

Chippenham Area Board 17 January 2011

Chairman's Announcements

Fairtrade and the Wiltshire Fairtrade Coalition

Fairtrade is based on the idea that small producers in the developing world should be paid a price for their produce that covers the cost of production and gives the family a living wage. The producer makes a long term agreement in advance with the Fairtrade purchasing company that ensures a guaranteed minimum price.

In return the producer commits to working to progressive standards of production and environmental protection. Under the agreement children are not forbidden to work but bonded labour is prohibited and children must go to school.

As a result, producers are able to plan ahead and achieve a degree of stability.

In addition, a specially formed local co-operative receives a social premium that can be spent on projects to benefit the whole community. These are decided by the co-operative not imposed from outside and may include such projects as building a classroom or clinic, starting a small business to help diversify the local income or providing a safe water supply or sanitation. The social premium is often of particular benefit to women because it can give them more of a stake in the decision making of the community. For instance, by using the premium to buy sewing machines, village women can create a sewing business that brings in income.

The Fairtrade mark on products is a guarantee that adherence to the agreement is being monitored. It has been in existence for 16 years and is now widely recognised though not necessarily widely understood.

The success of the Fairtrade movement so far is due in large part to the efforts of small local groups with the support of larger organisations. There are nine towns in Wiltshire which have achieved the status of Fairtrade town awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation.

The Wiltshire Fairtrade Coalition is an association of local Fairtrade town groups, businesses, other organisations and individuals working to promote understanding and uptake of Fairtrade produce. The coalition offers mutual support and encouragement to members and aims to make Wiltshire a Fairtrade county.