

BBC CHARTER REVIEW SEMINAR:
INFORMED CITIZENSHIP
24TH NOVEMBER 2004

Lord Burns: It's just been said to me that there is light at the end of the tunnel which I know for some people, who have been here to a number of the late comers will come as a bit of relief. But I'm always very grateful to see those who are coming back for more and take some encouragement from that. Today we are looking at a subject, which has the grand title of informed citizenship. (INAUDIBLE) is the third of five seminars with a slightly different focus to the previous ones that we have called cross-cutting seminars. Because we are trying to look at how the BBC delivers in five broad themes corresponding roughly to those that are set out in building public service value and we are looking of them, of course, across the whole range of channels. As I have said, this morning we are looking at informed citizenship and, as many of you are aware of course, the arguments and evidence that we are hearing is to go forward to help to inform and shape the government's thinking as it works towards the Green Paper in the New Year. As usual, I've got a number of housekeeping issues and for those who have been here on a regular basis will be very familiar with them but, for those who haven't been here before, there are cameras at the back of the room kindly provided by the BBC, which is providing a live-stream of footage via a link on the Charter Review site and direct onto the BBC's website. We are likely to lose this link for about 15 minutes today but that is in a sense our problem. There will still be of course a transcript at the end of it. However, in order that we don't interfere with the sound, it is very important that people switch off their mobiles and blackberries and particularly the case with people sitting near to the microphones. The blackberries have to be turned I'm afraid to power down, just as if you were on an aeroplane, and similarly with the mobiles. They should be off, not on silent, as they interfere with these microphones and cause some problems. So, if you hear some buzzing going on out of these loud speakers, you know that somebody hasn't remembered to turn things off. The loos are opposite the meeting room. The fire exits are all clearly marked. There will be opportunities at various points in the morning for discussion from the floor. There are also some blank cards in your packs if anyone wants to, feels that there's an issue that's being handled poorly and they want to draw it to the attention of the staff or if there's some particularly burning question. We have a roving mic when it comes to having questions from the floor and, if you would wait until we get the mic to you if you do want to say something when we come to have a more general discussion. And finally, if I could ask you to keep your security badges and name badges on and not to go into other areas of the building please. First, I'd like to introduce Alice Rawsthorn from the Independent Panel who has helped here today to help facilitate the debate. We were hoping to also have Sly Bailey but unfortunately she is ill and has had to pull out. Joining us on the platform we have a Panel of invited experts – Professor Stephen Coleman of the Oxford Internet Institute; Jeremy Dear, the General Secretary of the NUJ; Guy Ker, the Chief Operating Officer of ITV News; Glyn Mathias, who's the Electoral Commissioner for Wales is going to be here but he's taking the terrible risk of travelling up from Wales on the train. It's safe that he'll be here for the start of the session at 10.30. I have to say it's a little while since I was on one of those trains which arrived on time but you never know. David Seymour, the Political Editor of the Mirror Group Newspapers and Kevin Sutcliffe, Commissioning Editor, News and Current Affairs, Channel 4 and from the BBC we have Mark Byford and Helen Boaden, who are respectively Deputy Director General and relatively recently appointed Director of BBC News and we congratulate you on that, Helen. As you said to me outside, it just shows how long this process has been going on. You were involved in a different guise until now but we all have to get used to changing jobs from time to time. I'd like to make special mention of some of the organisations who have fed in additional comments to help frame today's seminar – the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, the church's Media Council, Citizen's On-line, Community Service Volunteers, Hansard Society, NUJ, Public Voice and Society of Authors. And I know that representatives of some of these organisations are here today and of course Jeremy Dear is with us on the Panel and I'd like to put my thanks on record for that and there will be I hope plenty of opportunity to contribute to this discussion. The agenda for today – well the BBC's Manifesto for Charter Review, Building Public Value, says that the BBC should add what it calls democratic value and it goes on to say that the BBC supports civic life and

national debate by providing trusted and impartial news and information that helps citizens make sense of the world and encourages them to engage with it. I think we'd all sign up to that. I think what we have to do in part is to ask what does it mean in practise? In our first session we're going to try and get under the skin of the statement by proving what we mean by democratic value and we aim to ask how public service broadcasting and the BBC in particular can contribute to this aim and what does the BBC do to support civic life in national debate. Should it do more, less or the same? How successful has it been? How can its future success be determined? And how can it reach across the full range of society, including young people? We will then have a break for coffee. We'll resume around 10.30 and we describe that session, the next session, under the general heading of how the BBC adds democratic value through its direct services, principally the news and current affairs programmes that it delivers through television and radio services and on-line content. It also provides an opportunity to look at some of the key issues about accuracy, impartiality and balance in news coverage. And then how do we ensure that the BBC remains a trusted provider of information and news and to what extent should the BBC set a gold standard and how might this be achieved without lowering standards elsewhere or interfering with editorial independence and what impact might changing demands for news provision, for example 24 hour news, have on all of this? And then finally we have designed the agenda so that we have a session towards the end on the subject of what the BBC does beyond its core programming activities. Building Public Value sets out a mission to create opportunities, especially at local and regional levels, for people to become more active citizens, to encourage more open debate and public participation on radio and new media and to build on the BBC's successful open centres and learning buses to engage people in their local communities. And we hope to ask questions about the effectiveness of this kind of activity, how it's co-ordinated and what I suspect that it might be built on in the future. So that's the scale of the ambition. Now inevitably in these sessions what we have posted as topics in some of them, you know, may be picked up in some other part and so, although I will try to stick to an agenda along these lines, I realise that sometimes this is...I'm more successful on some occasions than I am on others in doing that. I'm going to start by asking Alice to introduce the first session with some observations and questions of her own. I'm then going to ask Mark Byford to give us a general BBC view and then I propose to throw it open to the Panel. Alice?

Alice Rawsthorn: Thank you, Terry. Now there can be no doubt that the issue of informed citizenship is at the heart of the BBC in its purposes and that it will continue to be so during the period of the next Charter. Time and time again, in survey after survey, when people are asked what they value most about the BBC, news and current affairs are at the top of the list. And in the BBC's own document, Building Public Value, it tells us that it spends £500 million a year on over 200,000 hours of network and local programming and services which, as it puts it, 'directly seek to inform citizens'. Tellingly, one of the BBC's proudest claims when it's asked about its own achievement is that in times of crisis or celebration people turn to these services, notably to BBC Television News, for coverage of critical events and why is this? The answer's simple. It's because they trust the BBC. Now of course in most areas of contemporary life trust is diminishing. The culture of deference that once prevailed has disappeared. People no longer automatically place confidence in important institutions because they're told that they should. Instead they question their authority and expect their trust to be earned. Yet despite all the public criticisms of the BBC, externally and internally, it still stands out as one of the very few institutions to have bucked this trend. By and large people still do trust it and that's why they turn to it for objective information and analysis at critical times. In short, there are very persuasive arguments for viewing the BBC as a mainstay of our democracy. That said, the world is changing and not simply because of the diminution of trust. The environment within which the BBC operates in terms of broadcasting and also culturally will be almost unrecognisable by the end of the next Charter period. For reasons we're familiar with, from the proliferation of channels and platforms, changes in viewing habits, to widespread disengagement with the political process, the way in which news and current affairs is produced, consumed and perceived is being and will continue to be transformed. One factor among very many is the emergence of the Internet as a key source of news and increasingly for many people their principal source, certainly of initial information. This poses as compelling a challenge to television news as its emergence once did to newspapers and of course raises some very interesting but complex issues for the BBC

on the sort of editorial controls, the guarantees for user if you like, that it offers on its Internet news services. And this makes it all the more important to make sure that we get informed citizenship, the central aspect of the BBC's activities, absolutely right. So in this morning's session we will put its contribution to informed citizenship under the microscope. We will try to look at what the BBC supplies us with on-screen, over the radio and through its wider activities. Overall we hope that this seminar will move the debate forward by seeking clarity and hopefully even, certainly on some points, consensus over the BBC's purposes now and in the future in this very important area.

Lord Burns: Thank you very much, Alice. Mark, would you like to...?

Mark Byford: Thank you very much Lord Burns. Thank you, Alice. As Deputy Director General, I am responsible for all the BBC's journalistic activities across the United Kingdom, at nation, region, local level and across the international services. I also chair the BBC's Journalism Board. Supporting informed citizenship in the United Kingdom is for the BBC the pivotal role. We recognise that democracy needs informed citizens to survive and to flourish and to help people make informed choices and act as informed citizens. As Alice has already emphasised, people place a very high priority, in fact the highest, on this role of the BBC. News and current affairs, UK-wide and at regional levels are rated the most important areas for the BBC by people both as consumers and as citizens. We support informed citizenship at a UK-wide and national, regional and local level by providing first trusted independent news and information, committed to explained complex issues, focusing on the stories that matter, a serious agenda of purpose, supported by specialist expertise and eye witness reportage that gives reliable reporting, investigative original journalism and fair interviewing. We also obviously offer a comprehensive coverage of the democratic bodies themselves, whether it's the Westminster Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly, local government throughout the United Kingdom, reporting on the political process, explaining and discussing policy formulation and policy difference. And last, we promote and stimulate participation in public debate. The national conversation, the local forum, intelligent debate across all our airwaves, whether it's Question Time, whether it's David Dunseith on Radio Ulster this lunchtime, Ed Doolan in the Midlands or Have Your Say on the Internet. And we're committed to serving everybody. Universality is critical in this, recognising though at the same time that different styles and different services are there to meet different audience groups and different needs. But everything we do is rooted in having the same values and principles for all our activities, including those Alice on the Internet. Those principles are truth and accuracy, serving the public interest, independence – not just independence from government but independence from all political and commercial pressures – impartiality and diversity of opinion and accountability to our audiences. We have to be committed to excellence in all we do and a commitment to creativity, such that we make the important interesting. And we recognise we've got to aim high. We have to be recognised for really high quality and distinctiveness, to be the most trusted, to create impact and at the same time provide value for money. We're committed to maintaining a very significant investment in this role. We're also committed to efficiency and effectiveness, such that the deployment of public money is well exercised. New technology, as you say, provides new opportunities as well as fresh challenges. There's the opportunity for new creative offers but also fragmenting audiences provides us with a challenge of how to reach everybody. And those audiences are travelling at different speeds on the digital journey and to stay where we are with no change is actually the recipe for decline. One recent survey from the BBC revealed that 84% of the public say that as a result of the BBC they have a better understanding of the world around them. Now that's good but we recognise that we have to aim high in this and we also recognise that we have to try to do even better. And in that context we know we've got to maintain and build trust. We have to ensure that we meet the highest standards of accuracy, fairness and impartiality. We have to help engage people in the political process, increase the prominence and appeal of current affairs, take the opportunity of the digital age to make our services even more local across the United Kingdom and help make that transition to a fully interactive, on-demand, digital world, whilst at the same time respecting that audience needs, audience expectations and audience behaviours on that digital journey are travelling, as I say, at different speeds. Thank you.

Lord Burns: Thank you very much. I'd now like to invite others on the Panel to comment on this whole question about, you know, what is democratic value, what are its components, you know what should, how we describe the remit purpose of the BBC in this area, how do we measure it, how do we know that it's doing what it says that it should be doing? Would you like to start, Stephen?

Professor Stephen Coleman: Well of all of the aspects of the BBC's remit, informing public citizenship is the most intangible. This is a problem around all of this. You can measure most aspects of what the BBC does. You can try to measure how far the BBC affects public citizenship. You can for example, as Mark has reported, ask people how far they think there are certain effects on their behaviour or their thinking, but it seems to me that the most useful way to think about the BBC's affect on informed citizenship is to ask what would happen if there were an absence of this effect? What's it going to be like in a world where nobody for example has a public service obligation to provide certain flows of information that might not be the sort of information people particularly want or are looking for, there might not be either market demand or even political consciousness around these areas of information, but they are areas of information that make us a more civilised, friendly, harmonious society. Now it seems to me that this problem is surrounded by some other problems. If I can just go on to mention what they are. One of them is the paradox with all information that people don't know what it is they don't know. One can never run public information on the basis that it's demand-driven anymore than you can run education for children on the basis that you ask children what they want to learn. They don't know what they haven't learnt. The second problem is that people very often don't want to know what they need to know. I mean they might know that they need to know. They might need health information. They might need to know about the news. They might need to know that there's a threat to the country but they might not want to know it. There is a strong philosophical argument, which is probably quite a practical argument, for saying that there are some things that people do need to know. You might not want to be a lawyer but you need to know about the law. And there is a third argument that people don't often believe, or know how to make judgements about belief, with information that they are given. And therefore it is the institutional source of the information that is almost more important than the information itself. The institutional source is cumulatively trusted. The individual piece of information is contingently trusted. You may say "I don't think the BBC has given me the right answer about this but I think the BBC are the kind of people who give me the right answers." So it seems to me that the way to proceed with this kind of question is to measure the four things that the BBC has identified in its report on informed citizenship, which if I may say is a very good report, and they are awareness, curiosity, discussion and engagement. They are the four criteria which are very intangible, very alien to the way that economists think about the world but socially actually very helpful.

Lord Burns: I don't want the tax on economists. We'll get off to a bad start here.

Professor Stephen Coleman: Well economists have put a tax on everyone else. But I think it would be quite helpful to go into those four areas. How you make people more curious about the world – and I'm very struck by the figure that 57% of BBC viewers and listeners say that they have more of an interest in international affairs as a result of the BBC than they had before, and that's always very hard to get people interested in. The press know that. Secondly, I am very struck by the argument about awareness, that there's this 84% reach, and that's a very, very important critical mass that doesn't exist in many other countries. Thirdly, I'm absolutely fascinated by the argument about discussion. 81% of BBC viewers and listeners say that they can explain issues to other people as a result of listening to or watching the BBC. Now that is a really fundamental area of inter-personal networks that makes a good democratic society. And fourthly, I'm very interested in engagement. 17% say that they participated in some way in democratic life that they wouldn't have done otherwise – this is self-reported of course – as a result of the BBC. Now I think if you take those figures together, you take those questions together and if you take the gaps in those figures, there I think you have the basis of the kind of questions that need to be asked about how the BBC performs.

Guy Ker: But there is one paradox in all that. I mean everyone is stating as a premise that there is widespread disengagement with the political process. If the BBC is meant to be the

engine of engagement, we have to say something is going very wrong because if there is widespread disengagement, then the mediums which are responsible for the engagement can't be doing a great job, you might say. So that's a paradox.

Lord Burns: It's the messenger and the message though.

Helen Boaden: I think there's a messenger and a message and I think the job of the BBC is not to force people to the ballot box. I think there will be in the next election many highly informed people who have listened and watched and consumed our programmes, who will make an active choice as a citizen not to participate in voting. Engagement takes many, many forms and some of it is actually disengagement with conventional politics.

Lord Burns: Could I, before we move on, ask those people from ITN and Channel 4, I mean how far is this a field which is entirely for the BBC and what is the role of other people in this market-place and to what extent is that changing? You know is the nature of the competition and the nature of the offerings from elsewhere in this industry going to change as we move forward in this new world?

