

Prime Minister's New Year's message: 31 December 2020

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Well folks we are coming to the end of 2020.

The year in which the Government was forced to tell people how to live their lives, how long to wash their hands, how many households could meet together.

And a year in which we lost too many loved ones before their time.

So I can imagine that there will be plenty of people who will be only too happy to say goodbye to the grimness of 2020.

But just before we do, I want to remind you that this was also the year when we rediscovered a spirit of togetherness, of community.

It was a year in which we banged saucepans to celebrate the courage and self-sacrifice of our NHS staff and care home workers

A year in which working people pulled the stops out to keep the country moving in the biggest crisis we have faced for generations – shopworkers, transport staff, pharmacists, emergency services, everyone, you name it.

We saw a renewed spirit of volunteering, as people delivered food to the elderly and vulnerable.

And time after time as it became necessary to fight new waves of the virus, we saw people unite in their determination, our determination, to protect the NHS and to save lives.

Putting their lives, your lives, on hold.

Buying precious time for medicine to provide the answers, and it has.

In 2020 we have seen British scientists not only produce the world's first effective treatment of the disease, but just in the last few days a beacon of hope has been lit in the laboratories of Oxford.

A new room temperature vaccine that can be produced cheaply and at scale, and that offers literally a new lease of life to people in this country and around the world.

And with every jab that goes into the arm of every elderly or vulnerable person, we are changing the odds, in favour of humanity and against Covid.

And we know that we have a hard struggle still ahead of us for weeks and months, because we face a new variant of the disease that requires a new vigilance.

But as the sun rises tomorrow on 2021 we have the certainty of those vaccines.

Pioneered in a UK that is also free to do things differently, and if necessary better, than our friends in the EU.

Free to do trade deals around the world.

And free to turbocharge our ambition to be a science superpower.

From biosciences to artificial intelligence,

and with our world-leading battery and wind technology we will work with partners around the world,

not just to tackle climate change but to create the millions of high skilled jobs this country will need not just this year – 2021 – as we bounce back from Covid, but in the years to come.

This is an amazing moment for this country.

We have our freedom in our hands and it is up to us to make the most of it.

And I think it will be the overwhelming instinct of the people of this country to come together as one United Kingdom – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland working together to express our values around the world.

Leading both the G7 and the COP 26 climate change summit in Glasgow,

And an open, generous, outward looking, internationalist and free trading global Britain, that campaigns for 12 years of quality education for every girl in the world.

2021 is the year we can do it,

and I believe 2021 is above all, the year when we will eventually do those everyday things that now seem lost in the past.

Bathed in a rosy glow of nostalgia, going to the pub, concerts, theatres, restaurants, or simply holding hands with our loved ones in the normal way.

We are still a way off from that, there are tough weeks and months ahead.

But we can see that illuminated sign that marks the end of the journey, and even more important, we can see with growing clarity how we are going to get there.

And that is what gives me such confidence about 2021.

Happy New Year!