

OPINION



Climate Action

Submitted by
Harborough
Climate Action

How to cut clothing industry's impact on the environment

This month we are focusing on the 'Shopping' segment of the Carbon Footprint Wheel, and specifically on clothing.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change the clothing industry is responsible for 10 per cent of the world's deadly greenhouse gas emissions.

When we reach for that T-shirt and pair of trousers in the morning, we rarely consider the environmental cost. First there is the production of raw materials: cotton or hemp for example use vast amounts of water and polluting pesticides.



Synthetic fabrics such as acrylics, polyester and nylon are mainly made from petroleum which inevitably lead to more greenhouse gas emis-

sions. The manufacture of clothing uses 300,000 tons of water worldwide annually. Just one pair of cotton trousers and shirt can use 20,000l of water.

Why not have a clear-out and pass clothes on to charity or vintage shops?

More emissions are generated from the packaging and transportation of these goods around the world.

And then there is the problem of disposal. Every year nearly 340,000 tonnes of fabric are thrown away globally, equivalent to 29,000 London buses.

So how can we dress more sustainably and reduce our impact on the planet? Here are our top tips:

1. Think twice before buying new. Check out the most sustainable brands on www.GoodOnYou.eco.

2. Be prepared to repair.

Look out for local courses on how to repair clothes yourself; take items along to the Repair Cafe at the Eco Village; visit Sophie & Co on Abbey Street. Use clothing alterations and repairs shops, for example by Speedy Sew (Manor Walk), Fit To Pin (St Mary's Road) and Alterations by Louise (Talbot Yard)

3. Have a clear-out and pass clothes on to charity or vintage shops. It is estimated that a third of the clothes in our wardrobe haven't been worn for over a year. Or sell through the pre-loved clothes shops in Harborough: The Attic and Ginger Kate. There are also on-line options to sell or buy second hand.

4. Dispose of clothes thoughtfully. Never put clothes in the bin where they will be incinerated, or languish in landfill sites for up to 200 years releasing pollution into the atmosphere. If clothes are not fit to wear you can put them in a textile bank labelled "rags."