



# **BBC Charter Review Consultation**

Response from the Members Working  
Group on Cornish Minority Status

# **Keskussulyans Daswel Chartour an Kortyb**

Gorthyp dhyworth Bagas Oberi an Eseli war  
Savla Minoryta Kernewek

8 October 2015

## **Foreword from Cllr Bert Biscoe, Chair of the Working Group**

Aswonvos a-dhiwedhes an Gernowyon avel minorityta kenedhlek re beu dynerghys gans meur a lowena. Y trehav an gorher a-dhywar bledhynnyow an ansurneth, omdhout ha difyskneth, hag y prof an ambos a bobel vretennek dasnerthhes owth omsevel dhe'n chalenjys yw enebys gans lowender ha poll. Komprehendyans yn-dann skoos an Akordyans Framweyth Europek rag Difresyans a Vinorytys Kenedhlek a brof chalenj dhe'n fondyansow bretennek a-dro dhe'n fordh may tyghtons an Gernowyon – chalenj hag a wortheb yn posedhek dhe dhasnowydhyans, dhe dhesehdans yn kehavalennow a frankedh ha revrons hag a fram agan kowethas, ha chalenj hag a ambos kussul nowydh, hwithransow nowydh, fordhow nowydh a weles, a gewsel hag a ynterweythresa.

Dasnowydhyans an Chartour a brof dhe'n Korteb an chons a-brys dhe dasvynsa y nesheans dhe Gernow – dhe omworra ha skoodhya, dhe brofya arethvaow, nag yw yn unnik rag ravshyans notyansel mes rag an diskonfortow ha konvedhes chanjys a-bervedh rag kavos klerder hag ervirans, ha bos konvedhys gans fondyansow poblek, kemenethow ha kenedhlow yn tevri, hag a gows dhedhi yn tidro. Hwithrans a revrons nowydh kevys, diank dhyworth ragvrens, furvyans a fordh brederi nowydh ha fordhow nowydh a weles ha gorthebi dhe Gernow ha'y fobel ewn-henwys – a yntan an 'minorityta kenedhlek' ma. Yth yw tybyansow hag yntanans, keffrys ha chonsyow a'n par ma hag a lostlever gorthyp Konsel Kernow dhe geskussulyans Dasnowydhyans Chartour Korteb.

The recent recognition of the Cornish as a national minority has been greeted with much joy. It lifts the lid on years of uncertainty, self-doubt and inertia, and offers the promise of a reinvigorated British people rising to the challenges it faces with relish and intelligence. Inclusion under the auspices of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities offers a challenge to British institutions about how they treat the Cornish – a challenge which responds positively to renewal, to an adjustment in the equations of freedom and respect which frame our society, and a challenge which promises new expressions, new explorations, new ways of seeing, speaking and interacting.

The Charter renewal offers the BBC the timely opportunity to recalibrate its approach to Cornwall – to engage and support, to offer platforms not so much for observational rapture but for the discomforts and altered perceptions from within to find clarity and resolution, and to be understood and addressed by public institutions, communities and, indeed, nations. The exploration of new-found respect, the escape from prejudice, the forming of new thinking and new ways of seeing and responding to Cornwall and its eponymous People – excites this 'national minority'. It is such ideas and excitement, such opportunities as this which prompt Cornwall Council's response to the BBC Charter Renewal consultation.

## Introduction

Cornwall Council unreservedly supports and values the role of the BBC as a public service broadcaster, making it uniquely positioned to serve the public in all its diverse forms.

The BBC has a fundamental role to play in our democratic society and should be protected from political and commercial pressures, to ensure it serves the public's rights to freedom of expression and freedom of information.

Crucially, the following defining features of public service broadcasting should be enshrined, and in some cases given greater prominence, as part of the next Royal Charter and Agreement:

- Accessible to all
- Serving the public interest in all its shapes
- Emphasis on quality, balance and impartiality
- Commitment to education of the public
- Freedom to produce challenging and controversial programming
- Independent from political and commercial interference
- Forum for expression of national cultural identity
- Provisions for minorities

It is this last principle, specifically the support given to native languages such as Cornish, which is our primary concern and the focus of the Council's response.

In formulating this response, we have incorporated the views of members of the public at the Gorsedh Kernow conference in September 2015.

### **Q 1: How can the BBC's public purposes be improved so that there is more clarity about what the BBC should achieve?**

It is vital that the BBC continues to be underpinned by its six public purposes. We consider the most important purpose of the BBC is to 'represent[s] the UK, its nations, regions and communities' (public purpose no. 4).

