

The value of localism - what's the case for local media?

**A Voice of the Listener & Viewer Seminar supported by Ofcom and
The Centre for Media Research, University of Ulster**



Wednesday 23 November 2011

4.00 – 6.00 pm

University of Ulster, Belfast Campus, Room B82D23, York St, Belfast BT15 1ED

Admission free, refreshments provided

Northern Ireland has long been the home of a range of lively local media. UTV is one of only two commercial TV companies still independent of ITV PLC (the other is Scottish Television, STV); BBC Northern Ireland's news coverage has an award-winning record; there are 21 local commercial and community radio stations on air in Northern Ireland and nearly every small community has at least one local newspaper. On a recent visit to Northern Ireland, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Jeremy Hunt, claimed

'Local TV will contribute to growth in the creative industries, develop local journalism and help to bring communities together around a shared voice and interest. . . . These new, local TV services will be a fundamental change in how people get information about their own communities, and how they hold their representatives to account.'

In contrast, more recently, the BBC announced major cuts in local radio services, arising from the Government imposed licence-fee freeze. So how much do local media really matter? Panelist Pat Loughrey, former BBC Head of Nations and Regions said 'Tip O'Neil said that "all politics is local". All news is ultimately local too. In any hierarchy of audience need, local news comes first. Sadly, those needs are seldom reflected in political or corporate priorities.'

This seminar - the first VLV event in Northern Ireland for 15 years - will discuss local media provision from a variety of perspectives – industry, regulatory' political, professional and educational.

Invited speakers include:

Dave Hyndman, Community Media Director of local TV station, NvTv

Mike Nesbitt, NI Assembly Member for Strangford and former UTV journalist

David Mahoney, Director of Content Policy, Ofcom

Maggie Swarbrick, Director, MA in Journalism, University of Ulster, and BBC broadcast journalist

Professor Pat Loughrey, former Controller, BBC Northern Ireland and BBC Director, Nations and Regions from 2000 - 2009. He is currently Warden of Goldsmiths College, University of London and a Visiting Professor at the School of Media, Film and Journalism, University of Ulster.

Chair: John Rosborough, award-winning radio producer and former radio executive, and member, Voice of the Listener & Viewer

Admission is free but participants need to register their attendance.

Please contact: Linda Forbes at Linda.Forbes@vlv.org.uk or call 01474 338 711

For further information about VLV, Ofcom (Belfast) and the CMR, contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Voice of the Listener & Viewer (VLV) is an independent, non-profit-making association**, free from political, commercial and sectarian affiliations, working for quality and diversity in British broadcasting. VLV represents the interests of listeners and viewers as citizens and consumers across the full range of broadcasting issues. VLV is concerned with the structures, regulation, funding and institutions that underpin the British Broadcasting system. VLV does not handle complaints but is in touch with Members of Parliament, Government, media regulators and broadcasters; publishes briefings, responses to public consultations and a quarterly newsletter; holds conferences and other events in different parts of the UK, open to the public at affordable prices; organises visits for its members to broadcasting centres and holds annual Student Essay Competitions and Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting.