

Jane Hunt MP



House of Commons

15 May 2020

Dear local residents,

Thank you to those who have contacted me about the future of TV licences.

The way audiences consume content has shifted dramatically in recent years and, as we move into an increasingly digital age, with more and more channels to watch and platforms to choose from, I believe the time has come to think carefully about how the BBC – and indeed public service broadcasting more generally – can stay relevant in the years ahead. A key part of this is considering how to ensure the TV licence fee remains relevant in this changing media landscape.

I know that many people consider it an anachronism that you can be imprisoned effectively for not paying for your TV Licence. I, therefore, welcome that a [consultation](#) has been held on whether to decriminalise licence fee evasion and look forward to seeing the Government's response. This consultation will help ensure we have a fair and proportionate approach to licence fee penalties and payments.

The consultation did not ask for views on any other changes to the TV licence, and is clear that decriminalisation of licence fee evasion would have an impact on BBC funding. I appreciate that the current licence fee arrangements are a core part of the BBC's funding, so I am pleased the Government has indicated that, if it decides to take decriminalisation forward, it will consider the impact of it in the context of the overall licence fee settlement for 2022 onwards, with negotiations beginning later this year.

Finally, I am aware that there has been some speculation in the press about the potential scaling back of BBC services. As a local MP, I believe that BBC regional services, such as local radio, play an important part in maintaining local connections with communities throughout the UK. I would stress that the consultation was purely on whether to decriminalise non-payment of the licence fee.

I hope that this information is helpful. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jane'.

Jane Hunt MP

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