

UTV PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF 2022

PROGRAMME REVIEW

Content - News, current affairs and general programming

UTV's portfolio of local programmes offers a diverse range of top quality news, current affairs and other content including factual entertainment. In an intensely competitive market, UTV is committed to maintaining the highest standards of output with a focus on the needs and preferences of the Northern Ireland audience. News and current affairs are at the heart of UTV output.

'UTV Live' continues to be a highly successful source of independent news, with share of audiences at 6pm rising last year from an already very high base.

Innovation, Experiment and Creativity

Delivering accurate and impartial news remains central to the UTV offer, and innovations in technology have allowed the news teams more flexibility and efficiency in how they worked.

Some practices that arose from necessity during the pandemic have remained - journalists dialling into morning meetings allowing them to work out 'on the road' more; UTV invested in high-end kits to support 'mobile journalism', with a number of reporters trained in their use, allowing for a different type of news gathering that can be more reactive. These so-called 'MoJo' kits comprise microphones, stands, and gimbals, and are proving very effective in a 'grab and go' scenario for important stories.

Under the guidance of the digital editor, appointed in 2021, UTV's digital footprint grew with page views rising steadily to two million per month from a base about half that figure. At the same time our social media presence grew, from 1.9 million impressions on Facebook to a high of 5 million.

Reporting

Major stories in 2022 which UTV covered extensively:

1. Death of The Queen, her funeral and accession of the King, September 2022
2. DUP collapse of Stormont by withdrawing Paul Givan as First Minister in February 2022
3. Assembly elections May 2022 (nine hours of extra programmes to cover the elections, with much more extensive online coverage than ever before, including updates from specially set up studio). In addition, there was a one hour election debate, attended by all the party leaders.

PROGRAMME OFFER

UTV PRODUCTIONS

UTV's weekly political programme, **View from Stormont**, aired regularly on Monday nights with the focus on the turbulent political scene here brought about by the collapse of the executive in early 2022.

UTV Life (weekly magazine programme) presented by Pamela Ballantine aired throughout the year, moving to a Friday 7pm slot in March, just after the ITV News. Famous Irish and UK actors, singers and performers came into the studio, with a special programme to mark the release of Kenneth Branagh's 'Belfast' movie.

Up Close (hard-hitting current affairs programme) with five hour-long programmes produced. Topics covered included alcohol abuse in Northern Ireland, cancer services and domestic abuse.

Hidden NI - This was a new six part series which uncovered some of the less well known spaces and places in Northern Ireland. UTV's Sara O'Kane presented the series and travelled across Northern Ireland (and sometimes a little bit further) celebrating NI's hidden gems, and finding out about places few knew existed or got to see.

World at the Feet - This one off special took an in-depth look at the rise of women's football in Northern Ireland on the back of the success of the NI Ladies football team in qualifying for the Euros for the first time.

UTV also marked the passing of **David Trimble** in a one hour special programme.

Other shows in the UTV schedule are made by the independent sector in Northern Ireland.

Rare Breed – A Farming Year returned to UTV with a new series of 12 programmes in January 2022 produced by Strident Media throughout 2021. The series charts the agricultural year through the lives of farmers, with each episode capturing the highs and lows of a particular month.

Eamonn Mallie Face to Face with... aired between February and April. This was the fifth series for UTV. Each programme is a long form interview by the award-winning journalist Eamonn Mallie who takes one-to-one with some of the biggest names in the world of sport, drama and public life in Northern Ireland. The eight-part series, produced by Mallie Productions, saw Eamonn interview, among others, actor Adrian Dunbar, local politician Emma Little-Pengelly, and former Labour communications director Alistair Campbell.

Westway Film Productions delivered 14 episodes of "**Mahon's Way**" in 2022. Veteran presenter Joe Mahon travelled the highways and byways of Northern Ireland, visiting interesting places, providing fresh insights across a wide range of subject matter, from flora and fauna to historic buildings, areas of natural beauty and history. It was presented with all the usual enthusiasm and genuine enjoyment Joe brings.

Secrets of the Comedy Circuit was a new departure for UTV in 2022. This series showcased the vibrant Northern Ireland comedy scene. The four part series was filmed in

front of a live audience in the Belfast Empire Music Hall during their 'Empire Laughs Back Comedy Club' nights, a mainstay of the scene for more than 30 years. The series highlighted local talent, featuring both well-known and emerging voices as well as acts from across the UK. This was picked up by our streaming service ITVX and so reflected Northern Ireland back to a UK-wide audience.

Other programming

Election 2022 - UTV provided extensive coverage of the May Elections, with nine extra hours of programming, including a leaders debate. This was enhanced by additional programming / reports exclusively for online audiences.

There were also special programmes to mark The Twelfth parades and celebrations, as well as St Patrick's Day programme. 'UTV at the Show' also brought highlights of the Balmoral Show, showcasing the best of NI's agri-food industry.

Cultural and Other Diversity

UTV is committed to providing equality of opportunity, dignity and respect both on and off screen. The company continued its support for a number of major community events and organisations. Belfast Mela, NI's largest multi-cultural event held a series of outdoor events, with UTV reporter Paul Reilly hosting the kick-off carnival in Belfast city centre, and reporter Marc Mallett hosting the finale concert at Botanic Gardens.

A wealth of on air content was included in our news programmes representing our audiences in the content we make.

News Traineeship - In 2022, UTV, along with ITV Wales and ITV Anglia, completed their annual news traineeship posts exclusively for disabled applicants, as part of an ITV wide drive to boost representation. This proved very successful and all three regions made appointments. UTV's trainee secured an extension to his contract to year end.

