

GLOSS FM

Radio for the Whole Community

Background

Severnvale Media CIC is a not for profit organisation that runs a community radio station in South Gloucestershire called GLOSS FM. Both Severnval Media CIC and GLOSS FM are staffed entirely by volunteers. The station has operated two 1 month RSL broadcasts per year since it started in November 2005. In addition it broadcasts 365 days a year on the internet.

Response to Consultation

Severnval Media CIC were disappointed to read that RSL licensing charges have not been reviewed in this consultation. As a voluntary organisation, we find that funds are extremely scarce, and so considerable time and effort is spent in attracting advertising revenue. This detracts from volunteer time available to deliver our social gain and community service objectives.

Alongside music royalty fees, the RSL radio licensing costs are a huge burden to the station, so much so it almost seems like a penalty charge.

We fully acknowledge that a contribution towards administrative expenses is required for RSL licenses. However given the scale of charges we have to pay for each broadcast we find it hard to believe that this accurately reflects administrative costs. If it does, then we ask an open question whether the administrative efficiency of the RSL licensing process should be reviewed. The costs seem even harder to understand when often we are asking for the same height and power from the same location, and still more so when we look at the (low) costs associated with fulltime CR licences.

Big Society

We have read about and broadly agree with the Government's plans for the "Big Society". However we find it hard to understand why when a group of people like GLOSS FM try to contribute to their communities they apparently have to pay such a high entry charge which feels like a tax or penalty charge

Proposal

We propose that RSL radio licensing charges are reviewed for RSL stations that have a clear and measurable input to their local community that results in social gain and general community spirit. RSL's with purely commercial aims should still pay the same. The two types of RSL stations could perhaps be distinguished by requiring compliance to a suitable statement in the application form requiring community service, or alternatively through expectation of a kind of "lightweight key commitments" like full time community radio stations.