

Fuel Oil News

 Incorporating **DOWNSTREAM**

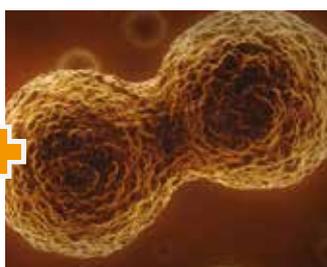
NOVEMBER 2024

**THE ENERGY ACT:
ONE YEAR ON —
where is the
promised
consultation?**



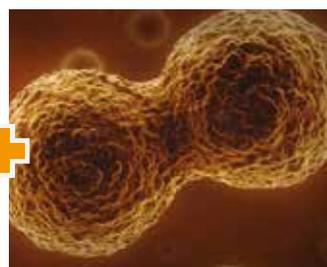
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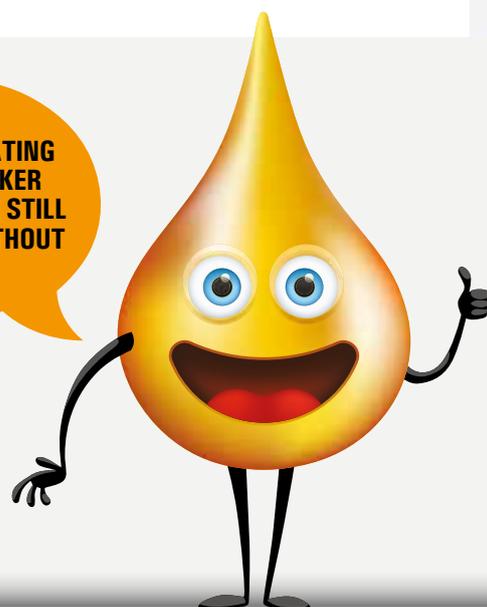
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Sometimes, less is more

On the cover of this issue, we have stepped away from a long-held tradition. Dropping our usual practice of highlighting three topics covered in the issue, you'll have noted that this issue's cover highlights just one. (Happy to pause a moment there while those of you who had not yet noticed, flip over to the cover to take a second look.)

That we only highlight a single topic on our November cover is no indication of either a lack of variety or of interesting content in this issue of the magazine – an assertion I hope you'll agree with once you have read through these pages! – but rather the level of importance of this particular one.

It is a matter of vital importance to the industry and, more importantly, to the rural communities it serves, as well as to the rate of progress towards clean energy solutions. In these pages, we highlight how a promise made a year ago has not yet been kept, and how the industry is, again, uniting behind a campaign to ensure that promise is delivered on.

You can read about it, and find out how you can get involved, on page 4.

In the other pages of this

magazine, you can read about the role of energy policy in the US election and the latest updates from both the industry and our distributor community.

You can also find out if fuel distributors are vulnerable to cyber risks and how they can best protect their businesses.

There is an opportunity to consider some of the latest developments in both industry software and telemetry, as well as to explore the benefits they may offer, and you can find out how Claudia got on as she took on an industry challenge – the first of many we hope!

With its usual array of conversations with distributors and industry figures, thoughts from Ken on latest sector developments, insight into energy sector changes, and guidance on maintaining a successful business and a happy team, this issue is certainly not one focussed solely on the particular topic highlighted on the cover – it just happens

to be a topic of the utmost importance.



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Fuel Oil News

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On the cover

James Robinson and Ben Booker are locals to the village Peshurst Fuels is named after. With customers ranging from Mrs Smith at No. 2, to National Trust properties, you can read about this young business on pages 12 & 13.



In this issue

Receiving Royal Assent on Oct. 26th 2023, Energy Act legislation paves a route to widespread use of HVO in domestic heating. With consumers promised a consultation within a year, the industry call is for this promise to be fulfilled. Page 4.

The Energy Act: One year on – where is the promised consultation?

Industry bodies, UKIFDA and OFTEC, mark the anniversary of the Energy Act 2023

“The Government must deliver on promises made to rural communities.”

On 26th October 2023, the Energy Act received Royal Assent and became an official act of parliament. Within the Act, Section 159 contains legislation that, if invoked by the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), would create the renewable liquid heating fuel obligation and pave the way for the introduction of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and other renewable fuels for home heating.

This piece of legislation is very similar to the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation created by the last Labour government in 2005 and was introduced with the promise of a consultation on the technical details in a few months and certainly within one year. The legislation received cross-party support in Parliament, including from the Labour Party, which now forms the new government.

Ken Cronin, CEO UKIFDA explains: “While acknowledging that there is a new government, rural off-the-gas-grid households and businesses were effectively promised a consultation within a year, but so far, the consultation has not been forthcoming. To highlight this oversight, a new Future Ready Fuel campaign has been launched for the Energy Act’s first anniversary. We are calling for the legislation to be invoked as soon as possible and for the consultation to be undertaken. In support, we’re asking UKIFDA distributors, OFTEC registered technicians and home heating oil consumers to share this message with their local MP.”

Proven solution

“We know HVO is a viable solution. As part of a nationwide demonstration project, around 150 properties, including homes, schools, churches, and village pubs, were converted from kerosene to HVO. It’s been an overwhelming success. Carbon emissions were reduced by 88%, and the conversion only required a small, low-cost modification to the boiler, which only took a few hours.

“For rural off-grid households who can’t afford a heat pump or would need to undertake significant disruptive changes to their property for the technology to work effectively, HVO is an ideal alternative. Our survey of oil-heated households has shown over 90% support for this approach. Fundamentally, it’s about giving consumers a choice.

“We all want to play our part and transition to low-carbon heating, but the options available must be affordable and practical.”

For more information and to support the campaign, visit www.futurereadyfuel.info.



Cornish Village HVO pilot scheme results show the way

The small Cornish village of Kehelland is the unlikely setting for an important demonstration project that began 3 years ago this month, and has been leading the way in rural domestic heating decarbonisation.

Since it began, we have regularly followed its progress, covering the residents’ successful journeys to low carbon heating. Now, 3 years on, we explore the impact it has made both on the community and the environment.

Similarly to hundreds of rural villages in the UK, Kehelland is not connected to the gas grid and, prior to the rollout of the HVO pilot, its residents, primary school and church all relied on kerosene-fuelled boilers for their heating.

Scorrier-based Mitchell & Webber has supplied conventional heating fuel to most of the village for years. Keen to test HVO as an alternative fuel, the distributor met with residents to outline the proposed pilot scheme to trial its use as an affordable solution to decarbonise domestic heating and accelerate the UK’s journey to net zero,

Many of the residents were aware of the vital need to decarbonise their heating, but had found the cost of achieving an effective heat pump installation in their older properties prohibitive.

Mitchell & Webber had installed and delivered HVO to the first UK property in Scorrier in November 2020, and it proved so effective that residents were keen to come on board. Excited by the proposed decarbonisation solution, HVO was rapidly rolled out throughout the village, with the trial beginning in November 2021.

Impacts

We caught up with John and Robert Weedon, Directors at Mitchell & Webber, to find out more about the impacts of this scheme over the three years it has been running.

“We wanted to look at a village scenario,” John said, “with a school, a church, and at least 25 homes to have a feel of scale. Kehelland was also a village with different types of properties, Georgian houses with solid granite walls, to pre-war right up to modern bungalows.

“We have demonstrated that HVO reduces 90% of CO2 emissions, compared with kerosene, and works in all types of houses and all types of boilers. It’s non-toxic, biodegradable and not carcinogenic.



Andrew Geake from the Methodist Church outside the chapel in Kehelland which was switched to HVO in the trial.



Perran Moon, MP for Kehelland, hears from residents about their positive experiences of HVO.

Recent analysis of the environmental impacts of the use of HVO have shown that, since 2021, the introduction of HVO for heating has saved 253 tonnes of carbon emissions in Kehelland alone, and John says: "It is a clear demonstration of what can be done right now! For many people who can't afford to spend the thousands of pounds needed to make their homes suitable for heat pumps, it's about offering a green alternative, greater choice and a solution deliverable immediately.

"We just need government to back this move away from fossil fuels"

Andrew Geake, the environment and climate change advocate with the Methodist Church for the South West Peninsula District, oversaw Kehelland church switching to HVO following the previous trial church at Stithians and said: "There are a lot of rural churches and chapels which are often not connected to the main for heating, gas, electrics and sewage. Heat pumps would not be feasible for many of these old and often listed buildings, and would not be efficient as churches are only used sporadically and our existing controls allow any user to have heating for a certain period and on demand which is essential."

The Methodist Church recently set out its aspirations to become net zero by 2030 which is also what prompted the Kehelland church to look at HVO to help to achieve that at its level. "It's about being a pragmatic environmentalist," Andrew said, "And without this HVO solution, there would be a disastrous impact on our progress as a carbon neutral church that would throw us back decades!"

Government needs to act now

More recently the new MP for Kehelland, Perran Moon, has been hosted by Mitchell & Webber to hear about the success of the pilot. Other Cornish MPs are also keen to visit this example of domestic heating decarbonisation and a contingent of officials from Cornwall Council will also be visiting in December.

In an extension to the trial, a number of customers have adopted a



20% HVO blend which they have been using for over 12 months, whilst the school, church and other residents remain on the original 100% HVO. In all cases there have been no issues, with customers reporting a very positive experience of their use of the sustainable fuel

At present there is a 20% VAT rate and fuel duty of 10p per litre on HVO but zero duty on heating kerosene and only 5% VAT. Industry trade associations UKIFDA and OFTEC are calling for government to bring HVO

in line with kerosene. Mitchell & Webber, are hoping that the results from the Kehelland trial will support the industry calls and persuade the government of the need to remove this disparity.

"It won't even cost the government anything to do it. That's the beauty of it," Robert commented. "We're not anti-heat pumps – every solution that contributes to decarbonisation is needed. We just believe consumers should be able to choose the best solution for their property and HVO is a solution that can make a significant and immediate difference across rural communities.

"We are backing the calls for this renewable fuel to have the same duty rate as heating oil and for the consultation from the Energy department to start straight away so all off-grid constituents can benefit!"

Sewage to SAF pathway recognised with Innovation Award

The team at Firefly Green Fuels were delighted to see the company announced winner of the Aviation Innovation Award at the Aviation Industry Awards UK event hosted in Birmingham in September.

Firefly was recognised for its innovative sewage to SAF pathway which promises to bring sustainable, home-grown SAF to the UK by 2028/29.

Paul Hilditch, COO, said: "It's an honour for Firefly to be recognised alongside industry giants at this prestigious event. This award is living proof of the increasingly widespread industry recognition and support behind our highly sustainable SAF."



Industry supplier nominated for prestigious award

TEC, one of Ireland's leading suppliers and distributors of a wide range of industrial and hydraulic hoses, fittings, and adapters, has once again been nominated for a business award.

Last year, TEC won the 'Best Small Business' award at the South County Dublin Chamber Awards. This year, TEC was

once again nominated and shortlisted – this time in the 'Best Business Category' at the awards ceremony in October.

Simon van Lonkhuyzen, Managing Director, said: "We didn't win our award this year, but we still had a great night and we were honoured to have been shortlisted in the 'Best Business Category' at the 2024

South Dublin Chamber awards.

"The awards were hosted by broadcasting legend Marty Whelan who was superb. It was fantastic to see so many large and small companies from the south Dublin area attend the awards ceremony held at the Maldron Hotel in Dublin."



Stable oil prices mean a fall in Group revenue for J.R. Rix & Sons

A return to stable oil prices in the wake of recent global turmoil, led to a fall in Group revenue for J.R. Rix & Sons Ltd in 2023. Rix Petroleum reported a decrease in 2023 turnover of 19.6% on the previous year.

However, the previous year's performance, which saw petroleum sales peak at £535.1m, was fuelled by a steep rise in crude oil prices brought about by the war in Ukraine. In 2023, oil prices dropped 17.9%, marking a return to more normal trading conditions which were reflected in Rix Petroleum's sales.

The performance led, in part, to a reduction in Group revenue of 28%.

Challenging trading conditions

Other factors that impacted on Group performance included challenging trading conditions for caravan and holiday home manufacturer, Victory Leisure Homes, brought about by high interest rates, high inflation, and the post-COVID return to unrestricted foreign travel.

James Doyle, Managing Director of J.R. Rix & Sons Ltd, said that the Group, as a whole, had made steady progress across the year as global turmoil had continued to subside.

He commented: "The global and geopolitical events of recent years have produced a number of abnormalities for the



Rix Group.

"The war in Ukraine led to highly volatile crude oil prices which inflated the turnover of our petroleum businesses. Over the course of 2023, the price rebalanced to below average, meaning the value of our petroleum sales returned to form.

