

The Belfast Titanic Society

Incorporating the Ulster Titanic Society

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June 16th 2008

Dear Rhona Parry,

Re: Belfast Titanic Society response to the consultation: Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review – Phase One: The Digital Opportunity Consultation

The Belfast Titanic Society commemorates and celebrates the world's most famous ocean liner, the RMS Titanic. It is the depository for an immense amount of information from first hand accounts of the ship, the shipyard and Belfast life at that time. We have a growing research department and are at the forefront of the present work to learn more about the ship and its local context. Each year, in partnership with Belfast City Council, we organize the annual 'Titanic Made in Belfast' festival with new exhibitions, talks, tours and events.

In response to your consultation and in relation to your main objective of furthering the interests of citizen-consumers; in particular, developing "*a new broadcasting licensing regime to foster self-regulation and broaden citizen/consumer choice*" we would recommend that Ofcom considers acceptance of local community television as public service broadcasters.

We know from our own experience that documenting a local area's cultural and natural history has considerable social and educational significance. It is important that local heritage is preserved and enjoyed by the local community and by tourists and visitors to our city. Local television media has an important part to play in preserving this heritage.

Empowering our citizens to become content providers and creating media which reflects and raises awareness of local issues and interests constitutes a valuable public service. It enhances skills, encourages a sense of place and ownership of the city and has the potential to foster greater citizenship.

In relation to the development of local television in Belfast, we should be grateful if Ofcom would support Northern Visions/NvTv being carried on Freeview as a local public service broadcaster. Such a development would ensure that everyone in the city has access to a valuable local service. It would also support those of us who are working to preserve our varied collection of local heritage, which does so much to enrich and give identity to our city.

Yours sincerely,
Una Reilly
Chairman