

A group of white sheep are standing in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. The background shows rolling hills under a warm, orange-hued sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The sheep are looking towards the camera.

Wilton Carpets

Sustainability Achievements & Goals

July 2023



Ethos

The Wilton Carpet Factory sits in the picturesque downlands of Southern England. Although we occupy one of the oldest industrial sites in the country with a 300-year history of carpet-making, we have long recognised our responsibility to protect the environment of our rural setting.

The shallow chalk-bed rivers Wylfe and Nadder flow through our location, home to diverse wildlife ranging from otters to wildfowl to water voles as well as a variety of insect life - our business activity respects the sensitivity of this habitat, designated by Natural England as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.



ISO 14001 Accreditation

One measure of this respect is our adoption of an ISO 14001-accredited Environmental Management System. This provides us with a framework that helps us achieve our environmental goals through consistent review, evaluation, and improvement of our environmental performance.

From local to global

If we once thought locally, we now think and act globally. We endorse national and international net zero goals and have taken significant steps on our own journey towards them.

We already benefit from the proximity of our primary raw material suppliers - we create a smaller carbon footprint by sourcing British-grown wool to form the bulk of our yarn blends. We ensure that this yarn is also dyed in the UK under strictly controlled environmental conditions.

Why wool

Wool is a naturally renewable and sustainable material which re-grows annually. It also has great insulating properties which help homes and business reduce their heating energy use. Wool is biodegradable and unlike synthetic fibre, it does not rely on fossil fuel extraction for its production. We have committed to continue to use wool as the major component of the carpets we manufacture.

A platform for progress

The wool in our carpets is mostly derived from the hill sheep farms of the UK – it is a natural, sustainable fibre, fuelled by grass. This local sourcing policy will continue as a cornerstone of our sustainability policy.

At the same time, most of the carpets we produce furnish hotel & hospitality venues within the British Isles. Our policy of sourcing raw materials locally and making them into products designed principally for UK clients means that we play our small part in decarbonising commercial and industrial activity and its transport infrastructure – we want to minimise our impact on the planet in everything we make and everything we do.

The following pages outline our achievements so far. More importantly, they also signpost an even more sustainable way forward.



Waste reduction & recycling

Recycling; nothing thrown 'away'

As part of our circular thinking, all post production waste is now compacted and 100% of this is recycled and certified as such. This initiative means that approximately 108 tonnes of carpet manufacturing waste a year is diverted from landfill.

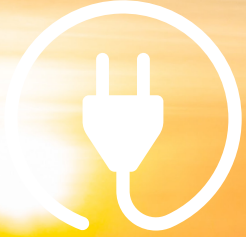
Reduction; making fewer demands on materials

But we recognise that in the 'waste hierarchy' pyramid, prevention and avoidance, reduction and re-use all rank above recycling, energy recovery and disposal and so we have adopted measures which will help us complete more of these more favourable actions in the years to come.

For example, our investment in more accurate high speed weaving means that we now generate far less production waste than ever before, and of what remains, 100% of the yarn waste element is now recycled into other products.

Reaching out; progress through collaboration

We are also currently evaluating the comparative benefits of membership of carpet recycling associations. We want to ensure that such inclusion would be genuinely beneficial in the achievement of our sustainability goals.



Fossil fuel use reduction

Reduction through efficiency

We have recently invested heavily in modern high-speed weaving technology to replace superannuated and energy-inefficient looms. Our energy consumption per sqm produced has fallen significantly as a result.

Replacement of factory strip lighting with LEDs has also contributed an energy saving and a safer working environment, and we replaced gas-powered fork lift trucks by battery powered models.

We now operate with a range of EV or PHEV vehicles within our company vehicle fleet and have installed charging points for them.

Our future plans include more of these as we strive to burn less and less fossil fuel.

Reduction through alternatives

We have conducted a feasibility study for the installation of solar panels on our factory roof – its south-facing orientation and our sunshine-blessed south of England location makes Wilton an optimal site for investment in solar. Plans are at an advanced stage and we anticipate that these works will be completed during 2024.

We also plan to replace our steam-generating boiler (steam application is critical to the finishing of wool carpets) with an advanced and highly efficient unit. This measure alone will not only save energy, but will also significantly reduce our water consumption.

The majority of our suppliers are already UK-based, meaning that supply-chain carbon miles are kept to a minimum. Going forward, in the evaluation of any new suppliers, their relative geographical proximity to our factory in Wiltshire will be considered critical.



Product development

Recyclable product verses longer life span

Our bespoke woven offer already includes a 100% wool pile option for clients who want an alternative to our standard 80/20 wool/synthetic blend.

We understand that the longer life span provided by the blended yarn in most of our carpets might offer a more environmentally sound solution when looked at in the round. Our project consultants will take the time to discuss this balance on a project by project basis.

All aspects of production under scrutiny

Polypropylene backing yarns are also now available with 80% recycled content and we are also working with our suppliers to develop a 100% natural version of the latex back coating used in our product finishing process.

Opportunity for innovation

Use of undyed wool will also form part of our future product thinking as will use of plant and other natural dyestuffs as we strive to balance the competing sustainability merits of product longevity, performance, and lifecycle maintenance costs with our determination to reduce, wherever possible, our use of the earth's mineral resources.



**The smaller
steps count
too...**

A culture where everything counts

The plastic packaging we use to wrap our products has a high recycled content, but we want to do more by making it fully recyclable. Alternative wrappings under active consideration include the use of fully biodegradable materials.

We already use recycled / recyclable cardboard tubes for carpet transportation, and we have reduced the use of polypropylene carpet tube end bungs by 50% over the last 2 years.

Our ultimate goal is to discontinue the use of all single-use plastics in our factory.

All our printed promotional materials are printed on FSC® paper and all our office paper is recycled too. We return all ink cartridges for recycling and we aim to reduce our use of both ink and paper by 50% over the next 5 years.

Happy to take materials off your hands

All our sales & marketing physical assets, including samples, hand trials, tuft boxes and brochures, may be returned via our sales team for reuse or recycling at any time, and we encourage customers to take full advantage of this free service.



Our vision

Taking action while striving to improve

Our sustainability improvement strategy acknowledges that whatever we do we will have some impact on the environment. Our responsibility therefore lies in minimising or mitigating these effects as much as we can. So we undertake to:

- Manufacture products that last – we won't be part of the throwaway culture
- Manufacture products with high wool content
- Manufacture products responsibly
- Manufacture products efficiently
- Reduce our energy usage – reduce our carbon footprint
- Recycle everything we can
- Act as stewards of the natural resources of our local and global environment
- Innovate products and processes with sustainability in mind as THE key aspect of conscious continuous improvement



If we can help with your sustainability agenda,
or if you have an idea to support ours, please
get in touch.

We also like to chat carpet.