

South London opinion

southlondonpress
THE SPIRIT OF SOUTH LONDON

OUR COMMENT

Let's get back to business

Work can be very tough sometimes – but it is a lot better than the alternative. In the old days, before lockdown, some of us would have been tempted to beat the rush hour by turning up a couple of hours late. We'd be happy if the buck didn't even slow down whizzing past our desk.

But most of us will now have been missing the smelly armpits of the commute, checking our emails while pretending to work – and especially our colleagues' bad jokes.

It's nice at least to be looking forward to work again (for a bit).

After a nice break, it's now time to get down to business again.

And we need to do it quickly. Some South London firms will not return. Others will never be the same again – their workplace model has changed, their operations have been transformed, or they are still struggling to get back on an even keel.

We at the *South London Press* want to ensure every single South London business can emerge from this unprecedented crisis with an efficient structure and a buzz about it which secures its future.

We want every firm to find its market and for its staff to benefit from a bounce-back which Tiger would be proud of.

South Londoners worked hard before this pandemic had even been heard of. Many have toiled on, in the teeth of immense challenges, glitches in their new structures – and even through illness and bereavement.

Our medics and NHS staff have worked miracles – and our key workers have shown the same commitment.

Now the rest of us want to show what we can do. South Londoners can be heroes – every one of us. And the *South London Press* is here for you, supporting your profile and your customers.

And if we unite and support each other through the coming weeks and months, we can all celebrate a big bounce-back in our fortunes.

The global health crisis needs a global response

The NHS has seriously struggled with COVID-19, as the UK experiences one of the highest numbers of recorded deaths globally – surpassing 40,000 in early June.

Now, COVID-19 is beginning to engulf developing countries as well. South Africa recorded 3,267 new COVID-19 cases last Thursday – their largest spike since the pandemic began. Nigeria, Egypt, Brazil, and Mexico are also experiencing surging cases.

Developing countries are not equipped to sustain COVID-19 measures such as lockdown, and they have very few intensive care unit (ICU) beds; it is estimated that even 200 severe COVID-19 cases could completely overwhelm their health systems. To effectively respond, robust mass testing and contact tracing programmes are required.

In comparison to the UK, developing countries are also disproportionately affected by other infectious diseases including tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS.

If their health systems are drowned by COVID-19, the fight against other preventable diseases will be dramatically set back.

For example, the Stop TB Partnership estimates that COVID-19 lockdowns could lead to an additional 6.3 million cases of TB between 2020 and 2025, leading to an additional 1.4 million TB deaths.

This global health crisis demands a global health response. The UK must aggressively invest in developing countries' community-owned pandemic prevention plans to strengthen health systems, supply chains, and infectious disease prevention programmes. All countries deserve to and are capable of hiring hundreds of thousands of people (paid a living wage) to provide mass testing, contact tracing, and isolation support, promoting everyone's universal right to health.

Fiona Mortell
SE17 3PE

Thanks for your support to help vulnerable people

I wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for the support you have shown our charity over the years.

As you may be aware Paxton Green Time Bank has been running a food hub for vulnerable local residents during the pandemic.

We have been providing food to about 70 households a week, and on top of that we have a group of dedicated volunteers who have been



Harriet Harman, MP for Camberwell and Peckham

The murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police caused a wave of anger and revulsion across the world and is strongly felt in south London.

The Black Lives Matter movement marks an important moment. It is a moment for hearing justified anger and determining to make change. It is about solidarity with black people in the US who face oppression and police violence but also about recognising racism exists in the UK too, the everyday hostility and discrimination faced by black people and black men and boys in particular and the structural and systemic inequality.

You are still nine times more likely to be

in my view



Nurses care for a patient in an intensive care ward treating victims of the coronavirus. Picture: PA

collecting prescriptions and doing basic shopping for other members who are self-isolating due to age or ill health.

On top of our phone befriending network we have been kept very busy!

You can support our work during this time. As such, I am sharing the link to our fundraising page – www.gofundme.com/f/paxton-green-time-bank-crisis-fund.

Thank you for all your support for PGTB during this time, and over the last decade, we feel privileged to be part of such a caring and collaborative community.

