

Inside Politics

with Spen MP **MIKE WOOD**



Fairtrade makes fair point

FAIRTRADE Fortnight begins on Monday. A two-week period that serves to highlight, promote and advance the Fairtrade movement.

Batley and Spen is the country's first ever Fairtrade parliamentary constituency. Starting with a broad foundation of churches, the Fairtrade movement locally has grown strongly through even more churches, schools and organisations, not insignificantly among businesses and across multi-faith lines into mosques and other com-

munity-based concerns.

Our Fairtrade steering group members, particularly the chairman the Rev Tina Walker, work tirelessly to promote Fairtrade, develop better understanding and to improve availability in our shops, schools, workplaces and eateries.

Times are hard for all of us in different ways but that doesn't mean we can't change the world - no matter how small are the steps we take. Buying goods

that feature the Fairtrade logo means that the goods or their ingredients have been sourced in such a way that pays farmers and other producers a fair price.

But what difference does it make? Is it a token gesture towards relieving poverty in the developing world? I firmly believe it does make a difference.

For example, buying Fairtrade chocolate in Birkenshaw today has a direct impact on the lives

of whole communities in countries such as Ghana. The benefits they get from Fairtrade not only mean fair wages for their workers but also help to build wells for villages and pay for children to go to school - children who otherwise would have no real access to education.

There will be an event taking place near you over the next fortnight - be it a simple coffee morning, a Fairtrade tasting session or something a little more

dramatic - like the bid to set a record with the national Banana Challenge or a five-a-side football match featuring Fairtrade footballs and Fairtrade oranges at half time!

If you can't get to an event why not buy a packet of Fairtrade tea, coffee, fruit or biscuits from your local supermarket?

And if they don't have any - ask them why not. That one question or that one purchase is a small step towards a better, fairer world.

● More on Fairtrade Fortnight - page 28.