

# Fuel Oil News

DECEMBER 2023

## CHRISTMAS WITH PRINCE ENERGY

DEPOT DEVELOPMENTS

THE YEAR IN REVIEW





**WISHING ALL OUR FRIENDS, CUSTOMERS  
AND PARTNERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!**

## Let's hope it's a good one...

How can I already be penning words of welcome for the final issue of FON for 2023? If the speeding up of the years is an indication of ageing, then it must surely be time for a new profile pic!

I prefer to attribute the rapid passage of time, not to the increasing of my years, but to the increasing busyness of our industry as it goes above and beyond to look after every customer – 'delivering winter fuel' 'to young and old, meek and the bold', particularly 'in the bleak midwinter'.

Ensuring rural, off-grid homes remain heated and healthy, our distributors, with their deep community roots, have always looked out for those with the greatest needs – a difficult and complex issue addressed by Ken Cronin on page 22. The inaugural 'Ken's Corner' featured exactly a year ago, and we continue to appreciate the valuable insight shared each issue. This one is no exception, with its practical advice for those in our community willing to assist households in fuel poverty to receive the essential support they need.

Added to these challenges, this community is also using hours that don't exist to continue the campaign

for a fair transition for those reliant on liquid fuel. A campaign that has made significant progress this year in progressing the arguments for the support of HVO in domestic heating through an unparalleled industry collaboration – relentless in its pursuit of truth and common sense.

A year of great progress, but one in which we have also, sadly, lost highly regarded colleagues along the way. Our thoughts are with their friends and family – especially at this time of year.

Despite its challenges, 2023 also brought many special moments, personal and professional, that we have, again, been privileged to share. For continuing to allow us to be such a part of this great community, as well as for your supreme efforts in delivering energy solutions throughout the UK & Ireland, all of us at Fuel Oil News say a heartfelt 'thank you'. We wish you, and yours, a hopeful Christmas, and as for 2024, let's hope it really is a good one.



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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

Our fabulously festive cover features Aaron 'Mitch' Mitchell, Transport Director for Prince Energy, in his December outfit of choice. Mitch discusses Christmas at Prince and even lets us into the secrets of Santa's Scooter Sleigh on pages 12 & 13.

## In this issue

'In Conversation' with Moorland Fuels, we share their celebrations on pages 28 & 29. The community's views on industry past, present and future are on pages 19, 25 & 31 and our unmissable first double-header 'In Profile' can be found on pages 42 & 43.

# ReFuels to open Wales' first renewable biomethane refuelling station for HGVs

**ReFuels has announced the opening of its 13th low-carbon refuelling station – the first station of its kind to open in Wales.**

The new site, with 12 pumps capable of refuelling over 500 HGVs daily, and cutting over 60,000 tonnes of CO2 annually, makes low-carbon deliveries a reality for the hundreds of fleets travelling through North Wales every year.

## HGVs – a key component for net zero

HGVs account for 4.2% of UK carbon emissions, making the sector a key component of the UK's goal to achieve net zero by 2050. In Wales, transportation has been the slowest sector to cut pollution over the last 30 years, and is responsible for 15% of Wales' total emissions. The Freight Transport Association has long called for more public refuelling infrastructure for alternative fuels in Wales to support the country's planned phase-out of diesel HGVs by 2040.

Renewable biomethane – derived from food waste and manure – is the lowest carbon, most cost-effective alternative fuel to diesel available to HGVs today, cutting emissions by over 90% whilst providing up to 40% lifetime fuel cost savings.

The site in Bangor is ideally situated to serve major trucking routes connecting North Wales to England, and opens up routes to Ireland through the nearby Holyhead Port.

Philip Fjeld, CEO and Co-Founder of ReFuels, said: "From Inverness to Cornwall, Bangor to Ireland, our network of renewable biomethane refuelling stations is making low carbon logistics

a reality right across the British Isles. As the first station to open in Wales, our Bangor site serves a critical transport route for fleet operators, enabling low-carbon deliveries between Wales, England and Ireland for the first time.

"Every day, fleets – spanning major brands to local hauliers – are slashing emissions by over 90% using our fuel. Our nationwide network of refuelling stations has turned net zero ambition into a reality for fleets across the UK, and, with our plans for 30+ new stations by 2026, we're just getting started."

The new station is a joint venture between CNG Fuels, the infrastructure arm of ReFuels, and sustainability-led investment management company, Foresight Group.

## Growing demand

Demand for Bio-CNG from fleet operators is skyrocketing. In July 2023 alone, ReFuels saw an 80% increase in fuel dispensed compared to the same period in the previous year.

To meet the growing demand for low-carbon, renewable Bio-CNG, ReFuels is aiming to open between 30-40 new stations by 2026, with a total capacity to refuel 15,000 HGVs every day, and dispense more than 600,000 tonnes of renewable biomethane annually – equivalent to cutting the UK's HGV emissions by 8%.

The group has one more station under construction in Aylesford in Southeast England and expects two further stations to commence construction during the financial reporting year ending 31 March 2024.



## Jim Callow

**It is with great sadness that we report the peaceful passing, on 24th October 2023, of Jim Callow, founder of Callow Oils, aged 84 years.**

Jim was born in September 1939, and started the business in 1969 as a company known for providing the best possible service to their customers day in, day out. An ethos established by Jim from the outset, this dedication to customer service continues today with the present team determined to honour Jim's legacy – a man they describe as 'a fantastic person to work with' and who will be hugely missed by them all.

A true gentleman of the industry, Jim will be remembered for his integrity, generosity, kindness and compassion. He was a great friend to many, always supportive of those starting out in fuel distribution, and will be greatly missed by an industry that describes him as someone 'the likes of which may not be seen again'.

Those from the industry shared their sadness at hearing the news and offered their condolences to the family with Neil Donald, Chief Executive of Southern Glass Ltd expressing the thoughts of many of those fortunate to have known Jim, describing him as: "A real nice guy, approachable and with great knowledge of the downstream fuel distribution business. He will be remembered fondly by all who knew him."

Jim will be sadly missed and lovingly remembered by all those who knew him, but especially by his wife Angela, children Helen, James and Kate and grandchildren.

Our thoughts are with them all at this time.



# Further growth for LCM with third acquisition in 12 months

**Good things come in threes – the acquisitions of two Yorkshire-based businesses are the second and third for LCM Environmental Services Ltd in the past year.**

Completing three acquisitions in just 12 months, international fuel and tank storage risk-mitigation specialist LCM Environmental Services Limited has successfully brought Repair Protection & Maintenance Limited and Sprayglass International Ltd into its group of companies.

RPM is a highly regarded supplier of tank lining, bund and advanced coating service specialist services, whose offering compliments LCM's current environmental services range. This strategic collaboration represents an important milestone in LCM's growth and diversification, enabling the company to further enhance its offerings and better serve the needs of businesses across the UK and Europe.

Sprayglass specialises in the manufacture of a range of chemical resistant Glass Flake and GRP Laminating Linings suitable for application to both metallic and concrete substrates, providing protection solutions since the 1970s.

## Exponential growth

LCM Environmental has delivered exponential

growth through 2023, which has been recognised with an award. The company was announced winner of the Transformation Award at The Lancashire Red Rose Awards, and also features in The Sunday Times 100 Fastest Growing Companies for the year. Recording many successes over the past 12 months, LCM is also in the process of completing several major European projects in Ireland, Germany, France, and Belgium.

The acquisition of both RPM Ltd and Sprayglass International signifies LCM's commitment to expansion and to providing a more comprehensive suite of environmental services. The resultant partnership brings together three industry leaders with a shared vision for supporting sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions.

RPM's speciality focus is protective coating, lining and repair/maintenance services. The company's reach is international, with several completed projects across Europe, and further expansion planned. This acquisition enables both RPM and Sprayglass to benefit from LCM's own extensive experience in fuel management, as well as further environmental risk mitigation and scheduled maintenance programs.

With over 80 years of combined experience,



The photo shows Ian Simon (General Manager of RPM Ltd) on the left, Richard Wallace (CEO of LCM Environmental) and Dan Macdonald (former owner of RPM Ltd) on the right.

the two companies together will drive innovation and deliver more comprehensive solutions.

Richard Wallace, CEO of LCM Environmental Group comments: 'This acquisition represents a significant step in our mission to offer comprehensive, sustainable, and innovative environmental services. We are excited to welcome RPM Ltd into the LCM family of businesses and look forward to creating a brighter future together.'

Ian Simon, General Manager of RPM Ltd and Sprayglass International Ltd, shares: 'We are thrilled to join forces with LCM Environmental Services Ltd. Our combined expertise will provide our clients with even more environmentally responsible solutions while contributing to a safer, more sustainable world.'

"I'm looking forward to supporting Richard and the wider Board in my new role of non-executive director."

## New OMJ report gives access to daily and weekly HVO prices

The Oil Market Journal (OMJ) has launched a 'UK Road Transport Future Fuels Report' aimed at buyers of road diesel.

As the world progresses towards the implementation of a sustainable and carbon neutral road transport sector, renewable fuels such as Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) will play a pivotal role in the energy transition.

### Empowering clients

The new report provides access to daily and weekly HVO prices, as well as a differential to current B7 diesel benchmarks. The report also provides RTFC prices.

Ian Moore, director at OMJ said: "The new Road Transport Future Fuels Report empowers clients to make informed buying decisions as they work to decarbonise their fleets."

## Liquid fuel industry campaigners recognised by Minister at Number 10 Downing Street

Relentless campaigning, on behalf of their customers and the industry, has seen John and Robert Weedon recognised as 'local champions' at a special reception.

Nominated by George Eustace for the work they have done, through their Cornwall-based fuel distribution business Mitchell & Webber, to support the UKIFDA / OFTEC Future Ready Fuels Campaign, the brothers were invited to the reception at Number 10.

Hosted by Government Minister Gillian Keegan, John said they "had a great day".

"It was especially good as we also met with the political advisor to the PM and had the opportunity to discuss Kehelland and renewable fuels."

### Industry trials

HVO has been the subject of extensive trials led by industry bodies OFTEC and UKIFDA with



the support of fuel distributors such as Mitchell & Webber. Mitchell & Webber was the first company in the UK to convert an oil-fired boiler to trial HVO, in Scorrier in 2020.

Since this landmark moment, the Mitchell & Webber team have been converting oil-fired appliances across Cornwall to test the fuel's effectiveness and gather data, particularly in the village of Kehelland, which supports Europe's largest HVO trial.



# The future. Batteries included.

Humber Refinery is the only European facility producing battery anode coke, a critical component for batteries in EVs.



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# Industry urges the chancellor to correct HVO duty disparity

**Maintaining pressure on government to expedite the decarbonisation of off grid domestic heating by facilitating the wider uptake of renewable liquid fuels, UKIFDA and OFTEC issued a call for the chancellor to use his Autumn Statement to correct the duty disparity between renewable liquid fuels and fossil fuels when used for home heating.**

The then upcoming Statement was seen as the ideal time to equalise the duty on renewable liquid fuels with that of kerosene when used for home heating to align with the equal treatment of the fuels when used in transportation. Urging the chancellor to take this opportunity to show he is on the side of off-grid homes and businesses, the call was backed up by a letter signed by nearly 80 industry companies.

## Duty disparity

Welcoming the Government's commitment, in its Energy Act 2023, to hold a consultation on the potential of a Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Obligation (RLHFO) to give the 1.7 million off-grid homes which rely on oil heating a low-cost decarbonisation route, UKIFDA and OFTEC highlighted cost disparity as the main barrier to uptake.

With renewable liquid fuels for home heating currently attracting a fuel duty of c.10p per litre through the Hydrocarbon Oils Duties Act 1979, where heating oil does not, the letter argues that the disparity in the existing duties on renewable liquid fuels and kerosene when used for home heating are counterintuitive and a significant barrier to wider take up.

When used in transport, renewable liquid fuels and fossil fuels attract the same duty. Making the straightforward change of aligning their treatment in the heating sector would reduce the cost of renewable liquid fuels for



domestic heating and incentivise off-grid households to make the switch. Crucially, this change would require no subsidy, and would be cost neutral for the Government, but would be transformational for those off grid households heated by oil and make a significant contribution to reducing emissions.

## HVO demonstration project

Over the past two years, around 150 properties have switched to the renewable liquid fuel Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as part of an industry-funded demonstration. HVO is manufactured from waste cooking oil and feedstocks, meets exacting British Standards on sustainability and offers a carbon reduction of 88% compared to fossil fuel heating oil.

It costs less than £500 to convert an existing boiler to run on HVO and can be completed as part of an annual boiler service. In comparison, according to the government's online calculator, the typical cost for off-grid homes to install a heat pump is £10,000 to £30,000. This is due to the additional retrofitting measures often required for the technology to work effectively.

UKIFDA CEO, Ken Cronin and OFTEC CEO, Paul Rose commented: "Our demonstration project shows that renewable liquid fuels can achieve the objectives set out by the Prime Minister, by providing a fair choice to consumers across rural constituencies and deliver an easy, cheap and non-disruptive way to decarbonise their heating.

"When used in transportation, renewable liquid fuels and fossil fuels attract the same level of duty. However, there is currently a disparity when the fuels are used for home heating. It cannot be right that the tax system currently penalises the use of low carbon renewable liquid fuels for home heating, while kerosene attracts a zero rate.

"This is a major, and counterintuitive, barrier to the take up of these fuels, which are proven to reduce emissions by almost 90% and would lead to greater carbon reductions within current Carbon Budgets.