"Given the impact of these external factors, the Group as a whole traded well, reporting healthy sales and satisfactory profits. This

is due to our ethos of strong, judicious leadership and investing profits back into the business."

Renewables on the rise

Elsewhere in the Group significant progress was made during 2023, including Rix Renewables which provides managed services for the offshore and onshore wind farm industry and doubled turnover in 2023.

Estuary Oils stands triumphant

Monmouthshire-based Estuary Oils was delighted to be awarded 1st place in the competition for Best Show Stand at this year's record-breaking Usk Show.

One of the largest one-day agricultural events in the country, the show attracted a record number of visitors, with more than 26,000 people enjoying the extremely popular family day out.

An independent, family-run, oil and lubricant business, Estuary Oils is always pleased to support this important sector event. With more than 35 years' experience within the industry, the distributor is passionate about working with the agricultural community to keep busy farms supplied and working.

Serving a vital sector

Clearly thrilled to see the Estuary Oils stand recognised by the award, Founder and Director of the business Andrew Mould



commented: "This is the first time that we have won it at as Estuary Oils, (having last won it 2009 as Severn Fuels).

"As an independent business, we understand how important it is to keep agricultural businesses running smoothly and efficiently, especially during the busiest times

of the year, such as harvest.

"Over the years we have gained unrivalled experience of the particular fuel needs of this vital sector, and our specialist agricultural fuel team has extensive product and industry knowledge, with many of them coming from farming or engineering backgrounds."

Effective plant asset maintenance crucial to preventing further UK refinery shutdowns

The planned closure of one of the UK's oldest refineries next year has further highlighted the importance of proactive plant maintenance for improving the longevity of legacy assets through the energy transition.

Scotland's only oil refinery, Grangemouth, is set to close due to global market pressures, including declining demand and environmental regulations, and an inability to compete with more modern, efficient sites in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The announcement follows recent research by data analysts Wood Mackenzie showing over 20% of refining capacity globally is at risk of closure because of weakening refining margins.

The closure of Grangemouth Refinery underlines the importance of upgrading existing plant components to facilitate the energy transition, says an expert in flow control solutions to the oil and gas sector.

Following the recent announcement, Roby Buyung, President of Process Automation at IMI, commented: "Declining demand for fossil fuels and weakening refining margins are becoming increasingly common as countries move towards their respective net zero deadlines. In this challenging environment, legacy maintenance strategies and component upgrades are crucial to ensuring existing plants can remain as productive and competitive as possible, for as long as possible."



According to Mr. Buyung, a multifaceted approach to plant maintenance and asset upgrading, informed by the expertise of external OEMs, is key to effectively prolonging plant lifetimes. By following the guidance of industry experts when developing asset management and preventative maintenance strategies, refinery stakeholders can better guard against issues including expensive, unplanned shutdowns or extending periods of key component maintenance.

"Decarbonisation continues apace across the world, yet fossil fuels will remain vital to many nations' energy mixes for the short-to-medium term," he concludes. "To best facilitate the ongoing energy transition and avoid premature closures such as Grangemouth, it

is vital that legacy assets are as productive as possible.

"This will require a proactive approach to component maintenance, and a robust upgrades programme for the foreseeable future, as well as specification strategies for critical flow control components. By using existing expertise within the refinery supply chain, refinery stakeholders can better access technologies to assist in this aim, including real-time asset monitoring and augmented reality and audio-visual diagnostic remote assistance technologies."

You can read more insight around the potential impacts of the planned closure in 'Ken's Corner' on page 15

Virgin Atlantic's history-making flight wins industry award

British airline Virgin Atlantic is proud of the steps the company is taking towards a sustainable future for aviation.

On 28th November 2023, when Virgin's Flight100 took to the skies, it was the first time 100% SAF has been used in both engines by a commercial airline on a transatlantic flight.

Flight100 made the journey from London Heathrow to New York JFK. The purpose of the flight was to demonstrate the potential of SAF as a 100% drop-in replacement for fossil fuels, to provide important research on the end-to-end carbon lifecycle of SAF, and to act as a call for the support of greater production and use of SAF at scale.

Partnership of the Year

Virgin Atlantic was delighted to win the 'Partnership of the Year Award' at the Reuters Sustainability Awards in October.

The 'Partnership of the Year Award' recognises innovative partnerships that are addressing a key environmental or social issue. Submissions were required to demonstrate the impact and results of the collaboration - whether it is cross-sector, or a private-public partnership - and how it delivered significant impact.

Holly Boyd-Boland, VP Corporate Development, Virgin Atlantic said: "The success of Flight100, the world's first 100%



Sustainable Aviation Fuel transatlantic flight, was the result of more than 12 months of radical collaboration across Virgin Atlantic and our consortium partners.

"It's a great honour to receive the Reuters Partnership of the Year Award and is testament to the team's commitment to lead from the front, challenge the status quo and spearhead the cross-industry collaboration needed to meet net zero."

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THE LATEST UPDATES FROM OUR DISTRIBUTOR COMMUNITY

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



New Era Energy – supporting The Lighthouse Charity



New Era Energy, the Essex-based fuel distributor, had a great time supporting The Lighthouse Charity at their Gala Dinner evening. The Lighthouse Charity is one that is dedicated to the emotional, physical and financial well-being of the construction workforce and their families.

Melissa Lancaster, Brand Manager for New Era, said: “The Lighthouse Charity Gala Dinner is a wonderful event and it was an absolute pleasure

for the New Era team to attend. The theme for the evening was ‘Movies Through Time’ and it was lovely to get dressed up for the occasion.

“Kerry Smith has recently joined New Era Energy as a PA to our CEO, James Hunt. The evening was a great opportunity for Kerry to meet some of the wider team.

“We also invited Rachael Brookes from The Dingle Group to join us as our guest for the evening. We got into the fun spirit of the evening by taking part in a dress-up game and meeting Jack Sparrow! Everyone reported back that they had a fantastic time and were so pleased to be raising funds for The Lighthouse Charity.

“Overall, it was an incredible evening filled with delicious food, great entertainment and plenty of opportunities to catch up with connections within the construction industry.”

NWF Fuels – celebrating Julia Wood

NWF Fuels, the Crewe-based distributor, is always keen to celebrate its employees and show appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the business and has recently celebrated a big work anniversary for one member of the team

Julia Wood, Legal and Compliance, has just celebrated 30 years with the business!

Sharing her experience, Julia said: “I joined NWF Fuels Ltd at the then Head Office at Wardle on 8th August 1994 as a trainee Credit Controller and over the years I became a Senior Credit Controller. I am now in the role of Legal and Compliance and I spend time dealing with our insurance policy for customer claims and many other responsibilities – the work can be varied.

“Outside of work, my interests are motorbike racing (spectator only, of course!) My husband and I love the Isle of Man TT Races and have been numerous times, and to a lesser degree, car racing. For my sins I also support Newcastle United Football Club and my more sedate interests include gardening, walking and doing crosswords but I am very active and go to the gym three times a week and for that I have a personal trainer. I’m also a music lover and enjoy listening to classical music (no opera), Status Quo, and Queen so, you see, very varied!

“I enjoy the daily challenge of my role, which as I said, can be varied but I still come to work with a smile on my face and look forward to more challenges that come my way and long may it be able to continue.”

Congratulations Julia from the Fuel Oil News team!



Greenarc – James Johnson gives back

James Johnson, National Sales Manager at **Greenarc**, the Halifax-based business that supports customers with their move towards clean energy, has recently been back to his old school to share his experience as an apprentice.

Returning to The Crossley Heath School Sixth Form, James discussed apprenticeships and the world of sustainability.

James reflected: “It was great to go back to my old Sixth Form and to be able to speak to the current students about what the apprenticeship route might look like for them, as well as sharing my journey from starting as an apprentice to becoming National Sales Manager for Greenarc.

“Discussing all things sustainability with the students and seeing the levels of engagement and interest for our sector was so positive to see!”

If you or your business have been supporting the next generation then please do let us know – claudia@andpublishing.co.uk

Craggs Energy – celebrating Michelle McIntyre!

Craggs Energy, the West Yorkshire-based distributor, would like to say congratulations and thank you to their Accounts Assistant, Michelle McIntyre who is celebrating 10 years working for Craggs Energy.

Matthew Crockett, Group Managing Director, said: “Michelle has been a cornerstone of our finance team for the last 10 years.



“We are thrilled to celebrate this milestone with her. Her dedication, hard work, and commitment demonstrate the values of our employee-owned business. She goes about her day with a smile and positive attitude and we are looking forward to the next 10!”



BoilerJuice – fun and games at the Karting Track!

The **BoilerJuice** team organised a fun event in Manchester for its suppliers. The get-together was held at Chaos Karts which is a new experience that combines the world of go-karting and video games using state-of-the-art technology.

Zoe Blackhall, Head of Group Supply Chain, explained more about the event: “We had a unique

experience with augmented reality karting at Chaos Karts in Manchester, a first of its kind in the UK!

“The entire track is projected onto the walls and floors, meaning every race features a new, dynamic layout. As you race, you collect gems and power-ups that give you special abilities like boxing gloves, bombs, and even fried eggs to launch at your competitors, earning points along the way. The highest scorer wins the race!”

A token of appreciation

“Personally, I had a fantastic start in the first round but, unfortunately, my luck ran out in the race of champions, where I finished last,” Zoe continued. “However, the disappointment didn’t last long, as we were treated to an unexpectedly sunny afternoon and enjoyed some al fresco beers with our fantastic suppliers.

“Our fuel industry friends truly mean a lot to us at BoilerJuice, and this event was just a small token of our appreciation as we head into the winter season. Our gatherings are always aimed at nurturing strong relationships, networking, expressing our gratitude, and, of course, having fun!

“A huge thank you to all who came and congratulations to our winners of the day.”

The Podium

1st – Scott Mace – Exocet

2nd – Ross Patterson – Patterson Oils

3rd – Matt Richards – Monks Fuels



Quad Fuels – sponsoring the sports stars of the future

Quad Fuels, the North Wales-based fuel distributor, is proud to be supporting the next generation of sports stars. The business is currently sponsoring biker Calum Beach and darts player, Evie Strong.

Steve Forkin, Director at Quad Fuels Ltd, said: “Both Calum and Evie are part of my family, and both are talented sports stars. It’s been such a privilege to offer them sponsorship to support them in their development.

“As I’m a biker myself, it’s been amazing to support Calum. I love all bike racing, especially the BSB championship and wanted to become more involved. Calum’s racing career is going from strength to strength; he finished his last race with a podium finish! We are proud to be supporting Calum in his pursuit of glory and wish him a long and successful racing career.

“Evie has also had an incredible year, making waves in the Junior Darts Corporation Girls Series. She’s also just reached the semi-finals and finals at weekly Darts Academy events and has now officially been signed by SHOT darts, one of the big names in the darts world – she’s a star. Our ‘Evie Electric Strong’ keeps improving and is loving the game. We are excited to support her journey.”

Fuel Oil News wishes Evie and Calum the best of luck in their upcoming events!



MechTronic Ltd – Macmillan Coffee Morning

MechTronic Ltd, the Leeds-based metering and gauging fuel delivery system expert, was proud to support the charity Macmillan at a recent coffee morning. The Macmillan Coffee Morning is an annual fundraising event organised by Macmillan Cancer Support, with people across the UK hosting and attending coffee mornings in aid of Macmillan.

Emma Allinson, Marketing Coordinator for MechTronic, said: “At MechTronic, we were keen to support the Macmillan Coffee Morning on Wednesday, September 25th.

“The event provided an opportunity for colleagues to come together and enjoy a morning of delightful homemade treats, along with a coffee-themed quiz (which some took more seriously than others!), and good company, all while raising funds for, and supporting, a worthy cause! Ben Firth, Sales Manager, won first prize (a Freddo chocolate bar!)”

Congratulations to Ben!





Penshurst Fuels: a fuel distributor with community at its heart

PENSHURST FUELS WAS FOUNDED IN 2021 AND IS A RELATIVELY NEW, INDEPENDENT FUEL DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS BASED IN THE PICTURESQUE VILLAGE OF PENSHURST, KENT. BOTH OWNERS OF THE BUSINESS, **JAMES ROBINSON** AND **BEN BOOKER**, ARE LOCAL TO THE VILLAGE, AND ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS AND BEING PART OF THE COMMUNITY.

CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, SPOKE WITH JAMES, JOINT OWNER AND DIRECTOR OF PENSHURST FUELS, TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE BUSINESS.

The development of the business

“Ben and I met on the school run, as our children attend the same village primary school. Ben had recently left a local independent supplier, and I was looking for a new business opportunity,” James began, explaining his background and how he came to the decision to set up a brand-new fuel distribution business.

