

Monmouthshire County Council

2023 Fairtrade County Renewal Application

What have you been up to as a Fairtrade group?

Tell us about what you have been doing and we can then share this with other groups. Do you have something that worked really well to share as a case study that might help others, or a challenge to share you'd like ideas for?

We had a very successful 2020 Fairtrade Fortnight and managed to hold our first ever **Schools Fairtrade Conference** just before lockdown began, which was attended by 18 schools (see attachment). We had very positive feedback from teachers and pupils met Jenipher, a coffee grower from Uganda. Then inevitably events and meetings tailed off during lockdowns when staff were working from home and people were not allowed out or to gather. We **signposted schools to online resources** that they could use for Fairtrade Fortnight in 2021 for homeschooling (including a follow up video from Jenipher) and in 2022 when it was still difficult to visit schools.

Events for Council staff and councillors have also been harder to organise, since there has continued to be many people who mainly work from home and County Hall is often very quiet. To adapt to this, **events and sales we have held have been on days when there is a full Council meeting** happening, since lots of councillors will come in and there are usually more staff in too. This has been particularly important since we had a new administration elected in 2022, and around 60% of the councillors are new. It is important that they understand **the Council's commitments as a Fairtrade County**, so helping them to understand what Fairtrade means has been a priority. As part of this we held a **Fairtrade quiz** during Fairtrade Fortnight 2023, with two Fairtrade hamper prizes, one for a staff member and one for a Councillor, to encourage Councillor participation. As well as more general questions on Fairtrade, there were also questions about when we became a Fairtrade county, what that means and our Fairtrade schools.

What are your plans for the future?

Tell us any ideas that you are planning or would like to do in our community that you want to share that might inspire other communities. They might also give us ideas for toolkits or events that we can develop at Fairtrade to support you.

The Size of Wales Charity <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/> has been doing some pioneering work in schools in Monmouthshire, in particular at Osbaston Primary School, **to help schools**

learn about deforestation, and encouraging pupils to look at school meals and identify commodities used that contribute to deforestation. This has included a **focus on Fairtrade coffee and cocoa as the Fairtrade standard also protects tropical forests.** This work has been inspiring and has given a new focus and enthusiasm to the Monmouth Fairtrade Town Group in particular, who are working closely with the school who are now selling Jenipher's Coffee. **We plan to continue working with the Size of Wales and hope that this will encourage more schools to think about Fairtrade and the products that are included in school meals.** See <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/project/deforestation-free-schools/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRj0DE2OorU>

As a council we are planning to hold a number of events for **Black History Month** in October 2023 for the first time. As part of this, we plan to hold a **Fairtrade Fayre at County Hall,** where we plan to work with a number of organisations to have **several stalls selling and promoting Fairtrade,** including Love Zimbabwe, Fairtrade Usk and Osbaston Primary selling Jenipher's Coffee. We hope this will be a good way to help staff and members understand the impact that Fairtrade has on lives of those overseas, as well as spotlighting some of the good work being carried out by organisation in Monmouthshire and showcasing our 4 Fairtrade Town Groups.

We will be continuing **our support for the Fairtrade Town Groups** as the groups all find it a good forum for sharing ideas and experience, and we hope to work together to plan another **Schools Fairtrade Conference in 2024** to mark 30 years of the Fairtrade mark. We always organise County-wide press coverage for all of the groups events during Fairtrade Fortnight, which allows them to focus on organising their activities, and ensures that we are able to give consistent promotion across the county.

