

Sudbury Silk Mills Responsibility Report 2023/24



S U D B U R Y S I L K M I L L S

Creative, contemporary craftsmanship is the foundation for manufacturing luxury fabrics here at our mill in Sudbury, Suffolk in England. Our people are firmly at the heart of everything we do, and our culture is one of openness, integrity and accountability.

Our uniquely skilled team amasses over 1500 years of combined experience and knowledge.

1
unique product
weaving
per hour

10
fibre
types

22
varieties
of raw
silk

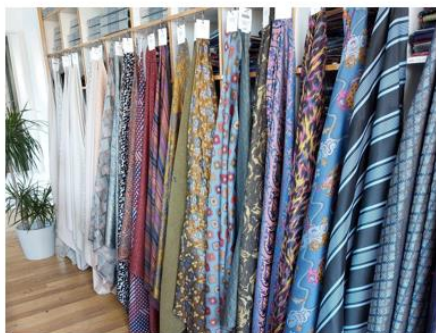
25
new bespoke
designs created
every week

2000
SKUs of
stocked
yarn

20,000
different
products
every year

Stephen
WALTERS

Woven in England since 1720



Luxury fashion &
accessories



HUMPHRIES
WEAVING



Recreation and special
projects for interiors

David
WALTERS

Woven in England since 1720



Luxury wholesale furnishing
collections

Introduction

Sudbury Silk Mills is a family owned and operated textile weaving mill based in the heart of Suffolk. It combines a 300-year heritage of artisan skills with investment in progressive and innovative technology, to custom weave contemporary and historic luxury fabrics. Three creative companies weave their fabrics in the mill, each with their own unique offering. While customer activity and fabric development are managed independently by each specialist business team, non-commercial activities such as sustainability and social responsibility are managed more cooperatively.

Recognising the importance of sustainable textile production and the scale of the commitment involved, Sudbury Silk Mills has adopted a structured and systematic approach to address the challenges in this area. A steering group provides overall strategic direction to a network of project teams or working groups. To improve our environmental management and environmental performance, to enhance our responsibility.

Membership to these groups is open to all members of staff throughout the business, based solely on merit. Drawing together colleagues with the passion, skills, and capability from all areas. Benefitting from this wide depth of knowledge and experience, to deliver significant improvements in the sustainability of the company. Sustainability that protects our natural environment, human and ecological health, while driving innovation and delivering a positive benefit to our way of life.



We recognise the value a certification or accreditation such as OEKO-TEX® STeP can add and there is a myriad of competing, branded and often subscription-based choices. We actively encourage a more holistic approach, to make progress as an industry in line with global commitments.

As such we have also made a commitment to becoming a Future Fit Business. This benchmark provides a self-regulated framework in which to operate, navigated through methodology guides, break even goals and positive pursuits. The framework is open source and guides strategic management and decision making at every level of the business. The framework aligns with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG's) which all countries have committed to reaching by 2030.

Julius Walters,

Managing Director

<https://futurefitbusiness.org/> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Improvement Strategy and Governance

Our continuous improvement approach is imbedded in the way we work, and our people recognise the part they play in this every day.

Our level organisational structure enables a distributed, rather than hierarchical leadership. The team are aligned to a clear improvement strategy with a focus on quality, productivity, responsibility and people. Steering and working groups, comprised of volunteer members from across the business, deliver substantial improvements company-wide. Moreover, every individual has direct control, independence, and autonomy over their own departmental improvements in relation to these four aspects.

The leadership team set the long-term strategic direction and near-term priorities of the business. They support these ambitions through targeted departmental tactical plans and coaching of their teams.

They ensure that resources are made available for improvement work, alongside the routine operation of the business. They carry out audits of the performance and functionality of the business strategy delivery systems and processes.

Responsibility Goals and Targets

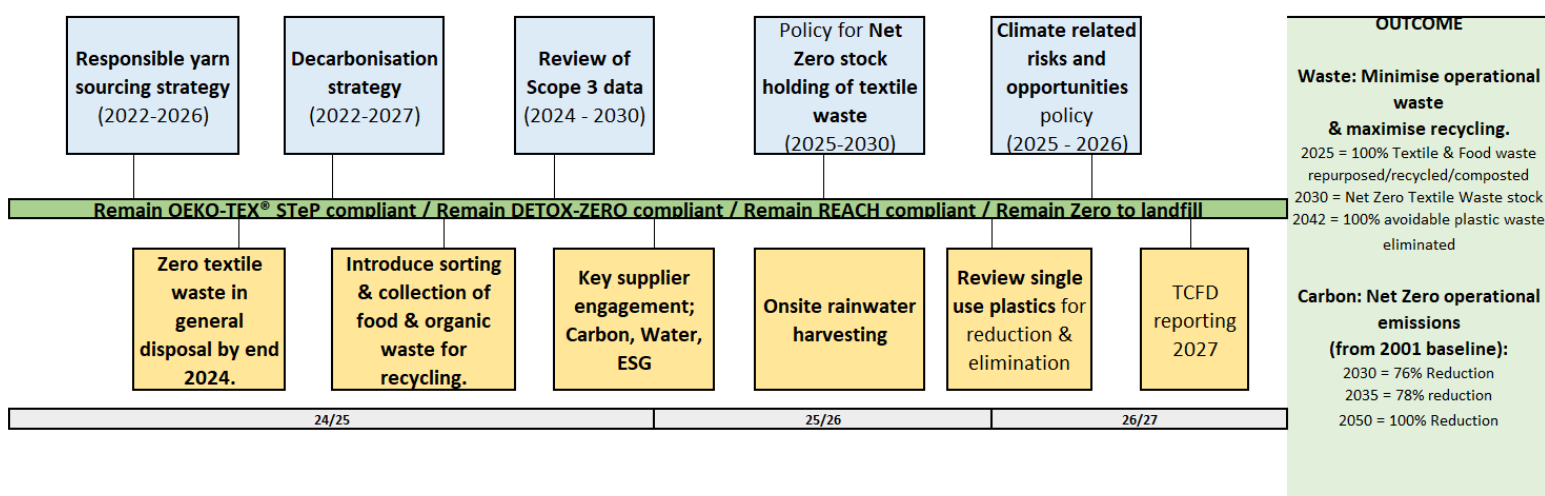
Waste: We seek to eliminate operational waste completely and ensure that all by-products are repurposed. Organic waste may be composted and returned to the soil, and materials that can be reused must be reclaimed.

Carbon: We seek to emit net zero GHGs from our own operational activities, including energy we consume.

Supply Chain: Natural Resources (such as yarns) are managed to safeguard communities, animals & ecosystems and products do not harm the natural environment.

Suppliers must reduce their carbon footprint as fast as possible, aligning or exceeding national targets, legislation, or our SSM Roadmaps.

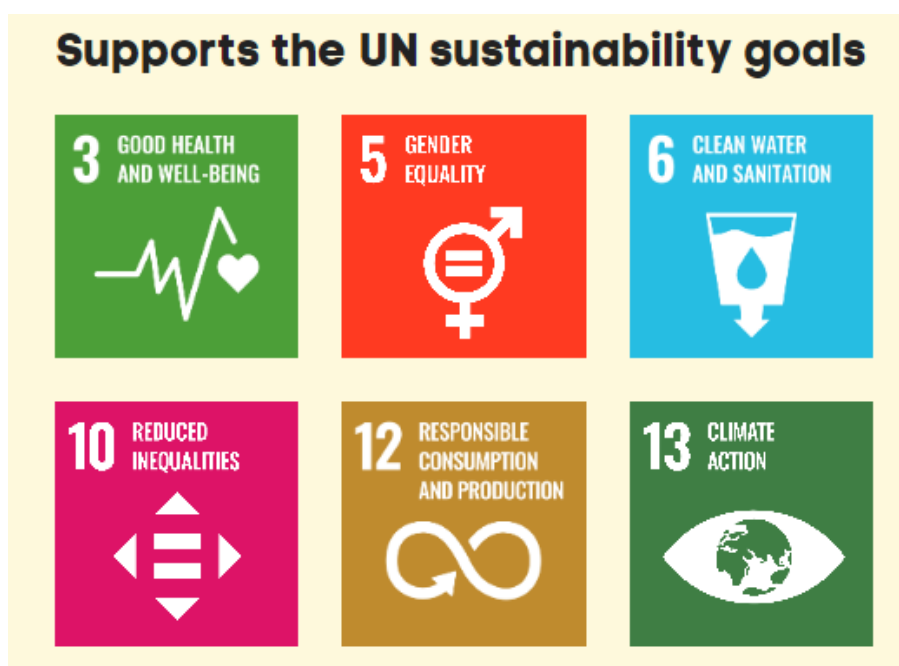
Environmental Social Governance: Publicly report in line with task force on climate related financial disclosures for SME's.



We provide qualitative and quantitative data in line with TCFD recommendations, aiming to include this reporting within our financial statement by 2027. Backed by independent third-party reviews, including an energy audit and decarbonisation plan (2022) and OEKO-TEX[®] STeP audit and certification (2023).

