



Guernsey Estate Agents

Swoffers

Reasons to
be cheerful....



The Lion's Den
BAR ROOM
#GuernseyTogether



Switch on the national news at the moment and you seem to be bombarded with downbeat, depressing, disheartening stories about the impact of lockdown and gloomy predictions for the future.

But here in Guernsey we are much more optimistic. Life is quickly returning to normal; we have zero active cases of Covid-19, there's good news about the local economy and the glorious weather is having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the whole community as we enjoy a new, more relaxed, way of life.

So, what are our reasons to be cheerful?





Guernsey is the first part of the British Isles to be Covid-free and remove nearly all lockdown restrictions

The island's response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been quick, decisive, and successful. So much so that we even led the national news agenda with the BBC News at 10 reporting Guernsey leading the way out of lockdown and the island's Chief Minister Gavin St Pier being a guest on Radio 4's Any Questions, Any Answers discussion programme. On 30th May, Guernsey moves into Phase 4 of its exit strategy, allowing nearly all businesses to operate again; restaurants and cafes to open; other public venues such as museums, leisure centres and cinemas can recommence operations and restrictions on contacts between households and those outside will be lifted.

The island's Health and Social Care Minister, Heidi Soulsby, told a recent press briefing: 'The current public health data has exceeded our expectations and there is clear evidence that the community is working together to ease out of lockdown.'

At the height of the pandemic Guernsey was carrying out well over 100 tests a day on-island, which would be the equivalent of more than 100,000 tests a day in a population the size of the UK.

'Our strategy remains the same: test, trace and quarantine,' said Director of Public Health, Dr Nicola Brink.

'It continues to be effective as evidenced in the lack of new positives and no active known cases. As we transition through the phases to exit from lockdown, this proactive testing in our community is key to managing the virus and protecting islanders.'

Social distancing and additional hygiene measures will still be required. But essentially, from Saturday, normal life - or close to it - returns.

With the emphasis now firmly on recovery, there appears to be a real desire to keep some of the benefits of lockdown - kindness, self-care, time with family, looking out for more vulnerable members of the community, volunteering, sharing and appreciating the good things in life.

The island's Health Improvement Commission is promoting the retention of a more active lifestyle that many islanders adopted over the past couple of months. Cycling, walking and sea swimming have become regular daily activities even with social distancing restrictions. Sport is returning, with the island's golf courses now busy and sports clubs and organisations preparing for the further lifting of restrictions.

In another first, Guernsey looks set to be the first place in the British Isles to host a competitive cricket match with two local sides playing a T20 game on Saturday 30th May, with the event being livestreamed to the world. It has even been suggested that Guernsey could play host to some Premier League football matches to help complete the season - an idea which gained some pretty far-reaching support and publicity, even if it does not come to fruition!





Guernsey's economy is well-positioned to bounce back

It may be too soon to really understand the overall impact the virus and lockdown will have on the Guernsey economy, but there are positive signs of a bounce back. We believe that's another reason to be cheerful – and we're not the only ones.

John Moulton, Chairman of The International Stock Exchange, which is based in Guernsey, predicts that the island's economic downturn could be between 3% and 5%, compared with 15% to 20% in the UK.

In a recent article in the Guernsey Press, Mr Moulton said: 'We're blessed with having such a strong financial services industry in Guernsey. It's possible our economy will go down three, four, five per cent, compared to the mainland which could go down 15 to 20%.

'It's an enormous difference. It's still not going to be easy, but we're quite blessed in a way.'

Upbeat messages are coming from other business sectors too, with talk of rethinking and reconfiguring working practices so that staff are able to work more flexibly and spend more time with their families – something that has been a real positive during lockdown.

Gavin St Pier's mantra of 'Build Back Better' combined with the power of the community's response to #GuernseyTogether, puts the island in a strong position to bounce back and develop a brighter future.

Of course, there will be casualties as businesses look to cut costs to stay afloat. The quick introduction of a package of financial support from the States of Guernsey has certainly helped. Unemployment

levels inevitably rose, but levels now appear to be stabilising. With lockdown restrictions being lifted, and schools re-opening their doors, it won't be long before most businesses are able to return to normal.

This is certainly the case for Swoffers. We have been back operating since 25th April with numerous properties placed under offer in the last few weeks. Surveyors, legal teams and removal firms are all working too, and with a thriving rentals sector, tenants are now able to move house.

One area that remains uncertain and a hot topic for discussion is when the island can open up to travel again. At the moment strict quarantine measures apply to all those coming into the island - travellers have to self-isolate for 14 days.

'We know there is a pressing need for this to return to normal as soon as possible,' said Gavin St Pier.

'Obviously we need to balance the risk bearing in mind the Covid-19 situation of our near neighbours. However, we cannot stay in fortress Guernsey or fortress Bailiwick until we have a vaccine, which may never emerge. We are actively discussing how off-island travel can recommence safely and will update islanders as soon as we can, as plans evolve.'

But travel restrictions between the islands of the Bailiwick have been eased, with offers of staycations on-island and in the beautiful sister islands of Herm, Sark and Alderney looking to be popular choices for holidays and short breaks in the coming months.





Living in Guernsey

Our final reason to be cheerful is simple - the fact that we are lucky enough to live in such a beautiful place. And you could be too!

'An important factor in Guernsey's future success is its location,' businessman and recent relocater Nick Moakes wrote in a local news publication, Bailiwick Express.

'For more than 1,000 years, Guernsey's strategic location has enabled it to diversify and grow into a successful economy. Today, the island has a hard-won reputation for being a stable, low tax economy but its geographic location could once again be a key reason why it will be attractive to many people and businesses in a post-Covid-19 world.

'We have all read about people buying property in New Zealand for this very reason and there are probably other locations where the same phenomenon is playing out. However, Guernsey has some key advantages over many of these locations. Located 70 miles from the UK, and only 27 miles from France, Guernsey is close to all of Europe's capital cities and financial centres. The island is also already home to a large and established financial / professional services industry and all of the support services / skills one would expect.

'In normal times, Guernsey is a truly wonderful place to live and work but the island has now proved that in difficult times it can quickly and effectively adapt and lock down its borders by restricting movement both on and off the island. This ability to self-impose complete lock-down will appeal to many people and businesses who want to live and work somewhere that is safe in uncertain times as well as good times. So, in a post-Coronavirus world, Guernsey could become just about the best place in the world to be located.'

**So, what are you waiting for?
Why not find your own reasons
to be cheerful!**

**Contact a member of our
experienced team to talk through
taking the first steps towards
relocating to Guernsey.**

