

Annual Report 2017-2018

Almost the first thing in this year's report was the speedy arranging of a Hustings Session when a snap election was called in May 2017. This was a very interesting occasion and we met with the all the candidates except the Lib Dems. Appreciation was expressed to Keith Gorton for organising this excellent event so quickly and a thank you letter was sent to Peter Gowland for chairing the meeting.

With a new MP in town, Mike Hill, the group arranged to meet him and make him aware of the group's existence and concerns. We have met with him twice and the first time presented him with a tee-shirt with the slogan 'MPs against Climate Change' provided by the NE-CAP group.

In the second meeting with Mike we particularly shared our concerns with him over the continuing doubts about Brexit, particularly with concerns about future trade deals. Climate change was also a large theme.

The group has written several letters to our MP, separately and as a group, on subjects including Liam Fox's Trade Bill, the Trade Democracy launch and the UK's supplies of arms to Saudi Arabia.

One thing which the group has found worrying is the move towards manufacturers (eg Mondelez) & retailers (eg Sainsbury's) to replace Fairtrade products with their own "fairly traded" products. Letters were sent to Sainsbury's expressing this and it took repeated attempts before we got a very lengthy reply from the CEO.

HGPJ supported Christian Aid's campaign on Tax dodging and got the Council to review and confirm that its procedures contained checks to guard against tax dodging by companies supplying goods and services to the local authority..

A Muslim Peace Seminar took place on 26th November at the Ahmadiyya Mosque and was attended by several members of HGPJ. The overall review was positive. The HGPJ wrote to the Ahmadiyya Mosque to inform them that they are welcome to attend HGPJ meetings and two representatives have visited.

The group were invited to a Mosque reception dinner in April. This was very informative about their charity work and several charities made presentations. The Chair gave a presentation on behalf of HGPJ, describing the work which was done by the group.

A report was also given at the AGM of NE-CAP (North East Call to Action on Poverty & Climate Change) in Newcastle. Though it often seems that little changes, we were heartened to know that from 1990 to 2016 there had been a reduction in worldwide child mortality rate of 50%. This shows campaigning is worthwhile.

As one of the original campaigning groups, the Jubilee Debt Campaign indicated they were extending their campaign to the cancelling of debts in the UK and was still promoting Trade campaigns in the light of Brexit.

20 years ago, members of the soon to be formed HGPJ attended The Jubilee Debt Campaign "human chain" event in Birmingham. (The group was founded as a result) The Jubilee Debt Coalition is holding an event in Birmingham on 29th September to celebrate 20 years of campaigning and some members hope to be there.

HGJP continues to support and engage in Fairtrade activities.

Members have attended the NE-CAP Energy Forum and a Global Justice Now event with workshops.

At present HGPJ are trying to arrange a "Rubbish Evening" with a representative from the Council to discuss exactly what can and what cannot be recycled. Like solving Climate Change, this is proving easier said than done.