



seasalt

CORNWALL

ETHICS REPORT

Our History

The roots of the *Seasalt* business go back to 1981 where the original shop was (and still is) in Penzance, and run by Don Chadwick, started off by selling government surplus clothing. The business is now owned and led by Don's three sons, David, Neil and Leigh.

From these beginnings, *Seasalt* has now grown to 29 shops located up and down the UK, plus hundreds of stockists right across the UK and in Eire and Europe, and has an ever-growing online shop - seasaltcornwall.co.uk.

We were the first fashion company to have our clothing certified to Soil Association (SA) certified organic status back in 2005 and since then we have sold over one million organic products and are now the largest producer of SA certified organic clothing in the UK.

We've recently been recognised for our sustainable approach to growing our business by becoming the first fashion company ever to win the *Queen's Award for Sustainable Development*.

Seasalt is always evolving, developing and moving forward, but we always remember where we've come from and keep our core values at the heart of what we do.

Our Standards

We are aware that inevitably we have impact on all those people who are linked with us and with our physical surroundings. We therefore aim to:

- Reduce the impact of our business on the environment
- Choose the right suppliers
- Think about others and be socially responsible
- Look after the well-being of our employees and suppliers

We've developed policies for each of these areas and these are included at the end of this report. You can also view them individually in the **Our Standards** page at seasaltcornwall.co.uk.





The Environment

We recognise that our activities can have some adverse impacts on the environment so we are committed to reducing these effects. There are a number of ways in which we're doing this ...

- **Organic cotton**

We know that the fashion industry is heavily reliant on chemicals through manufacturing and production processes, for instance. In fact cotton farming alone uses one quarter of the world's pesticides and over 8,000 chemicals can be used just to transform cotton into an everyday t-shirt*. We knew from the start that when we first set *Seasalt* up that we would be committed to using organic cotton for our garments wherever possible, to help reduce these damaging environmental effects. In 2005 *Seasalt* became the first fashion brand in the UK to have clothing certified by the Soil Association, the UK's leading organic campaigning and certification body.

Since then we are now the UK's biggest producer of Soil Association certified organic clothing, something we're hugely proud of. In fact, Lee Holdstock from the Soil Association has commented of *Seasalt*, "*Seasalt can be considered true organic textile pioneers*".



Neil Chadwick is also a member of the Soil Association's Textiles Standards and Trade Group. This is a group of industry experts and leaders established by the Soil Association Textile Standards Committee to provide a more direct link and a forum for organic textile businesses.

Sometimes it's not possible for us to use certified organic or eco-friendly textiles and this may be due to issues of price or availability but we always aim to inform our customers about exactly what they are buying and make our labelling clear when garments are made with organic cotton.

- **Packaging**

The thousands of paper carrier bags that we give to our customers in-store every year are made with paper from sustainable sources. We also produce thousands of Jute Shoppers, giving customers durable, reusable bags - part of our commitment to encourage an alternative to plastic. Where we do use plastic, such as for our mail-bags for online customers, we have chosen a biodegradable option to minimise the environmental impact.



- **Waste Management**

Across our shops, offices and warehouse, we currently produce around 522 tons of cardboard packaging and 7.2 tons of plastic packaging per annum and we ensure this is collected by a waste management company and recycled.





- **Property**

We're continuing to invest in the energy efficiency of our stores, such as by scrapping thirty two 50-watt low voltage light fittings (which were at the end of their useful life) in our Falmouth shop alone, and replacing them with just seventeen 8-watt compact fluorescent fittings. We reduced electrical consumption in this one store alone by over 1,460 watts. In Truro we swapped eighty 50-watt low voltage lamps for 5-watt LEDs, reducing electrical consumption of those fittings by 90%. And in Padstow, by reducing the number of light fittings and by swapping low voltage fittings for LED fittings, we cut consumption by 1,150 watts. We now install super-efficient LED lighting in all our new shops.

We also use FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) sourced timber which is from well-managed forests for our wooden fixtures, fittings and flooring.

- **New fabric developments**

As well as using as much organic cotton in our garments as possible, we have also introduced cotton alternatives into our ranges where organic isn't possible - fabrics such as bamboo, hemp and fleece made with recycled polyester fibres. In order to make our outerwear more environmentally-friendly we have also introduced a new waterproof fabric, Tin Cloth®, made with organic cotton which is our take on the traditional oil skin waterproof.

Choosing the right suppliers

We have worked really hard to find the right suppliers and have built up lasting relationships with them. We recognise that with the globalisation of trade, however, that the goods and services we buy can be at risk of being produced by people who could be abused or exploited. With this in mind we work with our suppliers to promote good environmental and labour standards, and have developed a **Supplier Standards Workbook** which is issued to all of our suppliers and ask them to:



- Sign a Statement of Commitment to Ethical Trading.
- Produce and manufacture Seasalt branded products in compliance with the labour (ETI) and environmental standards stated in the manual.
- Where organic or fair trade certification is specified by us as a condition of supply, follow the relevant certification organisation's rules and guidelines.
- Where certification is not specified by us as a condition of supply, use eco-friendly and/or fair trade and/or recycled materials wherever practicable.
- Support their local communities and be socially responsible.
- Join Sedex and report progress on ethical practice annually.
- Provide 3rd party evidence of any environmental, labour and/or social responsibility audits.
- Provide a copy of our Supplier Standards Workbook to all of their factories and ask them to join Sedex
- Allow Seasalt to visit the production sites and farms where our products are made.



