

THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE WINCHESTER HOTEL & SPA

Effective as from Midday Sunday 22nd March 2020

I have been in the Hospitality business since leaving University in 1969 and have enjoyed every minute of my time helping our guests and visitors have a great experience at any of the hotels I have been involved with.

In 2007, with our children grown up and doing their own thing, my wife Sandra and myself decided that we no longer wanted to be part of the London scene and spent four years looking for a hotel outside London, a hotel which whilst already established, would be a hotel which would go on to greater things given some dedicated personal input and an abundance of TLC.

In early 2011, we found The Winchester Hotel, as it was then known. Sadly, the hotel had recently been through some difficult financial times and was ready for an injection of enthusiasm, energy, creativity, not to mention some serious investment in the building.

Sandra and myself (both then already in our mid 60's) immediately recognised the potential lying dormant in The Winchester Hotel and in May 2011 were successful in acquiring the property. The thing which stood out to us from the moment we ever first walked through the doors of the hotel was the incredible team spirit which was so evident, despite the difficult period which the hotel had been through for the previous couple of years.

It was more like joining a family than taking on a group of staff and that has made our time with the hotel probably the most enjoyable years I have ever spent in the hospitality business.

We spent the first five years investing constantly in the hotel, from building a beautiful outdoor terrace for drinking, dining and relaxing, to creating a luxury spa, not just for our our residents and guests to enjoy but as somewhere for the local community to come and relax and be pampered. We refurbished all our function suites, many bedrooms and were literally (right up until three weeks ago) about to refurbish and redecorate the entire ground floor of the hotel.

Out of the blue, alas, Coronavirus has descended upon us, bringing literally everything to a halt. The world seems to be in limbo and it is a very horrible feeling.

At this very difficult time, I want to say this. Firstly, to my entire team at The Winchester Hotel (since 2013 The Winchester Hotel & Spa). My wife Sandra and myself are devastated at the situation now confronting the hotel and every member of the team working in it. We fully understand the difficulties you are all facing and we are going to do everything we possibly can to protect the hotel and your jobs. The fact of having to close our doors for business, albeit temporarily, is without doubt the hardest and saddest thing I have ever had to do in my entire business life and I hope and pray that this will be as short lived as possible.

We thank you for everything you have done for the hotel and for us personally over the years and I stress that this closure is temporary. We will emerge from this awful situation and when we do, we will carry on where we have left off, excepting that we will be even stronger and more determined to go on to even greater things.

To all our guests, visitors and friends, we thank you for all your support over the past years and cannot wait for the moment when we can welcome you back to our hotel and once again provide you with what we hope has always proved to be a warm welcome and a great stay with us.

It only remains for my wife Sandra and myself to wish every one of you, your families, friends and colleagues, all the very best during this difficult time. Stay safe and well and I am confident that it will not be too long before we can all once again get on with our lives, albeit perhaps with a somewhat different view as to how we see life and our daily priorities.

With best wishes

Gregory Harris
Managing director
THE WINCHESTER HOTEL & SPA