Kevin Sutcliffe: The Channel 4 offering is quite well defined and I think it partly defines itself against what the BBC does. It's got certainly news and current affairs, where we've got 50 primetime hours and an awful lot of output across the year. That's often taken into account the BBC approach and tone and taking a view of that. And I think one of the things we talk a lot about is how maybe the BBC's general tone, how it speaks to the nation, can sometimes alienate, can sometimes feel a slight patronising, a little nannyish. We sort of discuss that quite a lot and you I think would see in our output, our political output particularly, the way we would go about constructing a show. Recently we did say Greg Dyke on New Labour. That would be our comment on New Labour. You know we do much more one-off targeted things and try to say things and engage people through character, through story-telling. We don't do coverage in the same way as the BBC does coverage and I think there's an interesting, reading the document there's an interesting discussion we had about the universality argument, wanting to do everything, to cover everybody, to try and speak to everybody, which is something that Channel 4, you know we just don't do that. We're a smaller outfit, much more targeted. And I think that the universality argument for the BBC is I think slightly problematic in the sense that you're never going to, for instance a lot of discussion about young people and politics, you're never really going to actually get that audience. Whether constructing and spending a lot on money on Jeremy Vine without a tie and bound in a studio trying to get people engaged 16-24, 16-34 in politics for example. Actually there might be a point where you have to accept that that's not, it's just not going to come to that. They might come to the odd single issue programme. So I do think there's an interesting debate about this universality. I can see why it's tied to the licence fee and I can see how it's constructed. I do worry that trying to do all those things for everybody all the time is making, I mean spreading it too far, too thin. That's one thing. I do think though in terms of back to Channel 4 really and how we perceive the BBC, which is I think that particularly with news and current affairs, I think we keep each other on our toes. I think it's a very, very healthy relationship. We all watch each other. We watch what we're doing. We discuss – and I'm sure that Helen does – the shows that we put out, how we make them and the tone we have. And I think that that is a really rather important tension in the industry. I think what, as things move on to digital switchover, I think what's interesting again for the BBC is it's clearly defining itself in terms of trust. It's like the trust channel, the trust broadcaster and I think we define ourselves very differently. It's obviously in a commercial world but I think our current affairs feels much, if you want, slightly more real, slightly more engaged, slightly, we think we speak in a slightly more straightforward tone about what we find in Britain, how Britain is, how Britain lives. And I think if there's a debate to be had that we have it's how the BBC's tone perhaps is getting in the way of how it's trying to deliver some of its messages and some of its services.

Lord Burns: Guy, do you want to...?

Guy Ker: Yes, I mean I think that you know the whole debate has to be looked at in terms of the offering of all the TV and media organisations with respect to what they bring to the table for news and current affairs. I mean we all take it as a given that news and current affairs is

part of the information that allows you to be a responsible and engaged citizen but I think that as media I would like to stress this point that, you know, we can't just sort of sit back and congratulate ourselves on what a great job we are doing because, if you look at the history of Britain over the last 5 years, it is quite evident that from time to time we've all been caught short about aspects of a) the speed of change in some areas, b) the way that some sectors of the population have not been just slightly disengaged but have been extremely disengaged and, you know, things like, you know, significant numbers of young people in this country sort of tuning into sources of information from the Middle East and so forth that a few years we would have thought was completely sort of shocking and recently has started to be, you know, prevalent. We know now that – and the BBC has acknowledged in its own you know submission – that things like Al Jazeera are now extremely important and I think that we've all been a bit slow on the uptake to realise that despite our best efforts, or what we think are our best efforts, there are significant areas of the population which haven't felt that there was something instantly attractive for them on our media. And I think that all of us as news providers and sources of news and information around the world, we have to go a bit further than just saying this is our catalogue of wares, we can report from anywhere in the world kind of thing. We have to sort of say well are we actually making those assets work for us in this situation? And I think that, you know, we have to be a little bit self-analytical about this because from time to time you get the impression that what the media really thinks is terribly important. Out in areas of the country it does not wash and I think we have to acknowledge that.

Jeremy Dear: Can I come in on this question because I mean I don't accept that there is widespread disengagement from the political process. I think there is from party politics and I think Parliament very often is a turn-off. I may be one of those sad people who watch the Parliament Channel every now and again to watch a debate but I am in a significant minority in doing so. And yet a million people or two million, depending on which newspaper you read, march through London on a stop-the-war demonstration, predominantly young people engaged in the political process. At the European Social Forum that was held in London 20,000 predominantly young people talked about alternative media, local waste management, Venezuela, a whole range of political topics and whilst we may not agree with those political conclusions they draw, they are very engaged in a political process. And I think we need to look at this question and I'm a wholehearted supporter of the BBC and think it's done some really good work in engaging people but the rights of citizens to access fair and impartial information to enable them to make decisions and participate – and Guy used the word 'engaged' – and I think that's very important. It's not just about delivering information to people. It's about engaging people in the information process. None of us – someone else mentioned the BBC does not have the answer – none of us actually have the answers. We often have information that we can give to people to allow them to make decisions. So the BBC needs to have a very strong and well-resourced, robust news and current affairs operation, not operating just as a broadcasting kind of civil service but actually as a ground-breaking news operation with its investigative journalism and all the rest of it. Universal reach is absolutely central to that and it has to be across the range of its programmes that it delivers these kind of public service elements as well. Not just news and current affairs but across comedy, soaps and all other areas. And its independence is absolutely vital in that if it is to be trusted in delivering kinds of information. And its independence from government and commercial pressures is also extremely important and its mode of delivery therefore becomes important. Not everybody sits in and watches television from 8 till 10 pm. And the idea of video on demand and PDAs and all these kind of things are important in delivering it in a whole range of different ways to different groups of people to try to get them engaged. And one final kind of thing on that is I think that sometimes we get this kind of tabloid reaction to things like BBC3 and BBC4 to say "Oh well, no one watches them therefore they're a load of rubbish" but actually the BBC is unique in its ability to be able to try things and actually at times fail with some things in terms of trying to engage different groups of people. And when it fails in things, it should look again at how it can do it better but because of its kind of unique funding, it is able to try out different and innovative ways of trying to get new audiences and new groups of people engaged in the democratic process. Not every programme has to top 10 million viewers and sometimes we get this tabloid and other media reaction to say "Oh well it's a complete failure because only half a million people watch that." I mean one of the, my own example is the African Nations' Cup football on BBC3. It was what made me go out and

get Freeview because I wanted to watch the African Nations' Cup football and it was on BBC3. As a result of that, they then engaged people in information about the African country where it was being staged, each of the teams being played. You went to the website for the African Nations' Cup football with a lot of information. It then directed you to the BBC Radio 3 World Music site about African music, which then took you to Africa On Your Street, which is a website about African music and the African communities in the UK. All of that through wanting to watch a football match but that is the kind of thing...that is the kind of thing it can do. But I bet if you looked at it purely on audience viewing figures, you would say African Nations' Cup was a failure because not that many people really watched it. And so there are, there is more than one judgement that can be made in terms of informed citizenship.

Mark Byford: Well there's one guy on the Panel certainly getting value and I'm just a bit worried when Jeremy says, you know, not every programme has to get 10 million viewers. That's quite a good thing that you say that because in today's day and age that would be one heck of a challenge. I mean I agree with Guy that obviously the importance of the role is a given but we're certainly not complacent. We see incredible challenges for us in the engagement in that context of universality of reaching everybody but also this whole challenge as well of the opportunities for new technologies giving us creative offers that can engage new audiences with exciting new ways of doing things and yet at the same time respecting the people who are travelling at different speeds. I mean Stephen says think of what it would be like without the BBC. Well the first thing I'd say is we welcome plurality. I wouldn't want life with just the BBC in the United Kingdom. I don't think anybody in the BBC would with a, as a compliment to other offers as well but hopefully providing something truly distinctive. I mean the coverage of the democratic bodies themselves, whatever you say about watching BBC Parliament, would be seriously, seriously curtailed without the BBC. The speech-led radio services from Radio 4 and Radio 5 Live, to Radio Ulster, to Radio Leeds, to Radio Solent where I live, the strength of commercial radio fine but they're offering different things to us within that context. In a context as well where Channel 4, Channel 5, obviously ITV, Sky are providing strong offers, what is it the BBC provides? Well clearly we have to aim very, very high in our goal for being the most-trusted. We have to invest in expertise. We have to have agendas in different styles that really look at complex matters and try to explain them to support that role of informed citizenship. I mean Alice I think was saying about international affairs. You know our commitment to wide investment in bureaus around the world and the commitment on the 10 o'clock or the Today to international affairs we see as fundamental to us and that whole sense of participation across our airwaves is really important as an ingredient of support and informed citizenship. We're not trying to do everything but we are trying to reach everybody. I think that is a difference. We're not saying the BBC must do everything but if you're owned by the public, funded by everybody and this is the pivotal role, I think the goal must be that with this pivotal role you are trying to reach everybody. And with the politics and the young, I mean I've five kids, an 18-year old and a 16-year old. When I was 16, the only BBC that I ever connected with was Radio 1. Today my son is on the website every day, not just for trusted information but actually engaging in interactive ways. Now to me that's wonderful. He watches Question Time. Well he does and he's 18 and he loves it. And I think there's interesting things for us to note that it isn't all about let's have special programming for the young. Let's engage them with our mainstream programming across the board and make it attractive to them. And in tone, I hear what you say that obviously Channel 4 has a challenging gritty tone but the BBC doesn't have a single tone. It has single values that must be rooted in every programme but the tone of Five Live and the tone of Radio Leeds' debate this morning can be very different to our coverage on BBC Parliament. Andrew Neil on This Week can be a very different tone to what we'll be doing on the 10 o'clock news, so I don't think there is a single tone ergo. And for Jeremy, I think he brought that out very, very well, which is different styles to reach different audiences but all rooted in the same principles.

Lord Burns: Okay. David?

David Seymour: Well I believe that it's not just the BBC which has a responsibility to society for citizenship and explaining things. I think the entire media does but the BBC has a very special and pivotal role and my belief is that we wouldn't have the best of the media that we have in this country if it wasn't for the BBC which is...and I think that's something that the

whole of this inquiry needs to keep in mind and sustain and I give a couple of examples. I mean Sky News, which has just been mentioned by Mark, provides a fantastic news service. Most of the day I have Sky News on my desk all the time. It is a terrific news service. It is owned, as we all know, by the same, fundamentally by Murdoch, who also owns and runs Fox News in the States, which is one of the most disgraceful TV news channels in the world. Now how is it that we have these two very different news channels both owned by the same person? And I think the answer is that the BBC has set a standard in this country which all others follow, whether it's ITN, Channel 4 or Sky. Five Live has also been mentioned. I think Five Live is the great innovation in the media in this country in the last – I can't quite say 10 years because I think it's just past 10.

Helen Boaden: It's 10th birthday.

David Seymour: Just had it's 10th birthday. It's amazing and you know the great old Daily Express Editor, Arthur Christianson, used to have this mythical man on the Clapham omnibus who was, you know this was the voice of Britain. Well to me now the voice of Britain is the man or woman who rings up Five Live, some of which you agree with and some of which you don't. And the way that the presenters deal with them is I think one of the most important things that the BBC does. Some of it is fantastic, putting people right on factual information, letting them have their say. And the question is could any commercial organisation have created and run Five Live? I don't believe they could. And when you hear, you know Kelvin McKenzie constantly complains about the BBC in general, Five Live in particular, because they've got sporting rights, but if it was left entirely in the hands of the commercial sector of radio to run Five Live, you wouldn't have that open debate. You would have the sort of shock jock stuff which has come over to this country in some commercial stations. And I also think that, as everyone's been terribly nice about the BBC so far...

Lord Burns: Something's gone wrong, you know.

David Seymour: Yes, well let me just say, I mean the BBC 6 o'clock news about 2 years ago went so seriously down market that it became a disgrace and an embarrassment. In fact it went through a period where I watch these things, it's not just because I'm you know a news junky or anything, it's part of my work, I have to do it, and there was no point, almost no point in watching the 6 o'clock news and then the 6.30 came on on ITN which was beating the BBC constantly. And in fact ITN then suddenly went down this road and the BBC got its act together on the 6 o'clock news but it made me realise that in the way that we quite often talk about in the media is do newspapers follow TV or does TV follow newspapers? In fact it's a complete circuitous route. In broadcasting I think there's obviously something similar and ITN must have looked at these BBC people talking about absolutely trivial stuff and ignoring main news and all the reporters not wearing ties and whatever and then they'd gone down there. Now of course ITN has come back and followed the BBC back and it just shows that the BBC is the standard which is set and which everybody follows. And in this debate about citizenship and informed values, whatever anybody else does, if the BBC doesn't do it there's no hope of anybody else in my view seriously going down that path.

Mark Byford: And it's interesting, if I just can reflect one thing to you Terry, that I was in the newsroom last night with the Editor watching the 6 o'clock news and all the time we're going to have to think about different styles, different ways of engaging but always with a seriousness of purpose about it. I agree with that. And yesterday the 6, you know 17 minutes I think it was on background reports on the Queen's Speech and then live to Ukraine and background reports there. That's the 6 o'clock that we need to offer, which engages a very wide audience, a very wide audience at early evening but has a seriousness of purpose throughout.

Lord Burns: Could I pick up some of these issues of measurement? I mean we've heard from the beginning from Stephen who said that this is the most important thing the BBC does but it's the most difficult thing to measure. We then had Guy saying, you know, there are some ways in which we have them as well with respect to audiences who might have done and it's taken us some time to catch up. David is saying that there was a period that the 6 o'clock news went downhill and it became of low quality. How is it that you measure in any

way what it is that is going on in some of those areas so that you could actually substantiate some of those statements? You know how is it that you would set about monitoring and measuring the 6 o'clock news so that you would pick up the type of pattern that you were saying and whereby you would be able to in a sense demonstrate that it was happening so that you could put in place some kind of corrective process? You know because one of the worries about all of this is that a lot of it is very subjective and then people gaily tell us after the event well there was a bad period when this went downhill. Fortunately we've now got it together again, but all the time we've got to be searching for processes which mean that would pick up some of these problems earlier, or is it only in hindsight that you can tell some of these problems? You know measurement and correction and monitoring and demonstrating that people are delivering what it is, and the BBC in particular is delivering what it is, said that it should do, has become you know a constant theme of these discussions.

Mark Byford: There's no single measure is what I'd say but there has to be a framework. If we say today that to support that democratic value and support informed citizenship we're going to try and reach everybody, then measure it in a context of reach. And don't just measure the volume of the 6 o'clock news, whether it's 5.3 million or 5.6, and what it got against the ITV news at 6.30. What is it contributing to the overall reach of the BBC such that it's trying to touch everybody? So that measure of 80% plus of reach is really important for the BBC.

Lord Burns: What about this quality?

Mark Byford: Well in quality, if you say you want to be the most trusted then clearly you have to measure to the audience independently. Do they recognise you for trust? How do you sit against other broadcasters in that context? Impartiality? Do they see you as being not just impartial but do they rate you compared to other broadcasters as the most impartial? I think if the BBC was rated less impartial than Sky News then that would be a real challenge for us. The fact that we still have things to do to make people who feel that we may be not impartial, impartial itself then we've got to challenge on that. There are other things as well as trust and impartiality and the quality thresholds, which is in the range and styles of what we do, do they recognise it for its creative excellence? We've all talked about how the BBC can help to raise the standards. In the quality that they see, do they see that it is something of excellence? Then there are things around impact where, I mean a way to look at that is had it not been for the BBC why would life be less, as well as some of these measures around what we bring to the overall support for informed democracy.

Lord Burns: Would you agree with this observation about what happened to the 6 o'clock news, that it went downhill and became rather a bland offering without any bite and not touching the right stories but that you've managed to get...

Mark Byford: Well it was doing these sort of....

Alice Rawsthorn: Consumer stuff.

David Seymour: Yes, well it wasn't just consumer stuff. It was really trivial reports.

Mark Byford: The challenge of the 6 o'clock news then David, I mean David said what he said about 6 o'clock news in a context of absolute support for what we do...

Lord Burns: Oh no, no, no. This is not...

