

A return to Conservative values

The government response to the pandemic here and in most countries around the world damaged the free enterprise parts of economies, boosted state spending and borrowing and greatly increased state control. In the next few blogs I am going to look at where this is now unhelpful and how it can be reversed as economic recovery advances and as pandemic controls are dismantled. I am conscious that some officials in government posts and most MPs in Opposition parties will see the special measures for countering the pandemic as desirable in themselves and an advance they wish to consolidate and extend . The Opposition parties have been ever keen to vote for more restrictions and more state spending, and reluctant to countenance relaxation or tapering of special financial support. There have been few voices speaking up for the many small businesses that supply so many of our needs.

Whilst people were prepared to accept direction of where they worked or whether they worked, when and where they could go out and which if any friends and family they could meet in order to defeat a killer disease, there is no reason to carry on with such draconian controls with the death rate massively down thanks to vaccines. Government should expect increasing opposition to lockdown and growing resistance to the advice on how to lead our lives. We cannot still claim to be a free society if we carry on with the very detailed controls and regulations we experienced during the various lockdowns. The first necessity is for government to reassure us we will not be going back to lockdown if cases rise again of a disease that usually now remains mild thanks to vaccinations.

The economic cost of lockdown must remain a one off for 2020-21, not a recurring scarring of our economy matched by a progressive build up of state debt. The sooner furlough is no longer needed, the sooner the labour market finds the people to fill the many vacancies there now are, the better. The remarkable thing is how many businesses are ready to go and wish to recover quickly despite all the obstacles of lockdown and the long delay in removing controls.