

Annual Report 2016-17



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Much of our discussion this year was about **TTIP** (The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) and its possible effects. Having studied literature provided by Global Justice Now in conjunction with Unison, members contacted their local councillors with a view to getting the Council to make Hartlepool a TTIP Free Zone. A letter from the Mayor in the local paper stated there was unanimous support from the Council against TTIP. Councillor Stephen Thomas visited one our meetings and explained the background to the Council's opposition. They had also contacted our twinned town, Hucklehoven, as Germany has strong opposition to TTIP but they replied that it was a government matter. The Council's main objections were about different standards (use of chemicals etc) and ISDS (Investor State Dispute Systems) where big business can sue a government if they pass laws which would affect their profits.

The group has also discussed and written letters and supported other issues such as **The Human Rights Act, Tax Dodging and Climate Change, and the closure of most of the Co-op shops in Hartlepool.**

Several members visited a **solar farm** to see what an impact it could make.

The group was also invited to the **local mosque** where the speakers on how to achieve peace included the Imam, the Bishop of Jarrow and Iain Wright M.P. A description of the group's aims and work was given to the leader to inform the members of the Mosque about what we do.

Representatives also went to the **4th Newcastle Jubilee Lecture by Lord Stern on Climate Change.**

Fairtrade was also a large part of our work; 3 members are on the Fairtrade Town Steering Group- one of them is its Chair. Events were supported in Fairtrade Fortnight and at Christmas when many members helped out in the Fairtrade Christmas Shop in Middlesbrough.

The most recent happening was an open evening where others were invited to hear a presentation and a question and answer session from Andy Lie, Ecumenical Officer of the Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church, talking about his experiences as an observer with **EAPPI** (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel). We were pleased to see people from many different places and groups there.

We were very sad to lose **Sheila Deacon**, one of our founder members and hardest workers, when she died at the end of October. We miss her and her talents very much.

Contact: Chris Eddowes tel. 269412

Meetings: Second Monday of the month 7.30pm St. George's United Reformed Church, York Rd. All welcome.