

## The Online Green Packaging Award Entry - Faerly.ie

### Section 1: Our business and our core values



### **We're James & Eoin, the founders of faerly.**

We live in Kildare, Ireland with a small flock of rescue chickens and a very spoiled cat and our aim is to help our customers to live a simpler and more considered life.

James started his sustainability journey living in Copenhagen more than 20 years ago when faced, for the first time, with what were to him completely foreign objects - recycling bins! He has aspired to the Scandinavian way of life, their respect for nature and their humble worldview ever since.

Eoin grew up surrounded by Irish bogland and spent his summers cutting turf, watching tadpoles grow into frogs and listening for the first cuckoo of the season. His passion today is protecting wildlife and biodiversity. Since learning they are the world's greatest natural carbon stores, he now appreciates the bogs of Kildare even more.

We started Faerly to do our part to help reduce unnecessary chemicals and plastics in the world. We're passionate about supporting local and Irish makers and we're inspired by the Scandinavian concepts of Hygge (life moments brimming with happiness, comfort, loved ones, favourite things, beautiful places, savouring the present moment and the good life) and Lagom (not too much, nor too little, just right).

Over the years we've made more and more sustainable changes in our own lives and it's made us happier and healthier. We believe in helping others to make small, positive changes that are both life-enhancing and kind to the environment.

**How we aspire to build our business sustainably while staying true to our values.**

**We believe in a simple and honest approach to business.** We believe today's business model of extreme consumerism is broken. We want to be a positive force for change and impact the world in a meaningful way. We aim to create a sustainable business that supports a network of other small Irish makers and ethical brands.

**We want to do our part to reduce the huge levels of unnecessary plastics and chemicals in our environment.** We want to inspire people to live a simple and more considered life, choosing functional products that are made to last, are beautifully designed, ethically sourced, contain no nasties and as much as possible are plastic free, reusable or recyclable. We firmly believe that choosing products like these will enhance our customers' lives while being kind to our environment. After all, there is no planet B.

**We're in business to improve lives.** We want to be an inspiring, approachable and positive force for good. Meeting our customers where they are at right now and gently helping them make small positive steps that are right for them. We're not perfect ourselves. We favour progress over purity and we won't preach or lecture, respecting that everyone is on a different path and at a different stage in their journeys. Small changes lead to big things.

**We aspire to be a carbon neutral company.** We source local products as much as possible to minimise the distance traveled. We offset the carbon footprint of all our product deliveries and web hosting. We aim to operate our space efficiently and use resources responsibly. We use solar power and collect rainwater.

**We push ourselves to be a zero-waste company.** We ship all orders in plastic free and sustainable packaging printed with plant-based inks. We recycle or reuse everything we can. We email receipts instead of paper packing slips.

**We believe in ethical sourcing.** We prioritise working with small local and Irish producers as much as possible, especially handmade producers. We also work with a small number of international suppliers, mostly Scandinavian, who share our values. We have a strong preference for products that carry the Fair-trade mark.

**We believe in an equal and inclusive society.** We commit to treat all our customers, suppliers and employees equally regardless of colour, creed or gender. We are proudly part of the LGBTQ+ community. Black lives matter.

**We are a cruelty free business** and will not stock any products tested on animals.

**We aim to sell products made from natural ingredients from brands we believe in.** That means no parabens, phthalates, SLS/SLES and unnecessary synthetic fragrances or preservatives. If a product must contain palm oil then we insist that it's sustainably certified. We prefer organic only ingredients but we don't insist on this as organic doesn't always mean sustainable - we look at our suppliers' overall ethos.

**We give back to our community.** We plant a tree with every order. We donate 1% of our gross sales and we volunteer in our local community.

## Section 2: How we reduce the environmental impact of our packaging

We ship all of our orders in **100% plastic-free packaging**. (Except for our shipping labels but we're working on that). We don't include any paper packing slips in our orders.

To package our orders we use **plain brown kraft boxes** made from recyclable and biodegradable eco friendly cardboard, sourced from reputable Irish suppliers.

