

As many readers will know I sit on the Culture, Media & Sport Select Committee in Parliament and one of the inquiries we are conducting at the moment is into the Future of the BBC. This is a huge inquiry and being done in advance of Government discussions with the broadcaster on the renewal of its Royal Charter.

The BBC has been in existence for over 90 years and was initially set up as a private provider of radio broadcasts. Since its establishment it has expanded dramatically into television, film, online content and of course radio. It is the size and scale of the BBC that often causes so much interest from other commercial providers since it delivers all its content without much sought after advertising revenue but funding from our television license.

It was therefore fantastic to have Kent Messenger Chairman Geraldine Allinson before the Committee earlier this week as part of a wider panel from the newspaper industry. I love the KM, not just because they allow me to write this column, but because it delivers news at its most local level. It also has excellent journalists who get great scoops that are often picked up my regional and national news but what frustrates me, as I am sure it does them, is there is often little attribution to their hard work.

The BBC operates of a massive global scale and in the hugely competitive industry of news, much of which is now going online with the likes of Twitter and Google, local newspapers are finding it difficult to match reach despite the parity in quality of journalism. Parliament doesn't help with its often overbearing desire to regulate and control traditional media.

This inquiry will I hope encourage the BBC to support its local newspaper industry rather than see them as competitors. Without the likes of KM journalists exposing the good, the bad and the ugly of local news then the BBC would be facing more of a spending challenge than it already does.