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Dear Prime Minister

### **ARCHERY MUST BE ONE OF THE FIRST SPORTS TO RETURN POST LOCKDOWN**

As the positive effects of the current lockdown and the successful implementation of the UK vaccination programme begin to have a beneficial impact on infection rates, hospital admissions and outcomes, I appreciate the Government faces an extremely difficult decision regarding the timing of reopening the economy and allowing grassroots sports to resume.

As you collectively consider how best to balance these issues, I am writing to ask that archery is one of the first sports to be allowed to reopen as soon as possible, for three main reasons:

- **Archery is a naturally socially distanced sport** and all of our Archery GB clubs have already introduced strict, enhanced measures to ensure standards are maintained by all participants. During the last year clubs have followed the sport's guidance to be Covid-secure, with archers pre-booking shooting times and numbers limited to enable adequate social distancing. In addition, archers and coaches follow an appropriate PPE protocol and all venues have installed track and trace while reducing potential touchpoints. Archery is a sport which, by its very nature, relies on social distancing for safety and an archer can turn up at their club and shoot without coming anywhere near someone from outside their household.
- **Archery is a sport enjoyed by many with disabilities** who may struggle to take part in an alternative form of exercise. As the recent report by the Activity Alliance highlighted, there is serious concern about the long-term impact of the pandemic on those who face barriers to participation. Disabled people who count for one in five of the population currently feel that their ability to do sport or physical activity of any kind has been severely impacted, twice as many as non-disabled people. Despite the disability sport exemption during the current lockdown, many clubs have not been able to open for their disabled members, as they are reliant on volunteers to do so. However, since archery clubs cater for the needs of people of all abilities, once fully reopened they can provide a vital facility for disabled archers seeking to reclaim their lives post lockdown.
- **Archery is extremely beneficial to mental as well as physical well-being**, encouraging concentration and focus which helps many participants, including many key NHS workers, to manage stress. World Archery, our international federation, has highlighted the benefits gained from relaxation, concentration, patience and strength building. We believe these benefits will aid those with long Covid in the months ahead. Archery is an inclusive sport that can be enjoyed by all ages and abilities, not just those who have shown a natural aptitude for sport all their lives.

At Archery GB we fully support the government's efforts to tackle Covid-19 however, as steps are put in place to lift the current lockdown, we believe archery deserves particular consideration as a socially distanced sport and should be allowed to return at the earliest opportunity.

Fundamentally the benefits of archery are overwhelming, while the risk of transmission we believe will be minimal - no higher than other forms of outdoor exercise currently allowed, such as walking or running. Archery GB therefore encourages the government to consider the special case of archery as it reviews the terms of the lockdown and allow outdoor archery to resume at the earliest opportunity.

I hope you will take this opportunity to support our many archers - if clubs are unable to open soon it is likely many communities will permanently lose archery as a sport, which would be a sad loss of one of the country's truly inclusive sporting activities.

Kind regards

*Neil Armitage*

**NEIL ARMITAGE**  
**CEO, Archery GB**