We follow GHG protocols, measuring our scope 1+2 carbon footprint via the Carbon Trust for SMEs. Our scope 3 carbon footprint was independently assessed and followed the UK Gov conversion factors 2022.

Through OEKO-TEX[®] STeP we are actively contributing to UN SDG's, Good health & wellbeing, Gender Equality, Clean Water & Sanitation, Reduced Inequalities, Responsible consumption and production and Climate Action



OEKO-TEX® STeP

We set demanding goals regarding environmental protection, social responsibility and our commitment in the field of sustainable production conditions.

We are proud to be the first UK Textile Manufacturer to be awarded OEKO-TEX® STeP certification. Achieving the highest level 3, which demonstrates ideal implementation of best practice.



OEKO-TEX® STeP is an independent certification system that allows us to communicate our environmental measures externally in a credible and transparent way. STeP stands for Sustainable Textile & Leather Production and certifies the manufacturing process for environmentally friendly and socially responsible production facilities.

OEKO-TEX® STeP



OEKO-TEX® Sustainable Textile & Leather Production (STeP) standard aims to promote environmentally friendly production processes throughout the textile and leather supply chain. The standard applies to facilities at all processing stages of textiles and leather production. STeP differs from other standards because it includes comprehensive analysis of overall production conditions (environment, safety, social and efficiency), rather than individual or isolated aspects.



The requirements and criteria for STeP certification are specially adapted to the significant challenges of the textile, leather, and clothing industry.

1. Chemical management
2. Environmental performance
3. Environmental management
4. Social responsibility
5. Quality management
6. Health protection and safety at work



Alongside our OEKO-TEX® STeP certification we also attained OEKO-TEX® DETOX TO ZERO.

OEKO-TEX® DETOX TO ZERO



OEKO-TEX® DETOX TO ZERO strives to eliminate hazardous chemicals from textile and leather production. It is not a certification, but a management system determining and analysing Manufacturing Restricted Substances List compliance of chemicals used in textile and leather production, reporting the conformity status, and outlining improvements. DETOX TO ZERO helps manufacturers and purchasers, as well as brands and retailers, monitor and fulfil the Greenpeace Detox Campaign objectives. The system targets wet facilities in the textile and leather industry supply chains.

OEKO-TEX® STeP Certification of production facilities

STeP provides a more comprehensive analysis and evaluation of sustainable production conditions. Many certification systems only consider certain individual aspects of sustainability.

The certification demonstrates we are actively working to minimise our risks, reduce resource consumption and environmental impact, and create a safe attractive workplace for our members of staff. Furthermore, the certificate allows us to communicate our UN SDG aligned improvements in a clear and transparent way.

How do you feel OEKO-TEX® STeP has made us more sustainable as a business?

More and more we hear about how the world is changing, global weather events, pollution in the oceans, sewage overflows into rivers and loss of habitat. What we do as individuals and collectively can and will make a massive difference to what happens to our world. Knowing that our business and the goods we manufacture are OEKO-TEX-certified provides our customers and, in turn, their own customers reassurance that using us as a supplier means that they are also contributing to that collective change, and we are embracing this ethos.



How has OEKO-TEX® STeP changed your day-to-day role?

In my own role I'm continuing to improve on the ways we record what we do and how we do them so we can maintain the high levels expected with OEKO-TEX certification.

How did you feel when we achieved the accreditation?

So proud to be a part of the team achievement; with the many collaborations and all the additional hours it's taken to get to the audit, I was overjoyed that all the hard work was rewarded.

How do you feel OEKO-TEX® STeP has made us more sustainable as a business?

We can source more ethical products. We work with a lot of companies already that have the OEKO-TEX® stamp on their things, a lot of our suppliers. If we can focus on those companies, then we know that they're also doing the right thing, and that will make us more sustainable in that sense.

How did you feel when we achieved the accreditation?

Oh, I'm very proud. I think that's a very good thing, it's a symbol that says we're working properly, with the good ethics and sustainability.



How has OEKO-TEX® STeP changed your day-to-day role?

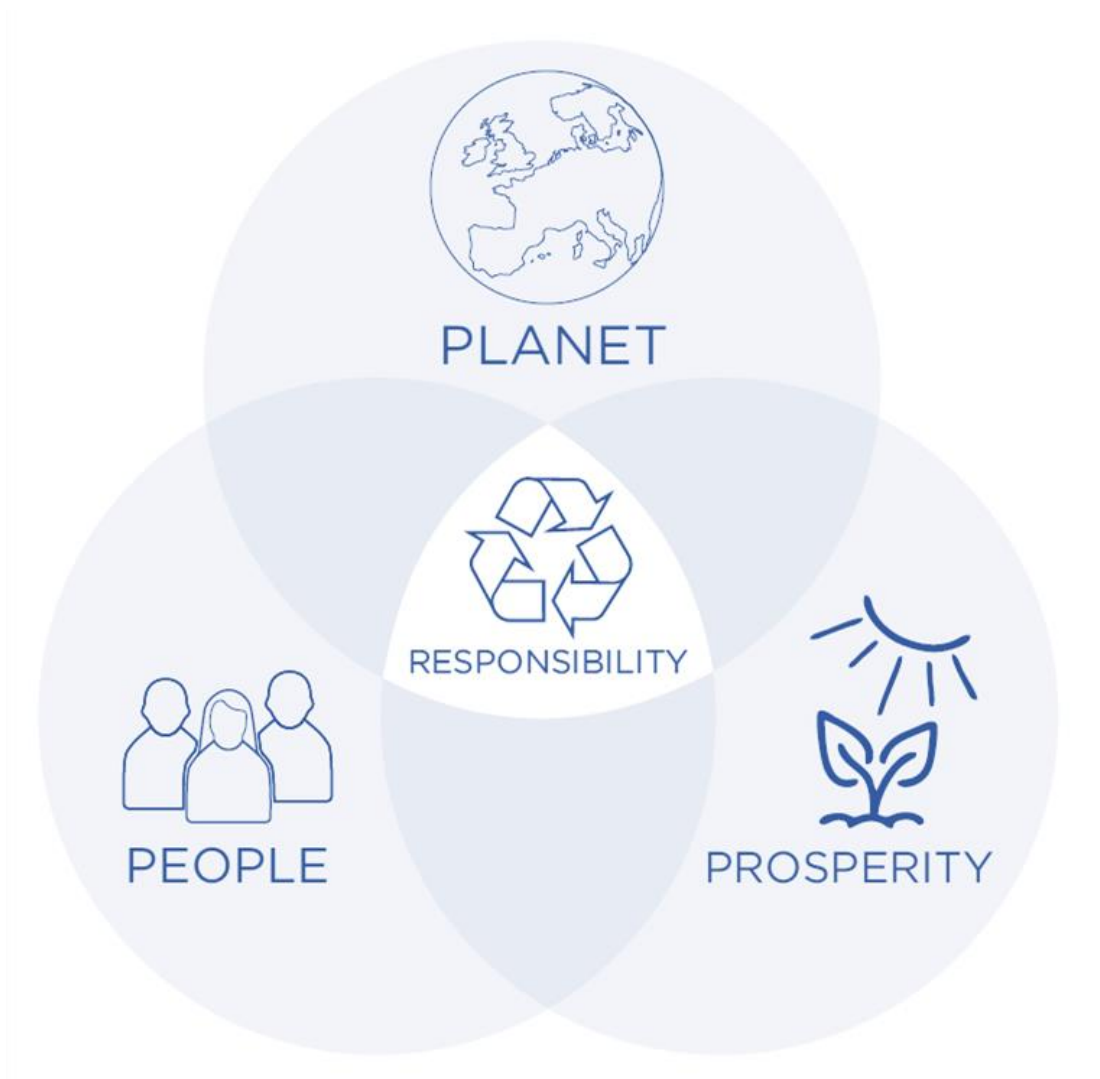
It's made me aware that just because we've had a chemical product for a long time again doesn't necessarily make it environmentally-friendly to use. So, when we're coming to do COSHH assessments we're looking closely at whether they are environmentally-friendly or not really; if they're not then we look for alternatives.

How did you feel when we achieved the accreditation?

Firstly, a sense of relief that we've achieved the accreditation. Pride for that achievement, Sudbury Silk Mills being able to give customers that fabric to use from Sudbury, which has been manufactured to a very environmental standard. A drive to continue to improve and be better at what we do. Achieving also communicates, I feel, our excellence to our customers and the rest of the world, who might be potential customers, and hopefully it will protect our business because we've got the accreditation.

People, Planet, Prosperity

Our purpose is to grow and develop a sustainable business by behaving with integrity towards our people, our customers, our suppliers, and our wider community – while retaining employment in Sudbury.



PEOPLE





PEOPLE

Sudbury Silk Mills' success relies on a positively engaged and healthy team. Our culture and values guide our behaviour, decision making and priorities. Identified by our whole team, sharing their views about the values that were demonstrated within the business. Everyone has a voice and autonomy to improve their area and influence the development of the wider company.

