

**Minutes of a Fair Trade Steering Group Meeting held on 26th February 2026 at 7.30pm
at St John's Methodist Church**

Present: Cllr Nigel Bennett, Revd Andy Jowitt, Sarah Leedham, Simon Willis, Christine Willis, Alison Peace, Elizabeth Lee, Gill Phillips, Revd Ruth Ridge

- 1. Apologies:** Mary Thompson, Michelle Mandry, and Malcolm Snow
- 2. Welcomes:** We began the meeting by introducing ourselves.
- 3. Notes of the last meeting:** Agreed as correct.
- 4. Matters Arising**

a. Local Council support

Nigel reported that a resolution had been passed to say that Fairtrade products should be used. However at the moment they were short of staff and it may not always be possible to do this. A new Finance Officer was to start work in March. Nigel would remind him that there is a commitment to use FT products for Council meetings etc. He thought the Council would know where to source these products.

b. List of local FT suppliers

It was noted that Tesco's website was unreliable in its identification of FT products. Elizabeth pointed out that some items advertised as FT are not available in the shop as only sold online. Chris suggested that Premcrest – a third ethical partner of Traidcraft was more geared towards wholesale than retail selling. Elizabeth agreed to update the list that she had originally prepared. It was noted that because the situation kept changing it would need to be kept updated fairly regularly and should be reviewed before any large FT event. Sarah suggested a focus before Easter might be chocolate and she agreed to research Sainsbury's products. Anyone noting any change in provision of FT products by any local shop was asked to contact Elizabeth on stjohnsmethodistchurch@outlook.com.

c. Schools Resources

It was noted that resources were available from www.suffolkfairtrade.org.uk/schools/. These were more for higher key stages. Resources more suitable for primary schools could be found at www.fairtrade.net/uk-en/get-involved/resources/resource-library/schools-resources.html

d. Feedback from local organisations

Andy said that Ali Burke [St Peter's – Sudbury Arts Centre] said that they do try to use FT products or if not possible, locally produced products. He also said that Secret Garden had replied to say that they use FT products wherever possible, or locally produced products. They also used coffee produced by the Coffee Rainforest Alliance. Nigel pointed out that the Rainforest Alliance had different accountability in that it focussed more on the environment than fair wage for workers. It was suggested that perhaps, rather than expecting or asking people to change from a brand with which they happy, they could be encouraged

to use FT sugar. Ruth would contact Kingfisher Leisure Centre and arrange for Air Cadets to be reminded. Nigel said he would follow up Sudbury Rugby Club

e. New Committee Members

Ruth asked that everyone should encourage others to come and join the Committee

5. Sudbury on Show

Sudbury on Show would be on Saturday March 28th from 10.00 – 3.00 pm. A table had been booked in St Peter's [Sudbury Arts Centre]. The following points were made:

- a. The best way to attract people was to be giving out "freebies". Ruth would purchase small chocolate bars, tea bags and FT mints. She confirmed that the organisers were happy for us to do this
- b. Andy would update the leaflet and arrange for a supply to be available
- c. Copies of the list of places where one could purchase FT items would be available [Elizabeth to copy]
- d. There could be colouring sheets for children and a fun quiz
- e. It was important to have people available to talk and to explain why it was important to support FT
- f. It was also important to emphasise that the aim of the group was to renew Sudbury's status as a FT town

Sarah suggested that for the table display, local firms might be asked to donate 3 FT items. This would also provide publicity for them. Sarah would approach Sainsburys, Andy would speak to the Co-op and Elizabeth would speak to Waitrose. Ruth would ask Mary Thompson or Ann Lycett to speak to Oxfam and Beki Gore to ask Tesco's. Ruth needs to know by Monday 23rd what has been donated so that any gaps can be filled.

Helpers would be needed between 3.00 and 5.00 on Friday 27th to set up. It was agreed that all items would be collected by Ruth who would be available at St John's on the evening of Thursday 26th. Sarah would collect everything from Ruth on the Thursday evening and take it to St Peter's on the Friday afternoon where Alison would help set up. Ruth to provide tablecloth; St John's to provide wicker baskets for freebies and some bunting. Chris will lend one medium and one large FT T-shirt.

Help will also be needed throughout Saturday. Offers were made as follows;

10.00 – 11.00	Ruth
11.00 – 12.00	Nigel
12.00 – 1.30	Alison
1.30 – 3.00	Mary and Elizabeth

There could be additional support available on the day.

It was thought there would be sufficient help to clear up.

6. Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade fortnight runs from September 21st to 4th October. Possible activities could be:

- a. A market stall on Saturday September 26th. This would offer similar information and freebies as planned for Sudbury on Show. Ruth would contact Rachel Price to see if a stall could be booked. She would also enquire about the availability of the Town Council gazebo. It was possible that one of the wardens might help to put it up
- b. It was hoped that the mayor would be prepared to host a “Meet the Mayor” style coffee morning at the Town Hall at which FT refreshments would be served. This would be good publicity for all. The new Mayor would be appointed in May. His secretary should be approached as soon as possible after his appointment to see he would be prepared to support this suggestion and to hold the event, if at all possible, on September 26th to maximise impact.

7. Any Other Business

- a. It was clear more people were needed on the Committee
- b. Elizabeth asked if there was a time frame in respect of the application to renew the town’s fair trade status. Ruth suggested it would be good if the application could be put forward after Fairtrade Fortnight. We would need to be collecting evidence of the work undertaken
- c. St John’s would be holding a Big Brew morning on Saturday February 28th in aid of Transform Trade from 10.30 – 12.30. Everyone was welcome
- d. All churches needed to be reminded to check, and where appropriate, renew their FT status. It was noted that Glemsford St Mary’s have done this.

8. Date of next meeting: Thursday 21st May 2026 at 7.30pm at St John’s Methodist Church, York Road.