

New Year message for 2023

2023 could promise much. It will be the year when inflation falls from the unacceptable peaks of 2022. It should be the year when we put lockdowns and special inconveniences from covid behind us. It should be a year when western resolve deters new aggressive actions by Russia, China, North Korea and Iran. It could be a year of economic recovery. It should be a year to show freedom works, offering hope to the world.

It is true that tomorrow though it is a new year we will still inherit the pains and problems of the old. Russia will continue to shell and bomb Ukraine, though should recoil from her dangerous threats with nuclear weapons. China will incur a cost in cases and deaths as she embarks on the last big move away from covid lockdown. The economies of the UK, USA and EU will experience more months of slowdown, recession and cost of living squeeze as their Central Banks seek to correct their gross inflationary errors by inflicting economic pain.

That is why as we want this year to be so much better than last we must look to governing establishments to change what they are doing to give us a better outcome. In the UK that means three things. A pro growth budget that makes it more worthwhile to work and to run a business, with tax cuts and benefit changes. A belated reform of business rules and laws, to facilitate more UK business and individual opportunity and success. This should include tackling the supply of illegal labour and illegal migration which undercuts legal businesses. A major private sector led investment in growing more food at home, landing more of our own fish, producing more of our own energy and producing more of our manufactured products.

If we do these things we can emerge with a stronger growing economy by end 2023. More people can succeed in their personal journeys, getting more skills, better paid jobs and owning their own homes. True levelling up is about helping create a nation of owners where owning your home, having a stake in the business you work for and having savings for the future is the experience of the many and the credible aspiration of many more.

The Opposition parties' menu of higher taxes, deploying the politics of envy, attacking profitable businesses and seeking to level down the successful would keep us in recession, intensifying the cost of living squeeze. If we carry on with price controls we will create more shortages. If we back windfall taxes we will deter the investment in extra capacity we need.

The Prime Minister and Chancellor have choices. If you want a better 2023, if you want the troubles of 2022 to recede, then join me in calling for growth policies. Let us give freedom more of a chance. The UK backs brave Ukrainians fighting for it. We need to insist on it at home and abroad by voice and vote.