"Crucially, equalising the duties, would be cost neutral for the Government, require no subsidy and could be done through regulations. We are therefore urging the chancellor to equalise the duty on renewable liquid fuels for home heating in the upcoming Autumn Statement and support a pragmatic solution to decarbonise the off-grid sector."



# Results are in for the annual Compass Pumpkin Competition 2023

**In 2022, an annual tradition was born at Compass Environmental Consultancy.**

A packet of seeds landed on the desk of every staff member with instructions to go away and grow the biggest pumpkin by Halloween. The winner would not only receive the official Compass Pumpkin Trophy (painted by Operations Director, Matthew Thomas), but 365 days of glory and bragging rights.

Last year, that honour was bestowed on Matthew Thomas. With blood, sweat and soil helping him to grow a behemoth pumpkin that weighed in at 42kg, you might think that 2023 would yield a similar result, but you'd be wrong. This year's competition was the closest yet, and it took a photo finish to declare the winner.

When weigh-in day arrived, the sun finally set on Matt's 365 days of glory as Managing Director, Stewart Ower, announced the official results and a new champion emerged.

- 1. Harry Ower - 27.65kg**
- 2. Matthew Thomas - 9.1kg**
- 3. Tom Ower - 1.05kg (originally this didn't register on the scale)**

Crowned Compass Pumpkin Champion 2023, Harry received a standing ovation in the office before commenting: "Beating Matt was extremely satisfying. It takes tremendous sacrifice to compete at this level and I'm glad that my efforts have paid off.

"Now I know what it takes to win, I am already looking forward to next year's challenge."

There was no hiding the disappointment on the face of outgoing champion Matt as he said: "Listen. Harry can celebrate as much as he likes, but his 'prize pumpkin' was nowhere near the all-time Compass record that I set last year.

"He can have 24 hours to celebrate but if he wants to go down in history as the GOAT (greatest of all time), he needs to be in the garden preparing to smash my record next year."

## THE LATEST UPDATES FROM OUR DISTRIBUTOR COMMUNITY

### Craggs Energy secures double victory at Calderdale Business Awards

Craggs Energy, the West Yorkshire-based distributor, is delighted to have won two awards at the Calderdale

Business Awards – Employer of the Year and Business of the Year – solidifying its position as a business leader in the local community.

Matthew Crockett, Managing Director at Craggs Energy said: “We are honoured to have received both the award we were nominated for and the prestigious Business of the Year award. This recognition stands as a testament to the dedication and hard work of our entire team, of which I couldn’t be prouder.

“At Craggs Energy, we believe that our employees are our most valuable assets, and we are committed to empowering our workforce. This accolade reflects our ongoing dedication to fostering a supportive and thriving workplace. We place high value on our employees, customers, and the community we serve.

“Not only this, but winning the Business of the Year award highlights our commitment to excellence and innovation within our industry. Our sustained growth, relentless pursuit of quality, and dedication to customer satisfaction drive us to continuing to provide reliable and renewable fuel solutions for our Calderdale community for years to come.”

Emily Yates, Transport and Operations Planner added: “We had a fantastic evening at the awards ceremony and we were blown away to be recognised for two awards. Over the past twelve months we have seen lots of improvements within the business, including the introduction of a dog friendly office, revamped breakout areas, internal awards and recognition, and more regular staff incentives including meals and team nights out.

“I feel privileged to be working with such an amazing team and to be able to share in the growing success of our one hundred percent employee-owned business. The continued incentives and benefits that are introduced keep the team motivated and feeling valued. I’m excited to see what the future holds for us.”

*A huge congratulations to all at Craggs Energy!*



Roth Read Photography

tantalising treats on offer thanks to those who had been hard at work in the kitchen with an eye on the prize.

All bakes were judged blind by Assistant Stores Controller, Marcin with a colleague commenting: “It’s a tough job, but someone had to do it!”

After much deliberation (and second and third helpings) the winner was declared as IT Support Technician Sam Smith with his classic take on the ‘School Cake’ and custard making him a worthy winner of the sought-after apron.

Congratulations to Sam.

*We hope you had fun in the kitchen IPU Group and managed to avoid a soggy bottom!*

### Half Marathon success for LCM Environmental team

LCM Environmental Services Ltd, the Lancashire-based, fuel, energy, and infrastructure specialist, is very proud of two of the team for completing the Manchester Half Marathon back in October.

Jeremy Cosway, Operations Director said: “I’m incredibly proud to have taken part in the Manchester Half Marathon alongside our finance assistant, Kirstie Higgins. We both gave it our all and pushed ourselves to the limit - this is my personal best finish.

“Crossing the finish line with an impressive time of 1:37:09 for myself and 2:13:49 for Kirstie was the perfect demonstration of the spirit, teamwork, and commitment LCM Environmental strive to excel in. We’re not just about environmental excellence; we’re also about personal merit, and this race was a perfect example of that.”

*Congratulations to Jeremy and Kirstie!*



### Matthew Terry celebrates a milestone at Centre Tank Services

This month, CTS celebrated Matthew Terry, CEO, who has been with the business for 25 years.

In 2013, Matthew took over from his father, Mike Terry, to become the managing director after being the commercial director for 15 years, which started a new chapter for the company.

Lauren Cordelle, Marketing Executive, said: “Centre Tank Services has been established for over 35 years and under Matthew’s guidance, CTS has become one of the UK’s leading suppliers for fuel dispensing, storage tank, lubrication and AdBlue equipment.

“The day was celebrated with a buffet, speeches, gifts, and a presentation for Matthew of his accomplishments over the years in pictures, with all employees in attendance to show their appreciation and support.

“At the end of the presentation and speeches, Matt opened his gifts and cards – one of which turned out to be a confetti bomb (the cleaners were thrilled) – and thanked the team at the CTS group.”

Graham Morrell, Group CEO of Flowmax, gave a speech detailing how Matthew started within the business and his achievements over the years. Graham said: “CTS is one of the most consistent growth and delivery businesses within the Flowmax Group, and I think a lot of that



### The IPU Group – on your marks, get set, bake!

The West Bromwich-based design and manufacturing company, IPU Group, held a charity bake sale in aid of Children in Need with the winner of the ‘best bake’ being awarded a fabulous IPU apron!

In the build up to the big day, Melissa Payne, Marketing Manager, said: “Here at IPU, we love fundraising for charity, and we love cake, so a bake off seemed a logical choice!

“Raising money for the BBC’s Children in Need is a fantastic cause and well worth some sweating in the kitchen to get a perfect bake.

“The first prize apron is going to cause plenty of healthy competition at IPU HQ!”

When the day arrived competition was fierce, with an array of



is down to the employees and the support that they get from Matt in his role. We really appreciate him for that as it shows a really strong community here at CTS.”

Matthew said: “It’s been a fantastic 25 years! I’ve worked with some great people in all the companies – CTS and, more recently, Castle Pumps and Whisper Pumps.

“A lot of my time over the years has been spent here at the CTS office and some faces have been with me for the whole journey, it’s great to be part of such an amazing team. I appreciate everybody who has helped me get to this milestone, thank you very much.”

*Congratulations to Matthew from Fuel Oil News!*



### **Moorland Fuels walks to challenge success!**

Moorland Fuels, the Devon-based fuel distributor, is extremely proud of two members of the Moorland team who recently took on a tough charity challenge.

Abby Turner, Sales Director, and Ryan Woolacott, Sales and Customer Account Manager, completed a 100-mile walking challenge in October raising over £400 for Cancer Research UK.

Abby said: “We all know someone who has been impacted by cancer. It is research, awareness and early diagnosis that is making cancer beatable. That’s why we are determined to raise as much money as possible for this cause. A big thank you to Ryan for taking part with me.”

*Congratulations to Abby and Ryan on raising money for such a great cause.*

*If you are planning a charity event in 2024 then please let us know: claudia@andpublishing.co.uk*

### **Road Tankers Northern – Adrian’s gone fishing!**

Adrian Mason, Sales Executive at Road Tankers Northern (RTN), has some exciting news to share with the FON community. He is taking part in the YouTube Predator Cup – a serious fishing competition that is being broadcast online!

Adrian explained more: “Artificial lure fishing is growing rapidly in the UK, and a number of brands from across Europe now have pro staff anglers fishing for them across the UK.

“The YPC (YouTube Predator Cup) has been around since 2018, and is now the largest lure fishing competition in Europe, but this year it moved to the UK. Ten anglers from across the top brands fished in a three-day event in, and around, an hour and a half from Birmingham for pike and perch to see who the first winner of the YPC UK Cup would be.

“Not only do I work for RTN, I also work part-time as the UK sales manager for Catch With Care (CWC), which is a company based in Sweden. I have been lucky enough to stand side by side with our pro staff, who are regarded as some of the best lure anglers in the world, so



it’s a huge honour to represent the brand on the European stage.

“I spoke with some of our pro staff members, and they told me that it’s not about going out and winning the competition, it’s about being entertaining, and I hope that comes across on camera. The first episode came out on the 29th of October and the series runs from now until New Years Eve on Sundays at 6pm, with the last two episodes being the final four anglers in a one-day fish off.

“The YouTube channel that is running the series is ‘Pike and Perch’ – I hope you enjoy it.”

*Good luck to Adrian for the competition!*

### **SS Motors (Fuels) is proud to sponsor local rugby**

SS Motors (Fuels), the Cambridgeshire-based fuel distributor, is proud to be sponsoring the local rugby club.

Steven Munns, Director SS Motors, said: “SS Motors (Fuels) Limited has become a kit sponsor for a newly-formed local colts rugby team. The team is a joint venture, bringing March and St. Ives Rugby Clubs together to create a combined colts team.

“In doing this, they will be giving an opportunity for 25-30 teenagers (aged 15-18) to play competitive rugby, something that they would not be able to do if they didn’t merge the two small clubs together.

“The plan is for this to be a long-term solution for the two clubs to keep the colts playing before transitioning to senior players, so we see this sponsorship opportunity as a long-lasting relationship as the team grows over the years.”

*Good luck to the colts team for the rest of their season!*



### **TEC Industrial is celebrating award success**

One of Ireland’s leading suppliers and distributors of a wide range of industrial and hydraulic hoses, fittings, and adapters, TEC Industrial Ltd, has proudly announced its recent award success.

TEC Industrial won the ‘Best Small Business’ award at the South County Dublin Chamber Awards 2023.

Simon van Lonkhuyzen, Managing Director, said: “This recognition is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our incredible team, who consistently go above and beyond to deliver outstanding products and services to our valued clients.

“It’s also a reflection of the unwavering support we’ve received from our wonderful customers and partners. Many thanks to all the team in the South Dublin Chamber for organising the awards ceremony and Crowe for sponsoring our category.”

*Congratulations from Fuel Oil News, we look forward to being ‘In Conversation’ with TEC Industrial next year!*



Read all these stories and more in full at [www.fueloilnews.co.uk](http://www.fueloilnews.co.uk) and send your latest news to [claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk) or [margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk)

## Northern Ireland council embraces HVO in project to reduce carbon emissions by 87%

Last year, in September 2022, The Alliance for Zero Carbon Heating (TAZCH) met in the offices of Longford Council, Northern Ireland with Paddy Diffley, the buildings and facilities manager of the Council and deputy Joe Flaherty, TD for the Longford–Westmeath constituency since 2020.

The meeting was to discuss whether TAZCH could offer a simpler solution to decarbonisation of the Council HQ than a major retrofit programme. The answer, of course, was yes – by converting the oil-fired boiler that heats the main office building to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), a biofuel offering an immediate c.87% reduction in carbon equivalent emissions.

David Blevings, Ireland Manager for OFTEC and director of NIOF, takes up the story: “In principle, the solution was straightforward, but we had a few steps to get here, and the conversion only went live in May 2023.

“Sean McBride, the ROI local inspector carried out the initial site survey, and then, through the Council’s tendering process (all OFTEC registered businesses), Brendan Earley, Premier Energy Storage, was engaged to replace the tank and carry out the necessary works to convert the existing boiler to run on a biofuel.

“The boiler, which is now running on HVO, will see a reduction in its emissions by 87% - paving the way to achieving heating emissions



David Blevings (OFTEC), Nick Hayes (UKIFDA) and Kevin McPartlan (FFI) outside the Council offices.

savings in a timely and affordable fashion.”

Samantha Healey from Longford County Council was interviewed for RTÉ News and said: “Before we could even look at putting in a heat pump system, for example, we would need to make some significant deep retrofits to the fabric of the building. HVO presented an excellent opportunity to bridge that gap.”

The Council will be monitoring the emissions reductions achieved by the fuel switch and it’s anticipated that the project will demonstrate the scale of carbon reductions that can be achieved in both commercial and residential settings in a way that is quicker, cheaper, and more universally applicable than retrofitting.

### Seamless

Speaking about Longford County Council’s aspirations for the project, executive engineer

David McNiff said: “We’re very pleased for Longford County Council to play such a strong role in the move towards the use of biofuels. The process itself was seamless and, by utilising existing equipment, this move has saved the Council money, reduced our capital outlay and given us an immediate 87% reduction in carbon emissions.

“Looking towards the future, we plan to invest in more adaptations and add further controls to achieve additional savings.”

OFTEC and TAZCH will be using the project to demonstrate how the switch to low-carbon liquid fuels can accelerate Ireland’s journey towards hitting its emissions reduction targets by 2030. The Government’s Climate Action Plan commits Ireland to a legally binding target of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and achieving a reduction of 51% by 2030.



The team of technicians who oversaw the conversion.



Checking the conversion.



The HVO arriving on site.

# Deliver More.



For Your Customer.  
For Your Team.  
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# Prince Energy: community, charity and Christmas

PRINCE ENERGY, THE LEICESTERSHIRE-BASED FUEL DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS, IS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FESTIVE SEASON. HAVING RECENTLY CELEBRATED 60 YEARS IN BUSINESS, PRINCE ENERGY IS STILL PROUD TO BE A FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS.

CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, SPOKE WITH **AARON 'MITCH' MITCHELL**, TRANSPORT DIRECTOR, TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE BUSINESS AND WHAT THE TEAM HAVE PLANNED FOR CHRISTMAS!

## A family-run business

Prince Energy is an independent, family-owned and run business. Aaron has been working with Prince Energy since 2004, and is a key part of the Prince Energy team.

“Prior to being employed by Prince Energy, I served 18 years in HM Forces,” Aaron explained, talking about his introduction to the fuel industry. “Part of my role was providing ADR and Fuel Tanker training for HQ Land where I’d be sent to train any unit that required training prior to a deployment.

“As part of my resettlement training, in preparation for civilian life, I completed the Dangerous Goods Safety Advisors course, All Classes (DGSA). Whilst in my final year, and actively seeking civilian employment, I was fortunate to obtain an offer of employment from David Prince at Prince Energy. My commanding officer granted me gardening leave for my final six months enabling me to

start my new career at Prince, on the condition that I ran two more ADR courses during that time.

“I commenced my employment with Prince in the June of 2004, initially employed as the artic driver. A year later, I took on the role of transport manager, whilst still driving. As the company has grown over the years, my role, and the time afforded to the transport documentation, has increased to such a level that I had to hang up my driving gloves. I do still get the opportunity to get behind the wheel to cover things like driver sickness and holidays.

“In 2020, David made me a director at Prince Energy. My time at the company has been amazing; it’s been so nice to work for a family business. When I first started, David’s father Victor, who founded the company, would still pop in frequently to say ‘hi’, and see how things were running!”

## The local community and charity

Prince Energy is a big part of the local community and does a lot for charity. Aaron explained more: “We are a local, family-run business with owners that have grown up and still live in the local area.

“We want to make sure that, as a company, we can give back to the community that has supported us for the past sixty years. David Prince, Managing Director at Prince Energy, has afforded me the time over the past nineteen years to undertake a lot of these charity ventures.

“The main charity the company supports is Rainbows, a charity for our local Children’s Hospice. Rainbows cares for hundreds of families every year who have a baby, child, or young person with a serious or terminal illness that means their lives will be shorter than most.

“There are two events for this charity that



we get involved with each year. Every October, as a company, we sponsor the Champion's Events annual charity rugby dinner. Then, of course, in December, I don the big guy's red suit to ride to the hospice with as many toys as I can squeeze onto the sleigh!"

This isn't the only charity that Prince Energy supports. "The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal is another charity that we care a lot about," Aaron continued. "I used to be the Poppy Appeal co-ordinator for Blaby in Leicestershire (unfortunately work and family commitments meant I had to take a step back) but I still get involved with the local street collecting for the charity.

"I also organise, through the Lord Mayors office, the Ride of Remembrance to the Leicester Cenotaph for the Armed Forces Scooter Club, Royal British Legion Riders Branch and local clubs. We have somewhere around 200 Bikes and scooters in attendance for this event each year raising much needed funds for our ex-servicemen's and women's charity.

"We also take part in the Santa Run to Barnes Heath House, a children's home and respite home for disabled children in Leicestershire and, of course, we support Movember, the charity that supports men's mental health and suicide prevention. Ben, our sales manager, embraces the clippers each year in support of this."

### Last Christmas

Every Christmas is busy for Prince Energy, and

not only because they deliver a lot of fuel! "Last year was an exceptionally busy year around Christmas. Word got out about the epic adventures of Santa's Scooter Sleigh. Radio Leicester invited me to take part in a live broadcast outside their offices at St Nicolas' Place announcing the forthcoming toy runs to Barnes Heath House and Rainbows Childrens Hospice.

"Following each of these toy drops, the sleigh completed a six-hour ride around the streets of Leicestershire stopping to meet and greet the local children with selection boxes kindly donated by Tesco (with the two-stroke oil, my fuel bill was horrendous!)

"At one of the villages, Santa was met by Claudia Webbe MP, Christmas carollers and hot spiced gluhwein! At request, an extra stop was also made to a local retirement home to distribute personal hygiene gifts to their residents."

Father Christmas must have needed a big rest that night!

### Christmas at Prince

"Each year the company likes to spread a bit of cheer amongst our own employees, to say thank you for all the hard work throughout the year. Paid for by the company, we either attend a Christmas function with partners or organise a joint activity for our office staff and drivers. Last year was activity time! An indoor carting track was booked where our office staff gave the drivers a run for their money! (No cash exchanged hands, except the bill!) We

followed this up with a meal and drinks at a local restaurant!"

### Christmas spirit

Aaron and the team are huge fans of Christmas and are very much looking forward to getting into the Christmas spirit this December. Wanting to find out more about the festive fun that happens at Christmas, we asked Aaron:

- **What's your best Christmas joke?**

My children's wish list!

- **What's your favourite Christmas song?**

'Rudolf, the Red-Nosed Reindeer', and 'I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday', by Wizzard.

- **What will you be eating on Christmas Day?**

CHOCOLATE – for breakfast!!

- **What's your favourite thing that is associated with Christmas? (A food, activity, tradition etc.)**

As a family we've always had a tree present saved for boxing day, dinner, Christmas movie and then presents.

- **What's your favourite Christmas film?**

Got to be Miracle on 34th Street with Richard Attenborough.

- **What are the values that you would like Prince Energy to be associated with?**

Our honesty, openness, and fairness.

Fuel Oil News wishes Aaron, and all the team at Prince Energy a very happy Christmas and New Year and we look forward to catching up with them again in 2024 when we will discuss their 60th anniversary.



# A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Hollie Mills

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 **HOLLIE MILLS**, FUTURE FUELS MANAGER AT NEW ERA FUELS, TO DISCOVER HOW HOLLIE SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.



## MY ALARM GOES OFF AT...

6:30am – with a 10-minute snooze if needed, and it normally is!

## THE FIRST THING I DO IS...

Coffee. Always coffee.

## I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY...

Checking my emails so I can see if anything new has come in that I need to action or prioritise. Then I get myself ready and organise everything for my little boy to go to school.

I'm the first one up and out the house before they wake, so knowing everything's already sorted puts my mind at rest.

## I CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT...

My Apple watch – it's become a bit of an obsession.

**MY TYPICAL DAY** – I arrive at the office by 7:45am, enough time to settle down and make another coffee before my 8am start. I consider myself relatively organised and live by continuous to-do lists. I find this works in my favour though as my day will pretty much already be planned out!

My role is to support our existing customers and potential new clients on their journey to net zero, by discussing New Era's portfolio of sustainable fuel solutions and services. I understand that every business is different and, therefore, so will the requirements and challenges be that come with the transition.

I mostly spend my day building relationships with sustainability and supply chain teams, often creating bespoke proposals to demonstrate how easily carbon reduction strategies can be implemented into their business, and the impressive benefits they'll gain as a result. I'll either call or present over Teams, but sometimes I visit clients in person as you'll never beat the connection that is made with face-to-face meetings.

As well as client meetings, I'm also on the road a lot attending supplier events, sustainability conferences, strategic partner meetings and represent New Era when we exhibit at trade shows.

Other parts of my role include participating in workshops and

webinars to keep up with the evolving renewable energy market, so that we are aware of new developments to UK infrastructure or government initiatives.

Another big responsibility of mine is looking after the fuel contracts for all of our customers that have chosen to secure a guaranteed HVO supply, which has become increasingly preferable due to the rapid growth in demand for renewable energy sources.



## MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT...

In March, we attended the NFDC awards, where New Era was honoured with the NFDC Supplier of the Year award. We were thrilled that our exceptional teamwork and unwavering dedication had been recognised by the industry.

## THE WORST PART OF MY JOB...

Most clients are opting to use alternative fuels such as HVO as an approach to help achieve their ambitious sustainability targets. They

will be under pressure from carbon auditors and may have signed up to the SBTi, so this will require me to provide sufficient quantitative data.

Their deadlines become my deadlines, so when these urgent requests for data come in unexpectedly, I need to put my juggling skills to the test.

## THE BEST PART OF MY JOB...

After spending the earlier years of my sales career in more superficial industries, it's rewarding to know that I'm now pushing awareness for a product that is positively contributing to the protection and well-being of our planet.

Every day is different, and there is always something new to be learnt. It's safe to say no day is boring!

## I RELAX AFTER WORK BY...

In the kitchen, music on, cooking. I find it so therapeutic and spend most of my free time trying new recipe's and having kitchen discos with my son. Good for the heart and soul!

## MY FAVOURITE MEAL IS...

Anything pasta based is always a firm favourite.

## THE LAST THING I DO EACH DAY IS...

As much skincare as I have the energy for. Vitamin C serum is my life saver.

## I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY...

10:30pm - 11pm. I'm not the night owl I used to be, unfortunately.





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# TRANSITION TALK

## FuelBox: the success story of New Era Fuel's sustainable dispensing solution

**“We are proud to empower our customers in enhancing their sustainability credentials through the adoption of FuelBox, contributing to the reduction of carbon emissions and improved air quality across the country.”**

SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2015, FUELBOX HAS EMERGED AS THE BENCHMARK FOR THE CONVENIENT AND ECO-FRIENDLY DISTRIBUTION OF VARIOUS FUELS. OUR CONVERSATION WITH **JAMES HUNT**, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NEW ERA FUELS, SHEDS LIGHT ON THE GENESIS OF THIS GROUNDBREAKING PRODUCT AND OFFERS INSIGHTS INTO THE TRAJECTORY OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY.

New Era Fuels has been delivering excellent customer service within the fuel, oil and lubricant industry for more than 100 years. The distributor's primary objective is to provide an unrivalled, nationwide, next day delivery network for its customers.

With depots strategically positioned across the country and an extensive network of local distributor partners and stockists, New Era Fuels ensures comprehensive national coverage. A current fleet of over 60 fuel tankers covers Greater London from depots in Harlow, Gatwick, Grays, Wembley and Oxford, plus 4 depots in East Anglia, and Birmingham and Plymouth, carefully chosen regional distributor partners and the Head Office team in Harlow.

Since 2015, New Era Fuels has pioneered FuelBox, a 'bag-in-box fuelling system' that is completely recyclable and nothing short of revolutionary. The result of a collaboration with Quadpak and Fenton Packaging Solutions – a specialist stockist and distributor of a wide range of containers for powders, granules, pastes and liquids across many industry sectors, the FuelBox had its origins in red diesel but is evolving with the sector and plays a key role in New Era Fuel's efforts to champion a sustainable future.

True to our name, New Era Fuels has been a pioneer since its creation in 1919, initially catering to the industrial sector with lubrication products. By the 1970s, lubricants constituted 95% of our business, while fuels represented a mere 5%. Currently, the situation has evolved, with fuels now comprising the majority, enabling us to establish a significant presence among the leading fuel distributors in the UK.

Today, New Era Fuels stands as, a fuel-centric enterprise, committed to delivering an unparalleled nationwide next-day delivery network, available 24/7, 365 days a year. With 11 depots strategically positioned across the country and an extensive network of local distributors and stockists, we ensure comprehensive national coverage.

At the turn of the century, our main business revolved around selling red diesel. Customers would arrive with their rigid 20-litre jerry cans to purchase fuel for their farm or plant machinery. The idea for FuelBox originated in 2014 during a routine delivery in Chelmsford, where our Director of Operations, Stefan O'Len, noticed several discarded plastic jerry cans along the roadside, prompting the concept of a more eco-friendly alternative. Within a brief, two-week period, Stefan developed a prototype for the FuelBox, based

on a UN-approved bag-in-box system – and he is holding that prototype in the picture on the page header!

### Convenient and sustainable

Convenience and sustainability form the cornerstone of FuelBox, a result of collaborative efforts with Quadpak and Fenton Packaging Solutions. Our intensive testing and subsequent full launch at the Executive Hire Show in 2015 underscored the overwhelmingly positive reception of FuelBox. Today, it stands not just as a product but as an established brand, embodying an enhanced user experience and a more environmentally responsible solution.

FuelBox owes its effectiveness to an exclusive agreement with Quadpak for fuel in bag-in-box, with support from Fenton Packaging Solutions in expanding our product



The current FuelBox range.



FuelBoxes are invaluable on construction sites

range. With substantial investments in filling machinery, we now boast over 1,800 stockists across the UK.

FuelBox offers numerous benefits for plant operators, including easy handling, spill-proof dispensing, and robust protection against contamination and adverse weather conditions. Moreover, its recyclability significantly reduces plastic usage by up to 90%, minimising landfill waste by 86%. Notably, the space efficiency of 90 FuelBox bags equals that of a single traditional jerry can, resulting in substantial cost reductions for hazardous waste disposal.

### Expanding to an extensive range

The FuelBox family has evolved in response to customer demands, moving beyond its origins in red diesel to incorporate an extensive range of products, including white diesel, AdBlue®, kerosene for domestic heating, HVO, and hydraulic machinery oil. These offerings come in varying pack sizes from 10 to 20 litres.

New Era Fuels work closely with Yara International as a licensed distributor of AdBlue® and witnessing the UK's annual AdBlue® consumption soar towards half a billion litres, we are committed to meeting this escalating demand. To provide a convenient and eco-friendly solution for both commercial

and domestic customers, we proudly supply 10 and 18-litre AdBlue® BlueBoxes.

