

Sustainable Leather Foundation holds inaugural partnership meeting

United Kingdom

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The new global foundation, which aims to bring together all stakeholders from across the leather industry and is set for its official launch later this year, held its first inaugural partnership meeting, which outlined key goals and developments and delivered a progress report so far.

Founded by Deborah Taylor, Managing Director, and Karl Flowers, Technical Director, the main focus of the initiative is to provide a certification programme, education, best practice, cohesive collaboration and global action in order to advance sustainability in the leather industry and drive change and improvement. At the heart of the foundation is a consumer focused, integrated platform, linked to a certification standard that assesses the compliance and performance of leather manufacturers and associated facilities against the three pillars of sustainability in the production of leather: Environmental, Social and Governance.

Deborah Taylor outlined the key developments so far ahead of the official launch, which is set for July, and wider plans for 2021, which include bringing the whole value chain together, as well as promote a positive message to consumers. Developments are under way to create an integrated website and App, which will allow for a QR code on leather product swing tags to be scanned and which will showcase compliance levels with environmental and social standards, ensuring greater transparency and traceability.

“Future proofing our industry in a sustainable way, by protecting our planet, the people who inhabit it and the profit that supports thriving economies, should be at the top of every organisations' agenda. The Sustainable Leather Foundation is committed to supporting the industry in this, and to ensuring better understanding and knowledge is passed on to consumers so they can once again have faith and trust in leather products and in those who manufacture and sell them”, says Deborah Taylor. Meanwhile, Karl Flowers provided a Technical Update on the SLF's Audit Standards, Benchmarking, Guidance & Templates which the foundation is currently finalising.

A host of guest speakers, including Dr Warren Bowden, Scottish Leather Group; Matthea van Staden, Aduu Mal / TLC Leather and Vikrant Pratap, Qualus also gave presentations, with topics ranging from circular manufacturing through sustainable and traceable value chain to more sustainable methods of retanning. The initial virtual meeting was attended by a cross-section of industry stakeholders as well as the organisation's founding partners and advisory board.

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