Firstly I wanted to thank you for all the work you are doing both as a constituency MP and for your voice within the House of Commons. We really appreciate you.

I work full time at Lewisham Foodbank both managing all our volunteers and running our social media platforms.

The reason I’m writing to you at this time is because so many of our volunteers are only able to give us their time because they have jobs in the arts.

Amongst our 200 or so volunteers are actors, directors, musicians, stage managers, costume designers, casting agents, choir directors, writers, comedians, photographers, lighting designers/stage crew, music teachers, videographers… the list goes on. Some are well known household names, others’ names are unknown to us but they work in iconic institutions such as the Royal Opera House.

All of these people, whilst we are incredibly blessed to have them giving us their time, would rather be doing what they do best which is working to provide the rich culture within the whole sphere of the arts that we have come to appreciate, and which London is known for. Two of our volunteers should be working at the Regent’s Park Open Theatre this week.

You will be aware that Germany has pledged €150M to the arts, and yet the UK so far has pledged nothing, despite the UK arts and culture economy contributing £11 billion per year into our economy. Without Government support this is in danger of being lost. With 3000 job losses within the industry to date, many artists are being forced to take casual jobs as supermarket shelf stackers, in order to pay their London rents.

With the likelihood of recession hitting both due to Brexit and the pandemic, the entertainment industry will almost certainly to be the first to suffer.

If we removed all elements of the arts from our lives we would have no television, no cinema, not much radio and no music. ALL the things that improve our well-being and sense of community, and provide a lifeline to many people. It’s ludicrous and short sighted not to invest. Wetherspoons I understand was awarded a grant of £48M from Government – only £2M short of what the arts industry is asking from Government – despite the fact that Wetherspoons’ staff were treated appallingly at the start of the pandemic. It just doesn’t make sense.

On behalf of my household and my Foodbank volunteers, I urge you to apply pressure to the Government to support this crucial yet forgotten industry.

Very best wishes