

# Fuel Oil News

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May 2025

## BREAKING BARRIERS. THE WOMEN DRIVING CHANGE

SELLING YOUR BUSINESS: A DISTRIBUTOR VIEW

FULL GUIDE TO UKIFDA SHOW 2025



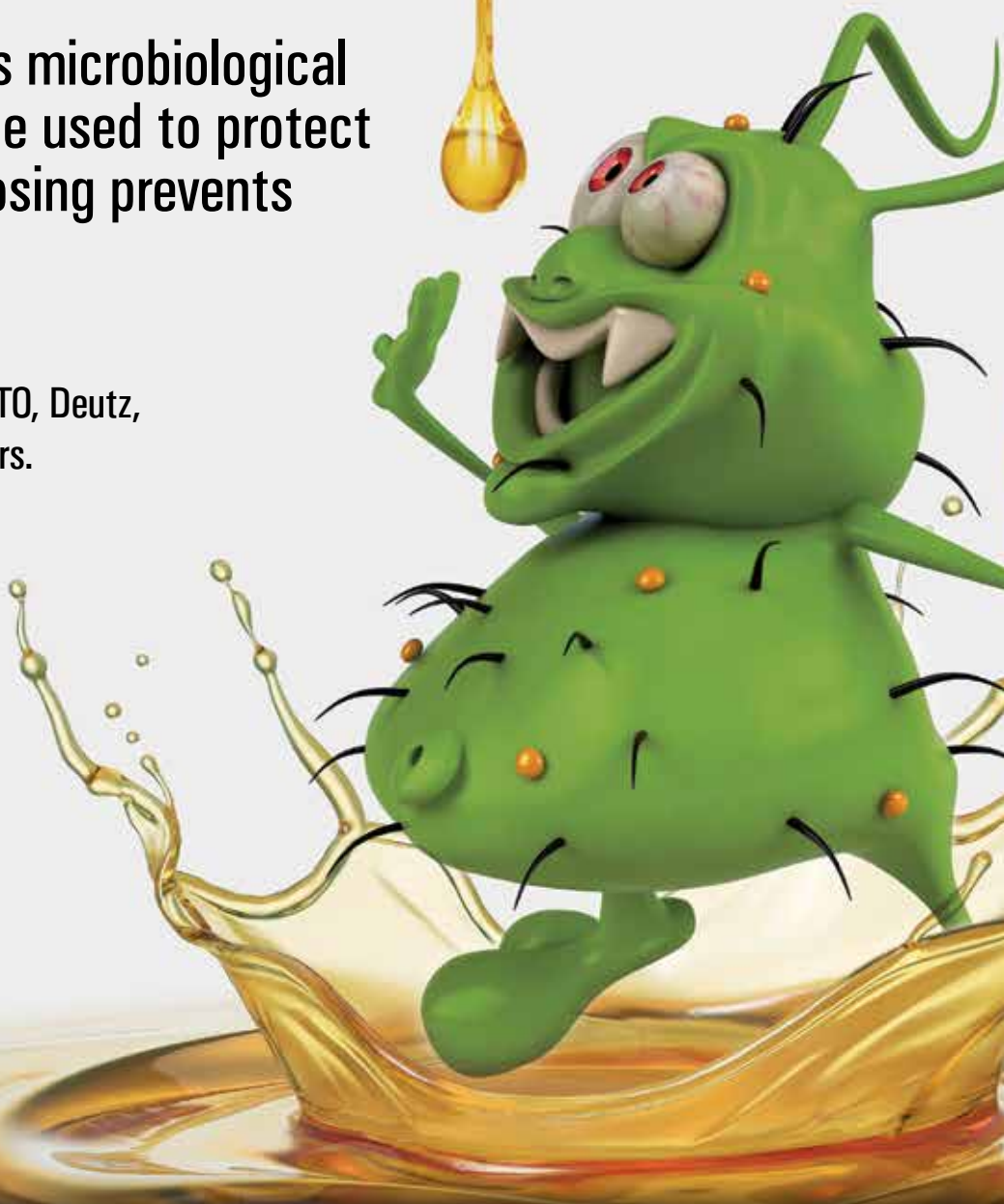


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As Mental Health Awareness Week (12th–18th May 2025) draws attention to the importance of community and connection, it's especially fitting that our industry comes together this month for the annual UKIFDA event.

Far more than just a trade show, it brings an opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, share experiences, address challenges, and remind ourselves of the strength, solidarity, and spirit of cooperation that define our industry.

