

Notes of the meeting of the Fair Trade Working Party held at Greenways on 17 January 2006

Present:

Cllr B Terry, Chairman – Ringwood Town Council
Cllr D Cracknell, Ringwood Town Council
Cllr Mrs B Charlton – Ringwood Town Council/Chamber of Trade
Mrs M Olive, Mrs E Parfitt & Mr D Haywood – Teachers, Ringwood School
Oliver Thew, Lee Hallifax, Jamie Chambers (Vice-Chairman) – Students, Ringwood School
Mrs A Pedersen – Greyfriars Community Centre
Cathy Dine – Churches Together
Lisa Baxter – Ace Office Supplies } for item 5
Christine Mogg – Café Direct Plc }
Gwen Hensen - associated with Parish Church
Mark Lloyd – Coffee Mill Services – for item 7
Terry Simpson – Town Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Christine Ford who was attending a District Council meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Notes of the Meeting held on 29 November 2005

AGREED that as not all Members of the Working Party had received the notes, their approval be deferred until the next meeting.

4. Membership of Working Party

It was noted that Gwen Henson (associated with the Parish Church), Cathy Dine (Churches Together) and Ann Pedersen (Greyfriars Community Centre) had agreed to serve on the Working Party. In addition although not present due to a prior commitment Karen Jefferies of Forest Forge had also indicated a willingness to serve on the Working Party.

5. Presentations

The Working Party was pleased to welcome Christine Mogg of Café Direct and Lisa Baxter of Ace Office Supplies to the meeting.

Christine Mogg explained that Café Direct had started business some 20 to 25 years previously. The Company philosophy was to establish a guaranteed price for growers that would be preserved and would not be affected by fluctuations of prices on the world market during a season. The Company only dealt with small farmers direct and did not trade with large plantations or purchase raw materials through trade markets. The intention of dealing direct would guarantee a price for the farmers which would give them more security. In addition the Company assisted with the education of the farmers' children and gave support to the farmers to help them grow better crops. Company profits are also shared with farmers.

One of the essential elements of the Company's fair trade process provided for each package to be numbered. This would enable full traceability of every package sold and would enable the Company to trace it's origin back to a particular grower.

As part of their support for fair trade the Company would provide posters and signage for use in connection with general publicity. They would also be prepared to be involved in the National Fair Trade fortnight events scheduled to start on the 6 March. During that period, she would have two farmers from Africa or Mexico with her and would endeavour to bring them to the school to meet the students.

In response to an enquiry Christine Mogg accepted that the original quality of coffee beans was not as good as would now be expected. However, there had been a continual improvement in quality since that time. Because the Company guaranteed prices and did not buy at the lowest prices, the cost of coffee in shops might be marginally more expensive than coffee sourced elsewhere.

Whilst Café Direct did not advertise on television, Lisa Baxter indicated that her Company did promote the product through their own mailing lists.

Margaret Olive indicated that Ringwood School would be arranging a Fair Trade Day at the school in July and invited Café Direct and Ace Office Supplies to attend on that day.

The Working Party thanked Christine Mogg and Lisa Baxter for their most helpful presentation and confirmed that further contact would be made with the companies to move the fair trade accreditation for Ringwood forward shortly.

Christine Mogg and Lisa Baxter then left the meeting.

6. Progress Reports

(a) Erection of Street Signs

NOTED: That it had not been possible to move this item forward at present but this would be done shortly.

(b) Canvass of Local Shops

The students reported that their canvass of local shops had produced a poor response. This might have been because the canvassing was undertaken in the pre-Christmas period and shops did not have sufficient time or it may have been that it was not possible for contact to be made with the appropriate person at each of the shops.

AGREED that a further canvass should be undertaken, this time supported by information from the Town Council. In support of that information the school would provide additional text.

(c) Production of Publicity Display and other Literature

AGREED to defer to the next meeting.

(d) Production of Fair Trade Directory

AGREED to defer to the next meeting.

(e) Educational Campaign

Margaret Olive reported that the students would have one whole day of timetable in July to enable the Fair Trade concept to be fully explored. In addition some further information dissemination would be undertaken during the Fair Trade fortnight commencing on 6 March.

(f) Media Coverage

AGREED to defer this to the next meeting.

(g) Special Event in March

AGREED that action be taken to facilitate a fair trade launch during the Fair Trade fortnight commencing on 6 March. Cllr Belinda Charlton as representative of the Chamber of Trade would investigate the possibility of utilising the Furlong Centre for this purpose.

(h) Involvement of Major Supermarkets

The Town Clerk reported that Tesco Direct, Waitrose and Sainsburys had all been contacted about taking part in the Fair Trade initiative. To date none had responded.

AGREED that further efforts be made to try to get the major supermarkets involved in the initiative.

7. Presentation – Coffee Mill Services

The Working Party was pleased to welcome Mark Lloyd of Coffee Mill Services, Christchurch to the meeting.

He explained that his Company was very small but based in Christchurch and therefore able to give a very good personal service throughout the area. In particular they were able to supply small quantities, and retailers did not need to acquire vast quantities of any goods.

The Fair Trade products represented about 20% of his Company's business. They supplied principally coffee, chocolate and sugar. He would be very happy to follow up any links that the school or the Town Council might make in relation to Fair Trade in order to make the products more widely available in the town. In addition, if the Town Council and the school decided to be involved in the Fair Trade fortnight initiative, his Company would be very happy to man a stall irrespective of whether a similar supplier was present.

The Working Party thanked Mark Lloyd for his presentation and confirmed that further contact would be made with him as the initiative progressed.

8. Other Suppliers

AGREED that further information about Tradecraft should be obtained in order to involve that Company in the initiative.

9. Other Issues

The Working party noted that whilst both of the Companies making presentations would have appeared at first sight to have been in direct competition, the information provided showed that each aimed at different markets. There would therefore be no difficulties with involving both Companies within the Fair Trade initiative.

With regard to the launch of the Fair Trade fortnight, Cllr Danny Cracknell agreed to contact Mr Morant, the holder of the Market Charter to ascertain whether he would be prepared to allow a Fair Trade stall to be placed on the market on either a Wednesday or Saturday during the Fair Trade fortnight. From the school's perspective, the students were more likely to be available on a Saturday than on a weekday.

10. Next Meeting

AGREED that the next meeting be held at Greenways at 4pm on Tuesday, 21 February 2006.