

## MAILBOX

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## Shared responsibility to tackle infection rate

THE city mayor's letter to faith communities in Leicester asking for an extension to the voluntary closure of places of worship has sparked a lot of discussion.

It is now very likely that the anniversary of the first lockdown – March 23, 2020 – will be marked by online events rather than in person in our churches, mosques, temples, synagogues and gurdwaras. This is deeply frustrating for many of us.

Faith communities are a vital resource, not only for those who attend our places of worship, but for all of us as we seek to emerge from this crisis with more kindness and justice in our world.

Issues of poverty, deprivation and trust seem to be increasingly relevant to rates of infection and of vaccine uptake and demand our attention. And the faith communities of Leicester have a superb track record of growing relationships and working together to serve those most in need in our society.

We can rightly be proud of the fact that other places look to us as an example of good interfaith work.

Yet the city mayor's letter is a reminder that we must continue to do all we can to work together to tackle the virus. Despite all the excellent work of the NHS, our emergency services and public health teams, the infection rates are once again rising in some areas and are more than twice the national average in other areas.

We now face the distinct possibility of further local lockdowns even as the rest of the country has restrictions lifted.

I am therefore joining the city mayor in making an appeal to all our faith communities and all those who live and work in Leicester and Leicestershire to play your part in tackling the virus.

We simply cannot afford to blame others or point fingers at other groups. This is down to each of us individually and collectively to make a difference and to make one another proud of all that is good about this city and county.

**The Rt Rev Martyn Snow,**  
Bishop of Leicester



**'WE NOW FACE THE DISTINCT POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER LOCAL LOCKDOWNS':** The Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Rev Martyn Snow  
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## What will the extra £9 a month be spent on?

I HAVE just received my council tax demand bill for 2020/2021. I find that I have to find an extra £9 per month and for what? Let's say, hats off to the dustbin men, you are quite welcome to my money, you do a grand job.

But I have to ask myself what warrants a 6.4 per cent increase for the Police and Crime Commissioner when we read the amount of crime that occurs in our city. To reduce this we have to have a force to reckon with – I don't believe we have that.

Police and Crime Commissioner Lord Bach still fails to tell us just how the recruiting of new police officers is going. Are we asked for more tax for fewer officers?

We then move on to Leicestershire Fire and Rescue, up by 2 per cent. Why Leicestershire when I live in the Leicester boundary? And do we envisage fighting more fires this year?

This brings me to the increase of 2 per cent for Leicester City Council and again, I have to ask, for what? I'm a house owner so everything to do with it comes out of my own pocket.

My road has never been resurfaced in the 31 years I've lived here. The grass verges are not cut, that is often due to cuts being made. I did not want a 20mph limit in a cul de sac. These limits are a complete waste of time because they are never adhered to or supervised.

The cycle lanes are a farce. Where are the cyclists? As for the bus lanes,

I feel the space may have been better used for a tram system to bring us in line with other cities.

As for the taxes: bring back Robin Hood, we certainly need you.

**Pete Pollard,** Aylestone

## Our mania for growth cannot be sustained

IT'S right people should be protected from mass unemployment and that businesses should be supported in delivering a 'levelling-up' agenda as the UK seeks to recover from the economic damage from the pandemic and Brexit.

The shock to the UK economy has been enormous and the virus has exposed a large inequality gap.

We will recover. However, a bigger threat to life and to the world is from

the climate emergency. It's utterly unacceptable to see no major investment in the Chancellor's Budget for a green new deal, a green recovery with skilled jobs, which polls show the public want, not austerity.

The UK is hosting the United Nations COPT26 in November and will be embarrassed when other countries commit to deep cuts in carbon emissions to deliver on the Paris 2015 accords.

The Green Party is calling for a net zero carbon energy target by 2030 based on science and a moral case. The UK's net zero carbon target by 2050 is too late.

We need to get away from endless growth. This doesn't mean living in a cave, losing your job and being miserable! It is about shifting growth with emphasis on re-use, products lasting longer and not keep on making so much stuff.

We've exported carbon-intensive manufacturing, sometimes to where there are human rights abuses, so the UK can enjoy a less polluted environment and cheaper products.

The government's Climate Change Committee estimate the costs of a low-carbon revolution will be an annual £50 billion by 2030.

Over nine years that's about the same amount as the £400 billion plus recently spent by the government in pandemic support.

We face a climate emergency and the enormous mistake made by the Chancellor not to invest in a green recovery should be reversed so that the UK is on a path to be net zero carbon by 2030.

**Robert Ball,** Leicester Green Party

## We need a spitting ban during sports matches

CAN anyone tell me why professional footballers and rugby players are allowed to spit on the pitch whilst a game is in progress?

I have noticed this on many occasions whilst watching on TV and it seems to be becoming more prevalent.

Surely it is a health hazard, where players can possibly fall on some whilst in play?

Yes, they possibly all have a test before the game but that doesn't mean to say Covid is not lurking in their bodies. I think it is an offence in the "outside world" to do this.

**Margaret Briggs,** Birstall

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