

# Sustainability Champions



Bridget Tibbs (right hand side)



Alpacas



Natural plant dyes grown on farm



Camelid dynamics



The farm is off grid

## Cotswold Alpacas

Bridget Tibbs, Owner

**Based on 20-acre Korinn Farm near Cheltenham, Cotswold Alpacas has been sustainably focused since its establishment in 2013. Owner, Bridget Tibbs explains their ethos of living lightly on the land.**

### Why did you choose to farm alpacas?

"Alpacas are one of the most sustainable fibre producing animals. They are light footed on the ground, so do not destroy soil structure, and they consume very little water as they are camelids.

"Their fibre is lanolin free, meaning no chemicals are required; once skirted the whole fleece can be processed without de-hairing.

"There are 22 natural colours of alpaca and their fleeces are hypoallergenic and hollow fibre, more akin to cashmere than sheep's wool. For colours we use natural plant dyes such as indigo and madder, which is grown on the farm.

"We use the principles of camelid dynamics with the alpacas, which means both animal and human can interact calmly and enjoy each other's company."

### Tell us about your energy and water provision at the farm

"The farm is off grid; we use a mixture of solar PV with battery storage and a ground-source heat pump to generate energy. To ensure we minimise our energy use, we monitor our usage and the battery levels – the technology is very affordable.

"Our house is made from hempcrete, which is a low carbon building material. It's also highly insulating and airtight, so requires less energy to heat. Soon, we're aiming to start using water from our bore hole and rainwater harvesting instead of mains water."

### How does your sustainable ethos apply to the products you make and buy?

"The products we make are slow textiles, eco products in themselves, most are handmade on the farm and the mill will use is in Wales, so there is no airfreight on our other products. We use biodegradable packaging for all our products.

"We have minimal plastic usage and try to upcycle wherever we can. For instance, we use vintage linens to create our textiles and are fitting a second-hand kitchen in our house, as well as solid beech flooring which used to be in a school gym in Nottinghamshire and still has basketball court markings on it, which will bring splashes of colour!"



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Our staff are committed as we are



Sustainable practices



Re-wilded woodland



Slow textiles



Alpaca fibre is lanolin free

## Cotswold Alpacos continued

### What nature-related practices do you have?

"We are always conscious of best farming practice and use no pesticides or chemicals. Everything we grow is organic and we use alpaca manure, which is like rocket fuel for plants!"

"We have planted a small orchard of native fruit trees, as well as copper beeches in the paddocks to create shade for the alpacas. We've re-wilded woodland on the farm and are inundated with birds and wildlife, including barn owls and hedgehogs."

### Are staff involved in your sustainability practices?

"Our staff are as committed as we are, we share the same dream of working with the land and being conscious of our practices on a daily basis."

### What are you hoping to do next?

"This year we will be finishing our off-grid, hemp and lime, green build, which will also house our studio space for workshops. We are also continuing to establish a workshop programme on sustainable practices, crafts and wellbeing."

### What advice would you give to businesses who are starting on their journey?

"Just start, one small step at a time. Look at the products you use, from hand soap to packaging."

"If you are creating something, try and keep in mind the obsolescence of your products in their afterlife – can it be reused, recycled or is it biodegradable? Is it going to end up in landfill?"

[cotswoldalpacos.co.uk](http://cotswoldalpacos.co.uk)

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