



CELTIC & CO

SUSTAINABILITY  
REPORT 2023

NATURAL SUSTAINABLE STYLE



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## ABOUT CELTIC & CO.

A sense of environmental and social responsibility has been woven into the DNA of Celtic & Co. since we began crafting sheepskin products over 30 years ago. Inspiring everything from manufacturing to our relationship with our employees, our slow and considered approach has driven our enduring commitment to pioneering and improving at every opportunity.

At its core, our mission is striving for a better fashion future. We have been front runners of the slow fashion movement since 1990, crafting products which are designed to last a lifetime.

We aim to encourage consumers to reduce mass consumption and waste through buying quality over quantity, and to repair items rather than replace.

## A MESSAGE FROM ZOE BRAY, OUR MANAGING DIRECTOR

Welcome to our Celtic & Co. 2023 Sustainability Report. As a business with sustainability at its heart, our team continues to work hard to ensure our operations make as little impact on the planet as possible.

With the climate crisis at the forefront of our minds, we're committed to making improvements both within our business, and in the wider community. Thank you to our Sustainability Working Group for leading the way on our new initiatives – including the submission of our B Corp application.



## OUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

At Celtic & Co. our purpose is focused on creating enduring, contemporary pieces using only the finest natural fibres.

Passionate supporters of British manufacturing, many of our products are made within Great Britain. This year we launched a successful end-to-end British Wool range. Championing British from field to factory, this project has also gained industry recognition for a reduced carbon footprint.

One of our biggest aims is to reduce the amount of fashion going to landfill. We have created a resale platform and extended our repair and resole services to support long life of not just our handcrafted sheepskin boots, but also some of our clothing garments. Read on to find out more about how we are also working with our suppliers to use their waste and turn it into new, exciting products.

## HOW WE MANAGE SUSTAINABILITY

We have a sustainability working group which has a representative from every department around the business who can provide updates on how their

teams are delivering on their targets, and come together to help decide the important next steps we should take to achieve our sustainability goals.

OUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY IS BROKEN DOWN INTO THREE KEY PILLARS:



PRODUCT

ENVIRONMENT



COMMUNITY

OUR TOP THREE SUSTAINABILITY GOALS FOR 2024:

1. To elevate our repair, resale and recycling services as a 'one stop hub' on our website to centralise all customer options.
2. To reduce factory waste to landfill/incineration by 80%.
3. To complete phase one of a renewable energy installation project (fully costed feasibility and scoping proposal).



*“We’re aiming to grow our range of investment pieces through the research and introduction of new environmentally-friendly fibres and continued ethical manufacturing, providing more options with our signature Celtic identity for our customers to add more versatility into their wardrobes.”*

**Katy Burnett**

Head of Product & Buying.



## PRODUCT

We’re proud champions of British manufacturing and we know traceability is important to our customers, which is why we have embarked on a significant project to trace all our products back to the origin of their raw material in a bid to be as transparent as possible. We have made great progress on this for our core products, and will be a high priority for new products that are introduced to our range.

We review our supplier’s performance through certifications such as GRS (Global Recycled Standard) and GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) to ensure the finest quality, ethically made

materials. We’ve developed close relationships with our production partners to promote a sustainable model for creating an ethical, transparent and environmentally-friendly production process. We support social and ethical approaches, protecting people along the production chain with emphasis on fair wages, women empowerment, and child protection education and training.

Through both the traceability project and continued review of suppliers, we will be able to identify areas where improvement can be made to our production and supply chain.

## WE BELIEVE IN CIRCULAR FASHION

Hand-in hand with our commitment to designing for longevity is our use of biodegradable and recyclable materials. The pieces we design are thoughtfully crafted from yarns and fibres that are kind to people and the planet - they don't pollute our environment by shedding microfibres and releasing plastic into our water.

Never synthetic, our knitwear is fully compostable. The fibres will biodegrade, break down and give nutrients back to the soil. In turn, they feed the plants and animals and allow the cycle to begin again. We believe in the value of giving back to the environment with everything we create.

We work with only natural materials because of their sustainable, renewable, and sumptuous qualities. It also means we can help our farmers reduce waste. All of our sheepskins are a by-product of the food industry and would otherwise go to waste, incinerated at very high temperatures.

An important part of our commitment to designing products that last is repair and reuse. We create all of our products to the highest standards, but well-loved clothes can show signs of wear, and we believe in repairing rather than throwing away. Our unique repair and resole service helps reduce waste and extend the life of our sheepskin boots.

In 2023 we extended our repair capacity to include the ability to repair our wool and woven garments too in our Cornwall factory. We have also created a resale platform for pre-loved Celtic items to give them a new lease of life with someone new.

## RECYCLE

We have started working with some of our suppliers to turn their waste into new, exciting products. For example, we now buy Geelong waste from the supplier that creates some of our best selling jumpers, and our very own factory turns them into fingerless gloves.

## SAMPLE SALES

As a way of reducing our waste, we hold regular customer sample sales to ensure anything that hasn't been selected for our range doesn't end up in landfill. They are extremely popular with our customers, as it often means they receive something unique. Staff have early access to sample sales as well, which sometimes include items in need of repair that could be taken home and fixed by our handy workforce.





