

(111)

Danger is that he is interpreted as saying it is all OK.

DC says "Rishi thinks just let people die and that's OK"

This all feels like a complete lack of leadership

26/10

**I&S** tells me that when PM was FS they asked him to chair one COBR on Caribbean hurricanes and it was so badly done that they never asked him again (CCS that is)

European CSAs are all speaking to each other and we all have the same answers - Govt not listening etc

Cabinet brief

Rees-Mogg pushing on "it's all flattening off isn't it" "what is plan B if there is no Vx"

etc - no doubt part of the new Covid Research Group (like ERG)

Dashboard

PM being shown graphs - "right, right I see what is happening here" - does he really?

Hancock again says "speed of decision making is slower than doubling time - it is a good line

PM has come in a different mood "terrible, terrible, terrible numbers"

Says "we need to do local lockdowns fast"

"Foot to the throttle" "accelerate" "we need action". He is so inconsistent.

Gove argues for imposing things on mayors

“Why are we negotiating. This is the govt of the UK” Just make it happen”

[and he says “we made a fundamental mistake at the beginning by having Tier 3 at too low a level”]

PM says “I am all in favour of ruling with a rod of iron but I was advised to engage and bring people along”

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

On Sunday all PM wanted was a sense of mutually incompatible outcomes – says Simon Case privately. Owns something for a day and then changes.

27/10

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

Deaths 374 today

Everything we said is happening and still no action

Vx - legacy discussion good but again we still don't have a clear plan for how we will get society on board with a vaccines programme.

START OF PAGE 231

(112)

28/10

PM Dashboard - Grim numbers & fast growth

CMO asked opinion 'It's very bleak'

PM clings to testing again.

Dido gave a rather upbeat assessment of where T&T is. How worth it is this?

They now have a support package in place for isolation & are calling people (they say 15-50% adherence).

PM completely obsessed with testing as the solution even as numbers so bad that is obvious more action is needed.

Vx update - Hancock was more realistic on trends. Campaign to get support for Vx.

PM 'virus clearly gaining ground'

I made the point of having to deal with lower prevalence areas as well.

Simon Stevens came in and supported - 10-14 days in high prevalence areas + only weeks in other lower prevalence areas before hospitals fall over.

PM resistant to national lockdown & wants to continue with regional.

But nothing actually happening. I sent Stuart Glassborow (PS to PM) a note saying you should deal with the lower prevalence areas because they will all become high.

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

START OF PAGE 232

### **Irrelevant & Sensitive**

REACT study shows by ↑ & fast growing in SW & SE London. We are headed in a bad way.

France and Germany have acted. France I think took our circuitbreaker idea and applied it.  
(We sent them the papers.)

Papers now saying why aren't we doing more  
Vallance & Whitty were right & even underbaked it a bit (oh how smart they are in retrospect.) Piers Morgan fuming about how right we were & why wasn't the government listening c.f. Sept 21st when he fumed out about how wrong we were!

The right wing press are culpable & we have a weak indecisive PM.

Apparently CO now cautious about putting things to SAGE because we publish it all.  
That is a very bad outcome.

## **Irrelevant & Sensitive**

Cartoon of CMO and me circulating saying 'I don't want to say it, but we told you so.'

Kate Bingham article in Lancet says 'VTF which was the brainchild of Sir Patrick Vallance.'

START OF PAGE 233

(113)

29/10/20

Call with CO - trying to get papers to PM. I argued strongly for PM to set out his aims. What does he want to achieve

Protect NHS? Something else? Emergency care, all care etc

Daily Mail "show leadership, avoid a lockdown"

CMO again talks about going 'too early' & losing people. Is he really right about this. I think we need to go sooner & harder.

## Irrelevant & Sensitive

SAGE - fractious & everyone wanting more done

Jeremy F - "shouldn't we feel more angry"

People on their high horses. We could not have been clearer with govt & the PM & others also understood the situation. SAGE becoming an angry agitating mob would not help!

Currently people are looking to us as a source of truth.

START OF PAGE 235

(114)

30/10

Worth remembering that we sent the AMedSci Winter report to all Departments in July saying "do something about it". Papers have only now cottoned on to the importance of it.

4 reasons why we did badly

- PHE underfunded
- NHS capacity too low
- Massive seeding everywhere
- Poor information flows
- Demography - deprivation

Vit D - what a joke. Big fuss 2-3 weeks ago; joint PHE/NICE statement agreed. I sent a note saying 'where is the statement' - answer came back "we hope to be ready by December". What are they doing! No 10 want ? saying why Dec.

We have pushed all week that the key is for the PM to define his aims but he still hasn't done that. Is it to save the NHS, ↓ deaths, stop interrupting other services etc

Testing meeting - JB now saying subjective reading of lines in LFTs a problem...  
& now talking about end Nov. Irrelevant & Sensitive

PM meeting

Lots of infectious vs infected & that lower sensitivity tests "actually better" because they are picking up infectiousness.....

START OF PAGE 237

(115)

Still not getting people from care homes to settings for covid +ve

Hancock much too positive that care homes situation much better.

Simon Stevens says nosocomial going up.

Can now do much more asymptomatic testing now of staff.