Mark Byford: So the first thing I do is absolutely respect the view that you've said and you hold it honestly. (TANNOY) I absolutely respect the view, David. I think what people were trying to do then was in good faith engage wider audiences in trying to explain complex issues. That was the whole idea of some of these stories and the treatments they were given. It was not to go down market or to be light froth. It was experimenting with a creative process to try and engage audiences. Now what we mustn't have is the view that you've expressed, which is it was starting to become froth, lost its sense of purpose, lost its seriousness of

agenda. These are touches of the tiller and you need to actually bring it back to actually we are going for the stories that matter and the way that we'll explain them will engage a wider audience. Now, as I say when I saw the 6 last night myself, the way that we tackled the Queen's Speech, not just in reporting but explaining and involving the public, whether it was about ID cards or whether it was about some of the anti-social behaviour legislations, was fantastic. Ukraine – I mean most people don't even know where Kiev is, so you first have to explain the background to the presidential elections as well as the protest. That's absolutely the heart of the 6 for me. And then value for money, Terry. It's about reach. It's about quality measurements. It's certainly about impact around some of these things of what we do in support of democratic value and what Stephen said about how people feel the BBC has contributed to making life better for them but it's also demonstrated not just that we're efficient but also that we commit ourselves to a certain level of investment. The fact that we do put money into those bureaus around the world is a good thing.

Guy Ker: I have to take issue, Mark.

Lord Burns: If I could just have her word and then...

Alice Rawsthorn: If I could ask you to expand on that point? You talked about a period of experimentation with the 6 o'clock news. Can you explain the internal mechanisms that come into force once an experiment like that has occurred and perhaps hasn't quite worked out? You talked about all the research you have, qualitative and quantitative, to measure the impact on the audience of your news and current affairs service. If that research comes back and it looks wobbly, what happens internally within the BBC? Do the governors press the panic button? Is it dealt with purely by executive management? Could you talk about the checks and balances you have and the specific mechanisms that would stop deterioration in standards or check it should it occur?

Helen Boaden: Do you want me to pick that up, Alice, because in a way the measurements are very important but it's actually, it's always slightly dangerous to be driven by what the audience says. It goes back to your point about the audience doesn't necessarily know what it knows. Actually one of the key things that underpins all that Mark's talking about is judgement and it's judgement based on a framework of values. And I wasn't around when the 6 o'clock news went through its interesting period of creativity and experimentation. What I do know about that team is that they were very passionate about being extremely audience focused and actually what happened I suspect was the passion for being audience focused led to a slight loss of judgement about we are still a grown-up, serious news organisation. So what should have happened and did eventually happen was the key figures within BBC News recognised that this genuine, well-intentioned experiment had perhaps gone a little far and the Editor and the Head of Television News were asked to adjust and that is what happened. And that's the way any grown-up sensible organisation does it. The governors certainly may well have recognised it and raised it in their deliberations with very senior management but actually we are trusted with the responsibility to spot what is working and to build on what is working and also to spot where things haven't happened. I mean I have a 10 to 9 meeting every morning with the Heads of Department in news, the output people, before they go and then talk to their editors and, coming new to the job, I am incredibly impressed by the degree of self-criticism and the conscientiousness with which people critique their own output. That might sound like quite a modest thing. It's certainly what you'd be used to in newspapers – what did we miss, what did we get right, where are we taking it forward today? – but it is genuinely impressive. For example, yesterday the Head of Radio News came in and said "I am ashamed that we are so late on the Ukraine story." He said the World Service was doing brilliant coverage of it for the last 3 weeks. You know the radio sequences should have picked up on it. So then you address what happened – it was a lack of linkage with the World Service. Usually that works quite well. For various reasons it didn't, and you take it forward. So that's how you do it and it's about a lot of scrutiny by some very responsible people of their output.

Lord Burns: Guy?

Guy Ker: No, I mean I think eventually the conversation has to come down to the brass tacks issue and what my colleague here was saying about where we are today. I mean the point is that where we are today is with a plurality of sources and of information which has come about over, you know, a long period, many decades of competition, of co-existence, of different companies setting standards of excellence in technology, in journalism, in judgement and each one responding to the other and competition does that. It creates this environment. I think that where the brass tacks argument has to now start kind of biting in a way is that in today's age with the BBC sitting on a sort of guaranteed income source which is disproportionate really to the kind of guarantee that the commercial sector has in terms of its ability to bank on advertising revenues and all that, you've got the very real danger of a cash mountain in one sector starting to become almost self-justifying and, you know, I mean I'm not here to knock the BBC but we're here to kind of engage in a decent process and I think that, you know, aspects like value for money really have to be brought to the party. I mean the value for money of, you know, the BBC's coverage of the American elections was in some parts of the world scrutinised and people were saying "Hang on, did you really need, you know, 300 people or whatever it was to cover those elections?" So I think that you know we are talking now brass tacks and I think that you know people have to remember that the BBC's ability and its aim to sort of appeal to everyone has ripples in the commercial sector. If the BBC decides that it wants to reach an audience on a mobile phone or something and starts pumping what is essentially free picture into that sector, it can destroy the market for some other company trying to set out that store and therefore you get not a plurality but a growing kind of monolith. And I think that that is something that we have to bear in mind and be a little bit wary of.

Lord Burns: Can I just press you on that a little more because I mean again one of the things that has run through a lot of these seminars is that in the changing world and with digital switchover there is going to be less public service broadcasting on the commercial channels because they will be under an enormous amount of competitive pressure and there will be some inroads made into that. I mean is it, are you coming from, are you taking that in a sense as a given and therefore that is going to be one of the problems and that in addition to that the BBC is making life difficult for those stretching circumstances by maybe making it more difficult to compete in terms of the resources that they are throwing to you?

Guy Ker: Yes, I think both things are tendencies which one can see happening. I mean there's a fragmentation of the audience and you know where people get their information from is fragmenting a lot to different types of media, different channels and that's all going to accelerate very quickly. And that's why you know in terms of this process and the BBC's, you know, Charter renewal, I mean I would say that we don't know what's going to happen in 5 years. I don't think anyone in this room will accurately predict what the patterns of British viewers will be in 5 years. There's enormous, you know, change going on and in that kind of process of course the ability of companies which depend on advertising revenue to bank on it is really put under scrutiny and question. And in that kind of context, if you've got one major news organisation or major news provider with a guaranteed revenue of such an amount of money, half a billion in your own submission, that puts an enormous sort of potential lack of competition into the market-place. And remember, we've got here via 50 years of big competition between the various players and we don't want to throw that away. I think we have to remember that what we want, what all of us want, is people engaged through watching Channel 4 or the BBC or ITV or Sky or whatever it is, not just with the BBC eyeball in mind.

Lord Burns: But there are two responses to it aren't there? I mean one, as you say, the BBC should back off and do less of some of these things, which I'm not sure that necessarily the viewers or the watchers or the mobile phone addicts would welcome. The other is that you try and support it, the provision of this type of material, elsewhere. I mean competition up till now hasn't taken place by people backing off has it? Competition has taken place by people getting up in the same space.

Guy Ker: Yes, I know competition takes place, yes, in a commercial world with people having an even playing field you know but if you've got essentially, I mean look at some of the BBC's figures. You know in some areas the value of the BBC World 24 hour news is valued at 25

million or something but then in other areas of the report you actually come clean and say the total aggregate value of this based on the value of the synergies and the value of everything else is actually 50 million. So that's quite a different interpretation of the value of different services.

Mark Byford: Just quickly, Terry. I think on that we were saying that it generates 25 million in airtime sales and it's reaching over 50 million audience every week. And on the public money, we are actually very open that you know this is a pivotal role and we make a substantial investment. It's 18% of the overall licence fee, not just for the UK-wide but for all the nation, regional and local services. But when you're committed to such a range of services in order to try and reach that goal of universality, the actual overall investment is rather good value for money. As we say in it, it's 25p per week for all the services together and most of the services that we provide are less than 10p a week. Now if it's public money, which it all is, we have a responsibility as well as making a significant investment to also be efficient and effective in it of course. And I'll tell you now, the American elections and the party conferences, because we know people are always going to raise them, they're the ones that get more scrutiny than any other, the United States election was the most important election because it was the choice of the most powerful person in the world. And therefore all our services have a stake in doing that story well. It means that you don't duplicate but it means that for the audiences that are touching different services, they have that story done well. And the scrutiny that we gave over who was there and why – and some of those figures are about technicians and getting the pictures back – meant that I think we felt very confident that our overall range of services that we were providing meant that we were going to do that story well. What we have to do is obviously recognise that market impacts but we have to recognise that the market impact must be less than the public value that we're generating in supporting the informed democracy. To us as consumers and as citizens, as Stephen said earlier, that those end results more than outweigh the market impact that we would have.

Lord Burns: David?

Professor Stephen Coleman: I think there are two debates going on here, one of which is about competitive fairness but the other is about your original question, how do you measure any of this? Are there any kind of useful standards of measurement? And I want to give a social scientist's answer to that, which is first of all of course take expert advice from social scientists. My advice is four points. First of all, not everything is reducible to numbers and I don't think public value in relation to informed citizenship is but that doesn't mean that you can't research it. You research it qualitatively. You ask people. I mean I've just done an evaluation of a very interesting BBC project run by BBC Online called the I Can Project. I decided in conducting that evaluation that there was no sense in trying to do it quantitatively. Numbers told us relatively little. What we could learn about are people's inter-personal networks as a result of being a part of this mechanism, what people knew, how confident they felt, particularly this notion of political efficacy. Efficacy, it seems to me, is the No. 1 political problem in this area of engagement. So the first thing I would do is I would say don't get hung up on numbers, think about what people tell you and what that means and what sense it makes to you. Secondly, I would say these measures need to be longitudinal. You don't necessarily ask people what they think of the American election the day after the American election. You ask them what they know about American politics in two years' time and what they know about how things work. Do people know how Parliament works? Do people know what the relationship is between Ukraine and the European Union and the United States and the United Nations and so on. And you ask them, you track that and the BBC is in a very good position to track these things and probably doesn't do it quite as well as it might but it can do it. The fourth thing is a very technical point but I think very interesting point to look at, and that is that you can use something which is quite new to social science, which we call argument repertoire theory. That is to say you don't only ask people what they know, you ask people what they know about what people who disagree with them would say. One of the things the BBC should be doing is asking people were you in favour of the Iraq war? What would a person who took the opposite position to you have said to you? What would you then say to them? It's a very simple and commonly used form of test and it's measurable. I mean you know people either score well on it or they score badly on it and it depends on where they get their information from. And the fourth thing that you can do – but this is expensive but I think

it's worth doing, I've been pitching this for a long time – is that you can create artificial experiments. I mean that's what social scientists have to do most of the time. One of the things I've been arguing for a long time is that you get 200 people who never watch Newsnight and pay them to watch Newsnight for 6 months. At the end of 6 months, you ask them whether they have become political junkies, whether they are actually concerned...whether they think that politicians don't understand how to do politics very well. It doesn't cost very much and it's one of the only ways you're going to get to people who are disengaged. Can I just make one final...

Lord Burns: How much do you think you'd have to pay them?

Professor Stephen Coleman: You're the economist. The other, the only other question I just want to throw in because we've talked a lot about engagement, can we make a distinction between engaging people and engaging with people – and I think this is your issue of tone. It seems to me that engaging with is about letting go and it's something the BBC naturally finds difficult because letting go means that there could be a diminution of its authority as a national communicator but it does seem to me that that is the key challenge for the BBC at the moment, that it has not only to talk to people but it actually has to allow people to talk not only to it but to each other through it and that in a sense means that the notion of service changes fundamentally. The old notion of service, which is the National Health Service, we will make you well, changes to we will facilitate a process in which you are a much more important and central player as a citizen and that's a political judgement that the BBC has to make.

Mark Byford: I think that's right. One interesting thing is as well as the old....

Lord Burns: Can we go to, Kevin I think wanted to...

Kevin Sutcliffe: No, I mean I talked about the tone thing earlier and I think that's for Channel 4 looking in. In a way that feeds into a sort of feel-good factor in a strange way as well.

Helen Boaden: What, sorry?

Kevin Sutcliffe: Into feel-good. You know the sense for me in the BBC often is whether it feels good about itself to the outside world and it's obviously been through quite a traumatic few months, so it doesn't feel good. And I think that really simple things like that communicate much more broadly to people who use the services rather than some of the more specific messages that we've been talking about. I think that's interesting. And I think though that the tone issue and how the services are used and applied is the challenge because people use media now very differently, in a much more guerrilla way. And for the BBC to try and somehow get in on that, which is what part of this debate is about, the facilitating, that's quite difficult territory because it starts to move into your area of trust, impartiality, because people use media in a much more proactive way now.

Helen Boaden: Can I just give a sense of perspective on that now. I totally agree with you. That's the challenge for us ahead but we shouldn't lose sight of the enormous number of people who still want very conventional mainstream media and I was staggered when I took this job to realise 30 million people a week watch the 10 o'clock news. They sit down and they want a built bulletin. They trust us to tell them the top 10 stories of the day in the way that we do. You know across the piste there are still a huge number of people who are not getting their news on-line. They may come to it, they may not come to it and it's partly your point, Guy, about the media village. Obviously we've got to spot the trends. It's incredibly important that particularly the BBC spots the trends and understands the need to be in there, you know, at the very early stage. And it's one of the privileges of the licence fee that we can experiment with all sorts of things like the Interactive 10 at the moment. It would be interesting to find out if people actually want to dig deeper when they're watching the 10 o'clock news or not. That would tell us a lot of information but it's equally important to remember that there are still vast numbers of people in this country who, actually their lives are very busy and they engage in a rather predictable conventional way with all sorts of media and it's just we just always need to keep pulling ourselves back to the fact things haven't changed quite as fast or as radically for everyone as sometimes we in our particular media village assume.

Audience Member: I wish. I wish.

Helen Boaden: Possibly.

Kevin Sutcliffe: I suppose I was making the point about you're offering the tools but there's a sense also, there's a sort of the instructions that go with them too and that seems to be for me the difficult area that's coming.

Helen Boaden: Yes, I think that's right. It's a huge challenge.

Kevin Sutcliffe: That you know, do use these things but you know we're a state broadcaster, we're heavily regulated, we've got our plan, so you're also then saying well the tools sort of work in this way only. And I think, when you're trying to get people to engage, part of what they're thinking is well just a minute, are you facilitating me or aren't you?

Helen Boaden: Well it's one of the challenges in moderation on the website. I mean that's always a challenge because some users of the website, you know, for legal and libel reasons we have to have moderators who actually tell people to back off, who then sadly email me and complain. But you know those things are very important but equally there's a really, as you know, an incredibly lively debate about whether moderators should ever be there at all and a lot of participants actually feel that's an infringement on their, as it were, person to person engagement. So that is a challenge undoubtedly.

Lord Burns: Could I raise, I know that one of the pieces in your paper which intrigued me was (INAUDIBLE) however one area where we've not achieved the right balance is with the prominence of current affairs analysis on BBC Television. Recent years have seen some experimenting, again this word, without provision in this area, particularly on BBC1, as we sought to build a profile of the channel. I mean I presume this means that we were spending all our time trying to get audiences and we were putting on things that people wanted to watch and we allowed the amount of news and current affairs to drift away from BBC1 and we've now seen the error of our ways. Again, what is the process which in a sense allows this to happen? Where is the monitoring taking place? Who is it who is keeping a check on the standards of this? Who was it who had this bright idea and what were the processes whereby which it was challenged and similarly why, you know, the process of recovery of this? And how much do you think should be on BBC1 and the very high profile channels as opposed to having this tucked away in places where minorities should seek to, you know would search it out?

Mark Byford: Well this goes back to Alice's point again about what are the processes of decision making around these things.

Lord Burns: But is it at a higher level of the issue. We're now talking about the amount of it that is on the big, the popular channels as opposed to in a sense the content of it.

