



Alderman  
Vincent Keaveny  
Lord Mayor of the  
City of London

On 25th February 2021, Kuwait celebrated its 60th National Day. As I look back to 1961 when Kuwait became a sovereign independent state, it is clear that since then, the close friendship between the United Kingdom and Kuwait has continued to this day, leading to a mutually beneficial partnership across a variety of spheres.

Looking back over the centuries, the United Kingdom and Kuwait have a long standing economic and trading partnership that can trace its roots back to the eighteenth century; when we traded saffron and silks, satin and spices through Kuwait as a key trading post.

Kuwait and Britain have many shared attributes; we are small countries that have looked outside our borders for growth, we are dependent on trade with a strong maritime history – Kuwait as a gateway to the Gulf, London as a gateway to Europe. In these modern times we are democratic countries with dynamic private sectors that have an emphasis on financial expertise.

In recent years, Kuwait has played a huge part in the life and work of the City of London; the Kuwait Investment Authority is the oldest Sovereign Wealth Fund in the world and since 1953 they have had the Kuwait Investment Office located on the historic thoroughfare of Cheapside here in the heart of the Square Mile. For more than sixty years, they have invested and traded in and through the United Kingdom.

It is not just in the business arena that we have such strong ties. We have had the privilege of having the support of the Kuwait Ambassador to the UK, His Excellency Khaled Al-Duwaisan GCVO, the longest serving ambassador in London and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. With over 25 years of service, His Excellency has done so much to

support the Kuwaiti-British relationship and we are always grateful for his advice, insights and wealth of knowledge.

The United Kingdom and Kuwait enjoy a very special relationship. When the Lord Mayor Sir Paul Newall visited Kuwait in 1994, his visit showed that the City of London stood and still stands firmly in guaranteeing the security of Kuwait and its people.

The following year the City had the privilege of hosting a State Banquet in honour of the late Amir, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, where Lord Mayor Sir Christopher Walford once more spoke of the close relationship between our two nations.

My predecessor William Russell was received by the Amir during his first visit to Kuwait in 2020 and had the opportunity to discuss the potential for increased bilateral investment and further trade between our two countries.

We are all humbled by the kindness and hospitality shown to successive Lord Mayors where the strong historic ties and warm relationships between our kingdoms is clear for all to see.

I was delighted to visit Kuwait in October 2021 alongside the late Lord Mayor William Russell and discuss opportunities which will create shared jobs and prosperity for both of our countries.

With a new Amir, Crown Prince, and Government in place, Kuwait is enjoying a period of change and transition. Although the friendship between the United Kingdom and Kuwait has achieved a great deal, there is still more that we can do together. I am confident that our deep links will put us all in a strong position to emerge from the pandemic with a renewed sense of purpose and focus allowing us all to build back better. **E**