Thinking about others and being socially responsible

We've always been aware that we don't operate in isolation and that what we do has a direct impact on our employees, our suppliers and our communities. We've therefore always tried to support our people and put something back into our communities, and we've tried to do this in a number of ways ...

- **Investors in People**



Although *Seasalt* has been accredited by the Investors in People (IIP) scheme since 2005, we have more recently achieved the additional Silver status to recognise our commitment to supporting all those who work for *Seasalt*, and creating the best environment and culture we can in which to work.

- **Charity campaigns**

Every year we support numerous charities both national and local through our various campaigns and activities, such as in-store raffles, donating items for auction, encouraging people to knit for charity and many more.

Fishermen's Mission - we have supported this UK coastal charity for several years by selling Charity Jute Bags designed with celebrities, donating money from the sales of our *Sailor Shirts*, baking cakes, selling fundraising Christmas Cards designed by our customers, and doing sponsored walks across Dartmoor in the middle of the night!



We've now successfully raised £15k. In recognition of our efforts, *Seasalt* were awarded *Corporate Fundraiser of the Year 2013* by the Fishermen's Mission

Save the Lido - for 80 years the Jubilee Pool has stood proudly on Penzance's seafront and is much-loved Cornish landmark. The winter storms of 2014 sadly proved too much for this popular lido and it suffered such severe damage that it resulted in its closure. Since then a group of locals have been fundraising to restore the pool to her former Art Deco glory. To support the campaign, we designed exclusive car stickers and canvas bags giving all the money raised through these items directly to the campaign.





Cornish Rowing Challenge – in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympics we set up a partnership with two top Cornish rowers, Helen Glover and Annabel Vernon, and followed their journey to the games held in the summer.



Following on from this gave our support to an event set up by Annabel which saw Team GB rowers, who competed at the Olympics, row against the very best of Cornwall's gig rowers. Gig rowing is a regional sport we have long supported so this event brings the two rowing worlds together.

The whole event raised funds for Shelterbox – an international disaster relief charity based just 10 miles away from us.



- **Community Support**

Leach Pottery Bursary - We support the Cornish artistic community and every year sponsor an apprentice through our Bursary scheme at the world-famous Leach Pottery in St Ives. Now in its second year, this year's apprentice Matt Foster is a young local man from St Ives who beat hundreds of other very worthy applicants. Without a formal background in pottery but an obvious creative interest, he now gets the chance to train and work alongside Leach's highly talented team of potters to learn the craft and develop his skills in ceramics.



Our first apprentice, Callum, has now finished his placement but has been offered a permanent position at the pottery, demonstrating the positive legacy effect of the Seasalt Bursary.



Sea Shanty Singing – we like to celebrate our maritime heritage and part of that heritage is the tradition of shanty singing. We are sponsors of the *International Sea Shanty Festival* which is held every June in Falmouth. Hundreds of singers come from across the world to sing in the town in a weekend full of celebration.

We have also teamed up with various local shanty groups based around the UK coast and helped to promote them via our blog and social media networks.

In turn they have supported us by entertaining our customers at shop openings and other events, bringing shanties to a whole new audience.

Isles of Scilly Boatmen's Association – for several years now we have helped the *Boatmen's Association* on the Isles of Scilly by kitting out all of the crews which otherwise would have proved fairly costly to them. They are an integral part of island life, providing a lifeline to those who live on the smaller islands.



Recognition

- 2003 Restormel Borough Council gave *Seasalt* a design, conservation and environmental award for the regeneration of its Fowey shop
- 2004 *Orange Best Family Business Award*
- 2005 *Cornwall Sustainability Award for Best Environmental Initiative*
- 2006 Neil Chadwick, *Seasalt* co-founder, won the *Cornwall Business Award for Entrepreneur of the Year*
- 2006 *Seasalt* won the *Cornwall Business Award for Innovation*
- 2007 Leigh Chadwick, director, won the *ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales) South West Regional Award for Best Chartered Accountant for Sustainable Business*
- 2010 & 2011 The Ethical Company Organisation ranked *Seasalt* the UK's top fashion company for its ethical standards
- 2010 *Seasalt* named the *UK's Best Organic Retailer* in the Natural & Organic Awards 2010, a first for a non-food company
- 2013 *The Queen's Award for Sustainable Development* - the first time this has been achieved by a fashion company
- 2013 *Drapers Award for Womenswear Brand of the Year*
- 2013 Awarded *Corporate Fundraiser of the Year* by the Fishermen's Mission
- 2014 Shortlisted for 2 *Drapers Awards - Fashion Retail Business of the Year (under £125m turnover)* and *Womenswear Brand of the Year*





The benefits of working to the standards we do ...

We believe we have a duty to work in the most responsible way we can but we find there are also other benefits to our business by working in this way ...

Maintaining high standards in the way we source and produce *Seasalt* goods sets us apart from other fashion brands.

- ⚓ We have established a good reputation for this and it is now expected by our customers.
- ⚓ We receive positive publicity which helps us to grow *Seasalt* brand-awareness and our sales.
- ⚓ As a result of working closely with our suppliers we enjoy better relations with them.
- ⚓ It gives everyone who works for *Seasalt* a sense of achievement and pride in working in the way we do.

The view from our design studio

