

## Year 9 Message-Silver Linings

There has been dire economic news this week; the UK economy shrank by more than 20% in April, due to the lockdown. It's good that you won't be fully entering the economy for another 4 years, by which time things should have recovered. You have to stay in education or training until you are at least 18. This doesn't mean that you have to stay on at school past Year 11, at 16 you can go to college, the Sixth Form Centre or start an apprenticeship. At the time of writing, UK deaths from coronavirus are nearing 42 000.

Have you heard the phrase "every cloud has a silver lining"? Despite how awful the effects of the virus have been there have been some positives.

Many people are now exercising more than they ever have, whether it be walking, cycling or doing workouts like Joe Wick's. If we keep this up we all shall be healthier, which will reduce pressure on the NHS in future.

Many people have felt a greater sense of community. Neighbours have volunteered to do shopping for others who are shielding, and gathered on the streets on a Thursday at 8 p.m. to clap for the NHS. A lot of us have realised quite how important our loved ones are to us and what is really important in life.

As of June 10<sup>th</sup> the UK had gone 60 days without burning coal to make electricity, as industry has needed far less power. This will have led to a reduction in SO<sub>2</sub> levels [SO<sub>2</sub> causes acid rain] and CO<sub>2</sub> [a major cause of climate change]. Far fewer car, train and plane journeys have been taken, leading to cleaner air. It is hoped that in the future more people will walk or cycle to work. During the pandemic far less oil has been used. BP, a major British oil firm, has announced that it is cutting back on oil production leading to reduced pollution and environmental degradation. Unfortunately, BP are making job cuts of 10 000, but the hope is that new jobs will be created in renewable energy and that, in general, we can have a green recovery.

I wrote about social justice a few weeks ago. As I walk my dogs I see so many signs supporting the NHS and key workers. Some signs call for pay rises for the lowest paid key workers. Hopefully, the NHS will get more investment, despite our economic woes, as the government has seen how important it is to us all. Have you seen that Marcus Rashford, the Manchester United football player, got the government to agree to providing free school meal vouchers over the school summer holidays. He says he wants to do more to help the poorest families in the UK. Marcus comes from a poor family and it's admirable that he hasn't forgotten this now he is well paid. The Premier League is resuming and instead of their names on the backs of their shirts they are going to have "Black Lives Matter". This follows the death of a black man, George Floyd, in the USA due to brutality from a white policeman. Black and minority ethnic [BAME] people in the UK and USA have been dying of the virus at a higher rate than white people. Whilst the full cause isn't yet understood, BAME groups are often the poorest in society. The protests that have followed George Floyd's death highlight that racism is still a major problem.

Wouldn't it be fantastic if the virus led to a fairer, cleaner world?

Thinking of you all

Miss Owen