#### PRODUCT'S SUSTAINABILITY GOAL:

To reduce factory waste to landfill/  
incineration by 80%.

#### MANUFACTURING IN CORNWALL

Part of our local sourcing policy is to retain as much of the manufacturing part of the business within our own factory in Newquay, Cornwall. Our heritage and expertise is in crafting sheepskin, and we've been making our sheepskin slippers, boots, and accessories in Cornwall for over 30 years.

#### SUPPORTING CHANGE IN THE INDUSTRY

We are supporters of Make It British, which boosts the awareness of local manufacturing, and are also UK Fashion & Textile (UKFT) members, which provides and promotes innovation, research and development, sustainability, support and training within the fashion and textiles industry. On top of this we also support Campaign for Wool, an initiative



which promotes the benefits of wool worldwide, including getting involved in Wool Month activities every October. This year, through the introduction of our end-to-end British Wool range, we now have two products licensed by British Wool which also looks to promote the sustainable benefits of using this natural, ethically sourced material.

We have also supported events organised by Circular Textile Foundation and Arca Circular in order to build our knowledge and support collaborative research projects led by the University of Exeter Business School.



## ENVIRONMENT

### REDUCING WASTE

Our approach at every step of the production and supply process has sustainability at the heart of it. We don't follow high fashion – we create high quality items designed to last and endure changes in fashion. Our sheepskin outerwear are timeless pieces that are likely passed down generations. Ultimately, we believe that our business model is sector-leading in sustainability performance as it promotes and supports the one thing that can truly make fashion a more sustainable industry – encouraging consumers to keep clothing in use for longer.

Within our operations area of the business we set specific targets for areas such as waste reduction, recycling and re-use of resources. An example of this includes replacing all plastic packaging with cardboard alternatives, which was initiated from October 2018. Goods that arrive to us in plastic now have it removed at despatch and then reused within the business for production and returns processing. Since we started this initiative we have avoided the dispatch of 1,248,859 pieces of single use plastic.



*“We are committed to the best and most sustainable way of working, and are always looking to find innovative ways of making our processes even more efficient.”*

**Paul Skidmore,**  
Warehouse Manager.



#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GOAL:

To complete phase one of a renewable energy installation project.

The use of handheld devices in our warehouse, which was trialled for put away tasks to reduce paper usage in 2022, has been rolled out further to include replens, investigations and stocktaking. This makes a further paper reduction of 10,750 annually on top of the 70,000 we already saved, and has also increased the level of accuracy.

Waste collections also continue to reduce due to finding new end uses for our sheepskin waste. In fact, through the combination of having less waste to dispose of and also investment in a granulator to compact the waste we do create, collections have dropped 50% in a year at our factory, with only one collection per week instead of two.

#### MANUFACTURING DEVELOPMENTS

We're actively looking into the way that we deal with the waste material leftover from manufacturing our sheepskin boots and slippers. We are investigating different uses for recycled rubber, and how it can be broken down to become more manageable for the end-user. As well as this we are working on a project to strip the wool away from the skins so that offcuts of material can be made into other products.

Factory workers have also diversified their skills to include making recycled wool gloves, as well as extending our repairs service to clothing garments.





## COMMUNITY

### CHARITY

During 2023 we helped to raise over £50,000 for a selection of worthwhile charities across the UK. Our team are very enthusiastic at raising money through bake sales, Christmas jumper day, and donations. We also support smaller local organisations such as school raffles and organisations that protect the environment around our coastline.

We are part of the Surfers Against Sewage Ocean Network, supporting the charity's ongoing work to look after our oceans. Being based in Cornwall, we feel this is very important to support as our seas are a very important part of our eco-system, as well as impacting the lifestyles of our team.

### VOLUNTEERING

In May 2023 we launched our new volunteering policy. It's often said that time is the most precious commodity of all. So, we want to give all our people the opportunity to spend one workday each year volunteering for an organisation or charity of their choice.

### CAR SHARING

Where possible, we encourage staff members to car share with other colleagues living nearby or on their journey to work. There is a WhatsApp group set up for employees who are interested in taking part in car sharing to facilitate communication and opportunities. This not only cuts carbon emissions through less cars on the road, but also has financial benefits for our staff.





### COMMUNITY GOAL:

To elevate our repair, resale and recycling services as a 'one stop hub' on our website to centralise all customer options.

### AWARDS

Over the years we have won several awards in many different categories, from international trade to manufacturing and sustainability.

Some of our proudest moments as a business has been winning our Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade – the highest official award for British businesses, in both 2018 and 2020. These became the King's Awards for Enterprise, which we won in the international trade category again in 2023. We were also recognised for our international trade efforts at the Cornwall Business Awards in 2017.

We like to recognise our staff in awards where we can too. In 2023 our customer service and sales assistant manager Rhyannan was featured in Drapers 30 under 30, which celebrates the rising stars of the fashion retail.

We were awarded a prestigious Drapers Footwear Award in 2019 – being named International Footwear Business of the Year recognising the quality of our Cornish manufactured sheepskin boots and slippers.

We've also been recognised in the South West by multiple family business awards, as well as being recognised for our outstanding customer services. And finally for our sustainability efforts, we were highly commended for the Great British Brands Sustainability Awards in 2021, putting us alongside some other impressive brands such as Rolls-Royce and Vivienne Westwood.

