

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE
FAIRTRADE STEERING GROUP**

Minute of Meeting of the Fairtrade Steering Group held in Council Headquarters, Inverness on Friday, 19 June, 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Mr H Wood, The Highland Council
Mr R Saxon, The Highland Council (by telephone conference)
Mr S Kelly, The Co-operative Membership
Ms C Willis, Global Learning Co-ordinator, Highland One World
Mr G Morrison, Parliamentary Officer, Chief Executive's Office
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

BUSINESS

Mr H Wood in the chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Alexander - Presbytery of Inverness, Ms J Campbell – The Highland Council; Ms H Mitchell & Ms H Lawson - Inverness Fairtrade Group, Mr M Bird - Chairman, Isle of Skye Fairtrade Group.

2. Declaration of Interest

The Group **NOTED** that there were no declarations of interest expressed.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

There was circulated for information, the Minutes of the last meeting of the Group held on 24 September, 2013, which were **NOTED**.

4. Highland Action Plan for Renewal of Highland Fairtrade Zone Status

There was circulated Report No. FTSG/1/15 by the Parliamentary Officer which invited comments on the Highland Action Plan for Renewal of Highland Fairtrade Zone Status.

The action plan provided a summary of activities that had been undertaken to promote Fairtrade since the last meeting both locally and regionally within the Highlands. It also set out the overall aim for each of the five goals, the proposed actions to be undertaken to achieve that aim and then how success will be measured. Areas where progress was required was also set out in the plan, prior

to the Renewal application being submitted before the end of 2015.

The key aim was to show that progress was being made in promoting Fairtrade in the Highlands.

In terms of the action plan the following comments were made:-

Goal 1 –(Local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade products)

Members were advised that the Isle of Skye had become a Fairtrade Island in April, 2015. In terms of other communities that had become or were making progress to becoming Fairtrade communities, Members were asked to inform the Parliamentary Officer of this, so that they could be included in the application. In this respect, confirmation would be provided on whether the Isle of Eigg was a Fairtrade island.

Members were also advised that Highland Council's Care and Learning Catering Service had expanded their range of Fairtrade products.

With reference to changes to procurement procedures for Local Authorities, it was acknowledged that this might be an opening for more Fairtrade products, as price might not always be a factor to be taken into account. This was a European initiative which was still under discussion.

Members were advised that Kinlochleven, Glenurquhart and Aviemore Community Councils had expressed an interest in being a Fairtrade community. Contact would be made with these community councils to check what progress they have made. It was also suggested that after the next round of community council elections, contact could be made with community councils again as well as community council associations regarding their interest in becoming a Fairtrade community.

Consideration was being given to developing a resource bank of Fairtrade displays for communities to use.

Contact would be made again with Dounreay about the possibility of a Fairtrade awareness day.

In conclusion, there had been progress on Goal 1 and Community Councils that had expressed an interest in becoming a Fairtrade community would be contacted to check on their progress. Members of the Group were asked to advise the Parliamentary Officer of any other community or group that was interested in becoming a Fairtrade community for inclusion in the renewal application.

Goal 2 – (a range of Fairtrade products are readily available in the area's shops and served in local cafes/catering establishments)

The aim of increasing by 20% the number of retail businesses that will expand their range of Fairtrade products and increasing by 20% the number of new retail businesses that will stock Fairtrade products from the baseline figure would be challenging goals given the downturn in the retail market, but it was still felt achievable.

Inverness Fairtrade Group had produced a new guide setting out the shops and restaurants stocking Fairtrade goods in Inverness. An update from local Fairtrade Groups was required and the online Fairtrade register required to be updated.

Members were advised that Highland Wholefoods had a large selection of Fairtrade products. They delivered wholesale to retail outlets, therefore they should know the statistics for sales. The Chair undertook to contact them.

Goal 3 – *(Local work places and community organisations support Fairtrade and use Fairtrade products whenever possible. Populations over 100,000 will also need a flagship employer).*

In terms of securing a flagship employer consideration was being given to Dounreay and/or Cairngorms National Park. Confirmation was being sought from Cairngorm National Park as to their Fairtrade purchase arrangements. Progress in terms of securing Lifescan as a flagship employer would be checked with the Inverness Fairtrade Group.