Our culture, people, and social responsibility

Our purpose is to grow a sustainable business and retain employment here in Sudbury. This is why we exist. It is our transformative purpose, and acts as our north star to ensure we focus on doing those things that make it happen and, conversely, not doing those things that work against it. Our culture is one of openness, integrity, and accountability. We encourage members of staff to act fairly in their dealings with colleagues, business partners, suppliers, and the local community.

We believe in a workplace that is free from all types of discrimination, including those based on gender, race and religion. We are proud to have a staff from diverse backgrounds and interests.

We recognise that our people determine our success, and we continue to invest in, and encourage their further development. This not only includes utilising important external training and development programmes, but also providing clear leadership and decisive action. As a board we work closely with our teams to ensure that we have the right capabilities and best talent to match our growth ambition.



Central to our approach to retain people is to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to develop within their role and the wider business. The average length of service is 12 years in 2023, with 20% of our team having more than 25 years in the business. We celebrate these incredible milestones and loyalty with long service awards. Conversely, one third of our team have joined us within the last 5 years, bringing new ideas and skills into our growing business.

We encourage the development of mastery and autonomy within roles, through internal development programmes that lead to fulfilling careers. External training is available for formal leadership and management qualifications, marketing and social media, emergency response, first aid, wellbeing, and sustainability. We offer training overseas with our machinery suppliers, with coaching and networking opportunities for those in key roles.

Last year this amounted to 2200 hours of training, this includes 13 people who have successfully completed the Institute of Leadership & Management Level 2 qualification.

Phil Harris (Yarn Stores Team Leader)

“Everyone knows who you are”

I like the fact that we work together to achieve great things, and each individual is part of the process. Good news is happily shared and rewarded. Being told you’ve done a good job is great and this extends throughout the company. After recently completing a college course, I was congratulated by the directors and the managers as well as my peers, which is nice.



Communication

There are numerous ways in which everyone has an opportunity to have their say.

Everyone can represent themselves and their department across a wide range of platforms such as departmental improvements, companywide surveys, steering and working groups. The staff committee was specifically set up to capture any issues not already covered by the other areas.

Improvement activities in all departments enable people to put forward and implement their ideas on how to improve working practices, including how to make the company a great place to work. Staff surveys are a great way to gather information, receive feedback and bring about positive changes company wide.

Everyone in the company contributed to the consultation that generated our values statement, that is central to our culture. Our values guide who we are, what we do and how we do it. Our people group facilitates our annual staff survey, weekly and monthly communication emails and engaging social events.

Our staff committee is comprised of nominated members who represent colleagues from all areas. They meet to review, progress and feedback on ideas collected from suggestion boxes and other channels.

Company Social Events

Social events bring people together, providing the opportunity to connect with colleagues on a personal level and celebrate key events. The events team consult widely to understand everyone's preferences and interests, to offer a range of events, trips, and occasions for the whole team to engage in. Most recently a hugely successful family open day, sporting events and evening social festivities.

The team also build links with local charities and our wider community, creating opportunities for our people to engage directly with community groups, schools and social enterprises.



Marie Seabrook (Weaver)

It is an open place to work, family orientated, and people get on well together. There are a variety of things organised by the events team like bowling, horse racing and Christmas parties; things that people enjoy for a good night out.



Michelle Beckinsale (Admin)

It's great that we celebrate success. We have a profit share scheme. Last time it was announced outside, and we all had a nice little glass of champagne. I think it's lovely because you feel appreciated here. You still feel like there's a personal feel to the company. You're not a number. You're a valued person.



Safety, Health & Wellbeing and Environment (SHE)

Safety, Health & Wellbeing and Environment is critical to all and a clear priority for us. We recognise the necessity of safeguarding the physical and mental health and safety of our own people while at work. We work hard to provide a safe and comfortable working environment for staff members, visitors, and the public. Our policy requires the business to manage their activities in a way that avoids causing unnecessary or unacceptable risks to health and safety.

Every month we hold a SHE committee meeting, which includes representatives from operations and administrative areas in addition to the management team, including the board of directors. The committee is chaired by the dedicated health and safety manager and environmental representative to ensure all issues are raised and appropriately actioned, with feedback and minutes posted on all bulletin boards. Health support is provided by a local occupational health provider, and we provide an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Regular training is carried out for first aid, fire marshals, environmental spillages, forklift truck operators, those working at height, and we have a large 'tool box talk' library for all teams to include in their regular team briefings.

Wellbeing

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a benefit designed to help people deal with personal or professional challenges that could be affecting their home or work life, their health or general wellbeing. This is in addition to the regular wellbeing training for all members of staff and managers.

The programme provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues. Proactive and preventative support to deliver the best possible outcome to life challenges, with immediate support available without delay, when someone needs it most.

Salaries and Benefits

Salaries and benefits are reviewed annually. Every role is bench-marked, using market data and an independent service provider. Every individual is encouraged to develop their skills and capability, setting, and reviewing these plans in personal development reviews and regular one-to-ones with their managers.

We regularly review our benefits offer, to ensure we are offering the most relevant and advantageous package to our people.



Human rights and ethics

Our human rights and labour conditions policy reflects the core requirements of the universal declaration of human rights, the UN global compact, the OECD guiding principles and the ILO declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work, including the conventions relating to forced labour, child labour, non- discrimination, freedom of association and right to collective bargaining.

We established the core structure to ensure that Sudbury Silk Mills comply with legislative and regulatory requirements while permitting them to tailor their approach to their needs. We do not tolerate practices that contravene international standards.

We embrace our responsibility for ensuring that human rights considerations are integral to the way in which existing operations and new opportunities are developed and managed.

Compliance with, and respect for, these fundamental principles is integrated throughout our organisation and the organisations we work with. Everyone working as part of Sudbury Silk Mills is responsible for having due regard for human rights. Managers and supervisors must provide leadership that promotes human rights as an equal priority to other business issues. All our people are responsible for ensuring that their own actions do not impair the human rights of others, and are encouraged to bring forward, in confidence, any concerns they may have about human rights.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) and The ETI basecode

From a people perspective, Ethical audit standards are based on the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO have 6 core conventions, which cover essential principles and rights at work, these conventions are crucial for promoting social justice and decent work.

As part of our ongoing commitment to ethical standards, we specifically align our practices with the ETI Base code. This code is based on the ILO convention and draws on specific commitments for employers. These standards of operating are assessed through external auditors.

For more information check out www.ethicaltrade.org

Human Rights and Ethics Policy

Human Rights

Sudbury Silk Mills supports the protection of international human rights within the sphere of our influence and will not be complicit in human rights abuses. We are committed to protecting the human rights of all our staff and those engaged in our supply chain.

We recognise that many human rights abuses are systemic in their host communities. We are therefore committed to working with other organisations that can help us implement this policy. Our position on human rights reflects the core requirements of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights such as freedom from torture, unjustified imprisonment, unfair trial, and other oppression. Other central tenets are freedom of expression, religion and political or other representation. We recognise that many human rights abuses are systemic in their host communities.

Ethics

Sudbury Silk Mills' culture is one of openness, integrity and accountability and we require our people to act fairly in their dealings with colleagues, customers, suppliers, and business partners.

We have a code of conduct that applies to everyone internally and our external business partners, which aims to ensure that we maintain consistently high ethical standards, while recognising that our business operates in markets and countries with cultural differences and practices.

Anti-Bribery and Corruption

Sudbury Silk Mills has a zero-tolerance policy towards bribery and corruption that extends to all business dealings and transactions in which we are involved. This includes a prohibition on making political donations, offering, or receiving inappropriate gifts or making undue payments to influence the outcome of business dealings.

Labour Conditions

Sudbury Silk Mills observes the ILO declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work which upholds basic values in four areas:

1. Forced labour

We will not tolerate forced labour, bonded labour or labour which involves physical or mental abuse, including actual or threatened physical punishment, verbal or sexual harassment, or domination or restraining of workers by force, authority or threats. Workers must not be required to lodge 'deposits or their identity papers with their employer, and they must be free to leave their employer after reasonable notice.

2. Child labour

Exploitation of child labour is unacceptable under any circumstances. No person under the minimum legal working age applicable to their country may be employed by Sudbury Silk Mills.

3. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining

Workers, without distinction, have the right to join or form trade unions of their own choosing and to bargain collectively. Sudbury Silk Mills adopts a non-discriminatory attitude towards the activities of trade unions and their organisational activities. Workers' representatives must not be discriminated against and must have access to carry out their representative functions in the workplace. Where the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is restricted under law, the supplier will facilitate and not hinder the development of parallel means for independent and free association and bargaining.

4. Discrimination

Sudbury Silk Mills does not discriminate in hiring, compensating, access to training, promotion, termination, or retirement based on race, caste, national origin, colour, religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation.

Accountability

We believe that everyone in our organisation is responsible for having due regard for human rights. In particular:

The board has overall responsibility for ensuring that human rights considerations are integral in the way in which existing operations and new opportunities are developed and managed.

