

Island gains its Fairtrade status

THIS was the moment when the Isle of Wight was granted a reputation for giving a fair deal to suppliers in developing countries.

Simeon Green, from the Windward Islands Bananas Company, presented island MP Andrew Turner with the certificate that showed the Isle of Wight had achieved Fairtrade status.

It means that the Isle of Wight Council has backed Fairtrade principles and enough island supermarkets and cafes are selling Fairtrade products. It's something that worshippers in our parishes and others have been working towards for years.

It happened at a celebration for 100 people held at the Isle of Wight College to coincide with One World Week. Guests included representatives from business, schools, charities and unions.

"The Fairtrade movement is happening because people of conscience are realising something isn't right with the world," said Simeon Green. "They see 840 million going to bed hungry, 30,000 children dying of curable causes a day, one billion people without clean drinking water. In a world of plenty, this is a scandal.



"People on the Isle of Wight are saying there is something they can do about it. It doesn't involve marching or campaigning. It's something you can do simply by changing the brands you buy.

"When you buy Fairtrade tea, you are making it possible for a child in Sri Lanka to have a piece of bread. When you buy Fairtrade bananas, a Caribbean child can have school books. When you buy Fairtrade chocolate, a child in Ghana can get medical attention. You are making a difference to people's lives."

And Andrew Turner MP said: "I want to congratulate everyone on the island who has worked so hard to get Fairtrade status. It's the work of volunteers like you that makes a far greater difference than the work of people like me who are paid."

Suppliers of products such as tea, coffee, chocolate and fruit often suffer economic ruin because of fluctuations in the world price for such goods. But Fairtrade goods guarantee a fair,



Simone Green (right) hands the certificate to Andrew Turner MP

minimum price for producers, as well as an extra 'social premium' which is invested in the local community. Those farmers also keep to stringent guidelines on environmental sustainability and employment. There are now more than 1,000 certified Fairtrade products in the UK, each of which carry the Fairtrade mark (pictured above).

The island's campaign for Fairtrade status began 15 months ago, and the island's Fairtrade Forum helped to make sure there were 30 retailers, 19 cafes and 49 other organisations, including many churches, using or selling Fairtrade products. For more

information, see www.iwff.org.uk

Portsmouth and Southampton already have Fairtrade city status, and groups in Havant, East Hampshire and Fareham are also working towards becoming Fairtrade zones.

Our diocese will also be applying to become a Fairtrade diocese soon. More than 50 parishes serve or sell Fairtrade products – enough to meet the standards set by the Fairtrade Foundation. The full list of those parishes is on www.portsmouth.anglican.org

For more information about Fairtrade in general, see: www.fairtrade.org.uk

Plea to get more women in top jobs

MORE should be done to encourage women into top clergy posts in our diocese, it has been agreed.

Diocesan synod members voted to rejoice in the ministry of women, but noted with concern the absence of women from the most senior diocesan clergy posts, and the small number of women in stipendiary clergy jobs.

Although there had been an improvement in the past two years, only 14.5 per cent of stipendiary clergy posts are filled by women – below the national average. In contrast, the number of non-stipendiary posts taken by women is 62 per cent, one of the highest in the country.

Representatives from the Bishop's Waltham deanery also noted there were no female archdeacons, residentiary cathedral canons or rural deans, and no women on the bishop's staff team at the moment. The Rev April Richards was rural dean of Petersfield and Canon Jane Hedges was a residentiary cathedral canon, but the former has retired and the latter moved on.

Proposing the motion, Peter Watkins, from St Peter's, Bishop's Waltham, suggested a working party should be set up to ensure better representation on women at senior levels, and that there should be a dean of women's ministry on the bishop's staff team.

The cathedral dean, the Very Rev David Brindley, told synod there had been strenuous efforts to appoint a woman to the cathedral clergy team. The last time a post came up, four separate women were head-hunted for the job, but none actually applied.

And the Archdeacon of the Meon, the Ven Peter Hancock, said: "It isn't for the want of trying, but the bishop is constrained in various ways in appointments. In some parishes, there are simply no female applicants."

Have a jazzy Christmas

IT will involve all your favourite Christmas carols - played in a foot-stomping jazz style.

Hark the Herald Angels Swing will see the Old Thumper Jazz Band, led by BBC Radio Solent's Chris Walker, playing at the Church of the Resurrection in Drayton, from 7pm on December 16. It's one of only three venues the band is playing.

Tickets, priced at £6, are available on 023-9237 5145.

Joy and sadness at centre opening

IT was a bittersweet moment when the new parish centre was dedicated at Holy Trinity, Gosport.

There was joy at the opening of a new community facility after months of rubble, scaffolding and disruption. But there was sadness as 96-year-old sacristan Rosina Goldring, who was due to perform the official opening ceremony, had died only hours beforehand after suffering a stroke.

The new centre has been created at the west end of the church, providing a new meeting room and kitchen on the first floor and a foyer, parish office and toilets on the ground floor. It means worshippers can welcome and serve the community better.

The day started with the official dedication of a memorial bench on nearby Trinity Green



Sisters Joan Millard (left) and Betty McDonald, open the new parish centre at Holy Trinity Church, Gosport

in memory of the Rev John Capper, who was priest at Holy Trinity for 30 years.

It was his bequest that made the new centre possible, so it was fitted that he was remembered in

the hand-carved, curved stone bench dedicated by Hampshire county councillor Margaret Snaith.

The 100-strong congregation - boosted by friends, relatives,

neighbours and well-wishers - then took part in a celebratory mass.

The organ, which was played by the composer Handel when it was installed in the Duke of Chandos' stately home, sounded again after months of being covered up to protect it from the dust. It now has gold organ pipes and a ducal crest.

After mass, the ribbon was cut on the new centre by sisters Joan Millard and Betty McDonald, who have been members of the congregation since they were babies. Prayers were said for Rosina Goldring, who had even written a speech for the occasion before suffering her stroke only five days beforehand.

And the congregation followed the vicar, the Rev Ian Booth, as he blessed each room in turn before a celebratory buffet lunch.