Whether it's through organised networking, a conversation over a drink, or the shared celebration of those recognised with awards, these moments reaffirm the value of our mutually supportive and resilient community.

This year's theme, "Be Part of the Solution," invites reflection and action. On page 23, UKIFDA CEO Ken Cronin explores what this means for the industry, highlighting the essential role of communication and collaboration as well as sharing a powerful example of how working together drives real progress.

On page 12, we launch a new series exploring the industry's

decarbonisation journey. Starting with a look at where we currently stand, we will consider where we need to go, and – crucially – how we get there – together.

Having supported this community for nearly 50 years, we're committed to evolving with you, working together to shape the industry future. As we plan future content, we want to hear from you. Turn to page 33 to find a list of key topics relevant to day-to-day business operations. It only takes a couple of minutes to indicate what matters most to you – and your input will shape our future coverage.

Visit us at Stand 48 to drop off your completed survey and chat with the Fuel Oil News team – we would love to see you.

The whole is always greater than the sum of its parts and, together, we can drive a timely, just, and commercially viable transition.

Community is everything – see you in Leeds!



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

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## On the cover

Amber Geggus, Melissa Lancaster, and Laura Lewis of New Era Energy, a distributor dedicated to sustainable energy and empowerment. Read how they are leading with purpose and shaping industry future on pages 15-17.

## In this issue

Valuable insights await on pages 34 and 35, as a distributor shares their experience of selling their business. Then, on pages 37, 41, and 42, we delve into the impact of shifting pressures on government strategy – and what it means for the future of liquid fuel.

# Certas Energy tanker driver makes a very unexpected delivery

Something truly remarkable happened in April at the Gulf Wivelsfield fuel station when Certas Energy tanker driver Ed Donohue helped deliver a baby – right on the forecourt.

Ed was in the middle of a routine fuel delivery at the filling station when a car carrying expectant mother Amy Holmes and her partner Adam Davies pulled onto the forecourt. With something of a commotion going on, it soon became clear that Amy had gone into labour – 2 weeks early. Caught in traffic en route to the hospital, and with the birth imminent, Adam had no choice but to stop at the nearest available spot which was right where Ed happened to be working.

## A superhero in hi-vis

Ed recalls: "I was midway through the delivery when a car came right toward me and I heard shouting. At first, I thought it was a domestic, but then I realised they needed help."

Although the ambulance service was on the phone, there was confusion about



getting them to the couple. With no time to spare, Ed drew on the first aid training he'd received during his time in the army. What began as a routine delivery quickly became an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experience as Ed successfully helped deliver baby Solomon on the spot.

Thanks to Ed's ability to remain calm under pressure, both Amy and baby Solomon were soon safely on their way home, healthy and well.

## A delivery to remember

Certas Energy praised Ed's quick actions: "We're so proud to have everyday heroes like Ed on our team. Not all superheroes wear capes



– some drive fuel tankers!

"We're sending huge congratulations to Amy and Adam after a very special – and very unexpected – delivery at our forecourt," Certas added. "A healthy baby boy was born with the amazing support of staff and customers alike."

Baby Solomon entered the world at 8:46 am, weighing 7lbs 14oz – just five minutes after arriving at the station. His father Adam expressed heartfelt gratitude: "Ed was brilliant – by our side the whole time. He was a beacon of calm."

Reflecting on the moment, Ed said: "It's definitely the craziest thing I've seen on shift – and maybe in my 50 years. I don't feel I did anything special. I'm just glad I could help."




# TANKER LOADING EXPERTS

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# Waste to SAF innovator receives OBE for services to low carbon fuels

James Hygate, CEO of Firefly Green Fuels and Green Fuels Ltd. has been awarded the prestigious Order of the British Empire (OBE) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the development of low carbon fuels.

"The prestigious investiture ceremony took place on Tuesday, 1st April 2025, at Windsor Castle," shared Callum Stewart, Marketing and Communications Executive for Firefly Green Fuels. "James has long been a driving force in the green energy sector, leading the way for over 20 years in developing innovative sustainable fuel technologies aimed at reducing global carbon emissions."

## A leading figure in the green energy transition

Callum continued: "Initially focused on sustainable road fuels, James has evolved to become a leading figure in the aviation industry's green energy transition. His latest business has developed a way to make SAF (sustainable aviation fuel) from recycled sewage waste, a material currently spread on land in the UK.

"This remarkable British innovation offers significant environmental and economic benefits to the UK. It puts huge quantities of sewage waste into beneficial use whilst also providing an affordable, waste-derived fuel. An asset that will help the UK to meet its SAF



mandate without relying on imports.

