

Monmouthshire County Council

2026 Fairtrade County Renewal Application

What have you been up to as a Fairtrade group?

Use this space to 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?

Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) has continued to build on previous events and activities as well as trying to reach new audiences.

We ran our second Fairtrade Schools conference in June 2024, and although a successful event, the number of schools able to attend was less than in 2020, many quoting staff cover and transport costs as a barrier. As a result, we have focussed since on schools work that doesn't involve them travelling anywhere e.g. delivering assemblies and workshops, arranging producer visits (September 2024 and 2025) and running a Fairtrade Easter poster competition in 2026.

We have continued to keep Fairtrade at the forefront of the thinking of Monmouthshire County Council. All of our leisure centres, the Borough Theatre, Old Station Tintern, Caldicot Leisure Centre and Chepstow TIC have Fairtrade Tea and Coffee for sale. In 2025 for the first time, we used Fairtrade tea and coffee to supply to community groups running Warm Hubs across the county, reaching a new audience.

Our work on Deforestation Free has grown and got lots of publicity as Monmouthshire became the world's first Deforestation Free Champion Council in December 2024. This work goes hand in hand with Fairtrade, since two of the five commodities which are a high risk of causing tropical deforestation are coffee and cocoa, but Fairtrade coffee and cocoa guarantees that there has been no tropical deforestation. Charity Size of Wales has worked with a number of schools in Monmouthshire to help children understand how the products in their school meals could be contributing to tropical deforestation. See <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wales-map/monmouthshire-county-council/> and <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/news/monmouthshire-county-council-becomes-worlds-first-deforestation-free-champion-council/> Monmouthshire's school catering staff have made a number of changes to school menus to reduce the risk of deforestation, including switching all cocoa powder to Fairtrade. The highlight of this work so far has been Monmouthshire County Council's leader and Monmouthshire pupils presenting their work at the COP30 climate summit! See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIlc_CX88LA&t=2280s starting at 30 minutes.

Our theme for Fairtrade Fortnight 2025 was Monmouthshire's Biggest Ever Coffee Morning, in order to build on the Deforestation Free work. Over 30 events were held in Monmouthshire during the fortnight, with Fairtrade coffee mornings held in schools, village halls, churches and more. An online Deforestation Free workshop was delivered by Size of Wales to 9 classes from 7 schools, with a strong focus on Fairtrade coffee and cocoa. 3 schools that took part in Fairtrade Fortnight were drawn from a hat and received a free Fairtrade chocolate brownie making workshop.

What are your plans for the future?

Use this space to 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.

We were pleased with how our Fairtrade Easter activities went, and have decided that the chocolate focus of Easter makes it a good time of year to focus on Fairtrade, so we hope to continue that next year.

We were also pleased with engagement from Monmouthshire libraries who all put up the Fairtrade Easter posters, so have decided to build on their willingness and enthusiasm, and are planning to have displays in each of the libraries during Fairtrade Fortnight, with a Fairtrade quiz for visitors to fill in and enter a Fairtrade prize draw. We are also planning to put together a directory of Fairtrade resources that the different Fairtrade groups across the county have, so that we can better share the games and activities etc we have when we hold events.

One of our enthusiastic Fairtrade schools, Osbaston Primary, carried out a survey of local businesses last year to find out which ones sold Fairtrade products. They were keen to put together an online directory of what can be bought where. MCC were going to help them put an online map on GIS, but sadly devastating floods hit Monmouth just weeks afterwards and many of the shops have shut and some will not reopen. This meant that the online map was put on hold. Instead MCC and Fairtrade Monmouth are supporting them to get posters that the children have designed to go in the windows of shops that sell Fairtrade. Hopefully we can revisit the online map later in the year.

We will continue promoting the Fairtrade message through our deforestation free work – we have an action plan and meet with Size of Wales quarterly to share updates and plan our work (see latest iteration of the Deforestation Free action plan attached).

As well as our partnership with Size of Wales, it has also been good to develop a partnership this year with Co-op who provided us with Fairtrade Easter egg prizes. It was also great to get a small grant from Fairtrade Wales for our Fairtrade Fortnight activities in 2025. We hope to develop and grow these partnerships.

In May 2027 we will be having local government elections, which may well mean an influx of new councillors, so we will plan some activities after that to make sure that the new elected members are aware of our Fairtrade county commitments.

Monmouthshire County Council will continue to co-ordinate our Fairtrade County work, with regular meetings with our four Fairtrade Town groups. Together we continue to share what we are doing and plan county-wide events, and MCC provides co-ordination and pulls together press releases for Fairtrade Fortnight which highlight all the different events going on around the county.