

## **Colston Statement – Press Release 7th June 2021**

### **From GladColstonsGone**

(Embargoed until 7am on 7<sup>th</sup> June)

**Start: On the first anniversary of the toppling of the Colston statue, we are Glad Colston's Gone from his pedestal.**

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 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.

***The Countering Colston Campaign says:*** “If local government and city institutions had cared about systematic racial inequalities in the past, Bristol wouldn't be where and what it is today. Drop the Colston statue damage charges, let's attend to the real damages of inequalities and racial injustices in our midst.”

**We do not believe the trial against four people is in the best interests of our city and urge that charges be dropped.**

***Sam Elliot from Bristol Defendant Solidarity - legal support says:*** “The charges are divisive and vindictive. We cannot have a 'conversation' or 'consultation' whilst some of the architects of that consultation have been involved with the criminal justice system in persecuting protesters involved in the toppling of Colston.”

**We 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 invite individuals, groups, institutions & campaigns to sign up in support of our Statement – see attached/or below.

Ends

#### Notes for editors, readers & others:

1. The statue of Edward Colston was erected in 1895 by a tiny clique of wealthy Bristol businessmen. It was toppled during a Black Lives Matter protest in Bristol on 7 June 2020 attended by over 10,000 people. Many were involved in pulling the statue down. But just six people were issued Conditional Cautions by A&S Police in the summer of 2020, whilst just four people were charged with criminal damage by the CPS in December 2020.
2. Bristol Council provided a statement to A&S Police in late June 2020 that facilitated the start of the Police's investigation.
3. For GladColstonsGone please see - <https://www.facebook.com/gladcolstonsgone/>
4. For Countering Colston Campaign please see - <https://counteringcolston.wordpress.com/>
5. For Bristol Defendant Solidarity please see - <https://twitter.com/bristoldefenda1>
6. For a range of historical research & articles related to Edward Colston please see - <https://www.brh.org.uk/site/project/edward-colston/>
7. #GladColstonsGone! Bristol Topplers' Defence Fund! Please see - <https://gofund.me/e49428cb>