

NORWICH RESEARCH PARK IN FOCUS

Changing Lives. Rethinking Society



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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

At this time of the year that is what we all say to each other; but here's a thing – is this just like that 'How are you' we have been talking about before? In issue 4 I asked whether we have forgotten the question mark that rightfully belongs after that phrase. The question mark lifts an otherwise alternative to 'Hello' to a genuine care for each other, 'How are you?' It's an ask, not a statement, it warrants a response – and that response warrants a listening ear.

So, is 'Happy New Year' a normal throwaway phrase again this year, or is this year the time that we really mean it? If, indeed we really do mean it, then what does it mean? And, more importantly, what are we going to do differently to influence it? Perhaps a good place to start might be to do some imagining – what would a Happy 2021 look like? How will we want to remember 2021?



A NEW YEAR - A NEW BEGINNING?

At the start of a new year, many of us begin it with great intent - we make resolutions, often forgotten by February! But maybe this year, more than any we might remember, is calling for a new beginning.

Of course, the pandemic remains uppermost in our minds, but our eyes have been opened through the crisis to the fragility of our life and our planet. If we have learned anything, we have learned that the status quo is unsustainable.

But, throughout the pandemic we have seen science move from the lab to the living room, it has become the focus of everyday conversation. We all know much more about vaccination, the route to public use of new treatments, public health, the NHS and the wider care system, and even economics and statistics. These are not mysterious topics reserved for others, they are mainstream conversations, open and accessible to all; this could be one of the most important changes in our culture for many years, certainly one we must treasure and encourage. We have broken down the fear of science, recognised the importance of listening to science and learned to ask of and to challenge science. Everything that passes our senses: touch, sound, sight and smell, has science at its core – it is right that we stay engaged. Science is bringing the answer to this pandemic; and beyond the pandemic, with support from us all, it will help us to sustain our new beginning.



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BUILDING TOMORROW TODAY

In previous musings I have talked about how tomorrow is not ours, it belongs to those who come after us. But the vital thing is that we must play our part in ensuring the foundations are there, I call this 'Building Tomorrow Today'.

There are many elements: environment, climate, feeding a growing population, good health throughout a longer life, education and experience to equip the next generation, places to work - with the facilities to enable great things to happen. Not a short list, and although

there are more things not listed, perhaps we could call it a good start.

At Norwich Research Park we have one of the world's leading places of climate expertise at the Tyndall Centre, we have world-leading plant science contributing to a better environment, sustainable food sources and better health, ground-breaking work on the relationship between nutrition and health and we launched the Norwich Institute for Healthy Ageing. We have career paths for almost every imaginable subject, our university and university

hospital are educating, we have a leading PhD programme and hundreds of apprentices.

At Norwich Research Park we continue to look to the future, The Quadram Institute has the most advanced endoscopy unit anywhere in the world! The Sainsbury Laboratory and the John Innes Centre are planning facilities for the next generation, the UEA and NNUH continue to grow and we have embarked on an exciting plan to increase our shared space - because we are growing!



CGI of a potential accelerator/bioincubator building bordering a village square, just one part of our thinking

OUR COMMITMENT

When I write 'Our Commitment', and you read 'Our Commitment' – is this my 'our', or your 'our'? The answer I offer, is both! If we mean for success and sustainability in our new beginning, then it places demands on us all. 2021 holds great promise, we hope through vaccination to end this pandemic and November will bring COP26, the Glasgow based United Nations climate change conference.

My challenge to us all is to hang on to our learning from 2020, what we learned about ourselves, our society and the environment, and to translate that into a new resolve to do better. We know history will record 2020 as the year of the pandemic; but what I also want future generations to read is that 2021 was the pivotal year for our world; the year our world began to recover, began to step back from a climate disaster, began to value our agriculture and sustainable food sources, sparked a resurgence of community living and working, and we relearned that simple humanity rates higher than profit. So, to return to where I began, when I 'imagineer' the end of 2021 that's what I want to be looking back on.

For Norwich Research Park, our commitment to you is to continue our medical care, our world-leading science and our educational programmes. We will continue to support recovery and growth in our regional and national economy, and we will continue to support the creation of new jobs. The commitment we ask is for the conversation to continue, for our learnings to be cemented, and for humanity to be our priority.