We are excited to announce that – recognising an unmet need in the market – we are our now taking orders for our cutting-edge breakthrough, the new 500L AdBlue® BlueBox.

### Compliance

Under the leadership of our Compliance Director, Ben Leworthy, New Era Fuels proudly holds the highest accreditations in the UK as a compliant fuel distributor, including esteemed risk certification. Our unwavering commitment to compliance allows us to deliver to any location, including challenges such as rail-side sites.

Our ISO certifications across ISO9001, ISO14001, and ISO45001, along with our FORS Gold accreditation, further validate our commitment to industry-leading practices.

### Beyond FuelBox and the future of fuel

At New Era Fuels, our passion lies in championing a sustainable future. As a consultancy-oriented business, we encourage customers to explore new-generation alternatives like HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil). Although renewable fuels are not yet widely available at forecourts across the UK, we have been at the forefront of advocating

renewables since 2017, well before the gradual phasing out of fossil fuels gained prominence.

HVO stands as a fossil-free solution, crafted solely from renewable materials, serving as a direct diesel replacement for vehicles and generators. It significantly reduces CO2 emissions by up to 90% and enhances air quality by lowering Nitrous Oxide levels by up to 30%. HVO is biodegradable, odourless, and contributes to an up to 85% reduction in particulate matter emissions.

New Era Fuels proudly holds the UK's largest HVO footprint through our extensive rigid tanker depot network, with our HVO distribution surging from half a million litres in 2020 to an impressive 60 million litres this year. We lead by example, fuelling our own fleet with HVO and advocating the same for our customers.

Our success extends to vital projects, including support for filming crews during premier football games and providing fuel for generators at large infrastructure projects like HS2 and Crossrail. Notably, during the pandemic, we played a crucial role in supporting the NHS and London Ambulance Services ensuring that they never ran out of fuel. This highlights our unwavering commitment to public health and environmental welfare.

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# How would you summarise 2023?

THE FUEL DISTRIBUTION COMMUNITY LOOKS BACK OVER THE YEAR.

ASKED FOR '3 WORDS OR PHRASES THAT SUM UP WORKING IN FUEL DISTRIBUTION IN 2023' OUR COMMUNITY OF DISTRIBUTORS SAID:

**Gross Margin Gone**

**Rapidly changing. Increasingly fragmented. Unrecognised significance.**

**Normalisation of margins. Enjoyable. The return of credit risk.**

**Family, forward-thinking, exciting.**

**Never a dull moment, inspiring, sometimes taxing and an exciting industry to be in.**

**Challenging due to international conditions and continuing changes in consumer behaviour.**

**Innovative as new technologies are adopted across supply networks.**

**Encouraging as consumers are increasingly choosing sustainable options over legacy fuels.**

**Challenging. Exciting. Fulfilling.**

**Sustainability, Change, Volatility.**

**Opportunity, Family.**

**Challenging. Ever-changing. Enjoyable (!?)**

**Busy. Rewarding. Fun.**

## A flashback to 2022 - has the industry changed in a year?

LAST YEAR THE COMMUNITY SAID:

**Challenging, shortages, and uncertainty**

**Turbulent, challenging, and educational**

**Challenging, necessity, and resourceful**

**Demanding, satisfying, and exceeding**

**Challenging, exciting, and successful**

**It seems that 'challenge' is the one certainty in this industry.**

# Truckstops go the extra mile to make Christmas special for drivers

Onroute Truckstops is part of the Mabanafit Group, a leading independent and integrated energy company, headquartered in Hamburg, Germany. The Group is operating a large, and growing, network of both automated and manned, full-service stations in the UK and Germany. Fuel Oil News spoke with the Onroute Truckstop team to discover how they plan to support drivers this festive season.

Christmas is a busy time for the road haulage industry and that's why staff at Onroute Truckstops make an extra effort to look after drivers over this period. As well as Christmas trees and decorations to make the sites feel cheerful and festive, they also gear up to serve hundreds of Christmas dinners to hungry drivers.

"We love Christmas," says Derrick Hemingsley, Manager at Junction 29, one of Onroute Truckstop's sites near Chesterfield. "Our staff really enjoy getting into the spirit and spreading some goodwill, making things special for drivers. We know how hard lorry drivers work to transport goods around the country, especially at Christmas, and it's a nice way to thank them for their hard work and dedication. Commerce would literally grind to a halt without them!"

### Delivering the goods

He's right of course. Haulage is crucial to keeping the country running, not just at Christmas, but all year round. There's a shortage of qualified HGV drivers in the UK and the Road Haulage Association says one way of encouraging more new drivers into the industry would be to provide improved overnight facilities. As a key service provider to drivers working in the industry, Onroute Truckstops is keen to play its part.

In the UK, Onroute Truckstops is developing a network of truck stops



Lucy-Ann from Avon Lodge

across the country – good value, high quality sites where drivers can rest, refresh, and refuel, before continuing their journey. It currently has sites in Ulceby (near Immingham), Swindon, Avonmouth (near Bristol) and Chesterfield. As well as 24/7, pay-at-the-pump, HGV refuelling, their truck stops provide safe and secure parking for drivers and their vehicles. Their on-site cafes serve a variety of tasty, freshly-cooked food so drivers can enjoy a healthy meal at the end of a long-days shift – including free fresh fruit. They also provide clean, well-maintained washrooms, laundry facilities and a well-stocked shop with useful items a driver might need on the road.

"The build up to Christmas can be particularly stressful for drivers, with shorter days and increased chances of poor driving conditions," comments David Hatherell, Business Development Manager for Onroute Truckstops. "They also often work extra shifts, meaning more time spent away from their families. We try and make things as easy and comfortable as possible, providing a safe, friendly space where they can rest and relax, have a chat, and soak up some festive cheer.

"We regularly survey drivers, to find out what's important to them, and always listen to their feedback. Top of their list is secure overnight

parking and we have introduced overnight patrols so drivers can get a good night's sleep knowing someone is keeping watch. We've also recently revoked our decision to be cashless in response to driver comments and are now taking cash again.

"Our goal is to provide good quality, well-maintained facilities at all of our truck stops and future plans include building new washroom facilities at Swindon and refurbishing the ones at J29 in 2024."

### We know how hard drivers work

"We really know how hard drivers work," comments Kate Williams, Manager at Avon Lodge in Avonmouth. "Two of our managers are married to drivers, so we have first-hand experience of the issues they often have to contend with, including unexpected delays or breakdowns that might impact Christmas plans. Many are away from home four nights a week, some for weeks at a time, so we do all we can to create a festive atmosphere and make our Truckstop cafes extra welcoming and cosy at this time of year."

"It wouldn't be Christmas without the festive food," adds Angela Malinson, manager of Ulceby Truckstop. "All our truckstops are serving Christmas dinners throughout December, with turkey, stuffing, roast potatoes, veg and all the trimmings (we have a vegetarian option) followed by home-made Christmas pudding with custard or whipped cream. Our mince pies and seasonal coffees are also very popular."

### Christmas Jumper Day

Onroute Truckstops is also supporting Save the Children by taking part in the charity's Christmas Jumper Day fundraiser. "Who doesn't love an opportunity to wear a Christmas jumper?" jokes Colin Humby, Manager



at Swindon Truckstop. "We'll all be wearing ours and donating to make the world 'better with a sweater,' and we find the drivers are always very generous and supportive as well."

### Thank you drivers

So, when we open our presents with friends and family over Christmas, let's spare a thought for the lorry drivers who distribute goods around the country and beyond. They will definitely have played a part in getting those gifts into the shops or distribution centres so that they could be found, bought, wrapped and, finally, handed to you.



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# KEN'S CORNER



## Mistletoe and Wine!

I unashamedly leave a copy of Fuel Oil News on the kitchen table in the hope that someone in the family is interested enough to read about what I do. I am hoping that this month they ask why I am wearing an Elf's hat. If for no other reason than observation is an important characteristic!

The answer is, of course, obvious: the brilliant people at Fuel Oil News got the real Santa to pose for the front cover and I am merely one of Santa's helpers.

In that vein, I hope that UKIFDA has been helpful this year. I know the whole team has worked extremely hard, and I believe we have achieved quite a lot.

A few weeks before last Christmas, I was in Cornwall with the Mitchell & Webber team, talking to George Eustice, their local MP, alongside residents of Kehelland. It was a Christmas wish that, at some point, we would get a piece of legislation outlining a proposed Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Obligation – see, Santa is real.

We have met some interesting characters across the political divide this year, including Liz Truss, Jacob Rees Mogg, Angus MacNeil, Ben Lake, Ian Paisley and Lord Berkeley, and it was an honour to do so alongside many local fuel distributors in their homes and depots. I have been humbled by the industry's support of the Future Fuels campaign.

Special mention must be given to our partners, OFTEC, who have been with us all the way.

I do, however, wish to use this month's column to address the difficult and complex issue that is fuel poverty. It's a topic that is not only hard to talk about but also challenging to solve.

### There are several aspects to this difficulty.

Firstly, many who are in poverty feel helpless and, often, have a lack of hope and, as a result, disengage from the very community that may be able to help. And, of course, the biggest issue of all is the loss of the ability to ask for help. On the other hand, others worry about getting involved, making a fool of themselves or even making things worse.

It is not helped that governments have different definitions of and approaches towards fuel poverty, with statistics that are not granular enough to really identify where the problems are.

The statistics (see separate section) show that the households in the homes and areas where we serve as an industry are more likely to be either in fuel poverty or have a very high poverty gap (the amount of money required for that household not to be in fuel poverty) than other parts of the country.

Although Cliff Richard crooned "It's a time for giving", I understand that money is only part of the problem.

At our regional meeting in Scotland in October, we invited speakers from the Fuel Bank Foundation and Advice Direct Scotland. Both organisations have significant funds from the Scottish Government to help those in rural communities classified as in fuel poverty.

What came out of those discussions was a surprise. The main challenge is not the availability of funds to support payments but rather the identification of and outreach to those in need and devising new ways to connect with them.

The bottom line is that we must explore new methods to increase awareness about the help that is available and, in doing so, find different approaches to communicating with people to help them seek the aid or resources that can benefit them.

One of the outcomes of fuel poverty is self-disconnection or self-rationing where, for periods of time, customers decide not to use their heating to either preserve money for other things or to eke out their remaining supplies. This has implications for both their health and the health of their homes.

### What can we do as an industry?

Well, I have to be honest; until very recently, I thought this was only about money, but I was wrong. The solution is more complex. As I have said before, under different circumstances, we know who our customers are and we know where they live. Also, we must acknowledge we don't have the skills to resolve it.

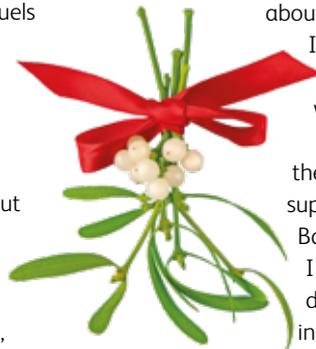
Therefore, my best advice and the general thrust of the presentations in Scotland is to get in touch with the local support agencies – citizens' advice, local authorities, the Fuel Bank Foundation and many others and simply say – "how can I help you communicate to those who need help". Please don't wait to be asked – UKIFDA will be happy to make introductions if you want us to.

With that in mind, UKIFDA launched its Winter Wise campaign in September, which gives a lot of information about who to contact, and I am pleased to see a large number of distributors using the material in their social media accounts.

This situation cannot be treated as one that can be resolved overnight. It will take a lot of interconnected people to find the solutions. However, if there is something we can do, we should all play our part as much as possible.

As I said at the start, this is a complex topic that doesn't have easy solutions. However, I hope the information provided can be of some help, particularly during a time of year when some of our customers may be facing difficulties.

With 'Mistletoe and Wine' playing in the background, I would like to thank you for your support throughout this year and wish you, your teams and all those close to you a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.





# Fuel Poverty Fact Sheet

## Definitions and statistics

Analysing fuel poverty is very difficult. There is a myriad definitions (not helped by each country in the UK using different variations and publishing statistics at different times).

At best, the statistics provide trends over time rather than a snapshot at a specific point.

Full poverty used to be defined as a household that needed to spend more than **10% of its income on energy** in order to provide a satisfactory heating regime.

A number of different charities, including the National Energy Action (NEA), use this method and have estimated that the number of homes in fuel poverty in the UK in 2022 was 6.5 million and is expected to be around 7.5 million in 2023.

In England, the government introduced a new definition of fuel poverty in 2021. This is the **‘Low Income Low Energy Efficiency’** (LILEE) definition of fuel poverty. Here a household is fuel poor if:

- they are living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F or G
- their disposable income (income after housing costs and energy needs) is below the poverty line.

The depth of fuel poverty is measured by the **fuel poverty gap**, which is the reduction in fuel costs needed for a household to not be in fuel poverty. In 2022 the mean average fuel poverty gap was £338 per fuel poor household and is projected to increase to £443 in 2023.

In 2022, there were an estimated 13.4 per cent of households (3.26 million) in fuel poverty in England under the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) metric, up from 13.1 per cent in 2021 (3.16 million).

## Characteristics that impact fuel poverty Off-grid and rural

*Note: Oil heated homes are all off the gas grid, and c90% are deemed rural. However, the majority of off-grid homes are electrically heated*

- Households living in rural areas have the highest fuel poverty rate, of 15.9% in 2022, and the largest fuel poverty gap, at £956.

- Households living in rural areas are, on average, in much less energy efficient and much larger properties but have higher than average median incomes. Rural properties have a higher incidence of being off the gas grid (56.8% compared to just 9.0% of urban properties).
- Of households living in properties not on the gas grid, 20.1% are fuel poor compared to 12.3% on the gas grid.
- The average fuel poverty gap for households off the gas grid was £804, over three times higher than on gas grid households (£222).

**THE NUMBER OF HOMES IN FUEL POVERTY IN THE UK IS EXPECTED TO BE AROUND 7.5 MILLION IN 2023.**

## House type

*Note: c50% of oil heated homes are detached*

- Those living in detached properties have the lowest likelihood of fuel poverty (7.6%). However, households living in detached properties have the largest average gap at £702, partly due to the number of exposed

walls which contribute to a lower energy efficiency rating and higher floor areas.

- Households living in detached homes had much higher median incomes than other households, which explains the lower levels of fuel poverty, but households with the highest floor areas had the highest fuel costs and, therefore, the highest fuel poverty gap.

## Property age

*Note: c40% of oil heated homes were built before 1919*

- Households living in properties built before 1919 have the highest average gap, at £507, and the largest proportion in fuel poverty (22.2%). This is due to their lower-than-average energy efficiency rating and higher-than-average floor area leading to a higher-than-average fuel cost for older homes compared with newer ones.

## Regions

- There is a high level of variation in fuel poverty rates between regions. The West Midlands had the highest rate of fuel poverty at 19.2%, compared to 8.6% in the South East. Given there are similar median energy efficiency ratings between regions and similar median fuel costs, the lower median incomes seen in northern regions and West Midlands have driven the higher shares of fuel poverty. The South West had the second highest median floor area (86m<sup>2</sup>), which drives the highest median fuel costs (£1,711) and hence the highest average fuel poverty gap of £521.

## Fuel type

Central heating	Main fuel type	Proportion of fuel poor households within group (%)	Number of households (thousands) - Fuel poor	Average fuel poverty gap (£)
Central heating/storage heaters	Gas	12.1	2,531	202
	Oil	19.4	162	801
	Electricity	20.9	281	636
	Other	12.5	91	1,508
All households		3.4	3,257	338

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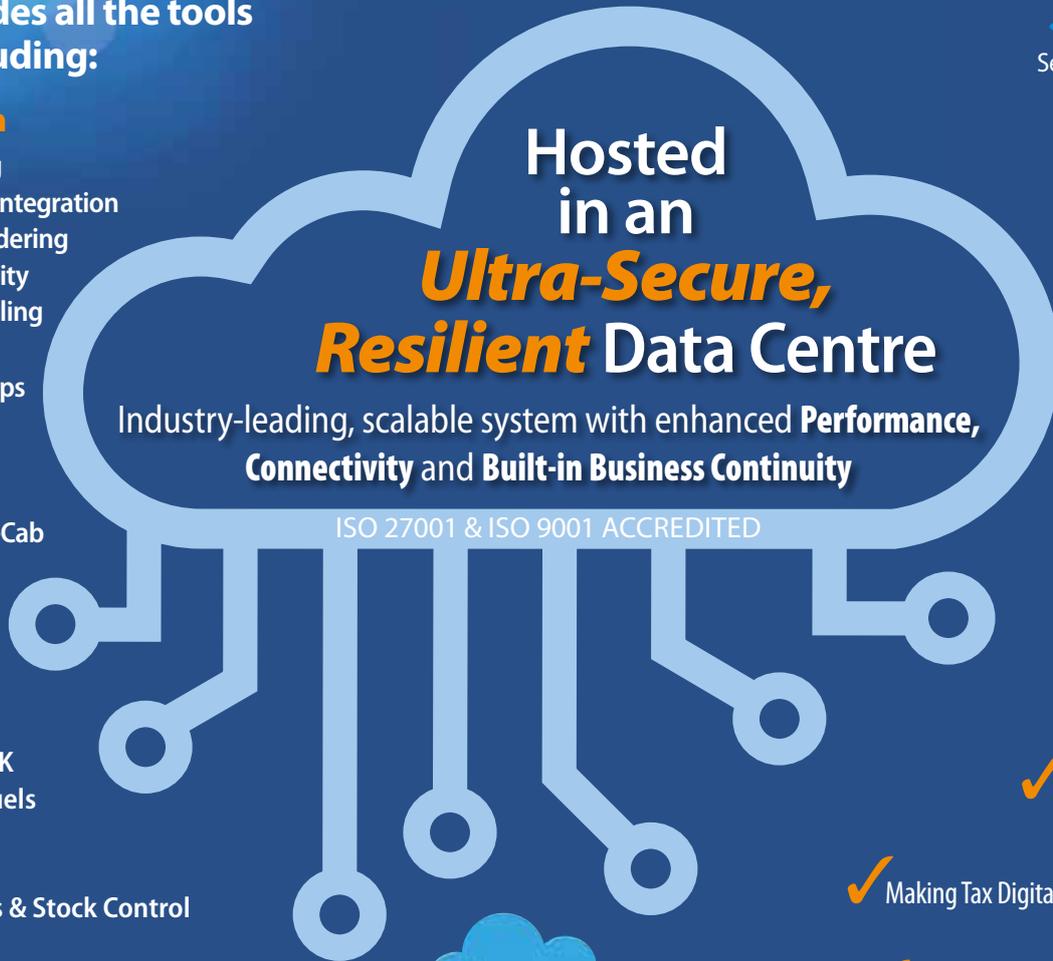
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# What are your hopes for 2024?

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEW YEAR, WE ASKED OUR COMMUNITY WHAT 3 THINGS THEY ARE HOPING 2024 WILL BRING AND THEY SAID:

- Increase in margins across grades to make the industry sustainable.
- Customers join the Energy Transition move to HVO.
- New to the workforce: school leavers and graduates joining our industry for a long career.
- A coherent and realistic energy strategy from government.
- An end to the upset resulting from Ukraine and Israel/Gaza.
- Manageable tax incentives for using renewable fuels.
- Growth.
- Operational efficiency with rising truck and P&L costs.
- Happy team within the company.
- Further industry involvement.
- That as a supplier we can add optimum value to industry members.
- A stable economy in a stable world.
- Progress from central government to encourage increased sustainability amongst both consumers and suppliers, especially in non-fleet applications.
- Continued growth of renewable and sustainable fuels across both the supply and consumer networks.
- Continued uptake in sustainable fuels.
- Improved pricing indices for sustainable fuels.
- Lower inflation.
- An increase in community-based activism from fuel suppliers; there are multiple avenues for fuel suppliers to take such as volunteering and mentoring programs, charity patronage, fundraising efforts or even direct donations.
- Cheaper fuel prices.
- A reduction in fuel poverty.
- England to win the Six Nations!
- Cold weather.
- A fantastic EXPO.
- England winning Euros.
- Cold weather.
- No drama.
- A peaceful world.
- On a personal note, it has to be Health, Happiness and Gratitude for all my family and friends.

## A flashback – are the industry's hopes different a year on?

LAST YEAR THE COMMUNITY SAID:

- Peace and the hope we can end the Ukraine crisis and allow people democracy and freedom across the world. (many times)
- Price stability.
- Arsenal to win the premiership.
- Windfall Tax.
- Diversity.
- Growth.
- Political stability.
- Prosperity.
- Parties.
- Health for us all.
- A successful year of business.

It is clear that hope springs eternal within our community and time has not blunted our enthusiasm for peace, stability and sporting success but, alongside these, the hope on most lips is for growth in sustainable fuels – let's see what 2024 brings on that front!

# A “changing of the guard” in the UK fuel marking regime: what businesses that mark fuel need to do now

BUSINESSES MARKING FUEL FOR REBATE AND SUPPLIERS OF REBATED FUEL ARE NOW SUBJECT TO NEW UK REGULATIONS COMING INTO FORCE IN MID-JANUARY 2024. THE UPDATED REGULATIONS – ACCORDING TO HMRC’S LATEST BRIEFING NOTE – STATE THAT “FROM 18 JANUARY 2024, A NEW MARKER ‘N-BUTYL PHENYL ETHER’ MUST BE ADDED TO ANY FUEL BEING MARKED AS A CONDITION OF ALLOWING THE REBATE”. IN THIS IMPORTANT ADVISORY ARTICLE, **PHILIP DOUBLE** OF JOHN HOGG TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS EXPLORES THE IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESSES THAT MARK FUEL.

The advent of the UK Government’s Windsor Framework in relation to Northern Ireland means the province is subject to the EU’s fuel marking legislation for gas oil and kerosene – namely Directive 95/60/EC. This requires companies to use the new fiscal marker, Accutrace Plus (n-butyl phenyl ether, also known as butoxybenzene), selected by the European Commission to replace the original Euromarker, Solvent Yellow 124, as the common fiscal marker.

The wider UK market is mirroring this move, with HMRC confirming the “addition of this new marker” to “enhance the existing marking regime” and “maintain alignment with the fuel marking requirements in other jurisdictions, particularly Ireland, which will support ongoing efforts to tackle fuel fraud”.

In this transition period between regulations, there are two key dates and related actions to note:

First, by the 18 January 2024 deadline, companies need to mark fuels with Accutrace Plus at prescribed levels of between 12.5mg/L and 18.75mg/L of fuel.

Second, 1 December 2023 is the earliest date companies can add the new marker to rebated fuel. As HMRC explains, this “will enable businesses that mark fuel to manage their stocks of marking products by [using the marker] before it becomes mandatory”.

In the EU, member states will set a marking level of Accutrace Plus of at least 12,5 milligram per litre and not more than 18,75 milligram per litre of energy product. This corresponds to a marking level of at least 9,5 milligram of butoxybenzene per litre and not more than 14,25 milligram of butoxybenzene per litre of energy product.

In summary, the required markers for each fuel type in the UK from 18 January 2024 are:

**1. Gas oil/biodiesel/gas oil bioblend/light oil for furnace fuel:**

- Solvent yellow 124
- Accutrace S10
- n-butyl phenyl ether (Accutrace Plus)
- Quinizarin
- Colouring substance (red dye)

**2. Kerosene and kerosene bioblend**

- Solvent yellow 124
- Accutrace S10
- n-butyl phenyl ether (Accutrace Plus)
- Coumarin

**What is the new chemical replacing Solvent Yellow 124?**

According to Accutrace Plus manufacturer and trademark holder, Dow (US), the marker is “resistant to common chemical and physical



**A tanker collects a gas oil marker concentrate delivery**

laundry” and provides a “unique fingerprint in the fuel, which alerts authorities to its intended use and enhances supply chain governance and product identification”.

From an environmental perspective, Dow says that the marker “contains only elements commonly found in petroleum/petroleum derivatives without any known ozone-depleting additives or dioxin-emitting halocarbons.”

**What is the impact on businesses that mark fuel and what are the risks to address?**

The introduction of a new marker system demands detailed implementation plans to account for the new requirements needed by the deadline date of 18 January 2024.

This includes considering stock management, order reviews and product requirements during the winter period to ensure optimum stock levels and the ability to continue supplying the market with fuel.

Before 1 December this year, it is illegal to add Accutrace Plus into marked fuel. After that date, the aim is to add enough new marker into the fuel supply chain to ensure compliance by the January 18, 2024, deadline. Companies can achieve this by carefully managing stocks of previously marked fuel, plus adding new product. Managing previous marker concentrate stock is important, as this is disallowed after 18 January. With the aim of reducing the volume of Solvent Yellow 124, the new legal requirement for the product is over 3mg/L. Removing an upper limit enables companies to run down the previous product in their system without contravening the legislation.

**Stock holding and disposal issues:**

Distributors need to consider their stockholding of existing marker concentrate from today: not holding too much old stock of marker and

ensuring they add new marker as early as possible to ensure compliance. This is because mixing old and new concentrate would dilute the new marker below the required concentration level (risking non-compliance with the regulations) and create unnecessary operational and cost issues.

As the UK doesn't require removal of Solvent Yellow 124 by a certain deadline – and the transition involves adding a new material – we are looking at ways to support companies through this process.

What we, collectively as an industry, need to avoid is disposing of marker concentrate which is both toxic and difficult to discard safely.

### Operational equipment, processes and procedures

Based on the physical properties of the new Accutrace Plus fuel marker, companies should be able to continue with their existing protocols.

With no change to the dosing of the formulated product, either for gas oil or kerosene, this should also mean that current equipment doesn't require any modifications.

Technical data sheets are available which outline the new marker's specific properties, including density and viscosity. Companies may want to verify that their pumping systems are compatible with these changes and should review the technical data to dose at the correct level to ensure compliance.

In addition, it's necessary – when receiving any new material into a system – to review the safety requirements for handling it. Consulting the material safety data sheet and conducting an operational risk assessment is prudent, as well as informing customers about potential hazards and safety measures.

### Managing the transition

Having fuel distribution customers in the EU – and with some early movers in transitioning to the new rules – we've had the chance to observe and support the shift in practice already.

In Germany alone, we've supplied 250,000L of new marker into the transition, which equates to a quarter-year's supply in six weeks. To do this, companies concentrated on running down their previously marked fuel stocks and emptying marker concentrate tanks: the supply chain was emptied through June and July 2023, with new supplies starting in August.

The lessons learned from this mean that UK companies – starting from 1 December 2023 – need to empty their existing stocks while we ensure the new product is ready to go. This also requires collaboration with customers on the availability of road transport to ensure they get what they need in time.

Ahead of the transition period, we will supply companies with a range of marker concentrate samples under the new name, Dyeguard®, to test, evaluate and ultimately meet the new requirements. And we



An operator and driver wait while filling a tanker with marker concentrate

have also conducted compatibility and stability trials and increased our resources and capabilities to support the change.

Indeed, one key advantage of our close collaboration with the regulatory authorities is being able to influence the formulation of certain marker products to the benefit of end users. For example, obtaining a reduction in the amount of Solvent Yellow 124 in the new Dyeguard® KMC 30 kerosene concentrate means companies won't have to modify their dosing equipment to allow for a different dosage rate.

As HMRC emphasises in its guidance, "users of marker concentrate should contact their supplier to discuss their needs". With the timescales as they are, we'd advise fuel distributors to do that sooner rather than later.

#### \*Gas Oil Marker Concentrates:

*Dyeguard® GOMC 0104: 1L Marker Dye Concentrate in 1,000L of fuel*

*Dyeguard® GOMC 0519: 1L of Marker Dye Concentrate in 5,000L of fuel*

#### Kerosene Marker Concentrates:

*Dyeguard® KMC1005: 1L of Marker Dye Concentrate in 10,000L of fuel*

*Dyeguard® KMC3015: 1L of Marker Dye Concentrate in 30,000L of fuel*

**PHILIP DOUBLE** is Chief Operating Officer at John Hogg. A manufacturer of fuel marking technology, regulatory and specialist dyes, John Hogg is a trusted global partner to brands, businesses and government, supplying fuel marking systems that protect from fuel theft, counterfeiting, smuggling, adulteration and tax evasion and ensure regulatory compliance.



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The advertisement features a large 3D 'Tankquip' logo at the top. Below it, there are two images of white tanker trucks. The text is arranged in a grid-like fashion with red and blue background blocks. Contact information for Dave Stanley is provided, along with the company's email and website. The bottom of the ad includes the text 'FUELS & ENERGY', 'ROAD TANKERS', and 'Or e-mail dave@tankquip.co.uk'. The website 'www.tankquip.co.uk' is listed at the very bottom.



# Moorland Fuels: 20 years and still growing strong!



MOORLAND FUELS, THE DEVON-BASED FUEL DISTRIBUTOR, IS CELEBRATING ITS 20TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY. PART OF THE CRAGGS ENERGY FAMILY, MOORLAND FUELS IS ALSO PROUDLY 100% EMPLOYEE OWNED. AS THE COMPANY CELEBRATES ITS 20TH YEAR IN BUSINESS, OUR COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD, CLAUDIA WEEKS, INTERVIEWS **ABBY TURNER**, SALES DIRECTOR, TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BUSINESS.

## Friendly, reliable, and dedicated

Abby explains more about the development of this family-run business from its beginnings in 2003 with just a single baby tanker: “My parents, Ben More and Debbie More, started Moorland Fuels back in 2003 in a building shared with another business named Southern Lubricants. They also shared a tanker driver with them as they only needed a part-time driver.

“Everything was handwritten back then, including tickets, orders, and invoices! After a year of trading, they were able to take on a full-time driver. Two years later, the first office staff joined, and the company steadily grew for 15 more years.

“The first major milestone for us was moving all operations into our own buildings in 2014. We then opened our Plymouth Depot, in 2015, and placed two full-time tankers there.

“In December 2020, we became a part of Craggs Energy and, with further investment from them, we have gone from strength to strength. Joining Craggs Energy and becoming a 100% employee-owned business in March of 2022 has really taken the business to the next level.

“We have recently purchased the 8th vehicle in the fleet, which will be on the road shortly, and, of course, celebrating our 20th anniversary is a huge achievement!”

## We really do put our customers first

Based in Okehampton, Moorland Fuels covers much of the South-west. Abby explains more about the customer base: “When Moorland Fuels was created, we began serving just the area around our main depot in Okehampton. Twenty years later, we cover the entirety of Devon and large areas of Cornwall.

“We currently offer our customers traditional fuels such as kerosene, DERV (white diesel) and gas oil (red diesel) alongside our 100% renewable diesel alternative – HVO. With further major investment in tanks at our Okehampton depot, we will soon be able to offer Flame35 which is an industrial heating oil alternative. We also offer a wide range of lubricants and additives including bulk AdBlue.

“We find that a lot of new customers have heard about us from friends and family, which is a testament to our customer service. Another



great advertisement for us would be our impressive tankers that can be seen serving the region daily!

“I know it may sound clichéd, but we really do put our customers first. Over the years we have built fantastic customer relationships and strive to deliver on our promises. The team go above and beyond every day to help customers with whatever they need, including emergency deliveries.”

### A beautiful but challenging location

“Our main depot sits right on the edge of Dartmoor which, of course, is a beautiful area. However, it does pose some logistical challenges.

“Our drivers and vehicles work extra hard on the narrow roads, and they can travel long distances before getting to their delivery areas each day. A huge positive is the beautiful landscape, and we get to work with wonderful local customers and team members from the area, and there are multiple terminals we can utilise.”

### A shared commitment to excellence

Moorland Fuels started its journey with just three employees, and now there are seventeen across the business.

In 2022, Moorland Fuels transferred 100% ownership of the business to its employees by establishing an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT). Moorland Fuels is proud of the way in which this unique ownership model empowers every team member, from drivers to office staff, to have a personal stake in the company’s success, resulting in unwavering dedication, loyalty, and a shared commitment to excellence.

Abby explains more: “Our employees have seen short term benefits so far, including the first payments to them being made in December 2022. The EOT gives the team more motivation and a sense of higher personal investment in the business.

“Employees have reported that they have a sense of career stability and feel part of the long-term business plans. This new level of dedication from the team also translates to excellence in customer service. I’m passionate about promoting the benefits of employee-ownership and I will continue to drive passion and enthusiasm with my fellow employee owners.”

### The future for Moorland

“A big focus for Moorland Fuels and myself, going forward, will be to continue to consistently deliver excellence to our thousands of customers across the region,” Abby shares as she considers what the future holds for Moorland. “We are looking to expand our growing commercial base



even further, and have invested heavily in our trucks, systems, and products, to ensure we can service businesses daily with their unique requirements.

“We are passionate about low carbon and sustainable solutions for our customers, and we will be continuing to pursue green alternatives such as renewable diesel, carbon offsetting and any new emerging technologies.

“I enjoy the challenges of working within fuel distribution; it’s a fast-paced industry that is constantly evolving, and every day is different. There is a great deal of teamwork involved in smoothly operating a fuel business and I am blessed to work alongside a wonderful team.”

### A Moorland Christmas

We couldn’t resist asking Abby what Moorland had planned for Christmas this year: “We always take part in Christmas Jumper day, in aid of Save the Children, and this year that will take place on Thursday 7th December. We also like to get the team together for a nice meal before Christmas to say a small thank you for all their hard work through the year.

“And, of course, there will be lots of chocolates and mince pies in the office throughout December to keep us powering through!”

Fuel Oil News wishes Abby and all the team at Moorland a wonderful Christmas and all the best for another successful year.





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# What are you hoping to read about in 2024?

THOSE IN THE FUEL DISTRIBUTION COMMUNITY SHARE WHAT'S ON THEIR MINDS.

ASKED 'WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO READ ABOUT IN 2024?' OUR COMMUNITY OF DISTRIBUTORS SAID:

*Are there too many fuel depots in the UK?  
What is the best value for money truck?  
Can we make rebated fuel digital taxation as opposed to dying red?  
The changing needs and expectations of customers with respect to liquid fuels.  
The knowledge gaps in our industry and what can be done.  
Industry facts and statistics.  
Industry innovations.  
Industry members and their day-to-day involvement in the industry  
Relations with adjacent industries, joint working etc.  
Emerging Markets.  
Review and impact a year plus on after the change for red to white  
Domestic market review.  
Prior years, here and now and what do we think this sector will be like in the coming years.  
Better understanding of future fuels, HVO heating oil, the government decreasing the duty on HVO for the consumer.  
Sustainable fuels.  
Customer service successes.  
Fuel science & product innovation.  
A greater ministerial understanding and acknowledgement of the key role that liquid fuels plays in the energy mix of future fuels.  
Reducing our reliance on imported energy.  
The resilience of the successful UK liquid fuels market.  
Market outlook, new distributors, competing solutions (e.g. heat pumps, hydrogen).  
Innovation.  
Future Fuels.  
More day in the life of.  
Young people still coming into the industry.  
Happy drivers!  
Liverpool winning the Premiership!  
Fuel Tanker OTC developments.  
Family-owned distributors celebrating milestones i.e. 50 years etc.  
The emergence of more young employees in our industry.  
Manchester United beating Liverpool in the last minute of the FA Cup Final to seal the double...OK, not very likely to happen but I can only dream.*

Some of these we can make happen; some may not be within our gift. But we will always endeavour to cover, through our channels, the topics at the forefront of your mind.

Thank you to all who shared your thoughts with us – your feedback is invaluable – if you'd still like to have your say please get in touch as we love to hear from you!

Drop an email to Claudia: [claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk) or contact Margaret on [margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk) or 07786 267527.



# PORTLAND XMAS REPORT

## A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Krampus Claus

WELCOME TO A RATHER UNUSUAL EDITION OF OUR MONTHLY FEATURE WHERE WE PROVIDE AN INSIGHT INTO A TYPICAL DAY OF A WELL-KNOWN PLAYER IN THE INDUSTRY. THIS MONTH, THOSE ROVING REPORTERS FROM PORTLAND HAVE LEVERAGED THEIR DEEP INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS TO SECURE AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SANTA'S COUSIN, **KRAMPUS CLAUS** TO DISCOVER WHAT HIS TYPICAL DAY LOOKS LIKE.

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### My alarm goes off at...

4.30am sharp. I'll quickly flick through my overnight emails and then I'm straight down to the Gym for a body-turbo, pump-max to the max exercise session.

Ha-ha...do I b0llox. I only put that in to convince your readers I'm a hard worker. Far from it! I'm fast asleep at this time of the morning, probably still well over the limit from the previous night's booze and almost certainly snoring. Probably farting too.

### The first thing I do is...

Probably around 10.00am, when one of the non-nice children will bring me a cuppa and a fag. You'd be surprised just how many young people apply for apprenticeships with us down here in the South Pole. Turns out that quite a few naughty girls and boys enjoy receiving cinders in their stockings every year - so much so that they want to find out more about what else we have to offer. And the fact is that some of the world's worst people have come through our training programme. We're very proud of that.

### I prepare for the day ahead by...

Every day starts with the blessed treble; a sh1t, a shower and a shave.  
*(Editor's Note: can we make sure this line above doesn't get published please!)*



### I can't leave the house without...

Watching Homes under the Hammer. Never miss an episode. Love Dion Dublin me. Top player, top presenter, top bloke. I flipped a couple of semis in Corby for a tidy profit last year, so I'm always on the look-out for bargains. And you see a lot of houses in my game. Average Naughty to Nice ratio is currently running at about 1 in 12, so although I'm way less busy than old fatso in the North, you're still looking at delivering to well over 65m "bad child" houses on Christmas Eve.

### My typical day...

Clearly no such thing as a typical day at Kramazon, but invariably I have to spend time with the Marketing Department, aka, Bullsh1t and Crayons, who are very keen on changing our brand. Apparently engaging in fossil fuels (coal ash...) and being cruel to children (...by putting it in their Christmas stockings) puts us at significant risk of falling below fuel distributors in the popularity stakes.

They also want me to reconsider our all-black colour scheme, but it seems to work pretty well for the NZ rugby team (defeats to South Africa aside). And, besides, why would we want jolly red & white colours like Old White Beard? We're not Stoke fans or even worse, Sunderland...

Also, we'll have a review of company strategy in conjunction with OPEC (Organisation for Present Extorting Countries) on a daily basis. My job is to make sure that festive gifts remain impossibly expensive for hard-working families and OPEC's production cuts mean that low quality ash alternatives start to look like an attractive option for parents. A lot of them actually write to us asking for cinders to be delivered rather than presents, so demand is never really a problem. Worth noting mind, that China's one-cinder policy has always limited volumes in that part of the world.

### My most memorable work moment...

Being awarded UKIFDA (United Kingdom & Ireland Festive Decoration Association) Distributor of the year in Liverpool in 2022. Had the award revoked a week later of course, what with HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue for Christmas) formally complaining to Chief Elf Ken Groanin that we hadn't filed a correctly completed RDCO form (Registered Dealer in Christmas Oil) in over 800 years. Plus, they accused us of failing to meet our CSO (Christmas Stocking Obligation). As if! Typical Customs &



Exercise. No sense of humour and no idea what it's like to operate in the real world.

Mind you, what a night we had after the awards dinner. Absolute carnage. Ended up stealing Santa's brand new 8-wheeled sleigh and crashing it into the Mersey. Me and Dasher had to be rescued by the RNFLI (Royal National Fairy Light Institution). Bloody mental it was.

**The worst part of my job...**

Daily call with cousin Santa. He's family so it's got to be done, but he is a premiership bore. That being said, whatever mutual dislike there is, we both know we're nothing without the other. A bit like the Old Firm in Glasgow.

**The best part of my job...**

Putting the phone down on Mrs Claus. She and I are not at all "sympatico", so when she rings, I just pick up the receiver and say "Hello, South Pole School for the Deaf, who's speaking please?". When she replies, I say "sorry, I can't hear you" and then put the phone down! Classic bantz right there.

**I relax after work by...**

Working on my Special Home Brew, which I'm hoping to launch in the German Market next year. I'm calling it HVO (Humunguzly Vell Oiled) and as my old mates Donder & Blitzen (now sadly plying their trade up North) would say "Zat packs a punch, ja!". That's right boys it does, but it's going to cost you a hoof and a leg to buy the stuff, which could be a problem unless I can get some form of subsidy from DECC (Department of Eating Christmas Cake).

**My favourite meal...**

Deep fried penguin. Good job really - there's nothing else to eat down here in the South Pole.

**On my bedside table is...**

The Biomass Strategy published by DECC's new incarnation - DESNZ (Drinking & Eating Sherry with NutZ), Cristo on a biko, what a frigging drag. How Groanin keeps awake reading that sh1te I have no idea. Earns his money on that alone. I've tried to make a start on it 3 evenings in a row but failed each time. I just end up going back to Bravo Two Zero.

**The last thing I do each day is...**

Troll Santa, Mrs Claus and Rudolph on social media via my @IamtheKramp account. They all try and block me of course, but I've got various aliases (@cindersnotpresents, @hahaSantaisaSunderlandfan, @Rudophisanalki, @MrsCwearsthetrousers) so I always get through in the end

**I'm normally in bed by...**

...late. Very late. I'll normally play online PokerStars with Vlad and Donald until the small hours. Love clearing out those two guys – the both of them are such sore losers...

Portland  
[www.stabilityfromvolatility.co.uk](http://www.stabilityfromvolatility.co.uk)

# Marking a decade of service: the depot built in a weekend

THIS MONTH MARKS THE TEN-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF A PIVOTAL ACHIEVEMENT FOR BROTHERS JOHN AND ROBERT WEEDON OF CORNWALL-BASED FUEL DISTRIBUTOR MITCHELL & WEBBER WHO TOOK ON THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING A MUCH-NEEDED, STRATEGICALLY LOCATED DEPOT, IN A WEEKEND! AS THEY MARK A DECADE OF SUCCESSFUL SERVICE FROM THE FACILITY THEY BUILT IN JUST TWO DAYS, THE BROTHERS REFLECT ON THE SUPER SWIFT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPOT, WHICH HAS SINCE PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN SUCCESSFULLY SERVICING CUSTOMERS AT THE UPPERMOST REACHES OF THE DELIVERY AREA.

The project was initiated when the Weedon brothers sealed a deal with the landowner of the site and the team immediately set the planning process in motion, drawing upon the company's design expertise and previous experiences to execute an admirably efficient establishment of the facility.

## All in the preparation

To guarantee a seamless and rapid implementation, the Mitchell & Webber team engaged in meticulous preparation and planning. They mapped out a comprehensive groundworks plan, provided a precise interceptor and ensured the required concrete was the correct specification and thickness and had suitable barrier protection.

To maximise speed, they organised an innovative new system of on-site crimping of stainless-steel piping and had a specialist trainer from the manufacturer sent to the site to assist and certify the work over the weekend.

Detailed electrical planning played a crucial role, with accurate measurements of cable runs and connections meticulously thought through in advance, with partial cable trays prepared ahead to expedite the process.

Once the timing was agreed, storage tanks and equipment were booked well in advance for the set weekend with dedicated staff, including directors and managers, earmarked for the task. Mobile generators and lighting were all tested and set to support the installation. Artic drivers were also prepped and ready with fuel so that the depot testing could be implemented on completion.

## A massive team effort

John explains: "We were very lucky that everything fell into place. We attribute the successful execution of the project to a culmination of our meticulous planning along with a stroke of very good fortune! The tanks were delivered on Thursday, which meant we had Friday and Saturday to complete the majority of the work and just Sunday reserved



Mitchell & Webber depot build

for the final touches.

"It was a case of "all hands to the pumps" with pipework being put together, but, with no hot works required, it enabled a much quicker and neater assembly. Once initial pipework from the tanks was completed, we had artics on standby to fill them. Thanks to the communal efforts of everyone helping, the pre-made cable supports were quickly put together and cables attached, meaning the electricians only had to do the connections."

Robert added: "It was thanks to a massive, dedicated team effort that we were able to complete the job by Saturday night, allowing deliveries to commence from the new facility on Monday morning. We couldn't have been more proud of what we achieved in such a short time and to this day we remain in awe of the efforts of everyone involved in this epic challenge".



Stainless steel pipework & offset filling pipes

## Anything is possible

When reflecting on the achievement and whether it could be done again, both Robert and John acknowledged that, while certain equipment and materials have become more expensive, the development of a specialised Industrial Services Division means the company is able to handle alterations and maintenance on fuel systems and depots.

John mused: "If faced with a similar challenge today, I'm pretty sure we'd have the ability to do such work again, however, we'd be sure to allow ourselves more time to alleviate the massive time pressure we put upon ourselves and the team."

Today, this rapidly erected depot remains a high-functioning cornerstone of Mitchell & Webbers' operations. Embracing innovation and sustainability, the team have since expanded the facility to include storage and facilities for renewable fuels.

Robert concludes: "The depot we built in a weekend has certainly proved its worth over the years and it will continue to serve us well in the future. We will always associate it with one of Mitchell & Webber's greatest (and fastest!) achievements and a testament to "anything is possible when you put your mind to it", especially when you have the right team!



Thursday and tanks are being offloaded on site.



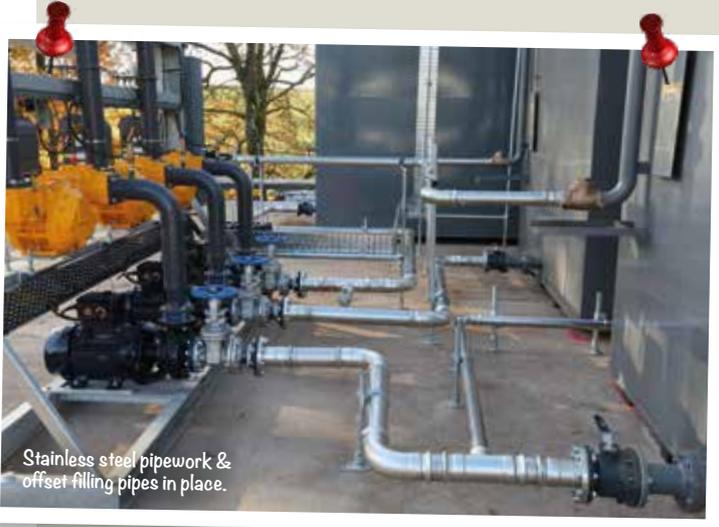
The final tank being delivered to the site.



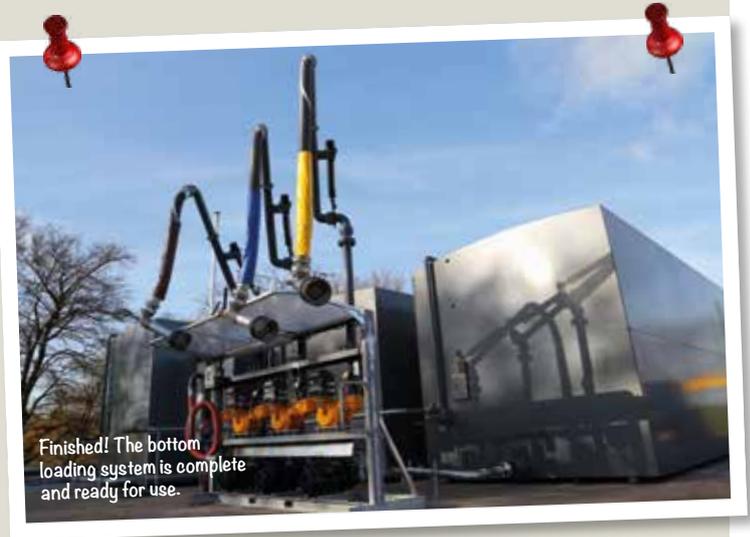
Tristan Weedon working with a representative from Geberit to implement the crimp device.



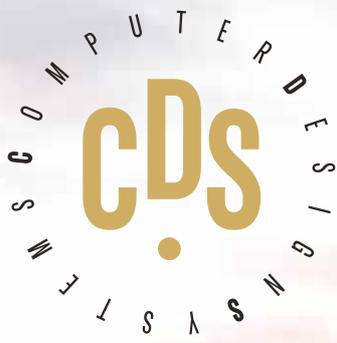
A close up of the Geberit crimper in action.



Stainless steel pipework & offset filling pipes in place.



Finished! The bottom loading system is complete and ready for use.



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# 2023 – A YEAR TO REMEMBER



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features  
'In Profile'



**FEBRUARY**  
Downstream  
& FON - a  
new industry  
partnership



**MARCH**  
Rupert Turner  
talks transition



**APRIL**  
Rix Group  
diversifies into  
renewables



**MAY**  
Progress for  
HVO - import  
tariff removal



**JUNE**  
FON goes on  
tour with Cobo



**JULY**  
Belated  
milestone  
celebrations  
for Craggs



**AUGUST**  
Renewables – a  
look at heat  
pump progress



**SEPTEMBER**  
Leah Snow  
challenges  
gender  
stereotypes



**OCTOBER**  
Certas moves  
into solar



**NOVEMBER**  
Rosebank –  
tackling the  
tough questions



**DECEMBER**  
Christmas at  
Prince Energy

## Send us a photo to see your own highlights featured in Fuel Oil News!

This is just a small selection of the many memorable moments we have been privileged to share with our community through 2023. We would love to see your own highlights, so please send us a photo from your most memorable moments of 2023 along with a few lines explaining why it was a special moment in the year for you, or your company, to Claudia: [claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk).

# Celebrating 100 years: the Chemical Business Association

FUEL OIL NEWS HEARS FROM **TIM DOGGETT**, CEO OF THE CHEMICAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (CBA), AS HE REFLECTS ON THE MILESTONES, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND SUCCESSES OF THE PAST YEAR AND CENTURY AND CONSIDERS WHAT THE SECTOR CAN EXPECT IN 2024.



The chemical supply chain has had its share of challenges and disruptions. However, it hasn't been all doom and gloom. The CBA has been the voice of the chemical supply chain industry for a century. In fact, the association, which represents distributors, manufacturers, traders, and other companies throughout the chemical supply chain, celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2023.

While much has changed since being established as the British Chemical and Dyestuffs Traders Association in 1923, two things have remained the same – the sector continues to face challenges, and its members remain the driving force behind everything the CBA does.

## A century of support

On the back of a difficult few years, the CBA marked its centennial anniversary in several ways during 2023. In April, it celebrated this momentous milestone with its member companies, special guests, and dignitaries from around the world during its annual "Floggers" lunch, the largest event of its kind in the UK. On this special occasion, it even received a letter of best wishes from King Charles III.

Exactly one hundred years since it was first registered, on 23rd November 2023, the CBA also hosted a 100th Anniversary Celebration and Awards night to recognise its members and their achievements.

However, its centenary year was not just about celebrating the past, but also about envisioning the future and advancing the sector. Throughout the year, it introduced several new initiatives. One of its most notable successes was establishing its People and Skills Hub, a platform aimed at facilitating the exchange of knowledge, skills development, and career advancement to young people and organisations alike.

It also launched Generation STEAM, an initiative geared towards engaging more young talent with the industry and highlighting the diverse entryways and careers available throughout the chemical sector.

Both these initiatives were introduced to address the potential growing skills gap in the chemical supply chain and the wider chemical



sector, which has been a key focus for the CBA in the past year.

Additionally, the CBA expanded the reach of its Future Council, a group of young professionals from its member companies, which celebrated its first anniversary in 2023. To help young people enhance their understanding of the chemical supply chain and to showcase the diverse career opportunities within the sector, 2023 saw the Future Council, along with CBA staff and its members participating in many outreach programmes and events during the year – directly engaging with over 8000 school children, students and young people during 2023.

The past year also saw the reinforcement of key partnerships. In addition to extending its involvement with Generation Logistics, an industry-led campaign aimed at bringing industry together, shifting perceptions, and encouraging the next generation to seek opportunities in the logistics industry, the CBA has partnered with STEM Learning to create and develop a STEAM Ambassador programme with several already qualified in 2023, and ambitions to train another 100 during 2024.

Moreover, the association continued to engage with local and foreign government departments, such as the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), advisory groups and other stakeholders on matters of global



importance, with members of the team participating in several trade missions and regularly attending events for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), INTERPOL, and the International Chemical Trade Association (ICTA) around the globe.

Due to these partnerships, and the value they offer, the CBA has forged a strong reputation, and is widely recognised for its expertise, support, and contribution to the industry in the UK and internationally.

## Driving sustainability

As part of its many commitments to the sector, the CBA has been seeking innovative solutions to sustainability challenges. In line with this, another significant milestone celebrated during 2023 was the 30th anniversary of its Responsible Care (RC) programme. Established in 1993, it is now a global initiative which provides an ethical framework for the safe use and handling of chemical products and seeks to deliver continual improvements in health, safety, security, and environmental performance across the industry.

In 2023, the CBA used the programme's 30th anniversary to refocus its commitment to sustainability in the chemical supply chain by publishing its vision for RC in the 21st century. This was complemented by its annual Responsible Care Awards, which recognise the achievements of member companies beyond basic compliance with the programme.

## Looking ahead

The economic climate is a key concern for many businesses, and those within the chemical supply chain are no exception. The CBA believes that, amid the challenging market environment, transparency, innovation, and collaboration will be key drivers in 2024 to ensure the sector remains relevant, effective, and productive.

Going forward, the association will consistently build and improve on its existing foundations, remain actively involved in supply chain dynamics, and continue to explore new and innovative ways to support its members.

With a century under its belt, it is ready for the challenges of the next one hundred years.

# Good mental health matters: mental well-being in the fuel distribution industry

**MANDY RUTTER**, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT, TRAINER, PSYCHOLOGIST AND COUNSELLOR, WAS AN IMPRESSIVE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE TSA (TANK STORAGE ASSOCIATION) CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION IN SEPTEMBER, WHERE SHE DELIVERED A TALK ABOUT MENTAL WELL-BEING IN THE INDUSTRY.



Starting her career working in deprived communities, Mandy focussed on children and their families, providing bio-psycho-social education and support. She then moved into the private sector, working with organisations experiencing traumatic events, such as Sept 11th and the July 7th bombings. Mandy now works alongside leaders in a range of industries including HMG Home Office, national charities, construction, renewable gas, and a premier football club.

Specialising in improving the psychological health of employees, managers, and senior leaders within all areas of the workforce, Mandy delivered over 350 webinars on a wide variety of psychological topics during the covid lockdown.

Reflecting on her talk at the TSA conference, Mandy said: "As a psychologist, passionately interested in mental health, resilience, and all things well-being, it was an exciting privilege to talk about good mental health and healthy habits at the Tank Storage Conference this year.

"I thought it might be a bit of a tough audience, as I came to last year's conference and was last on the agenda and only a handful of really interested people (and a few friends) remained attentive. However, at this year's event there were so many friendly faces, all positive and enthusiastic, which certainly lowered my anxiety and increased my endorphins."

## Talking about mental health is challenging

I am under no illusion that talking about mental health and psychology to a mostly male, technical, process-focused audience is challenging. It's not always the first item on the agenda of 'really important' things in life – that is, of course, unless you, or your loved ones, have had anxiety, depression, or other equally debilitating conditions, that reduce not only your performance, but your whole

personality and drive for life.

Since the pandemic, we have seen an increase in the number of people who are struggling with their mental health. This is due to a whole variety of reasons, ranging from isolation, financial worries, health worries, relationship conflicts and worries about our children, many of whom have struggled with schooling and socialising post-pandemic. Anxiety and depression are the conditions that have affected us all the most, with approximately 1 in 6 adults in the UK struggling with symptoms.

Many people are not getting the help they need and, as we know, our NHS is overwhelmed with mental health referrals, but this is where our organisations can really play our part.

## We should all proactively engage in promoting healthy habits

Most of the organisations we work for have resources and professionals available to offer



support, assistance, and counselling that could really help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. And yet, we don't use them.

Most Employee Assistance Programmes have about a 5% take-up rate from employees, but there are about 20% of us struggling with mental health at any one time. Our leaders and managers must act as informed role-models in that respect, understanding how the services work, and ensuring that every opportunity is taken to describe the importance of getting help and support at an early stage when people are struggling.

Creative use of posters, key rings, re-usable cups with logos and phone numbers could help to provide regular messages about the importance of maintaining good mental health and proactively engaging in the healthy habits that I promoted during the conference talk.

## Why is this so important in our industry – are we any different to other industries?

The answer can be easily explained through the lens of safety. Any of us involved in safety (and that should be all of us), know that, when your concentration is impaired, your thinking is foggy, and you are distracted; the decisions you make about your own safety and the safety of others is compromised.

In addition, safe health and safety practices rely on us to be motivated about the care of ourselves, the care of others and the care of our site and equipment. When you feel low, unmotivated, sad or worried, the extra emotional energy it takes to care and to follow all the workplace procedures is enormous, and sometimes we just can't find that energy.

## Good mental health matters

We already know that approximately 60% of us are not getting our 7-9 hours of sleep, and, according to a recent study, tiredness is the number one health issue impacting productivity. This is why good mental health matters – it saves lives. We need all our

workforce to understand that good mental health and safe workplace practices are inextricably linked.

## The challenge of this season

This time of year has particular importance for those of us who are prone to depression, and leaders can really play their part in helping to educate and support the workplace.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that usually occurs with the changing seasons, and often when the winter months arrive with a drop in temperature and reduced hours of sunlight.

Drivers, particularly, may get up and leave the house in the dark and return in the dark, sometimes not getting any hours of natural sunlight during the day. Sunlight is a key factor in producing serotonin, a hormone affecting sleep, mood, and appetite. Reduced sunlight can lead to reduced serotonin which can lead to depression. Some of the common symptoms of SAD include:

- Lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Not wanting to be around people
- Feeling sad, low, tearful, guilty
- Not enjoying things that usually give you



- pleasure and joy
- Feeling anxious, agitated
- Change in sleeping habits, either too much or too little
- Change in eating habits, again either too much or too little

## Challenge the stigma

If you are experiencing these symptoms, it is

important that you reach out and ask for help from a health professional. There are many things that our organisations can do to help people who experience SAD, for example providing specialist lights, altering shifts, referring to OH and counselling professionals.

However, the stigma of asking for help, and the 'self-stigma', particularly for men, feeling that we should be able to cope with everything by ourselves, often prevents us from reaching out.

This is where the education campaigns, the posters, the articles, the regular reminders, and the role-modelling from leaders can all help to challenge the stigma and encourage each and every one of us to get the help we all need, when we need it.

If you feel that you need help or support, then do get in touch with:

Mind - 0300 123 3393

Samaritans – 116 123

CALM – 0800 58 58 58

Fuel Oil News will continue to consider mental health and well-being next year.

If you or your business has mental health initiatives that you would like to share, then please contact [claudia@andpublishing.co.uk](mailto:claudia@andpublishing.co.uk)



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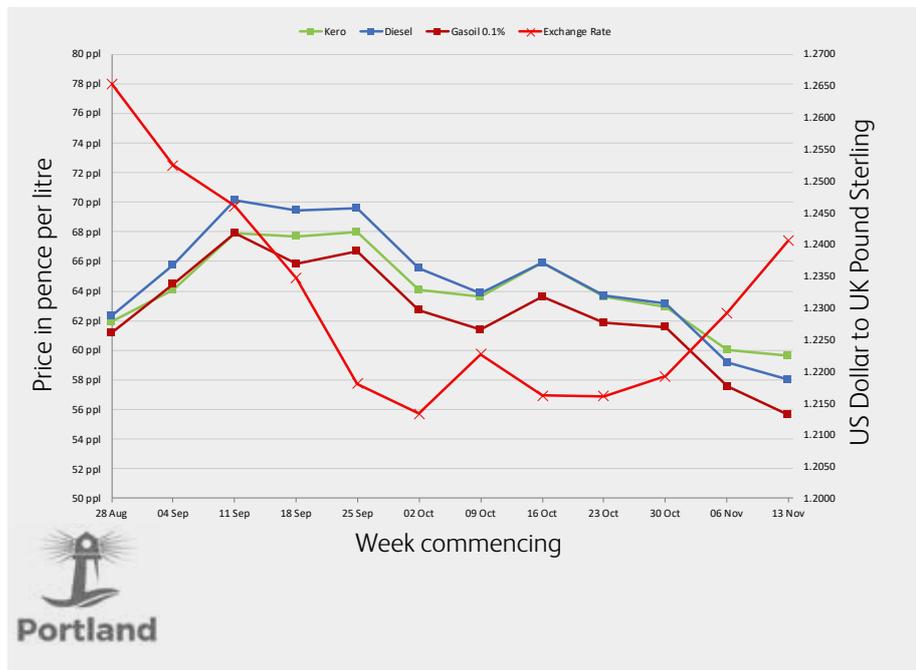
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## Wholesale Price Movements: 19th October 2023 – 18th November 2023

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	61.99	61.47	59.61
Average daily change	1.05	1.06	1.08
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	61.99	114.42	69.79

All prices in pence per litre



Highest price **67.10**  
Fri 20 Oct 23

Biggest up day **+1.68**  
Fri 20 Oct 23

**Kerosene**

Lowest price **58.05**  
Thu 09 Nov 23

Biggest down day **-3.59**  
Tue 24 Oct 23

Highest price **66.92**  
Fri 20 Oct 23

Biggest up day **+1.50**  
Fri 20 Oct 23

**Diesel**

Lowest price **56.64**  
Thu 09 Nov 23

Biggest down day **-3.89**  
Fri 03 Nov 23

Highest price **64.86**  
Fri 20 Oct 23

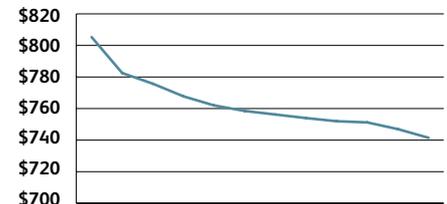
Biggest up day **+1.56**  
Fri 20 Oct 23

**Gasoil 0.1%**

Lowest price **54.26**  
Thu 09 Nov 23

Biggest down day **-3.76**  
Fri 03 Nov 23

Gasoil forward price  
in US\$ per tonne



December 2023 – November 2024

## The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	62.44	70.57	114.87	74.23	78.95	123.29
North East	65.11	73.89	118.64	76.80	77.25	121.14
North West	64.06	72.52	117.72	74.37	79.51	123.16
Midlands	65.63	75.12	120.11	72.73	77.70	121.89
South East	64.13	73.05	118.18	81.98	81.12	121.38
South West	64.23	73.01	118.16	76.01	77.50	120.94
Northern Ireland	64.58	72.85	118.00	73.13	79.90	n/a
Republic of Ireland	64.69	74.22	n/a	85.75	84.36	123.37
Portland	62.44	70.57	114.87			

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](http://www.portlandpricing.co.uk)



### Share your top tips for business success

**Lisa** – You need to work hard, put in long hours, and give blood, sweat and tears!  
**Andy** – Turn up and get the job done. If you don't, it doesn't happen. That – and always answer the phone!

### What's your most recent business achievement of note?

**Lisa** – We've had a new truck this year and got another one on order.  
**Andy** – The business is growing. It isn't easy but we're doing well. We put the effort in, and we care a lot.

### Tell us your greatest fear

**Lisa** – Dying.  
**Andy** – I'm not a fan of snakes!

### Which is most important – ambition or talent?

**Lisa** – Ambition.  
**Andy** – Ambition.

### Please give your career history in 25 words or fewer

**Lisa** – I worked in the financial services industry for years and then moved into fuel distribution.  
**Andy** – Started off as a chef/baker, a milkman, then passed my class 1, worked at a local quarry, then moved to livestock, then into fuel with Silvey Fuels, Oamps, and now Sodbury.

### Describe yourself in 3 words

**Lisa** – Andy described Lisa as hardworking, a fighter and kind.  
**Andy** – A grumpy bugger!

### What were your childhood / early ambitions?

**Lisa** – I wanted to be a weather girl.  
**Andy** – A milkman.

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

**Lisa** – I would love to own a craft shop – a bit like Hobby Craft!  
**Andy** – An astronaut.

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

**Lisa** – We haven't had lots of business advice; we just get on and get it done!  
**Andy** – Work hard and manage/focus on what you've got.

WELCOME TO DECEMBER'S EDITION OF OUR SPECIAL MONTHLY FEATURE WHICH GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO 'MEET' INDUSTRY FIGURES AND, HOPEFULLY, TO DISCOVER ANOTHER SIDE TO THEM BEYOND THE WELL-KNOWN FACTS. IN THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL DOUBLE FEATURE, WE CHAT WITH **ANDY AND LISA WELCH**, THE HUSBAND-AND-WIFE TEAM FROM SODBURY FUELS.

### What's the best thing about your job?

**Lisa** – Feeling happy being able to help people and getting paid - LOL!  
**Andy** – Helping people and being there for people when they need us.

### Which is the quality that you most admire?

**Lisa** – I really admire people that are honest and caring.  
**Andy** – Trustworthy.

### What are you most likely to say?

**Andy** – “For F\*\*\* Sake – not again!”

### What are you least likely to say?

**Lisa** – “Do you want a cup of tea?” I don't make hot drinks. I've never drunk a cup of coffee!

### Describe your perfect day

**Lisa** – In the pub with friends, I think!



**Andy** – A day trip to Bristol, a walk around the harbour, then going out for Sunday lunch and having a few beers.

### Do you have a favourite sports team?

**Lisa** – No.  
**Andy** – Not really, but I do quite like watching the rugby when I get the time.

### What's the biggest challenge of our time?

**Lisa** – General life is a big challenge!  
**Andy** – Cost of living. It's having such an impact on everyone.

### Cheese or chocolate?

**Lisa** – Cheese.





**What's your pet hate or biggest irritant?**

**Lisa** – Andy's snoring!

**Andy** – Lisa having the telly on too loud when I'm trying to sleep upstairs!

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

**Lisa** – Do things to help people that are hard working.

**Andy** – Do more to help people in need.

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

**Lisa** – You should have stuck to being a mortgage advisor! I work so many hours in fuel distribution.

**Andy** – Why don't you emigrate to Australia!?

**Andy** – Chocolate – Maltesers are my favourite!

**Share your greatest personal achievement**

**Lisa** – Having my son and the fact he has chosen to come into the business with us.

**Andy** – My three fantastic sons, my marriage to Lisa, and Sodbury Fuels!

**What is number 1 on your bucket list?**

**Lisa** – Win the lottery.

**Andy** – Be mortgage free.

**What 3 things would you take to a desert island?**

**Lisa** – My insulin and my phone.

**Andy** – Lisa, a BBQ, and some Carling!

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

**Lisa** – I'm type 1 diabetic.

**Who would you most like to ask these questions of?**

**Lisa** – Robbie Williams

**Andy** – Davina McCall



**What's your best Christmas joke?**

**Lisa** – "Who is never hungry at Christmas? The turkey – he's always stuffed!"

**Andy** – "What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck? A Christmas quacker!"



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