

# New Year's day

Happy New Year.

2021 should be a year of economic recovery and renewal, the year when we put the pandemic behind us and embrace the new opportunities for global Britain.

Welcome to our first day as an independent country after 48 years in the EEC/EU. I want the government to use our new freedoms to promote our voice for the good abroad and our prosperity at home.

Rejoining the World Trade Organisation as a full member, the UK will now be a strong and influential proponent of free trade. I look forward to us enhancing the trade deals we already have, and entering new ones. The Trans Pacific Partnership, for example, is a large fast growing bloc which offers us many opportunities to increase our trade.

Chairing the world conference on green matters, I want the UK to be a voice for a practical and popular roll out of products and services that can place clean air and water at the heart of what we do. Policy needs to go with the grain of human nature and ambition.

As a leading member of NATO I want the UK to be a force for peace in the world, building on recent advances with peace treaties in the Middle East, and acting as a strong deterrent to disruptive actions by rogue states and movements.

I look forward to the removal of VAT from items like heating controls and insulation now we can make our own tax decisions. I want to see Freeports and Enterprise Zones to attract more investment and more better paid jobs to places that need a boost. I welcome the new student exchange scheme to replace and improve on Erasmus. The Turing scheme will support more students wanting to study abroad, and will be a worldwide scheme, not just a European one, extending their choices and widening horizons.

I want to see more of our farming grant regime go to promote more UK grown and reared food, to cut the food miles and ensure high local standards. I welcome the decision to ban the live export of animals, and want the government to ban pulse fishing in our waters. We need to rebuild our fish stocks as we plan a larger UK industry, and restore our marine environment.

Today we have again an independent country. Every adult is a voter who can choose MPs to pass the laws and spend the state budget as we wish, and who can dismiss MPs at elections if they let us down. The restoration of accountable democracy is at the centre of the Brexit project. 2021 will be the year to educate the official government into responding more to the needs and wishes of the people, and less to the requirements of an EU law code.

A happy new year to you all. I look forward to working on all the challenges in conjunction with a government which now has more power to shape events for us.

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## How I feel about leaving the EU

I was asked to provide a comment, so I reproduce here for my readers:

I was told when young I was born into a country famed for her democracy, the home of the Mother of Parliaments, a place where each individual's voice was respected and each vote mattered. There was nothing the UK could not achieve. We were self governing, trading with the five continents of the world, an outward looking seafaring island people.

All this changed with our progressive incorporation into the EU project of economic, monetary and political union. For many years the UK governing classes pretended the project was not one of union, or thought we could be swept along by stealth. The public thought otherwise, demanded a referendum and voted to be an independent country.

I never doubted we would win the referendum. I argued that we were being good Europeans by stepping aside from their mighty task to create a United States of Europe. We should wish them well and be friends with them, but the fact that the UK had refused to join the Euro showed where our hearts resided – with the wider world and with national democracy. Today I feel much relief that our country has been open with our friends in Europe and stated clearly we wish to be self governing whilst good trading partners and allies of theirs. I look forward to 2021 as a year of strong economic recovery, where we can start to use the new freedoms and opportunities

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## Happy New Year

“Pour me another, lets toast the new year  
Here's to a better, put fizz in our cheer”

Tonight's not for sorrows, no mulling old wounds  
Come banish our troubles, lets sing some new tunes

Caught in the present is a moment to choose  
To look forwards or backwards, to win or to lose

If you comfort yourself holding what has past  
This precious moment of hope will never last

Grasping the future and its so unknown way  
Could bring success and many a wonderful day

The past is well trodden, we know the ending  
The future is for moulding, shaping, bending

As last year expires, hopes and promises broken  
Change things this time, leave pledges unspoken

So pour me another, drink to the new year

here's to a better, put fizz in our cheer

If your life is a drama you can change the plot  
If your friends are the actors you can recast the lot

If people around you are holding you back  
Tell them you're changing, cast aside their rack

Lets hold on to new clichés that drive us to more  
Lets venture out from behind that closed door

We can stretch for the stars and strive for the sun  
We can soar with the wind making life more fun

You are only out of the game when you give up the play  
So write some new words so you have a new say

Aim for something better, embrace the best  
You may fall short of target but gain from the quest

So cast off the old  
Live a new dream  
Grab the future foretold  
Mine a new seam

So pour me another, lets toast the new year  
Here's to a better, put fizz in our cheer

I know tomorrow can be better than today  
Let the future empower us with its new way

The future is only ours, my friend, if we want to race it  
Tonight is the night to embrace it

So pour me another, lets toast the new year

Here's to a better, put fizz in our cheer

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## Tier 4 and school openings

During a very busy and long day yesterday I joined on line conference calls with Health and Education Ministers and their senior officials to tackle issues about the pandemic response locally.

I was assured that computers will continue to be made available for on line at home learning where needed by qualifying families. Many have been supplied and more will be coming, as it is important that where an on line education is offered all have access to it.

Ministers confirmed that they do wish exams to go ahead this summer, with appropriate adjustments by Examining boards to take account of some pandemic disruption to normal learning. Year groups most affected by public exams will return soonest to school in January.

Ministers recognised that late changes to school opening dates and other arrangements are not ideal, but pointed out there has been a rapid acceleration in the spread of the virus and changes in NHS advice which has required some changes.

The NHS experts insisted that the only thing we can do prior to greater roll out of the vaccines is to cut down drastically on social contacts, other than those essential to work, food buying and other necessities. They were particularly worried about New Year celebrations.

I have not been notified of any worries about the way our local NHS is coping, and send my renewed thanks to all those NHS staff who are working hard to handle CV 19 cases.

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## Where are the EU and UK giants of the technology revolution?

One of the many things that should give us on this side of the Atlantic pause for thought is the way Europe has failed to produce the large global players of the digital transformation.

The UK and the EU have many talented and well educated people but none of the exciting corporate giants of the internet revolution.

Most of our software comes from Microsoft, our social media from Facebook and Google, our phones and pads from Apple or a far eastern source, much of our on line shopping goes to Amazon, a lot of internet entertainment comes from Netflix and Disney. We zoom to our friends and relatives and Teams for our

businesses and professions.

The main challenge to US dominance worldwide has come from the separate and differently policed Chinese system, spawning mighty Baidu, Tencent and Alibaba.

The EU response to the attractive offers and great service the US giants offer us is to look for ways to tax them more and regulate them more to penalise them for their success. The question we should be asking is how can we do it better? How can the UK if not the EU create the right climate and policy background so we can encourage giants of the new age to emerge here as well?

As we pass from the EU's single market to our own we need to learn from the EU's mistakes. There is the hostility to enterprise and small business, with legislative solutions favouring costly and intrusive regulation suited to incumbent large companies trying to keep out challengers. There is very prescriptive regulation which makes innovation more difficult.

We need to tackle three main areas of concern

1. Encouraging a large population of start ups, self employed consultants and small businesses, to try out ideas and innovations. No more IR 35.
2. Encouraging growth of the most successful into larger companies, with ready access to the large UK capital markets to fund future ideas and expansion.
3. A tax and regulatory framework for the largest success stories which is sensitive to their needs as global players requiring good access to the wider world , whilst also paying their dues and being good corporate citizens for the wider UK.