“At the time, my career involved a lot of international travel, and I wanted to be closer to my family and to contribute to my community. Like many people in our area of Kent, I was a heating oil customer, and I really wasn’t satisfied with the service I was receiving. Ben agreed, and over a few pints and packets of pork scratchings in our local pub, we came up with the idea to start our own supply business!”

A truly local business

“Starting from scratch was daunting, to say the least,” James continued. “But with Ben’s encyclopaedic knowledge of the industry and my drive, we believed we could create something special: a truly local business with values, customers, and the community at its heart.

“That was back in 2022. We started with one lorry and two customers – ourselves! Three years later, we have three active lorries and thousands of regular customers across Kent, Sussex, and the Surrey borders, whom we supply year-round.

“Our customers range from Mrs Smith who lives at Number 2, to the local dairy, school, and even the largest stately homes and National Trust properties.

“We love Penshurst and our surrounding area, and we will always put the community at the heart of what we do. We love that our customers can drop into the office for a chat or a cup of tea.

“Of course, we’d love to keep growing, but we plan to maintain our village feel and the values we were founded on.”

I love coming to work every day

“Looking back, it’s a great source of pride that we’ve been able to start and grow this business during an incredibly challenging market with so many economic variables,” James shared,

explaining how challenging yet rewarding it has been developing the business.

“With any new business, there are long hours and sleepless nights, and a significant amount of risk is involved. We both gave up our jobs and sold our dream to our loved ones. We were determined to make it work.

“Thankfully, we quickly realised that we had a product and a service in demand. It was a huge thrill when we recorded the details of our one-thousandth customer. In less than a year, we had to upscale to a second lorry. As demand increased, we added a third, and we’ll need a fourth before the end of this year. While growth





is important to us, we're in this business to offer a personal touch to our customers, and we're determined not to compromise our values as we expand.

"We are currently a team of six. It doesn't sound like a lot, does it? But it's amazing what we achieve together.

"I love coming to work every day. Even on the toughest days, we find something to laugh about – usually, it's the tortured groans coming from the Pilates classes in the studio next door to our office!"

A local business that gives back to the community

James is clearly passionate about his village, his community and making a difference: "There's a big marketplace, and a huge amount of competition. I was a customer before I was a supplier, and I felt there was something missing. I loved the idea of creating a local business that gave back to the community, and that's something we've focused on from day one.

"We support local charities and causes like the Kent Air Ambulance, the local hospice, and the farmers' association, and we helped create after-school sports clubs for children.

"We're very visible in the community, and our customers tell us this is something important to them. We're proud to have a customer retention rate of more than 95%.

"Our domestic customers may only speak to us a couple of times a year, but when they do, they're always pleased to tell us they've seen what we're doing to support the community. People always want good value for money, but they also want great customer service and the opportunity to support a company with values.

"We ask our customers; 'Would you stay with us if our prices weren't always the cheapest



on the market?' and more often than not, they tell us, 'Yes!'. It's proof that people aren't just interested in the product; they care about how you sell it."

Malcolm Silander, the coach and team manager from local football club, Chiddingstone, was keen to pass on his thanks and appreciation for the business: "Penshurst Fuels have been an amazing support in setting up our local girls' football club, Chiddingstone Girls FC.

"James and Ben bought our first footballs, sponsored our strips and have been there to cheer us on in all weathers, run BBQs and help wherever they can. We now have 50 girls playing every week thanks to their generosity. We can't thank them enough and every parent that uses Penshurst Fuels recommends them unreservedly!"

Working in this industry

James was clear about what he enjoys most about working in the industry: "The ability to truly help people when they find themselves in a sticky situation with runouts, and the fact that we can literally fuel local rural businesses.

"It's always nice to hear that our drivers have been treated to a free beer or two, off-shift, in local pubs because we've gone above and beyond for a customer. I must say that our drivers do often go above and beyond!

"One of our fantastic drivers, Adrian, was chatting with one of our domestic customers.

She asked if he could give her a quick hand moving something from her kitchen to the front garden, and, of course, he obliged. What he didn't realise was that she was moving her entire kitchen and had been waiting for a sturdy individual like him to help her.

"He ended up moving her kitchen worktops and sink and worked up quite a sweat. We all had a good laugh back at the office!"

The best industry advice

"You can only lose a customer once, so do your best not to let that happen!" James replied, when asked to share the best industry advice he'd been given. "These very wise words are from Alan Manning, our colleague who has over 40 years' experience in the business. Ben and I are very grateful to Alan, he has been a guiding light for us both with his years of experience. His wisdom, advice and industry knowledge are very much appreciated by us both.

"Our proudest accomplishment, since founding Penshurst Fuels, has been giving back; we help local charities and support community events. Also, we are so proud of the tremendous pace of our growth, and everything we've achieved over the past three years!"

Energy transition

With the sector transitioning at pace, Claudia asked James what he believes are the major challenges and positives for the industry as it moves forward. James responded: "We find this quite an exciting time. As a new supplier, we're not tied down to any historic working practices, and we enjoy talking to our customers about the transition to sustainable fuels.

"I find it interesting that many customers are unaware of how the transition will work. We absolutely have a duty of care to ensure our customers stay informed. I believe that's the best way to retain customers as our products evolve in the future."

The sky is the limit

When considering the future of the business, James said: "The sky's the limit for us. We want to deliver our consistent, considered, and customer-first level of service to as many people as we can.

"It would be lovely to come back and talk to you again in 5 or 10 years to see how much we've grown and how much the industry has changed for the better. One thing is for certain, we will be constantly looking ahead."

Fuel Oil News is very much looking forward to catching up with James, Ben and Penshurst Fuels in the coming years and wishes them every success.

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Managed Transition?

On September 30th this year, the Ratcliffe coal-fired power station in Nottingham closed, marking the end of over 140 years of electricity generation from coal in the UK. This closure was preceded in 2008 by the Climate Change Act and in 2015, Amber Rudd, the UK's Energy and Climate Change Secretary, announced the UK would close all coal-fired power stations by 2025. Therefore, the transition away from coal was well signalled and, in the main, well prepared for, with interconnectors, wind, solar and biomass more than making up for the lost generation.

However, this managed transition appears to be a rarity. In recent months we have seen a remarkable number of deindustrialisation stories linked to poorly managed transitions. For instance, the last Port Talbot steel blast furnace shut down on October 1st, with hopes that a new electric arc furnace will be operational by at least 2027. Similarly, in Scunthorpe, the blast furnaces are planned to be shut down this year, with new electric arc furnaces installed by 2025, but it is now reported that the required power connection will not be ready until 2032.

In our own industry we are facing similar issues. Petroineos has announced the closure of the Grangemouth refinery and plans to convert it into an import terminal, which raises questions about whether the capacity of the existing plant will be matched by the new terminal. Additionally, the train-fed Dalston oil terminal in Cumbria will likely close at the end of this year, posing further challenges.

Closing any terminal will be problematic, but doing so with limited notice in the middle of the busiest time of the year is, at best, a risk too far. While many of these decisions are made for commercial reasons, this current situation further highlights the need for thorough transition planning. The effective closure of Dalston at short notice, without a plan to mitigate the consequences, is putting the regional supply of liquid fuel at risk.

We live in a time of extreme global insecurity, but our industry has demonstrated that it is adept at managing this on behalf of our customers. Nevertheless, our customers will be affected when decisions are made that hinder our ability to operate at short notice, especially

during our busiest time of the year. We are working closely with impacted distributors and the Government in an endeavour to find a solution to any likely change at Dalston.

Sadly, the lack of transition planning is not confined to the UK. A recent survey by The Alliance for Zero Carbon Heating (TAZCH) revealed a widespread reluctance among the Irish public to install a heat pump in their homes – putting the Government's decarbonisation targets in severe doubt.

The nationally representative survey found that 69% of Irish households have no plans to install a heat pump, rising to 75% for households in rural areas. Of the households that do plan to install a heat pump, just 10% are considering doing so in the next year and only 14% in the next five years. High costs were cited as the main barrier to heat pump adoption, cited by 61% of respondents, rising to 73% in rural areas.

The survey highlighted the need for a broader range of policy solutions to decarbonise residential heating across Ireland and promote sustainable renewable energy in the home heating sector. It revealed strong support for blended fuels, with 70% of respondents supportive of the increased use of advanced, synthetic and biofuels to reduce emissions without switching to heat pumps.

As in the UK, the majority of people living in Ireland are conscious of the urgent need to decarbonise home energy emissions to achieve our GHG goals. However, this survey shows that current government policy is leaving them behind.

Winter Wise

Now that the clocks have changed, and winter has arrived, UKIFDA and OFTEC have launched the annual Winter Wise consumer campaign. The campaign provides easy steps for consumers to follow to mitigate any unforeseen issues during this winter, including getting appliances serviced, purchasing heating oil in good time and seeking out help.

We know that many of the most vulnerable customers are the ones who are least likely to come forward and seek help, so at this time of year, I ask everyone to be extra vigilant in identifying those in most need.

Be Winter Wise & Prepare For Winter

5 Point Plan



1

Keep your system maintained



2

Book your heating oil delivery early



3

Sign up for the Cold Weather Priority scheme



4

Choose a UKIFDA-accredited distributor



5

Helpful payment guidance



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Collaboration ensures inaugural Suppliers Cup is a huge success

Essex-based fuel distributor, New Era Energy is proud to have played a role in organising the inaugural Suppliers Cup charity football match which was held on Friday 4th October at the Redbridge Football Club.

Supporting a common cause

The Suppliers Premier Cup Charity Football Match, was organised as a collaborative partnership between James Hunt, CEO of New Era Energy and Rocky Sivell, Regional Operations Director at John F Hunt Power. The aim was to bring the two companies together for a common cause – supporting those in need by raising money for two charities; Phoenix Heroes CIC, which provides critical support to veterans and their families and Mind, an organisation that helps individuals facing mental health challenges.

Melissa Lancaster, Brand Manager at New Era, explains more: “Both James and Rocky wanted to make a meaningful impact on everyday lives, fostering community spirit and creating positive change through teamwork, camaraderie and a shared sense of purpose.

“This event was brought to life in less than two months, and seeing it come together in just a few short weeks was nothing short of remarkable. It’s a true testament to the dedication of everyone involved...from Rocky Sivell at John F Hunt, and Alan White at New Era Energy, who had the initial idea, to Brett Jacobs, whose connection with Redbridge Football Club secured us a location.”

Unity and vision

“Our CEO, James Hunt, gave us the green light and the funding to make it happen. Unity and a focused vision helped us pull this off, alongside the creativity of our design team and the contributions of every single supplier,” Melissa continued, sharing insights into the effort and input the team had made to ensure the event was such a success.



“I especially enjoyed designing the Suppliers Premier Cup brand identity, drawing inspiration from a football pitch and combining the brand colours of New Era Energy and John F Hunt to create a striking, memorable design. The Falcon emblem has traits of a successful supplier to the construction industry, speed to quickly adapt to changes and challenges and sharp vision and clear focus on goals and market opportunities. We hope the Suppliers Cup will continue to grow each year and become a place where suppliers can unite both on and off the pitch.”

Community and camaraderie

“On match day, the excitement was at fever pitch, and the atmosphere was electrifying. As the teams arrived and got into their branded kits, energy levels were high and the players were ready to give it their all. The newly laid, 3G pitch provided the perfect stage for this contest. Supporters cheered enthusiastically while enjoying a classic matchday feast of burgers and hotdogs, contributing to an unmistakable sense of community and camaraderie.

“Both teams battled fiercely, digging deep and playing with heart, making history in this first-ever cup. New Era Energy claimed victory in a hard-fought match, though the 8-1 scoreline didn’t quite reflect the quality and determination shown by both sides.”

Alan White, Head of Environmental for New Era, added: “From the moment we stepped onto the pitch, you could feel the unity among us.”

Melissa continued: “The atmosphere peaked after the final whistle, as everyone gathered at the bar for a charity auction. With David Hunt expertly driving up the bids, the auction was a roaring success, raising even more funds for our deserving charities.”

A huge achievement

“Raising over £5,000 for Phoenix Heroes and Mind was a huge achievement. It wasn’t



Image credits: Scott and Yasmine from Lunar-C Media (LCM Media)

just about football though. Knowing we were supporting Phoenix Heroes and Mind gave players and supporters a sense of purpose. That, more than anything, brought us closer as a team.”

“A massive thank you to everyone who made this event possible! Special thanks to Scott and Yasmine from LCM Media for capturing the day on video, and to the many generous sponsors and supporters – from banners and football kits to the officials who kept the game running smoothly. Without your support, this event wouldn’t have been possible.

We’re already looking forward to next year’s Suppliers Premier Cup, where we anticipate even more suppliers joining us for what promises to be an even bigger and better event.”