While we choose not to brand our boxes so they are easy to reuse and recycle we can still get our brand identity across but in a more sustainable way. We use **paper packing tape** with water activated adhesive and printed with eco friendly plant-based inks. The tape is recyclable, biodegradable and certified home compostable. We hand stamp the inside of the boxes ourselves using water-based inks.

Our **thank you cards** are printed on 100% recycled shiro card using plant based inks by Ireland's only eco printers The Factory in Offaly..

Our **everyday tissue paper** is actually repurposed and 100% recycled newsprint paper off cuts from Germany that's Blue Angel certified. For our gift packaging we use plain coloured unbleached tissue paper and **100% recycled kraft paper zig zag fill**.

When we print stickers these are either on uncoated paper stock, or our new stickers are printed on grass paper. Grass paper is an FSC-certified paper made from 30% sun dried hay and 70% FSC-certified pulp. Grass paper is produced using special grass pellets that are processed mechanically without using any chemicals. Compared to wood pulp processing, this requires 97% less energy and 99% less water consumption to produce. As the grass originates from areas close to the factory, logistics expenses are also minimized, resulting in CO2 savings of up to 75%.

We ship our orders in the smallest possible package to reduce the volume of our shipments. If we can fit our orders in a paper padded envelope then that's our first choice.

As much as possible we reuse any suitable materials from our incoming deliveries when sending our orders to our customers. This includes cardboard boxes, paper void fill, biodegradable cornstarch peanuts and shredded cardboard.

We have partnered with DPD to ship our parcels as we believe they are the most sustainable shipper in Ireland. We can't currently ship with no impact on the environment but we're



impressed by DPD's effort to expand their electric and bio-fuel fleets and their commitment to 100% carbon neutral deliveries.

Every single order we ship includes information on our sustainable packaging and its' one of the areas our customers' most love about our store.

### Section 3: Achievements to Date

We're one year in business in October and we've shipped many thousands of orders without using any plastic in our packaging. We're showing more established businesses how it can be done. If we can do it, and be profitable. Why can't everyone?

We send almost no non recyclable waste to landfill, and it's a tiny amount compared to other businesses our size. We're reducing this waste all the time.

We've been accepted on the Green for Micro programme with the Kildare Local Enterprise Office which is helping us take our sustainability ambition to the next level.

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We have more than 350 5-star reviews on Google Reviews and most of them mention our packaging. We're inspiring our customers to shop with us because our packaging is greener. Other than our shipping labels, we don't send our customers any packaging that they can't recycle or compost at home.

*"Great experience. **No additional packaging. All paper & card. Speedy delivery. Highly recommend."***

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### Section 4: Future Focus

We're currently participating in the **Local Enterprise Green for Micro** Initiative. This involves us working with an environmental consultancy to develop our own environmental management plan. We're working to measure our upstream and downstream carbon footprint as well as the impact of the various proactive activities we're working on. The goal is to be able to accurately measure our impact, and our progress towards our goals to be carbon neutral and a zero waste company.

When we complete our Green for Micro course we hope to be accepted for a **Going Green Competitive Grant** with LEO. The goal of this grant would be to fund the purchase of a cardboard shredding machine so that we can convert any used cardboard that we currently recycle or compost, into shredded cardboard mats that we can use as void fill and product protection.

A bug bear of ours is that our shipping labels are printed with a thermal printer. **Thermal printing paper** is not recyclable or compostable due to the chemicals used in its manufacture. Through our participation in Green for Micro we hope to source a sustainable and biodegradable alternative that's currently available in the USA, and as well as using it ourselves, make it widely available in Ireland, (hopefully) beginning with our shopping partner DPD who, with a capacity of 21,000 parcels an hour are one of the largest shippers in Ireland, with a large network in Europe too.

Some of our suppliers, not many, still use plastic packaging in their shipments to us. Our goal is to continue to positively influence our suppliers to remove non sustainable packaging from their supply chains. Many have already.

Thank you. For further information, questions or photos please contact [james@faerly.ie](mailto:james@faerly.ie)