

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Kickstarter crowdfunding for tartan-making Scottish Black House Mill in final lap

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*Prickly Thistle's fundraising for the Black House Mill is a valiant effort to keep alive the art of making tartan in Scotland. Image credit: Prickly Thistle*

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

An innovative crowdfunding campaign from Prickly Thistle to raise \$150,000 to fund a mill manufacturing tartan in Scotland has only three days to go.

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The **Black House Mill** project will keep alive the art of making tartan locally, ensuring the craftsmanship skills are not lost and Scotland's heritage is preserved, while debunking the fast-fashion trend worldwide that is destructive ecologically. Led by Prickly Thistle CEO Clare Campbell, the third installment of the all-or-nothing fundraising #BuildtheMill effort on Kickstarter is close to nail-biting finish, with 450 supporters contributing more than \$120,000, or 80 percent of the target.

"As a global community, we are over-consuming and our obsession with fast fashion is ringing loud and clear," Ms. Campbell said. "It is not long tolerable to chase the cheap needle around the world.

"Consumers now know that they are making a political statement with every purchase: Do they support modern slavery? Do they support environmental damage? Do they support commercial greed? Where are the ethics and values?" she said.

Here is the entire interview with Ms. Campbell on [her goal for the Kickstarter campaign](#) and vision for [Prickly Thistle](#), Black House Mill, tartan, fast fashion, crowdfunding as a source of funding and rewards for investors.

What is the Black House Mill project and how is Prickly Thistle involved?

The Black House Mill project has one clear goal, that is creating a permanent home for the textiles mill and brand Prickly Thistle, and play a role in rural and industry regeneration. This is a PT vision, so we are the company behind it all.

Why go the crowdfunding route?

After many years of speaking with many people, advisors, lenders, investors and startup agencies across Scotland, the U.K. and further afield, the vision of disruptive tartan design and product creation would not penetrate the minds of any more traditional thinkers. Bizarre, but true.

misses or, say, more traditional thinkers. Bizarre, but true.

Therefore, crowdfunding was our last option. This was going to be a permanent marker building of a global community, the paying customer who would prove the point. This is happening now.

What do the investors get?

This is a **full rewards campaign**. Essentially this is like buying any brand's product online.

The platform Kickstarter we are using makes it project-specific with a limited time scale and all-or-nothing mantra.

We believe in the all-or-nothing opposed to other sites, because many projects cannot be completed on half a tank.

The products and experiences we have created are reflective of who we are, rule breaking in construction and submerged in emotional value, which today can be a rare thing.



*Scotland's tartan tradition is under threat of fashion globalization. Image credit: Prickly Thistle*

This is not the first time round for crowdfunding this project, right?

Correct, this is the finale of a three-part story.

Season 1 was in February 2018. Season 2 was in December 2018, and now our finale, July 2019.

Each part of the trilogy is allowing us to generate revenues based on specific parts of the building.

So what would you do with the funds raised?

We use these funds along with matching funding that we then become eligible for to fully convert a 100-year-old agricultural building into the permanent home for the brand.

We would then migrate from our rented premises thereafter.

What is it about tartan that makes it special?

Yes, we are a startup company, and to raise the capital funds we need is very difficult because of the constant backdrop and track record the sector had in Scotland.

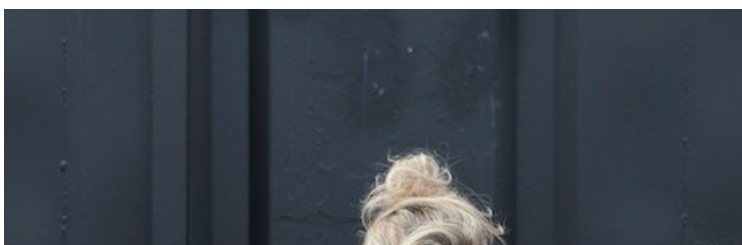
We have now since season 1 and 2 have been completely proven that we can walk the walk. Showing that by rescuing old equipment that was built to last forever and out run any modern computerized version.

Yes, these don't work as fast, but that's the point. As a global community, we are over-consuming and our obsession with fast fashion is ringing loud and clear.

It is not long tolerable to chase the cheap needle around the world.

Consumers now know that they are making a political statement with every purchase: Do they support modern slavery? Do they support environmental damage? Do they support commercial greed? Where are the ethics and values.

So, a very interesting time.





*Clare Campbell is the founder of Prickly Thistle and the Black House Mill and a staunch proponent of keeping tartan-making alive in Scotland*

Will the funds help get the Black House Mill off the ground and then become self-supporting?

We recognize that once full proof-of-life and all preconceived stereotypes are cleared, we have a vision to be a closed-loop, fully integrated brand. Flock to frock, you might say.

We have already started research into addressing the native raw materials issue in the U.K., where most homegrown animal fibers are exported at low spot prices and, at the same time, we import.

I want to see the carbon canceled and innovate with both animal and plant fibers.

So, in short, we feel many are watching right now, but to achieve the full potential we will ask them when the time comes.

Handcrafted businesses worldwide are under threat due to lack of artisan skills, consumer demand and cheaper alternatives to fabric from China and East Asia. In a way, you are battling to save Scotland's heritage, right?

Absolutely, showing that what we are doing is more relevant to today and tomorrow than yesterday.

We have an incredible heritage, but are in danger of losing that or being trapped by the legend that was.

Are you working with any third-party corporate investors or nonprofit organizations or even the Prince's Trust? The majority of our supporters and customers are from out with the E.U.

At the moment, we see a huge amount of this coming from the U.S.A. and Canada.

The smallest in some ways is the domestic market, aside from the collaboration partners we work with who have a large visitor segment, i.e. distilleries.

What is your ultimate goal with the Black House Mill project?

The closed loop fully integrated brand.

A lot of this is promoted by the likes of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation a brand that promotes a healthy society globally.

A major brand we are inspired by is Patagonia. Could we be the Scottish ally to that? Who knows?

But we believe in making the impossible possible and inspiring others to stand up for what they believe in and share their values always. We are a brand of endurance.

[Please click here to view the Black House Mill Kickstarter fundraising campaign page](#)

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*Kickstarter film to raise funds for Black House Mill*

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