

Rainbow Turtle Just Trading Ltd
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Rainbow Turtle urgently needs your help to raise £24,000 to keep us on the High Street.

Dear Friends and supporters

We are writing to you to make you aware of the current situation of Rainbow Turtle Just Trading Ltd (the business side of our organisation) and with a request for help. We need to repay an outstanding loan as well as boost sales for future sustainability. Easy ways for you to support the trading company are at the [end of this letter](#) and we would appreciate your views through a *very short* [online survey](#).

The Problem

The trading side of the organisation (the shop, web site, and our sale or return stalls) has been running at a loss over the past couple of years and we need to reverse this trend in order to continue trading beyond the end of the financial year.

Like many other high street shops, Rainbow Turtle has suffered from the economic downturn and changing shopping habits. For us this has been coupled with the feeling that Fairtrade is now mainstream and so there is less need to shop with us. However, in addition to this, the trading company has an outstanding loan of £24,000, and the repayments for this are having a serious impact on our profitability.

Background

Rainbow Turtle is more than just a shop and for the past 14 years Rainbow Turtle Just Trading Ltd (the trading arm of the organisation) has offered a one stop shop for Fair Trade goods in its High Street shop. It has also been at the forefront of promoting Fair Trade in the region, being instrumental in gaining Fairtrade status for Paisley and the Renfrewshire Zone. Through its educational work and sale or return services it has enabled schools and churches to gain and maintain their Fairtrade status and has played an integral part in the wider Fair Trade network notably the Scottish Fair Trade Forum, Traidcraft and the Fairtrade Foundation.

Through the work of campaigners and organisations like Rainbow Turtle the Fairtrade Mark has become a well-recognised symbol and is present on certain products in most supermarkets and food outlets. As such people can think that the job is done and feel the need to support outlets like ours is no longer necessary. However, the job is most definitely not yet done and we believe that it is important to keep pushing the boundaries and challenging the larger corporations to make trade fair.

Two years ago Rainbow Turtle was at a point where there was too much work for the staff involved to do and there was a choice to step up operations or drastically cut back. There was the opportunity from the Jessica Trust for help for social enterprises wanting to make a step change and a grant/loan (£20k grant/£40k loan) was obtained in order to develop the business. This allowed Rainbow Turtle to employ extra staff who put in a lot of hard work, with the intention of generating more sales. Unfortunately, the economic downturn and changes in the Fair Trade landscape meant that this extra income was not realised and the loan repayments are proving impossible to meet.

We really need to pay off the remainder of the loan (£24,000) over the next 12 months in order to avoid going into liquidation. Suggestions as to how you can get involved are at the end of this letter and more details are attached separately.

Good News

The good news is that Rainbow Turtle Charity is very healthy. It continues to support Fair Trade in Renfrewshire and surrounding areas through its work in schools, churches and with other organisations. Our education team goes from strength to strength with its successful educational programme, its popular producer visits, and its media activity and now with its bi monthly audio blog or podcast. The innovative work of the shop and charity has just been recognised by the Fairtrade Foundation who gave us the national Outstanding Achievement award for the 'living window display' in the shop during this year's Fairtrade Fortnight. However, without the trading side of the organisation, the charity will become a shadow of itself as both sides have a mutually supportive relationship.

Action

Our aim is to raise enough money over the coming year to pay off the Jessica Trust loan (which will then be able to be used to fund other social enterprises) whilst at the same time increasing sales to create sustainability.

The actions taken so far by Rainbow Turtle have been to:

- Obtain help from Just Enterprise to help with a business recovery plan
- Contact the Jessica Trust who have agreed to freeze the repayments while we put the recovery plan into action and then will restructure the payment schedule
- Come up with new ideas for generating extra sales
- Contact our stakeholders to gain support and further suggestions

Thanks and a request

We are very grateful for all the support, both financial and practical, that we have received from you over the years. Financial contributions in the past have gone towards the successful work of the charity (and will continue to do so) but we now find ourselves seeking your help with the trading company. The Rainbow Turtle business runs a tight ship – overheads are reduced to a minimum. If we can get a financial boost at the same time as increasing sales then we believe we will have a viable company again.

Martin Rhodes, director of the Scottish Fair Trade Forum says *'Independent Fair Trade retailers like Rainbow Turtle are important to Fair Trade retailing in that they offer on the High Street a much wider range of Fair Trade goods than are available in mainstream shops. Also retailers like Rainbow Turtle have traditionally been a hub for further Fair Trade activity raising awareness of Fair Trade in the wider community. Having a dedicated Fair Trade presence on the High Street such as Rainbow Turtle in as wide a range of communities as possible is part of the strength of Scotland's commitment to supporting and developing Fair Trade as part of Scotland's status as a Fair Trade Nation.'*

Can you help us by donating, fund raising or helping to boost sales? Many small contributions will soon add up. Some suggestions are on the following sheet.

We would also be very grateful if you could complete our *very short* survey so that we can find out which services are most important to you and the region.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QBVLFHT>

Can you help in any of the following ways?

We recognise that many people have already been very generous to the charity and we hope that if lots of people do a little bit for our trading company, the total will soon add up!

Donate

- A one off donation – <https://www.gofundme.com/rainbowturtle>
- Set up a monthly standing order to the trading company (download the form [here](#) or contact office).
If 400 people gave just £5 a month for 1 year we would have reached our target!

Fund Raise

- Pledge to organise a fund raising event for us eg:
 - Coffee morning
 - Ceilidh
 - Quiz night
 - Special collection

Contact us to let us know what you are doing and to request a fundraising pack.

Boost Sales

More sales will help us pay the loan ourselves and also make sure that the business is sustainable beyond the fund raising time. Can you:

- Hold an extra [sale or return](#) stall at your school or church?
- Shop with us more often and encourage friends and family to [visit the shop](#)
- Consider using our on local delivery service for your place of work, school, church (download information [here](#))
- Put posters up in your place of work or community halls to encourage people to shop with us (download the poster [here](#))
- Share our pages on social media  Find us on Facebook  Follow us on Twitter

If you are able to help in any way then please contact the office and/or attend our **AGM at 7 pm on 27 October** at the Paisley Methodist Church where you can share your ideas and offers of assistance.

We also enclose a link to a *very short* [survey](#) to capture ideas and we would *really* appreciate your feedback.