Mark Byford: Clearly the executive itself and the editorial leadership around both news and BBC Television work out the strategy for the overall make-up of the channels. We do that collaboratively together and we do it set within the context of Building Public Value and our goals and our promises and then the other ingredients if you like of the channel as well. And what we're seeing on current affairs is that we recognise that there is a challenge for us to increase the prominence, broaden the appeal of current affairs, not just on BBC1 but across the range of our offers. What's happening with that now is that myself, Helen, the Director of Television, the Controller of BBC1, the Head of Current Affairs, we've all been coming together with some of our professional heads as well to discuss the overall challenge, how we can fulfil that promise as laid out in Building Public Value. We'll take that to the Board of Governors and the Board of Governors hopefully will approve the final strategy but it will be subject to discussion with them and debate. Clearly they themselves, as the Board of Governors, now particularly in the context of greater separation from the management, are doing their own review of current affairs with their own independent expertise. We will take obviously due account of their direction on that as well. So in the first instance it's us coming together and how we fulfil the overall goal but we'll still be experimenting. You know we want

to have a greater prominence creator appeal. That is about we're offering today Real Story; we're offering Panorama; we're offering specials; we've tried If on BBC2. We'll always constantly be going to be experimenting with different creative styles but the commitment and conviction...

Lord Burns: You've probably been worried at some stage that too much emphasis on these things was going to lose you audiences. I mean I assume that's what this means.

Mark Byford: Yes and no. For Helen and myself – I'm sure I speak for both of it, I'd be interested to find out if I'm not, but it's not just about audiences. Presumably you've got to engage. The 6 o'clock news, the 10 o'clock news, some of our current affairs provision has got to engage with wide audiences as part of our overall commitment to reach and to accessibility. But not everything must. We must also have the conviction to do the difficult, to do the original, to do the specialist. It's a range of different programmings that overall then reaches wide audiences but also specialist audiences and getting that balance right is the challenge.

Helen Boaden: And I think that's absolutely right and I also think we all have to accept that in multi-channel homes audiences for current affairs are half. So current affairs is something you actually have to protect in the schedules because it gets ferociously scheduled against and if you want to maintain its depth and its seriousness, you have to put it in parts of the schedule where you know there will be an audience that will actually value that. It's a very in some sense quite an alarming trend that you will have also picked up Kevin in terms of you give people more choice and very often they actually, they don't leave news interestingly – they leave news to some extent but to a far smaller extent than they leave serious current affairs, indeed any current affairs, arts programmes and serious documentaries. That's a huge challenge for all of us.

Jeremy Dear: But isn't part of this precisely the point about the whole broadcasting environment in which the BBC was working at the time, following on from the 1990 Broadcasting Act and the Communications Act and now most recently to the Ofcom second phase report on public service broadcasting television that to my mind and to a lot of the submissions that have been made to this whole process allowed certain public service broadcasting to be marginalised, moved out of peak hours, reduced in capacity. And in fact because some commercial channels because of commercial pressure moved them out for precisely the kind of reasons Helen's alluding to, so the BBC felt it could follow suit. And I think what I particularly welcome about Building Public Value and so on is this commitment to put these back at the heart of BBC1 and in kind of peak hours and things like that. The question then becomes how do the commercial channels and the points Guy made, how do they respond to that? I mean so far, as a result of the Ofcom second phase report, Granada are saying well we will cut from the beginning of 2005 our non-news regional output, Channel 5 news output cut, the possibility that from 2007 regional news programmes will be cut across other parts of the ITV network. To me this is the wrong response. One of the things we put in our submission was the idea of a PSB levy that would be paid from the profits of commercial operators, that those who then carry out public service broadcasting, particularly at peak-time, would be discounted from that and that those who choose not to would pay that levy. Therefore the likes of some of the operations of Sky would be paying the public service broadcasting levy. ITV, Channel 4, those who view are committed to public service broadcasting in that way would be getting that discounted. That would deal with the commercial and financial aspects of that, whilst at the same time making sure that the whole of the broadcasting environment was helping to pay for core public service broadcasting across a range of channels. That to me seems a better way than saying everyone else can ditch it and only the BBC has to do it because then you end up with that problem about there being a monolithic BBC and precisely the plurality of broadcasting, the point that was made, keeps the BBC on its toes but the BBC also keeps other broadcasters on their toes – a point that was made before about well Sky without the BBC is Fox News really.

Lord Burns: Before we break for coffee, could I ask if anyone sitting in the audience has any questions or points they want to raise? On this area of, you know, remit, purpose, what the BBC should be doing and how we measure it, I mean issues to do with accuracy and balance,

etc. I want to do in the next session, so I mean these are points in relation to the discussion that we have had so far. Can we have the microphone, Kate? No microphone? Well just fire away.

Audience Member: (INAUDIBLE – OFF MIC)

Lord Burns: Do you think the BBC can have any credit for raising the American voting?

Mark Byford: I'd certainly, I'd certainly agree with Sylvia there wholeheartedly that the measure for the BBC of supporting an informed citizenship is not singularly on what the voting rate was at the next general election and income being determined by whether it went up or down. What it is about is do we have the conviction to explain complex issues such that people feel engaged with the political process itself and understand the stories and understand the different perspectives and policy differences? That seems to be the job for the BBC and then it's for the individual themselves to exercise their right whether to go to the ballot box or not.

Lord Burns: You've got your hand up? Right.

Audience Member: (INAUDIBLE – OFF MIC) ...correct me if I'm wrong but I've been looking at the measures put in place and, as Stephen says, curiosity, discussion and engagement all sounds pretty good but in quality in terms of news and if someone is to be informed there's a difference between knowledge and (INAUDIBLE) And it seems to me that all of those measures (INAUDIBLE) so there's no way to test if people are informed as opposed to whether they think they are informed. So if you ask them is the news accurate, then they might say yes, they believe it is but it may not be. Who knows? You know if I am told that a million people are killed in Darfur, the only way (INAUDIBLE) So does the BBC actually inform people and then secondly, does it do it better than other information providers (INAUDIBLE)

Lord Burns: Okay. Can I just hold it and then take one or two more points and then we'll... There is no microphone I'm afraid.

Audience Member: (INAUDIBLE – OFF MIC)

Audience Member: I'm interested in this session that nobody's mentioned Radio News.

Helen Boaden: I did.

Audience Member: (INAUDIBLE- OFF MIC) Sky came out with more international minutes of coverage but the 6 o'clock radio news had far more individual items that covered a greater breadth but through a lot of individual items and it taught us something at that point about the arrival of (INAUDIBLE), the importance of visual images and how that affects the editorial response and perhaps we can come back to that in the next session.

Lord Burns: Okay. Yes. Behind you.

Audience Member: (INAUDIBLE- OFF MIC)

Lord Burns: There are one or two other. Here, yes.

Audience Member: (INAUDIBLE – OFF MIC)

Lord Burns: Okay. Another one here and then we'll have you.

Audience Member: Several people have referred to the fact that informed citizenship really goes beyond just news and information (INAUDIBLE – OFF MIC)

Lord Burns: Okay, well we're going to look at some of that in the final session. First of all, any responses from the non-BBC people?

Kevin Sutcliffe: Yes, I think it's probably worth pointing out that Channel 4, which is obviously a commercial broadcaster, has a lot of prime time current affairs and is committed to that and in fact this year has just increased its prime time current affairs output with 28 Despatches investigations and programmes. We've got an awful lot that sits in the week and at the weekends in prime time and I think that the challenge – and it's really to you about the future – I mean I think you know we've got some indications of the future – digital switch-off. You know where do we as a channel perform in multi-channel homes? That's key and a lot of effort is going into how, when switchover happens, what's our share and how does that impact on us? And of course that impacts across all our output, not just our news and current affairs or our public service requirement and they're all treated I think the same, that the public service programming on Channel 4 is high priority. Not only is it regulated by Ofcom, I have a Director of Television who actually likes it and wants it. One of Despatches on the Post Office can get nearly 4 million viewers and have a huge impact. He's very pleased and he thinks that it's definitional for the channel. And I think that Channel 4 is very committed to keeping that sort of programming fore-grounded and, you know, the move to 8 o'clock on a Monday for Despatches was a very definite signal and perhaps one that, you know, Helen noticed because you know she's thinking you know where should I put some of my output, you know was to say this is where we want to be. We want to colonise prime-time with important public service programming. And I think, just to go back to the main challenge, it is a few years down the road. As a commercial channel, how do we fund our ambition? That's where, you know, that's where we are. How do we maintain the standards and the range is slightly different I think for Mark and Helen but we are thinking about it and a large amount of effort is going in to planning that because clearly that's quite key for something like Channel 4.

Lord Burns: Okay. Jeremy?

Jeremy Dear: Yes, just quickly on two of those. The gap at the local level, I mean I absolutely agree. Last week or the week before I was at the National Assembly for Wales giving evidence about the ITV Wales situation. I mean there are some ridiculous things happening in the ITV network at the moment as a result of the commercial pressures. Soccer Sunday in Wales has now moved to a Thursday night. The Youth Eisteddfod was shown at 11.45 pm because it was the only slot that was available. Every week programmes are having their hours changed so that you cannot do advertising about when that programme is going to be the following week because they're being out of prime-time slots. The Tuesday current affairs programme on ITV Wales is now often replaced by a network programming. In many cases Champions League football is replacing one of the main current affairs programmes on ITV Wales. Now that is not just happening in Wales. That is happening across parts of the ITV network and that creates a political disengagement in the case of Wales and it could be in Manchester, it could be in Birmingham, it could be in Scotland and so on. And that's something I think the Ofcom report absolutely has to address. On informed citizenship being about more than Panorama or Newsnight, I think that's absolutely right. I'm confessing too many things today but I came to political activity through The Clash. I was a great fan of Joe Strummer. I listened to the band, read their lyrics, went and found out more about that band. I think the music, news, soap, drama, the whole range of programmes have the ability to be able to educate and inform people and help them to take on those remits on informed citizenship and that doesn't just happen on BBC1. It happens across broadcasting. It should do. It certainly happens across BBC TV but it also happens on radio. And if we have these ultra local news services that are (INAUDIBLE), which I very much hope we will and I hope they'll be properly resourced news services, but that will help even more engagement at a local level as well I would hope. And I think that is the way we should be going rather than just looking at what BBC1 does between 6 pm and 9 pm.

Professor Stephen Coleman: Can I just say very, very quickly Terry that Gerard makes a very powerful point obviously about the hitting homes, the Holy Cross drama from BBC Northern Ireland, State of Play. All these things contribute to the overall informed citizenship. Jeremy's going to be delighted because on Six Music tomorrow Mick Jones and Paul Simmons from Clash are live with (INAUDIBLE) to explain with their songs and the context about their writing.

Lord Burns: I tell you what I propose we might do because I'm losing control of the tone here, is that we should stop now and have our coffee break and then come back and just finish the responses to that and then we'll move on to the agenda we have in the second part where I do want to move on to some of these issues about impartiality and balance. 15 minutes.

(REFRESHMENT BREAK)

Lord Burns: Well thank you all very much. I've made already a number of mistakes this morning. The first was suggesting that Glyn Mathias might not be here on time because of the accuracy of the trains. The reason he is is that he did allow an hour flexible I think margin in between so that he's done extremely well. The second was that I missed the timetable for the first session and thought we were finishing at half past 10 and we were due to finish at 10.15, which means that we're now a little bit behind schedule. However, I am sure we can catch up. I'd just first of all like to give people the chance to in a sense complete the round here on the Panel from the first session and then I'll ask Alice to start us on on what we have in the second session, focusing on news and current affairs.

Professor Stephen Coleman: Well just very briefly, I wanted to agree with what Jeremy Cowling from DCMS said about measuring cognition as well as measuring belief and actually cognition is much easier to measure than belief. Most of these measurements are the three things you measure and they are cognition, belief and behaviour. And the thing that people tell the truth about least is behaviour. So we know from all surveys that in the last European election 85% of the British population voted, according to opinion polls, after the election. So self-reporting can't always be relied upon. I just wanted the other two points that were made that I wanted to really just endorse. The one about place I think is incredibly important and the place is not just a locality. It's something that is historical, it is something that is literary, it is not something that can be pigeonholed into, you know, the local news. And also the point about listening, which I thought is incredibly important and it seems to me it is something the government in particular, governments everywhere are terribly bad at doing and the BBC on the whole seems to the public rather like a government. It seems to be a body that says have your say but don't ask us to reply. And in the age of e-mail and websites it's very, very difficult to do that. If you send somebody an e-mail and say "This is what I think, please don't write back" then you are acting more like a Member of Parliament than like somebody who has an understanding of interactivity.

Lord Burns: Very good. I recognise a lot of that.

Professor Stephen Coleman: I've now insulted Members of Parliament and economists.

Lord Burns: Yes well that's fine, that's fine. I don't mind some of that.

David Seymour: Well I think interactivity is something we'll probably come onto later and the one, well the one thing I would like to comment on is the radio thing. We have touched on it vaguely but I think radio is enormously under-estimated. We talk about the BBC and we naturally think about TV. I mean, to talk about the 10 o'clock news, I mean I actually usually prefer to listen to the World Tonight and having sort of (?) TV news all day I have to say....

Lord Burns: I can hear somebody's got a phone on somewhere. Sorry.

David Seymour: ...which is a fantastic programme. And I also agree that, I mean discussions I have had with politicians and people who want to get over a message and so often we've come down to, it usually starts off because you can't ever get any message over through national newspapers. Where does it come from? TV's a bit difficult and radio and particularly local radio is terrifically important in that. But if I could just raise one other thing that hopefully we'll deal with later on. Actually on the agenda I see the question 'What does the BBC do to support civic life and national debate' which I feel we've not really gone into and I hope we will and particularly on the national debate where we've talked to a certain extent about programming without actually talking about the issues. And I jotted down here Europe prime asylum and these are some of the things which obviously affect me in my work

and I hope that in the sessions to come that we'll actually be able to touch on how the BBC can deal with those issues to make them part of a national debate.

Lord Burns: Okay. David?

Guy Ker: Well thanks. I mean speaking as an ITN executive who makes news across a range of platforms and current affairs, I mean I think the audience is kind of picking up to some extent on some of our own shortcomings intellectually as a panel because I think that, you know, there is a range of aspects of programming which contribute to this whole question and I think that, you know, it's not just the BBC. It's Channel 4, ITV and all kinds of shows and all kinds of interpretations of current affairs which raise some of these very important issues of modern life. And I think that, you know, we as a panel and particularly as a sort of BBC aspect, we can really be dismissive about some of those variety in that landscape and I think it's very important that you know people realise that issues like class and you know race and all those things are raised potentially much more effectively by a show like wife swap than by a very kind of straight-laced show from one of the BBC's offerings. And I think you know the audience are now picking on that quite well.

Lord Burns: Glyn, you were, I don't know how much of the previous session you were here for or whether you want to say anything at this point about...

Glyn Mathias: I'll come in on the next one if I can.

Lord Burns: Okay, that's fine. Helen, do you want to apply to any of this?

Helen Boaden: Not especially. I think a lot of the points will be picked up I think in the next session.

Lord Burns: Okay.

Helen Boaden: Although I am amused about the behaviour because people always said we love programmes about Europe and Northern Ireland and we discovered in the figures this wasn't necessarily true.

Lord Burns: No. Well let's move on to the topic of the next session and I'm going to hand over to Alice again to start us off on this.

