

## **BISHOPSTON TRADING COMPANY**

### **Wholesale uniform supplier offers companies the chance to kit out their staff ethically**

Businesses are being given the opportunity to wear their ethical credentials on their sleeves – literally.

The wholesale catering uniforms range from Bishopston Trading gives companies the chance to kit out their staff in a range of fair trade uniforms, which have been ethically produced using organic cotton.

The offering comes at a time of growing interest in ensuring that producers in developing countries are properly rewarded.

Bishopston Trading recently celebrated 21 years of trading links with the village of KV Kuppam in southern India where it provides employment for more than 500 people.

In addition to the standard wholesale range, Bishopston Trading can also produce tailor-made uniforms for customers in a variety of colours and including company names and logos.

The current range of uniforms includes bibbed aprons, chef's jackets, chef's trousers, long aprons and jackets, waiting jackets and short aprons.

Fabrics used in the catering collection are calico and a denim which comes in four weights. Both fabrics are woven on small powerlooms from organic cotton (certified by SKAL) which is certified as Fairtrade by the Fairtrade Foundation and grown from non-GM seed.

Other products in the company's wholesale range include organic cotton fabric sold by the meter, organic tea towels, recycled newspaper bags and cotton shopping bags which again can be printed with a company's name and logo.

Director Carolyn Whitwell says: "We started off with one shop in Bristol and four tailors in India. Now the company - which is a workers co-operative - employs 37 people in this country and more than 500 tailors, cutters, craft workers and weavers in KV Kuppam, which is a village in Tamil Nadu.

"Tailors in KV Kuppam can afford to feed and clothe their families, repair their homes, send their children to school and save for the future. At the end of the working day, they walk home to their families which is the sort of life we take for granted but is not necessarily the case in India where people often have to travel great distances to find work.

"The money they earn is spent locally which, in turn, creates more opportunities for more people.

"In addition to their wages, the staff have access to a provident fund for hard times, healthcare, sickness benefit and retirement."

The ethos behind Bishopston Trading is that it will support marginalised producers in developing countries throughout the whole supply chain.

Carolyn adds: "We have made a long-term commitment to high ethical standards throughout the whole growing, harvesting, processing, manufacturing and retailing process."

Reader contact: Bishopston Trading Company: Tel: 0117 924 5598

Fax: 0117 373 0254

Email: [mail@bishopstontrading.co.uk](mailto:mail@bishopstontrading.co.uk)

Website: [www.bishopstontrading.co.uk](http://www.bishopstontrading.co.uk)

### **Captions:**

Pic 1: A simple bibbed apron from the wholesale range, approx £6.30  
<http://www.bishopstontrading.co.uk/wholesalecatering.php>

Pic 2 An example of a front-of-house catering uniform, long apron approx £5.80 and jacket, approx £10.83  
<http://www.bishopstontrading.co.uk/wholesalecatering.php>

**Notes to editors:** Media enquiries: For more information and high res photographs contact Helen Riley, Headline Media, on 0208 348 3103 / 07931 300 425 or email [helenriley@headlinemedia.co.uk](mailto:helenriley@headlinemedia.co.uk)

**Background Notes:** Bishopston Trading Company has five retail shops in the West of England (Bristol, Bradford on Avon, Glastonbury, Stroud and Totnes) plus stockists throughout the UK and Europe and a mail order catalogue.

All profits from the company are used to benefit the people of KV Kuppam through the company's registered charity, the South India Rural Development Trust. This Trust has funded an architect-designed factory in the village offering excellent working conditions for the staff.

There is a long tradition of hand-weaving in the village of KV Kuppam, in Tamil Nadu, southern India. The Bishopston Trading Company currently provides employment for more than 200 tailors, cutters and craft workers and 300 weavers. Many of the tailors and hand-finishers are women who can take advantage of the on-site crèche at the factory. Employees are offered secure employment and can remain close to their families rather than seek work elsewhere.

The Bishopston Trading Company is a member of IFAT (The International Fair Trade Association) and BAFTS (British Association for Fair Trade Shops) and licensees of the Fairtrade Foundation.