Christine Warren
Chairwoman of Paxton Green Time Bank

Talented young journalists have such a bright future

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed your new section, *The Studentview*.

The articles were all well written and carefully researched, and the topics were extremely relevant to a wide audience.

My family (adults and 20-somethings) enjoyed the articles very much, and learned a lot.

The *Studentview* contributors are obviously very talented young journalists, with a bright future ahead of them.

Thank you for giving them the opportunity to contribute to the paper. I shall certainly make sure I pick up a copy every week now.

Vicki Sabatini
Balham

Thank you for contacting us, Vicki.

We were delighted with the contributions of the students involved.

We really appreciated your comments.

Toby Porter
News Editor

stopped and searched if you are black than if you are white. Southwark and Lambeth are the two London boroughs with the highest stop and search rates. I'm challenging our local police to assess the impact of stop and search on their relationship with the local community.

For years I have been pressing our local police to face up to the reality of the poor relations there are between them and young black people. I've urged them to understand the strength of feeling by carrying out polling.

They have yet to act on this and together with Helen Hayes MP, Neil Coyle MP and Florence Eshalomi MP I'm now insisting on it.

It is hard to see how the black community can feel that they have fair policing until we have a properly representative police service with black officers at all levels of our local force.

I strongly back the move led by Black Southwark councillors to establish a #BlackLivesMatter initiative. It's important to chronicle the experience of what it means to be black in Southwark in 2020.

Everyday experiences of racism need to be recognised as fact not swept under the carpet. There needs to be concrete change to stop it.

As chairwoman of the Joint Committee on

Limousine salaries for a Robin Reliant service

The decade after the financial crisis has seen many front line public sector and most private sector employees receive below inflation pay rises, with many suffering years of stagnant earnings.

Not so for those at the top of City Hall, delivering value for money from the public purse is of no barrier for their earnings.

The TaxPayers' Alliance have published their City Hall Rich List 2020 which reveals:

- 654 people employed by the GLA and its subsidiary bodies in 2018-19 received more than £100,000. 154 received over £150,000.

- Transport for London alone has 518 employees on over £100,000. With 114 on more than £150,000.

- 28 employees received remuneration in excess of a quarter of a million pounds in 2018-19.

Taxpayers have to fund this on top of all the other costly burdens of living in London, with the Mayor having increased the band D council tax precept by just under nine per cent in 2019-20.

London taxpayers are paying limousine prices for what all too often turns out to be a Reliant Robin service from City Hall.

This is on top of the burden from London's Borough Councils.

Croydon council employs more than 23 staff on more than £100,000 a year.

Hardworking taxpayers need a fair deal that protects them as well as rewards staff.

We know the economy has taken a serve hit from Covid-19 and the lockdown.

We ask that City Hall and its subsidiary bodies share the burden with those who pay their wages.

We think it's reasonable to ask that no new employee in the Metropolitan Police, Greater London Authority, London Fire Brigade or the Mayoral team, be paid more than the Prime Minister.

Those in post were employed in good faith and must retain their salaries, but surely it is not unreasonable in these troubled economic times to say a Deputy commissioner in the London Fire Brigade or a Transformation director in TfL does not need to be paid more than the person running Britain!

We calculate that if this were already the case, just capping the salaries of the top 20 highest paid staff in TfL would save over £3.9million a year.

A good start to helping council tax payers.

Dan Heaton and Michael Swadling
Croydon Constitutionalists
TaxPayers' Alliance

Human Rights I'm establishing a #BlackLivesMatter inquiry. The whole point about human rights is that they are for every human being.

By definition they are supposed to be universal. But we know that those rights are not equally there for black people. We will propose action to change that.

The Covid crisis has exposed the race inequality in our society. Black Lives Matter has pointed to the structures that perpetuate the inequality. The Government must urgently publish the full report on the Covid impact on BAME communities.

The proof of change will be when we see statistics change to show you are no longer more likely to be low paid and in poor housing if you are black, and that black people are no more likely to be arrested or die in police custody.

We have to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Black community in demanding we cannot return to business as normal. There have been countless Government reviews making powerful proposals, particularly the post Windrush Review and David Lammy MP's review of black people and the criminal justice system. We don't need another government review. Now we must have action.