



## April 2020

### CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I think it's fair to say that my first year as Chairman has been challenging! In fairness in my position it's important to have support from the rest of the Committee and our membership, who I must thank for your kind words over the past couple of months!

It is clear that we have vital contacts in virtually all of the Government ministries and thankfully they continue to trust and support us with key information in difficult times.

As you would expect in times like these the 'rumour mill' continues to churn out supposition and unsubstantiated facts which we then have to authenticate before we circulate it to you.

Currently, most of the misinformation is surrounding the 'curfew' and the requirement to obtain permission from the Police prior to you leaving your residence. This is **NOT** true! If you are leaving the property to visit supermarkets, butchers, bakers, petrol stations, banks or medical facilities you **DO NOT** require permission, unless of course you have been told to 'quarantine'. However, it is not an excuse to go for a ride, walk or meet neighbours or friends! You may even be asked to show what you have left your residence for, till receipts, appointment letters etc.

**Last night the Government issued the latest, and strictest warning regarding the 'partial curfew' by introducing a 'full curfew' between 9pm and 6am. Anyone breaching this rule, without good reason WILL be prosecuted.**

As a team we are holding regular meetings by video-conferencing to ensure that we can discuss issues that arise as a result of the virus or other problems. Apart from the Government we are also in regular contact with the British High Commission to ensure that they are made aware of cases of hardship or particularly vulnerable individuals requiring their assistance. You can read more about this in our Government Liaison section.

Also, for people to keep up to date with all matters relating to the COVID-19 situation here in the TRNC, may I suggest that you view the following links to

Cyprium News <https://cypriumnews.com/>  
and Cyprusscene <https://cyprusscene.com/>

These are trusted sources and will provide you with factual information.

## WEEKLY UPDATES

From week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> April we will be circulating a weekly update which, in the main will deal with COVID-19 as it affects our members. It will be a brief document with links to relevant stories, facts and figures. This will be on a temporary basis until things get back to 'normal'

## RED CRESCENT AID

We were recently contacted by the Red Crescent who have extended their offer of aid to include ex-pats. Do you know someone who needs help at this time? If so email our Health and Welfare Secretary - [welfareandhealth.brstrnc@gmail.com](mailto:welfareandhealth.brstrnc@gmail.com)

## CLINICS

As you would imagine ALL clinics are suspended until further notice. We will announce when this changes.

## RESIDENCY – UPDATE

As we mentioned in our last newsletter the current immigration rules have been relaxed, so please do not have concerns about this, if due to the lockdown you have been unable to apply or are concerned that you are overstaying your visa, then you will be provided with an extension until the TRNC is out of the lockdown. It was going to be for a period of 30-days, but we expect this to be extended.

We will keep you informed of any changes that are made to the extension.

## FACEBOOK GROUP – INVITATIONS TO JOIN

As of this morning (Friday 31st March) we have 161 members who have joined our Facebook group (British Residents' Society – Official) This has, so far, been a quick and easy method for us to circulate the latest relevant information to our members. It is strictly an information group, but if people have questions about the posts, we will try to answer them as quickly as possible.

## ACCOUNTANT

I am glad to announce that following the request to our members last month for someone to help us, we were contacted by a retired accountant Grahame Ash, who has agreed to assist.

## WEBMASTER - MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

As I announced in last month's Newsletter, we are inviting applications from members to join the Committee to work with the BRS in this interesting role. The role will be one of maintaining the website and the members database.

If you would like more information, please contact me on [chair.brstrnc@gmail.com](mailto:chair.brstrnc@gmail.com)

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT LIAISON

As for the previous item we are still inviting applications to join the Committee in the role of Local Government Liaison coordinator. This is a new opportunity for the successful applicant to develop this important role. Again, if you have any interest or questions please contact me directly on [chair.brstrnc@gmail.com](mailto:chair.brstrnc@gmail.com)

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As things stand today it looks highly likely that the AGM will be postponed until a date when it will be safe for so many members to meet. We will keep you informed.

## **GOVERNMENT LIAISON**

We are remaining in regular touch with the British High Commission and referring issues that we are unable to assist with, to them.

# Open Letter to British Nationals in Cyprus on

## COVID-19

UK IN CYPRUS - BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION NICOSIA · WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2020 · 7 MINUTES

The world is facing an unprecedented crisis in tackling the spread of COVID-19.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has declared it the biggest threat the UK has faced in decades. In Britain and Cyprus the authorities are introducing radical measures to protect the population from the virus.

I know that many of our British community here in Cyprus are worried about the current situation, the new restrictions imposed by the government, and feeling isolated from friends and family back home. I am writing to you to address some of these concerns, and set out what the High Commission is doing and how we can support.

We are regularly updating our Travel Advice for Cyprus

(<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cyprus>) and encourage you to use this as your first point of reference for updates on the local situation, subscribing to alerts if you have not already done so.

### Tourists

Around 5000 British tourists were able to leave the island before the closure of hotels and the flight ban which came into force on Saturday 21 March. We continue to liaise with local authorities, airlines and tour operators on next steps for those tourists who were unable to leave, or chose to stay. As always, we continue to focus our consular effort on those most in need of assistance, including the elderly and those in need of medical assistance.

The flight ban to and from the island is currently in operation until 4 April in the Republic, and until further notice for flights into the north of the island. So if you are a tourist you need to focus first on ensuring that you have accommodation until you are able to secure a flight home. Although hotels in the Republic have closed, there is still a lot of other accommodation available, which can be found on the usual websites.

