

## Carefully unzipping the tent

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter we have had a statement this evening on how we begin easing the lock down. It is, by the way, another world away since a bellow of "Unlock" from the Speaker of the House made us sit up in anticipation of another cliffhanger of a vote. Today is a cliffhanger of a different sort. There is a lot at stake and to help appreciate this I want to tell you about a conversation I witnessed between survivors of the virus. This is not in any way to minimise the grief and mourning of the thousands of family members of those who have died nor to forget the lives tragically and prematurely lost but to remind the younger and fitter why it is crucial to be super cautious, to be mindful of others and for ourselves.

These two did not previously know one another, neither had been hospitalised but they were introduced across a wide road. The one in running shorts and a T-shirt outwardly a picture of suntanned health, the other a horticulturalist used to working outside every daylight hour. Both had suffered with Covid -19 and now five weeks later they were still invalids. The runner, not running anywhere, the gardener not pruning or trimming; both were exhausted two days out of three so only a smallish chance brought them both standing at the same time. (Frances could work it out!) And then even on these "good" days there were still hours when they were prone. They shared experience across the white lines where the similarities were striking: The sniffle they thought they had, the interminable coughing, the temperature and fever, the exhaustion, the getting up and the exhaustion again, the full recovery still awaited.

Hopefully by the time this appears in the magazine they will both be springing around like gazelles, which is a source of hopefulness for us all. I am optimistic but my message this month is less for the vulnerable or the elderly who can see the graphs and the big risks but for the younger of you, who will be back at work maybe, who see but the small block on the bar chart of mortality but may not be aware of the weeks of illness that may come your way if infected.

We cannot of course stay zipped in our tent forever but as we emerge let us be sure to live well, safely and with a mind for others who remain anxious.

With blessings

Steve