

Fuel Oil News

MARCH 2024



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We'd like to get to know you well...

I'm not entirely sure how many of our community would consider themselves in the Howard Jones fan club (or would freely admit it) but I can guarantee that those who do are, with all the lovers of 80's pop amongst us, singing along to the song featured in the above title.

A catchy little number, its lyrics are not generally feted for their illuminating insights. Yet, if you dig a little deeper, there is a surprising amount of inspiration to be gained.

In this issue we dedicate several pages to an in-depth preview of our annual industry EXPO. Hosted by the seemingly inexhaustible UKIFDA team, this vital industry gathering should, without doubt, be the unmissable date in your diary each year.

With the challenges facing the energy sector, it has never been more important that we gather in Liverpool under the theme of 'Working together in changing times'. The whole is, genuinely, greater than the sum of the parts and rapid progress will be better afforded by combining effort than by ploughing our own narrow furrows.

The content of the Future

Opportunities Conference, shared in full on page 22, has been carefully curated to address key questions and deliver the next phase of industry strategy. But, as Ken says in his column on page 21, "the discussions at the stands will be the beating heart of the event".

As Howard Jones aptly put it 40 years ago: 'People want to talk about the future, don't want to linger on the past. Leave the things that separate - build on a trust that we can stand on'.

It may be unlikely that he was thinking about the liquid fuel distribution industry when he penned the song, and I am sure there will be plenty of chatting about the past when we gather as an energy distribution community with a long history of serving our communities, but it is vital that we come together to look to the future with a united vision - since it is the only way that we can ensure that we will have one.

We can be one,
we can be one
together...

Can't wait
to see you
there!



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Fuel Oil News

The independent voice for the fuel distribution, storage and marketing industry in the UK and Ireland.

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On the cover

An unusual angle on a very familiar sight. Mechtronic has been enabling safe, accurate deliveries for 20 years now. As the company celebrates, we meet the team behind the popular product, on pages 16 & 17



In this issue

All you need to know about the upcoming industry EXPO on pages 21 to 29 with latest distributor fleet numbers for NI and ROI unveiled on page 20. The driver recruitment market is considered in depth on pages 34 & 35.

Greenergy expands biodiesel manufacturing plants

Greenergy has announced the successful commissioning of expansion works at two of their biodiesel plants in the UK and in Amsterdam.

The works included upgrading the pre-treatment process capability. This will allow for a wider range of waste oils as feedstocks to be processed into lower carbon biodiesel that will be used in transport fuels to reduce emissions.

Significant increase

Already a leading European producer of biodiesel from wastes, the upgrade to the Amsterdam plant has increased production capability by 25% to meet the rising demands for waste-based biofuels across Europe.

Christian Flach, CEO of Greenergy, said:



“We are constantly looking at how we can increase efficiency across our own operations, and the commissioning of these expansion

works in Amsterdam and on Teesside is key to our strategy to support the energy transition through waste-derived fuel products.”

Time to ‘axe the tax’ on renewable liquid heating fuels

The chancellor could achieve a quick win amongst rural voters by scrapping the tax on renewable liquid heating fuels in his spring budget.

That’s the message from industry bodies UKIFDA and OFTEC who wrote to Jeremy Hunt to ask him to maximise the impact of current government plans to introduce a renewable liquid heating fuel obligation by correcting the disparity on duty between renewable liquid fuels and fossil fuels when used for home heating.

Currently, no duty is applied to kerosene for heating use but renewable liquid fuels for heating use are subject to an additional c10p per litre. In comparison, renewable liquid fuels and fossil fuels attract the same duty when used in transportation.

A cost neutral ‘no brainer’

OFTEC and UKIFDA argue this disparity is counterintuitive and a significant barrier to

wider take up and have outlined a proposal to equalise the duty as in the transport sector where all fuels are treated the same. A move they argue would be cost neutral for the government.

UKIFDA CEO Ken Cronin and OFTEC CEO Paul Rose said: “It’s increasingly clear the only solution to achieving the UK’s net zero ambitions is a pragmatic one. The diversity of off-grid housing stock lends itself to a multi technology solution. It’s not a case of one size fits all.

“Renewable liquid fuels offer an affordable and practical solution for the UK’s 1.7 million oil heated homes to drastically cut their emissions. The Chancellor missed the chance to correct the duty disparity in his Autumn Statement, and the Budget is the last opportunity for the current Government to axe this unfair rural tax.

“It doesn’t make sense for the tax system to penalise the use of low carbon fuel for home heating when kerosene attracts a zero rate.”

The Government’s amendment to the Energy Bill committed to a consultation on a Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Obligation (RLHFO) within one year from the Bill receiving royal ascent. OFTEC and UKIFDA have submitted proposals to the Treasury to demonstrate how equalising the duties would be a cost neutral measure and require no subsidy.

Around 150 properties have switched to HVO as part of an industry demonstration. The conversion to the boiler can be completed for less than £500 and deliver an 88% drop in emissions. In comparison, according to the government’s data, the typical cost for off-grid homes to install a heat pump is £10,000 to £30,000, due to the additional changes needed for the technology to work efficiently.

Speaking on behalf of their industry bodies, Ken Cronin and Paul Rose added: “Our field trials have proved the versatility of HVO in decarbonising both domestic and non-domestic premises. Instead of remaining on kerosene, why not switch them to a renewable liquid fuel and start making carbon savings straight away?

“The mood music from the government has been positive but they must now follow through with their commitment to publish a consultation on a Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Obligation. Equalising the duty is cost neutral to the government and the industry is ready and waiting to play its part in delivering net zero off the gas grid.”

We will report on budget implications in our next issue.



Essar Oil UK rebrands to EET Fuels on route to become the UK's first low carbon process refinery

Essar Oil UK has become EET Fuels, as it delivers on its plan to become the UK's first low carbon process refinery, setting the global benchmark for lower emitting refineries and industrial decarbonisation.

For a century, the refinery based at Stanlow, on the river Mersey, has provided the fuel and chemical building blocks that people rely on for their everyday lives. EET Fuels remains committed to sustainably meeting the energy needs of the country. Supporting the UK's energy transition ambitions, EET Fuels is changing the way fuels are produced by significantly reducing all emissions related to the company's production processes.

EET Fuels is investing \$1.2bn to support industrial decarbonisation, with the ambition to deliver a 95% cut in carbon emissions associated with its production processes by 2030. That is two million tonnes of carbon emissions per year – 12.5% of all of the North West's carbon emissions, thereby making a substantial contribution to the UK's plans to decarbonise industry.

EET Fuels' decarbonisation strategy will reduce refinery emissions with two state-of-the-art approaches:

- Industrial carbon capture (ICC) – announced in November 2022 and planned to be operational by 2028. The project will result in an annual reduction of approximately 1 million tonnes of CO₂.
- Hydrogen fuel switching – using hydrogen as a fuel in place of natural gas and other refinery fuel sources, resulting in an annual reduction of ~1 million tonnes of CO₂.

Deepak Maheshwari, CEO, EET Fuels, said: "This is an exciting time for our business. We



are delivering on our plan to be the world's first low carbon process refinery and the world's first low carbon process fuel producer. It is world leading and we're pleased that it is happening now, in the North West."

EET Fuels is part of Essar Energy Transition (EET), which was launched in 2023 to drive the creation of the UK's leading energy transition hub in North West England. EET plans to invest a total of US\$3.6 billion in developing a range of low carbon energy transition projects over the next five years, of which US\$2.4 billion will be invested across its site at Stanlow, between Liverpool and Manchester.

Prashant Ruia, Chair, EET Fuels and CEO, Essar Energy Transition, said: "EET Fuels is a key part of EET, which is building Europe's foremost integrated energy transition hub. Leading by example, Essar Energy Transition is a major catalyst for region-wide industrial decarbonisation. We are playing our part to

ensure that the UK is delivering on its climate change goals, has enhanced energy security, and maintains a strong, secure manufacturing base for fuels."

EET's investment programme will play a major role in accelerating the UK's low carbon transformation, supporting the government's decarbonisation policy and creating highly skilled employment opportunities at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse economy. In addition to EET Fuels, EET also includes:

- EET Hydrogen, which is developing 1GW of blue hydrogen for the UK market, with follow-on capacity set to reach 3.8GW;
- EET Future Energy, which is developing 1GW of green ammonia in India, targeted at international markets and;
- Stanlow Terminals Ltd, which is developing enabling storage and pipeline infrastructure; and EET Biofuels, which is investing in developing 1 MT of low carbon biofuels.

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Fuels Industry UK sets out policy changes needed for net zero

With a general election looking highly likely this year, Fuels Industry UK has set out the policy changes needed from the UK Government so the fuels sector, and the UK as a whole, can transition to net zero with a thriving industrial sector still in place.

Recommendations

The recommendations can be adopted by any government to encourage essential investment in the delivery of net zero by making the UK competitive internationally.

The policies highlighted in the association's Policies for the Fuels Sector report address:

- The UK's high carbon and energy costs which are discouraging investors.
- Old models of legislation and regulation that are slowing down the net zero transition.
- The need to consider full lifecycle emissions.
- The workforce skills needed to deliver net zero.



Fuels Industry UK CEO, Elizabeth de Jong, said: "The fuels sector is helping the UK decarbonise but faces higher industrial costs than most competitor countries, poorer incentives to develop

new low emission technologies, and a policy environment that currently offers less certainty for investors. Without urgent action we risk falling behind and losing our global leadership in large-scale decarbonisation technologies like hydrogen, low-carbon fuels, and carbon capture.

"As we look ahead to the general election, this report sets out the clear policy needs of the fuels sector that will help us to deliver a successful transition while maintaining energy security for the UK."

HGVC secures £10m funding

HGV training specialist, HGVC has again been awarded a lead role on the Government's extended HGV Skills Bootcamps. The scheme will upskill thousands over the next two years.

The HGV Skills Bootcamps are flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills. First launched in December 2021, the programme has been extended once again until February 2026, with the Government committing a further £50m in initial funding, with scope for further extensions.

Helping employers plug the driver gap

HGVC has been awarded the maximum possible funding allocation of £10m to train 1,828 candidates over the next two years. It will focus solely on supporting employers looking to upskill existing staff, via three pathways: helping novice drivers gain their Category C (rigid lorry) licence, a Category C+E (articulated lorry) licence or helping those with a Category C licence upgrade to a Category C + E. This will include businesses across all sectors, including transport and logistics, retail, waste and recycling, agriculture, construction and engineering, local government, utilities and more.

The DfE funding offers a lifeline for employers large and small dealing with budget constraints. Under the new contract, HGVC



will deliver partially funded courses. For large organisations, with over 250 employees, the scheme offers employers a 70% contribution to HGV driver training through the DfE funding. For small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with under 250 employees, a 90% subsidy is available through the scheme. Employers will fund the remainder of the courses.

Since the launch of the Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving in 2021, HGVC has trained around 1,800 drivers.

The extended Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving goes live on 1 February 2024. Employers can apply at www.hgvc.co.uk/bootcamp.

James Clifford, CEO of HGVC, said: "This is a hugely positive initiative that the Government is undertaking and something that we are proud to again be a part of. The Skills Bootcamps have made a big difference to the driver shortage, yet there's more that needs to be done.

"For large and small employers, this is a major opportunity to upskill their staff with a significant subsidy from the Government."

New initiative cracks down on fuel thieves

Fuel Additive Science Technologies Ltd (FAST) has teamed up with Nottinghamshire Constabulary to put a stop to fuel thieves causing misery to local businesses.

Trial solution

Looking to address the specific challenges faced in rural areas, the forces have teamed up with FAST Exocet, a diesel dye company that offers the only notified HMRC fuel dye.

A meeting with farmers, haulage companies, and businesses was held, with free bottles of the blue dye, that makes fuel less appealing to target and enables the police to identify when it has been stolen, handed out at the event.

An effective deterrent

Workshop sergeant Mark Talbot, who came up with the idea, said: "This scheme is another tool to actively deter and prevent crime from occurring.

"We know fuel theft affects businesses in rural communities throughout Nottinghamshire, so implementing something like this is so important to crack down on criminals causing havoc to our rural communities.

"We can only achieve this with the help and support of members of our community so we're working with farmers, haulage companies, and businesses in the area to safeguard our rural spaces and tackle diesel theft head-on."

Significant impact on fuel theft

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner Caroline Henry said: "I'm excited by this new diesel dye project because I think it will make a big impact to reduce fuel theft offences.

"It will make it much easier to identify suspects and link them to offences and take action that could stop persistent offenders in their tracks."



Industry scheme celebrates 10 years

2024 marks the 10th anniversary of the Petroleum Driver Passport (PDP) scheme, an industry initiative backed by government, designed to ensure that all tanker drivers in the UK are trained and assessed to a consistent standard in loading, transporting and offloading petroleum fuel products from road tankers.

The scheme was developed by the Downstream Fuel Distribution Forum (DFDF) – formerly the Downstream Oil Distribution Forum – a partnership of employers, industry bodies and trade unions. The DFDF was first established in 2012 to provide a platform for the discussion and resolution of issues relating to health and safety as well as training in the downstream oil industry.

Current membership ranges from hauliers to trade associations, government departments – namely the Department for Transport and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero – and trade unions. As part of its early collaborative work, in 2014, the DFDF launched the PDP scheme.

A common standard

The scheme established a common standard for the training of all petroleum tanker drivers which, importantly, was backed by a system of approval and enforcement. Since its inception, the PDP has been managed by Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in conjunction with the PDP Management Group, a sub-group of the DFDF. UK terminals began using the PDP as a requirement of entry from 1st January 2015 and continue to act as the primary point of enforcement.

The PDP scheme is not only a guarantee of consistent, externally verified training but also an important example of effective collaboration between employers, unions,

trade associations, regulatory bodies, sector skills councils and Government.

The PDP is a driver card, demonstrating to terminal operators, hauliers, customers and the wider public that petroleum tanker drivers have been trained to the same consistently high and externally verified standard in all aspects of tanker driving.

At the heart of this voluntary scheme is an industry training standard which specifies all the required knowledge and practical skills for a petroleum tanker driver. The driver card is renewed on a five-year cycle, in line with a driver's ADR (Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road) licence and has annual practical assessment and classroom training requirements to maintain validity and ensure that standards are upheld.

The DFDF also successfully negotiated with the Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training (JAUPT) – now part of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and called the DVSA Training Accreditation team – that the annual training requirement could count towards Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) hours. Therefore, the annual PDP training provides highly relevant CPC training and no additional training burden on employers.

In addition, the scheme is supported by a comprehensive suite of documentation, including the industry training standard, the PDP syllabus and a scheme manual, as well as a website containing all relevant information and a host of useful resources for drivers, employers and trainers.

Strength to strength

Ten years on from its introduction, the scheme has gone from strength to strength and



today over 11,000 tanker drivers in the UK hold a PDP card. The success is testament to the commitment and dedication of all DFDF members whose core focus continues to be centred around the promotion of high levels of safety and competency across the fuel distribution sector.

To mark this important milestone, the DFDF is inviting everyone to take part in the scheme's digital celebration throughout 2024 using the hashtag #PDP10. It has also created a dedicated 10th Anniversary page on the website containing a number of downloadable resources. A video containing statements from members, partners, and a range of stakeholders reflects on progress to date and what is needed to address industry training and competency needs well into the future.

Marking a major milestone

As it looks ahead to the next ten years and beyond, the DFDF looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively on issues relating to health and safety and training in the downstream fuel distribution sector and to engage in important discussions in relation to future needs for net zero.

Marking this milestone provides an important opportunity to recognise the growth of the scheme and positive achievements over the last ten years while also strengthening and extending multi-stakeholder dialogue and co-operation as the sector continues to evolve.

For more information about the Downstream Fuel Distribution Forum and the PDP Scheme, please visit www.pdpasport.com

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- Perfect traceability of density and concentration results

New UK pricing lead for P66

Phillips 66 Limited has promoted Bhavna Misra to the role of pricing lead, UK Marketing – effective immediately.

Bhavna replaces Paul Carey, who recently retired after 35 years with the company. Prior to her new role, Bhavna was an FP&A Business Analyst and a Credit Analyst at Phillips 66 Limited. As the new pricing lead, she will manage market volatility and pricing, while ensuring that Phillips 66 Limited remains competitive in its pricing to its customers.

“I’m excited to be taking on the position of pricing lead and to be moving into a customer-facing role” says Bhavna Misra “I welcome the different elements it brings and look forward to engaging with customers in the upcoming



weeks, while further building relationships in 2024.”

Rupert Turner, Managing Director, UK Marketing, Phillips 66 Limited says: “We’re really thrilled to welcome Bhavna to the team, she has a great track record and we’re very much looking forward to seeing all that she does in the role.”



Firefly Green Fuels attends key UK-India Parliamentary Lunch

Firefly Green Fuels CEO, James Hygate, was recently invited to attend the 6th annual UK-India Parliamentary Lunch in the UK House of Lords. There was a huge amount of interest at the event around Firefly’s innovative SAF pathway and how it might be implemented on the Indian subcontinent.

Firefly is committed to decarbonising aviation by transforming sewage into a truly sustainable aviation fuel. The business specialises in a process which converts sewage sludge, a low-value waste product available in large quantities, into SAF. More than 57 million tonnes of sewage sludge are produced in the UK each year, with the potential to produce 250,000 tonnes of SAF.

Callum Stewart, Marketing and Communications Executive at Firefly Green Fuels, said: “We were delighted that Firefly was invited to the recent UK-India Parliamentary Lunch. It was great to see how much international interest there is around Firefly’s technology, which has potential to make a huge impact in India, one of the world’s fastest growing economies.”

Read more about developments at Firefly on pages 31 to 33 of this issue.



THE LATEST UPDATES FROM OUR DISTRIBUTOR COMMUNITY

Send your latest news to claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk or margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk

Aaron "Mitch" Mitchell celebrates 20 years with Prince Energy

Aaron "Mitch" Mitchell, Transport Director at Prince Energy, recently celebrated his 20th year anniversary of working at Prince Energy.

Claudia Weeks, Community Content Lead for Fuel Oil News, spoke with Aaron to hear about the last twenty years at Prince Energy.

Aaron reflected: "I am honoured to have reached this milestone in my career with Prince Energy, it's been an epic 20-year journey.

"My career at Prince commenced in the February of 2004, I was in my transition period from military to civilian employment. I enrolled with an agency and asked them to place me with as many ADR companies as possible so I could get a taste of what civilian employment had to offer!

"Soon into my new venture I was to meet with David Prince, Managing Director of then Prince Petroleum. On successful interview I was offered a contractual temp to perm contract of one year, this was quickly re-evaluated by David and by the June I was fully integrated into the company business."

I'm so grateful for this opportunity

"The growth that I've been privileged to be a part of during my time here has been amazing. When I started with the company it was operating a fleet of six vehicles, five ridged and one artic that I drove, we now have a fleet of fourteen tankers with a further five on order including our third artic! After my first year of employment, I was promoted to Transport Manager whilst taking on this role I continued to also drive for a further sixteen years. After almost seventeen years I was again promoted within the company to the position that I hold today of Transport Director.

"I'm so grateful for this opportunity afforded me by the Prince family, I've been well supported by the team at Prince and have made a lot of friends in the industry over the years. I look forward to the years of employment I have ahead of me and I'm ready to embrace the future in this industry."

A huge congratulations to Aaron! If you have a work anniversary that you would like to share then please get in touch – claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk



Tanker investment sees Rix hit a century

Rix Petroleum Ltd has hit a century with its latest investment. The Hull-based business has invested almost £2m in 10 DAF tankers, taking its national fleet past the 100 mark.

The trucks will initially work in the company's heartland of Hull and East Yorkshire, delivering agricultural and commercial fuels to farms and businesses across the region, and domestic heating oil to households.

Over time, however, some will be dispatched to the company's other 15 depots across the UK, either to extend the fleet in those areas or to replace older tankers.

The tankers will be fitted out with the latest technology in Santander, Spain, by family company Cobo.



Craggs Energy and Moorland Fuels – delighted to reveal new tankers

Craggs Energy, the West Yorkshire-based distributor, is proud to announce the launch of three new trucks for Craggs Energy and Moorland Fuels.

Kathryn Brennan, Senior Marketing Executive, said: "We're excited to reveal the newest members of the Craggs Energy

next generation fleet, featuring local scenes such as the Hewenden Viaduct and the impressive Manchester City skyline.

"They have been wrapped and are now out on the road! They have been designed to not only stand out on the road, but also to reflect our local community and the areas we proudly serve."

David Damary-Thompson, Director of Craggs Energy, added: "You may also have noticed the back of the tankers looks slightly different from our normal design. We have chosen to feature red and yellow chevrons, taking the first steps to becoming Chapter 8 compliant on both vehicles.

"Shortly, both tankers will be able to provide emergency fuel deliveries on highways and other high-speed roads ensuring a safe, efficient, and responsible delivery process!"

LCM Environmental – celebrating Leo's success

LCM Environmental Services Ltd, the Lancashire-based, fuel, energy, and infrastructure specialist, is incredibly proud of their Operations Assistant, Leo Garner, for passing his Level 3 Business Administration Apprenticeship with Burnley College.

Leo said: "During my time as an apprentice at LCM, I've been lucky to have amazing support and encouragement that's helped me sail through the program."

I felt like I belonged

"Right from the get-go, I felt like I belonged here. LCM has been like a second home to me, and I couldn't have asked for a better company to work for. Now that I've wrapped up my apprenticeship, I'm stoked to be joining the operations team and excited to see where this journey takes me within the company."

Jeremy Cosway, Operational Director, added: "We're thrilled that Leo has completed his apprenticeship with LCM through Burnley College. It's been a great journey to be on with Leo. He has learnt so much about LCM and the industry we operate within. We look forward to him being a long-term member of the team."

Congratulations to Leo!



Read all these stories
and more in full at
www.fueloilnews.co.uk

Compass Fuel Oils – To the rescue!

Compass Fuel Oils, the Lancashire-based fuel distributor, is always pleased to help in emergency situations, especially in the depths of winter.

A local care home got in touch with the distributor with an urgent request for fuel and Compass Fuel Oils managed to deliver the heating oil within 2 hours of receiving the initial call!

Michael Wilkinson was the tanker driver who delivered the fuel in a timely manner and was praised by Matt Ryan, Sales Director: "I would like to commend Michael for his exceptional work as our reliable go-to driver. He's been with the business for 9 years and he's always willing to assist with emergency deliveries."



Moorland Fuels – Employee of the Quarter

Moorland Fuels, the Devon-based fuel distributor, is proud to announce Kate Bradley, Sales Consultant, as their Employee of the Quarter.

Abby Turner, Director at Moorland Fuels, said: "We are proud to award Kate Bradley with the Employer of the Quarter award for Q4 2023.

"Kate consistently goes above and beyond for her customers and colleagues including picking up extra responsibilities such as weekend and evening deliveries in our custom 4X4 Ranger!

"Thank you for helping to support our business in every way you can and embodying our Employee-Ownership values, we appreciate you and hope you enjoy your prize!"

Congratulations to Kate! If you would like to celebrate a colleague for going above and beyond then please let us know: claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk

NWF Fuels – Going the extra mile

NWF Fuels, the Crewe-based distributor, is always keen to celebrate its employees and show appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the business. To support this, a new award has been introduced – Going the Extra Mile.

Dave Walmsley, Managing Director at NWF, explains more: "Going the Extra Mile is an employee recognition scheme we've developed to praise those who are consistently demonstrating the behaviours that make us who we are here at NWF Fuels.

"This encapsulates our tagline 'Where People Make the Difference'. It's from the dedication of our teams that we delight our customers with our fanaticism for service – and that's what enables us to grow as a business."

Dale Hunter, Accounts Payable Associate, is one of the January winners for the award. As NWF explained: "Dale has demonstrated lots of flexibility, a desire to help where required and a passion to put the support of the business first."

Congratulations to Dale and the rest of the winners!

Crown Oil – proudly supporting local hospice

Crown Oil, the Greater Manchester-based distributor, is proud to be supporting a local charity, Springhill Hospice. Based in Rochdale, Springhill Hospice provides the highest standard of care for patients in need of palliative care.

Crown Oil have donated £24,000 to the hospice this year, who are in vital need of funding and support. The money will cover the running costs for 3 days and, going forward, Crown Oil has pledged to pay for a day every year.



Matt Greensmith, Managing Director at Crown Oil, said: "We're proud to support Springhill Hospice's One Day Club initiative, covering three days' running costs in 2024 and a day every year from 2025. They provide vital and much-appreciated services to families across the greater Rochdale area, and at Crown Oil we feel that it's important for businesses to play an active role in supporting the local community."

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A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Wilma Kelly

WELCOME TO OUR FEATURE WHERE PEOPLE FROM MANY DIFFERENT ROLES IN THIS INDUSTRY WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH A TYPICAL DAY IN THEIR WORKING LIFE. THIS MONTH, FUEL OIL NEWS SPEAKS WITH WILMA KELLY, SAFETY, SUSTAINABILITY AND ENGINEERING DIRECTOR AT CERTAS ENERGY, TO DISCOVER HOW WILMA SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.



MY ALARM GOES OFF AT... 6:30am. Our drivers start work early – anytime between 4:00am and 6:00am. It's good to be up and organised as a lot of our business activities happen in the first part of the day.

I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY... checking in with my team. We are virtual, as we are based across the UK. We are all from diverse backgrounds and situated in the best locations to support operations.

We also have a wide range of Certas Energy colleagues in terminals, depots, forecourts, warehouses, offices, as well as our mobile workforce, including drivers and renewable operatives installing solar panels on customer sites.

I CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT... my mobile phone. In my job, being contactable and maintaining communication is key. It's important to be accessible, approachable and in touch with what is happening across the business.

MY TYPICAL DAY – is always different. From collaborating across the Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Leadership Team and travelling across the country to attending monthly Board meetings, it's fair to say, there is no typical day.

“WE ARE ON A REAL JOURNEY TO DECARBONISE OUR BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND OUR PRODUCTS. THIS PRESENTS MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH A VARIETY OF TALENT TEAMS, LEAD ON ALTERNATIVE LIQUID FUELS, SUCH AS HVO, AND DRIVE B2B RENEWABLE ENERGY INSTALLED SERVICES IN OUR RECENTLY ACQUIRED HEAT PUMP, SOLAR AND BATTERY BUSINESSES. EVERY DAY REALLY IS VARIED.”

– WILMA KELLY

MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT... was when we launched Safety First: Vision Zero and onboarded our Safety First Champions.

These are a wide group of colleagues from across the entire organisation, providing great leadership in health, safety and environmental matters. We were encouraged by the high volume of applications from colleagues across all areas of the business and geographies.

We also supported our Trade Union Safety Representatives in becoming part of the programme, which offered a great learning pathway for participants. The Safety First Champions, along with our Health and Wellbeing Champions, are vital to increasing engagement in health, wellbeing, safety, and environmental awareness.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB... is when colleagues and contractors have concerns or issues. It is also the best and most important part of the role.



We are in constant communication with teams and sometimes these conversations bring aspects of working life to light that need to be improved but I see it as a chance to make a positive difference.

Alongside great leadership team colleagues who care, I am blessed with a talented safety and engineering team, who focus on people and continual improvement.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB... is being able to help people, lead change that improves health and safety and to have a purpose-driven role.

I RELAX AFTER WORK BY... spending time with my husband, family, and our dogs. We have two miniature schnauzers, Oscar and Lola. It's great to get out into countryside with them. They are always pleased to see me at the end of the day and are so full of fun and mischief.

I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY... 11.00pm (often 10:59). There are never enough hours in the day but it's important to relax and recharge. The days are long, but the days are short!



New multi-channel fuel tank alarm launches

Centre Tank Services Ltd (CTS), a trade distributor of fuel dispensing, storage tank, AdBlue™ and lubrication equipment, is pleased to announce that they have redesigned the CTS multi-channel fuel tank alarm.

The CTS fuel tank alarm range has been on the market for over 20 years. The multi-channel tank alarm is recognised on refuelling tanks in a number of industries including haulage, construction, and agriculture, as well as on generator diesel tanks, and works by detecting and alerting tank owners of a high or low fuel level in their fuel tanks, or to warn them of presence of fluid in the bund.

A spokesperson from CTS explained more about the new alarm: “The



“THE TANK ALARM BOX NOW HAS A RAISED SOUNDER ON THE FRONT OF THE ALARM FOR AN INCREASED SOUND RANGE AND TO PREVENT WATER INGRESS.”

CTS Fuel Tank Level Alarm box has been redesigned to make it easier for tank manufacturers and engineers to install. It benefits from the same functionality but now has external mounting lugs for easier installation without the need to open up the box until it is being wired on site, as well as incorporating captive screws on the enclosure lid to prevent installers from accidentally dropping and losing them inside the bund.

“The tank alarm box now has a raised sounder on the front of the alarm for an increased sound range and to prevent water ingress. A rain drip guard now protects the decal for added protection from wet weather, allowing water to run off easily, improving visibility of the light up panel.

“Cable gland positioning has been improved,” the spokesperson continued, “with 7 cable glands on the bottom of the box with a larger gland for easy fitting of a 1.5mm² mains cable. Our alarms are now also supplied with gland plugs for any unused cable glands to stop water from entering the enclosure.

“The CTS Fuel Tank Alarm still has three functions; to detect and warn of a tank overflow, to alert of a high or low level of fuel, and to warn tank owners if there is a leak inside the bund. Each can be customised based upon the user’s requirements and fuel tank needs.

“Aside from the new features, the top mounted flashing orange strobe, weatherproof IP55 rating, test and mute functions and automatic reversed float logic for low channels, remain as features of this alarm. There are a number of different variations you can choose from depending upon your requirements, from alarm box only, to options with relay/s for connecting external equipment such as gauges or building management systems, or for using as a pump on/off control.”

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MechTronic: celebrating 20 years

MECHTRONIC IS A LEEDS-BASED FAMILY-OWNED AND RUN BUSINESS, SPECIALISING IN METERING AND GAUGING FUEL DELIVERY SYSTEMS FOR ROAD TANKERS. MECHTRONIC DESIGNS AND ENGINEERS FUEL DELIVERY SYSTEMS THAT AIM TO SAVE FUEL OIL DISTRIBUTORS TIME AND MONEY AND PREVENT CONTAMINATION. IN 2024 THE COMPANY IS CELEBRATING ITS 20TH YEAR IN BUSINESS!

CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD, SPOKE WITH **EMMA ALLINSON**, MARKETING COORDINATOR, AND SOME OF THE TEAM, TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE BUSINESS.

The development of the business

Emma explained the beginnings of the business: “MechTronic was established in 2004 and, in those early days, we initially just supplied the manifold – rather than any metering system.

“In 2006, we began to supply the MaxFlow system which revolutionised the fuel metering market. Built from our customers’ feedback, MaxFlow optimised space on the modern chassis. All the controls were in a single, weatherproof cabinet and Smart Product Grade Indicators helped to prevent fuel contamination.

“Then, in 2016, OptiMate was launched as a result of further customer feedback around the desire to physically prevent fuel contamination. Enthusiastically received by the industry, OptiMate has driven our business forward, with nearly 750 OptiMate metering systems on the road (as of February 2024).

“Even now, we continue to develop the product and introducing new capabilities such as dual metering. As the industry diversifies, we need to offer flexible solutions to continue to meet our customers’ needs.

“Our road map (pictured below) highlights

our key milestones and achievements. We are very proud of the journey we’ve been on.

“Our philosophy has always been to listen to our customers and strive to meet their expectations. Using advances in technology is one way that we can ensure we deliver for them at the same time as driving the business forward.”

The importance of team

MechTronic started with just two members of staff, back in 2004, and now employs a staff of twenty-six. The business is still family-owned and run, as Emma explains: “We have Martyn Wilkie (CEO), Brad Wilkie (Managing Director), Simon Haigh (Operations Director) and Vicky Wild (Finance Manager and Company Secretary) who all head up our management team.

“As part of our management structure, team representatives from across all the departments also form part of the management team. Lee Firbank is our Project and Operations Manager, Ryan Parr is our Engineering and Development Manager, Ben Wilkie is our Production Manager and Chris Wilkie is our Procurement and Logistics

Manager.

“By having a diverse management structure, we can make quick decisions and share best practices, ultimately uniting the team. We are lucky to have a fantastic team at MechTronic.”

The best results are achieved through teamwork and open communication

Claudia asked Emma and the team at MechTronic what values they hold as a business: “We encourage employees to think outside the box, experiment with new ideas, and challenge the status quo. MechTronic employees are given the platform to bring their creative visions to life, resulting in groundbreaking solutions for our customers.

“We believe that the best results are achieved through teamwork and open communication – everyone’s voice is heard and valued. Whether it’s in-person meetings or virtual collaborations, we ensure that information flows freely, promoting a culture of transparency, trust, and inclusivity.

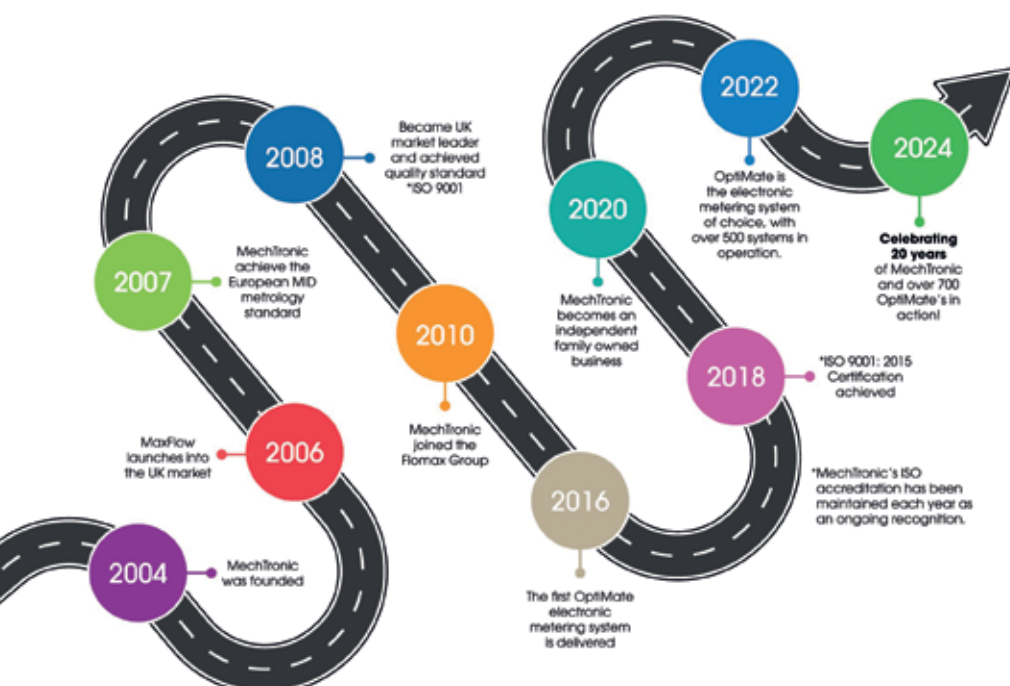
“As a family-run business, we realise that happy employees are productive employees. We take pride in our wellness programs, which include flexible work hours and support a healthy work-life balance.

“At MechTronic, our company culture is, undoubtedly, a driving force behind our achievements and industry recognition. By empowering employees, fostering innovation, and prioritising employee wellbeing, we can continue to deliver for our customers and our business.”

The home of MechTronic

MechTronic is based in Wortley, Leeds but has service engineers across the UK. Emma explained how the business operates from different locations: “Originally, we were based at Kirkstall Forge in Leeds, where we stayed for a couple of years before moving to Wortley, also in Leeds. Wortley has been our home since then. As we grew, our internal structure also evolved. We were able to develop our warehouse and production space to meet our requirements over the years.

“We are in the process of renovating our



office space. As a result of these renovations, we have been able to bring our office colleagues closer together, so we are now located in one area. Additionally, we now have breakout spaces and a large area that we can use for meetings, training sessions, and other purposes.

“Our service engineers are based across the UK, but we have regular service meetings where the team gets together, and we now have a nice welcoming space for everyone. We also welcome flexible and hybrid working; some colleagues can work from home, but they still come into the office regularly. Due to this flexible approach, and as we grow, we have no immediate plans to move.”

Why does a customer choose MechTronic?

Emma considered this question: “Our philosophy has always been to listen to our customers and strive to meet their expectations. Our culture, core values, and being a close-knit family-run business, allows us to react quickly and make decisions that benefit our customers.

“Additionally, we are proud of being approachable and friendly as a team. Over the past two decades, we have never stood still and have always tailored our products to fit our customers’ demands and requirements.”

Meet the Team!

Claudia asked to meet some of the MechTronic team to find out more about the people behind the business and what makes them tick!



Ben Wilkie – Production Manager

• *How long have you worked for the business?*

16 years

• *What do you enjoy the most about it?*

I enjoy working with a company that really values our customers and keeps pushing the industry with our innovation.

• *Tell us about your most memorable day at work.*

When I became Production Manager.

• *Please tell us an interesting fact about you or your favourite hobby?*

I regularly ride my bike through the beautiful Yorkshire countryside and my biggest achievement is completing a sportive event called “The Struggle Moors” where I cycled 112 miles with 11,800 feet of climbing.



Lee Firbank – Project and Operations Manager

• *How long have you worked at MechTronic?*

One year

• *What do you enjoy most about it?*

Working in an enjoyable atmosphere where every day is a different challenge.

• *Tell us about your most memorable day at work.*

That would have to be October 11th, 2023

– completing all our customer contract calibrations where seven months of hard work from the service department finally concluded.

• *Please tell us an interesting fact about you or your favourite hobby?*

A golfer since I was 10 years old, peaking at a 4 handicap!



Simon Haigh – Operations Director

• *How long have you worked at MechTronic?*

Just short of 19 years

• *What do you enjoy the most about it?*

I enjoy working with a small team that can react to customer requests quickly.

• *Tell us about your most memorable day at work.*

Being offered the Operations Director position.

• *Please tell us an interesting fact about you or your favourite hobby?*

I like all things equestrian, from riding to spectating at eventing.



Emma Allinson – Marketing Coordinator

• *How long have you worked at MechTronic?*

8 years

• *What do you enjoy the most?*

It sounds like a cliché, but every day is different, and I get to work with a great bunch of people.

• *Tell us about your most memorable day at work.*

I love the hustle and bustle of preparing for our Expo! It’s such an exciting time with so much to do. Seeing everything come together is always such a proud moment for me.

• *Please tell us an interesting fact about you or your favourite hobby?*

25 years ago, I went backpacking and ended up living and working in Australia for three years.

I’m now in York with my husband and two boys and wouldn’t change it for the world – although it would be nice to go back and visit when the boys are older!



Brad Wilkie – Managing Director

• *How long have you worked at MechTronic?*

16 years

• *What do you enjoy the most about it?*

I truly believe that everyone in our team brings something unique to the business. I am immensely proud of our customer-focused approach and differentiated products.

• *Tell us about your most memorable day at work.*

The day my Dad handed over the reins of the family business to me. Since then, I have strived to uphold the values and principles that have been the foundation of our family business, while also innovating and adapting to the changing business landscape.

• *Please tell us an interesting fact about you or your favourite hobby?*

I am a cycling enthusiast and love exploring new routes, during the warmer months, to clear my mind and enjoy the scenery.

The 20th anniversary

Claudia wanted to know how the MechTronic team would be coming together to celebrate their 20th anniversary. “As we work across the UK, we regularly get the team together,” Emma explained. “This means that everyone is up to date on new developments, and we can share best practices.

“As part of these meetings, we will head out into Leeds for a meal, and all enjoy a game of interactive darts – it’s a great way for the team to socialise and build relationships as some of our engineers who are based in Scotland or further South wouldn’t normally see our Leeds-based team, and it’s always great to be able to put faces to names.

“For our 20th anniversary, we have updated our branding to signify this milestone. At MechTronic we firmly believe we are successful due to the team we have working here and, to celebrate, we have planned a weekend away for the whole team, and their partners, at York Races.”

Looking to the future

“We are excited and honoured to be celebrating 20 years in the industry. Our journey has been marked by continuous innovation, outstanding customer support, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

“We owe our success to our dedicated team and the trust that our customers have placed in us. As we look to the future, we remain committed to driving industry advancements and delivering solutions that exceed expectations.”

A huge congratulations to the whole team at MechTronic on their anniversary. We can’t wait to hear what the next 20 years holds for the business!



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Ryan Finnigan, Ribble Fuel Oils: ten top tips for tanker care

RIBBLE FUEL OILS IS A FUEL DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS THAT IS PART OF THE NWF FUELS GROUP. ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED IN 1967, THE DISTRIBUTOR CONTINUES TO PRIDE ITSELF ON ITS STRONG LOCAL TIES AND QUALITY SERVICE.

CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, ASKED **RYAN FINNIGAN**, AN EXPERIENCED TANKER DRIVER FROM RIBBLE FUEL OILS, FOR HIS TOP TEN TIPS FOR TANKER CARE.



Life on the road

Ryan gave some background to his role as a tanker driver: "I deliver all types of fuels to the commercial, domestic, and agricultural sectors. I've been driving tankers for around 7 years, and I drive a range of vehicles from 6 or 8 wheelers to the artic.

"A typical day varies; a commercial delivery day involves more travelling and larger drops. A domestic delivery day can be up to 25 drops—that was a busy day!

"Most days are challenging because of excessive traffic or finding the location of certain jobs or the tank locations, but having experience does make things easier. I find that experience of an area and jobs makes such a huge difference to speed and performance – it almost becomes second nature."

Top 10 Tips for Tanker Care

A skilled and knowledgeable tanker driver, Ryan is quick to point out that "clean and well-kept wagons benefit a company!" Ryan has prepared his top tips and reasons for tanker care and shares them here with Fuel Oil News:

1. It's easier to identify defects with a clean wagon. Exterior cleaning is vital for appearance and for roadworthiness.
2. Customers see that you take pride and great care over the vehicles which are representing the company.
People often mistake my tanker for a new wagon. I can't complain about that – especially as it's over two years old! It's also



worth noting that, when the tanker is sold or returned, it will retain as much of its value as possible if it's kept in good condition.

3. Regularly cleaning the glass windows and windscreen, including the mirrors, reduces blind-spot risks. (I always keep a microfiber cloth and Rain-x window cleaner in the wagon).
4. Cleanliness on the inside of the tanker is also hugely important; it is my office for up to 12 hours a day.
Getting fuel on your clothes or person along with rain and mud daily isn't great. Having a clean place to dry off and clean up helps. (I also have white roll and wipes in the wagon to help too!)
5. Cleaning the tanker at the end of a shift can be time consuming and messy work – getting soaked at the end of a hard shift isn't fun. However, coming to work the next morning and getting into a clean vehicle is totally worth it.

By cleaning the tanker every day, you keep on top of it. If you let the dirt build up, then it takes a lot longer to get clean! I recommend using Meguiars detailer spray and Rain-X window cleaner.

6. PPE and spare items. It's so important to have PPE and spare items ready to go in the tanker. I always have spare work gear and a towel and always take two bottles of eye wash; in case something happens like a tank rupture or gauge failure causing a spill.
7. Keeping the delivery metre clean is vital. It aids the use of it as well as improving longevity. This also applies to other vehicle controls.
8. Always make sure you have the right tyres if you can. Tyres for off-road use are also desirable when doing a lot of site work and when visiting farms. You need grip not slip!
9. Impressions count. The mechanics that maintain the vehicles will thank you (maybe not always verbally, but it will certainly be noted!) Also, if other drivers use the same tanker, then they will be happy too!
10. There are also things that make the job easier such as locking diffs, double-drive axles and other driver aids. In-cab technology has its advantages but having a good working knowledge of your vehicles and not always relying on technology can also help you!



A huge thanks to Ryan at Ribble Fuel Oils for his superb tips and advice for tanker care.

TOP 10

FUEL OIL DISTRIBUTORS

IRELAND

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

COMPANY	NUMBER OF TANKERS
East Cork Oil	194
Corrib Oil	110*
Certa Ireland	103
Klass Oil	52
Valero Marketing	41
Sweeney Oil	24
Glen Fuel Services	21
Tria Oil	18
Ultima Oil	18
M&J Kelleher	17



Certa Ireland

NORTHERN IRELAND

COMPANY	NUMBER OF TANKERS
Nicholl Fuel Oils	120**
LCC Oil	110
Patterson Oil	36
Bangor Fuels	35
AH Fuel Oils	25
Thompson Fuels	18
Morrow Fuels	16
WR Kennedy & Sons	12
P Ferguson & Sons	11



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I had to make sure I kept an eye on the real world

THE REASON WHY THIS YEAR'S EXPO IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT IN A DECADE.

I am writing this piece following several meetings in Ireland with our Alliance partners, discussing the political backdrop of the last 12 months and what the next 12 months will look like. These meetings add to the many UKIFDA has attended in the previous two months across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, meeting representatives of all the main political parties.

What has struck me is the changing narrative around meeting targets, specifically net zero by 2050. Previously, there was little discussion about how to achieve the goals and who would bear the costs. However, the conversation is now moving towards the economic implications ahead of the elections in the UK and Ireland. This is a welcome shift as our industry knows that customers are worried about the huge cost of government policies and what it means for their pockets.

Politicians are beginning to come to grips with this issue, as seen in recent announcements by the UK Prime Minister regarding his net zero reset, the Labour leader's spending commitments, and comments in the Dáil by Sinn Féin about the burdens of carbon tax.

There is, of course, a double-edged sword – while trying to provide comfort to the electorate, this activity also shows policy inconsistency and creates delays to business. This delay, unfortunately, does not help meet targets, and most research suggests that any delay now will ultimately increase costs.

In all of our recent political dialogue, we have demonstrated not only the economic and

consumer benefits of using renewable liquid fuels for heating but also that we can meet the carbon targets up to 2033. Therefore, we don't have to delay and make it more expensive. As one politician said – **“WOW, this is a complete no-brainer”**.

“I HAD TO MAKE SURE I KEPT AN EYE ON THE REAL WORLD.”

RODDY DOYLE – IRISH AUTHOR, BOOKER PRIZE WINNER

However, the problem with no-brainers is that we still need to do the work to make the 'system' arrive at the same conclusion. That is why EXPO 2024 is so critical – the theme of **‘working together in changing times’** is now more important than ever.

I have previously mentioned in this column that our Future Fuels campaign, which began in May 2021 with a simple leaflet posted through our customers' letterboxes, was just the start. It came about because of a huge collaboration between distributors, technicians, manufacturers and suppliers. I am proud of how we have built a successful relationship with OFTEC, Fuels for Ireland and many others across our industry.

Let's keep pushing forward and making progress. Now is not the time to rest on our laurels. We still have a lot of work to do, especially in planning and delivering the next

phase, particularly in a year when politics will be front and centre in Ireland and the UK.

We now need to decide what we will say, how, to whom, when and using what data. That's the EXPO 2024 agenda.

The Future Opportunities Conference at EXPO 2024 is structured to look at these questions across the UK and Ireland – the views of current politicians, existing players in the industry, new market entrants and data providers will all play a part.

Moreover, the discussions at the stands will be the beating heart of the event. Yes, it is about meeting old friends; yes, it is about showcasing and selling your products, but I hope you agree that it is also about ensuring we continue to do so for many years to come.

Working together increases the possibility of finding the next simple idea that turns the dial. We all need to keep an eye on the real world, and Liverpool is a great place to do so. I encourage as many of you as possible to attend and join the discussion, and I look forward to seeing you there.



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10th and 11th April 2024
Exhibition Centre Liverpool

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UKIFDA Future Opportunities Conference 2024 – full agenda

Date and Time	Activity	Description	Speakers
WEDNESDAY 10TH APRIL			
11:15am – 2:00pm Future Opportunities Conference – Day One			
11:15am – 11:30am	Welcome		Ken Cronin, UKIFDA, CEO
11:30am – 11:45am	Keynote Speech		Rupert Turner, Phillips 66, Managing Director, UK Marketing
11:45am – 12:30pm	Decarbonising Ireland Roundtable: Progress made and the future trajectory for a greener Ireland	As Ireland heads into a possible election with climate change and the cost of living at the forefront of the agenda. This roundtable assesses the progress made in decarbonising oil-heated homes and outlines the future trajectory for a greener Ireland.	Kevin McPartlan, Fuels for Ireland, CEO, Mark Doyle, Firebird, Managing Director, Niall Fay, Grant Engineering, General Manager, Pat Murnane, Tria Oil, Group Operations Manager, Jerry Malee, DCC Certa, Head of Wholesale and Commercial Sales
12:30pm – 1:15pm	Data Geeks Panel Session: Harness the power of data for industry transformation	Join a panel of data experts in an illuminating discussion on how data and systems integration are revolutionising the liquid fuel distribution sector. Explore how working together could achieve that goal.	Tim Buckman, BoilerJuice, CEO, Rahul Maheshka, FoxInsights, International Sales Manager, Gordon Hyland, Touchstar Technologies Ltd, Sales Director
1:15pm – 2:00pm	What next for the Markets?	In a year of market turmoil, this session explores the major drivers of fuel prices, both old and new, and looks ahead to future drivers.	James Spencer, Portland Fuel, Managing Director
5:00pm	Day One – Exhibition Ends		
6:30pm – 7:30pm	President's Drinks Reception sponsored by FoxInsights	This popular ticket only event precedes the 2024 Awards Dinner. Join us for a glass or two of something special whilst listening to some live classical music.	
7:30pm – 10:00pm UKIFDA Awards Dinner 2024 sponsored by Mabanaft			
Providing the chance to relax and socialise with friends and colleagues, this ticket-only event celebrates the very best of the liquid fuel distribution industry with presentations made to those who are leading the way and those who are making a difference. The guest speaker is the highly acclaimed adventurer,			
THURSDAY 11TH APRIL			
9:30am – 9:30am Day Two – Exhibition Opens			
11:00am – 2:00pm	Future Opportunities Conference – Day Two		
11:00am – 11:15am	Opening Remarks		Ken Cronin, UKIFDA, CEO
11:15am – 11:45am	Keynote Speech – The politics of decarbonisation	Journey through the seats of Parliament as George Eustice MP shares insights into the political landscape that is shaping the industry. From the Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Legislation, the oil boiler ban delay, and the Net Zero reset, Mr Eustice offers an exclusive perspective on the challenges and opportunities faced while steering the course in these transformative times.	George Eustice MP, Parliamentary Minister, MP
11:45am – 12:30pm	Update on the UKIFDA & OFTEC Future Fuels Project	The Future Ready Fuel project has been a technical success, and governments across the UK have recognised tentatively that a 'one size fits all' technology is unlikely to work, with the timing tight – the panel will dive into recent technical, political and distribution successes and discuss what is next.	Ken Cronin, UKIFDA, CEO, Paul Rose, OFTEC, CEO, John Weedon, Mitchell & Webber, Managing Director, Stephen Rhodes, Highland Fuels, Managing Director, Angus Blundell, Certas Energy
12:30pm – 1:00pm	Future Role for Hydrogen	JCB, a trailblazer in hydrogen research, takes centre stage to explore the future role of hydrogen. Could it revolutionise the liquid fuel distribution sector? Hear about the ground-breaking work that JCB has done in engine technology and its potentially pivotal role in achieving a sustainable and renewable fuel mix.	Tom Beamish, JCB, Principal Engineer -Executive Support, Mark J Richards, JCB, Principal Engineer -Executive Support
1:00pm – 2:00pm	What is the future of liquid fuels in Net Zero? – Latest views from refiners and suppliers	It was a bleak outlook for liquid fuels a few years ago. Geopolitical change, cost of living issues and the stark realisation that there are applications for liquid fuels have rejuvenated the sector. Our industry-leading panel takes a look at what's next.	Carlos Rojas, EET Fuels, Chief Marketing Officer, Jay Nair, Mabanaft, Head of UK, Caroline Lumbard, Greenergy, Simon Holt, Phillips 66, Value Chain Strategy & Optimisation Manager for Europe
2:00pm – 2:00pm	Conference Close – UKIFDA President		Rory Clarke, J. R. Rix & Sons Ltd, Non-Executive Director
3:30pm – 5:30pm After Show Drinks Reception sponsored by Kingspan			
Everyone is welcome to this relaxed event, which rounds up UKIFDA EXPO 2024, providing the opportunity for exhibitors and delegates to reflect on the 2 days with a drink in hand.			



Supplying renewable diesel.*

Renewable diesel sold by Phillips 66 Limited is derived from biomass sources such as used cooking oil, fats, greases and vegetable oils, resulting in a fuel of significantly lower carbon intensity than fossil fuel and is a high-quality alternative to conventional fossil diesel.



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UKIFDA EXPO 2024: the industry awards

THE ANNUAL AWARDS RECOGNISE AND CELEBRATE THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS OF REMARKABLE COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE EVOLVING LIQUID FUEL DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY.

THE PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS CEREMONY WILL BE HOSTED BY UKIFDA PRESIDENT RORY CLARKE AT THE EXPO DINNER SPONSORED BY MABANAFT, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE END OF DAY ONE OF EXPO 2024 (10-11 APRIL).

KEN CRONIN COMMENTS: "THESE AWARDS ARE A TANGIBLE TESTAMENT TO THE DEDICATION AND INNOVATION THAT CONTINUE TO DRIVE OUR INDUSTRY ONWARD. THEY ARE A MUCH-ANTICIPATED PART OF THE EXPO EVENT. THEY ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO PUSH BOUNDARIES, EXPERIMENT, AND SET NEW STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN THIS EVER-EVOLVING LANDSCAPE.

RECOGNISING THE WIDER INDUSTRY, THE GREEN AND INNOVATION AWARDS ARE OPEN TO ENTRIES FROM BOTH MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS OF UKIFDA THOUGH A NON-MEMBER MUST BE NOMINATED BY A UKIFDA MEMBER.

WINNING OR EVEN BEING NOMINATED FOR AN EXPO AWARD BRINGS VALIDATION FROM INDUSTRY EXPERTS, BUILDING TRUST IN YOUR BRAND, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.



Customer Service Award sponsored by Worldpay

This is the second year **Worldpay** has sponsored the Customer Service award, as Alison Sweeney, Corporate Sales Director, International Fuel Oil Energy and Agriculture, explains: "This year's EXPO theme 'Working Together in Changing Times' is more important than ever, especially when it comes to customer service. It's evident that the Fuel Distribution industry is committed to delivering excellent service and this award provides the opportunity to recognise the customer service champions making a difference in their organisation and for their customers.

"As a global payments leader, we partner with our customers to help them modernise their systems and ease technology burdens so businesses can deliver great customer and partner experiences. It was great to get involved last year, and we're delighted to be sponsoring the award again."

Recognition for good customer service is to be celebrated

The Worldpay Customer Service Award honours customer service personnel who consistently deliver outstanding service.

Acknowledge and nominate your customer service star today!

In considering who to nominate, your nominee may, for example:

- Ensure customers receive the guidance and answers needed.
- Show empathy, responsiveness and resourcefulness when troubleshooting problems.

- Have a positive attitude both in overall ability, adaptability and communication.
- Take ownership of problems and follow through to completion.

Entries close on the 7th March 2024.



Driver of the Year Award sponsored by OAMPS

Karl Jones, Account Director of OAMPS Hazardous Industries, the specialist adviser to the hazardous fuels and environmental sectors and sponsor of the prestigious Driver of the Year Award, said: "The search is on! It's time to find the industry's best tanker drivers across the UK and Ireland whose inspirational stories motivate the entire industry to keep pushing for the highest standards in safety, efficiency and customer care.

"This is our 23rd consecutive year of sponsoring this award, and we're proud to do so.

"By recognising the drivers who deliver at every level, over and above the fuel deliveries they make day in and day out, we are rewarding their all-important wider contribution. Drivers' positive actions and behaviour help reduce the number of spillages, prevent pollution incidents and increase awareness among customers of environmentally beneficial initiatives, such as alternative green fuels.

"As a specialist fuel distribution insurer, we are looking forward to learning more about all the great drivers nominated while we support the industry and applaud its successes."

Get your stand-out delivery driver recognised

The OAMPS Driver of the Year Award celebrates those in the liquid fuel distribution sector who demonstrate industry excellence.

The following criteria are considered in deciding the winner of this prestigious award, with the judges looking for someone who:

- Consistently maintain industry-leading and high delivery standards.
- Support customers and raise awareness about tank safety.
- Conduct business safely and professionally, demonstrating industry best practices.
- Be an ambassador for the company or industry.

Entries are closed for this year's Driver of the Year Award.



Green Award sponsored by Oilshield

For the 6th year, **Oilshield**, which provides insurance and risk management solutions for fuel oil distributors, is sponsoring the Green Award.

Tom Ower, Development and Marketing Lead said: "The sector is certainly moving forward year-on-year to reach a greener future, and it's great to be involved with events like UKIFDA's EXPO, where we get to pool knowledge and network.

"Last year's entries were inspirational, and deciding on the winner was tough. We know there's been lots more happening since. This year's award will represent companies making significant changes in the Fuel Distribution industry and we look forward to learning more

about the entrants' latest green achievements and milestones."

We're on the hunt for a 'green' leader in the liquid fuel distribution sector

The Oilshield Green Award recognises a business or organisation that is taking genuine steps towards a decarbonised future.

Acknowledge and nominate as your green champion a company or organisation that:

- Reduces carbon emissions and delivers energy savings or waste reduction.
- Has introduced new technology, fuel or additive that cuts carbon emissions.
- Has developed risk management policies that prevent spills and protect the environment.
- Implements continuous improvement measures for year-on-year sustainability progress.
- Promotes future fuels to staff, customers and communities.

Entries close on the 7th March 2024.



Innovation Award sponsored by Fuel Oil News

Commenting on the Innovation Award 2024, Margaret Major, Publishing Director for the award sponsor Fuel Oil News, stated: "As the communication hub of the community, it's our role to share industry developments, and the Innovation Award is an excellent opportunity to uncover the latest sector innovations. This is the third year we have sponsored this relatively new addition to the UKIFDA Awards and, each year, we have been extremely impressed with the innovations submitted. We are very much looking forward to seeing 2024's entries.

"As a sector in transition, recognising and rewarding the companies in our community that are innovating, be that on the pathway to net zero or to deliver liquid fuels to sectors in a new way, is crucial. It is also a vital factor in motivating others in the industry to overcome the challenges the sector is facing right now."

Innovation in liquid fuel distribution is what drives the sector forward

The Fuel Oil News Innovation Award recognises businesses introducing new ideas, technologies and ways of working.

Acknowledge and nominate an

organisation that you regard as a great innovator because it:

- Has created/introduced an innovative product, service or new technology.
- Has adopted and/or introduced new business models and/or ideas.
- Is making an overall positive difference within the fuel distribution sector.
- Has created an innovative and collaborative partnership relevant to liquid fuel distribution..



Young Person of the Year sponsored by Just Tankers

Let's celebrate the emerging talent in our industry

The Just Tankers Young Person of the Year Award highlights the contribution that young people make.

Acknowledge and nominate as your top young person someone who:

- Has made a positive impact on the organisation.
- Always strive for excellence.
- Exceeds expectations frequently.
- Is an excellent point of contact for customers.

Entries close on 7th March 2024.



Depot of the Year sponsored by Pen Underwriting

The search is underway to find the best fuel distribution depot for 2024.

The winning distributor needs to demonstrate they are an industry leader in standards or safety and operation improvements.

All depots audited and passed by UKIFDA Technical Manager Tony Brown as part of the association's Depot Certification Scheme in the past 12 months are automatically entered.

To find out more about this year's awards and download the entry forms, please visit:

<https://ukifda.org/expo-2024-awards/>

Take advantage of the advance delegate ticket price

"Take advantage of the Advanced Delegate tickets that are now available for purchase", says UKIFDA EXPO & Conference 2024 organiser Dawn Shakespeare.

After unveiling this excellent conference programme, UKIFDA has now released advance delegate tickets for this year's EXPO, priced at just £12 each.

The price will increase to £15 for tickets purchased at the event.

Dawn explains: "We want you to have the best experience possible, and the ticket cost is purely an administrative one to allow us to plan for the right number of attendees. In the past, delegates have registered and not attended making it difficult to plan the catering, security and facilities accurately – we hope you understand."

Securing your ticket in advance means you save on the price, and pre-registering means faster entry on arrival. Simply visit the UKIFDA website or scan the QR code below and complete the booking registration form. Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email that will let you know more about your ticket and name badge.

Sharing the latest EXPO 2024 news, Dawn adds: "The exhibition space has nearly sold out, so if there are companies interested, please contact me immediately. The ever-popular Mabanaft-sponsored Awards Dinner and President's Drinks Reception, sponsored by FoxInsights, has already sold out. Also, the award entries and nominations are flooding in, so if you haven't submitted yours yet, please do so as soon as possible. It's going to be a great night.

"Plus, new this year is the After Show Drinks Reception – this new addition to the schedule is kindly sponsored by Kingspan – we look forward to seeing you there."



The industry EXPO and Future Opportunities Conference is always extremely well-received so don't miss out on the advanced price – book your tickets now.

Delivering growth: the importance of a fully engaged workforce

“HAVING AN ENGAGED DRIVER WORKFORCE IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ENABLING GROWTH AND SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE BULK FUELS INDUSTRY.”

DAVID HEATH, HEAD OF FUELS AT SUTTONS TANKERS



With employee engagement having become a real buzz word over recent years, its importance cannot be underestimated. David Heath, Head of Fuels at Suttons Tankers discusses here how having an engaged workforce boosts productivity, increases loyalty and ultimately leads to satisfied employees which, in turn, results in improved performance and better service to customers.

Employee engagement is crucial, especially in transport. Drivers are the beating heart of a logistics business. They represent everything the company stands for and are brand ambassadors to its customers.

Remote working and limited face to face interaction with senior management can lead to feelings of disconnection, impacting motivation and performance. Effective engagement boosts productivity, loyalty, and overall satisfaction, ultimately improving service quality and business success.

Due to the increasing numbers of depots and out-bases that logistics businesses now operate to be geographically advantageous, many drivers work remotely and do not frequently interact with senior management. The absence of interaction can have a detrimental impact on drivers. It can often lead to a lack of direction, support, and mentorship. Drivers who work remotely can also be subject to a lack of understanding of the business strategy, resulting in low motivation. Through research carried out by the Suttons Tankers leadership team, it has been recognised that drivers are keen to understand the overarching strategy and feel fulfilled knowing that their role and efforts are contributing to the development of the business.

Working remotely but not remote

At Suttons Tankers we have acknowledged the importance of keeping our driver workforce engaged and the fuels team have seen real progress. Pooling the strength of the regional operations support structure to the local operations management team has been a key factor in our success.

Suttons has invested in its operational management team to ensure that an operations

manager is present at our major remote working sites every day to interact with drivers. For our smaller sites there is a schedule for regular visits. Safety briefings are delivered, guidance is given, and key messages are shared. Having a management presence provides structure to the division and a framework for support.

Joel Hildago, one of our fuels drivers commented: *“It’s reassuring to have a manager available at the start or end of each shift. Having regular training and briefings keeps us all aware of the bigger picture, but it’s also nice to have someone there to debrief the day with.”*

In a recent engagement survey, Suttons Tankers’ fuels drivers scored highly, with more than three quarters of our drivers seeing themselves still employed here in two years’ time. It’s also worth noting that 9 in 10 drivers ‘understand what they need to do to succeed in their role’. This increased management presence has clearly given direction and motivation to the driver cohort.

Strengthening support

Upon reflection of this feedback, the fuels leadership team are increasing their presence further to support engagement with the drivers. Senior managers are carrying out a series of town hall meetings across all sites in Q1 2024 which are aimed at enhancing the cultivated team spirit and strengthening relationships.

The driver team at Northampton, one of our remote working locations, are positive about the current level of communication with the leadership team. They have commented that *“having the senior managers and wider operations team meet us at Town Hall meetings show we are one team.”*



Steve Shrewsbury-Gee

Fuel tanker drivers carry an enormous amount of responsibility when on the road. Drivers such as Steve Shrewsbury-Gee at Suttons understand, and are well trained in, the safe carriage of dangerous goods and the necessary precautions they must adhere to.

Many fuel tanker drivers deliver directly into forecourts. This involves direct interaction with the public. To act as safely as possible, Steve determines the size of each site and respectfully waits until he can safely move the tanker into position for delivery.

He explains: *“it is important to cordon off the area to protect the public. The managers at Suttons provide us with the equipment to put the customer and the public first when delivering the product. Knowing I have delivered the product safely at the end of each day is the most important thing to me.”*

The engagement survey also revealed that 98% of fuels drivers at Suttons ‘know what they are expected to deliver’ in their role. Clear job expectations and regular management check-ins are a contributing factor to this high level of engagement.

The management and training team at Suttons empower drivers to follow the correct procedures and processes. Regular contact and refresher training is delivered to support them to carry out their job compliantly, delivering the highest levels of service to our customers.

While the results from the survey are encouraging, our efforts won’t stop there. We are looking into rolling out tablet-based communications in our remote locations so that drivers can easily and regularly speak with the management team. Briefings, notices, and business information can be shared with drivers in an interactive way to further improve engagement in these more remote areas.

Thanks to the high levels of engagement in our fuel’s driver workforce, Suttons Tankers can provide the fantastic service, value, and safety our company is known for to a customer base located nationwide. Engagement is a core focus of ours and we are excited to explore other ways to keep our driver cohort engaged and committed, enabling us to grow further in the fuels sector.

INDUSTRY EXPO REVISITED

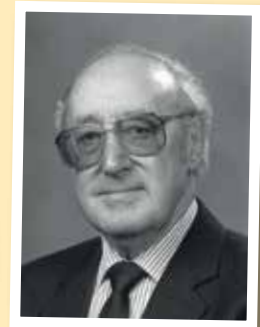
WITH THE ANNUAL INDUSTRY GATHERING ARGUABLY BOTH THE HIGHLIGHT AND THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT OF THE LIQUID FUEL DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY YEAR WE ASKED YOU TO SHARE YOUR PHOTOS FROM EXPOS PAST. ORGANISED BY INDUSTRY BODY UKIFDA, THE EVENT IS HELD IN THE HIGHEST ESTEEM BY THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES, BRINGING OPPORTUNITIES TO NETWORK AND TO CONNECT WITH OTHER INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS, TO SEE THE LATEST SECTOR PRODUCTS AND INNOVATIONS AND TO ATTEND INSIGHTFUL AND ENGAGING CONFERENCE SESSIONS THAT ARE CRUCIAL TO THE INDUSTRY FUTURE.

WITH THE EVENT BEING SO KEY TO THE INDUSTRY'S ONGOING SUCCESS IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT SO ENTHUSIASTICALLY SHARED YOUR PHOTOS. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE AS WE CELEBRATE PREVIOUS SUCCESSFUL EVENTS AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE BIGGEST AND BEST YET AS WE GATHER IN LIVERPOOL IN APRIL FOR UKIFDA EXPO 2024.

THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR WONDERFUL PHOTOS WITH US – CAN YOU SPOT YOURSELVES IN OUR GALLERY?



It started in 1979 and the evolution continues



Mr ESB Goddard was the trade body's first President



The ever-present tankers – Gilmore Trucks



Amy Williams enthralled the audience in 2023



Adrian Mason RTN and Lynn Casson WCF Chandlers receive FON TOTY award



Emmy and Kiran of IFC Inflow at EXPO 2023



At Harrogate Convention Centre



What a swell party that was!



Celebrating success



The calm before the storm... EXPO 2022



◀ A community meets in 2023



◀ Mark Nolan, Nolan Oils and Howard Illingworth Northern Energy



◀ Alex Wolfe of Certas, Alison Maguire of Crown Oil, Nick Smith of Fuel Oil News and Sam Johns of Aggreko



◀ The EXPO team celebrates 25 years of FPS in 2004



◀ Discussing industry future at a seminar in '86



◀ AGA Rayburn shares the Innovation Award 2023



◀ The Fuel Oil News Team



◀ Rare downtime for former President Janet Kettlewell and CEO Ken Cronin



◀ Jack and Clare from Hytek in Liverpool 2022



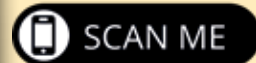
◀ MechTronic stand



◀ IFC and Hytek at the Cavern Club



◀ Winners! Depot of the Year 2023



◀ Janet Kettlewell receiving her trophy for Tanker of the Year – this was a collaboration between Kettlewell Fuels, MechTronic and Cobo.

BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW:
<https://ukifda.org/show-2024-delegate-registration/>



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James Hygate, Firefly Green Fuels: challenges and progress on the pathway to green aviation

FIREFLY GREEN FUELS WAS FOUNDED WITH A DESIRE TO DECARBONISE AVIATION BY TRANSFORMING A WHOLLY BIOGENIC WASTE – SEWAGE – INTO A TRULY SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL (SAF).

WITH DEMAND FOR SAF HIGH ON THE AGENDA IN A RAPIDLY TRANSFORMING ENERGY SECTOR, CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, MET WITH **JAMES HYGATE**, CEO, FOR AN UPDATE ON THE BUSINESS SINCE OUR ORIGINAL INTERVIEW BACK IN MARCH 2023.



Firefly Green Fuels

The biofuel industry continues to move rapidly and, with everyone working to progress at pace, Fuel Oil News caught up with James to find out what has been achieved in the last year and what the future is looking like for sustainable aviation.

James is the founder and CEO of Firefly Green Fuels, which makes sustainable aviation fuel out of sewage. Firefly has gained £5m in funding and an offtake agreement for up to 525,000 tonnes of fuel from ultra-low-cost airline Wizz Air.

A serial entrepreneur, James is also the founder of Green Fuels which, over a period of 20 years, has pioneered waste to biofuel technology. Green Fuels has helped its customers reduce their carbon emissions by an estimated 6.5 million tonnes.

The biofuels industry

“I have been working in the biofuels space for over two decades now, and during that time I have witnessed remarkable changes in how this industry is viewed, both by the public at large, and by industries waking up to the reality of climate change and how a warming earth will affect their bottom line.” James began, explaining the current industry perception of biofuels.

“In my lifetime alone, biofuels have gone from a somewhat fringe industry to being viewed as a serious energy alternative for our fuel hungry world. I have also been truly fortunate that my company, Green Fuels, has been at the forefront of that shift, producing biorefineries and equipment that has saved millions of tonnes of carbon for our customers all over the globe.

“With Green Fuels, we were able to make a significant impact in the road fuels space, but for the past several years our sights have been set higher than that, up in the skies you might say! We decided that it

made most sense to focus on abating the more difficult to decarbonise sectors – the future of road travel is clearly in electrification and when we have sufficient renewable energy – hydrogen. However, the simple fact is that neither batteries nor hydrogen are energy dense enough to support long-haul travel.”

The future for Sustainable Aviation Fuel

Looking at the challenge of decarbonising the aviation industry, James continues: “We have known for a while that what we need in aviation is a drop-in replacement that comes from a sustainable source and that can be produced at high volumes. Indeed, there are already a lot of other fantastic companies working in this space.”

“Some of these companies are further along than we are and are using different, established feedstocks and pathways. The problem that exists right across the SAF industry, however, is that most waste feedstocks are already ringfenced for one use or another.”

“Some pathways to SAF are competing for feedstock, other feedstocks have uses outside of SAF; there is simply not enough to go around. This has been a major limiting factor for the whole industry and it’s the reason why we started to research into the viability of sewage sludge.”

The importance of feedstock

The issue of feedstock availability for biofuels is very much a current industry talking point. On top of the scarcity issue, businesses must ensure the provenance of feedstocks is truthful and that their production is not creating additional environmental issues.

James reflects: “There is a huge amount of untapped potential in sewage. It’s a low cost, completely biogenic material. Right now, it holds little value. In fact, it’s currently viewed as a problem waste, the



Sewage to SAF



Biosolids (sewage sludge)



James at airfield



Lab work



Biocrude

disposal of which poses a constant challenge to municipalities around the globe. When we first started, we suspected this was the case, but now we know it for a fact as we are approached practically every week by different councils and governments who are all waiting on tenterhooks for our technology to become commercially available to them!

“During our research we could also see that this already highly abundant feedstock is one that will only increase in volume year on year in line with global population growth. Plus, when we investigated how it is currently managed, we realised that all current disposal routes are extremely suboptimal.

In the UK, processed sewage sludge is taken and spread onto land as a fertiliser – a practice already banned in several countries, and which is likely to soon be outlawed here due to known complications including agricultural runoff.

“The only other disposal route for sewage currently available is incineration, an energy intensive and relatively costly process due to the high-water content of the sludge. We could see that there was real opportunity for somebody like us to come in and solve problems at both ends of the value chain, helping to dispose of low value unwanted waste by converting it into high value sustainable fuel.”

Perfecting the process

“For the past few years, we have been perfecting our process and we are now approaching a stage where we are ready to start commercialising which is really exciting. So far, all the testing carried out on our fuel has been extremely positive. In 2022 Cranfield University carried out an independent lifecycle analysis on our fuel which showed it to have a 92% CO₂e saving versus fossil jet fuel. That’s incredibly significant.”

James added: “I really believe that sewage sludge is going to be a huge part of the equation when it comes to global SAF production, the processes that we use are quite straightforward and that’s really the key when it comes to an efficient scale up. Simplicity in our process means

that we can scale up fast and de-risks the process significantly – when there are less unknowns, it gives us confidence that we will be able to roll this technology out all around the world.”

The challenges of producing SAF at volume.

“When looking at the volumes of SAF required between now and 2050 the numbers are astronomically huge. We really do need every different technology and pathway to SAF to work at maximum capacity if we want to reach net zero and abate climate disaster.

“As I see it, there are three main challenges that all SAF producers face to reach production at a significant scale:

Challenge 1 – feedstock

“The first challenge is an obvious one, but finding a sustainable feedstock in sufficient volumes can be a real challenge. I alluded to this above, but unless this can be addressed, the SAF market won’t be sustainable in the long term.

“This is where Firefly stands alone in the SAF market right now, we have identified a feedstock that is non-competing, and which is produced in every country around the world on a daily basis.

Challenge 2 – price

“The second challenge is in understanding whether the route can ever be financially viable. By this, what I mean is if you are starting at a production point that’s ten times the price of fossil fuels, selling that fuel on to airlines is going to be a very hard sell, especially when you are competing with other pathways producing fuel at a much more competitive rate. At the end of the day airlines will have to pass on these costs to their consumers.

Challenge 3 – financing

“The third major challenge facing all SAF producers is financing a first of a kind facility (FOAK). These first facilities are incredibly expensive and need to be financed via infrastructure funds and debt. To even consider raising money for a FOAK facility, producers need to have solid offtake agreements, as well as price support mechanisms and mandates in place.

“At Firefly we are extremely pleased with the relationship we have developed with Wizz Air, they fully understood this need and worked with us to provide a ‘bankable’ offtake for 525,000 tonnes. This offtake alone is going to save 2.5m tonnes of CO₂e, alongside helping us fund the FOAK facility.



Sergio at the distillation unit

The key to accelerating commercially viable production

“The most important thing we need in the UK is a mandate, this is something that has been consulted on, but is yet to be in place, at the time of writing.

“There is a colossal opportunity for the UK to develop a domestic SAF industry, we are leaders in aviation and have been for over 100 years, but without a mandate in place commercial facilities simply will not get financed and will subsequently be built elsewhere where mandates are already in place.”

A positive impact on the UK economy

James is passionate about the economic impact that producing SAF could have for this country: “I cannot overstate the impact that this burgeoning industry could have on the UK economy. SAF production needs to grow by a factor of 1,600 over the coming decades if we are to meet net zero. That means job opportunities, it means economic growth, and, ultimately, it means moving the needle on our climate impact in the right direction.

“To meet current targets, we will also need as many different production routes to be operational as possible. We will also need to see the transition of biofuels from road use to aviation.

“This is a unique and interesting industry to be a part of – SAF developers are incredibly supportive of each other because there is a broad understanding that we are all working to achieve the same goal. Importantly, there is also a huge level of demand for SAF meaning that the playing field is large enough for us all to flourish at scale without stepping on each other’s toes.”

Hope for the future?

Looking to the future, James concludes: “Where there is a challenge there is an opportunity; this is where we see new routes to SAF, such as ours, developing. Sewage offers a phenomenal opportunity in the UK, where the waste we produce each day could meet half the 2030 SAF target.

“The numbers get very exciting when you look at very populous cities, such as Mumbai, where the sewage created by the city’s 25 million residents has the potential to fuel 80% of the needs of Mumbai International.

“The fact of the matter is that, for change to occur, we need economically viable green alternatives. Firefly’s route to SAF will use the many advantages that sewage offers, compared to other feedstocks, to produce a cost-effective SAF that will effectively turn waste material into profit.



SAF in a vial

“We will achieve this whilst also helping to promote public health and biodiversity in areas where sewage is currently discharged, as well as providing a pathway towards economic independence for resource poor communities through processing their waste into biocrude. We are incredibly hopeful for the future, and we are greatly encouraged to see many other innovative companies like ours rising to the challenge of climate change.”

James and the team at Firefly Green Fuels have a clear strategy for establishing the pathway towards a greener future for aviation. Fuel Oil News looks forward to following their journey.

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Analysing the driver recruitment market: Noz Miah of Aim Recruit

AIM RECRUIT IS A SPECIALIST RECRUITMENT COMPANY DEDICATED TO FINDING, SCREENING, AND PLACING CANDIDATES FOR POSITIONS THROUGHOUT THE TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS INDUSTRY.

COVERING THE FULL SPECTRUM OF THE SECTOR, AIM SUPPLIES CANDIDATES FOR MANAGEMENT ROLES AND PERSONNEL FOR TRANSPORTATION OFFICES AND WAREHOUSES, AS WELL AS FOR DRIVING AND NON-DRIVING POSITIONS.

CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD, MET WITH **NOZ MIAH**, MANAGING DIRECTOR, FOR A CHAT ABOUT THE BUSINESS AND ASKED FOR HIS THOUGHTS ON DRIVER RECRUITMENT IN THE FUEL DISTRIBUTION SECTOR.



The story of Aim Recruit

“Aim Recruit opened for business in February 2012,” Noz began. “Originally, it was founded with a focus on serving Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) drivers and has expanded from there.

“Aim has undergone significant growth since its inception, necessitating a move to larger premises. We now have our headquarters in Canary Wharf, London and offices in Hertfordshire and Lyon, France. We also have plans underway to expand into the north and west of England in 2024.

“I believe what sets Aim apart is our diversified approach, operating seamlessly across multiple sectors – including retail, haulage, and fuel distribution.

“It has been important to me from the start that we position ourselves as partners rather than mere suppliers. Our focus is on cultivating enduring relationships, with longevity and innovation at the forefront of our mission. We take pride in being integral members of our clients’ ecosystems, providing unparalleled support to both clients and candidates.”

The current market

Claudia asked Noz for his thoughts on the current market for driver recruitment: “The market continues its recovery from the turbulence of the past 24-36 months, which has significantly reshaped the driver recruitment landscape and kept us vigilant! A combination of factors, including Brexit and IR35, has resulted in a notably sparse candidate pool. Consequently, wages and workforce demands have surged dramatically.

“Our expertise lies in assisting our clients in adopting a more flexible model; a specialisation our fuel team excels in. This approach allows clients to adjust their fixed cost base during typical lean periods and helps to optimise asset utilisation during peak demand. This contingency model not

only mitigates the need for full-time wages year-round, but also reduces costs related to employee benefits and insurance.

“While signs of stabilisation are emerging, the pace varies across sectors. Currently, the fuel sector is experiencing buoyancy, especially with the onset of cold weather and a noticeable uptick in demand!”

The current driver profile is more accomplished than ever before

“The intersection of Brexit, IR35, and Covid has had a profound impact, significantly reducing the number of ADR drivers in the UK.” Noz continues. “The cost-of-living escalation has only intensified this challenging scenario.

“The outcome is a noticeable increase in hourly rates, accompanied by a heightened expectation for improved working conditions. It’s worth arguing that the current driver profile is more accomplished than ever before. The surge in wages has led employers to demand a higher standard of performance and diligence, a crucial aspect given the frequent and substantial changes in legislation. This heightened level of skill and commitment is now of paramount importance.”



UKIFDA dinner with Alex Wolfe

Challenges to the driver recruitment market

It’s clear that there are some challenges in driver recruitment, as Noz explains: “In addition to the factors already mentioned, there exists a substantial shortage in new entrants to the industry. Jobs in technology and services, offering comparable salary potential, are perceived as less demanding for younger individuals. Furthermore, changes in legislation, such as the prohibition of drivers taking their children to work, have eliminated a significant attraction for entering the driving profession.

“The requirement to acquire and apply knowledge through tests and exams, including the mandatory Driver CPC, serves as a significant deterrent. The cost of these programs, coupled with the time investment, can dissuade potential newcomers to the industry. While some companies cover the expenses of such training, I believe government funding is crucial to subsidise the initial costs of obtaining HGV1, HGV2, or ADR licenses.”

What does the future hold for recruiting drivers?

“It is imperative that the government and the Department of Transport initiate robust funding and training programs, including apprenticeships, to bolster a sector that serves as the lifeblood of all other industries, influencing their operational efficiency.

“Without such initiatives, the industry will inevitably face a cycle of escalating salaries and improved conditions, driven by necessity rather than choice. The ripple effects of this trend contribute to a growing cost of living in the UK, a prospect that, frankly speaking, is quite alarming.

We advocate a balanced approach



Charity focus

“Historically, the predominant demand was for agency drivers to fulfil ad-hoc needs. However, the increasing complexity in expertise, coupled with evolving legislation, has shifted the trend towards a preference for full-time placements with associated guarantees.

“In the current market dynamics, we advocate a balanced approach, encouraging our clients to embrace a combination of permanent recruitment and a contingency workforce. As previously mentioned, this strategy allows for optimum flexibility while keeping cost centres satisfied through a substantial reduction in fixed costs. The efficiency gains from a contingency workforce, deployed as needed, further contribute to this approach.

“In an ideal scenario, companies would have a self-sufficient, skilled, trained, and reliable in-house workforce operating seamlessly. However, intense industry competition, fuelled by a scarcity of available workforce, has made achieving this ideal nearly impossible. Consequently, I anticipate a growing trend where more companies will adopt a dual approach, combining a fixed and a flexible workforce to effectively navigate these challenges.”

How to achieve successful recruitment and retention

Noz explains his thoughts on strategies for successful recruitment of drivers and retainment. “A good approach when recruiting is to understand that the experience of joining a new business is crucial from the very beginning. Businesses should prioritise the individual needs of candidates when placing them into roles, working collaboratively with hiring managers to ensure a seamless transition from candidate to employee.



Noz Miah

Businesses should ensure that close attention to onboarding and training is given, ensuring specificity and thoroughness. A meticulous approach, coupled with close collaboration with partners, is what is needed from recruitment companies to result in excellent retention rates.

Noz continued to explain his views on what happens with new employees’ once they are in role: “Post-placement, commitment should continue by prioritising individual engagement, providing the necessary tools for the job, and allowing ample time for adjustment and upskilling to meet required standards.

“Regular weekly communication with contractors should be a non-negotiable practice. Beyond addressing minor issues or providing guidance on queries, this consistent communication serves as a proactive measure to prevent misunderstandings and miscommunication, ultimately enhancing the overall value of service to clients.”

What is the best piece of advice you

would give to a driver?

“In every aspect, be it safety, customer engagement, line manager reviews, or evaluating job offers, our message to all the drivers we engage with is consistent: take your time, carefully consider all aspects, and make the right decision.

“To new entrants, our advice is to pursue obtaining HGV1 and 2 licenses, along with an ADR certification. Being flexible and diligent is key, given the vast array of opportunities in today’s dynamic landscape. Additionally, maintaining good physical shape is often overlooked but, in our view, essential for prolonging one’s career in such a physically demanding industry.

Our focus is definitely centred around people—literally!

Claudia asked Noz what it was he enjoys the most about operating in recruitment. Noz replied: “At Aim, our focus is definitely centred around people—literally!

“Our immensely diverse customer base allows us to cultivate incredibly fruitful relationships, making the operational experience inherently enjoyable. Whether visiting sites or offices, we take pride in knowing everyone by their first names, from the cleaner to the managing director. It’s the strength of these relationships that fuels our passion and keeps us ticking.

Outside of work, Noz has an exciting development to share. His family has established a memorial foundation in his father’s name to support those in rural and deprived communities across Bangladesh. Initiatives so far include His family have established a memorial foundation in his father’s name to support those in need in rural and deprived communities across Bangladesh. Initiatives so far include the building of a primary school, helping to develop orphanages, a monthly medical drop-in centre and providing children with scholarship opportunities. It’s something that he feels passionate about: “My dad would have wanted us to give back to the community that he came from.”

Coffee and cake anyone?

If you would like to know more about driver recruitment in the industry, or the charity that Noz has established, then get in touch with Noz and the Aim Recruit team. They will be at the UKFIDA Show and Conference in Liverpool – where they will be doing a coffee shop take over! So, grab a coffee, a cake, and a chat in April.



PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

FEBRUARY
IN VIEW

THE IMPACT OF THE RED SEA CRISIS AND WHY EXPANSION TO THE NORTH COULD BE CATASTROPHIC

In last month's report, we pointed out that increasing tensions in the Red Sea – centred on Yemen's Houthi rebels – could be one of the factors that send oil prices significantly northwards in 2024. Since writing that report, conflict levels have further intensified with ongoing drone attacks against passing maritime traffic and "preventative" military strikes from the US Navy and Britain's RAF in return. The aim of the US / UK strikes has been to nullify the Houthi threat and protect international trade, but with major shipping lines such as AP Moeller saying that the counterstrikes are actually making the security situation worse, should we now expect a prolonged crisis and resultant increases in the price of fuel?

The strife-riven Southern Arabian Peninsula has a long history connecting it to the oil industry. Historically part of the British Empire (Federation of Southern Arabia), the port of Aden was a key coaling (refuelling) station for ships voyaging between Europe and India, via the Suez Canal (built in 1869). Fuel oil took over from coal as the "bunker" of choice for ships from 1900 onwards, but Aden's role as a key fuelling station continued. By 1950, it had become one of the busiest ship-bunkering ports in the world, fuelling over 7,000 ships per annum (20 ships per day) and to meet this demand, BP opened the 170,000 barrel per day (bpd) Aden refinery in 1954.

For the next 20 years, the Aden refinery was one of BP's most profitable, taking cheap crude oil from inland Yemen and converting it into heavy fuel oil for shipping. However, in 1977 the refinery was nationalised by the newly formed People's Republic of Yemen and soon became embroiled in a spectacularly complicated civil war that rages to this day and has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. The current "stage" of the conflict pits the "officially" recognised government of Yemen (Presidential Leadership Council) against both the secessionist and socialist southern Yemen (including the Aden Governorate), and the Houthi led Supreme Political Council that controls the North Western part of the country. In addition, there are a long string of other regional and religious combatant groups.

The impact of interminable hostilities on the country's oil industry has been predictably dire. The Aden refinery ceased production in 2015 and crude oil production has declined from 500,000 bpd to less than 10,000 bpd today. It has also resulted in some bizarre and worrying outcomes, not least the stranded 1m barrel super-tanker "FSO Safer" (ahem...), that has lain at anchor for the last 8 years. With nowhere to discharge its cargo and the ownership of the oil disputed by rival factions, this slowly rusting hulk of iron presents an environmental time-bomb and no-doubt some bargaining collateral for anyone who can lay claim (legally or otherwise) to its contents.

"THIS SLOWLY RUSTING HULK OF IRON PRESENTS AN ENVIRONMENTAL TIME-BOMB."

With no refinery, major security concerns and ships that can sail much further without refuelling, bunker activity around Aden is now virtually non-existent. Nonetheless, the flow of maritime traffic sailing past the port has not diminished. In 2023, 24,000 vessels took the Red Sea passage, of which 25% were transporting oil products. Overall, 12% of global trade and 15% of all European imports sail this route. Since the Houthi rebels began their campaign of attacking maritime vessels deemed as "friendly" to Israel, international ship owners have faced a daunting logistical choice. Carry on as normal and face the prospect of attack, or divert cargoes 5,000 nautical miles around the other side of Africa. This extra distance adds somewhere between 10 to 15 days of sailing time and costs around \$1m in extra fuel for a Suezmax vessel (i.e., the maximum size of ship able to travel through the Suez Canal). Furthermore, that same type of ship will typically emit a further 3,000 tonnes of CO₂ by taking the route around the Cape of Good Hope.

Unsurprisingly, Crude Tanker rates have

increased significantly. Those tankers still using the Suez route between the Middle East and Europe have seen rates increase by 65% to \$4.30 per barrel (~2.15ppl = pence per litre), largely reflecting increased insurance premiums. For those vessels avoiding the Red Sea, rates are a further \$2.40 per barrel higher (~1.15ppl) and, for refined products, rates are higher still. "Clean" tanker rates (i.e., carrying refined products) have almost doubled to \$13 per barrel (~6.50ppl), whilst biodiesel cargoes imported from Asia via Suez have increased from around \$18 per barrel to \$25 (up by circa 3.25ppl).

These freight increases are particularly acute for European markets as, since Indian diesel replaced Russian diesel (post-Ukraine), Europe has been dependent on product travelling via the Suez Canal. The same is true when it comes to biodiesel, where half of the EU's Used Cooking Oil (UCO) is imported from Asia (via the Suez route). Crude prices on the other hand are yet to move too far upwards on the back of the current situation. Global demand for oil still looks pretty shaky and markets generally are actually still over-supplied. Furthermore, the important geographic fact remains that however circuitous, there are still available shipping routes that bypass the Red Sea. This means that, irrespective of increased freight costs, product shortages (the real driver of price spikes) are unlikely. Hopefully this offers some comfort to hard-pressed consumers, although they shouldn't relax too much. If, for example, the current crisis was to spill over into the Northern Arabian Peninsular, then that would threaten the flow of 20% of global oil production (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE), because there are no alternative shipping routes to the Straits of Hormuz.

Now that would have a seismic effect on prices.

For more pricing
information,
see page 42

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TRANSITION TALK

In a turbulent sea, the clean energy transition proves surprisingly steady

A BloombergNEF report, released at the end of January, showed global clean energy investment reached an all-time high in 2023, jumping 17% to hit \$1.8 trillion.

While China still leads, accounting for 38% of the total with \$676 billion invested last year, the EU, US and UK delivered a combined investment that exceeded that of China. With investment growth driven by renewable energy production, electric vehicles, hydrogen and carbon capture as well as the clean energy supply chain, we take a closer look at energy investment trends and consider how, despite record levels of investment, we are still significantly adrift of the level needed to stand a realistic chance of delivering net zero.

The report, *Energy Transition Investment Trends 2024*, indicated a new record level of annual global investment and demonstrates the resilience of the clean energy transition in a year of geopolitical turbulence, high interest rates and cost inflation.

It's electrifying

The report finds that electrified transport is now the largest sector for spending in the energy transition, growing 36% in 2023 to \$634 billion. This figure includes spending on electric cars, buses, two- and three-wheelers and commercial vehicles, as well as associated infrastructure.

Electrified transport overtook the renewable energy sector, which saw an 8% increase to \$623 billion. This figure reflects investment in the construction of renewable energy production facilities, such as wind, solar and geothermal power plants, as well as biofuels production plants. Power grid investment was the third-largest contributor at \$310 billion. Grids are a critical enabler for the energy transition, and investment in them will need to rise in the coming years.

"Last year brought new records for global renewable energy investment. Strong growth in the US and Europe drove the global rise,

even as China, the world's largest renewables market, sputtered, recording an 11% drop. Despite a year of tough headlines, a record amount of offshore wind capacity also reached financial close," said Meredith Annex, BNEF's Head of Clean Power and co-author of the report.

There was also strong growth in emerging areas such as hydrogen (with investment tripling year on year), carbon capture and storage (near-doubling) and energy storage (up 76%).

Global energy transition investment by sector

The largest country for investment, by far, was China, with \$676 billion invested in 2023 – equivalent to 38% of the global total. Although China remains dominant, its lead has been reduced. Taken together, the European Union, US and UK outpaced China with \$718 billion of investment – a feat they hadn't managed to achieve in 2022. Investment in the US jumped 22% year-on-year, to \$303 billion, as the effects of the Inflation Reduction Act started to be felt.

Top 10 economies for 2023 energy transition investment, plus the EU-27 and rest of the world

The current level of investment in clean energy technologies is not nearly sufficient to set the world on track for net zero by mid-century. According to the report, energy transition investment would need to average \$4.8 trillion per year from 2024 to 2030 to align with BNEF's Net Zero Scenario, a Paris Agreement-aligned trajectory from the 2022 New Energy Outlook. This is nearly three times the total investment observed in 2023.

Solar and storage oversupply

In addition, BNEF's report finds that investment in the global clean energy supply chain, including equipment factories and battery metals production for energy technologies, hit a new record at \$135 billion

in 2023 (up from just \$46 billion in 2020), and is set to surge further over the next two years. BNEF projects this figure to rise to \$259 billion by 2025, based on currently announced investment plans. In the next two years, only the wind sector needs to increase its supply chain investment to get on track for a net-zero trajectory; the other areas are investing at a sufficient pace.

Antoine Vagneur-Jones, Head of Trade and Supply Chains at BNEF, said, "Abundant supply chain investment should continue to tamp down equipment prices across most sectors, which is good news for the energy transition. But the ensuing oversupply heralds an era of squeezed margins for solar and battery manufacturers."

Aside from tracking the funding for clean energy deployment and clean energy supply chain investment, the *Energy Transition Investment Trends 2024* report also tracks two other types of funding:

Climate-tech equity raising: Equity raised by companies focused on climate and the energy transition (\$84 billion in 2023)

- This figure has fallen for the past two years, as rising interest rates have made it harder for companies to raise capital. Companies had raised \$168 billion in 2021 and \$127 billion in 2022.
- Clean energy-focused companies raised more equity than any other sector in 2023, at \$49 billion.
- Companies in the clean transport sector saw funding drop the most sharply, from \$47 billion raised in 2022 to just \$18 billion in 2023. Transport remained the second-largest funding sector, followed by Industry, Buildings, Agriculture and 'Climate and Carbon'.

Energy transition debt issuance: Debt issued by companies and governments to fund the energy transition (\$824 billion in 2023)

- This figure rose by 4% in 2023 after dropping 10% in 2022. Stabilising or falling

interest rates in various markets helped companies and governments raise debt for energy transition purposes and these trends are reflective of the broader market.

- Utilities raised the most debt for the energy transition (\$328 billion), followed by financial institutions (\$176 billion) and governments (\$141 billion)
- Oil and gas companies' energy transition debt issuance fell to \$8.3 billion, down from \$17.5 billion in 2022.

Key findings:

- **Electrified transport** is now the largest sector of spending in the energy transition, growing 36% in 2023 to \$634 billion, overtaking the renewable energy sector, which grew 8% to \$623 billion.
- **Power grids** investment was the third-largest contributor at \$310 billion.
- There was also strong growth in emerging areas such as **hydrogen** (with investment tripling year on year), **carbon capture and storage** (near-doubling) and **energy**

storage (up 76%).

- The largest country for investment by far was **China**, with \$676 billion invested in 2023 – equivalent to 38% of the global total. Although China dominates, its lead has been reduced, with the **EU, US and UK** together investing \$718 billion in 2023. **UK** spending jumped **84%** thanks to strong EV sales and renewable power investment. The EU posted 35% growth, and the US 22%.
- The current level of investment into clean energy technologies is not nearly sufficient to set the world on track for **net zero** by mid-century. Energy transition investment would need to average **\$4.8 trillion** per year from 2024 to 2030 in order to align with BNEF's New Energy Outlook Net Zero Scenario. This is nearly three times the total investment observed in 2023.
- The UK would need to see nearly **double the \$72 billion** spent on energy transition technologies in 2023, every year from 2024 to 2030 to align with the scenario.
- Investment in the **global clean energy**

supply chain, including equipment factories and battery metals production for energy technologies, hit a new record at **\$135 billion** in 2023 and is set to rise to **\$259 billion** by 2025.

- \$824 billion was raised in energy transition **debt issuance**, \$84 billion in **equity issuance**

In summary Albert Cheung, Deputy CEO of BNEF commented: "Our report shows just how quickly the clean energy opportunity is growing, and yet how far off track we still are.

"Energy transition investment spending grew 17% last year, but it needs to grow more than 170% if we are to get on track for net zero in the coming years.

"Only determined action from policymakers can unlock this kind of step-change in momentum."

Albert Cheung is the Deputy CEO and Head of Global Transition Analysis at BloombergNEF.

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Do your staff feel appreciated?

More than a third say your thanks is meaningless

WHEN JUST SAYING “THANK YOU!” IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

FUEL OIL NEWS HEARS FROM **ANDREEA DINU**, CULTURE AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIST FROM O.C. TANNER, AS SHE CONSIDERS THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF GENUINE STAFF APPRECIATION.



Appreciating your people with an authentic and meaningful “thank you” can deliver powerful results – improved engagement, greater loyalty, reduced staff turnover and increased innovation. After all, everyone wants to feel valued and recognised for the efforts they put in and the results they deliver. On the surface, the energy sector is doing a reasonable job when it comes to employee recognition. However, it appears that in many instances, the recognition is only skin deep. So, what’s going wrong?

Giving recognition is hugely impactful, with O.C. Tanner’s Global Culture Report finding that 53% of employees would stay at their jobs longer if their employers showed them more appreciation. Companies with recognition integrated into their cultures are also four times’ more likely to have highly engaged employees and are twice as likely to have increased revenue over the past year.

Encouraging

When looking at recognition within the energy industry, the figures are encouraging. 67% of employees state that their leaders acknowledge the great work they do and 61% say that their organisation consistently rewards high performers. However, when the figures are drilled into further, over a third of employees (34%) admit that the recognition they receive feels like an empty gesture and isn’t meaningful. And a worrying 56 per cent feel that productivity and bottom lines are more important to their organisation than the people.

The issue appears to lie with how recognition is being given. In too many instances, recognition is taking place but it’s poorly executed. For instance, giving recognition to teams far more often than individuals isn’t as powerful; giving recognition in passing rather than with intent feels like an afterthought; and making the recognition moment generic rather than personalised loses the meaning.

For employees to feel valued and

appreciated on a regular basis, recognition must become an organisational priority. If it’s not considered important enough by the leaders, little time and effort will be put into getting it right. This means creating a culture of recognition in which showing appreciation becomes second nature. It also means creating an environment where everyone has access to giving and receiving recognition, including leaders, managers and peers.



Timing is everything

Plus, whilst the quick “thanks for that!” is a great start, recognition must be given deliberately for it to be effective. This must include putting time aside to appreciate the employee, giving details as to what they have done that deserves recognition and outlining how they are contributing to their team and the ‘bigger picture’. This makes the appreciation personal and meaningful.

Appreciation must also be given regularly and in a timely way – ideally, it should be given daily across the organisation. Leaving it until the annual review will allow disengagement and resentment to fester.

And tailoring the recognition moment according to each individual’s needs will also ensure it’s personalised. If the employee likes a big ‘fanfare’ then giving recognition in front of managers and peers helps to make the moment more special. This show of appreciation also means that co-workers are clear what ‘great work’ looks like and what they, too, need to do to be recognised. Of course, if the employee would be uncomfortable with such a public show, providing appreciation in a quieter, more

private way may well be more appropriate.

For any recognition programme to have impactful results, it’s key for employees to understand how their behaviour links with the company’s values and purpose. This means that every time an employee is appreciated, it needs to be made clear how their behaviour is in line with the organisational values – whether it’s excellent customer service or innovation, for example – and how they’re helping achieve the bigger goal. By linking recognition to values and purpose, this ensures the ‘right’ behaviours’ are shown to be valued and are more likely to be repeated again and again.

And of course, organisations mustn’t forget to recognise key moments in employees’ lives and careers as well as their everyday efforts and achievements. From work anniversaries through to weddings, celebrating important occasions – ideally using symbolic awards – will heighten engagement and foster closer ties between the employee and the company.

Get it right

Leaders must therefore revisit their recognition strategy to see whether it’s delivering results or whether managers are simply going through the motions of appreciating their people.

When recognition is done half-heartedly and in an impersonal way, this can be worse than not giving recognition at all as employees are left feeling like a number on the payroll. With so much to be gained from an effective recognition programme, leaders can’t afford to pay it lip-service but must invest in getting it right.

Andreea Dinu is European Culture and Engagement Strategist at O.C. Tanner. She works with European companies to help them design, apply, sustain and elevate culture and employee recognition strategies that affect positive changes across their multinational workplaces and in the everyday experiences of their people at work. These changes have a measurable impact on culture, people, and business metrics.



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INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Talking about mental health: frequently asked questions

MANDY RUTTER, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT, TRAINER, PSYCHOLOGIST, AND COUNSELLOR, CONTINUES HER SERIES FOR FUEL OIL NEWS ON THE TOPIC OF MENTAL HEALTH. FUEL OIL NEWS IS DEDICATED TO OPENING UP THE CONVERSATION AROUND MENTAL HEALTH AND SHARING INDUSTRY INITIATIVES.

MANDY SPECIALISES IN IMPROVING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES, MANAGERS, AND SENIOR LEADERS WITHIN ALL AREAS OF THE WORKFORCE. IN THIS INSIGHT ARTICLE FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, MANDY ANSWERS THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

Q1. What is mental health and why is it important?

Our mental health is about how we feel and think, it is a combination of our emotions and thoughts. Everyone has mental health.

When we are in good mental health, we can feel positive about ourselves, our families, and the work we do. But good mental health isn't always about things going well. Often things happen in life which can feel overwhelming (bereavement, work stress, relationship conflict), but if we are in good mental health when these things happen, we are able to ask for help, think about options, and make decisions that are in the best interest of our physical and mental health.

Q2. How do I spot the signs of mental ill-health?

Spotting the signs of mental ill-health can be vital in providing timely support and intervention. Common signs that may indicate someone is struggling with their mental health may include:

- **Changes in behaviours:** If people are usually energetic and enthusiastic, you might notice they have become much quieter, and withdrawn. People who are patient and kind may become more irritable or agitated.
- **Emotional changes:** Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, or an overwhelming sense of guilt. Sudden and intense emotional reactions that are out of character for the individual.
- **Difficulty concentrating:** Reduced ability to focus, make decisions, or complete tasks. This may present as a decline in academic or work performance.
- **Changes in sleep patterns:** Disruptions in sleep, either sleeping too much or not being able to sleep. Persistent fatigue or a noticeable decline in energy levels.

- **Appetite changes:** Significant changes in appetite, leading to noticeable weight loss or gain.
- **Physical symptoms:** Unexplained physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, or other unexplained pains that do not have a clear medical cause.
- **Isolation:** Social withdrawal, avoiding friends, family, or usual activities. A person experiencing mental health challenges may isolate themselves due to feelings of shame or an inability to cope with social interactions.
- **Substance abuse:** Increased reliance on alcohol, drugs, or other substances as a way to cope with emotional distress.
- **Changes in personal hygiene:** Neglecting personal hygiene, appearance, and overall self-care i.e., not showering/brushing hair/ changing clothes/brushing teeth/cleaning uniform.
- **Expressing suicidal or self-harming thoughts:** Verbalising thoughts of self-harm or suicide or expressing a sense of hopelessness and worthlessness.

Q3. How does stress affect us mentally and physically?

The body's stress response occurs when we have too many complicated demands placed upon us, and we feel unable to cope. When we perceive that we can't cope, the body releases a number of stress hormones including adrenaline and cortisol.

It is these hormones that cause a range of 'stress' responses, often referred to as the "fight or flight" response. It's important to remember that short term stress is essential for survival, it can make us run fast, work collaboratively and reach out for help. Some people even say that they work better under stress. But chronic or prolonged stress



causes damaging and dangerous responses often affecting our body, our mind and our behaviour.

Stress responses affecting our physical state include:

- Increase heart rate, elevated blood pressure, heightened risk of cardiovascular disease
- Compromised immune system leading to greater susceptibility to infections (coughs, colds, eye infections, skin infections, cold sores), and disrupt digestive functions, contributing to issues such as indigestion and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).
- Muscle tension and hormonal imbalances may result in headaches, musculoskeletal pain, and disturbances in respiratory and endocrine systems.

Stress responses affecting our mental state include:

- Difficulties in concentration, memory, and decision-making often affecting our ability to keep ourselves and others safe
- Worrying and overthinking leading to anxiety
- Sadness, low mood, irritability, lethargy often leading to depression.

Stress responses affecting our behaviour

- Becoming withdrawn, isolated, silent, unable to ask for help or reach out to loved ones for support.
- Argumentative, aggression, violence
- Drinking more alcohol, gambling, drug taking
- Self-harm and suicidal behaviour

Q4. What changes can I make to improve my mental health?

Improving our mental health isn't difficult – small changes in a range of directions can have a big effect. It will often involve seeking support from friends, family and professionals,

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

and adopting positive lifestyle changes. This can include the following:

Get good sleep: Prioritise and respect sleep by establishing a consistent sleep schedule and creating a healthy bedtime routine. This can include limiting screen time before bed, not eating too late, keeping the bedroom cool, dark and silent, relaxation exercises, using a weighted blanket, lavender spray – or whatever feels right for you.

Connect with others: Spending quality time with friends, family and people you love, sharing our feelings with someone, or engaging in acts of kindness can prevent loneliness and release endorphins to help us feel positive.

Regular exercise: Doing some physical activity every day is essential to release our stress hormone and increase our endorphins. If you can be outdoors, in nature, it has added benefits. A varied, nutritious, well-balanced diet full of multicoloured fruits and vegetables will also help you feel good.

Be in the present: Take time to be aware in the moment of how you feel, how you are coping, managing, or enjoying life. The practice of mindfulness has been shown to help us feel calmer and gain a better perspective. Mindfulness breathing can really help to manage a range of distractions and worries that negatively impact our mental health.

Do something for enjoy: Ask yourself what makes you happy, and actively work towards doing things that make you happy on a regular basis. You might want to learn a new skill, join a new group, reconnect with old friends – whatever the activity, try putting time in your calendar for events and activities that can bring you joy, contribute to your personal fulfilment, boost self-esteem, and help you feel a sense of achievement.

There are a few things that it can be helpful to reduce if we want to improve our mental health, such as: smoking, sugar, alcohol, caffeine, screen time, over-working.

Q5. How do I talk about my mental health difficulties?

- Find a quiet, comfortable setting where you can talk without interruptions, ensuring plenty of time for an unrushed conversation.
- Share your feelings with a trusted individual, be it a close friend, family member, or mental health professional—someone understanding



and supportive, willing to listen without judgment.

- Clearly explain what you are experiencing without blaming others if possible. Use “I” statements to communicate your feelings, thoughts, and experiences. For example, “I’ve been feeling overwhelmed lately” instead of “You make me stressed.”
- Use specific examples to illustrate your experiences. This can help the person understand the impact of your mental health difficulties on your daily life.
- Understand that not everyone may react the way you expect. Be prepared for various responses, including surprise, concern, or even misunderstanding.
- It can be helpful to write things down first, to help get your thoughts and emotions into a structure.

Q6. What could I say to someone who is feeling low?

Use empathic and supportive statements such as:

- “I’m really sorry to hear that you’re feeling this way.”
- “I can’t fully understand what you’re going through, but I’m here for you.”
- “Is there anything specific that’s been bothering you that you want to talk about?”
- “You’re not alone in this. I’m here to support you.”

Encourage communication and share your concern:

- “I’m here to listen. You don’t have to go through this alone.”

- “Let me know if there’s anything you need or if you just want to talk.”
- “I’ve noticed you seem down lately. Would you like to go for a coffee?”
- “I’m here for you, and I’m concerned about your well-being. Can we talk about how things are for you?”

Offer practical help or suggest professional support:

- “Would you like to have a walk, or a break so that we can talk away from here?”
- “It sounds like you have a lot going on at the moment. I am here for you, but I want to ensure you have the right help to provide good advice and guidance. Shall we have a chat about talking to a professional, maybe a therapist or counsellor?”
- “Sometimes, speaking to a professional can provide valuable insights and support.”

Q7. How do we support men with mental health challenges?

Recognising and challenging the traditional expectations around masculinity is vital for promoting an atmosphere where men feel empowered to prioritise their mental health. Some of the ways to help overcome stigma and shame about talking about mental health include:

- Asking senior men within organisations to tell their own stories of mental health challenges, can be helpful in encouraging positive role-modelling.
- Publishing stories of men within the workplace reaching out for help and having a positive outcome, to help challenge the stigma of men asking for help.
- Recruiting men within the organisation to be mental health champions so they can challenge stereotyping and encourage non-judgemental discussion.
- Get creative with advertising services for men’s mental health. Examples in the past have included ‘The hairy arse builders guide to stress management!’

While the above are questions that Mandy hears frequently, please do get in touch with others that you’d like to see addressed. We will be continuing our conversations around the importance of good mental health in future issue since, as Mandy says: “It’s essential for all of us to proactively look after our mental health as it is the foundation of a good quality of life.

“There is no health without mental health.”



CASE STUDY

A BWOC initiative: first aid for mental ill health

RECOGNISING THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF MENTAL ILL HEALTH ON BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESS, NATIONWIDE BULK LIQUID FUEL DISTRIBUTOR BWOC INTRODUCED AN INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES.

AS WE CONTINUE TO CAST AN IMPORTANT SPOTLIGHT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING IN THE SECTOR, WE SPEAK WITH **ELAINE QUIRK** WHO SHARES MORE ABOUT THE COMPANY'S APPROACH AND HOW IT LED TO HER CURRENT ROLE AS A MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER FOR BWOC.

What inspired your decision to become a Mental Health First Aider (MHFA)?

I have always found the way the mind works inspiring, in how our thoughts and emotions shape our lives and have taken various courses to help gain greater insight. Mental Health is so important and I find this a fascinating area of study.

Can you share when the Mental Health First Aiders initiative began?

I was approached by the Managing Director who recognised my passion for the topic, to participate in Workplace Mental Health Training. The group wanted to provide a Mental Health Team to provide support to employees, during personal challenges they may encounter.

Could you delve deeper into the MHFA course?

The MHFA course covers in-depth topics surrounding mental health; helping people gain a better understanding of how to prevent issues from becoming more serious and how to assist others in a crisis. The course also covers common myths, stigma and discrimination, provides useful statistics and helpful resources. Finding the material so valuable, we felt compelled to share it with our teams.

Was this the inception of the internal MHFA team?

Following our September 2020 course, an official MHFA Team was introduced within the group as planned. However, additionally, we decided to proactively promote wellbeing, by writing articles on Mental Health topics and sharing them with our teams. We also plan fun activities throughout the year for our community of employees to come together. We now have a growing MHFA team, expanding across the globe, collectively raising awareness of Mental Health issues.

"WE ARE FOCUSED ON PROVIDING SUPPORT TO YOUR WORKPLACE THROUGH ADAPTED TRAINING AND NEW RESOURCES. WE WILL SUPPORT YOUR ORGANISATION TO LOOK AFTER THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOU EMPLOYEES"
MHFA England

How does the initiative operate?

Elaine: Through our company online platform, anyone can reach out to any of the MHFA Team, where our contact details are readily available. This can be personally or anonymously and regardless of their location. Whilst we are not professionals, we can give others our time, compassion in a non-judgemental way and guide individuals towards professional support if necessary.

An excerpt from one of the articles Elaine shared with the community of employees at BWOC

Mental ill health is a condition that affects a person's thinking, emotion and behaviour, whereby they may feel overwhelmed and

unable to cope effectively or engage in daily activities. Some people may only ever experience one episode of mental ill health in their lifetime, while others may have many episodes with positive times of wellness in-between.

Life throws many things at us suddenly due to an event or it may build up gradually over time, having an adverse effect on how an individual feels and behaves. At work, you may find it hard to concentrate or focus and tasks may take much longer. You may become indecisive or make risky decisions. You may find it hard to interact with people at work, or you may have difficulty keeping to set working times. Absenteeism or presenteeism also play a part.

Many individuals choose not to seek professional help due to the stigma or discrimination and some may or may not want to talk to family members or work colleagues and managers. As an organisation, we realise the importance for all its members to have in place a dedicated team of Mental Health First Aiders, who care and can listen without being judgemental; helping you deal with times when you feel troubled.

Whilst we are unable to provide professional help, we are able to guide you to the many resources available within the UK, including local support or online peer support groups. Please note, that you have the choice to remain anonymous. We are here to provide continued support to promote positive well-being for all employees. If you have any concerns that you are facing, no matter what they may be, please be reassured that we are here to offer help and support to you.

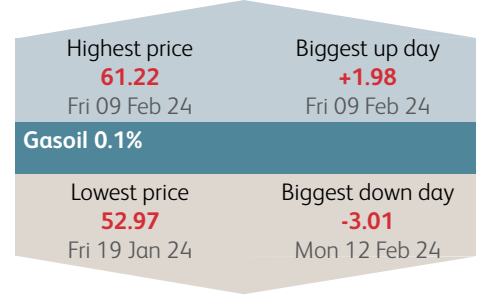
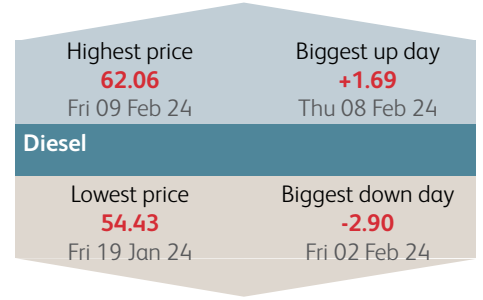
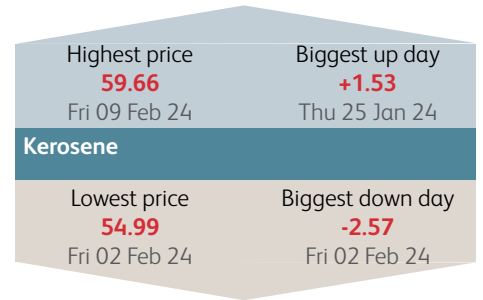
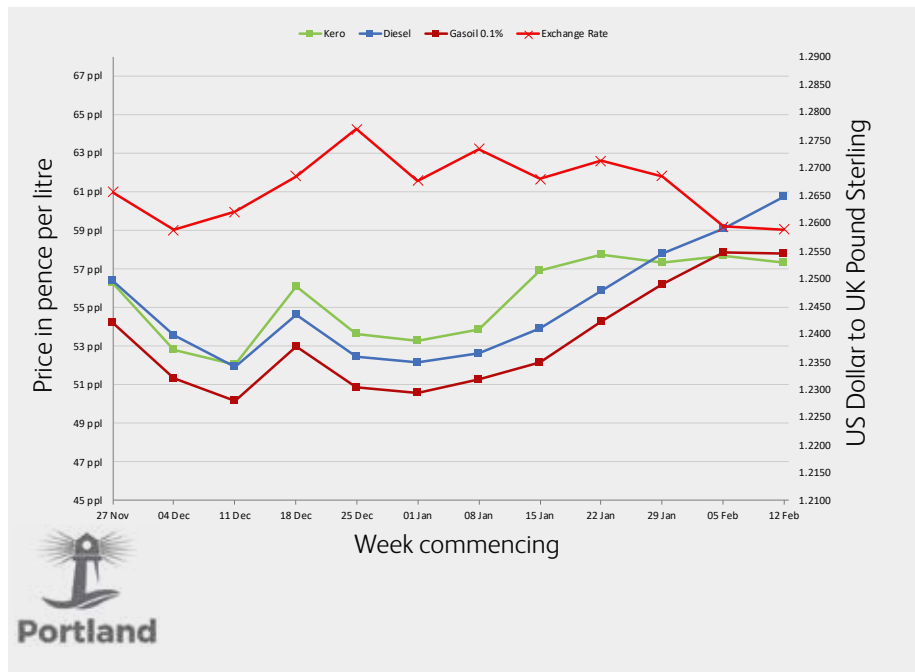
Statistics from a 2020 Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England report on mental ill health in the workplace indicate:

- 1 in 6 workers will experience depression, anxiety or problems relating to stress at any one time
- In 2018/19, stress, depression or anxiety were responsible for 44% of all cases of work-related ill health and 54% of all working days lost due to health issues in GB
- 1 in 5 people take a day off due to stress. Yet, 90% of these people cited a different reason for their absence
- Every year it costs business £1,300 per employee whose mental health needs are unsupported
- Mental ill health is responsible for 72 million working days lost and costs £34.9 billion each year
- 69% of UK line managers say that supporting employee wellbeing is a core skill, but only 13% have received mental health training. 35% of line managers reported a wish for basic training in common mental health conditions

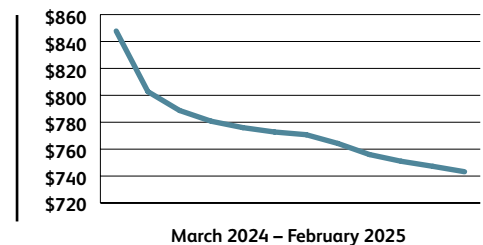
Wholesale Price Movements: 19th January 2024 – 18th February 2024

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	57.52	58.18	56.35
Average daily change	0.89	0.90	1.08
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	57.52	111.13	66.53

All prices in pence per litre



Gasoil forward price
in US\$ per tonne



The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	60.46	70.97	115.51	68.93	75.83	120.03
North East	59.41	69.60	114.59	71.22	74.14	117.92
North West	60.98	72.20	116.98	69.10	76.42	119.95
Midlands	59.48	70.13	115.05	67.46	74.60	118.66
South East	59.58	70.09	115.03	76.04	77.88	118.16
South West	59.93	69.93	114.87	70.54	74.39	117.73
Northern Ireland	60.04	71.30	n/a	67.87	76.76	n/a
Republic of Ireland	73.80	76.73	116.45	80.67	81.27	120.14
Portland	57.79	67.65	111.74			

The price totem figures are indicative figures compiled from the Portland base rate using calculated regional variances.

Buying prices are ex-rack. Selling prices are for 1000 litres of kero, 2500 litres of gas oil and 5000 litres of ULSD (Derv in ROI). Prices in ROI are in €.

Wholesale prices are supplied by Portland Analytics Ltd, dedicated providers of fuel price information from refinery to pump.

For more information and access to prices, visit www.portlandpricing.co.uk

WELCOME TO MARCH'S EDITION OF OUR SPECIAL MONTHLY FEATURE WHICH GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO 'MEET' AN INDUSTRY FIGURE AND, HOPEFULLY, TO DISCOVER ANOTHER SIDE TO THEM BEYOND THE WELL-KNOWN FACTS. THIS MONTH WE CHAT WITH **CHLOE CROFTS**, CEO AT EXSWIFT.

"BEING RISK-ADVERSE IS WORSE THAN 'FAILING FORWARD'."

CHLOE CROFTS

Give your career history in 25 words or fewer.

I'm a personal licence holder, so I worked in hospitality as a Country Club Manager, then I moved into events as an Operations Director for a 'pop up' horror themed event where I met my business partner and then made the transition to the fuel industry!

Describe yourself in 3 words.

Ambitious, loyal and confident.

What were your childhood / early ambitions?

I wanted to be an actress or a forensic scientist!

Describe your dream job (if you weren't doing this?)

An Estate Agent – I am obsessed with all things 'property!'

What's the best business advice you've ever received?

People buy into people. I think it's so important to be personable, and foster strong relationships with customers, suppliers, and partners.

Share your top tips for business success.

Keep moving and trying new things; being risk-adverse is worse than 'failing forward', as there is always something to learn even if a strategy or idea didn't pan out how you hoped.

What's your most recent business achievement of note?

It's the success of exswift.com – it's been my baby. It's something I spend a lot of time working on, so seeing the volume through the site double each year since its launch in November 2020 has been incredible.

Tell us your greatest fear.

Something happening to my family.

Which is most important – ambition or talent?

Without doubt, ambition.

What's the best thing about your job?

Watching the team that we have built grow in confidence and skills.

Which is the quality that you most admire?

Integrity.

What are you most likely to say?

I think this is a really good idea, we should try it!



What are you least likely to say?

No, I don't think we can do it.

Describe your perfect day.

Waking up somewhere tropical with my husband, having a blue mountain coffee, spending the day swimming in the ocean. It would be rounded off nicely with a steak dinner and a pina colada. Heaven.

Do you have a favourite sports team?

The Michael Jordan era of the Chicago Bulls!

What's the biggest challenge of our time?

Climate change.

Cheese or chocolate?

Cheese! Manchego to be precise.

Share your greatest personal achievement.

Aside from my wonderful family, it's completing the National Three Peaks Challenge – I'd completely underestimated it, so I was delighted to get to bottom of the third mountain in 24 hours!

What's your pet hate or biggest irritant?

People that only see obstacles and are pessimistic.

If you were on 'Mastermind' what would your specialist subject be?

Fuel tanker liveries!

If you were elected to government what would be the first law you'd press for?

I'd make sure that there was enough SEN provision and, in turn, that funding was never cut for children with disabilities and additional needs.

If your 20-year-old self saw you now what would they think?

Who is she?!

What is number 1 on your bucket list?

To visit Nashville, TN and go to the Bluebird Café and Grand ole Opry – I'm a HUGE Country Music fan!

What 3 things would you take to a desert island?

My husband, our record player and vinyl collection and most importantly – factor 50!

Tell us something about you that people would be very surprised by.

I don't actually like the colour pink despite choosing it for our branding!

Who would you most like to ask these questions of?

My Nan. She is no longer with us and was all the things I hope to be. I wish I'd spent more time asking her questions and committing it all to memory.



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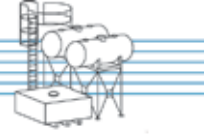
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