Rainbow Turtle
Chair's report
April 2024 – March 2025

Introduction

Welcome to the AGM for the Rainbow Turtle charity. Rainbow Turtle consists of two arms, the charity whose aim is to educate about and promote Fair Trade in Renfrewshire, and the shop, Rainbow Turtle Just Trading, Ltd which is a business and runs the shop in Gauze St which also supports and promotes Fairtrade.

This AGM is for the charity and fulfils part of our requirements as a charity. As such we shall cover what the charities activities and finances but also, for interest and information, there will be short account the shop's progress.

This report covers April 2024 to the end of March 2025

Trustees and Members

The charity is required to have a board of trustees. At present we have seven trustees and we are always looking for more, so if you are interested in becoming a trustee please let us know.

Trustees at 1st April 2024

- Colum Scriven (secretary)
- Gillian Henry (treasurer)
- Steph Mayo
- Chris Johnstone (chair)
- Ann MacInnes
- Marianne Sermanni

Trustees at 31st March 2025

- Colum Scriven (secretary)
- Gillian Henry (treasurer)
- Steph Mayo
- Chris Johnstone (chair)
- Ann MacInnes
- Marianne Sermanni
- Stephen Edenborough

We were delighted to welcome Stephen as a new trustee last year. The trustees met six times, face to face in 24/25. I am grateful for all their help, time, and good nature in keeping me on the straight and narrow. Rainbow Turtle could not exist without all their commitment and hard work. Many volunteer in the shop, help cover the shop when Elise is on holiday, run stalls and help out in other events we take part in.

Rainbow Turtle Charity and Education

The charity employs a part-time educational officer. Philippa continued her role as temporary education officer until Linda returned from maternity leave in October. Philippa visited several schools in 2024 including Bridge of Weir and produced online videos about fairtrade. Philippa hosted an excellent Seed Matters evening in Methodist Halls. We are grateful for all her help and enthusiasm in covering Linda's maternity leave.

Linda returned from maternity leave and has been working with schools and community groups. She ran a very successful Growing Grounds project with three primary schools. She sourced new planters from Sight Scotland. She then led three sessions in each school about fairtrade, growing and climate change. She led a stall at the Paisley Food and Drink Festival. Linda also organised a Big Brew event at St Peter's.

Olive Tree gave a powerful presentation at our 2024 AGM.

We had a further stall in the Christmas market in the High St. It was a better day than last year and maintained our shop's presence in Paisley town centre. We are members of Paisley First and took part in several of their promotions, including billboards on Maxwellton St. We also had a stall at the Lochwinnoch Fayre.

Our membership was stable over the year. Colum continued to write a monthly newsletter/update for the website which was circulated by email to all members.

We have been supported again by the Methodist Halls. We moved into our new office in May, but with no change in our rent. Thanks to David Jackson for all his understanding and support for Rainbow Turtle.

Colum released more Rainbow Turtle Rebooted podcast episodes during Fairtrade Fortnight. He interviewed Juliet Robb, Linda and a lot of our volunteers. These are insightful and inspiring stories about the people who formed and are involved with Fairtrade. The podcast is gaining popularity and available on all platforms.

We have continued to increase our presence on social media, mainly Facebook and Instagram. Sarah and Linda have provided most of our content, with help from other volunteers.

We attended the Erskine Arts Young Volunteer evening where two of our younger volunteers won awards.

Rainbow Turtle was active in the resurrected Renfrewshire Fairtrade Steering Group. We helped organise an art competition and prize presentation at Coats memorial church with Howard Msukwa presenting the prizes. This was part of Fairtrade Fortnight. We helped arrange a large, impressive set of hoardings outside Paisley museum. The hoardings showcased the art competition entries, but also explained about and promoted Fairtrade. The group also emailed all local elected officials and this generated visits from three MSPs and a councillor. The steering group still meets bi-monthly and works with the Council and other related groups.

Rainbow Turtle was very involved in the Steering Group's application to renew Renfrewshire's Fairtrade Zone application. Fairtrade zones are now called Fairtrade Communities and our application was successful.

Rainbow Turtle Shop

Elise Kelly, our wonderful shop manager, has continued to build on her successes and the shop continues to flourish under her stewardship. We thank her for her hard work and dedication to the shop and Rainbow Turtle

As always, the volunteers have been wonderful in supporting Rainbow Turtle and being the welcoming face in the shop. Rainbow Turtle is indebted to their time, humour and persistence. Thank you all.

The shop has had stronger sales, but margins are still tight and we need to keep pushing and promoting the shop to increase sales as much as possible. We continue to look at the best ways of doing this and all suggestions gratefully received.

I would like to thank Colum for all his work for the shop. Thanks also to Kenny McTaggart for all his help in preparing and submitting the shop accounts. This was Kenny's first year volunteering with the accounts and we thank him for stepping into the breech.

Summary

2024/25 has been a year of change with Linda rejoining and moving into the new office. Despite this Rainbow Turtle flourished and continues to be a strong, valued presence in Renfrewshire. As always Rainbow Turtle thrives on all the people who give their time to support the charity including the volunteers, trustees and many others across Renfrewshire.

Thank you all for help this past year and we all look forward to working together in the coming years to keep promoting Fair Trade in a more equitable, greener world.

Chris Johnstone
Chair of Trustees
19 Sep 2025