Recently, the company announced plans for a commercial-scale facility in Harwich, Essex, to convert sewage biosolids into highly sustainable fuels. Expected to be in commercial operation by 2029, the centre would be the first of its kind anywhere in the world."

## Royalty, climate and sustainability

HM King Charles III has long been an advocate of the innovative work being done by Firefly Green Fuels and its sister company, Green Fuels. Visiting the company's labs in Gloucestershire a couple of years ago, he met the team and learned more about the technology.

"During the Royal visit the Firefly team were energised by how passionately His Majesty spoke about climate and sustainability," Callum

shares, "as well as the significant opportunity for the UK that can be derived from supporting and retaining, homegrown British sustainable innovators and innovations."

James expressed deep gratitude on receiving the honour: "I am incredibly humbled to receive this honour today. It is a reflection not just of my work, but of the tireless efforts of everyone I've worked with over the past 20 years.

"Together, we have pushed the boundaries of innovation and sustainability in the low carbon fuels sector. This achievement reflects all that hard work, and I am proud to work alongside such dedicated and passionate teams. I would like to thank my colleagues, partners, my family and all those who like me are dedicated to building a more sustainable future."

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## LCM further strengthens diversified portfolio

LCM Environmental is continuing its diversification journey and future-proofing its services, through a new strategic partnership with Orca Finance.

Orca is a finance provider, working with 95 different lending institutions, and the partnership enables LCM to offering flexible financing options, making clean energy solutions more accessible to businesses of all sizes.

By enabling commercial solar and EV financing for its clients, LCM aims to tackle high upfront costs – one of the key barriers to green technology adoption.

This move builds on LCM's 2024 expansion of its Clean Energy division through acquisition which expanded the company's services to include a broad spectrum from electrical compliance testing to full solar and EV infrastructure solutions. By incorporating the financing option, LCM intends to strengthen its ability to support clients through the energy transition, helping them to reduce energy costs and improve infrastructure efficiency.

Founded in 1987, LCM Environmental is a fuel, energy and infrastructure specialist business with a wide range of services that has



strategically diversified operations.

Transformed by organic growth and multiple strategic acquisitions of complementary companies, LCM has expanded its portfolio of renewable solutions to enable the forward-thinking business to futureproof clients' businesses.

After receiving scaleup support from Boost; Lancashire's Business Growth Hub, LCM acquired two further businesses – one of them specialising in solar and EV which facilitated LCM's expansion into the renewable energy market.

In August 2024, LCM announced its intention to "foster a greener future through cutting-edge

solutions and a broader service portfolio" and rebranded to create a single cohesive identity, saying: "LCM Environmental's rebrand signifies a commitment to four key pillars: unmatched reliability, sustainable innovation, expanded services, and global strength."

In 2024 LCM increased revenue from £10m to £15m, with the aim to double turnover in the next three years and is focussed on continued growth and workforce expansion.

Actively reducing reliance on its traditional fuel-related services and embedding sustainability into its core business, LCM is making a bold step toward long-term resilience and growth in the green energy market.

## Fuel Logistics Digitisation

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## Industry consolidation continues, driven by acquisitions and private equity

The UK fuel distribution landscape continues to change as major players scale up and investors look for growth opportunities

### A new chapter for Watson Fuels

One of the most significant developments in the UK fuel distribution sector this year comes with the acquisition of Watson Fuels by London-based private equity firm Inspirit Capital.

Watson Fuels, established in 1957, in rural Wiltshire, has grown into a leading national distributor, delivering 1.4 billion litres of fuel and lubricants annually.

"With the support of Inspirit Capital, we are well-positioned to drive future growth and innovation," commented Matt Whitton, CEO, Watson Fuels

The deal includes all operations under the Watson Fuels banner – from domestic heating oil and agricultural fuels to lubricants and fuel cards. Backed by Inspirit's institutional investor base, Watson Fuels plans to continue, uninterrupted, its legacy of personal and reliable service, while exploring innovations and capitalising on new opportunities presented by the rapidly evolving market.

### Standard Fuel Oils expands North with Solo Petroleum acquisition

Meanwhile, Liverpool-based Standard Fuel Oils Ltd, has continued its growth strategy by acquiring Solo Petroleum Ltd, a respected, family-run distributor headquartered in Pontefract, West Yorkshire.

The acquisition enhances Standard's operational footprint across Northern England, especially bridging the corridor from Liverpool



The image includes the New Watson Fuels Board of Directors and members of the Inspirit Team.

and Manchester to Immingham.

