

New Year message from the First Minister

In her end of year message it is not surprising that the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon focused on pandemics and the people of Scotland.

Ms Sturgeon said: "This Hogmanay, as we look forward to a new year, most of us will be relieved to be ringing out the old one.

"2020 has been unimaginably difficult: thousands have lost loved ones, our society has been upended, our economy has taken a severe hit, many have lost jobs, families have had to cancel holidays, and of course Christmas plans had to be cancelled too.

"We have had to deny ourselves so many of the things that we most value in life, human companionship, hugs from loved ones, the comfort and the pleasure we get from meeting and spending time with each other.

"I can simply never thank all of you enough for the sacrifices you have made, and the patience you have shown, during these last difficult months.

"One of the continuing consolations of this year has been seeing how often the worst of times have brought out the very best in people.

"Our health and care workers, in particular, have shown the most extraordinary dedication, in the most testing of

circumstances. The entire country is grateful for your efforts.

“But there are so many other examples too. When we asked for volunteers to help people in their local communities, more than 40,000 people signed up in the first 48 hours alone.

“Thousands of others signed up for vaccine trials, or helped to track Covid symptoms.

“And many more of you supported charities and local businesses; or helped in your local communities; or kept in touch with neighbours and friends who otherwise would have been lonely.

“These have all been points of brightness in dark times. They have reminded us again of what truly matters in life – kindness, compassion, solidarity and love.

“As we look forward to 2021 – for all the difficulties that still lie ahead – there is a lot we can now look forward to.

“Tens of thousands of people in Scotland have now received their first vaccination against Covid.

“And that number will grow in the weeks and months ahead.

“2021 will also see the expansion of free nursery care, the introduction of the Scottish Child payment to tackle child poverty, and the first full year of Scotland’s new investment bank. As we rebuild after this pandemic, we can, we must, focus on making Scotland a fairer country and a greener country.

“And of course, towards the end of the year, the eyes of the world will be on Glasgow, and the COP 26 climate change summit – a gathering that has the potential to set the whole world on a path to a more sustainable future.

“So even as we reflect on this darkest of years, we can see

light ahead.

“Of course our first priority must be to get through these next few weeks and months. They will be tough for all of us.

“So let’s stick with it, and stick together.

“Let’s continue to show each other kindness, compassion, and love.

“And let’s all of us resolve to make 2021 Scotland’s year of recovery.

“I wish all of you a Happy New Year.”



30 July 2020 Pictured: Nicola Sturgeon MSP – First Minister of Scotland and Leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) giving a ministerial statement: COVID 19 Next Steps. Credit: Colin Fisher/Alamy Live news/SP Pool.