Rocky Sivell, Regional Operations Director at John F Hunt Power, concluded: “In today’s world, it’s more important than ever to give back and prioritise mental health. With everything going on, supporting initiatives like this helps remind us that we need to take care of one another.”

You can read more important guidance on prioritising mental health on pages 32 & 33 of this issue.



ADR Training: Claudia Weeks joins Barton Petroleum

Claudia Weeks, Community Content Lead for Fuel Oil News, was invited to attend an ADR Awareness Course hosted by Barton Petroleum at their Oakley Depot in September.

ADR Driver Training 'Accord Dangereuse Routiers' (ADR) requires drivers of hazardous goods vehicles to attend a formally recognised and approved training course every five years.

The training course was delivered by Pen Underwriting, a provider of specialist training courses for drivers in the hazardous goods and general haulage industries, its customers, suppliers and contractors.

Ken Taylor, Training Manager for Pen Underwriting, said: "At Pen Underwriting we don't just want to be there when something goes wrong, we want to help businesses prevent it from going wrong in the first place. Pen has provided specialist driver training for over twenty years, has trained thousands of candidates and organised hundreds of training days each year both in the UK and internationally.

"All our services are delivered by in-house specialists, supported by a network of associates who have expertise in their field and have practical in-depth experience of the industry. At Pen, we take pride in providing an exceptional service and create an unforgettable experience."

Rob Sweeney, Pen Underwriting, delivered the ADR Awareness Course at Barton's Oakley Depot and commented: "Conducting training courses requires a lot of preparation and continual development. Delivering training courses for Pen Driver Training ensures that I have continued to maintain their high standards.

"There is no greater satisfaction than candidates enjoying the training they have received and achieving their ADR Certificate."

The importance of training

Howard Marriott, Group Transport Manager, shared why Barton Petroleum feels training is important for all its staff: "Although ADR Training is obviously mandatory for driving staff, we always provide ADR Awareness Training for all our non-driving staff.

"We feel it not only provides an insight into the importance of carrying dangerous goods safely but that these types of training courses help our staff feel valued.

"We also like non-driving staff to

accompany drivers from time to time, to gain an understanding and appreciation of what a day is like for our drivers, and this Awareness Course satisfies ADR requirements.

"We passionately believe in the importance of training. All our managers have recently completed 2 days covering Mental Health Awareness as well as Equality, Inclusion and Diversity training which were excellent and very valuable."

Refreshing and informative training

"I thought the course, and the course content, were informative and presented in a refreshing manner keeping us engaged throughout the day," shared John Keeley, Sales Executive for Barton.

"As always on these courses, you get a few new pieces of information that you did not know or indeed had slipped off your radar so, from that point of view, it was a great course to attend."

Rainy Stripp, Administrator for Barton, added: "Working in the office I didn't know what to expect from the course. Rob, the facilitator, was fantastic and extremely easy to listen to as he explained everything clearly and thoroughly.

"The course was very interesting, and it has given me a greater depth of understanding



in the areas I knew a little about but had only touched base with previously. I found the packaging codes especially interesting (and now I can't help but look at boxes to see if I can guess the code!) We all gained certificates to enable us to travel in a tanker if ever needed."



A big thank you to Barton Petroleum

Claudia Weeks, Community Content Lead, shared her appreciation, thanking the whole team at Barton and Rob Sweeney from Pen Underwriting: "It was an absolute pleasure to attend the training course at Barton Petroleum's Oakley Depot.

"It was a fantastic course, I learned so much about tankers, fuel and the industry. It was clear that Rob has an expert knowledge of the industry, and he delivered the course with a clear structure, plenty of insight and good humour.

"Rob also did an excellent job of encouraging group discussion and debate about the industry with the delegates on the course, and we were all able to confidently share our experiences and knowledge.

"I would also like to thank the Barton team, Howard, Kelly, John, Leon and Rainy for welcoming me to their depot for a day. What a team! Thank you for the warm welcome, great conversation and delicious lunch. I hope I will be back for another visit again soon!

"The team at Barton have very kindly offered me the opportunity to also spend a day with one of their tanker drivers in the coming months, but knew that I would need ADR training in advance. I now feel fully prepared and ready for the experience of spending a day supporting a tanker driver!"



Cyber risks: Are fuel distributors vulnerable?



Most people would be aware of the ever-increasing threat that cyber breaches pose to businesses in the UK, but here Karl Jones, of industry insurance specialist OAMPS, considers our community of fuel distributors – are you especially vulnerable?

As part of the UK's critical national infrastructure, the reality is that in addition to criminal activity and disaffected individuals, the sector could also be targeted by:

- Environmental activists
- State-sponsored attacks against UK PLC

As with any system of protection, the integrity of that protection is only as strong as the weakest link, and there are a number of potential issues with:

- Weak password management
- Use of work systems for personal email access
- Allowing employees to use personal devices to log into your network (their phones on your Wi-Fi)
- Limited use of password protections to control access to sensitive parts of your system
- Employee awareness of Cyber security

Your physical assets and software also represent potential threats if your internet-enabled IT assets (including CCTV cameras, leak detection/safety systems and Point of Sale devices) use:

- Unsupported software/firmware
- The original password provided by the supplier/manufacture

Not updating operating systems or software as soon as the patches are released also means your system protection is out of date and could be breached by recently created malware.

What could this cost?

The average cost of a breach is £10,830 in the UK which is a lot smaller than some of the headlines you might have seen, as this doesn't include compensation costs if data is compromised.

GDPR data breach compensation costs start at around £1,000 per person where their name, address, date of birth and email address are part of a data breach, and this can multiply quickly if financial information is involved (anywhere between £3,000 and £8,000 per person on average)



But we outsource all of our IT to a third party and they protect us

Unfortunately, you're not in possession of a "get out of jail free card" if you outsource the operation and management of your IT systems to a third party – if you check your contracts issued for the Software As A Service (SAAS) you use, it will almost certainly limit the indemnity that the provider will give you to the charges you pay them, but only in respect of property damage.

The agreement will often also exclude any consequential losses resulting from a Cyber breach, which could include:

- Loss of customers and revenue (especially if you can't trade at your busiest times)
- Possible environmental damage
- Potential damage to your hard-earned reputation

Even if you don't hold the information yourselves, these agreements often place data controller responsibilities on you.

The ICO states that the controller is primarily responsible for its own compliance and ensuring the compliance of its processors. This means that, regardless of the terms of the contract with a processor, the controller may be subject to any of the corrective measures and sanctions set out in the UK GDPR. These include orders to bring processing into compliance, claims for compensation from a data subject and administrative fines.

So the loss or breach of 1,000 customer records could cost you upwards of £1,000,000!

What can you do?

There are a number of things:

- Use a robust password management system
- Control or exclude the access of personal email accounts on your systems

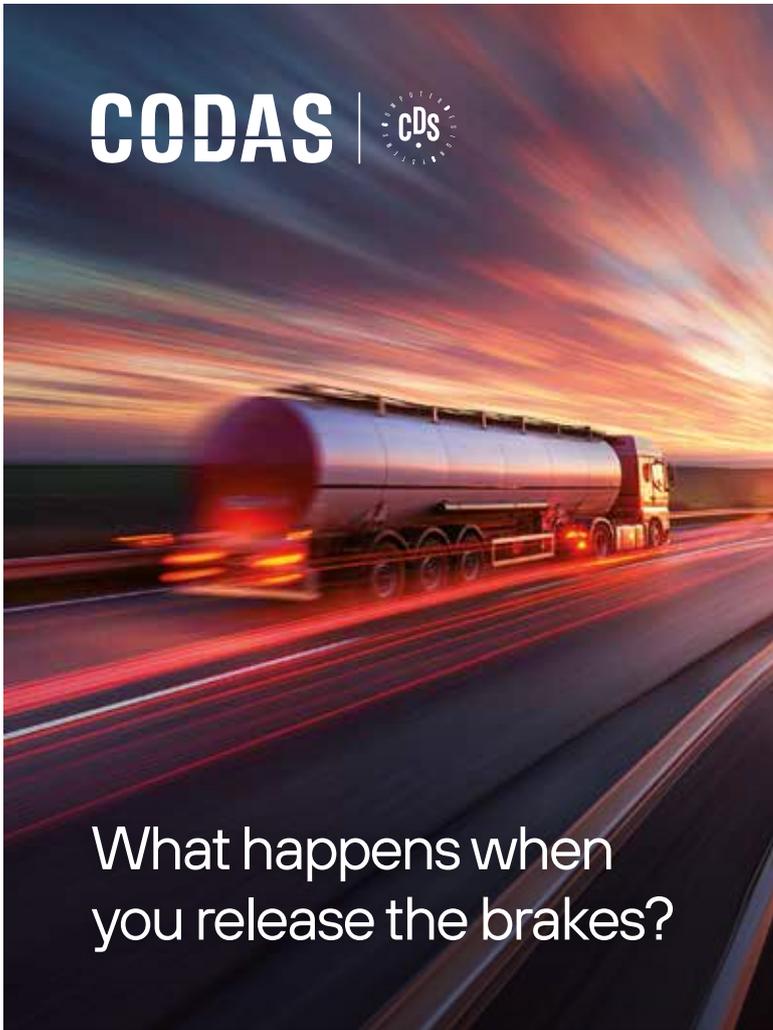
- Don't allow employees to connect personal devices to your systems
- Use passwords to protect sensitive areas of your system
- Train your employees on the importance of cyber vigilance
- Change passwords on internet-enabled devices
- Allow automatic software updates
- Limit or exclude the use of any unsupported hardware/firmware

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Cyber Essentials scheme is a useful starting point, and whilst getting certified does attract a charge, there is a useful toolkit at <https://getreadyforcyberessentials.iasme.co.uk/questions/> which would help you prepare for certification and would identify areas that you should focus on.

Cyber insurance is also a valuable tool to consider in your Cyber strategy; many policies can be tailored to provide cover for the areas that most businesses are concerned about – social engineering, phishing, and ransomware. Some of the policies can also provide access to specialist support in the event of a system breach, help identify why and how the breach occurred, as well as advise on preventing further breaches.

The sole purpose of this article is to provide guidance on the issues covered. This article is not intended to give legal advice, and, accordingly, it should not be relied upon. It should not be regarded as a comprehensive statement of the law and/or market practice in this area. We make no claims as to the completeness or accuracy of the information contained herein or in the links which were live at the date of publication. You should not act upon (or should refrain from acting upon) information in this publication without first seeking specific legal and/or specialist advice. Pen Underwriting trading as OAMPS Hazardous Industries accepts no liability for any inaccuracy, omission or mistake in this publication, nor will we be responsible for any loss which may be suffered as a result of any person relying on the information contained herein.

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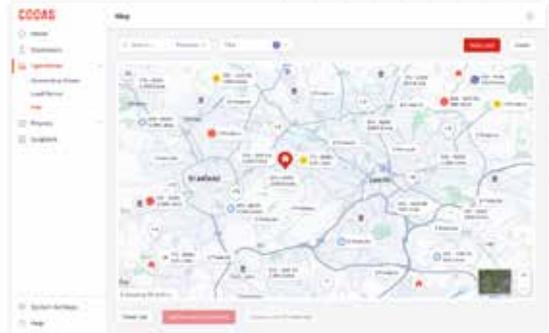
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A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Kelly Mcloughlin

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 **KELLY MCLOUGHLIN**, DEPOT MANAGER AT BARTON PETROLEUM'S OAKLEY DEPOT, WHICH WAS THE RUNNER-UP DEPOT IN THIS YEAR'S UKIFDA DEPOT OF THE YEAR AWARD, TO DISCOVER HOW KELLY SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.



MY ALARM GOES OFF AT... 5.30am and I always snooze for 5 minutes!



THE FIRST THING I DO IS... feed my beautiful Siamese cat – 'Smokey'.

I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY... I'm always the first one up in the house, so it's quiet. I will usually prepare dinner for the evening before I leave.

I CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT... My handbag, laptop and car keys.

MY TYPICAL DAY – I have worked for Barton Petroleum for over ten years now. I initially joined the company as a part-time administrator, then the role expanded over time into a full-time administrator role. I was then promoted to Depot Manager in October 2021.

The Oakley Depot was established in 1989, and continues to grow from strength to strength. The depot has an excellent reputation for delivering a wide range of oils and lubricants to industrial, agricultural, and domestic customers alike.

My usual day begins by arriving at the office just before 7am, and I will immediately put the kettle on for my first coffee of the day! I will then check in with the drivers to make sure that all of them are okay and ready for the day.

Next, I start confirming deliveries from the day before. We rotate this in the office, but I do like to help. I then liaise with the supervisor about what fuel we will order for the next day, all the time checking regularly for email orders and enquiries. It's also my role to support the depot with pricing and winning new business!



No two days are the same in the office here, and my plans can change with a blink of an eye.

