

Email response received 2 August 2005 from Mr J Warburton:

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

Answer 1. Yes, though it depends what is meant by 'lighter'. Whilst I am not adverse to an electronic licence process, it must not dilute any of the rights the current licence carries. The electronic medium must be secure and robust and an electronic licence must be recognised by overseas authorities to the same degree that the current licence is recognised.

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.*

Answer 2. No. Whilst the Amateur Radio Certificate (the qualifying exams) should remain valid for life, I think a 5 year renewal period for the licence would be a good compromise. Whilst I understand that an annual renewal is costly, it is important to Radio Amateurs to have access to up to date address information (except where the licence holder has requested confidentiality). There is also the possibility of people drifting out of the hobby - the total of 'for life' licences would not correctly reflect the number of people currently pursuing the hobby.

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

Answer 3. No, I believe a licence fee of modest proportions is acceptable to most Radio Amateurs, though special exemption could be given to the elderly and registered disabled. I believe a free licence degrades the status of the hobby.

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.*

Answer 4. Yes, as an incentive for people to use the electronic licences. However this charge should not be unreasonable as postal applications will no doubt be used by many people who don't have internet because they cannot afford it.

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

Answer 5. Yes, see answer 6 also.

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

Answer 6. I think it would be disastrous for Amateur Radio licences to be exempt from the Wireless Telegraphy Act. A legal framework is required to

support the existence of the hobby and manage any infringements that may take place within the Amateur Radio spectrum. It is also important that licences are recognised by overseas authorities and the WT Act enforces the minimum standards that are required for this recognition.

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.*

Answer 7. Five years, please see answer 2.

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

Answer 8. No. It is essential to maintain the integrity of the hobby to have entry examinations and a licence regime. The current annual licence renewal is no burden to me and the pleasures the hobby brings far outweigh the 5 minutes it takes to renew the licence every year.

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.*

Answer 9. No. The nature of the hobby is that it is experimental and research based. NOVs should be encouraged where possible to extend the boundaries of current knowledge. If an administrative charge has to be levied, it should be in proportion with the licence fee.

Any other Comments

The future of Amateur Radio is very much in the hands of OFCOM at the moment. This consultative approach to changes is very much appreciated and will hopefully be adopted where changes are considered in future.

Amateur Radio is a diverse hobby that encourages research, learning & development, international goodwill, emergency communications etc and has recently been seen to provide (again) a real international service in disaster relief circumstances. It is important that OFCOM understand the need to regulate the hobby (it is NOT Citizens' Band radio) and promote its use and development.