

New Year message from the First Minister

The First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has issued a resounding Happy New Year to everyone with a message hoping for health and peace in 2022.

Ms Sturgeon said: “2021 has been dominated by the challenges of Covid.

“Throughout this year, our health and care workers have continued to do an absolutely magnificent job. And those working on our vaccination programme have provided all of us with an incredible service.

“Thanks to their efforts – and also thanks to the sacrifices of people right across the country – earlier this year businesses were able to reopen.

“Schools stayed open throughout the autumn, and our public services were able to remobilise.

“And near the end of the year, at the COP26 Summit, Glasgow was able to welcome the world to the most important international gathering ever held in this country.

“And I know that all of us, at different times, will have had reunions with friends that felt a bit more precious, for being so hard-won.

“The fact that we made so much progress is a real achievement.

“But of course it also makes it all the more cruel that now – so late on in the year – we are facing a new challenge.

“The omicron variant is a very significant threat. It means that at the moment, we need above all to keep each other safe. We all need to stay at home, far more than we would want to at this time of year. And we have asked that you minimise new year socialising as much as you can.

“So this is not the Hogmanay we all wanted and hoped for.

“But I believe that we can still look ahead to 2022 with optimism.

“An important reason for that, is that so many of you, in the past few days, have gone out to get your booster before the bells.

“I am so incredibly grateful to you for that, and for all the other sacrifices you have made throughout this difficult year.

“In the coming year, our vaccination programme will continue to enable us, to make our way back to greater normality.

“And we will continue to work to rebuild our society and our economy – for example by supporting businesses in the move to net zero, and starting work to establish a new national care service.

“As we come through this pandemic, there will still, I am sure, be setbacks.

“But as we look back on the challenges we have faced this year, I believe we can also look forward to a much better and brighter new year ahead.

“So as you see in the bells, I want to take the opportunity to wish all of you a good Hogmanay. And to everyone, whether you’re in Scotland or further afield, let me wish all of you, a very happy, healthy and peaceful new year.

“Happy New Year.”