"This is a strategic step forward in our physical fuel supply in the North of England," said Nick Goodwin, Managing Director, Standard Fuel Oils

Solo Petroleum brings a suite of services including oil tank installations and boiler servicing, adding valuable capabilities to Standard's offering. Crucially, the transition includes the full retention of Solo staff, reinforcing Standard's commitment to a "seamless integration, with continued access to high-quality products and services".

### Momentum building across the sector

Standard Fuel Oils' latest move follows its November 2023 acquisition of River Marine Fuels, expanding its marine operations. With private equity now entering the market through the Watson-Inspirit deal, the sector is entering a new era of strategic investment and operational consolidation.

These latest moves come at a pivotal time for the UK and Ireland's fuel distribution industry, as traditional fuel distributors adapt to changing energy needs, supply chain dynamics, new technologies and the drive toward more sustainable fuel solutions.

In an evolving sector, these acquisitions

represent more than strategic business development – they are signs of an industry shaping a new future.

### What this means for the future

For customers, both commercial and domestic, these changes may usher in broader service offerings, more efficient logistics, and continued access to trusted providers under stronger, more agile structures. For our community, it reflects a challenging landscape, where scale, innovation, and financial backing are becoming essential for success – and survival.

Faced with complex questions around the future fuel outlook, evolving customer expectations, succession planning, and diversification, many distributors are weighing their next move. For some, a strategic sale is one potential path forward.

With many companies in the sector being long-standing, family-run operations, this decision often comes with a deep sense of responsibility – and no shortage of emotion. In this issue, on pages 34 and 35, we speak to a distributor who made that very choice two years ago, and hear firsthand what the journey has meant for their business, their legacy and themselves.

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**Daniel Brain** has been promoted to the role of Chief Operating Officer for **Watson Fuels** while **Shaun Galvin** has shared his own delight at taking up the role of

Chief Sales Officer (CSO) saying: "We have an incredibly exciting period ahead for our business with the support of our new owners Inspirit Capital. Thank you to our talented team and to our valued customers, we look forward to continuing to service your business in the future."

**Essar Energy Transition** appoints **Prashant Janaswamy** as new Chief Information Officer at EET Fuels

Prashant brings over 25 years of global experience and will lead the development and implementation of EET Fuels' digital transformation strategy.

Deepak Maheshwari, CEO, EET Fuels, said: "Prashant's appointment demonstrates our commitment to leveraging cutting-edge technology to drive our business forward."

His extensive experience and innovative approach will be invaluable as we continue to advance our digital transformation initiatives."

Prashant said: "I am excited to join EET Fuels and contribute to the Company's digital future. The Company's commitment to innovation and technology modernisation aligns perfectly with my passion for driving growth and efficiency through digital transformation."

**Daniel Webb** was appointed Head of Sales at **Prema Energy** in March of this year.

**Leigh Claridge** has joined **Certas Energy** as Head of Sales - Liquid Renewables.

**Lee Martin** has taken up a new position as Country Manager UK and Ireland at **Otodata Inc.** having experience in the industry from his time with NWF Fuels and Certas Energy.

**QM Recycled Energy (QMRE)**, the Kent based specialist operator of plastic waste-2-oil systems, has introduced its first new senior management position with the appointment of **Lauren Gingell** as company secretary.

## New leadership team for Lifecycle Oils

Used cooking oil collection, recycling and green fuel generation specialist, **Lifecycle Oils**, has appointed a new leadership team.

The move is in line with the company's ongoing investment, expansion and growth programme which aims to capitalise on the growing UK demand for biofuels.

**Adam Thompson**, formerly CFO, has been promoted to CEO, while Graeme McFaull becomes Non-Executive Chairman. Joining them are seasoned transport and recycling expert **Mark Mansfield**, who becomes Operations Director. Experienced oils and fats business development specialist, **Suzanne McKenzie**, has joined as the new Sales Director.

The appointments follow significant further investment.

Adam Thompson, the new CEO, explains: "We have ambitious plans to become a key player in the UK renewable energy market by transforming yesterday's cooking oil into tomorrow's green energy. Lifecycle Oils is perfectly positioned to meet growing domestic and international demand for greener biofuels and sustainable aviation fuels."