Managers and supervisors must provide visible leadership that promotes human rights as an equal priority to other business issues. They also have a responsibility for identifying abuses that occur.

All our people are responsible for ensuring that their own actions do not impair the human rights of others. They are also encouraged to bring forward, in confidence, any concerns that they may have about human rights abuses through our whistle blowing procedure.



PLANET

Photograph; Sudbury Water Meadows by the Mill Hotel

Taken by Richard Heap, Quality Manager



PLANET

Environmental and Social Governance

We are committed to reducing our negative footprint and actively contributing to the restoration and regeneration of ecosystems and communities. We aim to create a positive and lasting influence on the environment and society, embodying a holistic approach that goes beyond sustainability to foster regenerative practices.

We are committed to the protection of the environment and reducing the impact of the business on the natural world. Our initiatives minimize the environmental impact of our business while maximising our social responsibility and striving for a regenerative impact.

We ensure environmental issues, including climate change, are considered in the operation of our business and the procurement of goods and services. We are proud to be a demand driven luxury manufacturer, weaving to order to meet customer demand, without producing unwanted stock.

These requirements are an integral part of every decision that we make. We believe in a responsible approach to product development, manufacturing, material supply and transportation – for example through reduced energy consumption, improved resource conservation and minimising our waste, carbon, and water footprints.

Our Responsibility

The responsibility steering group coordinates our sustainable development and environmental activity. The company has an appointed environmental management representative within a wider safety, health, and environment committee.

The environmental management team is specifically responsible for ensuring best practice throughout the company and that the company meets or exceeds all current and future European and national environmental legislative and regulatory requirements. It encourages and develops our employees, partners and stakeholders to conduct their activities in an environmentally responsible manner.

Details of our Environmental General Arrangements (EGA) and Safe Operating Instructions (SOI) can be found within the Environmental Management System (EMS), which outlines company procedures related to best environmental practice. The accompanying EMS manual acts as an overview, including our policy and commitment, general responsibilities of the company for the implementation of the policy.

The environmental performance team monitors, measures and takes action to reduce the carbon footprint of our activities and ensures our buildings and services can adapt to environmental change. The EPT monitors, manages and minimises our use of energy and water, and the amount of waste produced by us and partners to encourage greater reuse in recycling.

We ensure environmental, including climate change, criteria are considered in the procurement of goods and services. We commit to the 5R's; Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle and are a zero to landfill site. We consider environmental factors in decisions and activities including giving due consideration to environmental issues and energy performance in the design, refurbishment, and use of our buildings which includes exhibitions and activities. To ensure we meet our commitments, we undertake to periodically monitor and review our environmental performance and take corrective action where necessary. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Environmental Management and Performance

Our environmental management team monitor and improve our company procedures to ensure we are compliant with best practice.

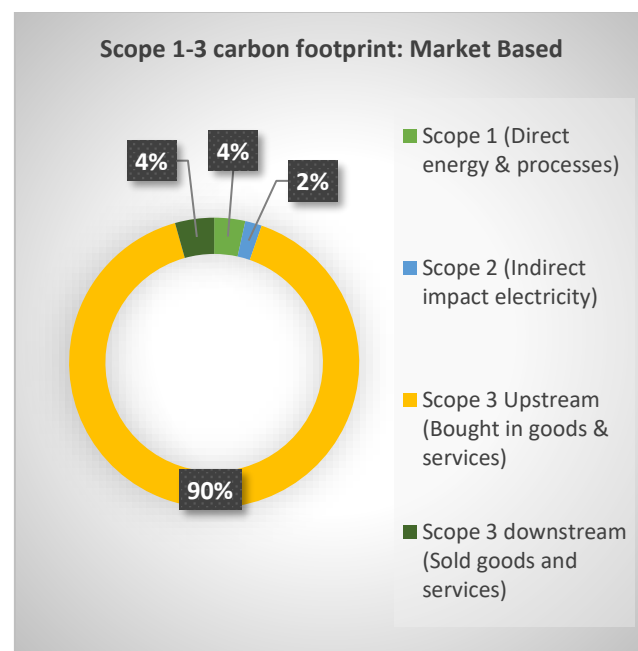
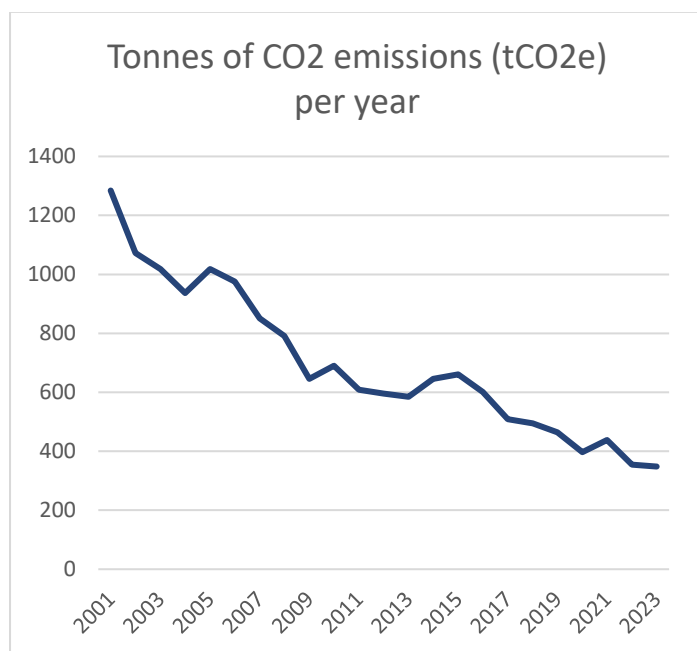
Sudbury Silk Mills has an environmental management system (EMS) certified by OEKO-TEX STeP®. The EMS includes objectives, targets, and programmes for the improvement of the organisation’s environmental performance. These targets are managed by the Environmental Performance Team who set objectives and coordinate working groups to ensure that potential improvements are planned and implemented to improve our overall environmental performance.

Carbon footprint

We measure and take action to reduce our Scope 1+2 carbon footprint which is reported in our annual responsibility brochure. This is achieved through small- and large-scale energy efficiency projects and process improvement. Through our electricity provider contract all our electricity is generated from renewable energy sources, backed by Guarantees of Origin.

Carbon Reporting

We reduced our Scope 1 and Scope 2 real terms emissions by a further 2% in 2023, bring our cumulative reduction (from our 2001 baseline) to -73%.



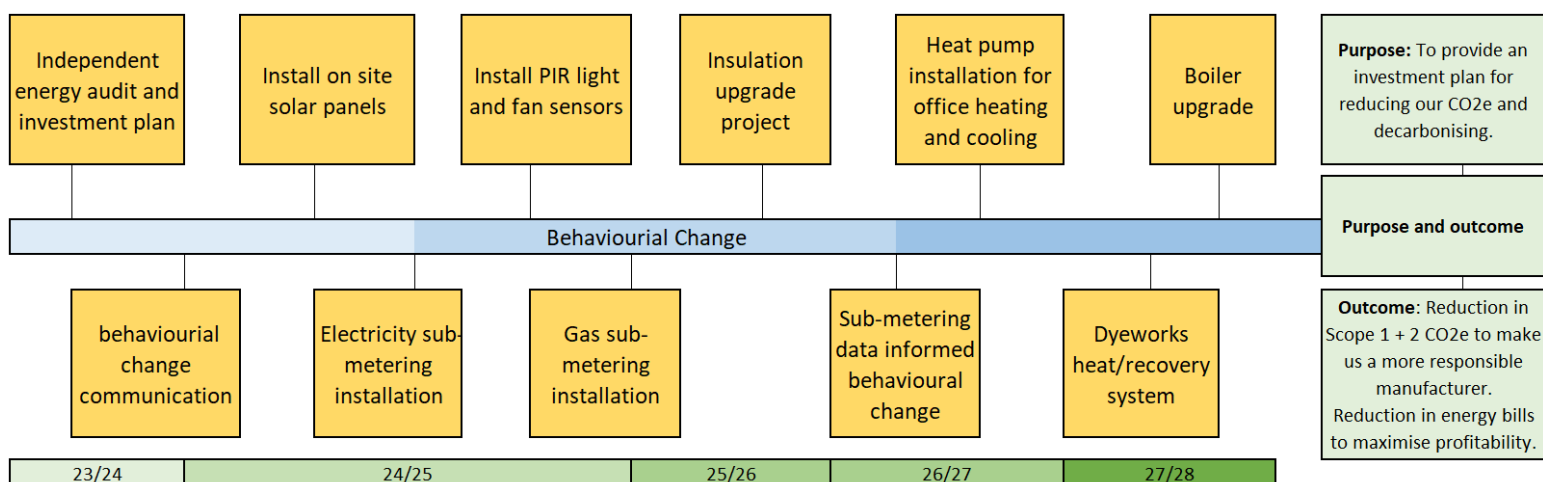
Energy Efficiency

In 2022 we reviewed our highest energy using processes to discover possible efficiencies and energy saving:

- Lighting upgraded with energy efficient LED lighting, including motion sensors where appropriate.
- Finishing machine optimisation, which has resulted in a reduction of run time by 64%, projecting a yearly saving estimate of -6,840kgCO₂ and -1.6% of total kgCO₂e.
- Looms have a priority list, so weavers have visibility of the work required per loom to manage switch on/off times more efficiently.

An independent third-party energy survey completed in December 2022 will inform further long-term reductions and investment plans, including self-generated energy and energy recovery.

In 2023 we undertook a scope 3 carbon assessment with an independent third party and in 2024 we introduced our decarbonisation strategy, with costed investment to 2026.



Sustainable Energy Sourcing

In 2023 we moved to a renewable electricity contract with Guarantees of Origin / REGO

For all the electricity we use, our supplier guarantees that the same amount of energy from renewable sources will be fed into the National Grid. This is backed by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) and Renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin (RGGOs) as proof.

Scope 3 impact

As a manufacturer we recognise that our biggest impact is within Scope 3 and in 2023 we undertook our first full Scope 3 assessment, using market-based data and an independent consultant. This data will now help us to inform our supplier engagement and collaborating on cross-industry supplier milestones.

Chemical Management

Our dyestuffs are fully REACH compliant and entirely Azo-free, with signed declarations from dyestuff and chemical suppliers in compliance with the ZDHC MRSL. Our chemical inventory and management systems determine that all our production chemical products meet the sustainability requirements of OEKO-TEX® STeP and ZDHC. For all chemicals hazard and risk assessments are carried out and documented and annual audits are carried out.

Our enhanced chemical management system replaces or reduces potentially hazardous chemicals used onsite, particularly in the dyeworks, and the handling, testing and storage of chemicals; checking, labelling and safe transport of incoming chemicals on site. Management, control, and effective handling of chemicals to avoid spillage, to water and to ground.

CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT

Summary Table

	Sub-category	Standard features	Cost	Validity	Resource Requirements	Traceability Requirements
bluesign®			£££			
OEKO-TEX® DETOX TO ZERO			££*			
OEKO-TEX® ECO PASSPORT			£££*			
OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100			££*			
OEKO-TEX® STeP			££££*			
OEKO-TEX® MADE IN GREEN			Free			
ZDHC Gateway			£			

* These are average values only and can vary drastically, based on information provided

Key of Icons

Category

Product

Production

Water/waste

Standard Features

Animal Welfare

Social Responsibility

Environmental Impact

Product Safety

Chemical Management

Cost

Free

Standard pricing

Expensive

More expensive

Validity

1 year

2 years

3 or more years

Resource Requirements

Manageable

Considerable

Significant

Traceability Requirements

Chain of Custody

Documents

Digital tool

Contractual obligation

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Water

Textile production can use very large volumes of water, which is a precious resource and much of the global production takes place in regions of high-water stress.

Water Stress

Sudbury Silk Mills does not directly withdraw from surface water body or groundwater source. Our third-party supplier is Anglian Water, the water originates from 425 boreholes, eight reservoirs and nine rivers.

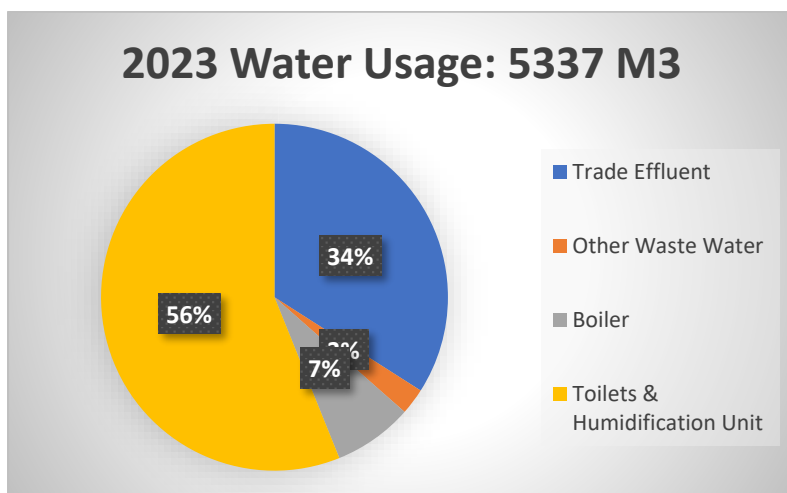
The Aqueduct global rankings give an overall water risk score on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 being low and 5 being extremely high. East Anglia's score is 1-2 'Low-medium'.

<https://www.wri.org/aqueduct/tools>

Looking to the future the Anglian Water region is vulnerable to the potential impacts of climate change, temperature rise, reduction in summer rainfall, lower available water resources, increased flood risk and rising sea levels. The East of England is the driest region in the UK, receiving only around 600mm rainfall per annum, around two-thirds of the average for England and Wales.

Water Consumption

The UK average employee water consumption is 50 litres per working day, which accounts for around 25% of our water usage. The remaining 75% is for production processes, mainly from our onsite dyeworks and some comfort heating such as air conditioning.



Steps in reducing our water consumption.

- Planned preventative maintenance (PPM) on all equipment to minimise leaks and breakdowns.
- 2022; Automatic Taps fitted in the main bathrooms
- 2023; We undertook a full site drainage survey
- 2023; Outlined a water reduction strategy
- 2024; Formalise our water policy

Water discharge

The effluent generated by the dyeworks at Sudbury Silk Mills is pre-treated to remove all organic matter, through oxidation rather than filtration, so there is also no waste or slurry.

Our improvement plan for 2024 includes looking at options for improved heat and water recovery in a closed loop system as well as working with academic partners to explore innovative dyes and techniques. Our key focus for 2024 is improving RFT in the dyeworks, which includes reviewing the recipe and batch database and ensuring recipe modifications are routinely updated.

Our wastewater is tested annually by Anglian Water and by an independent laboratory to the strict OEKO-TEX® STeP standard. The effluent generated by the dyeworks at Sudbury Silk Mills is treated to remove all organic matter through oxidation, rather than filtration, so there is also no waste or slurry.

High tech solutions for dyeworks sustainability

Our dye works uses state-of-the-art technology that oxidises 100% of the organic dyestuffs in the used dye liquor. This breaks them down into safe components that can be discharged through local sewer works to be further processed by local authorities.

There is no resultant slurry to dispose of and no reduction of efficiency as filters become clogged towards their end of life. The clear water is then ideally suited to be reprocessed and recycled via the municipal wastewater system.

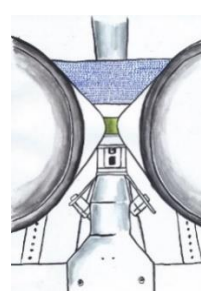
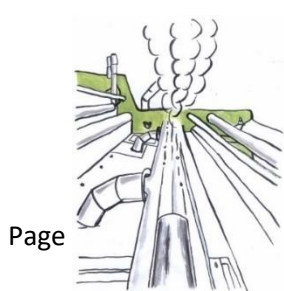
The heat from the dye liquor is recovered in a heat exchanger to preheat water for subsequent dyeing's, which in turn cools the waste liquor to the temperature required for treatment.

Ultra-efficient pressurised cone-dyeing reduces the amount of water and dyestuffs required in the dyeing process.

Sudbury Silk Mills has pioneered the use of this technology within the textile industry, and we are always looking to make sure that we are on top of new developments and solutions to improve sustainability.

Water saving measures

Our finishing machinery is bespoke-designed and custom-built to be low-or-no water usage. Instead, the system we have developed uses energy-efficient methods to generate heat and steam if required, which can be precisely controlled when delivered to the fabric, to achieve the desired effect. As no chemicals or sizing agents are added in our production process, the fabrics require no washing or scouring, therefore minimising the amount of water required and generating no effluent or wastewater from our finishing processes.

