

# BBC's Tony Hall gets it right even when he gets it wrong?

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Tony Hall: in charge at the BBC

The new BBC director general Tony Hall barely had time to arrange the pens on his new desk before two hot potatoes landed on it. I disagreed with his decision on the [Wizard of Oz protest song](#) and, you may not be surprised to hear, [disagree](#) with the line taken on the [LSE's complaints about the BBC Panorama North Korea film](#). But politically, he may well have done the right thing.

By taking such a protective stance towards right-wing sensitivities over the Ding Dong song he has offended a lot of people on the liberal left. However, he has also now accumulated some capital that he can spend when he next has a conflict with the Conservative Party over something more serious than a piece of ironic agit-prop.

Likewise his defence of the controversial actions of John Sweeney and the Panorama team has sent out a very strong signal to his journalistic troops that he is prepared to back them in the face of criticism. I really do think that their actions were reckless but I can also understand why someone of BBC Head of News Programmes Ceri Thomas' integrity is happy to make a 'public interest' defence of the BBC's journalism with this DG's backing.

So two apparently contradictory and criticised decisions might actually add up to the fact that Hall is in control and prepared to be decisive, even when it hurts. Of course, it could just be that he's bouncing from one balls up to the next. One thing is for certain, there will be plenty more of these tests to come.

[You can read [my take on the LSE BBC North Korea row here](#)]

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