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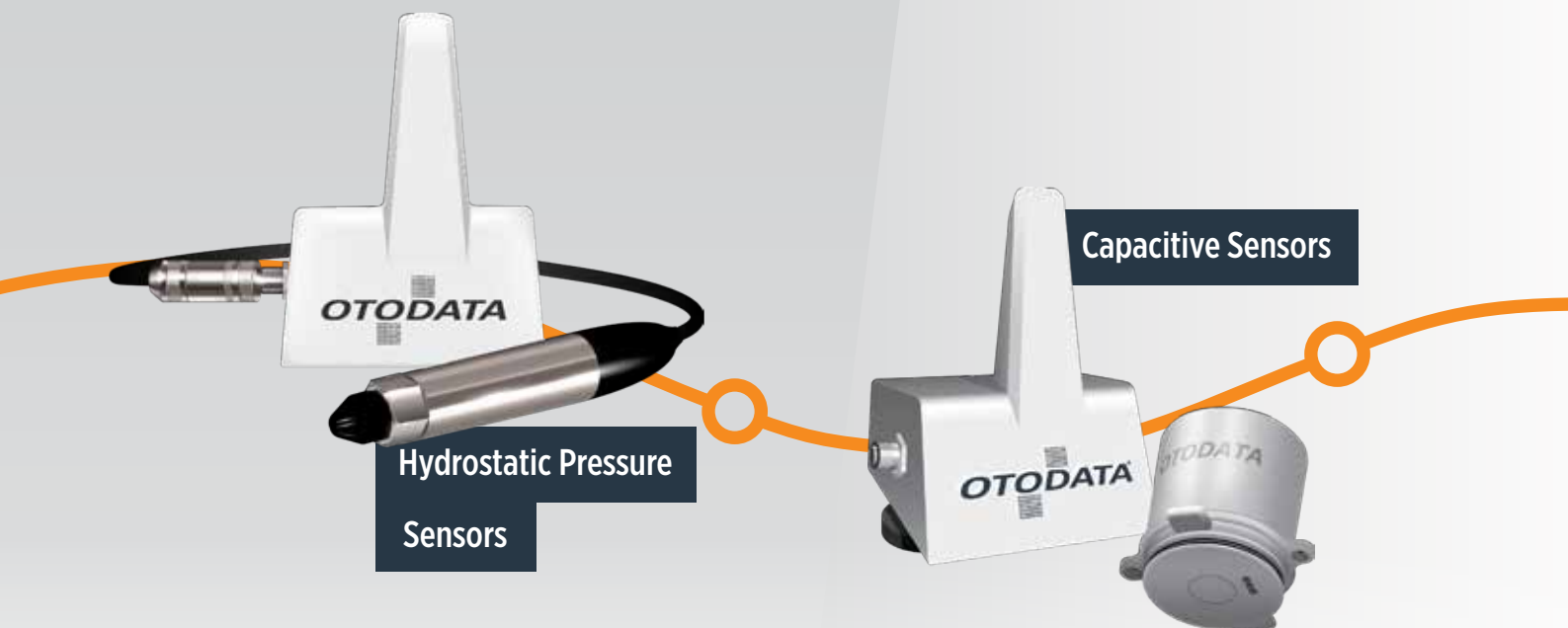
Greenflame, our renewable heating oil, is helping fuel distributors offer a sustainable solution to meet the growing demand for lower-carbon heating fuels. Greenflame provides an easy way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90%.

It can be used as a replacement for oil and dual fuel burners, with technical input available to support gas-only setups.

