



The National Association of Jewellers

Mr Andy Street
c/o West Midlands Combined Authority
16 Summer lane
Birmingham
B19 3SD

15th December 2020

Jewellery Quarter a no-go area a fortnight before Christmas, action required

Dear Mr Andy Street,

Not for the first time this year, the Birmingham jewellery quarter is facing crushing economic challenges, this time due to protest marches. The protests which took place on Saturday 12th December resulted in local tv and radio media brandishing the quarter a no-go area.

The weekend a fortnight before Christmas represents for much of the retail businesses in the quarter, a critical trading day, at the end of a year that has not been kind to traditional retailers. November and December are the crucial months for most of our members, and following November's lockdown, jewellers are doing everything they can to try and make up significantly lost ground.

On Saturday, while some protesters followed COVID safe guidelines, the majority did not. This means that the area has not just been off limits for the period of the march, but now consumers who may have ventured into the quarter may chose not to after seeing so many individuals not follow COVID secure guidelines.

We must stress that the request for action today is not against the protest march, quite the opposite in fact. We strongly believe in free speech and are a great supporter of human rights.

However, while we recognise the Indian consulate has residency on Augusta Street, we implore you to:

- Liaise to find an alternative location for future marches
- Ensure plenty of notice to local businesses for any future marches
- Highlight the importance of COVID secure guidelines for such activities
- Influence the days and dates such marches are held where support can be made available

The above actions will go some way to help protect our members in the quarter, as well as enable future marches to take place safely.

Urgent action can and will make a difference. As a community we are doing what we can to support each other through this difficult time, but your direct and pressing leadership is crucial. Please consult our sector alongside representatives of other businesses of the quarter on the decisions that will mean their survival.

Yours sincerely

Gary Wroe
Chair, National Association of Jewellers

David Doyle
President, National Association of Jewellers