The Charter Review is a high profile opportunity for the BBC to:

- Demonstrate its commitment to representing the diverse communities across the UK by acknowledging the recognition of the Cornish as a protected national minority in the UK;
- State how it is going to fulfil its obligations under Article 9 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities; and
- Outline how it will provide Cornwall with the same level, and type, of support it provides to other protected national minorities (the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish).

Information about the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is set out at the end of our response.

Lord Wigley recently highlighted in the House of Lords debate (10 September 2015) how much the BBC has done for Wales to help the Welsh better understand themselves and interpret their national and local life for the people of Wales and the wider world. We request the same level of support for the Cornish to do the same.

This comes at a time when Cornwall has successfully negotiated an historic Devolution Deal with Government and when there is a wider discussion about the future of the United Kingdom. It is vital that the UK better understands Cornwall. An important part of this is reviewing the BBC's approach to the regions, which seems to be on the basis of the old Government Offices. There is a need to rethink this approach so that the BBC can communicate the unique position of Cornwall within the UK.

Over the past year we have been working closely with significant public organisations and national funding bodies to develop opportunities following on from the recognition of the Cornish under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This includes the Art Council and Devon and Cornwall Police Force. We welcome this opportunity to open a dialogue with the BBC to investigate and develop opportunities going forward.

## **Q 2: Which elements of universality are most important for the BBC?**

We believe that the BBC should focus on underserved audiences with its output especially in Cornwall where the relative high cost of the license fee (in comparison to low average wages) calls for the need for distinctive programming. The Charter Review is an opportunity to develop proposals which:

*"lead to a more creative, more distinctive BBC, and a BBC which is more personal to all of us"* (Tony Hall 7 September 2015).

We recognise and appreciate the financial pressure on the BBC in the current economic climate. We also welcome the BBC's ambition to do more online. To do achieve more with less, we would like to work with the BBC locally and nationally to achieve the following three ambitions.

Ambition 1: Programming that reflects the reality for Cornwall – whether online, TV or on radio. This would be demonstrated by:

- More news reporting on local issues covering major events
- Programming that provides more regular output in Kernewek (Cornish language) – Kernewek is a protected language under the European Charter for the Protection of Regional or Minority Languages
- Programming that reflects both the heritage of Cornwall and popular culture.

- Programming that demonstrates to the rest of the UK that Cornwall has more to offer than an amazing holiday destination
- Programming that portrays the Cornish people in a balanced way, not only in historical drama but also in current affairs and contemporary culture.

Ambition 2: Develop BBC TV programming in Cornwall. This would be demonstrated by:

- Distinctive programming, expanding the Cornish slots on Inside Out and Politics SW
- Establishing a BBC Kernow
- Funding for Cornish language programmes (with English subtitles)
- Funding to provide English-language television programmes emanating from Cornwall

Ambition 3: Build upon other media opportunities

- Continue to build on the good work of BBC Radio Cornwall by developing more unique programming bespoke to Cornwall
- Develop online resources (including via IPlayer)

It is worth noting that the digital/IT/media is a growing sector in the Cornwall economy with approximately 10,000 jobs reliant on the cultural sector.

We would like to work with the BBC to investigate how to maximise the opportunities for commissioning Cornish language programming. As part of this, we would like to open a dialogue about a programme budget for Cornwall.

### **Q 3: Should Charter Review formally establish a set of values for the BBC?**

The BBC has identified 'diversity' as a potential value for the BBC. There is an urgent need to include protected national minorities within the list of 'diversity' groups identified in order to ensure that the BBC workforce (both on screen and behind the camera) is representative. In order for this to be possible, it is vital that the talent pool is developed. The BBC has a great role to play in training and developing people's skills and there is an opportunity here for the BBC to work more closely with local media and production companies in Cornwall.

Additionally, we request that the BBC take an in-depth look at the portrayal and inclusion of Cornish people, including undertaking research and a public consultation. There is a need to challenge discrimination against the Cornish. It is important to note that the Police are now recording hate incidents and hate crimes against Cornish people.

## Notes

In 2014 the Cornish were granted protected national minority status under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This means the Cornish have the same recognition as the Welsh, Scots and Northern Irish. This follows on from the official recognition of the Cornish language (Kernewek) in 2003 under the European Charter for the Protection of Regional or Minority Languages.

The BBC has a key role to play in maintaining and promoting Cornish language and culture. Article 9 of the Framework Convention outlines the responsibility of the state and media:

### Article 9

1 The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

2 Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.

3 The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.

4 In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.

Any questions on this response should be addressed to Natalie Russell ([nrussell@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:nrussell@cornwall.gov.uk)) in the first instance.