

"Working for quality
and diversity in
British broadcasting"



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**Press Release
Immediate**

**11th November 2010
17/10**

MARK THOMPSON TO SPEAK AT VLV CONFERENCE ON 24 NOVEMBER BBC DIRECTOR GENERAL WILL GIVE KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM VLV MEMBERS AND LICENCE PAYERS

BBC Director General Mark Thompson will be among the speakers at VLV's Autumn Conference in London on Thursday November 24th along with the Chairman of Channel 4, Lord (Terry) Burns; Chairman of the Consumers' Association and Professor Emeritus, London Business School, Patrick Barwise; and BBC 4 Controller Richard Klein.

In its immediate response to the Coalition Government's decisions on the BBC licence fee settlement and changes to the remit and powers of Ofcom, the media regulator, Voice of the Listener & Viewer (VLV) announced on October 28 its intention to hold a series of events under the title *Broadcasting Matters - Your Chance to Ask* to give broadcasting decision-makers an opportunity to explain - and licence-payers a platform to interrogate them - about the implications for audiences of a six-year freezing of the BBC licence-fee combined with major additional responsibilities including the:

- ❖ The World Service
- ❖ The Monitoring Service
- ❖ S4C (Welsh Language TV Channel)
- ❖ 'Superfast' broadband roll-out in rural areas
- ❖ New Local TV services.

Mark Thompson's participation in VLV's autumn conference is a welcome first step in VLV's *Broadcasting Matters - Your Chance to Ask* campaign to give the licence-paying public their voice on the likely implications and consequences of the BBC settlement.

Later events will include a re-scheduled evening with Secretary of State for Culture, Media, the Olympics and Sport, Jeremy Hunt MP. Mr Hunt was to have spoken to VLV members and guests on 24 October but was called away on urgent business by the Prime Minister.

Commenting, VLV President, Jocelyn Hay said: "We are delighted that the BBC Director General has agreed to accept this invitation to speak to VLV members and licence payers and to take questions about the recent proposals. We believe it will provide their first opportunity to do so. We are equally pleased that the Secretary of State will also address VLV members and take questions about the recently announced changes. As the chair of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee has said, neither Parliament nor the licence fee paying public were consulted or given an opportunity to debate the proposals before their publication."

John Whittingdale, Chairman of the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee announcing plans for a session with the BBC next month, stated:

"This settlement has huge ramifications for the BBC, yet it was concluded in an unprecedentedly short period of time with no opportunity for wider consultation. Despite its significance for the BBC and viewers, Parliament has had almost no opportunity to date for scrutiny."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION and conference tickets please contact: Linda Forbes, Conference Administrator on 01474 338711, Linda.Forbes@vlv.org.uk, info@vlv.org.uk or visit www.VLV.org.uk

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Registered office: Unit 9, The Old Rectory Business Centre, Springhead Road, Northfleet, Kent DA11 8HN

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