In terms of increasing the number of Fairtrade schools, a list of responses from schools had been circulated. A number of schools did not have Fairtrade status, others did have, some were Fair Achiever schools and some were working towards Fairtrade status. Members were advised that there was a significant amount of administrative work involved in achieving these awards, so while schools may be doing a lot of work around Fairtrade, they may not be a Fairtrade school. Therefore the evidence of what they were doing should be detailed, as it was felt that the list did not reflect the amount of work going on with Fairtrade in schools in Highland. Teachers were very enthusiastic about embedding Fairtrade into the curriculum. If it was shown that schools did not have the time to fill in forms to achieve these awards, then the Fairtrade Foundation should be made aware of this, as this was defeating the purpose of inspiring children to use Fairtrade products.

The Chair had met with the Head of Education who was positive over the principle of linking Fairtrade into the Eco School Programme. The Head of Education was to raise this with Head Teachers and an update would be sought from him on this.

Also, work was being undertaken through the Inverness Presbytery of the Church of Scotland and the Moray, Ross and Caithness Diocese of the Scottish Episcopal Church to promote Fairtrade amongst churches. A letter had been sent out to churches regarding their current Fairtrade status and a response

was awaited.

In terms of increasing the number of businesses using Fairtrade Products, Members were advised that encouraging local Fairtrade groups to consider distributing Fairtrade sample packs to businesses/workplaces was being looked at. Also, the Inverness Fairtrade Group were continuing to work with the Eastgate Shopping Centre to find ways of promoting Fairtrade within the shopping centre. Bed and Breakfasts were also being looked at to use Fairtrade products.

In conclusion, work was being progressed in order to attract another flagship employer and the number of schools involved in Fairtrade activity had increased. Also, it would be looked at whether Fairtrade could be linked into the Eco school programme. An update from the churches and local Fairtrade Groups would be sought.

Thereafter, the Group **AGREED** that: -

i An update would be sought from the Head of Education on his discussions with Head Teachers regarding the principle of linking Fairtrade into the Eco School Programme;

ii The Fairtrade Foundation be informed of the problems schools were having with regard to the administration involved in achieving Fairtrade awards, and perhaps a self-assessment could be undertaken rather than an external assessment;

iii evidence of the Fairtrade activities happening in schools would be sought.

iv an update from Churches and local Fairtrade Group regarding their Fairtrade activities would be sought.

Goal 4 – (*Events and Media coverage raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade across the community*)

There was a need to find different ways to interact and gain media exposure for Fairtrade activities.

It was **AGREED** that:-

i an update after this meeting be issued to the media on the key points that the Group were taking forward; and

ii Local Fairtrade Groups would be contacted to get an update on their efforts to raise awareness about their Fairtrade activities.

Goal 5 – (*a local Fairtrade Steering Group representing a range of local organisations and sectors meets regularly to ensure the Fairtrade Town*)

continues to develop and gain support)

The Group **NOTED** the planned activities to broaden the membership of the Group.

Thereafter, it was advised that overall reasonable progress was being made on all of the aims of the group and it was felt that it would be possible to submit a renewal application to the Fairtrade Foundation this year.

The Chair on behalf of the Group thanked Mr Gordon Morrison, Parliamentary Officer for his hard work and efforts on the action plan for renewal of Highland Fairtrade Zone Status.

5. Local Fairtrade Group Updates

It was suggested that local Fairtrade Groups be asked to submit a written report on their activities, so the Group were aware of progress, particularly if they were unable to attend meetings of the Group.

Insofar as Highland One World was concerned, there were Fairtrade activities being planned. In particular they had been working with Just Trading on the Rice Challenge in Schools which had helped children build life skills. Also, they were working with the Scottish Fairtrade Forum delivering Continuing Professional Development on cotton.

In terms of the Co-operative, there was a new initiative whereby some of their stores were allocating hours for 'community pioneer' whereby they had two hours a week to work in the community. This could include going into a school and giving a talk about Fairtrade. Fairtrade would continue to play a prominent role in the Co-operative.

Inverness's Fairtrade City Status had been renewed successfully. The Fairtrade Foundation were particularly pleased to hear of the annual Fairtrade Bazaar and road signs.

The Group:-

- i **NOTED** the activities undertaken or being planned; and
- ii **AGREED** that local Fairtrade Groups be asked to submit a written report on their activities to future meetings of the Group.

6. Date of Next Meeting

It was **AGREED** that arrangements be made for a further meeting of the Group at the end of August or early September, 2015.

The meeting ended at 3.05 p.m.

