

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Date:** 20 March 2020

Dear Shezal,

I hope that all is good with you and your family under the current circumstances and that you are keeping safe and well.

Thank you for meeting with me recently to discuss arrangements for Sankofa Day 2020. As we discussed then, given that Trafalgar Square is very worn down and in need of a number of urgent repairs, August had been identified as a month when this essential work could be carried out. This was entirely due to it being a period of low rainfall and as a result the Square had been made unavailable to book throughout the month. Please be assured that this was not a case of singling out any organisation or event, but was purely necessary to meet the maintenance demands of the Square.

Following a re-assessment of the maintenance schedule as we also discussed, we intended to pause the work for the weekend of the 22 August to allow Sankofa Day 2020 to go ahead and I'm pleased that you were happy to consider holding a rally on that date. However, since we last spoke the situation with regards to the Covid-19 virus has clearly changed which will affect not just Sankofa Day but also all other public events taking place on the Square going forward.

Covid-19 has presented us with a public health crisis, one of the worst for a generation. There has been clear guidance that the public should avoid events with large numbers of people and to stop all non-essential social contact. We have therefore decided to cancel all events in Trafalgar Square until further notice and will be unable to take any bookings for the time being and while the situation remains as it does. Whilst I know this will be disappointing, it is vitally important for all Londoners that we follow the latest advice to help keep the most vulnerable people in our city safe and, ultimately, help save lives.

Slavery Remembrance is a core part of the work we do to celebrate London's diversity and the Mayor has always been committed to this. I want you to feel reassured that in all the work that we do in this space, from our programmes increasing the employment of young Black men in key sectors, to our support for the Notting Hill Carnival, the support and amplification of London's minority ethnic communities has been and will be continuous.

We will continue to ensure that the history of Enslaved Africans and its enduring impact is not forgotten and do hope that we will be able to resume our activities in this space as soon as safe to do so. We'll of course be monitoring

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the situation in our attempts to keep Londoners safe from Covid-19 and will keep in contact with you as the situation changes. I have welcomed your partnership thus far and look forward to continuing to work with you, as the developing situation allows.

With all good wishes to you, those in your organisation and family

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DWB', is enclosed in a light grey rectangular box. To the right of this box is another empty light grey rectangular box, likely a placeholder for a name or title.

**Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard**

Deputy Mayor, Social Integration, Social Mobility & Community Engagement