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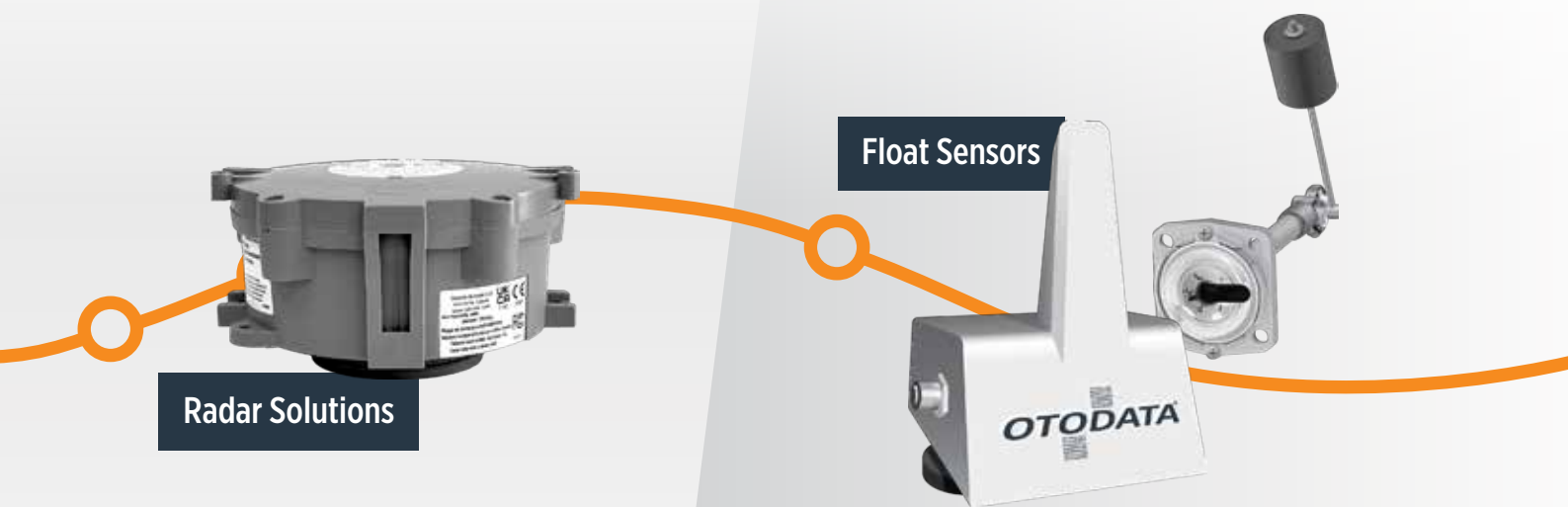
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### MechTronic Ltd: Emma Allinson clocking up the metres

Emma Allinson, Marketing Coordinator at **MechTronic Ltd**, the Leeds-based metering and gauging fuel delivery system experts, is taking on a new running challenge.

Emma explained more about her new team challenge and what she has planned: "Stepping out of my comfort zone has led me to something truly special.

"On the 4th of May, I'll be walking and singing the Race for Life 5k with Lucy's Pop Choir. Though I'm admittedly tone-deaf, the choir's focus on fun and inclusivity drew me in. It's been a joy meeting new people and singing every week.

"Previously I have completed the Great North Run and last year, I ran the York 10k, but this time, I'm taking a slower, more melodic approach, whilst raising funds for Cancer Research UK, a cause close to many hearts."

We'll let you know how Emma gets on in the June issue. Good luck to Emma for the race, if you would like to sponsor her then please visit: <https://bit.ly/4ipxDXK>



### Nolan Oils: Sponsors a motorcycle racing legend

**Nolan Oils**, the Oxfordshire-based distributor, is proud to be sponsoring Peter Hickman, an international motorcycle racer who competes in the British Superbike Championship and various major international road racing events, including the Northwest 200, Isle of Man TT, and the Macau Grand Prix.

Mark Nolan, Owner, said: "We are proud to say that Nolan Oils is Peter Hickman's longest standing sponsor. We have many great memories of the early days from club racing and BSB, making up sandwiches and other food for the garage mechanics with Mark Hatcher and Peter's parents, Dave and Sue.

"It's been amazing to follow Peter's career in road racing where he has had phenomenal success! He holds the outright lap record for the Isle of Man TT at 136.358 mph, which he set in 2023."

Fuel Oil News wishes Peter every success for the race season ahead.



### WCF Changers – Somewhere over the rainbow

**WCF Changers**, the Lincolnshire-based distributor, shared this wonderful image with us. Driver, Jamie, took this photo at the Grantham depot, bright and early one morning at the end of March.

Declan Searle, Fuels Marketing Executive, said: "Jamie is one of the most dedicated drivers at WCF Changers. He goes above and beyond for all the team here and all the customers too. We loved this photo he took of the Grantham depot."

If you have any fantastic images from life in the industry that you would like to share, then please send them to: [claudia@andpublishing.co.uk](mailto:claudia@andpublishing.co.uk)





## Climate Challenge: Drawing the line in the sand

THE INDUSTRY'S STARTING POINT IN THE DECARBONISATION JOURNEY

A year ago, we asked our industry a deceptively simple set of questions: How do you see climate change? What do you think of government policy? Are you getting the support you need? And, crucially, what role should this publication play in helping our community navigate the transition?

The answers were revealing. In partnership with UKIFDA, we captured both quantitative and qualitative insights from over 100 respondents, supported by in-depth interviews with six senior voices in the liquid fuel distribution sector. This is the first in a series of articles where we reflect on where the industry stood, where it is now, where it needs to go, and how we get there – together.

This first piece draws a line in the sand.

