

4th April 2019

Dear Member of Parliament,

Thousands of cherry trees in the UK

The Japanese cherry tree, known as *sakura*, is the most popular tree for people in Japan. In August 2017, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and British Prime Minister Theresa May announced when they met in Japan that they welcomed a proposal from the Japanese private sector to plant a substantial number of Japanese cherry trees across the UK.

This proposal is one of the main projects of the Japan-UK Season of Culture, which aims to celebrate the friendship between our two countries and will provide both British and Japanese people with the opportunity to explore each other's cultures between 2019 and 2020, bridging the Rugby World Cup 2019 and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Japan British Society has gathered contributions in Japan from Japanese businesses to support this project. The Sakura Cherry Tree Project Committee has been created to carry out the project in the UK, and with the support of the Embassy of Japan it is now looking to plant 5,000 trees in autumn 2020, in publicly accessible parks and gardens.

A wave of blossoms across the UK

I have heard that the Sakura Cherry Tree Project Committee has already identified many sites throughout the United Kingdom which are committed to participating in the project. Please find the list of those sites attached with this letter. It is due to be published on the Committee's website (www.japanuksakura.org) later this month.

In addition to the trees planted in the parks and gardens on the list, hundreds of trees are to be delivered to schools across the UK

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as part of this project.

The trees donated by this project will be a visible symbol of the relationship between our two countries and I am sure that they will attract visitors during the flowering season for years to come.

I am writing to you and to all Members of Parliament to provide you with information about this project, which I hope you will find interesting and inspiring. The Embassy fully supports this initiative to enable everyone to enjoy these wonderful blossoms.

Should you have any questions, please contact the office of the Sakura Cherry Tree Project Committee directly at the following address: info@japanuksakura.org.

I look forward to continuing to work with you towards strengthening the excellent relationship between Japan and the UK.

Yours sincerely,



Koji Tsuruoka
Ambassador