

The future of the BBC

A couple of tweets by the Culture Secretary does not create a new policy. It appears for the next few years the Licence Fee remains, though for a couple of years it may not increase. What she has done is invite those interested to debate the future financing of this important national institution.

The Licence fee is becoming increasingly difficult to collect as many people turn to social media and commercial entertainment and news services which they say they can legally access without paying the Licence fee. The Fee is also resented by more people who are paying for access to non BBC service but still have to pay the tax because of the way they watch other services. The BBC continues to antagonise people who legally do not need to pay with their intimidating emails and messages demanding payment.

One of the reasons BBC support is dropping is the attitudes and content of much BBC output. Although the BBC sought to be impartial over the formal period of the EU referendum. for the rest of the time before and after , it is remorselessly pro EU putting the EU case against the UK and refusing to treat the EU to critical pieces on its policies and on its ways of arriving at them in the way it does for any UK government. It campaigns relentlessly for net zero policies, weaving them into the fabric of many of its programmes, and favours the experts of world organisations however wrong they turn out to be. It plays up Scottish and Welsh identity but refuses similar treatment for England.

It also has some great back catalogue material, employs some talented and interesting people and produces some good programmes. If it wishes to re establish itself as the accepted voices of the UK it needs to become the people's BBC. I suggest that the government should now move to decriminalise the licence fee, making it a bill like other household bills. Enforcement occupies too much time and resource in magistrates courts. The BBC should also be told to offer the same level of support and service to England that it shows to Scotland by having BBC Scotland.