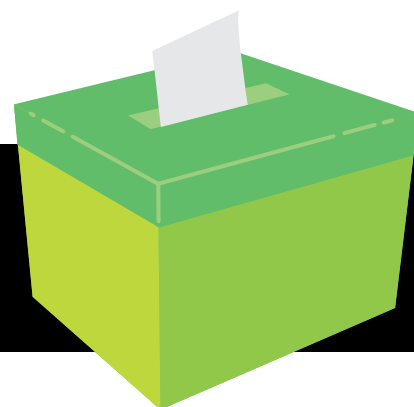


FAIRTRADE AND THE LOCAL ELECTIONS 2011

Ready to put your cross in the box? Use this guide to find out from the people who want to represent you, what their commitment is to Fairtrade.



WHY ARE COUNCILS KEY TO OUR CAMPAIGN?

In the midst of making difficult financial decisions, it is more important than ever to remind future elected representatives of your community's commitment to a better deal for producers and workers in the developing world.



THE HEART OF CIVIC LIFE

From Remembrance Sunday to Mayday street fairs, councils are at the centre of community life, giving prominence to things that matter to local people. Putting Fairtrade Fortnight on the civic calendar is a brilliant way to raise awareness for your local campaign and for your community to show its commitment to tackling global poverty.



A £186BN BUDGET

Austerity doesn't mean scrimping on ethics. From the tea at your swimming pool cafe, to the cotton for council workers uniforms, the purchasing power of councils can make a huge difference to supporting farmers and workers in developing countries through Fairtrade.



TODAY'S COUNCILLOR, TOMORROW'S MP

Not just active in your local community, candidates are often involved in party politics, influencing national policy and debates. Many MPs start as local councillors – you never know, you could be speaking to a future Prime Minister!

LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

5 MAY 2011

30 MILLION VOTERS

279 TOWN HALLS



WHAT TO ASK

Securing pledges to support Fairtrade from individual candidates is great, but even better is getting a commitment from their local party. Most major political parties field candidates in local elections. As in Parliament, local councils are run by the party, or coalition of parties, that wins the most seats in the council. Therefore, you should ask a candidate what their party's commitment is to Fairtrade.

Here are some suggested commitments to ask your local political parties to sign up to:

- **Maintaining, or working towards achieving Fairtrade status**
- **Inserting a 'Fairtrade where possible' clause in all new supplier contracts**
- **Reporting annually to the full council on the Fairtrade goods it buys**
- **A request specific to you locally. Is there a particular event or commitment you want to secure?**



HOW TO GET THOSE PLEDGES

It can take some persistence to reach the right person and sometimes a bit of prompting to get a response. Don't give up! Here are some tips on how to get commitments:

Letter or email: The easiest way. Start by writing to the leader of the local party and ask him or her to commit on behalf of their candidates. A quick internet search will usually reveal who the party leader is and their contact details. See the templates below.

Press event: Invite local councillors to sign a Fairtrade pledge, take a picture and send it to your local press.

Publicise: Asking questions publicly is a good way of guaranteeing a response, so why not write to your local paper, explaining what you are doing. You could also use your campaign website, Twitter, Facebook or a blog to communicate what you are doing and share the response you get.

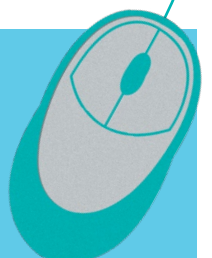
Fairtrade hustings: Hold an event where you invite a candidate from each party to answer questions from a public or invited audience around the theme of Fairtrade.

Not all councils are holding elections, for example there are none in London. To find out whether your council is holding elections, contact your local election returns officer. You'll find their details on your council's website.



For more ideas follow this link to the Fairtrade Local Authorities Guide:
www.fairtrade.org.uk/local_authorities_guide

Good luck with your campaigning. We'd love to know how you get on:
campaigns@fairtrade.org.uk



TEMPLATE LETTERS

Template letter to your local party leader:

Dear *[local party leader]*,

To help me decide how to vote in the forthcoming local elections, I am writing to find out whether you and your candidates support Fairtrade.

[if relevant, insert details of your local Fairtrade network and its achievements]

I would very much like your assurance that even in the face of the difficult financial decisions our council will have to make over the coming years, it will not mean compromises over ethics and sustainability. One of the clearest ways you can demonstrate this is through a strong commitment to Fairtrade.

I would therefore be grateful if you could clearly outline whether you and your candidates are able to commit the following during their elected term of office:

1. Maintaining/obtaining Fairtrade status for our town,
2. Ensuring that all new council procurement contracts will have a 'Fairtrade if possible' clause,
3. Ensuring the council reports annually on how much and which Fairtrade goods it has bought.

I look forward to your prompt response.

[include your full name and address]

Template letter to the editor of your local paper:

Sir,

Ahead of the coming local elections, talk of cuts and efficiencies loom large. But as candidates strive for cost savings and our votes, they must not forget our community's commitment to those much less fortunate than ourselves.

Winning Fairtrade status in *[insert year]* brought us together in common cause to help some of the poorest farmers and their families on the planet. Their needs have not changed. Therefore, we would welcome commitment from candidates from all parties on maintaining our Fairtrade status. Because, whoever wins the local election must remember that cuts and efficiencies cannot mean sacrifices and compromises in our ethics.

Signed

[Coordinator for Local Town Fairtrade Network]