



# Working Together

As many of you will know, what was meant to be a weekend of great celebration for our town has been overshadowed by the loss of her late majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Duty, honour, integrity, and quiet determination. These were the qualities which Her Majesty embodied so perfectly. These were the qualities which steered our great nation through its many trials and tribulations over the course of the last seventy years. We were truly blessed as a nation to have called her our Sovereign.

She served her country, the Commonwealth and indeed the world with unswerving devotion – sustained by faith and driven by duty. The French President Macron called it right when he told the French people that, Britain had lost its Queen. But the world had lost ‘the Queen.’

With her passing, the great light of this nation has been extinguished. A significant chapter in our island story has come to an end. We stand on the cusp of change. But change is something that this nation, and Her Majesty the Queen, has never been afraid to embrace. Gradual, patient but decisive.

But at other times change can be forced upon us, and it is seldom welcome. Today marks the anniversary of another grave and solemn occasion.

On a clear and bright Tuesday morning on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001, at 8:45am, an American Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Centre in New York City. The impact left a gaping, burning hole near the 80th floor of the 110-story skyscraper, instantly killing hundreds of people and trapping hundreds more on higher floors.

Just 18 minutes after this first impact, a second Boeing 767 came into view. Manoeuvring sharply, it sliced through the south tower near the 60<sup>th</sup> floor. The collision caused a massive explosion that showered burning debris over surrounding buildings and onto the streets below. It immediately became clear that America was under attack.

But for some, this attack struck far closer to home. Among those who lost their lives on this terrible day, were 176 Aon workers. This company had offices in Romford at the time. Friends and colleagues whose lives were cruelly cut short by this despicable act of terror.

I would ask you all to join me in observing a two-minute silence in recognition of the loss of Her Majesty the Queen and to mark the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the World Trade Centre attacks.