Alice Rawsthorn: Well Helen offered a very eloquent preamble to the main topic of this session in her description of her colleagues in the BBC news team and she describes them as committed, conscientious, self-critical, striving for accuracy, impartiality and balance – in short everything that responsible journalists ought to be. So it's fantastically reassuring to hear that. Unfortunately, this is not the perception not just of BBC journalists but of journalists in general that's shared by the general population. And I say this, I should come clean here, in a spirit of full disclosure, I was very happily and proudly a journalist for 20 years. When I began in the early 80s, when you said that you're a journalist, very gratifyingly people looked impressed. By the time I left the profession 20 years later - and I hope this wasn't specifically because of my contribution to it – people did not look impressed anymore. They viewed journalism with suspicion. Now there are lots of factors for this and their perception may be right or wrong and I very much hope that it's wrong, but journalists are no longer perceived as truth seekers. There are many factors that have contributed to this. They all operate in an incredibly competitive market-place. Most of them – though the BBC's rivals would have us believe not the BBC – have been subjected to pretty stringent cost-cutting so they're operating on reduced resources. They are also dealing with increasingly short attention spans from a very fragmented audience which, as we heard in the first session, is increasingly cynical about what it's hearing. So all this has added up to what we could call the tabloidification of media culture and this, as we heard from BBC news experiments, hasn't been spared the BBC. Now how can the BBC combat this? I mean I caricature if I say that journalists are now viewed by the general public as being sensationalistic and inaccurate. It's a sort of re-run of the old privatised street of shame but this does have important implications for all news organisations and, as the BBC is the primary news organisation in the UK, it has particular implications for it. So this brings us absolutely to the heart of this session. How can

the BBC ensure that it strives for accuracy, impartiality and balance and is perceived as doing so and perceived as achieving it because it actually does achieve it to the best of its ability in its news and current affairs coverage?

Lord Burns: Thank you very much. Now that is a challenge. What does the NUJ think about...

Alice Rawsthorn: I'm a Clash fan too by the way.

Jeremy Dear: I mean I think we share very much public concern and concern to be honest amongst an awful lot of journalists about the increasing commercialisation of some elements of the media, about the increasing monopolisation of ownership of large sections of the media and about the increasingly shareholder-driven nature of much of the media that is out there. It is that which fundamentally is the pressure on sensationalism and on the quickest possible response when you talk about 24-hour news and so on. And there are enormous pressures on journalists who deliver scoops and exclusives and constantly to beat their competitors. That is a very positive aspect in some respects but a very negative one in some others. And I think that has led amongst the public to a lack of trust because they feel all too often that there are either commercial or political pressures from owners or government or politicians on journalists and on the message that is being delivered. And it's incumbent on all of us, not only the BBC, to try to combat that kind of impression. Certainly, as a result of Hutton, I think that the whole of the media had to engage in looking at these issues and certainly we very much welcomed the review that the BBC carried out under Ron Neil and the Neil principles that he came out with, which are informed throughout the document. And whilst we may have had grave reservations about the findings of the Hutton Report, I think it was important for journalism and the media to go through that and ensure that the values and the procedures were in place to ensure that the BBC's journalism in this case remains highly trusted. And it was a debate that happened not just in the executive suites at Broadcasting House or at TV Centre but actually probably in newsrooms right across the country people talked about well was Gilligan right or was Gilligan wrong? Were the BBC right or the BBC wrong on that issue? It's worth reminding ourselves that despite the criticisms the BBC remains one of the most trusted sources of news, not only in the UK but internationally, and there are lots of figures bandied around in the various reports. We believe out of what happened after Hutton that there were a number of practices and procedures that could be improved and we've put a submission in to the Neil Report and I'm delighted to say many of those were taken up and have been incorporated in the new editorial practices, for example, the fact that journalists should usually use two sources and not just rely on single sources. Of course there are times when that is not possible but when only one source is being relied on, it should be made clear. That journalists should be given adequate time to carry out their responsibilities. The pressures of 24-hour news, IS(?) , the end lines in people's kitchens. People beginning broadcasting at 6 am in the morning and finishing at midnight across a range of programmes create their own difficulties and their own potential difficulties for journalists and for accuracy. The regular training and updating in things like law and companies' editorial policy and things should be an integral part of career progression and things like that and that there should be clear lines of responsibility within editorial structures. And that when mistakes are made, or when complaints are received, they are treated seriously and that the most rapid on-air correction, if there is a mistake, because there will be mistakes – journalism is a human profession – that as quickly as possible those mistakes should be corrected. There's lots of other things around the question of using two-light, two-ways and things like that. What we are keen is to ensure that there are proper principles there but that they are not principles that put obstacles in the way of good journalism, that they aid good journalism, that they don't provide an obstacle to carrying out investigative journalism or relying on single sources or whistle blowers or whatever in particular cases. In terms of public trust, I mean I think that some of the most interesting surveys that there were were people who believed that the war was wrong thought one thing about Hutton and people who thought that the war was right believed another thing about Hutton and anything the BBC said or anything any of us said really did not make an awful lot of difference to what people felt at that stage. And I think in terms of the BBC's levels of trust, I don't think that particularly affected it but it's important that they went through this process, that they put in place clear principles and procedures and that journalists adhere to those and that editorial management take responsibility for mistakes that

are then made when those things do happen. And rightly important in all of this then is the BBC's independence from political and commercial interests that we mentioned in the first session because if one of the things pushing or giving people a view about lack of trust is that they feel increasingly that the Sun is always going to give Rupert Murdoch's line, whether it's on royalty or the European Union, then they begin less to trust it as an impartial purveyor of news. If you are free from political and commercial pressures – and I don't think any journalist can be totally free from those pressures, they are after all the same as anybody else in feeling those pressures – but if the BBC can demonstrate to the best of its ability and be seen to be independent of political and commercial pressures then its journalism is likely to be trusted more.

Lord Burns: David, you belong to this profession which is being...

David Seymour: Well apparently, yes. I, one thing that Jeremy said I think is very important, the obsession that there is now with scoops and exclusives. I'm not, perhaps I should generally with journalists before I go onto that. I mean the, I mean Alice says that the view of journalists is low. It may be slightly lower than it was before. What is extraordinary is the number of young people who want to become journalists. I've done various, I did the NUS student media conference a couple of weekends ago and it is, you know universities are full of people who want to be journalists and who actually very hard at it and are very clever young people. I went up to the Trinity Mirror Training Scheme in Newcastle last week and you know they are very bright people and they actually do believe that they are seekers after truth, although as somebody has pointed out that 20 years ago if you asked aspirant journalists what they wanted to be, they wanted to be foreign correspondents. Now they all want to be 3 am girls. That's not completely true. But on, I think the most, probably the most destructive thing for journalists is a thing that Jeremy's referred to, which is this obsession with exclusives. And editors are driven by getting exclusives, which means they drive the news desk, they drive their reporters, and it does lead to problems. And one of the real questions to be raised about Gilligan was that you know we all now know that Andrew Gilligan was hired by the Today programme because the then editor of the programme wanted to get exclusives. And the question should be – and this was done, I can't remember who at the BBC dealt with it, it may well have been Mark himself – that could the BBC just sit back and allow other news organisations, principally newspapers, to get the exclusives which the BBC then follow, and came to the conclusion no, the BBC had to be involved in going out there and getting news. I actually don't particularly agree with that because I think there is a danger in exclusives and coming from principally a political journalistic background, I know where exclusive stories come from - and how negative can I be about my profession? – and there is a problem with almost all of them. And in that your, I mean stories aren't, the idea, politicians quite often say political journalists make up stories. It is not true. They do not make up stories. They write stories or broadcast stories which they are given by people who may have made them up. Those people are called politicians. Now it's very difficult to deal with that on a newspaper but if you're a political journalist and particularly a political editor on a broadcasting medium, and particularly the BBC, how do you deal with it? Actually I have to say I think that on the whole the BBC deals with it excellently well and I think that, I mean Andrew Marr, even though he comes from a newspaper background, is I think a good broadcaster. I think one of Gilligan's problems was that he wasn't a particularly good broadcaster and when he did the 6.06, there was nothing wrong with the Gilligan report – and this is the other thing – there was nothing wrong with the Gilligan report that went out at whatever it was, 10 past 7, yes, but the 6.06 is sitting in his dressing gown. This is entirely right. You know everybody missed this to a great extent. The 6.06 presumably sitting in his dressing gown, feeling at 6.06 like all of us feel at 6.06 and he made a mistake, which I think it is true to say that it was 10 days before Alastair Campbell picked up that particular – was it 10 days? I think it was something like that – picked up that particular point. And of course what No. 10 then did – and I think this is the relevance of the whole thing to what we're talking about here – is that it used this one slip, and it was a slip, to attack the entire BBC output on the war and accused the BBC of being anti-war. Now I happen to know that, there are a couple of people I know who said before the war that they couldn't listen to the BBC anymore because it was so pro-government. That's obviously not what Alastair Campbell thought and my view of journalism is that if people on both sides of an argument complain that you've got it wrong, you're probably doing something right. So but I do think that...I don't want to go on

too long but one other thing I want to say and Alice talked about are increasingly shortened attention spans. I'm not sure that this isn't an industry idea because we are a far, far better educated nation than we have ever been before. And if going to university, staying at school to 18 we should have a shorter attention span, there's something wrong with education. I don't think we do have a shorter attention span and I think it's a debate that we have at the Mirror about you know how much people can read and I think it would be very sad if the BBC went down the line of thinking let's not have anything longer than 30 seconds, and you know Mark's already said 17 minutes on the 6 o'clock news yesterday on the Queen's Speech, absolutely right. It would be very sad if that went.

Guy Ker: I mean there are some very important points there but as a journalist of long-standing I mean I think that the hunt for exclusives and the imperative to get exclusives is part of the territory of journalism. And you know in a way there's another fundamental paradox here because you know journalism is all about rocking the boat. Journalism is all about exposing things that people don't want to be exposed and asking hard questions. And if we are saying that, you know, in the desire to not rock the boat we're going to back off from you know hunting for exclusives and all that kind of thing, then really we are saying that the BBC is ever-presently susceptible to political pressure because the whole point of journalism is that you are there to defy the political kind of you know orthodoxy and to ask the questions that they don't want to be asked. And if, you know, the aim is to kind of back off from being seen to rock the boat, then I'm afraid then you are already compromised to a very large extent. And you know that again shows the danger of a monolithic culture because if the BBC make one little slip and the government of the day can you know castigate it and kind of lash it publicly on behalf of everything it does, that again shows the danger to a democratic society of a monolithic source of news and current affairs and also emphasises the need for a plurality of sources and different organisations.

Lord Burns: Glyn?

Glyn Mathias: I also have a confession to make in that I was a journalist for the best part of 30 years and when it comes to exclusives, I always choose to remember the ones I got right. But just picking up on the point that Guy made. He's absolutely right, journalists should not be afraid of rocking the boat. But I want to put a slightly different perspective and slightly widen the argument while at the same time if I may just heading back over some of the points that were discussed in the earlier session which I just picked up at the end there, and that's about political engagement. The Electoral Commission has done a great deal of research on political engagement and it's quite clear that the 'disengaged', for want of any better phrase, are disengaged from the current political process not from political issues. And the media – and the BBC is included in that – are part of what they see as the political process. The media and the way the media handle politics is part of their perception of what it's all about. And the plea I'm going to make I think really is that impartiality is not enough. You can be impartially cynical about everything. And when I say cynical, there is a degree of public cynicism about politics and you can argue the extent to which the media are responsible for that but there has to be a degree of involvement in that responsibility and there has been I think a cynical tone, a detached cynical tone in a lot of media broadcasting about politics in the last 10 or 20 years. Myself, I date it back to the John Major years and sleaze and all that, which was accelerated this particular tone of media cynicism. But I want to put this in particular context with which I'm familiar and not make it just sort of abstract stuff. In Wales the National Commission did a report on the Assembly elections last year, to the National Assembly of Wales, and we've done, there was a section in it on the role of the media in covering those elections carried out by a team from Cardiff University. And it was quite clear from their report what came across to them was a negative tone about the electoral process, a great deal of coverage of apathy and coverage questioning almost the value of the democratic exercise. I put it slightly extremely but nevertheless that came across. We had a number of seminars subsequent to that in which we put the journalists in the same room as the politicians and other interested parties and it's fascinating to see what we're going to say in our report on the June elections this year, a report which is due out in December. And it's quite clear from that report, carried out by the same team of researchers from the University of Cardiff, that the tone was much more engaged, much more constructive. Instead of questioning people why they're bothering to vote, they actually asked people what were they concerned about and tried to explain what

the functions and services being provided by local authorities in particular and tried to relate the concerns of the voters to the political process. This far more constructive approach actually made...it's one of the reasons we cite for the increase in turnout. I wouldn't care to argue cause and effect but it was one of the reasons we cite. And so when I say impartiality is not enough, I think I'd like to see BBC journalists as engaged citizens. Whether that is a concept that will go down well with BBC journalists or any journalists. Guy's absolutely right, it is the role of journalists to rock the boat from time to time but it has to be from a constructive point of view in which they are attempting to improve the society in which we live.

Lord Burns: Okay.

Professor Stephen Coleman: Can I confess that I am not and never have been a journalist but I've been to the pub with some in the past. Well just on the point about attention span that was raised earlier, I mean I think that's a crucially important point because it's measurable. I mean again we can find out how much attention people are prepared to give to things by asking them, watching them. You know these are empirically observable factors and they are also culturally different. Dare I say the attention span in the United Kingdom might be different from the attention span in the United States. I think the issue about trust and confidence is something that we touched on in the first session and I just want to build on here because I think it's relevant. You might not trust everything and sometimes low levels of trust are quite healthy, either because you're being lied to a lot or because you have a lot of choices to make and you can only trust some of them. The key question for an economy, for a political system, is can you have general confidence in structures through which you make those choices about trust and that's the challenge for the BBC. The challenge for the BBC is this cumulative challenge. Now I think the public perception of the BBC is very clear and I think Glyn is absolutely correct in what he says about it. It is that there is a systemic embrace between journalists, including BBC journalists, and the political class and there...

Lord Burns: I mean this is a kind of Dracula-like....

Professor Stephen Coleman: Yes. Yes. And there is something sinister about this relationship. There is a sense that politicians whisper into the ears of the journalists. The journalists have one way of speaking to politicians and one way of speaking to everybody else. This is a cultural perception and I suspect that the resentment is understood least of all by the people who are resented, as is usually the case – politicians and journalists. They are the last to actually understand what most people actually quite commonly understand when they speak to each other in everyday life about journalism and about politics. What can you do about it? I think there are two things that I would say, as somebody who is not trying to tell journalists how to do their job because I think journalists have skills that most people underestimate. One of the things that you can do is to actually recognise where there is good journalism and I mention two names – both BBC, both not with us any longer – Alastair Cooke, John Peel. And in relation to informed citizenship, there you have two very interesting case studies. Voices that are almost inherently embodiments of what you can have confidence in. Don't always trust what Alastair Cooke tells you is going to happen in America in the next few months, don't always trust John Peel's love of the Clash, but you did, and did in these two cases, recognise that here is a voice that you want to be present with you and that's what citizenship is all about. Citizenship is about the encountering strangers in a way that is unthreatening and ultimately rewarding and that's what citizenship has to produce and that's what the BBC at its best produces and at its worst neglects. So we're dealing with a spectrum of confidence here and the question is how do we get to one end of the spectrum rather than the other? My second point is to say that I know of no occupation in which skilled training doesn't produce a movement towards a healthier end of the spectrum rather than the other one. We have long accepted that we are going to be represented by politicians who are enthusiastic amateurs and have no training. We don't, however, say that about journalists. We are beginning to train them but there is an incredibly snifty attitude by the journalistic profession towards any kind of training. And when Glyn suggests that we need to construct, engage citizens working in the BBC, I think he's right but I think it begs two questions. First of all how do we import that knowledge to people? How do you make sure that that's part of the training that journalists receive? Because journalists very often act up to their own image and, if their own image is that they are people who are always chasing after exclusives and act like

the movie image of a journalist, then they do that. And the second question is to simply recognise an engaged citizen is a contested concept and is an engaged citizen somebody who goes out on the streets and riots when there's a really bad law like the poll tax or is an engaged citizen somebody who votes in every single election even when they think the election is pretty pointless? And there are a lot of debates to be had around that.

Lord Burns: Okay. Kevin.

