

Cross-Party Group on Fair Trade

7 March 2023 1pm online

Minute

Present

MSPs

Colin Smyth MSP
Claire Baker MSP
Sarah Boyack MSP

Invited guests

Doha Asous
Muna Asous
Bridget Cowan, Zaytoun
Lesley Hinds, Office of Foysol Choudhury
Gerard Hastings

Non-MSP Group Members

Sandra Burt
Martin Rhodes, Scottish Fair Trade Forum
Kiera Williams, Scottish Fair Trade Forum
Catherine Newman, Scottish Fair Trade Forum
Anne Walsh, West Lothian Fair Trade Group
Martin Meteyard
Colum Scriven, Rainbow Turtle
John McDonald, North Lanarkshire Fair Trade Group
Nduzani Zaya, Scottish Fair Trade Forum
Peter Kennedy
Arthur West
Sarah Aldred, Scottish Fair Trade Forum
Pam Maxwell, North Ayrshire Fair Trade Group
Carol Morton, Hadeel/Palcrafts
Karena Jarvie, Perth and Kinross Fair Trade Group
Jon Cape, Stirling Fair Trade Group

Apologies

Russel Salton, City of Edinburgh Fair Trade Steering Group
Shirley Brown

Foysol Choudhury MSP
John Mason MSP
Dumfries Fair Trade Group
Kirsty Connell, Scotmid
Scott Erwin, Greencity Wholefoods

Agenda item 1

At the start of the meeting Colin Smyth MSP, Convenor, paid tribute to Andy Mount, a former member of the CPG who had recently died. It was noted that as well as being a member of the CPG, Andy had been active in the Livingston Fairtrade Town campaign, the West Lothian Fair Trade Group and the Scottish Fair Trade Forum.

Agenda item 2

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 were approved with the addition of Pam Maxwell of the North Ayrshire Fair Trade Group as attending.

Agenda item 3

A presentation was given by Bridget Cowan and Doha Asous of Zaytoun. Bridget is the Communications Manager of Zaytoun and Doha is an olive farmer from Burin in Palestine.

Bridget spoke about the history of Zaytoun as a business and its commitment to Palestinian farmers, bringing their products to the market. She outlined some of the problems faced by farmers in growing their produce, loss of land and difficulties getting their products to market.

Doha spoke about her life as an olive farmer. She described how she had been a farmer for most of her life, having helped her family on the olive farms after the death of her father in the Six Day War in 1967.

She outlined some of the problems faced by her and other olive farmers in the West Bank. Some farmers locally had lost 70% of their olive trees, either because they had been taken by people in the nearby settlements or through not being given access to cultivate the trees. She talked about how at harvest times farmers are not given access long enough to harvest the olives. She also explained that access to water had been limited by those in the settlements.

Doha spoke of the closeness of olive farmers to their trees as they are very old and have been cared for through generations of family. She also spoke about the importance of being in the UK and international solidarity.

Doha answered questions on her motivation to carry on, her connection with her trees, her involvement in the slow food movement and her curation and use of heritage seeds.

The Convenor thanked Doha and Bridget for their presentations and Muna for her interpreting. He wished Doha and her colleague Taysir Arbasi a speedy recovery from Covid.

Agenda item 4

Any other business – it was noted that a parliamentary reception was being organised to mark 10 years of Scotland being a Fair Trade Nation in 2023 which would be held on the evening of 24 May. Invitations would be sent to members of the Cross Party Group

The meeting closed at 1.55pm