Positive Action Placements - In the summer of 2021, UTV offered a training placement which limited applications from Black, Asian and minority ethnic background in recognition that individuals from those communities are currently underrepresented within the media. This scheme worked well with one intern returning in 2022, before embarking on a Journalism Masters course.

ITV Able events - UTV and ITV West Country led on an ITV wide initiative to encourage disabled staff members across the business to consider employment in news and programmes. A series of newsroom visits was rounded off with a live-streamed panel discussion from across the industry including leaders in the field. The success of the events were two-fold. Not only did disabled staff members become more engaged and knowledgeable about careers in news, it also promoted and cemented ITV's commitment to diversity and inclusion with external parties involved.

The UTV Diversity & Inclusion Panel continued to meet in 2022. Four meetings were held hosted by Vidar Hjordeng. Panellists got to see news packages, hear about ITV initiatives and the forum is excellent at giving valuable feedback on UTV's activities and output.

Public Input

UTV is very proud of the range of programming and the interactivity enjoyed with audiences across all platforms. Overall social media interactions grew. The digital team also created Instagram pages which have gained traction during 2022.

Promotion of Media Literacy

UTV appointed a News Trainee in October 2022. This is in line with other ITV nations and regions. The successful candidate got a nine month contract to learn all the skills necessary to work in our multi-media newsroom.

In 2022, UTV gave temporary news trainee contracts to students Aidan Rafferty and Shannon Hamill.

At the end of 2022, ITV News launched a **schools outreach programme** to encourage children from diverse backgrounds to think about careers in news. Visits were planned for early 2023, with several staff members signing up.

UTV STATEMENT FOR 2023

We look forward to providing our audience with the same high standards of news, current affairs and top quality local programming which reflects the people and issues of Northern Ireland in 2023

News will remain at the heart of our output this year and we will continue to deliver news and current affairs. Other programming will return with new series of familiar favourites and some brand new content is also planned.

Innovation, Experiment and Creativity

While there are many advantages of remote working, a hybrid version is how most colleagues continue to operate, so they develop and share ideas, maintaining their wellbeing by collaborating in person, as well as enjoying greater flexibility.

Innovation - as part of Project Invest - 2023 will see training of all newsroom staff on the new Avid Media Central System. This is a leading edge functionality in news editing, storage, and publishing systems for regional and national news. This is an upgraded newsroom production system to serve the entire output of ITV News across all locations including UTV, supporting ITV News and ITVX. All newsrooms having common access and free exchange of media across the estate is the key objective of this investment, which represents a major strategic commitment for ITV News.

With many staff now trained on the new mobile journalism kits, 2023 will see this technology used in programme making, as well as news. 'Living Off Grid' is a two part special which will be filmed and edited solely using mobile technology.

PROGRAMME OFFER

News

UTV Live will continue to deliver a market leading news service and will respond quickly to breaking lines following political developments to include exclusive reports and informed analysis.

We will also provide relevant coverage of the most topical and popular events in Northern Ireland.

View from Stormont will continue to respond to the news events and provide viewers with in-depth political analysis and comment from key players in Northern Ireland.

Current Affairs

Up Close - the hard-hitting monthly current affairs programme is set to run in 2023, with the first programme marking the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

Other programmes

Weekly magazine show **UTV Life** returns in 2023 bringing viewers a relaxed and conversational line-up. The studio-based series airing on regular Friday 7pm slot will continue to cover a diverse range of subjects centred on Northern Ireland's cultural life. Presented from the newly revamped set by Pamela Ballantine with reporter Rita Fitzgerald bringing filmed items from all over NI.

UTV will also produce a second series called **HIDDEN NI**, where reporter Sara O'Kane takes the viewer to hidden gems in Northern Ireland to which members of the public wouldn't normally have access.

Rare Breed - A Farming Year returns to UTV in January 2023 with a new series of 12 programmes produced by Strident Media (formerly Crawford-McCann). The series charts the agricultural year through the lives of farmers working in a variety of enterprises, with each episode capturing the highs and lows of a month.

Eamonn Mallie Face to Face with... Award-winning journalist Eamonn Mallie returns for a sixth series, talking one-to-one with some of the biggest names in the world of sport, drama and public life in Northern Ireland. He kicks off the series with an exclusive interview with former Prime Minister Tony Blair, reflecting on the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday agreement

Keepers of the Lough will return for a second series. First aired in 2021, the series will make a welcome return later in the year. Set in Strangford Lough, the episodes will take the viewer on a beautiful voyage of discovery about this enchanting part of the Northern Irish countryside, learning more about its people and its habitat.

Living Off Grid - This two-part special is a UTV production that will feature people from Northern Ireland who embrace a different way of living. Reporter Emma Patterson will meet several local people who have turned their backs on conventional living. She'll explore how

and why people have chosen to live this way; what prompted the move; how they overcome daily challenges; and what motivates them.

Westway Film Productions will produce 12 programmes to be aired later in the year.

Mahon's Way presenter Joe Mahon will take to the highways and byways of Northern Ireland again, with a promise of returning with another entertaining mix of people, places and fascinating stories.

Secrets of the Comedy Circuit will return for a second series to be aired on UTV and on ITVX. Eight episodes will be filmed from the Empire Laughs Back Comedy Club.

Homemade Heroes - is a UTV in house production. Four episodes are planned for later in the year, showcasing four of Northern Ireland's sporting heroes, including footballer Gerry Armstrong and boxer Dave Boy McAuley

Special programmes will include UTV at the Show, the Twelfth parades and St Patrick's day celebrations. It is also planned to produce rugby specials to mark the Rugby World Cup in France.

ENDS
