

The end of lockdown in the absence of any sort of plan

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The government gave up doing daily press conferences on the coronavirus crisis yesterday.

That is despite the fact that the death rate is higher than when we locked down.

In which case the claim that we are now following the science no longer stacks. All it actually says is that the strain on the scientists - even the tame ones in search of gongs - has begun to show too much.

Whilst the government's claim that their plan is working is palpably a false.

And worse, this is happening before the true economic impact of coronavirus has yet to hit.

Whilst the redundancies of those who have been furloughed have yet to really start.

And the business failures as it becomes apparent that many businesses have nothing like the resources that they now need to reopen have not begun.

In addition, the massive losses on the loans already made to business have yet to crystallise.

On top of which, the failure to secure the option of turning those loans into equity stakes so that businesses had a greater chance of surviving this has not yet been appreciated.

Meanwhile, the demand for additional government spending to get us through this has not yet dawned on the Governor of the Bank of England.

And the risks of a second wave of coronavirus appear to be almost wholly unappreciated, most especially by the young who think themselves immune to all this, but it's not their money that keeps so much in society going. I rather strongly suspect those who I might politely call more mature won't be going anywhere near a pub or

restaurant for some time yet, and for very good reason.

Yet the government has stopped doing daily press conferences.

And that's a bit like saying that Dunkirk was a victory and after that there was nothing much to talk about in the war that followed because everything was inevitable thereafter.

Except it wasn't.

And there is nothing that is in any way certain now. Barring, I suspect, that what the government is doing now is hopelessly inappropriately timed, because everything else that they have done has been, and on this occasion I am not even willing to presume that once in a while they will, by accident, get things right.

So, what now?

Don't breathe easy.

Don't be fooled by the summer sun and that the chance to meet outside is the solution to all coronavirus problems. We know neither will last.

And come September, which is only ten weeks away, when schools and the mass seasonal internal migration of the student population begins again, so too will autumn, and the evidence is pretty compelling that coronavirus likes the cold and the damp. So let's presume it does.

What then? What is the plan for another outbreak?

Is it that this time it will be let rip? Will it be that the 86% of those in care homes who survived this wave will face the next one with the same indifference from the government that they have now got used to? Or will it be that this will now spread much more widely amongst the population and the outbreak will be much worse second time around, as was the case with the Spanish flu?

If so, has anyone got the slightest idea how this will be managed?

Or how the anger will be contained? Because I cannot help but think that next time people will not be so tolerant of the incompetence we've seen. Next time they're not going to feel we're all in this together. And that we must suffer for the common good.

Instead I suspect that next time they're going to say the plans should have been in place.

And the track and trace systems should work.

Whilst the job guarantee should have been thought out.

And the business support mechanisms should be planned, and not ad hoc.

Or maybe, even, they might expect some honesty on our ability to survive this only if we fundamentally change our understanding of government, and its financing. They might even think that this should have been the subject of a prior information campaign so that the confidence that knowing this might provide could be in place in advance of the need when it will be patently obvious that the second wave will account for many more jobs.

However, I note none of that happening. All I can see is ministers saying 'let go all safeguards' with mighty big fingers crossed behind their backs, and a statement that they have no intention of being accountable any more.

And somehow I just cannot see people buying that next time. They'll forgive once. But twice, most especially if, as has become normal, we're worse than everyone else? I just don't see that.

But as worryingly, nor do I see an Opposition preparing itself to say any of these things either, so that it might be willing and able to take over leadership if required when and if this government falls.

I am, overall, an optimist, with a tendency to anticipate downsides. But optimism is justified only in the event of it being reasonable to think there is a way through a situation. Right now we know that the likelihood of a second wave of coronavirus is significant. And if anyone in government is talking about it I've not heard.

That gives me no cause for optimism at all. July 4 is not liberation day. I might risk a haircut if everyone is masked. But more than that? Why? The likelihood that a great deal might still go wrong seems extraordinarily high. And that gives me no sense of liberation at all. All I suspect is that next time it will be worse.