I am proud to say that I work with a great team who are extremely experienced in the oil industry, and we are all keen to see our depot continue its growth and to continue with our excellent customer service.

MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT... The Oakley Depot being the runner-up for The Depot of the Year 2024 at the UKIFDA Awards.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB... When things don't go to plan, and it's out of my control. I always deal with any issues as quickly as possible.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB... that every day is different, and there is always something to learn. I enjoy the challenges and enjoy working with my depot team.

I RELAX AFTER WORK BY... I enjoy going to the gym, when I'm not working too late – I do love a spin class! Otherwise, it's always nice to relax and catch up on a series on TV.

MY FAVOURITE MEAL IS (Breakfast, lunch, or evening meal)... I do love dinner time and love making one of my homemade curries.

ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE IS... Smart watch, mobile phone and vitamins.

THE LAST THING I DO EACH DAY IS... I run the Hoover around the house and put a wash in the machine!

I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY... I sometimes have a cat nap on the sofa, but I'm normally in bed by 10pm.

Tackling supply chain challenges through diversification

FROM FUEL REFINING AND DISTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND LOGISTICS, DISRUPTIONS, DELAYS AND SKILLS SHORTAGES ARE HAVING A PROFOUND IMPACT RIGHT ACROSS THE CHEMICAL SUPPLY CHAIN. **TIM DOGGETT**, CEO OF THE CHEMICAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (CBA), EXPLORES WHY THESE CHALLENGES ARE DRIVING THE NEED FOR DIVERSIFICATION WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, AND THE INITIATIVES THAT ARE HELPING TO PUT IT IN PLACE.



Current state of the supply chain

Resilient and robust as it is, the chemical supply chain faces numerous key challenges, some of which have persisted or worsened over several years. While the new government wants to reset the UK's relationship with the EU, the legacy of Brexit continues to present obstacles and hamper businesses. The introduction of customs and border controls means strict and often costly formalities along with delays in transit, leading to price increases and supply and productivity problems for businesses on both sides of the border.

Not least among these challenges is UK REACH, a regulation covering the manufacture and importing of chemicals in Great Britain. Prior to Brexit, this was covered by EU REACH and which UK industry spent over £500 million complying with. UK REACH requires the duplication of this process, which has been estimated by DEFRA to be of significant additional cost to British businesses, with projections ranging from around £2 billion, to as much as £3.5 billion.

Furthermore, the impact of UK REACH is not only on the chemical industry supply chain and the wider chemical sector, but also on downstream users who were previously not within the scope of the regulation. The implications of this are wide and far reaching, and which has seen consequences such as manufacturing or trade lanes being moved from the UK to EU states. It has also restricted new business opportunities and resulted in investment being diverted to the EU or Asia. Inevitably, this has increased costs and, in some cases, reduced choices, making some products unavailable or commercially unviable. A series of deadlines stretching out to 2030 could potentially worsen the situation, as each

deadline draws nearer. This also inevitably means divergence, adding further complications to trade and unintended consequences.

Geopolitical tensions coupled with conflict around the globe is also having a major impact on the supply chain. Russia and Ukraine are both major industry suppliers or transit routes, and their ongoing war has resulted not just in shortages of vital raw materials and increased fuel prices, but it has also disrupted key supply chains, such as the Black Sea ports, and affected logistics availability. This included many Ukrainian HGV drivers, who made up 40% of some eastern European fleets workforce, who have returned home to serve in the military. Attacks on ships in the Red Sea meanwhile, has forced cargo operators to take the longer route around Africa, lengthening transit times, increasing costs and reducing the productivity of vessels. Combined, the two conflicts have led to global price increases and delays which have major implications for businesses and in turn, consumers.

The need for diversification

If the UK chemical supply chain is to overcome these and future challenges, as well as create and seize the opportunities that arise, it must continuously evolve, adapt and diversify. It must lead and be increasingly inventive and evermore innovative in today's fast-paced and increasingly hi-tech world. Diversification can strengthen the supply chain in various ways, for instance, by offering varied perspectives and bringing a number of different skillsets into the sector that lead to smarter solutions to potential future issues. Such talent can help the industry mitigate or avoid disruption, optimising operations and maximising efficiencies, to ensure everyday products are

available to the public with minimal shortages or delays. Furthermore, with 97% of all manufactured goods containing a chemical input, diversification can help deliver tangible benefits for the wider society, providing new and better products and innovating sustainability efforts.

One area where diversification is vital is in ensuring a sustainable skills pipeline. Only by attracting a talented, diverse array of people right across the spectrum of roles will the industry be able to find the innovative solutions it needs. While getting more people interested in studying STEM subjects is vital, future success also means recruiting the right people in areas such as sales and marketing, admin, IT, and project and account management.

There are a number of hurdles that stand in the way of achieving this. Firstly, the chemical supply chain must be perceived as both an employer of choice and an industry where people can have long and fulfilling careers. Secondly, it must appeal to people from a wider range of backgrounds and ethnicities, as well as addressing gender imbalances. Finally, it must change its negative perception as an environmentally unfriendly industry to attract the increasing number of young people who will only work for sustainable businesses. Indeed, a more diverse workforce may be the best way to deliver tomorrow's sustainability solutions and continued innovation across the supply chain.

Initiatives for diversification

Efforts to tackle the issues facing the chemical supply chain have seen industry associations and other stakeholders implement various initiatives, often working in collaboration or through partnerships. One initiative is the

CBA's Generation STEAM, a project which aims to encourage more young people to study for the qualifications and learn the skills that the industry will need going forward. The name STEAM is an expansion of the traditional STEM, with the 'A' highlighting the importance that creativity through the arts, and problem-solving attributes, like attitude, ability and ambition, which will develop the industry in the future. This new focus is crucial if the industry is to attract those with the skills to work with creative, cutting-edge technologies, like AI and intelligent automation. Beyond this, Generation STEAM seeks to increase awareness of the various career opportunities the supply chain offers and the different pathways into them, while showcasing the diversity of roles and personnel to challenge misconceptions.

Generation Logistics is another initiative seeking to address skill shortages, in this case, specifically within the logistics industry. Like Generation STEAM, it too aims to encourage the recruitment of new talent by raising awareness of the sector's broad range of career opportunities and their pathways, including roles from warehousing, engineering and HGV driving to HR, IT and marketing. A major collaboration, the project involves over 40 leading industry associations, organisations and stakeholders, all while being supported by the Department for Transport.

The CBA's Future Council is an initiative that takes a slightly different approach and has a dual function. Since its launch in 2022, its primary aim has been to nurture aspiring talent already working in the industry. It achieves this by bringing together a group of young people from across the Association's membership who, between them, have a wide range of career experiences and skills. By working together on a variety of projects and outreach events, the Future Council's members can learn from each other, acquiring knowledge and skills beyond their everyday roles. This helps them develop a greater understanding of the industry as a whole and enables them to contribute to wider industry projects and policies. Such experience is not only essential for driving innovation and progress within the industry; it also gives participants more opportunities to develop their careers and skills within the sector, which is vital to improving employee retention and preventing talent from leaving.

The Future Council also organises events at schools and universities where it builds upon the work of Generation STEAM by promoting the importance of STEM education, highlighting the valuable work of the supply chain and changing perceptions of the industry. Crucially,



Danish Azri, Sustainability Lead at the CBA

as the Future Council is made up of young talent, the members are excellent role models for the students they meet with. At the other end of the career journey, the CBA 5050 Vision is an initiative that seeks to provide workforce stability by retaining and actively engaging with these experienced individuals, who can offer a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and institutional insight, whilst driving innovation, enhancing safety protocols, and mentoring the next generation of talent. At the same time, it is encouraging those over 50 who are looking for a career change to bring their much-needed skills and experience into the chemical supply chain.

These initiatives, whilst vital in helping individuals on their career journey and organisations in addressing the pressing skills gap, also stand to serve a wider purpose for companies by providing opportunities to collaborate on a more fundamental level, ultimately easing some of the wider manufacturing delays.

Danish Azri, Sustainability Lead at the CBA, explains: "As the global economy has expanded, so to have the needs of consumers. A single solution, product or source can expose businesses to significant risks, whether that's because of climate change causing extreme weather or due to political unrest.

"Through diversification of our supply chains, we can make our industry stronger and more resilient to potential challenges. One way of doing this is to have a wide variety of suppliers and partners. This can help companies to respond quickly to any potential market changes, creating more sustainable supply chains."

Creating a sustainable industry

While addressing environmental concerns is the chief reason why the chemical supply chain needs to be more sustainable, its green

credentials are an important factor in recruiting the next generation of talent. Young people don't just want to buy greener products, they are becoming increasingly conscious of their environmental impact through all facets of their life, and thus want to work for greener companies. As the largest industrial consumer of energy and the third largest subsector for CO2 emissionsⁱ, the global chemical sector has a lot of work to do to make it more appealing to these job seekers. To address this, there is an increased focus on sustainable action through initiatives like the Carbon Literacy Project and Responsible Care.

The Carbon Literacy Project provides a certified training programme, which empowers individuals to make informed decisions to reduce their Greenhouse Gas Emissions and to make positive contributions towards this goal. The Responsible Care programme, meanwhile is the chemical industry's commitment to go beyond regulatory requirements and continuously improve in areas such as health, safety, security and the environment.

To address the skills gap, deliver the innovation needed to overcome challenges and tackle sustainability, diversification is essential. The chemical supply chain needs to attract people from a wider range of backgrounds and with a more diverse range of skills to ensure it has the talent required for all the various roles, current and future. To help bring this about, industry associations, like the CBA, together with businesses and other stakeholders, are working tirelessly to implement initiatives, training and support that will ensure the supply chain, including businesses in logistics, environmental services, fuel refining and fuel distribution, has a sustainable, talented workforce.

ⁱ<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvg3pxz4334o>

ⁱⁱWorld Economic Forum's Nature Positive: Role of the Chemical Sector

In review: The Tank Storage Association Conference and Exhibition

THE TANK STORAGE ASSOCIATION'S CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION, THE UK'S LEADING EVENT FOR THE BULK STORAGE AND ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR, RETURNED TO THE COVENTRY BUILDING SOCIETY ARENA ON THURSDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER 2024.

The event brought together more than 60 top-tier exhibitors showcasing an extensive array of products, services and solutions, as well as attendees from across the tank storage sector and beyond, for a day of knowledge exchange, networking, industry development and insights. Margaret Major, Publishing Director, and Claudia Weeks, Community Content Lead, had the pleasure of joining the TSA community for the day as media partners.

This year's conference programme was carefully tailored to reflect key issues facing the sector and explore opportunities for the future. It once again featured top keynote speakers from industry, government and regulators covering topics ranging from global trends and security of supply to biofuels, the energy transition, climate change adaptation and safety.

Martyn Lyons, Managing Director at TR3 Consulting Ltd, and conference delegate, commented: "I always greatly look forward to attending the annual Tank Storage Association Conference and Exhibition at the CBS Arena in Coventry, an excellent central venue, meaning that everyone can attend this single day event without excessive travelling.

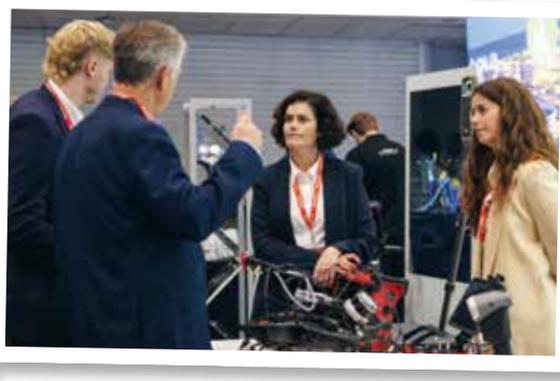
"This year's extremely well-organised event didn't disappoint, and was very well attended by both delegates and exhibitors. There was a real buzz with close concentration paid to all the very interesting and informative conference speakers, and there was considerable interest in the wide array of exhibitors.

"Two particular highlights for me were meeting the newest cohort of apprentices with Reynolds Training Services and listening to the

panel session covering Women in Terminal Operations, showing that without doubt the sector is attracting new talent and that it is talent and not gender that is critical to the success and the future of the tank storage industry in the UK. I would highly recommend this conference."

Keynote speakers

- **Simon Stoddart**, Head of International Oil Security and Strategy at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, presented on global trends, security and strategy, touching on the role of tank storage in energy security and supply against the background of dynamic changes within the global context, as well as the sector's role in the journey towards climate neutrality.



