



Skibbereen named overall winner of 2009 Fairtrade Towns Awards

By Carol Gilbert Saturday October 24th, 2009

Skibbereen Fairtrade committee with plenty to celebrate as Skibbereen has been declared 'Best Fairtrade Town in Ireland 2009' – from left – treasurer Nicholas MacGillycuddy, Raymond Ruttle, chairperson Isolda O'Connor, Patrick Crowley, secretary Kay Quinn and Cllr. Catherine O'Keeffe. Skibbereen Fairtrade committee are delighted to announce Skibbereen was named Best Fairtrade Town and overall winner at the 2009 Fairtrade Towns Awards held during this year's Fairtrade Towns Conference in Ballymun, earlier this month.

The two-day conference was opened by the Lord Mayor of Dublin City, Cllr. Emer Costello, and the other winners were Nenagh, winning the 'Most Retail and Catering Outlets' category, Waterford awarded as the 'Most Creative Activity' and Clonakilty received the 'Best Schools Work' prizes.

There are 42 Fairtrade towns in the 32 counties and over 70 groups working with the Fairtrade towns initiative. Skibbereen Fairtrade committee expressed their appreciation to everyone who had helped in any way to achieve this important recognition of the work undertaken so far.

An independent assessor said that Skibbereen was able to demonstrate a high level of community involvement. This began when Skibbereen Fairtrade committee made an initial presentation to Skibbereen town council.

Since then they have made several presentations to the schools in the Skibbereen area, participated each year in A Taste of West Cork Food festival, run a slogan competition, a schools art competition, a writing competition for children and adults during the Famine memorial event, which attracted entrants from all over Ireland and as far away as the US.

A soccer match was held between Clonakilty and Skibbereen Fairtrade groups, a celebrity shoot out, a visit from two Fairtrade growers to the town and they have also involved shops, cafes, restaurants, local businesses and Skibbereen Golf Club. The committee took part in the town's St. Patrick's Parade, dressed as bananas and chocolate bars, and organised the town's participation in setting a world record for the most number of Fairtrade bananas eaten in one day during Fairtrade fortnight.

Skibbereen will hold the title of Best Fairtrade town until next year's annual Fairtrade Towns' conference in October, which it is hoped will be hosted in Skibbereen.

Skibbereen Fairtrade committee hope to involve the whole town in celebrating this award early in the New Year and details will be announced at a later date.

In the meantime, as the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton dropped into Bewley's Grafton Street, in Dublin's City Centre for a cup of Fairtrade coffee during her recent visit to Ireland, they invited people to follow her example and look out for Fairtrade products in their local shops.