

## **Statement of Support for the Toppling of the Colston Statue & for the Four Colston Defendants**

The statue of Edward Colston was toppled in Bristol during a Black Lives Matter protest on June 7<sup>th</sup> 2020. This protest was one of many globally and nationally, in direct response to the brutal murder of a black man, George Floyd, by Minneapolis police. The Bristol protest was attended by thousands of people. Hundreds can clearly be seen on camera to have been involved in various activities that led to this object being pushed into the harbour. Despite this, authorities have decided to single out four people who are now charged with criminal damage. They await trial in December 2021.

We, the undersigned, support the anti-racist aims of the protests throughout the summer 2020. We abhor the legacies of institutional and structural racism arising from European colonisation and the trafficking, enslavement and transportation of African men, women and children into plantation slavery in the Caribbean and Americas.

We believe that raising the statue of the slave-trader Colston in 1895, some 60 years after the Emancipation Act, and repeatedly ignoring expressions of concerns by citizens, campaigners, and artists, has been deeply damaging to Bristol's Black community and to our common humanity.

We believe the statue has stood as a monument to the disingenuous way power is wielded, impacting those of African descent adversely and disproportionately in policing, health, housing, education outcomes, job opportunities and life chances.

In contrast, we note the absence in our city centre of any memorials, monuments or plaques that restore to African peoples' ancestors their dignity and humanity, or that honours the many nameless Africans and indigenous people exploited and murdered by Bristol merchants and ruling elites.

We recognise that this statue has been a point of division for many years and welcome the fact that it no longer stands in our city centre. We do not believe the trial against four people is in the best interests of our city and urge that charges be dropped.

We call for some permanent recognition in our civic spaces of the historical reality of this period, and the creation of a permanent memorial and centre of memory, resistance and renewal to begin a process of understanding, healing, reflection and education.

### **GladColstonsGone – 7 June 2021**

**Note:** We invite individuals, groups, institutions and campaigns to sign-up in support of this Statement. To support this statement:

- add your or your organisation's name in a comment to the pinned post of the [GladColstonsGone](#) FB page.
- message us via [FB](#) or [@gladcolstonsgone](#) on Instagram
- email us at [gladcolstonsgone1@gmail.com](mailto:gladcolstonsgone1@gmail.com) and we'll add you.