Clipper Tea Ethics Record: The Documented Facts

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Clipper tea ethics record, in summary:** A proven, documented ethics leader: UK Fairtrade pioneer, organic for many years, and real work on plastic free bags. Strong, verifiable credentials, but a separate matter from cup quality, and ownership is a separate ledger again.

Clipper is the UK brand most associated with tea ethics, so here are the documented facts. This sits in the brand-history cluster beside Pukka ethics record.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in May 2026.

The documented record

Clipper was founded in 1984 in Dorset by Mike and Lorraine Brehme, with ethics central from the start. It is widely documented as a Fairtrade pioneer, launching the UK's first Fairtrade tea in the mid-1990s, the scheme the Fairtrade guide explains. It has long stood for organic tea and a "natural, fair and delicious" line, and its documented work on unbleached, plastic free tea bags is a real point of difference, set out in the plastic-free teabags guide. These are verifiable facts, not just marketing claims.

The record at a glance

Area	The documented fact
Founded	1984, Dorset, by Mike and Lorraine Brehme
Fairtrade	Pioneer; launched the UK's first Fairtrade tea in the mid-1990s
Organic	Long-standing organic and "natural, fair and delicious" positioning
Plastic-free bags	Unbleached, plastic free bags, backed by documented work
Ownership	Part of the Ecotone group, a separate ledger from the ethics record

Three ledgers, kept separate

To read any "ethical" brand properly, keep three things apart. The ethics record means certified, documented behaviour, and Clipper's record there is strong. Ownership is a separate ledger: Clipper is part of the Ecotone group, which neither cancels nor confirms the ethics, the context the ownership map gives. And cup quality is a third ledger entirely: strong, verifiable ethics credentials are not the same as a verdict on

how the tea tastes, the point the is Clipper good page makes. Certification is a fact, not a flavour verdict, and a brand can be both ethically excellent and merely fine in the cup, or excellent in both. Reading the ledgers separately is what keeps the assessment straight.

Common questions

Is Clipper really an ethical brand? Yes, on the documented record: a Fairtrade pioneer, long-standing organic, and real plastic-free bag work. These are verifiable, not just claims.

Did Clipper really pioneer Fairtrade tea? Yes. It is widely documented as launching the UK's first Fairtrade tea in the mid-1990s.

Does its ethics record mean it tastes best? No. Ethics and cup quality are separate ledgers. Strong credentials do not guarantee the cup you prefer.

Does its ownership undermine the ethics? Not directly. Clipper is part of the Ecotone group; ownership is a separate matter from the certified ethics behaviour.

Buy on ethics and the cup

Weigh the certified record against the taste in the brand directory or the full tea shop, and compare it with the wider ethical scorecard. Weigh both Clipper ledgers; over £35, UK delivery is free.

Browse the tea range

Reference noted

- Encyclopaedia Britannica: Tea (history)

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Pick what you'll actually drink every day. The brew you keep reaching for, Clipper or otherwise, beats one you only admire.

More from the tea wiki

- Pukka ethics record
- UK tea brand ethical scorecard
- Fairtrade explained
- Plastic-free teabags
- Is Clipper good
- Ownership map

Earn rewards on teas.co.uk

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

+100 pts

Create your free account

Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



100 pts = 1 tree

Plant a tree in Scotland

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.