Kevin Sutcliffe: I think it's worth bearing in mind, I think with Gilligan, not to go back over there, but there are different sorts of journalism BBC does and it does it well in different areas and Gilligan was chasing a scoop on a news programme. It's high pressure. John Ware will give you a scoop on Panorama after 9 months, 2 years of an extraordinary piece of journalism. So it's worth bearing in mind that we're talking about very different sorts of things and maybe some of the things to think about is what sort of journalism the journalists you have do at different points of the BBC. I think that's clear that you know a John Ware investigation will land you a massive scoop, a massive amount of attention, and it will be right and you know it will be in the Annual Report. I do think though that we are about...and I am commissioning programmes all the time, and I've got a motto which Mark Thompson left me which was 'Make trouble, do it first, inspire change'. You know I'm not very big on mottos but it's actually quite useful, particularly 'make trouble' because that's what actually I'm paid to do and that's what journalists I think are paid to do, find out, not to be popular and not really to curry favour with anybody but to, you know, get down and dirty. Now what's happened I think is that the public have clocked that and changing the public's use of the media has led to a change in how journalists are perceived. Most of the time now if you find a story and you go to somebody, they say "What's in it for me?" because they now know there's a sort of different relationship with television. I mean the X Factor and all this sort of interactive role aside, they just think there's something in it for them. So our whole relationship with how journalism is has changed. And I think we're only just grappling with that. I think that's a very difficult thing to do and I think the public perception then of journalism has slipped because actually well we're just like anybody else now, doing a job and scrambling about. Gilligan, I mean we took a lot of notice of Gilligan. We looked at our procedures. In the end we decided that what Gilligan was was admit your mistake sooner, get it out the way and it would have actually gone away and it wouldn't have grown into the thing it was. There would have been no Neil Report. It seemed to me that that as journalists is the most simple and effective thing you can do to make yourself appear real, appear honest. Look, we get things wrong. Channel 4 does that every so often. We are also it's worth remembering, as opposed to newspapers, extraordinarily highly regulated. I'm far more regulated in what I can do, and the BBC are as well, than the newspapers. I would argue that, you know, being dragged through the Ofcom when you've made a mistake is quite an extraordinary you know sort of court martial really to justify yourself. So I think it's worth thinking of the context of how television journalists operate. And I think also then with the BBC, most of it, most of the news we're talking about really is just really good high quality on the daily news reporting and I don't see any problem with that. I see sometimes a problem with coverage – there's too much of it. I'd context your American election argument and say you monstered it and it wasn't necessary. I'd say that there were problems in feeding the monster that is 24-hour news and what that does to the repetitive nature of your output. How a journalist – and when I've been on location working for Panorama, my news colleagues even in a war go nowhere. They sit at the feed point knocking out what they're told. There are real issues that are sort of micro-issues about how – I'm sure Helen's very aware of these – how news is created in a way but I think across the range of the BBC output you know you've got an amazingly wide range of scoops and of exclusives and I think though it's just the context in which you're chasing them and you'll trip yourself up at 6.06 or 6.07, you will, but you should just go fair enough, a mistake.

Lord BurnsTB: Right. I've got some challenges here. How you, we have the issue about the obsession with exclusives. We have the whole question of whether impartiality is enough and whether or not this dialogue between politicians and journalists is generating a kind of cynicism in a destructive part of the process which is turning people off. Whether or not people have short attention spans or not and whether we pander to this. How you maintain this trust and whether or not you're training your journalists. So, now I think part, I mean as well as telling us that all of this of course is not true and none of this applies to the BBC, I

think one of the, I think the things that we do want to press on is the issue about the processes and arrangements that are in place to try to deal with these issues and how it is that one deals with them if problems begin to emerge because I think we all realise that you know things do go wrong from time to time and part of life is about how you correct that and how you in a sense avoid some of those pitfalls that you know about.

Helen Boaden: Should I kick off just talking about the Neil Committee because it's incredibly important and I was on it and it's important because it was really an assertion of back to basics in terms of journalism, which was pretty valuable, not just because of the problems around the Andrew Gilligan 6.07 as well call it, not 6.06, but it was actually an incredibly moment to pause generally because BBC News has expanded dramatically over the last 10 years and actually like a lot of things that grow quite fast, there has never been a moment of focus where you think what are we doing right? What can we build on? What are we doing less well that we need to sort out? What are the key lessons from that particular problem but what are more general lessons? And one of the key things that I felt passionately about is the gatekeepers to quality and veracity in our news programmes and indeed in our current affairs programmes are the editors. And the Neil Committee recommendations – aside from talking about two-ways and note-taking and sources – put a huge re-emphasis on the critical role of the editor. And that in the end has to be the beginning and end of quality and veracity in all our programmes. And we try to appoint, and I think we largely do, incredibly conscientious, thoughtful people to whom we then give training. I mean the Neil training, which is about, it's everyone's going to have to do it who does journalism, it's an incredibly engaging course. It puts people in a situation they could actually face in real life about someone who's whistle-blowing on a situation and it's not sit there and this is the rule. It's actually an opportunity for journalists at all levels to engage in the ethical and practical dilemmas of when you are given information that you're not quite sure what to do with. And it's been already, we've had an extremely positive response from our journalists because they're really enjoying the time and the space to think intelligently and thoughtfully about news dilemmas. So that's one of the ways we actually have in place and control. But just to go back to the editors, editors determine very much what goes in the programmes. We give them a huge amount of trust. I hope we give them enough support. Certainly the departmental heads that work with them, you know, hold at least two meetings a day in daily news where actually you look at the agenda, you look at what you're covering and how you're covering it and you critique what you've done in a fairly frank and open way. They're not easy meetings those meetings. And I know Panorama, you know under Mike, does exactly the same thing. When I ran File On Four, you do not let yourselves off the hook easily. I think review is something actually as a new Director of News I'm going to bring in a slightly different way as well because I don't think it's just the daily. I think you need to be able to stand back and look at the big issues and the big stories and Mark and I are both very committed to that. But in the end the lynchpin of quality is the editors and it's about getting the right people in place, giving them the right support and making sure they've got the right feedback.

Lord Burns: But the issue about exclusives? I mean the balance, how do you maintain the balance between asking hard questions, you know, the point about rocking the boat, not letting people simply come along and read out their press releases without....

Jeremy Dear: Aren't there two types of exclusives because the Daily Express ran a story to say that 1.6 million Roma would arrive in Britain on the day of the accession of 25 new countries to the EU. It was labelled exclusive. In fact I can't remember what the figures were. I think it was 6,000 people over the first two months or something applied to come to Britain. That was labelled as an exclusive in that newspaper but was clearly a total fabrication. As a headline, the story itself wasn't quite as bad as the headline was. There is the other type of exclusive, which are done by the tabloids media as well, done by the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, all the time that are serious investigative exclusives, that are the bread and butter of good journalism and holding authority to account and they should be encouraged. So it's not just about exclusives. The problem I think David alluded to and I did earlier is that there is a pressure even when there is not an exclusive there to deliver an exclusive because that is what sells the newspaper. So it's the two different types of exclusives.

Lord Burns: Could we deal with this exclusive and where it is that you want to position the BBC in this. Fundamentally the hard time and not just chancing your arm and hoping that, you know, you might get two out of three right.

Mark Byford: The fundamental part of BBC journalism is to present original journalism from the BBC set in a context of a rigorous editorial framework. So we have to have the courage, the conviction and the expectation of the audience frankly to bring original journalism from the BBC but it's got to be right. And there's a range of different original journalism on scoops, whatever. It can be a 10 past 8 interview on the Today programme where a minister says something that has never been said before and that's original and a scoop. It can be a John Ware 11-month investigation. It can be Andrew Marr in a two-way bringing you something of news at the 10 o'clock news tonight which is original in itself but all of it has got to be right. And I come back to Alice's original point, which is the context of the standing of overall journalism. That has to be matched with the overall expectation of the audience of the BBC. And part of the link with trust is about truth and accuracy, and for the BBC it has to recognise that the audience has a very, very high expectation of it. That's why we did have Neil and the Neil Report was to get to the principles of what our journalism stands for, that in every part of every place of the BBC they are upheld. So to be first and wrong is not good for the BBC. To be second and right is better. Also, if for instance with Arafat, we will not call that he's dead when we don't know that he is, and if we're slower but we're right, that's better. We'll commit ourselves to training investment because we believe what Stephen said, which is actually to train and invest in development of the journalist, particularly when there's a 17% turnover, Terry, in some areas - people are joining all the time - is to root it in those values so that people know what they stand for is really important. We know from research that actually an arrogant BBC that says we never get anything wrong and yet we're doing 200,000 hours of output every year, really, really is not living in the real world. So if it does make a mistake and it does get it wrong, say it and actually the audience feel more trust for you. So the development of the News Watch website, which explains some of the dilemmas that editors face and also if we get things wrong corrects them, is a good thing for the BBC. And on labelling about scoops, I think there is something about labelling. Let us be clear the BBC has the confidence and conviction for original journalism but it doesn't have to label everything as world exclusive this, exclusive that. Let the story itself drive its impact. And just to Glyn, I entirely agree that we do have to respect the political processes if you like but also offer challenge. That is the expectation of the audiences, is to respect the democratic process itself but within that context, set challenge, for people in power ask difficult questions, bring out policy difference, encourage debate and discussion and explanation about policy difference but also within a respect if you like for the political process itself.

Lord Burns: But take the issue it raises in a sense about the cynicism. You say, you know, the issue about challenge and trying to draw out what it is that is really going on but haven't we reached a situation in a sense where there is a need for some disarmament, whereby we're now in a position where politicians just basically are doing their best to hide from journalists because they fear that if anything gets out it will be treated in an over-sold way. This causes the journalists to press even harder and to chance their arm at times and you know you can listen - and I don't want to talk about the Today programme at any length - but you know some mornings as I listen, I think you know the attitude is as if everybody who is on there is somehow or other engaged in some suspicious and devious activity and if only I can press hard enough I will eventually find it. They will make a slip. And you know there is a sort of tone sometimes about - I'm not blaming this all on the journalists because you know I've worked a lot of my life with politicians and I know what's going on on the other side of the fence in terms of trying to sometimes stop people getting after the things that you don't want them to get after. But hasn't it reached a point where people just worry that it has become a kind of trench warfare at certain times and certain programmes and somehow or other the temperature needs to be reduced in some of these engagements? I think this is partly Glyn's point.

Glyn Mathias: Yes, the fact that there's also an expectation amongst the public now that journalists will go for politicians in this way because they don't respect politicians and it becomes a circular process and that is a problem.

David Seymour: May I say something, I mean I think this is a real problem. On the other hand, if a politician appears on the Today programme or Newsnight or any other programme and isn't properly questioned then the listeners will probably lose.... But there are other things. One of the things that really annoyed me on the 12 noon news programme on Five Live the other day was that I'd been to the opening of the new Lambeth Academy about 3 weeks ago, which is an absolutely fantastic school for anyone who went in there. Now there was a story in I think it was the Express or the Mail saying that the new Islington Academy, there was a problem because it's called Lady Magdalene or something and they are going to change its name. So the Leader of Islington Council came onto the programme to talk about this new school and the entire interview was about the name change and it wasn't actually about the fact that the people of Islington were actually going to get their first new school for 35 years, which would be rather good. Now I felt that that was wrong to do that. You know I hate to add words particularly on the BBC but I did particularly on the BBC. So I think that's the sort of issue more than actually sort of nagging at politicians but doing things which I would say is against the whole principle of what we're talking about today, the whole business....

Jeremy Dear: And doesn't that kind of derive from that Mark Thompson motto, the first part of which was make trouble? Now to me that's not the core of a journalist's job. It's to uncover the truth. If that subsequently causes trouble for politicians because they're trying to cover something up, so be it. That's a fundamental part of it but the job is not to make trouble. It's to inform, stimulate, debate and so on.

Kevin Sutcliffe: No, it's not.

Guy Ker: Making mischief is making mischief. Making trouble is a more fundamental kind of aspect, which I would argue is part of the search for the truth. But, you know, going back to the BBC's sort of profile in the community and this kind of aspect of trust in all that, I mean you know again I don't want to be the kind of nay sir from the left wing but, you know, aren't we in a position where if every single survey tells us that there's record numbers of people who trust us, isn't that actually a problem in a democratic society? I mean then you're starting to come, I mean I bet you know Stalin Radio in the 1930s had record numbers of trust and a huge approval rating and you know part of this whole thing is to realise that you know in a plural society there are an awful lot of points of view and if we start kind of taking, you know, talking down and being the arbiter of taste you know we are going right back to the kind of patronising aspect of this profession which will turn people off.

Mark Byford: If the context, if the context is as you've set it out, which is that politicians are smarter at avoiding questions or may not want to be putting themselves up, the expectation of the audience, which is what we must be fulfilling, the expectation of the audience is that we will challenge and that we will ask the difficult questions about policy difference or policy explanation. The tone has to be fair. The tone has to be fair but it also needs to be challenging and that Today programme 10 past 8 interview is a unique part of British life because if the Today programme didn't exist, where else would this be taking place on the radio at a national level? And it's a bit like we were saying about the 200,000 hours of output. Is every interview that we do wholly successful? No. Do we debate intensely among editors and presenters where we got it right, where we got it wrong, where we needed to be more challenging, where we should have allowed space for more explanation? Of course that's what we should be doing all the time but the overall expectation of the audience must be that we challenge people in power fairly but also very, very effectively.

Lord Burns: Could I have one, I'd like the audience to ask questions but there is one issue which was referred to earlier on by David, which is the issue about opinionated news. Now clearly we have an enormous amount of opinionated news in newspapers. In a sense one might say that is what newspapers are about. We have seen the emergence of this in the United States. So far we have been free of it I think in terms of broadcast news on television, radio. I mean is one of the things that's going to emerge in this new multi-channel world some pressure of some people to want to move in this direction and is this going to put any pressure upon the BBC? Can I ask non-BBC people first of all whether they see this as an issue because so far this is not a dog that's made any noise.

Kevin Sutcliffe: I suppose you mean Fox. I mean we do programmes where we flag them quite clearly, hour-long pieces, often bi-liney (?) pieces where somebody has a specific thing to say and I mean quite a lot of our output will do that. Within news? No, not at all. I mean Channel 4 news is a fantastic piece of impartially balanced news and current affairs sort of hybrid programme but I think outside that one of the things that defines Channel 4 often is its willingness to embrace journalists who have a take or have things to say but within that the usual checks and balances apply. What that does though is give a slightly more definitional tone against some of the BBC output. I mean I don't see Fox being particularly successful because I think it's on the platforms now. I mean it's American so nobody really relates to it but I can't really see that version of a British Fox here really working. I mean Sky is somewhere nearest at the moment.

Professor Stephen Coleman: Well I think we have a British Fox but it's on television. I mean there is a radio station called Talk Sport, which is an absolute disgrace, and probably spends a great deal of its time breaking all the regulations in the book. And yes, I think you have to guard against this. I mean I think that part of democratic obligation is regulation and it is regulation against bad practices starting but also against bad practices when they happen continuing. And so I think, you know, a very interesting piece of research is there to be done – I'm not seeking to do it – is to compare Talk Sport and Five Live and they are doing completely different things. And Five Live is a significant contributor to informed citizenship in Britain. Talk Sport is seriously damaging to that, particularly when you look at the groups of people who the BBC are not speaking to at the moment – the lower socio-economic classes. It's one of those groups and those are the people who are most likely to be part of that very pernicious conversation. There is one other point to make about citizenship in relation to all of this and that is that citizenship is not only stratified in class lines and age lines, it's also still gendered. And all of the messages from all of the research, very clear that the people who are most put off the tone of political journalism in Britain at the moment are women and this is really a damaging thing. This is the majority of the population after all who vote, who certainly contribute in very important ways to political discussion and who are excluded by a sort of broadly accepted cultural approach from much of the discussion that goes on in the British media because of this ridiculous prisoner's dilemma between politicians and journalists who will not actually stop the aggression towards each other, even though it is at the expense of the people they both need in order to sustain them.

