

## ***A Message to Chamber Members from BCCJ President, David Bickle OBE***

On behalf of the BCCJ Executive Committee and the entire team at the BCCJ, I would like to extend our sincere thanks for your continued support of the Chamber.

At its most fundamental, the purpose of the BCCJ is that its members make great connections with people and organisations that matter to them in business. With this, our mission in serving our members continues to be the promotion of bilateral trade and investment between Japan and the UK for sustainable economic growth in both countries.

Specifically, our goals are to build trust and opportunities in bilateral business, and to create a more effective platform for business exchange, growth and networking. In order to best achieve these goals, the BCCJ recently launched its new vision project, entitled “**Brave Conversations, Positive Transformations**”. We will continue to focus on advancing the three pillars that we believe are crucial for the sustainable growth of business in 2022, which are (i) increased digital and technological innovation, (ii) greater diversity, equity and inclusion, and (iii) the proliferation of responsible business practices, and will strive to bring BCCJ members together to tackle the grand challenges faced by business and society today.

With the ongoing uncertainties and challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the BCCJ has adapted the ways in which we engage with, and provide business opportunities for, our members. I am pleased to say that by leveraging technology, and with the support of our members and local, regional, and global partners, we have held over 50 high-quality events in a variety of formats, merging the best of the physical and digital worlds, and have ensured that members remain at the forefront of updates on travel restrictions and related developments.

The BCCJ led two joint-chamber collaborations in 2021 to support Japan and the UK in hosting two key events as a way to drive forward towards the “three pillar” goals of the Chamber. The first was the “Paralliance”, a coalition of twenty national Chambers of Commerce in Japan dedicated to supporting aspects of Japan’s delivery of the postponed 2020 Paralympic Games. Then, in October, we launched the “COP26 event series”, a coalition of five Chambers of Commerce created with the purpose of promoting understanding of, and action on, critical climate issues in the lead up to and during the COP26 Climate Change Conference that took place in Glasgow last year.

With the aim of providing topical and useful information and services for our members, the BCCJ also launched a number of first-time projects throughout 2021. These included our COVID-19 **Vaccination Accelerator Programme**, in collaboration with Japanese partner organisation TKP, which enabled us to secure first and second vaccinations for over 1,250 BCCJ member company employees and families. The BCCJ also hosted “Tohoku Week”, with the aim of highlighting local businesses and tourism in the three prefectures most acutely affected by the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011, to mark its 10-year anniversary. Other Chamber highlights included the delivery of Black History Month in October and the BCCJ’s first ever hybrid British Business Awards in November.

The BCCJ will continue in 2022 to deliver events as a way to connect members and stakeholders, stimulate mutual trust and generate commercial opportunities for the benefit of all who are operating

in the UK-Japan business ecosystem. We are very much looking forward to getting back to more in-person events, and as Japan's border restrictions ease, to welcoming delegates and executives to meet members of the BCCJ community over the coming months.

The success of the Chamber will continue to be a direct result of the active participation of our members. We encourage you to get in touch with us with ideas for events or activities which would be of interest to **you/your company**. To amplify opportunities and develop the support network within the BCCJ community we continue to welcome active new members. Accordingly, we invite you to enjoy the financial benefits of our Member-Get-Member scheme when introducing candidates with a British, Japanese, or international affiliation. More details about Member-Get-Member can be found on the BCCJ website.

If you have any questions at all about your membership of the BCCJ, please do not hesitate to contact Executive Director (Designate), Sarah Backley, at [sarah.backley@bccjapan.com](mailto:sarah.backley@bccjapan.com). As we hope you will have seen from recent BCCJ communications, Lori Henderson, who has been the BCCJ's Executive Director for the past 11 years, will shortly take up a new position as Senior Advisor to the Chamber with Sarah stepping into the Executive Director role as of April 1, 2022.

In closing, we are mindful that there has never been a more important time to accelerate the development of positive and mutually beneficial relationships between Japan and the UK – like minded democracies with shared interests and mutual respect for the international rules-based system and its institutions. The bilateral relationship is multifaceted and there are innumerable opportunities for positive engagement at the government, corporate and community levels. The BCCJ has a role to play as an enabler and accelerator of this engagement, and it is with that in mind that we look forward to your continued support and active participation in our Chamber in the year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

David Bickle  
BCCJ President