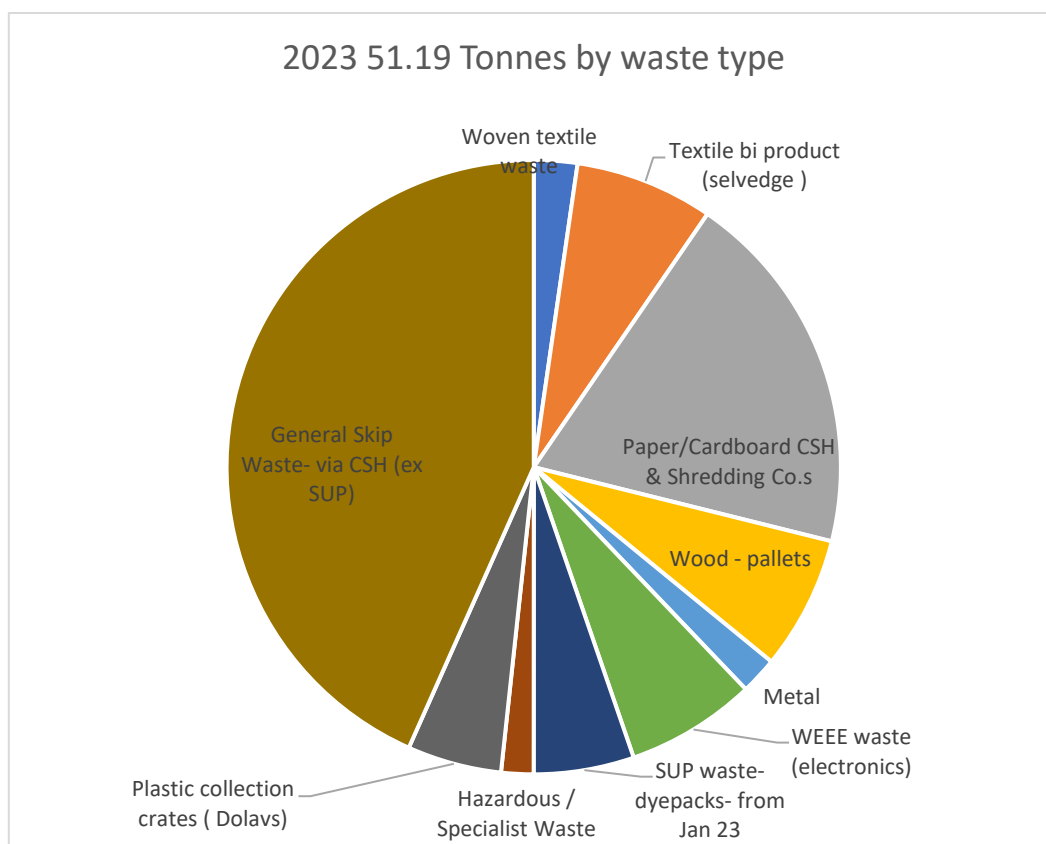


Waste

Waste reduction follows the principals of the 5R's; Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle. Making smart design choices, manufacturing right first time and recycling a greater proportion of general waste and textile by-product. We are proud to be a luxury manufacturer producing fabrics that will be treasured. Our main focus is currently reduction and elimination projects around textile waste, single use plastics and organic matter.

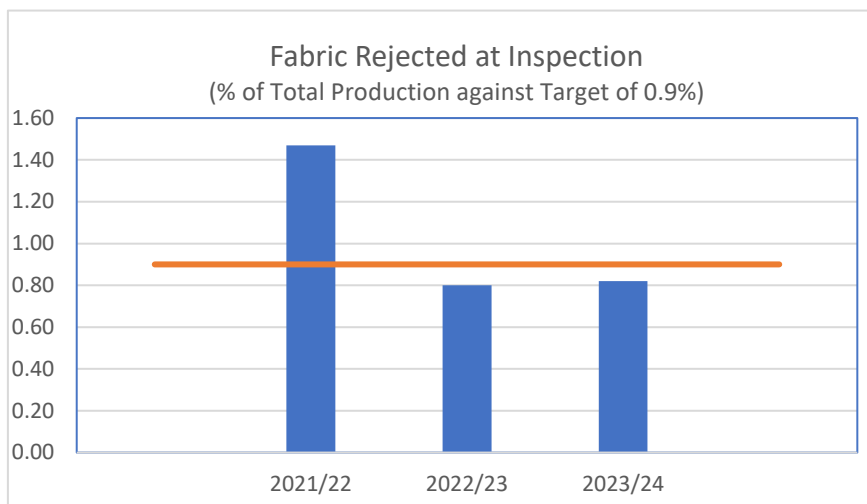
Waste reporting

We are a demand driven manufacturer, which means we only use raw materials to weave fabric in a direct response to customer demand, which eliminates over production of stock. We remain a committed zero-landfill site. In 2023 approximately 78% of our waste was recycled and 22% incinerated for energy.



Waste Reduction- Quality

We have achieved 59.7% reduction in woven textile waste **since 2021/22**. Fabric rejected at the inspection stage is down from 1.47% of total production in 2020/21 to 0.92% in 2023/24. Our Quality Management System and initiatives such as the quality circle are designed to deliver a zero-textile waste target.



The quality team remains focused on reducing and eliminating the root causes of waste generation, while optimising the channels available to repurpose or recycle any unavoidable textile waste.

Waste Reduction- 5 R's

- In December 2022 we introduced recycling for our waste dye-pack cones, these are collected and made into a polymer raw material for use in other industries. Since this project started, we have diverted 5 tonnes from our general waste skip into this reuse method.
- In 2022 our mill shop introduced a hierarchy to encourage re-use, repurposing and donating textiles for social benefit, as alternatives to commercial value. To date 4800 metres of fabric and 432kg of yarn have been donated to local and national community and educational groups.

As a final step any woven fabric not reused, repurposed or donated is shredded and used as a raw material in textile products such as filler for products such as punch bags and dog beds.

- In 2023 our weaving floor implemented separate collection bins for selvedge waste, which are edges of yarn created during the weave process and these are now collected alongside woven waste. **So far 10 tonnes of textile waste have been kept in circulation this way. By the end of 2024, in line with upcoming legislation we are on track to have zero textile and yarn waste in the general waste.**

Organic Food Waste

As key target for 2024 is to introduce collection of organic food waste for industrial composting, this will further reduce the weight of waste going into the general skip collection.

Single Use Plastic

We are committed to reducing and eliminating single use plastics (SUPs) where possible within our production and packaging areas and are working through our biggest users in turn. Where no viable alternative yet exists to replace and we cannot reuse, we work hard to find routes to recycle.

Our polythene for wrapping and protecting fabrics for despatch is made from recycled material and is fully recyclable. A copy of our sustainable packaging commitment is available for customers which details the materials used and information on how to recycle all our onward packaging materials. Alongside this we support consolidated shipments and encourage the re-use of our packaging.

Plastic Dye Pack Case Study

Yarn dyeing

Much of our yarn is dyed on a plastic package, a style of lightweight perforated cone that supports high performance dyeing at our vertical mill. Previously all our dye packs were placed in general waste and sorted by our partner.

Separating from general waste

From the end of 2022 empty cones were collected separately onsite and we partnered with a certified plastics recycling specialist based 60 miles from our site. Our cone waste is relatively small in manufacturing terms, and they agreed to collect annually.

Recycled- circular system.

The cones are broken down to create regrinds and plastic compounds. These are then used in subsequent manufacturing processes. This recycles our waste, and it creates a raw material that is used in other manufacturing processes.

Annual Collection

At the end of 2023, after collecting for just over a year, 3 tonnes of plastic waste attributed to our yarn dye packs was diverted out of general waste and recycled via this method.



Selvedge Waste Case Study

Selvedge Waste

Our fabric has selvedges, which are woven edges that ensure the integrity of the fabric. They help to eliminate issues such as bowing, skewing, and creasing and make the fabrics suitable for handling by our customers.

Where the rapier passes yarn from one side of the loom to the other, loops of yarn are created at the edges, these are cut off during weaving and are a textile byproduct. We keep these 'tails' as short as possible on the loom but can also be weaving up to 12 colours of yarn at a time and multiple yarn types.

Some of this we can distribute through our shop, as it has proved popular with crafters, but we needed to source a further method for recycling.

Separating from general waste for recycling

From the end of 2023 we have had a separate onsite collection for all our selvedge waste, after a successful introduction on the weaving floor this is being rolled out to all departments, from fabric preparation through to sales.



Supply chain traceability and Raw Material

Our raw materials are carefully selected, and our supply chain is managed to offer great diversity, quality and performance of the range of products we can produce, while understanding more and minimising the impact on the environment.

Social and ethical credentials are already a key factor in the sourcing and introduction of new yarn types, and we are committed to a continuous improvement plan for our existing yarn types.

As a Tier 2 textile manufacturer our whole supply chain is mapped and audited to give transparency to the country and region level. This goes back through Tier 3 (yarn spinning and dyeing) to Tier 4 source (raw material production).

Our investigations are designed to highlight any breaches or risk indicators in terms of human rights and working conditions. We are happy to engage in transparency of these findings with our customers through preferred face-to-face visits and audit processes.



In 2022 traceability audits expanded to collect details of process and product certification in our value chain, such as OEKO-TEX®, GOTS (Global organic textile standard), Textile Exchange Standards, Organic and recycled materials.

In supply chain mapping there are multiple layers and processes, which can each have their own certification, which doesn't necessarily apply through the whole value chain. For example, GOTS or OEKO-TEX® 100 certification can be applied to the farm/crop cultivation level, processing such as spinning or twisting, finished yarn, woven fabric and eventually retail product.

Work from 2023/24 onwards will expand our supply chain mapping within tier 4 to include farm and field within the already identified regions. This will increase our visibility of regenerative agriculture and biodiversity considerations.

Responsible sourcing

Responsible sourcing is the conscientious approach to procuring products and services, both internally and across our supply chain to minimise negative impacts and promote positive outcomes for both people and the environment.

