

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2024 (9 – 22 September)

September this year sees the 30th anniversary of the Fairtrade Mark and Fairtrade Fortnight has been moved from the traditional February/March to September (9-22 September) to mark this. It fits well with the themes of Harvest and the Season of Creation and will hopefully feature in churches' celebrations.

Choosing Fairtrade has never been more relevant. A report last year by Christian Aid reminded us that a significant percentage of what is in our shopping basket originates from countries vulnerable to the climate crisis. Bananas, coffee, tea and cocoa are among the staples of UK shopping baskets but are under threat from the warming climate. 'Our record on carbon emissions has helped cause the climate crisis. Farmers in some of the world's poorest countries are now struggling to cope with droughts, storms and rising temperatures... We cannot and must not ignore the needs of the people who produce our food.' For farmers in the Fairtrade system – apart from the benefit of fair prices and decent working conditions - the extra premium received by the community helps the farmers become more resilient in the face of climate change, for instance diversifying crops, learning different methods of cultivation, or planting trees for shade and biodiversity. But expanding the number of farmers in the Fairtrade system needs more Fairtrade products to be purchased.

As we celebrate thirty years of the Fairtrade Mark, let us also ensure that we make Fairtrade our automatic choice in our church supplies. The theme of Fairtrade Fortnight this year is **Be the Change**. When farmers receive fairer pay and a fair say, they can drive positive change in their communities. We can **Be the Change** not only by choosing Fairtrade in our churches and at home, but also by explaining our choices to others and encouraging them to do the same. If we can convince one single extra person to pick up a Fairtrade item in their weekly shop, we are making a difference.

For a Fairtrade stall (food and craft products on sale or return) during this period or at any other time, please contact Anne Garsed, fairpreston@gmail.com, 07813 870641.

Churches may also want to publicise and support the work of two organisations:

Transform Trade www.transform-trade.org

Fighting for a fairer trade system, supporting producers around the world. They work together for trade that values people over profit. Right now, corporate greed and destruction still dominate the world of trade. But there is another way to do business. It's called people centred trade. They partner with farmers, workers and artisans to help them benefit from more sustainable and equitable trade. In the UK they advocate and campaign for changes to business practices and government policy. For more information see website.

Shared Interest www.shared-interest.com

Investing in a fairer world, supporting producers around the world. Since 1990, Shared Interest has provided finance to fair trade businesses in up to 45 countries. The majority of these organisations support smallholder farmers who produce around a third of the world's food but often struggle to feed their families. They use members' investments to make loans to organisations of farmers and craftspeople as well as some fair trade buyers. The loans typically fund seeds, plants, materials, crops, equipment or finished goods. Once the crops or crafts are sold, the organisation repays Shared Interest the capital plus a fair rate of interest. The funds can then be recycled and lent out again. Anyone can invest. For more information see website.