

16/June/2008

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to express my opinion on the decision made by ITV to merge the ITV Westcountry and ITV West regions into one. As a 'Westcountry Live' viewer, I live in the Plymouth area which to me means 'Devon & Cornwall' and this move can only mean a dilution of our local news as we'll be receiving news of areas well outside of our 'patch' at the expense of items local to us. The idea of a local 'opt out' is not sufficient either - it will still mean two regions' half hour programmes combined into one. The recent decision to split this local opt into Devon & Cornwall regions could actually make things worse as we'll be denied news events from the 'other half' of our region.

Events in Tewksbury are in no way 'local' to someone in deepest Cornwall and any event large enough to be of interest would be covered by the ITN national news. Take the recent Exeter bomb for example, covered in great detail by Westcountry, barely covered at all by ITV West (they didn't need to, it was not of local interest to them) It was however, covered at a level adequate for those not in the immediate region by ITN.

Penzance to Tewksbury is near equivalent in distance to Plymouth to London. No-one would consider London news to be of 'local' interest to people in Plymouth so why would we want news local to Bristol at the expense of our own?

I understand that companies need to save money and it maybe it's OK to consolidate those regions which are split into parts but to combine two completely separate regions/TV stations is a step too far. I guess this applies to the Tyne Tees/Border situation as well. Please don't allow this to happen and ensure that we at least keep these two 'main' regions.

Thank you for your time,

Yours Faithfully

G S Russell