



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Nicola Sturgeon MSP
The First Minister
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

13 /09/2016

Dear Nicola

We are writing in support of Edinburgh Diwali and Mohindra Dhall MBE, who has been an active community leader in Edinburgh for over 20 years and is at the forefront of organising the festival.

We believe that that this is an important celebration of multiculturalism attended by people from across the country and, as such, should enjoy financial support from the Scottish Government. We note that there is a large scale Diwali celebration in London at Trafalgar Square, supported at a UK level, but there is no such event in Scotland.

Mr Dhall has contacted us due to the unwillingness of the Scottish Government to provide resources for the Diwali festival to take place in November in Edinburgh. It is Mr Dhall's expectation from his prior experiences organising events as part of the Indian Arts Forum, that the festival will be attended by people of all ages, race, religion and from all corners of Scotland. This is not just an event for the Indian community in Edinburgh, it's purpose is to strengthen Scottish and Indian ties through sharing Indian culture with everyone.

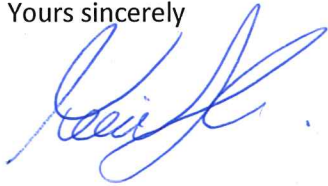
It is our understanding that last year, when Mr Dhall wanted to organise a large scale festival for the first time, £5000 funding was pledged by the Scottish Government but subsequently that pledge was withdrawn, the reasons for this remain unclear. Although an event did take place, it was on a much smaller scale than first hoped.

It is also our understanding that the Indian Government has pledged some funds to pay for a group of Indian folk dancers to come over to Scotland and perform at the festival. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Scottish Government seems to be unwilling to engage.

Furthermore, the lack of Scottish Government funding is making it harder for the organisation to make their case to private companies which could also provide further funding for the event, which is expected to cost around £35,000. Mr Dhall has made it clear that if the Scottish Government does not provide their support, this event will simply not go ahead due to all these constraints.

We would be grateful for your involvement in resolving this matter and we hope for a positive response from the Government.

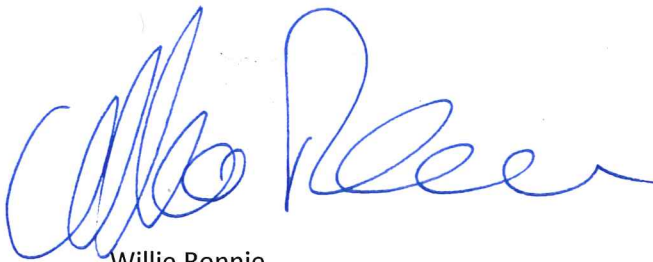
Yours sincerely



Kezia Dugdale
Leader, Scottish Labour Party
Lothian region MSP



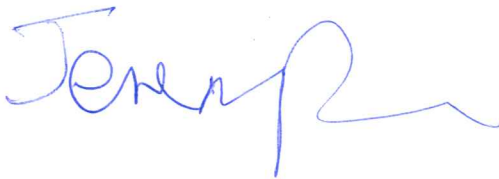
Ruth Davidson
Leader, Scottish Conservative and Unionist
Party
MSP for Edinburgh Central



Willie Rennie
Leader, Scottish Liberal Democrats



Alex Cole-Hamilton
MSP for Edinburgh Western



Jeremy Balfour
Lothian region MSP



Daniel Johnson
MSP for Edinburgh Southern

c.c. Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs