

[Nadine Dorries' Opinion Piece for the Daily Express](#)

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The countdown is on. In exactly six months' time, athletes from all over the world will be heading to the UK for one of the biggest events in the sporting calendar.. The Birmingham Commonwealth Games is officially set to be the most popular in history, with over 1 million tickets sold. And that's not even mentioning the 1.5 billion people who will tune in from around the globe. It's going to be the sporting highlight of what promises to be an incredible summer.

Every now and then, the UK gets to experience a summer like this – one of those rare years when there's a special buzz in the air; when the whole country pulls together, and we let our hair down and celebrate.

For me, 2012 was that kind of year. It was a summer of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Diamond Jubilee, of gold medals and volunteer armies and street pageants. I can still remember that hum of anticipation across the country as we headed into both events – and the sense of achievement when we pulled them both off in style. In the aftermath, 2012 was voted year of the century: Brits said it brought them closer to family and friends, and that it had sparked more national pride in them than any other year in living memory.

2022 promises to be the same.

In fact, we're going one better this time round. It's quite an achievement for a monarch to reach their Diamond Jubilee. But this year, the Queen will be marking her Platinum: 70 years of devoted service to the nation. On the first weekend of June, the entire country will come together to mark the special occasion, with four days of street parties and pageants and a Platinum Party at the Palace.

It will be a nationwide celebration – and each and every one of us will also get to play our own small part in the history books, as we witness a genuinely momentous occasion for the country. No British monarch has ever reached 70 years on the throne.

We'll also have a nationwide celebration of creativity throughout the year, with the Unboxed: Creativity in the UK – a £120 million festival that will inspire the next generation of artists and innovators. And at the end of July, the Birmingham Commonwealth Games will officially open. The Games are on time, and on budget, with over 40,000 applicants to join our army of volunteers. Every time we host such sporting occasions, we prove yet again that we're one of the best countries in the world for major events.

This isn't just about sport. In the West Midlands, we'll be witnessing

levelling up in real time. Birmingham and the wider region are benefitting from a £778 million investment to stage these Games, and a proportion of that money is being used to build world-class sporting facilities for the entire community. I visited the Sandwell Aquatics Centre last week to mark the filling of the official Games pool, and saw the work on the exercise facilities and football pitch that are being built alongside it. Those are the kind of everyday amenities that make a community a great place to live – and they will be there years after the final 2022 medal has been draped over the neck of an athlete.

We've had an incredibly difficult couple of years. We've sheltered and isolated, we've made huge sacrifices to protect others. We've vaccinated and boosted, and as a result, we now have one of the strongest and most open economies in Europe. We've got a lot to be proud of – a lot to look forward to in 2022. It promises to be not just a golden year for the UK, but a platinum one.