Consideration must adhere to stringent quality criteria, align with ethical, sustainable, and socially conscious principles, and keep pace with the evolving landscape of regulation and legislation.

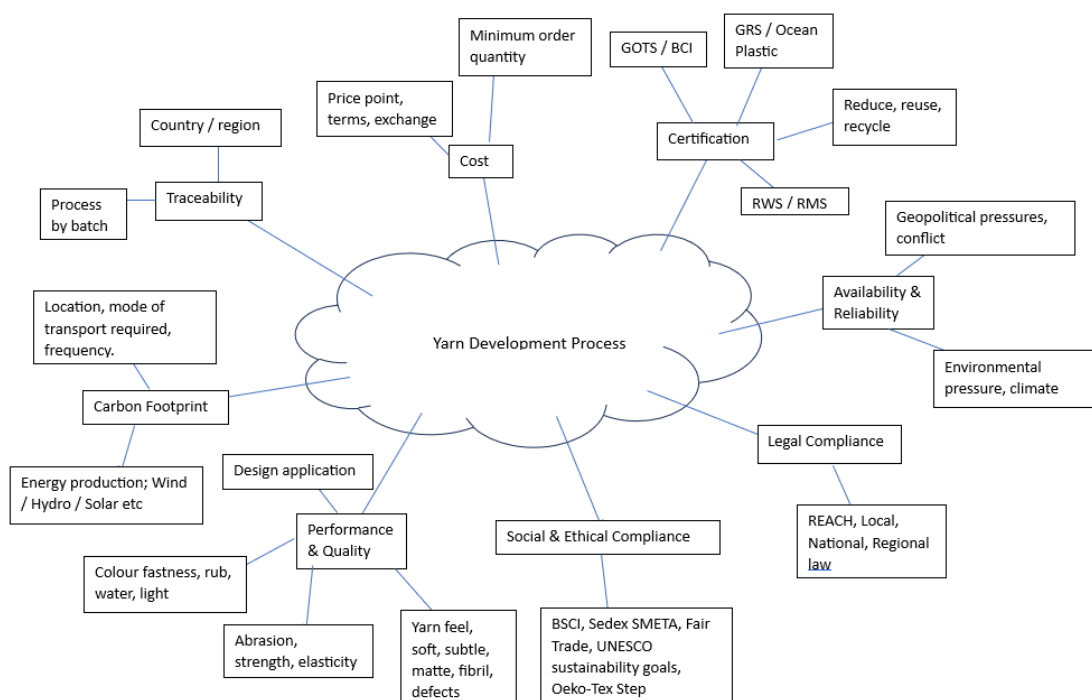
Raw materials

Responsibly sourced yarn choices have many considerations; animal welfare and husbandry, regenerative agriculture and biodiversity, water use, chemical and pesticide use, social and welfare conditions of producers and workers; all while retaining the supply reliability and quality.

We offer our customers access to a wide range of stocked yarns in a diverse range of fibres, which often come from multiple global suppliers. We follow a rigorous due diligence process when we introduce a supplier. They must commit to uphold and adhere to our supplier code of conduct. Where appropriate we undertake regular audits and site visits.

We check if any of our supply chain activities are in sensitive and/or protected biodiversity areas through www.protectedplanet.net or within a high-risk country in terms of human rights via the human freedom index.

Yarn introduction process, considering responsible sourcing:



Natural fibres

Natural fibres are biodegradable — they break down in nature and release nutrients back into the soil. In this way, these fibres are inherently circular as they have a natural place in the carbon cycle.

Animal hair

Traceability: Country and region

Our preferred sources for animal hair fibre (wool, cashmere, angora, mohair) moving forward are those certified by Textile Exchange Standards, such as RWS (Responsible Wool Standard). This is certified to yarn level; however the woven fabric is not RWS certified. As part of our push towards RWS at yarn level, we are progressing to full certification across the range, with almost 50% already certified and the remainder expected to transition by the end of 2024.

Wool is the most common animal fibre used in the fashion and textile industry. It's natural, breathable and has good insulation and thermo-regulating properties. It reacts to changes in the body temperature to keep the wearer warmer when it is cold, and cooler when it is warm. Wool is also odour and wrinkle resistant, which means that woollen clothing doesn't need to be washed as often as other fibre types, therefore saving water and energy.

A sheep produces a new fleece every year, making it naturally renewable. Mulesing is a banned criteria for any new yarn introduction and we have a commitment to phase out remaining mulesing stock. Animal fibres, such as wool, can be recycled, generally through a mechanical process that recovers the fibres, which can then be re-used in new yarn or utilised in industrial products.

Responsible Wool Standard. This means we will have full transparency of where the wool fibre originated, as well as RWS being the industry benchmark driving improvement in animal welfare protection, land health preservation and social welfare.

Animal welfare protection – This covers the FIVE FREEDOMS of animal welfare such as freedom from hunger, discomfort, and distress.

Land health preservation – RWS farms use progressive methods of land management, protecting soil health, biodiversity, and native species.

Social welfare – Ensuring that workers health, safety and working conditions are compliant.

<https://textileexchange.org/responsible-wool-standard/>

Wool 2/48's. Our most popular wool range is available in a beautiful palette of 28 shades, popular with both interior and fashion clientele. RWS cert.

Wool Boucle The latest new yarn introduction is a heavily looped wool boucle available in its natural shade. When used in conjunction with our other stocked yarns it creates an eye-catching random texture. RWS cert.

Mohair Our Responsible Mohair Standard yarn is available in 17 solid and stamp colours, consisting of 67% Responsible Super Kid Mohair (RMS Certified), 28% GRS Recycled Nylon and 5% Wool.

Aurora Mohair is offered in colours Stone and Marble, made from a special melange spun fibre (that is not available as RMS due to the nature of the production of the yarn), consisting of 67% Super Kid Mohair, 28% GRS Recycled Nylon and 5% Wool.

Silk

Traceability: Country and region, to reeling mill

Silk has been prized for its luxurious properties for thousands of years and it can be dyed to create an incredible quality of colour. Silk's natural prism structure makes it great at reflecting light. It is also breathable, hypoallergenic, and known for its thermal properties, being cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Silk is naturally self-extinguishing, which means it has excellent natural fire-retardant properties without the application of chemicals. Our fabrics are either pure silk or woven as blends with other natural fibres.

Our affinity with silk is deeply rooted in the origins and heritage of the business and it remains one of our specialities today. We have long established relationships with our key silk suppliers, and these are at the core of establishing our sustainability strategy and roadmap in a partnership setting. Some processing has, over time, become GOTS certified, and we are well advanced with mapping source traceability. As a business we can trace our silk back through the supply chain to localised region, to reeling mill. This level of transparency through our supply chain enables us to monitor and rigorously assess any negative process that could be involved in this yarn type.

All our raw silk is sourced from China (Guangxi, Hangzhou, Jiangsu, Sichuan, Shandong, Yunnan, Zhejiang) from the domesticated Mulberry Bombyx mori silk moth.

Cotton

Traceability: Country and region

Cotton is breathable, making it popular for keeping cool in humid climates and has a dry handle popular with furnishing customers, without the creasing of linen/flax.

We source cotton grown or processed in Egypt, Australia, Pakistan, Italy, and USA. When considering BCI and GOTS cotton, we take into consideration the sustainability of the crop, and not just the yarn type. The reason for this is until a crop is stable in its offering and quality, you can negatively impact sustainability by introducing unnecessary waste. We continue to explore GOTS, BCI and other forms of certified cotton as part of our yarn offering and we are planning to increase these proportions throughout 2024 and onwards.

GOTS Certified Slubbed Cotton: Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) is the worldwide leading textile processing standard for organic fibres, which also includes ecological and social welfare criteria.

The choice of GOTS cotton for this new yarn helps to reinforce our companies environmental and ethical values, as the GOTS standard assesses everything from the chemical inputs being used to

the ethical treatment of workers. This yarn is available in its natural shade and has a beautiful soft handle, creating interesting slubbed textures.

For further information on GOTS please follow this link: [The Standard - GOTS \(global-standard.org\)](https://www.global-standard.org/)

Linen/flax

Traceability: Country and region

Made from fibres that are sourced from the stems of flax plants, linen is three times stronger than cotton. Both linen and flax are derived from the flax plant but generally linen is spun from the longer fibres. Progress has been made in this area too, with testing underway and expected to complete by the end of 2024, by which time we expect to have transitioned to fully certified stock.

Man Made Fibres

Man-made Fibres - Regenerated cellulose

Fibres derived from natural polymers are biodegradable— they break down in nature and release nutrients back into the soil.

Viscose/rayon

All our pure (unblended) rayon and viscose is FSC Certificated and Canopy Hot Button Evaluated.

Viscose flax blend

In 2023 we started to evaluate our blended fibres such as our popular viscose/flax blend. This is popular with furnishing manufacturers due to its strength, slub character and subtle lustre. This yarn provides a robust, natural alternative to synthetics for higher performance and higher abrasion fabrics for interiors. The viscose element of this yarn is Canopy certified.

