

A better Christmas?

Plenty of people want a Christmas to cheer them up. Sales of trees and decorations are by all accounts good. People are brightening up their living rooms early this year, and planning a family get together. The government was at least wise to relax the rules a bit to allow more people to come together for Christmas meals and conviviality as they wish.

There has been much worry expressed by some government scientific advisers over what all this social contact might do for the spread of the virus, and a wish on their part to have periods of greater restriction before and after. They like the idea of each of us having some sort of limited freedom budget, and if we spend too much of it on meeting people over Christmas we need to rein in before and after.

We need to move on to a more trusting approach, where we all make more of our own decisions based on understanding the messages from the medics and scientists. We can calculate our own risks and the risk we might pose to others, as we do about all other such threats in the normal course of life.

It is not easy making choices for people, weighing the danger from opening non essential shops against the danger of opening hospitality venues. I am glad the discussions some of us have had with Ministers making the case for sports facilities to be open and against the curfew have led to some sensible modifications of the local lockdown schemes. What do you think of the latest proposals? I and my colleagues will study the detail of these new measures as it is published, and will want to see a way forward that minimises damage to business and ,jobs.