The government in Cyprus has said that even during the ban it will allow passenger flights to arrive in Cyprus empty, to take people back home. So you should continue to check airline websites regularly for new flight options. This could include flying to a third country and changing flights to get back to the UK – but in that case please check FCO travel advice for the third country in case there are any restrictions on Britons entering.

At the same time, flight websites may not always be accurate. If you have a booking that falls within the ban period, contact the airline to ensure it will still be leaving as advertised.

### British residents

The High Commission is keeping in close touch with community representatives as we face this crisis together. Difficult times like this can bring out the best in people as they look out for each other in shared adversity. I know there are already some great community initiatives to help more vulnerable members of the community, including the Helping Hand Cyprus group and the Cyprus Aid website (<https://cyprus-aid.com/>). Please tell us about others so we can help you to promote them. And where you have concerns, please use your local British community representatives to share them with us.

For the time being, our advice for British residents of the island is to:

- Ensure you keep in touch with friends and family to support you during this period.
- Follow the advice of local authorities. You must be ready to comply with local isolation, testing or quarantine requirements, and will need to rely on the local health system
- Follow our Travel Advice for further developments affecting British nationals on the island.
- If you continue to use a UK mobile phone, consider getting a local SIM card for your telephone to facilitate contacting local hotlines, such as 1420 for suspected coronavirus symptoms, and 8998 for requesting permission to leave your home. Attached to this letter is a short summary of rules on leaving your home over the coming period.
- Only contact us on +357 22 861100 (choosing the consular option) if you require urgent consular assistance, so that we can dedicate our time to helping the most needy.

For British nationals living in the north of the island, we understand your concerns about being unable to cross the Green Line at the present time, the risk of overstaying your permitted length of stay due to the ongoing coronavirus situation, and the potential risk of medical shortages. We are monitoring the situation and are in touch with local authorities and the British Residents' Society. As elsewhere in the island, please ensure you comply with local restrictions on leaving your homes.

We also know that some British residents of Cyprus wish to return, but are unable to do so. We realise that this is frustrating, and you may have obligations which you need to attend to here. However, until flights resume, you have little choice but to remain where you are. Please note that even after flights resume, you will need to comply with the Republic's health certification and quarantine rules. Additionally, the authorities in the north have prohibited re-entry for foreign residents until further notice.

Finally, the High Commission remains in close contact with the administration of the Sovereign Base Areas on their approach to the crisis, and the Bases are closely mirroring measures introduced in the Republic to stem the spread of the virus and protect the local population.

The next few weeks are set to be a testing time for all of us, not only here on the island, but all around the world as new restrictions are placed on daily life in order to attempt to curb the spread of the virus. Please look after yourselves during this period, follow medical advice on the basic precautions which we can all take to protect ourselves from coronavirus, use your extra free time at home to do things you enjoy, or have been putting off for a while, and look out for friends and neighbours who may require extra support. Please also continue to follow us on Facebook and Twitter for new information and updates.

Best wishes,  
Stephen Lillie CMG

## **HEALTH AND WELFARE**

### **SPONSORSHIP**

Our new sponsorship deal with Prodent is now in the final stages of completion and will bring in 6000 TRY over the next 12 months. Terms of a contract have been agreed and are currently awaiting being signed off by both parties

### **SPECIAL ADULT DAY CENTRE**

Work being carried out at the centre being paid for by money raised by the BRS is

still on-going due to the current “Lock down” It is anticipated that it will be completed soon.

### **BLOOD DONOR DAY**

Our first Blood donor day of the year was held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March and was attended by 18 donors.

### **BRITISH MEDICAL LABORATORY**

The BML and adjoining Medical centre have both accepted written agreements offering the BRS members 20% discount. They also offer Well person clinics.

For more information: [www.britishmedicallab.com](http://www.britishmedicallab.com)

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **FACEBOOK**

At the moment the site is strictly members only. If you invite a non-member or lapsed member to the group, they will be advised by message that they are not a member and are invited to join the BRS, but until they do their acceptance to the group will be declined. This is for no other reason than to make sure the Facebook team are not overwhelmed!

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Below are the latest membership renewals

Total members renewed to date	1391
Total new members this year	140
Members who have paid in advance for 2021	432
Life Members	142

Some of last year's members are still to renew and this can be done at any of our regular clinics throughout the year. Don't forget to visit the website to keep up to date with the list of healthy discounts available to members in local shops, hotels etc. Our list continues to grow weekly.

## **EVENTS**

Sadly, the EVENTS to Azra Claire's are cancelled. We will update you all on other events when we have any information

## **CLINICS – ALL CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

- Lapta (Lambousa Market every Saturday morning 10.00-12.00)
- Girne (The Hut every Saturday morning 10.00 to 12.00)
- Catalkoy (Creditwest Bank – Monday mornings 09.30 to 11.30 am)
- Alsancak (Creditwest Bank – Wednesday 0930am to 1130am)
- Esentepe (Stone Castle – 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month 1.00-3.00pm)
- Küçük Erenköy (Charlie's Bar – 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month 1.00-3.00pm)
- Bogaz (Eddie's Restaurant – Dates notified monthly)

## **MEMBERS – HAVE YOUR SAY**

Whilst the pages of our newsletter are limited, feedback is very important to us. If you have something to tell us, happy or sad, that concerns you or another member please forward your news with permission to print to [info.brstrnc@gmail.com](mailto:info.brstrnc@gmail.com).