- **James Evans**, Senior Manager, Biofuels, at Argus, the leading independent provider of global energy and commodity market intelligence, focused on transport fuel, feedstock and global trade flow dynamics.
- Executive Director of the Federation of European Tank Storage Associations (FETSA), **Ravi Bathiani**, provided an insightful overview and analysis of the energy transition across geographical Europe calling attention to the key role of storage infrastructure in both core and green products supply chains.
- **Max Walker**, Acting Director of the Chemicals, Explosives and Microbiological Hazards Division at the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), presented on HSE's future outlook for regulation and underscored the need for collaboration in the context of the energy transition.
- **Dr Mike Nicholas**, Senior Advisor, Climate Change Adaptation and COMAH at the Environment Agency also stressed the need for collaboration and continual improvement to deliver sustainable industries of the future in his presentation on climate change adaptation.
- A Women in Terminal Operations panel, moderated by this year's event chair, **Justine Fosh**, CEO of Cogent Skills, featured Wilma Kelly, Safety, Sustainability and Engineering Director at Certas Energy, **Esma Gulten**, Co-Founder and CEO of Gizil and **Tahya Slaven**,

Electrical Control and Instrumentation Project Manager at Exolum. The panel explored careers, skills and opportunities across the bulk storage and energy infrastructure sector.

Esma Gulten, Co-Founder and CEO of Gizil, added her thoughts on the conference: "The TSA Conference 2024 was an incredibly inspiring experience, especially as we discussed the evolving role of women in terminal operations.

"I feel that digitalisation is a key driver in this transformation. It's not just about adopting new technologies – it's about empowering our teams with data-driven insights that improve efficiency and safety. By embracing tools like Virtual Plants, we're not only enhancing operational resilience but also creating a digital-first environment that attracts and nurtures the next generation of talent, including more women in our industry."

In her closing speech, Wilma Kelly, Safety, Sustainability and Engineering Director at Certas Energy and President of the Tank Storage Association, reiterated the need for cooperation, partnership and innovation to seize the opportunities of tomorrow and to open up a new frontier of possibilities.

A time to come together

Nunzia Florio, Communications Director for the Tank Storage Association, said: "The 2024 Tank

Storage Conference and Exhibition explored the key role of the bulk storage and energy infrastructure sector today in supporting growth and prosperity by importing, exporting, storing and blending products that are integral to our daily lives, and in the journey towards carbon neutrality.

"I particularly enjoyed an amazing expert panel of Women in Terminal Operations who shared insights and experiences on careers, skills and on boosting opportunities in the industry. And with partnership at its heart, this important event for the sector would not be possible without the support of all exhibitors, sponsors, media partners and expert speakers. We are thankful to all for an incredibly successful 2024 event."

Peter Davidson, CEO of the Tank Storage Association, concluded: "Our annual event continues to provide one of the best opportunities for the sector to come together to be inspired, gain strategic insights and forge connections. With one of the highest attendance rates to date, this year's event is testament to the continued growth and strength of the bulk storage and energy infrastructure sector and its commitment to play its part in shaping the future."

The Tank Storage Conference and Exhibition will return to the Coventry Building Society Arena next year on the 18th September 2025.





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PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

OCTOBER
IN VIEW

FOSSIL FUEL FUNDAMENTALISTS VS. CLEAN ENERGY ENTHUSIASTS – WILL ENERGY POLICY IMPACT THE U.S. ELECTION?

To adequately summarise US energy policy in a few short paragraphs is a nigh-on impossible task; a report on the world's biggest economy (still) and biggest energy producer should really take up many pages. But we don't have that luxury at monthly report HQ and with a US election only days away, we shall try and sum up where US energy is currently "at" and how much we expect it to change under respective Administrations. Will it be "drill baby, drill" under Donald Trump or more a case of "baby drill" under Kamala Harris?

"WHY ADD AN EXTRA LEG, TO EFFECTIVELY ACHIEVE THE SAME OUTCOME?"

At this year's Republican National Convention, Donald Trump promised to boost production of fossil fuels to "levels that nobody's seen before", making America so "energy dominant" that it will "supply the rest of the world". That the US oil and gas industry is therefore broadly pro-Trump is unsurprising, but in fact the sector has done remarkably well under the Democrats. US Oil and Gas production in 2023 was higher than in any year of the Trump Administration and more drilling licenses were issued by Joe Biden in his first three years in office than during Trump's (4 year) Presidency. It is true, of course, that Kamala Harris in the past has opposed shale gas fracking, but that was before she became the Democrat candidate for the White House, who very much needs a victory in the "shalecentric" state of Pennsylvania! Previous opposition to shale gas has now evaporated and Harris has (cautiously tbf) endorsed the industry...

As to whether a Trump Administration means even more oil and gas drilling is not a foregone conclusion. From 2009 until 2014, the shale industry burned through \$300bn of investors' cash, only to see it largely wiped out when prices collapsed at the end of 2014.

Memories of these losses still loom large and as a result, most US producers are now locked into capital discipline and the paying back of debt. With the global outlook for oil demand stagnant (to bearish) and with most US "oil plays" requiring a price of \$60 per barrel to make a profit, producers are sticking rather than twisting and keeping production steady – hoping that this will avoid an over-supply / low-price outcome. White House policy then, is not the main driver behind oil and gas activity in the USA. Instead, market conditions and whether Wall St has the appetite to invest further in such a cyclical industry, are the main factors.

One area where Donald Trump and the Republicans are keen to act should they win the election, is in the unwinding of Joe Biden's clean energy agenda – euphemistically called the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Essentially the IRA sought to turbo charge low-carbon energy development through the use of hefty subsidy for green technologies. Trump has called this legislation the "Green New Scam", which plays well to much of his voting base. The reality is however that 70% of IRA subsidies are going to Republican Districts! Further to this, most US states (whether Republican or Democrat) are very favourable to green investments, because they generate employment whilst not necessarily reducing existing fossil-fuel reliant jobs. The core Republican state of Texas is a prime example of this, with an explosion of new opportunities in the renewables sector (Texas is the largest wind power generator in the States and second largest solar producer), sitting alongside the hundreds of thousands of jobs already existent in the oil and gas sector.

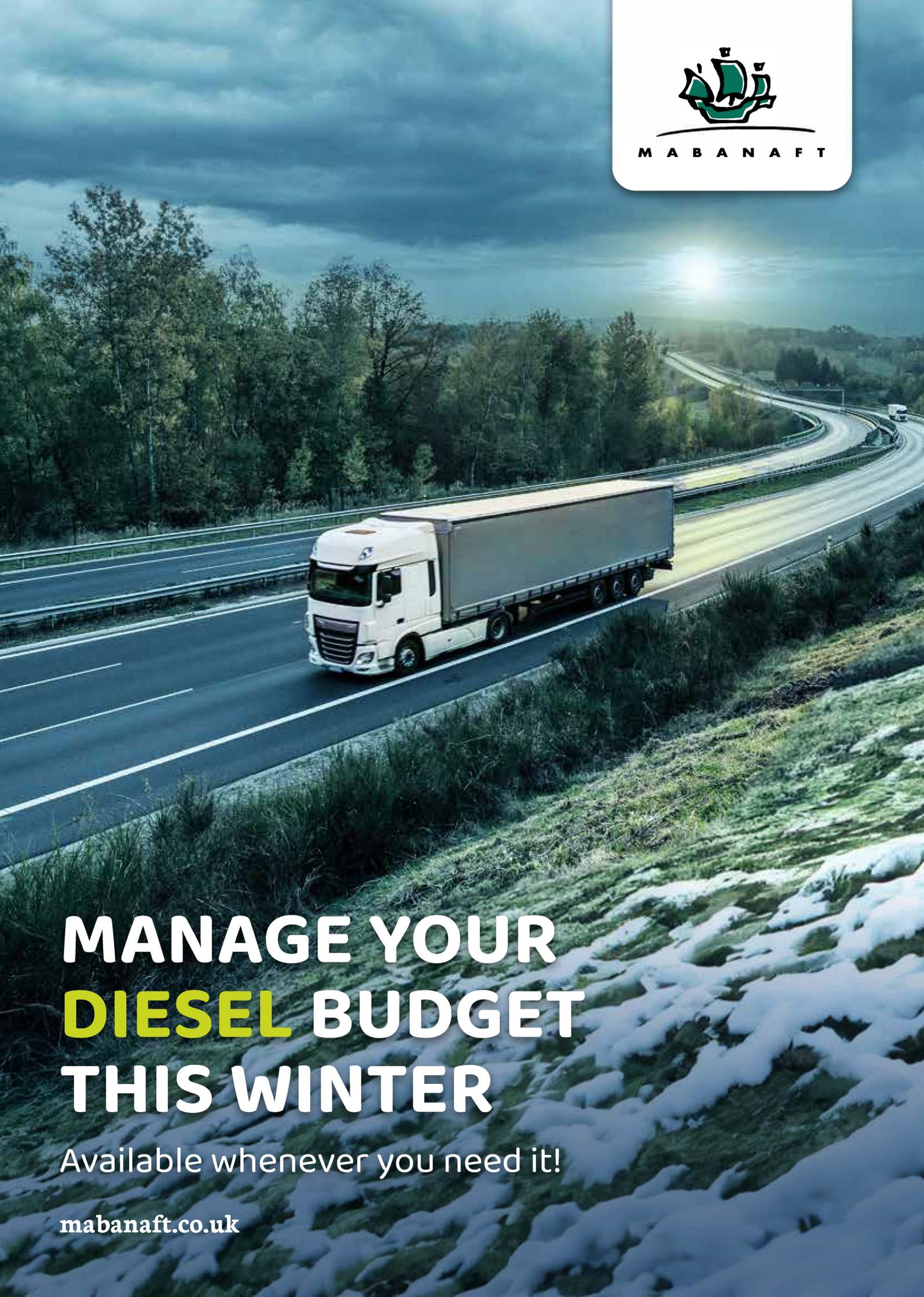
At current rates of investment (ie, Biden levels) the USA is projected to spend around \$7.5tn on low carbon technologies between now and 2050. It is forecast that under a Trump Presidency, that figure would fall at most to around \$6.5tn investment. That's a slight slow-down in the speed of travel, but hardly the end of green energy in America! Basically, the energy market-place will continue to operate independently of the White House because far too much money

has been sunk into renewables to see that investment now being reversed. The bottom line is that the President – whoever he or she is – has no control over private energy companies or their investors.

"GETTING HYDROGEN TO THE CONSUMER REQUIRES COMPLEX AND FAR-REACHING INFRASTRUCTURE."

We know that the USA is a deeply divided country, and when it comes to energy, the situation (superficially at least) seems no different. On the one side, we have fossil-fuel fundamentalists who are mostly republican and vigorously at odds with the clean-energy enthusiasts on the other team, who are mostly Democrat. Scratch below the surface though and it seems clear that in an industry so dependent on huge-scale, long-term investments, the White House incumbent largely becomes irrelevant. Of course, a Trump Presidency will see periodic bouts of anti-green rhetoric to strengthen his support amongst the Republican base, in the exact same way that Kamala Harris will habitually bash the oil industry to please progressive Democrats. In the meantime, the energy industry will do its own thing and pay far more attention to market forces and the global trend of decarbonisation.

For more pricing
information,
see page 42



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A digital transformation for Highland Fuels

DreamTec Systems revolutionises operations for Highland Fuels

“The implementation of DreamTec tablets has revolutionised our fleet management processes, allowing us to operate more efficiently and effectively than ever before.” – Ian Forsyth, Regional General Manager, Highland Fuels.

Founded in Inverness in 1957, Highland Fuels is a growing, forward-thinking supplier of energy for homes, businesses, vehicles and marine craft in Scotland and beyond.

Highland Fuels offers a range of high-quality fuels, lubricants, additives and storage and dispensing tanks for homes, businesses, vehicles and marine craft. Independence and ethical operations are fundamental to the company, which is dedicated to maintaining the fantastic service their customers have come to expect.

Distribution Network: Scotland, Northern England

Fleet: 49 vehicles, 11 depots

Integration: Alfons Haar meters and CODAS ERP

The challenge

Highland Fuels faced several operational challenges due to outdated, paper-driven processes. With a fleet of 46 trucks servicing a diverse range of customers across various regions, maintaining efficiency and accuracy in operations was becoming increasingly difficult. Manual handling of paperwork, including delivery tickets, loading schedules and driver communications, was time-consuming and often prone to errors and inefficiencies. Additionally, the lack of integrated navigation systems posed challenges for drivers, especially in remote or unfamiliar areas. The company

sought a solution to enhance efficiencies, compliance and customer service whilst helping Highland Fuels stay competitive in the market.

“DreamTec Systems’ solution not only streamlined our operations but also provided invaluable insights into our fleet activities, enabling us to make data-driven decisions and optimise resource allocation.”

