



Our Environmental Policy

2013 Environmental Report

Summary

Covers Timber & Builders' Merchants are committed to minimising our impact on the environment. In order to achieve this we are constantly re-evaluating all aspects of the business, from sourcing environmentally friendly products through to working to increase the efficiency of site and delivery management.

Procurement

- We work diligently to ensure that the maximum number of sustainably sourced products are available at Covers.
- Wherever possible we use local suppliers in order to minimise the carbon footprint of our supply chain.
- The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) estimate that 34% of waste leaving construction sites is packaging. Working with BiffPack, Covers undertakes significant measures to reduce, re-use and recycle packaging in accordance with Government guidelines.

Biffpack
packaging
compliance

Timber

Covers are committed to supporting the responsible management of the world's forests. We are fully committed to the principles promoted by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

Covers are continuously audited to ensure compliance with the above certifications. Our staff are trained by TRADA so to understand the importance of securing the chain of custody.

All our timber and timber based material suppliers are obligated to ensure that, as a minimum, materials are sourced in accordance with legal forestry and logging controls, complying with upcoming Verified Legal Origin legislation from EUTR.

We regularly check the CITES list to ensure that none of the timber we purchase is endangered in its country of origin.

As a company we endeavour to educate our customers about the benefits of utilising timber in construction wherever possible. Timber is a renewable, sustainable, recyclable, non-toxic, waste-efficient and biodegradable material, meaning there is no other building material that matches it's environmental credentials.



Timber - con'td

From 2013, all softwood will be sold as a minimum of 70% FSC or PEFC certified.

We are committed to continue to increase the proportion of our hardwood that is fully certified. 2013 sees a new system introduced designed to monitor exactly what percentage of our hardwood is certified, enabling us to set future targets for increasing our sustainable offering.



In 2013, an area of particular focus for us is sheet materials. Much of the sheet material in the UK comes from the far east and often achieves only the minimum environmental standards. We aim to dramatically increase the level of certification in this product group over the coming year.

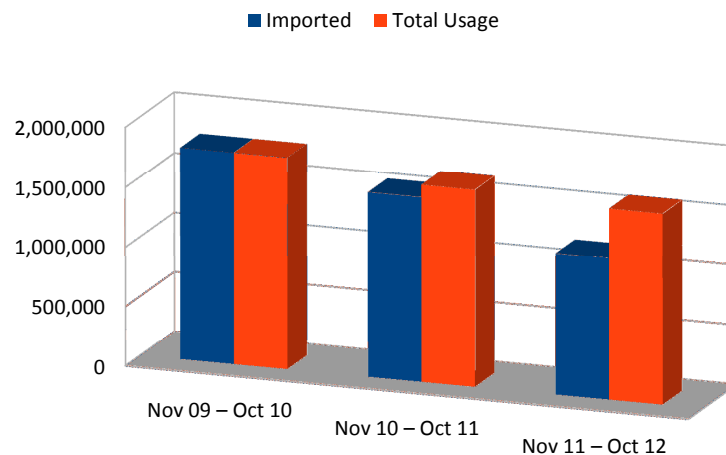
Operations

Depots

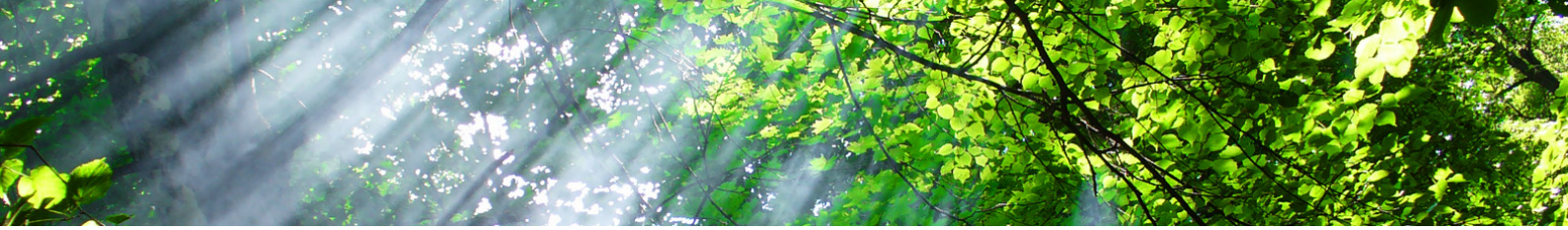
Electricity

- Towards the end of 2011, Covers fitted solar panels to over half of our Depots. These have produced in excess of 750 kWh over the past 18 months, with around a 1/5 of this being contributed to the grid.
- We continue to replace lighting throughout all depots with new energy efficient light bulbs. We estimate that this represents in excess of 1/3 saving of electricity consumption in each area of replacement.
- All new depots are fitted with lumen time switches and movement controlled sensors and we are committed to retrofitting these systems to our existing buildings and yards. As such part of warehouses that are not used, do not get illuminated, representing a significant saving on energy consumption.
- Depot managers now have access to their electricity usage and pattern of usage in order that they may further identify areas where consumption savings can be made.
- The net effect of these measures can be seen below. A decrease of 10% in electricity usage over the last 3 years, and a 33% decrease in the amount of power drawn from the national grid. Overall, our net consumption of electricity has fallen by 15% in the last 3 years.

