



FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE

Jon Collenette, director at Collenette Jones reminds us why Guernsey remains a wonderful place to live and work

Back in April, many businesses in the island had been forced to close; uncertainty about staff retention and cash flow meant I spent hours with clients helping them keep a positive mind-set.

In early August with the island firmly in Phase 5, our business community now finds itself booming. With some exceptions, our clients are reporting an economy in over-drive. This is much as I had predicted - most islanders have kept their jobs on full or close to full pay and have put money aside during lockdown by not going out or away.

With spending on home improvements and eating out, fortune has favoured the brave. Those businesses that made financial

sacrifices during lockdown by retaining staff, keeping stock levels up and planning ahead have taken advantage of the 'Guernsey bounce'. Those who were over-cautious or who had spent their cash reserves before lockdown have had a tougher time.

Looking ahead for the next few months, I suspect that things won't be quite as rosy for many of our businesses as worldwide stock shortages start to kick in, affecting retail in particular. This is why this downturn is so different to ones preceding it, being supply rather than demand driven.

Somewhat shielded from the worldwide downturn, our financial services businesses have given us the wages we need to fuel

our economy. Most have remained largely unaffected, with staff working from home. But a word of warning - our successful home working arrangements have made our island strangely vulnerable because home working can be from many other places in the world with a skilled work force. And labour costs elsewhere are often cheaper than Guernsey's.

Therefore, we must not get too relaxed. Now, more than ever, we need to maintain our island hard work ethic, be flexible to employer demands and keep ourselves trained up and technologically expert. And we must make sure that Guernsey remains a wonderful place to live so that our entrepreneurs will continue to want to live here and new ones will want to join them.

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Everything we have learned from 40 years of local business comes down to one important lesson, everyone being in it together.

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