Random academics coming to meetings is causing problems **Irrelevant & Sensitive**

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

Simon Case WhatsApp'd to say national lockdown on Monday - French style. I wonder what that really looks like, who is in that meeting!!?

PM meeting & graphs on projections that suddenly got given to CO without me seeing them.

Rang around to get from Angela & SPI-M exactly what they are.

Showed a horrible picture.

PM says - we need to act. French style national lockdown except schools, universities.

Guidance on travel. Go to work but shops + others shut.

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

PM speaks to Humeric logic that people only believe what is in front of them now rather than the future.

"I think in this case the scientists may already

START OF PAGE 238

be right + we may face many deaths”

Cx argues to keep shops open

Also says doing it just come back when you release the measures.

PM then argues that letting it go may be better economic route.

“Let’s get back to Bruegel’s ~~the torturer’s horse~~ the fall of Icarus” “the torturer’s horse some say the boy in the corner is dying but the agriculture goes on.

Gove argues that if hospital falls over we all stay at home, don’t do anything & economy collapses.

He gave a compelling case for economic problems & the democratic system coming under threat as hospitals collapse.

Cx responds when asked whether he agrees says “I wouldn’t presume to predict the future as Michael does. Why try to justify on economic grounds.’

MH says we have just spent 2 months proving that the best thing for the economy and everything else was to hit harder earlier.

They argue about back benches - how they can persuade them that there is an economic problem if they do not do enough.

When Irrelevant & Sensitive argues that he always thought people would shut up shop because NHS is falling apart

PM “So you are with Peter Bruegel the elder”

“So the case is weaker if we are just arguing about saving lives, as they are all very old anyway”

DC argues that those who acted sooner in first wave did better economically

PM “that ship has sailed” “Yes” I&S MH.

Irrelevant & Sensitive



START OF PAGE 239

(116)

DC say (1) what is the right thing to do

(2) how do we explain that to people

& the answer is to save lives

DC "the problem you have is your back bench colleagues who have a different world view"

i&s texts to say "meeting this morning was totally out of control".

Eddie Lister says that some stores will not re-open after another lockdown.

Rishi suddenly uses hand sanitizers.

These are truly horrible decisions,

MH "we know that the general public, unlike the Tory party, support further measures"

DC asked whether anyone wanted a different path from acting now.

No one spoke to that: Cx said "in any scenario we have to build NHS capacity"

I laid out – Vx, Rx, Dx all a bit better & they will get to a situation more like flu.

DC said "the only reason not to do it now is if you won't ever do it"

PM says "should we just level with the public & say we will tough this out & tell them there will be deaths"

Lee Cain spoke up about how fast this is growing and said "I don't see any world in which we don't act"

START OF PAGE 240

PM somehow believes it is a small group people letting everyone down.

DC - "The idea that a group of fucking Tory MPs who spend all day worry-tweeting about fucking school meals will watch quietly as the NHS collapses you are fucking mad"

MH "Liberal individualism doesn't get you far in a pandemic & that is in line with traditional Tory philosophy"

Meeting ended with no decision and going round in circles. "Too many unknowns" - "we need to look in our windscreen & avoid a car crash & the deaths will be unacceptable for political, medical and moral reasons"

We need to close this off & get the numbers down. They will probably give way on non-essential retail.

I may have put them off the "it will all be alright in Spring" because I think that will come back to bite us.

"We cannot promise this is the last time we will have to do this. It is a total bummer but I don't think toughing it out works."

28 day lockdown

Cx notes that at the end of this it works like flu & so we need to be honest about the fact this will still cause death every year.

PM crumbles on non-essential retail

START OF PAGE 241

(117)

31/10

Frantic day, whole thing leaked into the media.

Everyone can see action is needed but of course some are pushing hard against it.

We suddenly have to do a presser today.

Why oh why not keep it quiet, get it right over weekend & then announce properly on Monday

Case 'we have to describe what the world will be & what people come out into'

PM "It will be brilliant"

Once again shooting ? down & PM complaining.

Big problem with SPI-M slide that Ben Warner threw into the meeting yesterday.

Briefing of ministers. Clearly pushing on why this all can't be managed by existing measures

Rees-Mogg looking for ways out of doing anything

Coffey with her usual micro specific questions

Long cabinet followed. PM gave everyone a chance to speak. Some very positive

(Braverman Suella) & many clearly sceptical

Everyone furious about the fact all the papers leaked

Williamson says how unacceptable it is: **I&S**

PM says "I know this action is like a paraquat to our Tory souls"

START OF PAGE 242

Meanwhile in the background the RWCS type scenario slide that Angela & Stu gave to Ben Warner is causing problems.

PM has latched onto that & the one of NHS collapsing as the reason for doing it

Angela & SPI-M now backtracking saying it was just a work in progress

Simon Stevens not wanting the NHS stuff used

(we had a call with him)

PM furious (rightly) that he had based a decision on a slide that I was now having to slightly row back from.

Tried to persuade everyone to use the 6 week projections which are much firmer & pretty grim

No10 insistent on using the modelling longer term slide.

Eventually SPI-M agree how we can position it

Went into No 10 press conference delayed as PM tries to shore up his position & speech to DAs + LOTO

Chris and I wait - still trying to sort out how to position slide & the NHS stuff.

Case says "they should have done this a month ago as we suggested"

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**