

To Whom it may concern,

I cannot tell you how saddened I am that every time I open a local paper, log on to the web or turn on the local radio, yes we do have one at present, I am flooded with news of yet another campaign to destroy any hopes we might have had to maintain a local radio station for North Devon. People here are working tirelessly and without pay to support the need for local radio in the North Devon area. It has not been an easy task for any one of these dedicated people but what they have done is to listen to the people of North Devon and respond to their request for a local radio station.

We were all followers of Lantern and Heart because we valued our local presenters who kept us up to date with local news and travel as well as providing information on local events and playing the tunes that local people wanted to hear. They supported local charities and had close links with schools and other organisations within the North Devon area which they visited regularly.

It feels to me that we have been bullied into either tuning in to a station that we no longer consider our own or turning off our radios, I know I am among many who chose to turn off rather than listen to Heart from Exeter.

I do not believe the people of North Devon want a digital station either, apart from the fact that it will still not be accessible to everyone we actually like listening to radio that comes from our small local studio, we don't want clarity in sound, we like the moments of silence and the laughter that comes from our presenters, we love the banter between them and the regular updates on what is happening in our local area. The studio window delivers the best weather forecasts, they are genuine and up to date, nothing like the generic ones given out on global radio.

The Voice was created because North Devon people wanted to keep a local radio station and were prepared to fight to do so. That has not changed. If I wanted to listen to the same music over and over and over again I would then have a choice, buy an MP3 player or tune into Heart, however I choose to listen to a variety of music which is what is aired on the Voice, sadly OFCOM seems determined to deny me my choice and is offering what they must truly believe is an acceptable alternative, and that is 'Heart', take it or leave it. Well I for one will continue to campaign for what I believe the people of North Devon want and sincerely hope that OFCOM will not deny us the chance to show that we can make it work and continue to provide community links in what is a rural area with many small towns and villages which would at times become isolated if not for local radio.

Yours in anticipation  
Helen Dickerson