

Grant Towards the Cost of Visit of Patrick Kaberia to Suffolk (Sept 2024)

Report by the Felixstowe Fairtrade Forum

The Town Council kindly made a grant of £200 towards the cost of the visit to Suffolk by Patrick Kaberia, a Fairtrade farmer from Kenya. Felixstowe is a Fairtrade town and the Council supports measures to support Fairtrade in and around Felixstowe.

Patrick had last visited Felixstowe in 2016 as part of a visit to Suffolk arranged by the national Fairtrade Foundation. He had done an excellent job in promoting Fairtrade in Felixstowe and Suffolk and his visit inspired the setting up of the Suffolk Association of Fairtrade Towns (SAFT) with Felixstowe as a founding member. He became the Patron of SAFT in 2018 and has been active in supporting Fairtrade in the county.

In 2024 we learned that Wiltshire Fairtrade were trying to arrange a further visit by Patrick to the UK to coincide with Fairtrade Fortnight. Wiltshire Fairtrade were contacted and an agreement was made to extend Patrick's trip to include a short visit to Suffolk, if SAFT could meet a share of the costs, proportionate to the relative lengths of stay in Wiltshire and Suffolk.

With the support of town councils, Fairtrade groups and individuals, the necessary funds were raised and Patrick was able to spend five nights in Suffolk, including two in Felixstowe on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st September.

On the Friday evening Patrick met local Fairtrade supporters at an informal reception – including the former mayors of Felixstowe, Jon and Jan Garfield. On the Saturday he visited the Co-op in Hamilton Rd to meet the manager and see their Fairtrade display. He then addressed a meeting of town councillors, church representatives, retailers and other local invitees at the United Reformed Church before attending our Family Fun Day at Felixstowe Library. This was open to all, but especially children and their families. There were games, competitions, a Fairtrade stall and refreshments. There was a good turnout and Patrick was able to talk to the children about Fairtrade in an informal environment (see attached photo).

Patrick also visited Woodbridge, Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft during his stay. The visit was a great success in raising the profile of Fairtrade locally. Felixstowe children, in particular, enjoyed the opportunity of learning, at first hand, how buying Fairtrade supports communities like Patrick's in the developing world.