Covers Group Electricity Consumption (Units)



Through continued investment into our energy efficiency, in particular in internal and yard lighting, we are targeting a further 8% reduction in electricity consumption over the next 3 years.



Management

- All new depots are fitted with high specification insulation to achieve a greater level of thermal performance
- Our Chichester kitchen showroom is heated using air-source heat pumps, an extremely efficient heating method.
- We actively encourage our staff to identify areas where energy is being used inefficiently and to work together to identify the most beneficial solution.

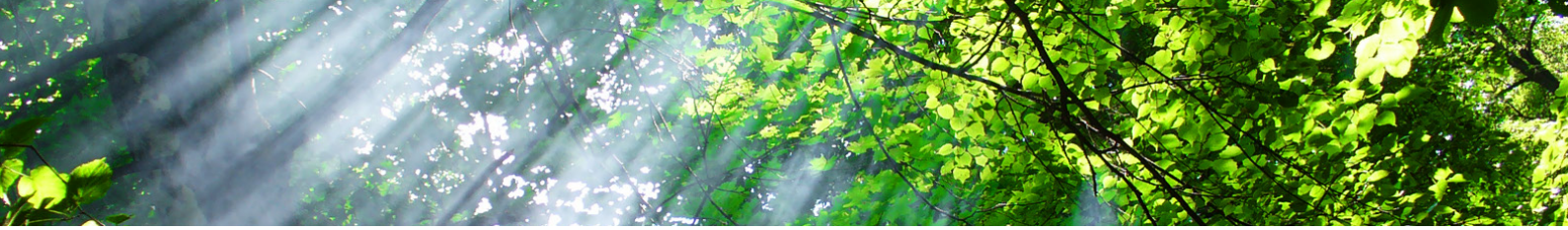
Transport

- We are constantly searching for new ways to improve the efficiency of our depots. In 2012 we completed a review of our central distribution hub and subsequently have made significant line management adjustments in order to reduce the number of on-site vehicle movements and maximise efficiency. Similar consultations are to be carried out across the group.
- We are committed to constant renewal of our fleet of vehicles to take advantage of the improvements in fuel efficiency available from modern engines. Increasing the number of multi-purpose vehicles will also help to reduce the total miles travelled by our fleet.
- Our new transport management system facilitates more efficient route planning for our delivery network, reducing the number of miles travelled per delivery. A newly installed tracker system will enable us to monitor much more accurately our fuel consumption and efficiency, enabling effective targeting in years to come.
- A reconfiguration of our inter branch distribution system has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of miles travelled by our vehicles in order to keep our depots stocked. Our three distribution lorries have travelled over 4600miles less in 2012 compared with 2011.
- All new company cars are low emission and high efficiency, producing less than 130g/km of emissions and achieving in excess of 60mpg.
- Interest free loans for bicycle purchase are available to all staff members.

Waste Management

- In July 2011 Covers implemented a new waste management and recycling system. The results have been dramatic, doubling the proportion of our waste that is recycled. The beginning of 2012 saw the next phase of our waste management plan come into effect. Over 80% of the waste produced by the group is now reused or recycled. This represents a direct carbon saving in excess of 300 tonnes per annum. Half of our depots now put less than 5% of their waste into landfill.
- Wood waste is our single largest waste component. We endeavour to minimise this through re-using as much as possible, however not everything can be reused on-site. As such our wood waste offcuts are delivered to green composters who recycle them into garden products. We produce around 8 tonnes of wood shavings per day, all of which is reused in the equine industry. Covers now recycles over 90% of our wood waste.
- We use organic wood treatments for the treatment of our timber.

In 2013, we aim to improve upon the work already done by putting less than 15% of our waste into landfill.



Eco-Centre

The South-East's first such centre, the Covers eco-centre is an exemplary demonstration of the latest environmentally friendly technology for the home and garden. The centre is used as an education facility as well as a showroom, informing the public and the trade alike about the ways in which homes can become more energy efficient, reduce carbon emissions and water use and obtain a higher home energy rating. We supply hundreds of eco-products from all the industry leading providers as well as innovative niche sectors.

We are committed to continuing the growth seen in this sector. Through increased advertising and education, we hope to have a significant impact on the energy efficiency of the housing stock in our region.

Education

- Our new management training scheme incorporates instruction on environmental impact assessment and how to identify energy efficiency improvement potential. This demonstrates our commitment to future sustainability improvements through ensuring that our managers are aware of the benefits available from improved energy efficiency and minimising out ecological impact.
- The specially trained staff in our innovative eco-centre run regular free workshops for employees, customers and anyone else interested in the innovations in the market. These cover a wide range of topics, but focus upon educating the community about the ways in which they can reduce their environmental impact and save money.

Summary of Targets

- Timber:
 - From 2013, to sell all softwood to a minimum of 70% FSC or PEFC certified.
 - Continue to offer an increasing proportion of hardwood as certified.
 - Dramatically increase the level certification of our sheet materials.
- Improve our monitoring of our transport network in order to increase efficiency.
- A further 8% reduction in electricity consumption by 2015
- Less than 15% of all waste going into landfill in 2013



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