

## Waterford celebrates 10 years of Fairtrade



Deputy Mayor Jason Murphy at Waterford Central Library for Fairtrade Ireland and One World Waterford Celebrations. Included are Melanie Drea (Fairtrade Ireland), Emma Daly (Fairtrade Ireland) and Jennifer Harris (One World Centre, Waterford). | Photos: John Power

A NUMBER of events took place recently to celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight 2015 and Waterford's tenth year as a Fairtrade City.

Fairtrade Fortnight ran from February 23rd to March 8th, and the Waterford One World Centre and Fairtrade Mark Ireland welcomed a banana co-op owner from the Windward Islands as part of the celebrations.

Stephen Best from St Lucia, who is Chairperson of the Windward Islands Farmers Association, was in Waterford to speak about the importance of Fairtrade.

"Fairtrade presents an alternative model to production. It is a way of sustaining our livelihoods and it has improved our quality of life. We want to heighten awareness of what Fairtrade means for the small producer," he explained.

"Fairtrade has brought dynamism back into our communities. Money is used for constructing farm roads, amenities, scholarships for schoolchildren, homes for the elderly and many other social activities."

Mr Best visited the Ballybeg Horticulture group where he engaged with students and discussed how Fairtrade has made a difference to his community.

The students showed him their gardens and explained how the project has made a difference to their community.

Mr Best also met Deputy Mayor of Waterford City & County Council Cllr. Jason Murphy in Central Library, Lady Lane where a Fairtrade exhibition from design students in Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) was launched along with a Fairtrade Cotton Exhibition by Sean Hawkey.

Attending the event were primary school students from Good Council Ferrybank and St. John of God's. Those in attendance enjoyed sampling some Fairtrade products with a cup of Fairtrade tea or coffee.

The overall aim of this year's Fairtrade Fortnight was to encourage large supermarkets to offer more Fairtrade products.

Consumption of Fairtrade bananas in Ireland is only eight per cent, while the figure in the UK is 35 per cent.