Glyn Mathias: Can I add another category, which is young people? The most disengaged from any process in our society are the under-35s and they're also the people who don't watch news bulletins very much indeed. I was reading Michael Buerk's autobiography the other day and he said "Well who cares if young people don't watch the 10 o'clock news. It doesn't matter" on the assumption presumably that they might watch it later on when they got middle-aged but that's not an assumption you can make.

Guy Ker: And it's not happening.

Glyn Mathias: And it's not happening and it is a concern that you're gradually losing your audience because by and large the bulletins don't make a great deal of attempt to engage young people.

Guy Ker: I'm afraid that again, just very briefly, you take these points but you kind of come out you know willy nilly every few minutes about the process in this country. You know you have to say you know that in the two decades or the last decade where the BBC's news and current affairs is growing massively there is a major and rather worrying discrepancy between what everyone is saying you know is the reality of people not being interested, not being taught to, not feeling part of it, being put off by the processes and the reality at some of the claims in this Charter Review.

Professor Stephen Coleman: But nobody is saying that people aren't interested. What people are saying is that there is a very peculiar dichotomy between very strong civic interest in local affairs and in political issues and disengagement from processes and structures that

don't seem to work for people, which are not in fairness to the BBC something which is within its gift effects.

Lord Burns: I'm going to invite one or two observations from the audience.

Audience Member: (INAUDIBLE – OFF MIC) My confession is that not a stone's throw or hardly a stone's throw from here I have met a journalist and talked to him in the Charing Cross Hotel but such a conversation led to the loss of a life and equally that there are journalists giving up their lives for us to know the news. Having said that, the dichotomy is that actually the conversation we've been having has become increasingly one that's only really of interest to the media village and Westminster village. I'm sorry but I don't believe that the vast majority of journalism in the BBC or in this country is about causing trouble of exclusives. The vast majority around the country in local regional broadcasting in 9 out of 10 items that are on the BBC News every night are straightforward reporting of factual events that are happening where we require balance and truth and insight. And one could use the example 300 or however many it was went to the US but didn't actually give, nor did anybody else, the fundamental perhaps driver between the outcome of the US presidential election which happened to be the influence perhaps of the religious grouping. Why not? I spend a lot of my life defending the media to viewers and listeners whose view and fear is fed by the Paxmans and the Humphries of this world, who have a job to do but they should be the minority. And the vast majority of those youngsters who are taking up journalism should not be aspiring to the next Watergate because unfortunately there are only a very few of them and we would like to go back to the World In Action, Panorama type approach and have less of the Kenyon Confronts type of approach definitely. The vast majority of your journalism is going on through things like the regional and local programming. You're putting on excellent initiatives like Voices which are letting people actually overcome that fear of the media and you're getting social and public value training from that. But the other point I think I'd like to make is that to a certain extent we are also dependent upon personalities of editors and controllers so that you get patchiness. Edward Stourton at our conference this year said he cannot understand today's news and current affairs, even in the narrow sense that we've been talking about, and I think we all agree that perhaps the definition that's been set for this exercise by whoever, the BBC, is too narrow but that you cannot actually deal with today's news and current affairs without having a fundamental and deep understanding of religion in general around the world. And if you look at the BBC across the piste, some of it is excellent but some of it is non-existent and one seems to feel that it seems to be dependent upon the particular driver of the editors and controllers.

Lord Burns: Okay. Any other points?

Audience Member: Two quite separate points. I wanted to go back to a previous, our habits have changed much less than we think. It does talk about everybody switching that much. I mean I've just been doing some research on media literacy and it's quite clear that there is still a lot of stability. People are less choosy. What there is is a really big age divide, both in terms of access to all the new channels and everything and in the habits and that needs to be recognised. The second one is about I've been fascinated having worked at Channel 4 originally about the change in technology, the availability of pictures and particularly in the Iraq situation about the use of embedded journalists and what that does and says back to – somebody used the phrase keyed back in – and the role of the editors. And earlier on one had the availability of fly wall attacks meant that some news items never even figured as news items because there were no pictures. I was working in Pakistan. There were enormous floods in Pakistan but nobody recorded the fact that these incredible floods in the Punjabi (?) till about 2 or 3 days later presumably because there weren't any pictures. And so managing all of this and not allowing the person embedded the most violent or the most emotional or you know those pictures to take over what was really the news of the whole piece just seems to me to be an increasing importance and I'm not sure that we recognise it. My final point about trust is that the BBC is starting to include – and they did it on Sunday night or Saturday night again – include in a news bulletin a trailer for what was in fact to be one of their current affairs programmes. And this has happened more than once. And it seems to me that that is a risk for the BBC to start to make trailers for their own programmes part of their news programmes.

Audience Member: Yes, just a couple of points. Firstly it seems to me that nobody has actually mentioned which is underlying this discussion is the question of who sets the news agenda and what the news agenda is. And I think that that's actually related to this question about people disengaging from news and current affairs because if people feel that some of the issues that they are really concerned about are actually not the issues which are being covered then this is a reason for not actually tuning in. And if for example a lot of young people are passionately concerned for example about environmental issues, and this is a very high priority for them and yet they perceive that the overall news agenda actually doesn't take that as seriously as they would like and perhaps spends more time on other issues which they don't find of particular interest, I think that's an issue but it's also a question I think for the BBC about the relative weight of different kinds of topics and stories and issues and who decides that and what doesn't get into the news and (?) and I think that's very important. The second very important point I think is if I coin a phrase which was used I think a long time ago about bias against understanding. The whole problem of contextualising news stories, there was a report the other night on Colombia from I think maybe it was last night on the BBC, but we have a very short space of time to actually try to understand the complexity of what's going on in that country and I have to say that I think that for most people who did have a prior interest in that, they would have been relatively none the wiser at the end of that news piece. They would have known that various things had gone on but there wasn't enough there for people to understand and I think that's a real issue. I mean it's a dilemma given the time constraints. How do you actually get things out in a way that's understood. Look at the question of Ukraine at the moment? There's references to Western Ukraine, Eastern Ukraine but for most people there's no framework within which they can actually understand what that means and all the cultural and social and economic issues that arrive there. And then just one very small point. I am very aware of this question of credibility of commentators that are actually interviewing on the news and people are presented as so-and-so, an expert in this or that or the other and you have to wonder sometimes where these people come from and how do they attain this credibility.

Lord Burns: One more and then I'm going to break. Yes.

Audience Member: I just wanted to go back to a point that somebody made earlier regarding the fact that the BBC has an opportunity to take risks perhaps in a way that other broadcasters don't and to test that idea just to push things forward. The BBC's review of political programmes I think was very insightful or made the diagnosis that it made of the problem in engaging in politics but it would seem that some of the solutions for it didn't seem to match up at times with the diagnosis that it made. And I was wondering in terms of engaging young people particularly in politics whether the BBC job in a sense does not accept that young people engaging in political programmes is a lost cause and there's no point in attempting it but whether it's their job to look at taking in people's interests and issues and the fact that young people are the most likely of any group in society to talk about politics among their friends and try and be perhaps more innovative and see how that can be translated into watchable and appealing programmes for young people.

Lord Burns:and then we'll move onto the next item which is the whole question about local and regional level of engagement and then I'll give everybody a chance to wrap it up because I'd still like to finish at half past 12.

Professor Stephen Coleman: On the Internet?

Lord Burns: Ummm?

Professor Stephen Coleman: On the Internet?

Lord Burns: Yes, on the Internet indeed. 5 minutes. We must start again in 5 minutes time.

(REFRESHMENT BREAK)

Lord Burns: ...new media and I'm going to ask Stephen to start our discussions.

Professor Stephen Coleman: I'd like, if I may, to address this elusive theme of interactivity. Interactivity is something that all broadcasters know they are supposed to be doing but very few know how to do. I think the first point I want to make is that interactive media and using the Internet in particular is not really a strategic choice for broadcasters any longer. This is here, everybody is using it, it is as important as print or broadcasting, for certain groups and becoming more important all the time. So one doesn't, no longer appear trendy by saying we're in favour of using the Internet, everyone has to use the Internet. Second point is you don't use it on it's own, you use it in connection with what goes on in the off-line world and it seems to me that where the main gains are to be made, whether it's in a campaigning, broadcasting or hosting conversation you link what people can do within that rather peculiar and sometimes rather restrictive space of cyberspace, this disembodied area, with what they do in their homes, in their work places and so on. And Online always works well when it's linked to that and it always becomes rather freaky and marginalised when it's not linked to that. Now I think there are two elements of interactivity that are important. One of them is this notion of feedback and I think there are two kinds of feedback. There is a kind of feedback which is rather like dealing with a troublesome infant in which one says, you know, write me a note about all the things that are bothering you and I'll take a look at it at the end of the day. And I think that there's a lot of that that British Broadcasting and other broadcasters have been doing, setting up websites, have your say, your shout, you know, your call. I mean it's all terribly patronising and pointless and governments do it as well. And then there is something else, which is called having a large-scale conversation and conversations are incredibly difficult to manage. Conversations, we know a lot about conversation. It's a form of political participation that people do more than anything else incidentally. People talk about politics more than they vote, more than they join anything, more than they are part of any other movement. So talking is absolutely important. People do it all the time. The question is how do you organise that in a way so that they can talk to each other in a purposive way. And I think that's where one is actually dependent upon technique even more than technology. The technology we know is there to enable many to many communication. That's what the Internet does. The techniques that are required are the kind of things that the BBC or other publicly minded broadcasters can bring about, which is first of all to ensure that the people who are talking receive some kind of response from one another and when they're talking to authorities from institutions. And the other important thing is to create the kind of trusted public space online which doesn't exist as an equivalent in the off-line world, the grand public debating chamber, the civic commons. And this is something that the BBC has I think done quite well in terms of its website, which is incidentally regarded globally as an enormous success story. It's one of the only bits of the British media that is a tremendous source of envy amongst all broadcasters and communications experts in the United States, who would almost universally regard the BBC's website as one of the great achievements anywhere. I just want to go back to the point that was made from the audience about setting the agenda because I think this is where interactivity can be so important. Let me refer to this BBC I Can project, which I think is one of the more imaginative things that the BBC has been doing. The basis of this project is enabling people to answer two questions, as I understand it. Am I the only person in this position, you know, with a noisy neighbour or going through a divorce or with a disabled child having particular special needs and what have other people done about this problem? Now these are classical network questions. They're questions that you don't tend to be able to answer very well by simply going to one source. What you need to do is to use something like the Internet to create a networked conversation where thousands, possibly in some cases millions of people can say "Yes, we are in the same position. Yes, we have done something about this and we think that others need to know about this." And that is a means of leverage for getting broadcasters to broadcast about issues that they might otherwise have missed and I think I Can has actually been quite successful in linking in with local media. And it's a way of getting government institutions at a local, national and trans-national level to hear issues on the agenda that they might themselves have missed. So I think that's a...

Lord Burns: How would you persuade me that this was something that was a job for the BBC to do as opposed to some other organisation because, you know, the issue about how you deal with noisy neighbours and finding out what other people have done seems to me to be a little distant from the kind of core issues about broadcasting and the way that the existing Charter is set up?

Professor Stephen Coleman: Well I just want us to ask who else is likely to do it and there are two candidates and they are national government and local government. The problem with local government is they are split up into lots and lots of separated blocks and would be duplicating lots and lots of resources if they try to do this and realistically they won't. I mean local government I suspect is going to continue to use the Internet to do what it's been doing so far, which is to tell people how good the council services are and to enable a certain level of transaction. But there is national government and national government in this country and in most others has failed in this task almost to the same level as the BBC has succeeded relatively in this task. I mean by and large British government consultations online have not been trusted by the public for a very simple reason.

Lord Burns: Apart from ours!

Professor Stephen Coleman: Well I'm delighted to hear it but, if you tell me, but the key point I think is that the BBC, what's the BBC's particular role and what's a broadcaster's role? It's the role of a trusted intermediary. I think the problem about the Internet was a piece, there was a piece of rhetoric that many people subscribed to about 5, 10 years ago, which is that the Internet is all about disintermediation. You get rid of the intermediary and it's everyone talking to everyone else probably at the same time. Now in some cases the Internet might be useful in that context but certainly in terms of civilised conversation with policy outcomes or with some kind of outcome in terms of public needs being met, that is very unlikely to work. So you need the trusted intermediary who know how to produce things. You need somebody who knows how to make a discussion work, how to summarise things, how to gently say to groups of people "Look, we think that you're not doing yourself any favours in putting your argument across in this way." So what you need online is the kind of thing you have on television discussion programmes. If you want to have a television discussion programme about the National Health Service, you don't open the doors at 10 o'clock at night when the pubs close and say "Look, anyone who wants to come in, here are 200 seats. We want to hear what you have to say." You go out and you find your nurses, you find your doctors, you find your patients, you find your disgruntled people, you find your politicians. You recruit. You have a purpose. You make sure that the authorities know what you're doing. You make sure that they can respond because they might be directly criticised and you make it work. That, I think, is where the BBC, both as an impartial and independent body and as a body that is good at producing discursive events, has a very important role to play on the Internet at the moment.

Guy Ker: All this emphasis on sort of civilised, you know, civilised discussions and kind of, you know, not having people with kind of extreme points of view and, you know, make sure that they're not straight out of the pub, I mean actually you know if you wanted to have a lively discussion you would do it after the pubs had just closed. So I mean, you know, part of the problem I think is that as a kind of industry we are being too patronising about the content that people want to put into this. And, you know, I know you're not speaking on behalf of the BBC but you know the point is is that there are many, many parts of the broadcasting landscape and I don't think that we want to see any one monolith occupy everything. I think we want to see a variety. I think we want to see in some community there should be fairly free for all discussions because that's obviously what they need and it's better to have a free...

Professor Stephen Coleman: Of course there should but I think it's a strange kind of relativism which says that discussion amongst a group of drunks after the pubs have closed is just as civilised as a discussion which doesn't take place in.....

Guy Ker: No, I'm not saying that.

Professor Stephen Coleman: There are, there are training contexts for good discussion which one should seek and if you want a discussion about for example the war in Iraq, then it seems to me you don't want a free for all, you do want some moderation, you do want some summary and you do want to make sure that there is listening as well as talking going on.

Guy Ker: Yes indeed but you also want to make sure that the landscape that you are encouraging doesn't just apply one set of rules to every area, that you are encouraging local people that, instead of always sort of saying oh there's a new media possibility, the BBC will

colonise it, then in a healthy society we're saying to other groups "Fine, listen, there is a local TV opportunity. You colonise that. You get that on." That we are saying to groups, you know, who are supplying you know information and content to telephones and things, you know, there is an opportunity, you do that, not ah right, the BBC will have that as well. And I think that there's a whole kind of danger here that, you know, Mark, sort of who was referring you know before to the many, many interviews that went on and not all of them were you know 100% but you know how many of them were strictly necessary? I mean how much of this kind of endless talk shop and media empire that's been created is actually necessary and is serving what we think the real goals of this are, which is to kind of encourage speech from the people who don't have the voice? And let's face it, we all have the voice. We're trying to see it spread to areas where people don't have it.

Lord Burns: I mean I do have, I mean I still have some worries about this issue about just scope and how far it goes. I mean if you take an area which, well a great deal of people use Internet, etc. and the whole chat thing and to obtaining local news is to do with you know soccer supporters, who are heavily, who get an enormous amount of their news and they get an enormous amount of their interaction from the websites of the clubs concerned and also unofficial websites, which enable them to sound off about the manager and the management in a way that they might have difficulty on the official one. I mean I wouldn't like to think that you know in a sense all of that should somehow be channelled through the BBC. It just happens that this is a vibrant area which has sprung up surrounded by clubs, fans, etc. and it kind of goes along quite happily on its own. And so I'm, what I'm also interested in is how you're going to get plurality in this area as opposed to it all becoming submerged into a kind of BBC website.

