

Meeting with [REDACTED] and BCC Staff to discuss Colston Statue Plaque

Friday 15 March 2019

- [REDACTED] has been leading a piece of work to replace a plaque on the Edward Colston statue in the city centre.
- This was agreed by Nicola Beech in Jan 2018, however the final text has not been approved.
- This meeting is to go through the suggested text of the plaque proposed for the Colston Statue
- [REDACTED] has been involved in the development of the wording, and is invited to give her expert view as historian, and also comment on the process.
- Aim of meeting is to agree the principles of the project to replace the former plaque, and to review the text for the new plaque.
- Some review of the drafting process to date might be helpful to gain understanding of the sensitivities. You can ask [REDACTED] of her impression of the process, and ask her for thoughts
- Review the text as drafted so far, make contribution on the text itself, and set out the direction to take.
- Need to consider if other stakeholders need to be involved in the process (Cllr Asher Craig? Merchant Venturers?)
- The Colston statue, and public commemoration of Bristol's slave legacy, is of course a contentious and sensitive issue
- [REDACTED] has said that he progressed this project with full knowledge of the administration and Mayor's Office. He had misinterpreted Kevin's email and should have kept us informed as this developed, but the important thing now is to resolve the issue and agree a way forward.

Suggested text for the plaque is:

Edward Colston (1636-1721), MP for Bristol (1710-1713), was one of this city's greatest benefactors. He supported and endowed schools, almshouses, hospitals and churches in Bristol, London and elsewhere. Many of his charitable foundations continue. This statue was erected in 1895 to commemorate his philanthropy.

A significant proportion of Colston's wealth came from investments in slave trading, sugar and other slave-produced goods. As an official of the Royal African Company from 1680 to 1692, he was also involved in the transportation of approximately 84,000 enslaved African men, women and young children, of whom 19,000 died on voyages from West Africa to the Caribbean and the Americas.