politically correct" or "fashionable" programmes.

Should the BBC run commercial services

I think that in this day and age, looking to the future of broadcasting, one is bound to run commercial services in order to maximise revenue intake and market successful productions/series, so my answer is yes.

How should we pay for the BBC

It is essential that the BBC remains as a totally independent service for the British public. Having said that, the funding issue is critical to its future success and needs to be a generated from a system where *everyone who uses the service pays for it*.

My personal view is that with the technology that we have today and with future developments it should be possible to have a better system than the current one, which is really archaic.

I'm am not able to quote figures but I am sure that a good number of people do not currently have a licence and never will have within the present system.

I believe that instead of the licence fee, one should have pay as you view service with a card similar to that used by commercial satellite systems. This way one could ensure that revenue income is *a fair representation of public need for, and therefore satisfaction with, the service*.

Is the BBC organised in the most effective and efficient way

To be honest I do not feel qualified to answer this question in detail. What I would say is that the organisation should be absolutely transparent to public scrutiny, this would make the general public more supportive of the organisation and whether or not it is run in an efficient manner.

How should the BBC be run? How should it be regulated

I believe that the current system is a good template to follow but the Chairman, CE, Board of Governors and senior management should be "non-party", experienced and totally independent people prepared to uphold the independence of the BBC whatever happens.

How do we ensure that the BBC is properly accountable to the public and Parliament?

I do not separate the public from Parliament because members of Parliament should represent the public at large.

As I have already mentioned, I believe that BBC operations, in general terms should be totally transparent to the public this could be achieved by monthly updates (prime time) of what has been achieved, programmes being planned, technical research, how to get the best from your TV/Radio etc etc.

One could have a number of local representative groups based on geographical/ethnic minority areas that could produce feedback on viewer's comments; these in turn could be made public "on air".

If the current licence were replaced by a "pay to view" system then the public would vote with their purse!!

Yours sincerely



David R Harries