



Scottish
Fair Trade
Forum

CASE STUDY: EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE

In October 2007, East Dunbartonshire became one of Scotland's Fairtrade Zones; meaning that the entire local authority area has shown support for Fairtrade. The campaign to achieve Fairtrade Zone Status took little more than 3 years, and was organised by the East Dunbartonshire Fair Trade Group. One of the group's long-standing members, Angela Oakley, talks to Duncan Smart, SFTF Campaign Development Intern, about what the campaign involved.

AO: When we began in the spring of 2004 our plans to work towards becoming a Fairtrade Zone were regarded by some as ambitious. At that time there were no other Fairtrade Zones in Scotland and the amount of groundbreaking work ahead of us seemed mountainous. Although our task was ambitious it was logical - Why apply for Fairtrade status for just one town or village when we could bring everyone along?

DS: What made it possible for you to achieve such progress?

AO: Support across the community has made this happen. Business listens to the consumer, so we asked consumers to ask for Fairtrade products in their local shops. Following a campaign by two local secondary schools, one supermarket increased its range of Fairtrade products by ten items overnight.

DS: How did you engage politicians and the local community in the campaign?

AO: We lobbied politicians; not just in our own Council, but our MP, MSPs, MEPs, Government Ministers and even the Prime Minister. Some parts of the community were easy to work with - schools, young people and community groups were especially receptive. It was a little slower with business, but we found that just mentioning a competitor was using Fairtrade products made businesses take notice.

DS: Did the steering group receive from the local authority for its campaign?

AO: We have been greatly aided by the support of East Dunbartonshire Council. The Council elected in May 2007 has continued the support given by the previous administration. In particular the service of the Sustainability Development Officer and the Purchasing Officer for the Council's catering services have made it possible for so much to be achieved.

DS: What are the future plans for the East Dunbartonshire Fair Trade Group?

AO: There is still a lot to do. In particular I find it shocking that only a few church groups in East Dunbartonshire have been awarded Fairtrade Church status. There is much more to be done with business. Achieving the status of Fairtrade Zone is by no means the end of the campaign, and we are now working on renewing our application. The work goes on.