The solution

Recognising the need for digital transformation, Highland Fuels partnered with DreamTec Systems to implement a comprehensive solution aimed at streamlining operations and enhancing overall efficiency. The core of the solution was the integration of DreamTec’s Mobile Fleet Management into Highland Fuels’ ERP system. Providing drivers with real-time access to delivery schedules, loading information and navigation assistance, significantly reducing the reliance on manual paperwork and improving route optimisation.

“DreamTec Systems has become an integral part of our operations, driving efficiency and profitability.”

The results

The implementation of DreamTec’s solution yielded significant improvements across various aspects of Highland Fuels’ operations:

- 1. Time savings:** Implementing DreamTec Systems resulted in significant time savings, with estimates indicating up to an hour and a half saved per depot each day. Enabling staff to focus on more value-added tasks, enhancing overall efficiency.
- 2. Improved navigation:** Integrated navigation features provided drivers with precise directions to delivery locations, improving delivery efficiency and route

optimisation, also resulting in reduced training times for new drivers.

- 3. Streamlined data management:** By replacing paper-based processes with digital solutions, Highland Fuels experienced faster and more accurate data transmission. In addition, the system offered real-time insights into fleet activities, providing management with actionable data to optimise operations.
- 4. Improved customer service:** Digitising processes led to quicker response times and improved communication, enabling Highland Fuels to provide superior customer service. Additionally, features such as customer feedback and photo documentation enhanced communication and transparency with clients.

“The transition from manual paperwork to digital tablets saved an average of 1.5 hours per depot per day, allowing resources to be redirected towards safety and strategic initiatives.”

DreamTec worked closely with Highland Fuels’ management team to customise the system according to their specific requirements, including seamless integration with their existing CODAS system and Alfons Haar metering system. Extensive training sessions were conducted to ensure drivers were proficient with the new technology.

“The whole experience has been fantastic. CODAS, Alfons Haar and DreamTec have done a great job.”

System highlights for Highland Fuels

- Time saving efficiencies across the business.
- Integrated navigation improving route optimisation.
- Real-time insights into fleet activities.
- Enhanced customer service offering.

Leading the charge towards accessible remote tank telemetry

Delivering future solutions now

As the fuel industry accelerates towards 2025, the increasing emphasis on energy efficiency and environmental responsibility is reshaping how both consumers and distributors approach fuel consumption. With the need for smarter decisions and a sustainable future, remote tank telemetry is moving from a future concept to a present-day solution.

A pioneer of radar-based remote tank telemetry, Magnus Monitors aims to be at the forefront of this transformation. Developing innovative technologies that redefine fuel management, the company was recognised with the 2024 UKIFDA Innovation Award at this year's industry event.

This accolade followed numerous nominations from Magnus customers – a clear indication of their relationship with the solutions provider, which Magnus attributes to its efforts to listen to their needs and continuously innovate to address industry gaps.

We spoke with Sean Donaghey, Head of Business Development at Magnus, to find out more about how the company's solutions are transforming fuel distribution businesses from reactive to proactive operations, enabling them to anticipate customer needs, optimise deliveries, and enhance overall efficiency, and how the latest Magnus product release, HAWKi, is addressing another barrier to uptake.

Introducing Magnus HAWKi

"Despite all the advancements in remote monitoring solutions, we recognised that the prohibitive cost of implementation was a significant barrier for many customers, particularly those with lower fuel usage rates," Sean explains.

"Traditional monitoring systems, often involving SIM cards and complex installations, were not economically viable for all, limiting widespread adoption.

"In response, we developed the Magnus HAWKi solution – a game-changer designed to expand accessibility and inclusivity in tank monitoring. The HAWKi is a cost-effective,

self-installable device that maintains the technical prowess of our radar technology while eliminating unnecessary expenses. By removing the SIM card and leveraging the end user's smartphone as a data bridge, we've significantly reduced both the device and communication costs, while also simplifying the device setup process."

Installation of the HAWKi is straightforward and user-friendly. It can be as simple as peeling a 3M adhesive strip and attaching the device to the tank or retrofitting it into an existing tank adapter. The device is powered by standard, off-the-shelf batteries available in any DIY store, making maintenance convenient and accessible.

"THE PROHIBITIVE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION WAS A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER."

The Magnus HAWKi empowers end-users by providing direct access to their tank levels and usage statistics via a mobile app. Users can monitor their energy consumption, receive alerts for low fuel levels or unusual activity, and understand their usage patterns – all contributing to smarter energy use and increased awareness. For those without smartphones, an optional LCD display offers the same vital information in an accessible format.

Additionally, for properties that have multiple tanks or challenging installations such as underground tanks, Magnus offers a gateway solution. This gateway collects data from several monitors and transmits it via the customer's Wi-Fi or cellular connection, further reducing costs and extending the device's applicability.

"By addressing the cost barrier and simplifying installation, the Magnus HAWKi solution has opened up tank monitoring

to a broader customer base, making it as commonplace as the electricity meter in every home."

The "Be Winter Ready" Programme

For customers where regular, real-time monitoring is essential, the Magnus Remote Monitor, equipped with a SIM card for continuous, reliable data transmission, continues to be the preferred solution particularly for those who have higher fuel usage rates that offer a clear return on investment.

Installation can be a challenge for busy fuel distributors, especially during peak seasons. Managing the logistics of deploying and maintaining monitoring solutions can be daunting when your primary focus is delivering fuel efficiently.

To alleviate this, Magnus launched its "Be Winter Ready" programme – an initiative designed to support distributors by removing installation barriers. Under this nationwide programme, installation of the Magnus Remote Monitor is offered as a free service, enabling fuel distributors to provide enhanced services to their customers without incurring additional costs or stretching resources too thin.

With distributors having expressed the need for assistance in managing installations, Sean shares how the support has already been well received. "When we introduced the 'Be Winter Ready' programme, based on feedback from fuel distributors, we saw an immediate positive response," he says.

"It's a bit like offering them an extra pair of hands during their busiest times. By eliminating installation costs, we've enabled distributors to focus on their core business while ensuring their customers benefit from our advanced telemetry solutions.

"This collaborative approach has been welcomed, with fuel distributors embracing the programme and scaling their solutions effectively," Sean continues. "It ensures that high-usage customers receive the benefits of continuous monitoring without the associated

complexities, fostering a more proactive and efficient fuel management system.”

Leveraging data for a sustainable future

The powerful data collected from thousands of users is the beating heart of Magnus solutions. More than mere numbers, the solutions provider sees it as a valuable resource to drive efficiency and sustainability.

“By analysing consumption patterns, we help consumers become more energy-conscious and enable distributors to optimise delivery schedules, reduce operational costs, and minimise environmental impact,” Sean explains.

“End-users benefit from insights into their energy usage, allowing them to make informed decisions, conserve fuel, and detect potential issues such as leaks or theft. Distributors, on the other hand, transition from reactive responses to proactive strategies, anticipating needs and improving service quality. The data enables them to reduce unnecessary deliveries, lower operational costs, and enhance customer satisfaction by ensuring tanks are replenished before they run low.

“Our commitment to leveraging data aligns with broader environmental goals. By promoting efficient fuel usage and

reducing the carbon emissions associated with transportation, we contribute to a more sustainable future. It’s a win-win scenario that supports both business objectives and environmental stewardship.”

“DISTRIBUTORS SEEK INNOVATIVE WAYS TO OPERATE MORE EFFICIENTLY AND SUSTAINABLY.”

Industry trends and a smarter future

Magnus sees the fuel industry as one trending towards greater connectivity and data-driven decision-making in which energy usage awareness is moving from a niche interest to a widespread one. Consumers are looking for transparency and control over their consumption, while distributors seek innovative ways to operate more efficiently and sustainably.

“Magnus Monitors is at the forefront of this shift,” Sean suggests. “Our solutions cater to

diverse needs, ensuring that no customer is left behind in this technological evolution. Whether it’s the cost-effective, self-installable Magnus HAWKi or the comprehensive, continuously connected Magnus Remote Monitor, we’re providing the tools necessary for modern fuel management.

“As we look ahead, we anticipate continued growth in the adoption of remote tank telemetry. The advancements we’ve made not only meet current market demands but also set the stage for future innovations. By merging our focus on data utilisation with industry trends, we’re poised to lead the charge in creating a more connected and efficient fuel sector.

“The future of fuel management is interconnected, intelligent, and inclusive. At Magnus Monitors, we’re not just adapting to the future – we’re shaping it. Our vision is clear: to have our telemetry solutions installed on every tank in the country, making energy management effortless and efficient for all.

“By breaking down barriers, fostering sustainability, and empowering both consumers and distributors with the tools they need, we’re paving the way towards a smarter, more efficient future where every drop counts, and every tank tells a story.”



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INDUSTRY INSIGHT

An A-Z of Stress Awareness

MANDY RUTTER, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT, TRAINER, PSYCHOLOGIST, AND COUNSELLOR, WAS A KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE TSA (TANK STORAGE ASSOCIATION) CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION IN 2023, WHERE SHE DELIVERED AN IMPRESSIVE TALK ABOUT MENTAL WELL-BEING IN THE INDUSTRY.

MANDY SPECIALISES IN IMPROVING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES, MANAGERS, AND SENIOR LEADERS WITHIN ALL AREAS OF THE WORKFORCE AND HAS DELIVERED A REGULAR SERIES OF INSIGHTS FOR FUEL OIL NEWS. IN THIS LATEST ARTICLE, TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH INTERNATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS WEEK, MANDY INTRODUCES AN IMPORTANT A-Z OF STRESS AWARENESS.

International Stress Awareness Week

2024 is the 50th anniversary of International Stress Awareness Week which is held annually during the first week of November. The aim of the Week is to raise global awareness of stress, and improve its management in the workplace and in our personal lives.

Let's face it, stress is unavoidable. It comes from the small things in life, such as running late, or forgetting things, to significant stressors such as major family illness or traumatic events. One recent study reported that over 80% felt stressed at work.

Stress is our bodies natural response to pressure. It is usually triggered when we experience something new, or unexpected, or when we feel we have little control over a situation. Stress comes from external events happening to us, and from our own internal thinking. The scholar Epictetus famously quoted:

"People are disturbed not by things themselves, but by the views they take of them."

Most of us want to perform well, we want to do what we say we will do, to be reliable, to be accurate, to make others happy – but when situations get in the way to disrupt this (for example: too much work, letting people down, making mistakes, being rejected from a job), we feel disappointed and anxious about ourselves and our performance. This internal stress is debilitating and harmful as its often invisible and hidden from others.

Only the individual knows how distressing it is. The aim of stress awareness week is to help people recognise when stress is affecting them, and to be able to act quickly, using a whole variety of techniques, to ensure that the stress they are experiencing helps them to react appropriately and safely, rather than causing harm.

A-Z of Stress Management

A Acute Stress. Short term stress that arises from specific incidents or situations. Some people will tell you that 'a bit of stress is good for you'. This is true, as the immediate stress response releases a number of chemicals into the body system, including adrenalin. Adrenalin response gives us a surge of energy that can be exciting and motivating and helps us reach a deadline, (and enjoy a fairground ride!)

B Burnout is a dangerous consequence of long-term stress, characterised by severe exhaustion, cynicism (not caring about how we treat others and not believing anything will change for the better) and depression. People who experience burnout struggle to ask for help, therefore if we notice family and friends with this combination of symptoms, we need to encourage them to reach out for professional help, either through their in-house health professionals, PMI, or NHS.

C Causes of stress at work. HSE have identified 6 causes of workplace stress that are universal and likely to cause a debilitating response, these include: high workload, lack of control over our work demands and routine, conflict with line-manager, unsupportive relationships with peers, multiple changes, and lack of clarity about our role, its purpose and expectations. If you are experiencing any or all of these, reach out for support.

D Daily exercise is essential to maintain healthy stress levels. Moving our body through any activity (walking, running, stretching, dancing, gym work, wrestling, karate), helps to release the stored stress hormones that build up during the day.

E Eating a healthy diet supports a healthy immune system and repairs damaged cells. It provides the extra energy needed to cope with stressful experiences. Healthy fats

(salmon, sardines, herring, avocados, nuts), and vegetables can also help to regulate stress hormones.

F Flight, fight, freeze or fawn are all natural responses to being under threat. The fight response instinctively energises us to act assertively, aggressively or be irritable with the people causing us stress. The flight response energises us to run away from danger, withdraw or become silent. The freeze response temporarily stops us in our tracks, paralyses us so we are unable to move or make ourselves noticeable. The fawn response is our 'people pleasing' response, whereby we agree and go along with an aggressive frightening person in order to keep safe and protect ourselves. All these innate responses can be helpful at certain times, but it's worth reflecting on your natural response to assess how appropriate it is, given the circumstances.

G Gain perspective, take a step back, ask yourself how important the issues is, and is there a more useful response other than an immediate stress response. Ask yourself 'what is the best thing I can do in this situation now to help everyone – not just myself'. The immediate stress response leans us towards personal survival, which is the opposite of gaining perspective.

H Home life can become stressful too. The most common causes of stress outside the workplace include money worries, relationship breakdown, bereavement, illness, caring responsibilities. Parents of toddlers and teenagers often feel that they are under constant stress. But home life can be a source of great joy, relaxation and love – all of which are essential for stress management. Review your routine and approach and assess whether you can increase your fun, love and laughter at home.

I Identify your own triggers for stress – are there people, places or situations that cause a stress response just by thinking about them? It may be helpful to talk to a professional about these stress triggers to gain perspective and learn some calm grounding techniques.

J Judge your own performance realistically, usually when we judge ourselves harshly our stress response increases. If we are perfectionists, we sometimes dismiss our performance as ‘rubbish’ or ‘not good enough’ but adopting a more realistic attitude to our performance, and focusing on the things we have achieved, can help us feel proud and increase our self-esteem.

K Keep a positive attitude. Smile more, be kind, show interest in others. Keep a journal of positive experiences that have happened, which you can reflect on when you feel down.

L Limit alcohol, drug and other stimulants, they affect your perception and behaviour. They provide quick fixes that might help in the short term, but not in the long term

M Mindfulness and meditation enable you to pay attention, with purpose, to the present moment. Having the discipline to stay focused in the present moment helps to avoid becoming overwhelmed, judgemental or reactive when confronted by stressful situations.

N Neurodiverse conditions need care and understanding. Everyone has their own signs and symptoms of stress, and their own way of responding. Many conditions and disabilities are invisible, and it's essential not to judge or assume that everyone responds to stress in the same way. Be curious, interested and open-minded about what causes stress in others and how you can help.

O Oxytocin is helpful during stress. The hormone is released during stressful periods and has been labelled as the ‘tend and befriend’ response as opposed to the ‘flight or fight’ response. Oxytocin is commonly known as ‘the bonding hormone’ encouraging people to seek out the help others during times of stress.

P Play more music, more games, more sport. Have something fun to look forward to everyday. Remind yourself of the things that make you laugh until the tears run down your face. Laughing stimulates circulation and helps muscles to relax, both of which can help reduce some physical symptoms of stress.

Q Qigong is an ancient Chinese health practice

combining gentle, fluid stretching movements with mental concentration and breathing. People who regularly participate in qigong sessions report better sleep and psychological wellbeing once they started qigong.

R Relationship with line-manager. An uncommunicative, unsupportive and absent line-manager, without any training on stress management or mental health will cause high stress levels in employees. Line-managers have a huge influence on the overall mental health of their employees, as they are ultimately in control of important workplace factors, such as workload, salary, bonus, appraisal and the credibility of the employee within the organisation. Many line-managers lack the knowledge, self-awareness and behavioural skills to be good line-managers and support the health, wellbeing and work-life balance of their employees. If you are a line-manager, ensure you have an interest in helping your team manage their stress and explore positive communication styles to demonstrate support and empathy.

S Sleep disruption is a common sign of stress. Every person has their own list of stress symptoms, but this will usually include irritability, anxiety, low mood, poor concentration and poor sleep. There are likely to be physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems, itchy skin, throat infections, chest, neck or back pain and fatigue. We might think that a good night's sleep will help with all of these signs and symptoms – and of course it will, if only we could sleep.

Stress nearly always interrupts our sleep. The stress hormones cortisol and adrenalin elevate the energy in our nervous system causing us to be hyper-alert to threat and danger. Whilst this might be helpful at certain times during the day enabling us to respond quickly, sometimes this response continues throughout the evening and night – feeling wired but tired. We have all had those nights where we lie in bed trying to sleep, with racing thoughts and continuous loops of catastrophic ideas creating a hyper-anxious state at 3am.

By lowering our stress levels in the evening, before we attempt to sleep, we can influence our levels of arousal and hence improve the duration and quality of sleep. Sleep hygiene refers to both your sleep environment and your behaviour around sleep. Good sleep hygiene includes keeping your bedroom dark, cool (17-19 degrees) and silent, dimming your lamps before bedtime, turning off screens for at least an hour before you want to sleep, taking your phone out of your bedroom and using an alarm clock to wake up. Sleep needs to be prioritised as an essential part of your physical and mental health routine.

T Talking therapy is one of the best solutions for managing stress. An independent counsellor, therapist or psychologist can help you identify your thinking patterns that contribute to stress, and help you find strategies to begin to think differently. You won't be judged or labelled, and you will have space to talk confidentially about feelings and opinions that are causing you distress. It may take a few attempts to find the right person for you, but it is worth the effort to begin to feel calmer and more confident about managing difficult situations.

U Unwind. Stress can sometimes feel like a coiled spring, or like a fizzy drink bottle that's been shaken too much. As soon as the lid is released, everything overflows. Taking time to unwind our thoughts and feelings can help us gain perspective and feel calm. Unwinding can be done through sports, gardening, being in the gym, dancing, singing, meditation, having a bath, a shower, a sauna, in fact any activity that immerses the whole self. This enables our busy stressed brain, to go ‘off-line’ and recover. Daily unwinding helps us sleep better and be more present with ourselves and our loved ones.

V Verify information before exploding or panicking. When we feel stressed, our brain begins to imagine everything that happens to us is dangerous and frightening. The threat response is on overdrive causing an overreaction. If you are constantly overreacting, take a step-back, breathe deeply, check your environment, and verify the real threats in your environment, rather than the responding to the imagined threats.

W Water sports and cold-water swimming really do help to lower stress hormones by boosting the immune system and increase endorphins and serotonin.

X sex drive is affected during stressful periods. Stress can cause your sex drive to spike, or it may cause your sex drive to dip. Sex can provide a helpful distraction to stress, it can help you unwind, increase feelings of intimacy and security and therefore be part of healthy stress management. However, the high cortisol levels in chronic stress inhibits testosterone, which is responsible for the sex drive (libido). If this is the case for you, seek support for your stress with talking therapy and mindfulness.

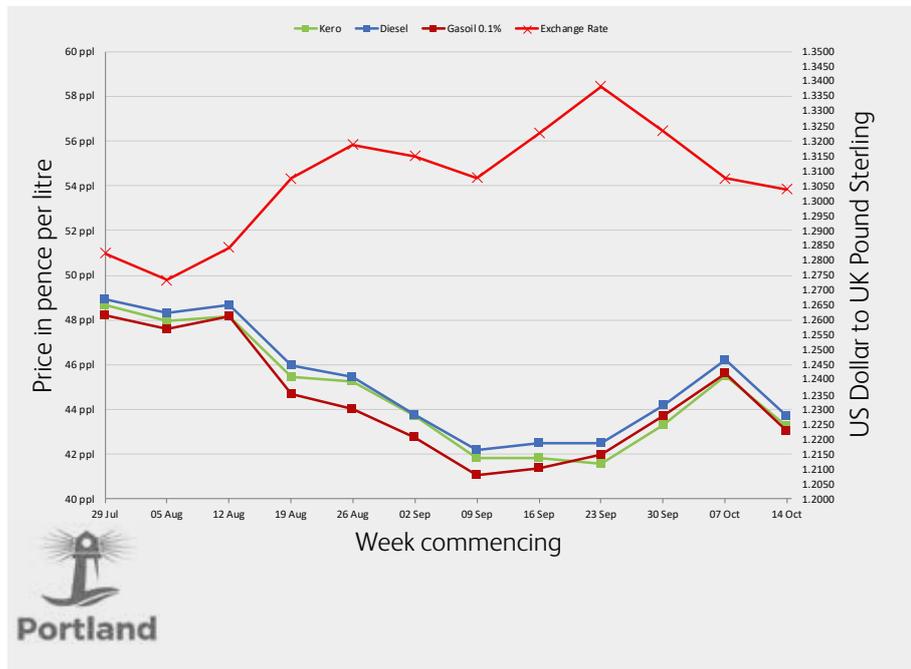
Y Yoga is for everybody, improves balance, stability and psychological calmness

Z Zest for life. Each day is a gift. Think of 3 things to be grateful for every day.

Wholesale Price Movements: 19th September 2024 – 18th October 2024

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	43.31	44.07	43.46
Average daily change	0.83	0.82	0.83
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	43.31	97.02	53.64

All prices in pence per litre



Highest price **46.76**
Mon 07 Oct 24

Biggest up day **+2.19**
Thu 03 Oct 24

Kerosene

Lowest price **41.08**
Fri 27 Sep 24

Biggest down day **-2.15**
Tue 15 Oct 24

Highest price **47.55**
Mon 07 Oct 24

Biggest up day **+1.99**
Thu 03 Oct 24

Diesel

Lowest price **41.97**
Fri 27 Sep 24

Biggest down day **-2.31**
Tue 15 Oct 24

Highest price **46.99**
Mon 07 Oct 24

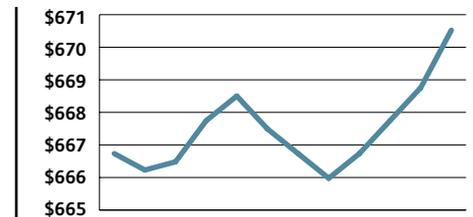
Biggest up day **+1.91**
Thu 03 Oct 24

Gasoil 0.1%

Lowest price **41.62**
Mon 23 Sep 24

Biggest down day **-2.30**
Tue 15 Oct 24

Gasoil forward price
in US\$ per tonne



November 2024 – October 2025

The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	47.40	58.47	102.25	54.04	62.47	106.25
North East	46.35	57.10	101.33	55.57	60.83	104.27
North West	47.92	59.70	103.72	54.30	63.19	106.35
Midlands	46.42	57.63	101.79	52.65	61.30	104.98
South East	46.52	57.59	101.77	59.37	63.99	104.54
South West	46.87	57.43	101.61	55.17	61.09	104.14
N. Ireland	46.98	58.80	n/a	53.11	63.30	n/a
Republic Of Ireland	60.74	64.23	103.19	66.40	68.03	106.46
Portland	44.73	55.15	98.48			

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

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

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

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

WELCOME TO NOVEMBER'S EDITION OF OUR SPECIAL MONTHLY FEATURE WHICH GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO 'MEET' AN INDUSTRY FIGURE AND, HOPEFULLY, TO DISCOVER ANOTHER SIDE TO THEM BEYOND THE WELL-KNOWN FACTS. THIS MONTH WE CHAT WITH **MARTYN LYONS**, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TR3 CONSULTING LTD, AN EXPERIENCED INDUSTRY LEADER AND INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT SPECIALISING IN BULK LIQUID STORAGE.



“BEFORE MAKING AN INVESTMENT, CONSIDER IF YOU WOULD DO IT IF YOU WERE USING YOUR OWN MONEY.”

MARTYN LYONS

Give your career history in 25 words or fewer.

Engineering Officer, British & Hong Kong Merchant Navy to 1988. 33 years with Inter Terminals in various management roles. MD from 2006. CEO from 2015 to end 2020. Now an independent consultant.

Describe yourself in 3 words.

Driven. Optimistic. Caring.

What were your childhood / early ambitions?

To join the Merchant Navy and sail the world.

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

Captain of a super yacht.

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

Work hard; have a defined strategy with clear objectives; strive to succeed; ensure you get a positive return on

investment. Recruit the best people and retain them.

Share your top tips for business success.

Always look after your people and your customers – without these you don't have a business. Create a team and empower them. Before making an investment, consider if you would do it if you were using your own money!

What's your most recent business achievement of note?

Being part of a team that landed a significant contract in the Middle East.

Tell us your greatest fear.

Climate change and its consequences

Which is most important – ambition or talent?

Ambition, because without it you cannot realise your talent.

What's the best thing about your job?

Being my own boss means that I can choose what to do!

Which is the quality that you most admire?

Trustworthiness.

What are you most likely to say?

I'm going sailing.

What are you least likely to say?

No sailing today.

Describe your perfect day.

Racing my boat in warm sunny weather with a good clear wind, and enjoying a meal and a drink afterwards.

Do you have a favourite sports team?

Newcastle United Football Club.

What's the biggest challenge of our time?

Conflict and Climate Change.

Cheese or chocolate?

Both!

Share your greatest personal achievement.

My wife and family, being CEO of Inter Terminals and achieving my goals as an independent consultant.

What's your pet hate or biggest irritant?

Failure to succeed!

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

Slow speed marine diesel engines.

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

A transparent and enforceable Code of Ethics for all politicians, that is regularly reviewed and tested.

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

You've aged!



What is number 1 on your bucket list?

Continuing to travel the world.

What 3 things would you take to a desert island?

My wife, my sailing boat and my mobile phone.

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

I first sailed completely around the world when I was 18.

Who would you most like to ask these questions of?

Ricky Gervais.



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