Man-made Fibres - Synthetics and microfibres

Oil-based synthetic fibre production carries a significant environmental cost, the fibres do not biodegrade and are responsible for micro-plastics. However, their performance properties are unrivalled which extends the life of fabrics and may reduce consumption.

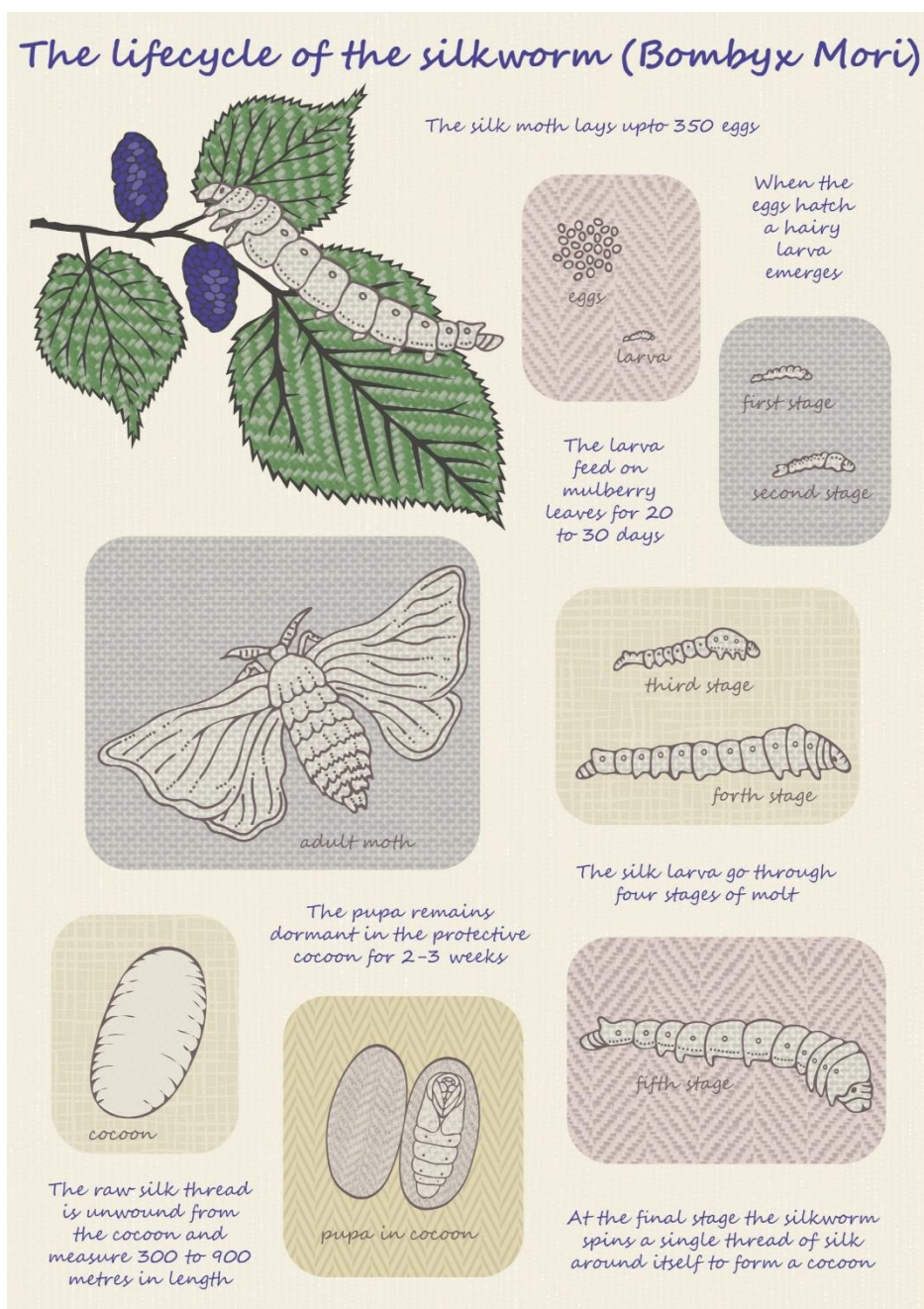
Polyester and Recycled Polyester

Our aim is to phase out the use of virgin polyester where possible and opt for recycled alternatives. Our certified recycled polyester weft range accounts for 10% of current consumption and yarn availability. We have set a goal to achieve 100% by the end of 2025.

Recycled Lurex Yarn: Made of 50% post-consumer recycled polyester, which is made from post-industrial waste such as plastic bottles. The remaining 50% is regular metallised polyester, to achieve a good level of lustre. The range consists of six shades in total and used to add a metallic highlight or flourish to fabrics.

Micro-plastic shedding and highwater impact come from the washing during the lifecycle of a product. Our furnishing fabrics are not designed to be washed and we encourage spot cleaning and responsible dry cleaning.

For our fashion fabrics synthetics are woven in blends with natural fibres and therefore post-consumer washing is minimised to aid the protection of more fragile fibres. With luxury garments, airing after use, washing on very low heat, hand washing, and spot cleaning are all encouraged.



Prosperity



Photograph; Sudbury Water Meadows at sunset

Taken by Jason Stalker, Finance



Prosperity

We believe that by looking after our people, our customers, our suppliers and our local community, we can foster improvements in social conditions and the environment.

We aim to create wealth responsibly and sustainably and determine where this wealth is best invested and distributed.



Over 2000m

fabric donated nationally to Schools,
Universities, Craft groups and Care Homes



Supported

more than 10 local wellbeing and
community organisations



Took part in 20

local events

Charity Partnership

By choosing one dedicated charity partner we believe we can establish a strong relationship and make the most meaningful difference.

Through consultation with our entire team, our chosen charity partnership Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS) are the main beneficiaries of our fundraising activity.

Our fundraising has delivered sufficient funds for 10 defibrillators and helped raise awareness. In return SARS have delivered CPR training to 20 people from Sudbury Silk Mills.



Charity events and collections

Our staff members have a passion for supporting a wide range of local and national charitable organisations, through events to raise funds or by volunteering their time. Recent activities include anything from bake sales to collecting goods for local food banks and Christmas boxes for children.

Many of our colleagues also take on their own charitable endeavours for causes with personal significance and we always undertake to support these efforts wherever possible.



In addition to SARS, in 2023 this included support for.

- EACH East Anglian Children's Hospice
- Friends of Wells Hall School
- Great Ormond Street Hospital
- Macmillan
- Shine

Community support

We support local wellbeing and community organisations and a range of children's and adult sport groups locally, including kit and equipment sponsorship. These wonderful organizations do amazing work and support the community, largely on a voluntary basis.

- Sudbury Hockey Club
- Sudbury Rugby Club
- Sudbury Youth Darts
- Cornard Bowls Club
- The Mix, Needham Market
- Kernos Centre
- Our Special Friend
- Storehouse Foodbank
- The Bridge Project

Education

Our schools programme helps local secondary school pupils to build skills and prepare for work. This could be helping with CV's, offering mock interview experiences or an insight into the diverse career opportunities within our business.

Our university programme helps graduates forge lasting links with industry and gain vital commercial experience. We have developed programmes to connect with national and international further education students, setting industry specific projects, collaborations and sponsored awards with partner universities at degree and masters levels.

We support the Worshipful Company of Weavers Textile Conference for 2nd year students, giving an insight to industry and access to mills, to support student development and forge industry relationships. We also support their entry to work scheme which offers full time, fully paid employment for new graduates.

We have strong links with the UK Fashion and Textiles association (UKFT) which is the largest network for fashion and textile companies in the UK. We bring together designers, manufacturers, suppliers, agents, educators and retailers to promote their businesses and our industry, both in the UK and throughout the world.



THE
WEAVERS'
COMPANY

Regional and textile heritage

We understand the value in supporting local and national projects to promote Sudbury's silk heritage, including initiatives around the Sudbury Silk Festival, giving talks to local interest groups, and supporting the Gainsborough House Gallery.

Recognising the importance of our communities for the success of the business. Also, the benefit to our local community of retaining employment in Sudbury, sharing the financial success with our staff, and acting responsibly to restore and rejuvenate our local area.

Investment in industry leading technologies and innovation

Investment in technologies to ensure that the business is competitive, to meet the future needs of the markets. Investing in equipment that will enhance the capability and further the ambition to create a positive environmental impact; our latest weaving machines were enhanced and specially adapted with grant funding support from Business Transition to Net Zero, thanks to the generous support of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).



We use Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to automate repetitive, rule-based tasks within our many business processes. So, the boring things that our people don't like doing but RPA loves! It mimic the actions a human would take when interacting with digital systems, such as entering data, triggering responses, communicating with other systems, and much more.

This report underscores our unwavering commitment to accountability and responsible practices. By diligently adhering to our defined responsibilities, we not only uphold the trust of our people, customers and stakeholders but also contribute positively to our community.



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