

GIBA 2020 Review and Look Ahead to 2021

Guernsey's response to the pandemic, as an island community and as employers, is one of which we should be proud, but if 2020 has taught us anything it is that we cannot be complacent.

Guernsey's finance sector remains the largest contributor to the island's economy, employing more than 7,000 people directly, including nearly 400 employers. However, it has not been without challenges and some casualties. The island's business community has not been immune to job losses and businesses reorganising their operations and reducing resources.

Guernsey has demonstrated tremendous agility and flexibility during 2020; our working practices and digital landscape shifted dramatically in a space of weeks. Changes and processes that would have previously taken years to implement happened almost immediately.

Off-island travel and physical connectivity to the City of London came to an abrupt halt. Existing business has carried on largely uninterrupted, but we have had to develop new ways of working and maximise the potential of digital connectivity to remain front of mind with introducers and potential clients. Once our market jurisdictions begin to relax border controls and the City is largely back, we need to be able to react accordingly to maintain our competitive position.

Despite the disruption, Guernsey has proactively introduced new products and legislation to maintain its position as a jurisdiction of choice, especially in green and sustainable finance, introducing a green insurance offering, laws enabling the migration of limited partnerships and updating our beneficial ownership legislation.

As the year draws to a close, the markets will remain uncertain. Notwithstanding the promise of a vaccine, the threat of Covid looms over us still, Brexit remains unresolved and we face the prospect of negative interest rates.

That said, GIBA is confident that, whilst Guernsey is not immune to challenges, with ambition and the strength of the sector we are more than capable of holding our own.