### The broad agenda? Agreed. The path? Not clear.

There was little dispute among respondents about the importance of addressing climate change. Most agreed it is a significant global threat and that transitioning to lower-carbon fuels is a “win-win” for the industry and planet alike. But this agreement was driven less by ideology and more by pragmatism.

As one interviewee put it: “I’m not doing it to save the world – I’m doing it because my customers need help.”

There’s a strong commercial realism in the industry, coupled with a deep understanding of the end user. The motivation isn’t moralising – it’s customer-focused and operational. Businesses feel loyalty to customers and

a responsibility to keep homes affordably warm and key operations running. They see the transition not just as an environmental imperative, but as a market shift that they must prepare for.

### Confidence in government? Deeply lacking.

The clearest – and most consistent – message from the survey was a deep lack of confidence in government leadership.

From inconsistent messaging on heat pumps to a narrow focus on electrification, policy was widely described as confusing, reactive, and blind to the potential for the continued role of liquid fuels. A lack of clear pathway was highlighted repeatedly with one respondent summarising: “They don’t describe at a deep enough level how to get there by 2050.”

Short-termism, lack of joined-up thinking, a lack of technology neutrality and absence of a complete portfolio of meaningful incentives (especially for low carbon home heating fuels such as HVO) were seen as core barriers. Businesses feel left to figure it out for themselves – with trade associations often regarded as more effective advocates than policymakers.

### The transition is happening – but it’s industry-led

Most respondents reported limited government support – but highlighted strong backing from within the sector itself. UKIFDA, along with the

wider fuel community, were praised for keeping future fuels on the agenda.

Yet many still feel stuck: hampered by unclear direction, weak market levers, and a lack of supportive infrastructure. Low carbon liquid fuels, for domestic settings in particular, are seen as overlooked by policymakers, despite being a major opportunity for decarbonisation.

What is clear is that many of the industry’s businesses are ready to transition. They just need the roadmap, clear legislation and the right reward structures to make it viable.

### What role for Fuel Oil News?

We asked what more Fuel Oil News could do – and the answers were humbling.

Our coverage was appreciated for reflecting “what’s really going on.” But some challenged us to go further: to step outside the echo chamber, to amplify demand-side voices, and to be a more forceful advocate for the industry in front of both policymakers and consumers.

Suggestions included:

- Telling more of the “story behind the struggle” around innovation, pricing, and policy.
- Sharing further insight for readers (and their customers) on solutions such as HVO, and the barriers to scaling them.

## Headline findings

### Confidence in government? Critically low.

95% of participants expressed low or no confidence in current government policy to deliver net zero.

Policy described as “short-termist, inconsistent, and overly focused on electrification.”

### Climate Change? Acknowledged – but pragmatically.

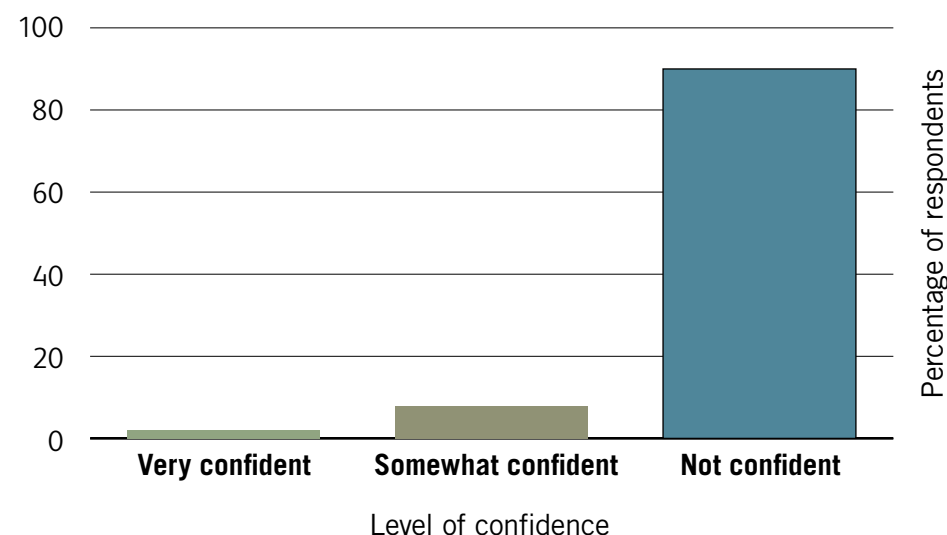
Majority agree it’s a significant global threat.

Motivations are commercial, not emotional: “I’m not doing it to save the world – I’m doing it because my customers need help.”