Professor Stephen Coleman: But I think if I may say that there's a distinction between what we need to do as citizens and what we need to do in all kinds of other respects and, for example in supporting a football team you know there is an element of local citizenship there but it's not primarily about that. It seems to me the issue about citizenship is what happens when you have to talk to somebody who doesn't only not support your football team but doesn't even support the same game or understand the rules of the game that you play. That's when the conversation has to be stimulated, managed and outcomes have to be thought through. And I would be the last to say that the BBC website should either be a monopoly or should be the centre of all online attention and it never will be. What I would want to say is that this relates to the earlier policy I mentioned of the BBC letting go. The BBC needs to work with people who are running websites. For example, I recently did a study of a group of people called Net Mums, who are women around the country who organise women and toddlers information, where can you find your nearest playgroup, what sort of GP should you trust. There is absolutely no need for the BBC to replicate what these women are doing. What the BBC should be doing, however, is in a sense giving – and I think it should be doing this – giving a stamp of approval to civilised and useful behaviour and distinguishing between that and behaviour which is uncivilised and dangerous to democracy. And I recognise that that's an unfashionable position to put in an age of relativism but I think it's what the BBC should be doing. I think the BBC doesn't only have an obligation to stand in the way of vice, it also periodically has an objective of promoting civic virtue.

Mark Byford: I mean I think the challenge for us of this is how do we support informed citizenship through that new technology rather than the context oh let's do everything? So if we're there to bring democratic value, what is it about that technology that can help support it within a context of plurality? We've been a direct broadcaster for nearly 80 years and yet the Internet, as well as specialisation and debts and personalisation and immediacy, it gives a sense of interactivity and participation. So firstly, the BBC with its trusted brand value can be a trusted hub for people to engage with each other. It can also, in the very same way we were talking about the 10 past 8 interview, actually the people themselves can put the questions and in dialogue with the people in power. That's something within the BBC's context I think is very meaningful. The I Can was about a response to political engagement and first and foremost it's putting people in touch with the contacts that they can then find out more about that issue. And one of the things that I understood it was people sometimes feel lonely, that they may feel I'm the only one that thinks this but through I Can they can engage then with others and learn how they're taking forward that case themselves. Thirdly, I think the Internet

can make us more accountable ourselves. The news watch site that we have just recently launched does explain about embedded journalists and the dilemmas that we face. It does put people up like Helen to engage and explain their decisions. It also offers the chance, you know, for corrections and clarifications. But all these things are driven by a context of the audience themselves participating through the BBC.

Professor Stephen Coleman: I hope you're right..

Lord Burns: David?

David Seymour: Well I'd like to widen this a bit, coming from an angle that's, I mean Guy said earlier that we didn't know where the industry would be in 5 years. I speak, as I think probably the only newspaper journalist who goes around the country saying there won't be any newspapers in 10 years time, and I, what always amazes me, I mean nobody, almost nobody agrees with me but what I find extraordinary is that people who have seen the change in what has happened in the last 10 years can believe that the newspaper industry or the television industry can remain the same. You know we're talking about the Internet. The Internet didn't exist...well I know it existed 30 years ago but none of us had really heard of it had we 10 years ago? Texts, e-mails, all the sort of things that we are now using as part of everyday life are really terribly recent. And I am convinced that what is going to happen in, I don't know what the time-scale will be – 5, 10, 15, 20 years time – we will get a delivery of information which is fundamentally what it is, which includes the exchange of information with each other and with the government and with whoever it is – the BBC, the head teacher at our childrens' schools – whatever it might be, the supermarket, through some electronic form which is going to probably bring everything together. So when we talk about, Stephen talks about how you use the Internet or how you use emails, how we use television or radio, I think it's going to apply to newspapers. I mean why are we content on news or why are the readers of newspapers content to see still photographs of a football match when we've seen David Beckham score a goal and the ball going in the net 20 or 30 times, we pick up a paper the next morning, or Arafat dies at 5 o'clock in the morning. It's another 26, 27 hours before you can read about it in your newspaper. So I think all these things are going to come together and that the problem then comes in what we're specifically talking about today, which is informed citizenship, is that you will get to the stage whereas just as now you can turn, you don't have to watch Newsnight, you don't have to watch the news. You'll be able to get your newspaper, whatever it would be called, wherever your information is, where you could exclude any information that you wanted to. You might just get sport or you might get whatever it was – I'll call it newspapers for the sake of a better word – yet without any sport. And the real problem, and I've talked to ministers about this and so what happens in the probably not too far distant future where you will be able to choose the sort of publication – again for want of a better word – that you want to get in which a certain proportion of people exclude any, perhaps any serious news, any foreign news, any political news and that is a real problem. And I know what we're talking about now is in the short, possibly early-medium term, but I think that we ought to be looking a bit beyond that.

Helen Boaden: It's a huge step. I mean how do you have a national debate when actually people can personalise their views so enormously and this is not going to be stopped by anything, this is the technology, we make it perfectly possible and people will make choices? And one of the obligations I think on us is both to be ahead of the game in terms of the technology but also to have a sort of portfolio proposition that if you have personalised your news but actually something in that peaks your curiosity and you want to go somewhere else to get something new, we will be providing it for you. But it is a real dilemma and it's a particular dilemma for the political classes.

Alice Rawsthorn: And how do you ensure that the same checks and balances, you were extremely convincing when you talked about the checks and balances featured in the BBC's existing television and radio news system. How do you ensure that they're applied to the very different dynamic of online in the way Kevin alluded to working on Panorama, the fact that months could be taken to rigorously research, rethink, revisit and reassess a story. And you alluded to the different dynamic of news. That's so much (?)

Helen Boaden: That's why you have to be really, really sure about your values and you have to be really sure about your systems for checks and balances. You know our news online site is a very impressive group of journalists with some very strong leadership that works incredibly hard, just like the Editor of Panorama. I mean Panorama, the kind of investigations they're doing, what would be terrifying is if you did it in less than 9 months. News is a slightly different thing. It's not going we hope go for the kinds of claims without the evidence. It's a different deal as it were. But you don't ever abandon your core values and your core principles and your core checks and balances whatever the delivery system. And I think that's going to be an increasingly important part. I mean at the moment you can Google basically all the newspapers in the world if you want to, so people, I know people who may, I mean I was talking to Paul Gambacini quite recently and he listens to the first hour of the Today programme and then he goes online and he Googles the newspapers of the world, particularly the New York Times. And a firm proportion of the audience will continue to do that and probably get more and more but for the BBC, just because the delivery mechanisms change it doesn't mean to say you change your values and your principles and your editorial checks and balances. Without those you are nothing really.

Lord Burns: Jeremy?

Jeremy Dear: Yes, I mean, as Stephen said, it probably wasn't a very popular view and we kind of ignored it but he talked about a BBC stamp of approval for civilised values. Now I'm not sure whether, much as I like Mark or Helen, I want them deciding what are the civilised values by which I or my community or my society or my organisation should live. I think if you adopt that approach, it leads to voices being denied and I think to some extent that may already have happened and I think the BBC needs greater accountability to a wider range of voices rather than a narrowing down of saying the BBC thinks this is okay for you to hear and the BBC thinks this is okay for you to hear. And I think it needs to encourage a diversity of voices and some of the stuff that's being put in by a whole range of civil society organisations about partnerships, about localness, these kind of things are extremely important ways in which the media will change both through technology but also because people will demand that kind of thing in the future. And I think alongside that we need to have a proper debate therefore on things like the governance of the BBC. I am a wholehearted supporter of the system of BBC governors but I also believe it needs to be democratised. It needs to have an element of democratisation that means it's not just taken from kind of the upper echelons of social and political life in the UK but actually it reflects a broader and wider number of people in different organisations and that there is accountability not just to Parliament but actually to the citizens. And I think that is something that the BBC has a real challenge to kind of take up and look at the ways in which that can happen, so they bring the BBC closer to citizens rather than it going further away.

Lord Burns: Okay. Now I'm slightly stuck here because of my mismanagement of time but I think it does reflect that we have had a lot of very interesting issues to deal with. I would like to take 2 or 3 comments from the floor and then I propose to give each of the members of the Panel in a sense a final say. So if you could hold your words up and you know maybe we can still get through by quarter to or 10 to. I have another seminar at 1.30, so I am up against a bit of time pressure here.

Audience Member: I very much agree with what Jeremy Dear said.

Lord Burns: I'm sorry, can you keep them short as well please, your contributions.

Audience Member: Yes. I think an absolutely vital outcome of the process we have is that we end up with a ...thank you. I think it's a very important outcome of the Charter Review process that there is a means of avoiding a monolithic culture within the BBC that makes the kind of choices that the Professor is talking about and that requires external governance still within the governorship.

Lord Burns: Okay. Thanks. Any over here?

Audience Member: Okay. I just wanted to mention again this distinction between news and current affairs because news outlets are proliferating, news channels are proliferating but current affairs hasn't had the same support. We've seen it shrinking right across the spectrum of British television and it seems very, I mean it's clearly important that the BBC is not the only organisation which delivers current affairs but it's absolutely essential that it keeps its commitment to current affairs which makes no concessions as well as the current affairs which looks at ways of attracting the audience. And we've heard those two things sort of run together I think from the channel and there has been a sort of danger that the absolutely uncommitted, the absolutely long investigations, committed investigations which current affairs can do are not abandoned.

Lord Burns: Okay. Fine.

Audience Member: We're certainly worried that the BBC might be put in some kind of dilemma. On the one hand I think certain things on the public service broadcasting front look as if they might actually vanish. The Ofcom PSB report actually virtually writes off regional broadcasting and yet it says that in redefining that that we'll have to look to new technologies and broadband and so on, then goes on to say however there are no proven business models and they may take actually several years to develop. My worry is that BBC embarrassment at the notion of further extending its remit will sort of hold it back from going into areas where frankly there is a vacuum and I would, I think that as citizens I think that we need to be understanding of that.

Lord Burns: Okay. I think we're done. Could I ask, I'll start at this far end and I'll work round and end with the BBC, they'll be last, but you know a sort of minute on kind of final observations.

Guy Ker: Ok a very quick point, I think that in a healthy, democratic society we have to ensure that, of course, the standards are upheld and that you know, there are kind of benchmarks of the standards. But that there should be many, many players in the market and many players supplying different kinds of news and current affairs and that we should encourage that even if it means taking a bit of a different attitude to the sacred cow that is the extremely large and ever expanding BBC.

Lord Burns: Thank you, Glyn?

Glyn Mathias: Someone asked the rhetorical question who would do it if the BBC didn't? and I would point to the BBC website (INAUDIBLE) which is a Welsh language website which if the BBC didn't do it nobody would. And in that context I would make this plea for those of us who live in Wales the value of the BBC to the bilingual diverse culture that we have in Wales is if anything more important than the value of the BBC to a UK wide culture. And when the BBC measures its public value, the new slogan which it is now adopting, I would urge them not to make it London based values but to make it polycentric values across the UK. There is no sign yet that the BBC as a fundamentally centralistic organisation has actually accepted this and I should like to see them do it.

Lord Burns: Ok thank you Glyn, David?

David Seymour: I think the lesson for the future is that if we, in parts of the media want to do our duty and fulfil our responsibilities and get people informed and get them involved in life more as citizens than we are going to have to use all kinds of new technology to get out of the news rooms and studios and involve people. And I think the BBC plays the pivotal the most important role in leading that in.

Lord Burns: Thank you very much David, Stephen?

Professor Stephen Coleman: I want to agree with David, I think that this is about being not only a good broadcaster but being a national communications service, in what may well become a post monolithic broadcasting age. I will agree with what somebody said at the back about the fragility of democratic values and of democratic citizenship I think that it is

incredibly important point that these things have to be sustained and promoted. I am not arguing, and I hope I wasn't understood to be arguing that the job of the BBC is to create a monolithic monopoly stick guarantee of public values. My argument was that the BBC as an intermediary between the creation of democratic values by citizens and all of the institutions need to understand those values has a very important role to play and I would also very much agree with the point that was made before about the crucial belief that should come out of this review that you should think through Government's evaluation of the BBC. It seems to me that the BBC has got to address the very serious problems about the things that Mark was talking about just before. Not only having a website that allows people to say we don't believe this but having a process within the organisation that enables that to go further.

Lord Burns: Thanks very much, Jeremy?

Jeremy Dear: From my point of view the (INAUDIBLE) for informed citizenship would be an independent, publicly owned, publicly accountable and properly financed BBC operating in the context of a pluralistic public service broadcasting system. And at the heart of that has to be retaining and developing its tradition of high quality news and current affairs output. And my only hope is that the rumoured cuts that are due to happen at the BBC do not affect its ability to be able to do that.

Lord Burns: Ok thanks, Kevin?

Kevin Sutcliffe: I think what the challenges are are that the BBC shouldn't try and promote the acceptable face of Britain, but the real face of Britain. I think part of what we are talking about here would be hedging round similar things about the tone of the BBC and how you use it. For me the challenge when compared to Channel 4 is that the BBC is the Waitrose shopper in one way, or certainly the people that work for it. So how to get over the sense that it still slightly talks down, it's still slightly middle class and how that somehow is the barrier and also the challenge to incorporating and including people. I think that's really the main challenge and I think otherwise people will go elsewhere for their information.

Lord Burns: Yes. Mark?

Mark Byford: We have to serve everybody but have to remain close to our purposes and what we stand for. So if opinionated news service does come more and more into this country we are there to provide different perspectives and different opinions, although the BBC shouldn't have opinions itself. If you're frustrated about what we did in Columbia Jim, the new technologies do provide opportunities on news interactive, on the back of the ten o'clock news where we can do that explanation as well as on the Internet site itself. The Governors, if you believe, Jeremy, in the Governors as you say and yet you have concerns like the six o'clock news, statements of programme policies, licenses that we must be contracted to by the Governors, their own independent reviews that we have to respond to, make us absolutely sure, absolutely accountable to license payers through that.

Lord Burns: Ok. Helen?

Helen Boaden: I suppose to reinforce what Mark said about a world where we increasingly see opinion reporting to be fact it's incredibly important that we assert the BBC's strength as offering accuracy without attitude, impartiality of tone as well as content, fairness diversity and accountability. A kind of seriousness of purpose which has to be at the heart of all of the BBC's news and current affairs but we absolutely have to be ahead of the game on technology and delivery. Because if we don't keep up with the changing audience tastes we really will become (INAUDIBLE) And finally to the lady who was worried about long-term in depth investigations, I'm a current affairs girl, they are incredibly important and we will continue to invest in those. They are very, very precious to us.

Lord Burns: Alice. Do you have anything?

Alice Rawstorn: Well, at the heart of this seems to be the point we started with which is trust. The BBC is in a happy position whereby it is one of the few institutions in Britain that

the public still places its trust and what could be the pressures that challenge that in the future? Diminishing plurality in the public service sector is arguably one, I wish we had more time to talk about the impact of online on terrestrial news and current affairs programming as it is a fascinating as well as times alarming issue. Another issue I wished we'd had more time to talk about is 16-24 year olds that are not going to remain 16-24 forever. I don't believe that they are suddenly going to hit the menopause and engage with television. So they are the adult citizens of the future and they are not engaging with television in general, not just the BBC in particular at the moment and I wish we'd had more time to talk about that.

Lord Burns: Great thank you all very much and thank you for those who contributed or just listened. I think it has been an interesting morning and obviously it is a huge issue you know. As I think Alice said at the beginning, you know, for many people the BBC is about citizenship and about news and current affairs and the handling of this as we go forward is a very big part of this review. Thank you very much.