



## **BULLETIN FROM THE RT HON THE LORD MAYOR**

**31 March 2021**

### ***Fellow Liverymen***

The recent anniversary of the start of the first lockdown gave us an opportunity to reflect on the tumultuous year that has passed since then. It is clear that our lives will never be quite the same again. I send my sincere sympathies to all those mourning loved ones who have been lost to the Coronavirus. To those who are still struggling with the virus and with its impact, I send my warmest good wishes. And I send my heart-felt thanks and admiration to all those who have done so much to support everyone over these difficult twelve months – the healthcare professionals and key workers, the volunteers and charities, and all who have found themselves on the front line over the last year. Their contribution has not gone unnoticed and neither has the spirit I have encountered in the City and among the Livery in the face of COVID19.

But as the Spring sunshine and the cherry blossom usher in the start of British Summer Time, it is difficult not to feel more optimistic about the future. We have had the good news this week that over 30 million adults have now received at least one shot of the vaccine, an incredible achievement by the NHS that has also involved the help of St John Ambulance and Volunteer Responders. As lockdown restrictions begin to be eased, with the return of the Rule of Six and an end to shielding, we can tentatively look forward to the reopening of the Square Mile's shops, bars and restaurants. St Paul's Cathedral and many of the City churches are open to celebrate Easter in person this year. And businesses and employers are developing plans to return staff to the workplace in greater numbers. I am told that even the bees in the Mansion

House hives have emerged and are busying themselves among the City's gardens.

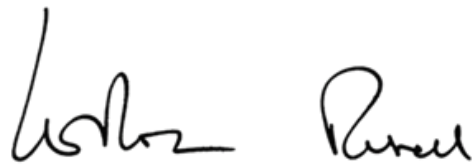
This confidence is critical to our **Reopening Campaign**, which will highlight the return of a more normal life to the City, driving increased activity and footfall in the Square Mile and supporting a longer-term economic recovery. We are working closely with communities across the City, but particularly at this stage with businesses, large and small, on a phased return to typical operations, following closely the timeline of the Government's COVID roadmap. From 12<sup>th</sup> April I will be marking the return of non-essential retail and outdoor hospitality to the City's streets and spaces with visits to re-opened shops and venues, before indoor hospitality and other visitor attractions start again in May. During this time we expect the number of workers returning to their desks to increase steadily, and I have had many conversations with business leaders who are staunch in their conviction that the office is not dead. From 21<sup>st</sup> June we hope that the current progress we are seeing with the vaccine will enable the majority of restrictions to be lifted. We have a number of activities planned for that week to mark that watershed, devised with the help of a group of Reopening Champions.

We are keen for the Livery to be involved and plans are being made both for a **United Guilds Service** later in the Spring, and for a **Common Hall** for the Election of Sheriffs on Thursday 24 June. Arrangements are still being worked out but further details will be shared when they are finalised.

Supporting firms that are struggling with the current operational and economic challenges is a key focus of our Reopening campaign. I am therefore delighted that the **Securing Future Prosperity** initiative, pioneered by the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants, has completed a pilot programme, working with SMEs to weather the pandemic. The project has successfully matched small businesses in and around the City, many of them run by young business leaders, with expert members of livery companies to provide help and guidance. I know that liverymen from the Framework Knitters, Musicians and Fuellers companies are already participating in the pilot, and the scheme would be keen to work with other livery companies who might be interested in taking part. Liverymen are also encouraged to refer businesses in need of help to the scheme - more information about SFP can be found here: <https://www.wcomc.org/education/securing-future-prosperity> Well done to everyone involved.

My virtual programme of activity has included some recent “visits” to the US and Canada, Brazil, Chile, China and Birmingham, as well as online events with the Livery. One area of real focus for me at the moment is the sustainability agenda, as the UK prepares to host the COP26 climate change summit in November. I am keen that the Livery is fully involved in these discussions and that we explore together the way in which liverymen can help to secure a green future for the City of London. More on that soon!

In the meantime, Hilary and I send you our very best wishes for a Happy Easter.



**Alderman William Russell**  
**The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor**



*Happy Easter from the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress*