

## London Fairtrade Conference October 13<sup>th</sup> 2018

Attended by John and Ann Boardman and Janet Stenner.

- **Two speakers from Sao Tome and Principe** explained why it is good for them to work with Fairtrade Foundation. They showed slides of chocolate production; getting the pods down with sticks, opening the pods to extract the seeds which are dried in the sun. They are weighed and fermented. Record-keeping and traceability are important. Each seed is checked for quality. Farmers are paid according to the weight of seeds cultivated. The Fairtrade Premium is used to help provide electricity, kindergartens, schools, houses, roads and to help produce cocoa pods in a sustainable way. Training is provided so that farmers can increase their productivity per hectare and their irrigation systems.
- **Brad Hill, ex-Cooperative senior CEO.**  
He waxed lyrical on the Fairtrade credentials of this supermarket, especially sales of tea, coffee, wine, roses, sugar, cocoa and bananas. The new Food Chief Executive is Jo Whitfield. Sarah Wakefield is the Fairtrade promoter.
- **Michael Gidney – CEO of the Fairtrade Foundation**  
He encouraged us to take the long view and picture the people behind the Fairtrade products. The price of coffee has collapsed but Fairtrade continues to provide growers with a fair price. Three quarters of coffee drunk in the UK is not Fairtrade.
- **Julia Nicosia – Assistant at Fairtrade Foundation**  
Fairtrade Fortnight 2019 will be between 25<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> March. The focus will be on promoting the value of women, particularly within the context of cocoa production. In the UK there is rising interest in gender equality and respect for women. She encouraged us to work with the local council.

After lunch we had a choice of 5 workshops. Here are short reports from the workshops we attended.

- **Adam's workshop.**  
Maintaining Momentum within local Fairtrade groups. He spoke very little about this. His focus was on the simplified Fairtrade Town reapplication form. He introduced a man who had done long walks to highlight Fairtrade. He said that the media are not interested unless something strikingly different is being done; he walked backwards and sometimes with an elephant!
- **Michael Gidney's workshop.**  
He highlighted the role of producer farmers dictating to the Fairtrade Foundation what its focus should be. There are many issues for the FT Foundation to address; climate change, gender inequality, global supply chains, human rights, child labour, trafficking and modern slavery. In the world 125 countries have some involvement in Fairtrade.
- **2 women from the Cote d'Ivoire**  
In their country women are supposed to have and raise children, therefore there's no point in educating them. They never have a break, a holiday or retire. A typical day; 5am collect water, housework and dress children; 7am go to work in the fields; 5pm return to clean house and prepare dinner. This is not considered work.  
The FT Foundation decided women were living in extreme poverty despite the premium. The Foundation have introduced changes like more water pumps, schools and solar panels. This

gives women more time for themselves. FT Africa is encouraging women's leadership training and empowerment coaching. Teaching women to read and write. Encouraging women to realise their importance in the economy and educating men to realise this. All humans should have the same rights. All this is thanks to being part of Fairtrade. All their cocoa is grown to Fairtrade standards but only about a quarter is sold on Fairtrade terms. Climate change is affecting cocoa growth, so trees need to be planted to shade the cocoa trees. The women reps encouraged people to buy more Fairtrade cocoa and chocolate.

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We will have a Fairtrade Christmas tree in St Peter's.

Please put your thinking caps on re original ideas for FT Fortnight related to Cocoa and chocolate eg a Bake Off, and/or Chocolate Tasting experience?