

Email response received 1 August 2005 from Mr B Wall:

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a lighter, electronic licensing process? If not, please explain why.

1. I agree in principle with the introduction of an electronic licensing process, but it should not be to the detriment of the hobby. It certainly should NOT be a license for life. I feel that the introduction of a license for life would leave the hobby unprotected and open to misuse.

Question 2: Do you agree with the proposal to issue licences which remain valid for the life of the licensee? If not, please explain why.

1. I do NOT agree with a 'License for life'. While this may sound superb on the surface, it tends to imply that deregulation isn't far behind. Amateurs will also lose up to date information about who we are communicating with on the amateur frequencies. As amateurs we guard the professionalism and legal right to operate on the frequencies allotted to us.

2. The yearly license fee served as a 'Stock Check' or 'Roll Call'. With this yearly database at hand it is relatively simple to produce an up to date record of practising licensed amateurs. As amateurs we rely on electronic or printed information which gives us up to date information on whether a person is licensed or not.

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposal to issue electronic amateur radio licences free of charge? If not, please explain why.

1. No, an amateur license is not easy to get (at least when I took my C&G), it should be valued and respected. Free licenses take the importance of the amateur radio license away. I see the license as a privilege and something to be cherished. Can something free really be cherished and looked after well by the masses? I think not.

Question 4: Do you agree with the proposal to apply an administrative charge when processing postal applications for amateur radio licences? If not, please explain why.

1. No, this should be within the total cost of the license. Although if you worded the question different 'Do you agree with the proposal to offer a discount when applying for licenses electronically' I would have agreed.

Question 5: Do you agree that WT Act licence exemption for radio amateurs is not currently practical?

1. I agree, WT Act licence exemption is not practical. Under the WT Act radio amateurs must currently be issued with and hold a licence to operate, also, all UK licensed amateurs would lose the benefit of being allowed to operate abroad, as they wouldn't have a licence document for inspection by foreign administrations.

2. If Ofcom doesn't hold a database of amateur radio users, an appointed agent (like the Radio Society of Great Britain) should certainly have this information.

3. Obviously, as other countries are in the process of advising their radio amateur fraternity of similar things as you are, you/we would also have to be guided by the outcome of their consultations. In the end we must fall in line with other countries, otherwise whatever system is adopted, it would not work internationally.

Question 6: What are your views regarding the possibility of WT Act licence exemption for radio amateurs in the longer term?

1. I strongly disagree with the possibility of WT Act licence exemption in the longer term for radio amateurs because of the implications to existing international agreements, There would be a requirement for HM Government to re-negotiate long established international agreements with the EU, ITU and CEPT. As well as those agreements, the Foreign Office has also negotiated a number of reciprocal operating agreements with countries outside the EU. Deregulation or WT Act exemption would spell the end of amateur radio in the UK and its dependencies, as there would be no requirement for entrants into the hobby to take any formal examinations. There would be no control on power levels which could cause widespread interference, and amateur radio operators could operate at will outside the harmonised amateur radio bands.
2. With the new 3 tier licences it would be foolish to remove this, as we now have people using transmitting equipment with little knowledge (i.e. M#3### licences)

Question 7: Is maintaining the existing licensing regime but with an extended renewal period your preferred option? If so, please state the renewal period that you believe would be appropriate and explain why.

1. Yes, it definitely is. I am sure that costs drive a lot of decisions; therefore I would suggest that my preferred renewal period would be anything between 2 and 3 years.
2. In all honesty, I would prefer if you were able to put the licensing out to tender, and find somebody who would issue licences and databases on a yearly basis.

Question 8: Do you agree that the current licensing system is over-burdensome? If not, please explain why.

1. No, it isn't for me, although I can see that it may be for Ofcom. I like the yearly system, because the database available due to the present system gives a yearly update of who is using the amateur bands, and who isn't or shouldn't any more.

Question 9: Do you agree with the proposal to apply an administrative charge when processing applications for a Notice of Variation to an amateur radio licence? If not, please explain why.

1. Yes, it is inevitable anyway.