### Transition support? Comes from within.

Industry bodies like UKIFDA seen as far more supportive than government. Call for greater infrastructure, clearer incentives, and recognition of liquid fuels’ role.

### Confidence in government to achieve net zero targets



## Primary drivers for business action on climate



- Building a broader community coalition to amplify shared challenges.
- Making use of Fuel Oil News as a “voice of the sector” to advocate for a responsible and just transition.

We hear you. This article – and this series – is in response.

### This is where we start

The climate challenge is real. The transition is already happening. But, a year ago, our industry made it clear: we weren’t yet on a unified path.

This article marks the beginning of our effort to chart that path – together. Over the

## How the industry sees itself

### Top motivators for transition

Loyalty to customers  
Operational necessity  
Commercial viability

### Top barriers identified

Volatile policy landscape  
Lack of HVO incentives  
Absence of systemic thinking

### Top recommendations to Fuel Oil News

Tell real stories: success & struggle  
Educate on emerging fuels  
Expand beyond the “distributor echo chamber”

coming months, we’ll explore the technologies, policies, partnerships, and leadership models that could enable a just, commercially viable, and timely transition for our sector.

We know where we were. Let’s work out where we’re going and how we’re going to get there.



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## Prema Energy fuels future with major investment, new leadership, and brand refresh

For over a decade, Prema Energy has been a consistent physical supplier and blender of fuel oils. Proud to have become a staple in the alternative fuel oil sector, we are known for providing quality products that underpin the essential operations of businesses across the country. It's more than likely that the heating oils your clients rely on – either in part or entirety – have come through Prema Energy's established network.

### From a solid foundation: what's next?

Looking ahead to the next 10 years, we've renewed our focus, reaffirming our commitment to helping the UK switch to sustainable fuels.

We want to become one of the UK's leading providers of comprehensive sustainable fuel solutions and services. Demand is increasing, across all industries, for cleaner energy and environmental stewardship. That's why we've made the strategic decision to focus on expanding our portfolio of sustainable fuels for marine, road transportation, and machinery. This includes our 6% marine blends, high-quality HVO from secure feedstocks, and tailored alternative blends.

The first step to fulfilling this has been refreshing our brand. More than a simple cosmetic change, it's a clear statement of future intent. Partnering with The PMC, the green digital consultancy, our new branding communicates our sustainable aims and reflects the role we will play in supporting our clients' transition to cleaner fuels, providing pragmatic advice and support throughout.

### Long-term commitment

The improvements have been made possible thanks to substantial capital investments explains our Managing Director, Stephen Fletcher. These underline the strong belief in Prema Energy and our potential to impact on the UK energy evolution. Not only will this funding allow us to continue innovating, developing, and providing advanced sustainable fuel solutions tailored to the marine, road, machinery and heating sectors, but it will also propel us in our mission to become a market leader.

"At Prema Energy, we've made a long-term commitment to enabling the UK's sustainable energy transition. We aim to continue to support businesses by supplying the fuels and solutions they need to meet evolving environmental standards," Stephen explains. "This investment highlights the scale of our ambition and the confidence we have in our ability to deliver meaningful change in the sustainable fuels industry."

### Leaderships and partnerships

We've also bolstered our leadership team by appointing Dan Webb as our new Head of Sales. Bringing considerable experience and a proven track record in the energy industry, Dan's invaluable insight and client-focused approach will be integral to our growth. Under his guidance, our sales division will be empowered to forge new partnerships, expanding our market presence in key sectors.

"I'm thrilled to be joining at this crucial point in Prema Energy's journey," Dan says. "Its commitment to sustainability and clear roadmap will unlock significant opportunities to build strong



Dan Webb and Stephen Fletcher

relationships within the industry and beyond and will help shape the evolving energy sector."

Partnerships will be essential to the achievement of our ambitions. We value deeply our relationships with distributors, hauliers and clients, and their role in helping clients make a smooth transition to cleaner fuels.

We also prioritise collaboration in our wider services – assisting with the provision of fuel storage tanks, liaising with Distribution Network Operators over depot power requirements, and supporting our direct clients and their wider distribution networks with carbon accounting and accreditation.

By working closely together, we believe we can make the adoption of sustainable fuels seamless across the entire supply chain.

### A clear message to FON readers

Our message is clear: Prema Energy is perfectly positioned for continued growth in the sustainable fuels sector. We have a simple formula for success: a reputation for quality and reliability, significant investment, and experienced leadership. For us, it's not a question of adapting to the evolving energy landscape, we want to actively shape it.

If you're ready to explore the possibilities of alternative fuels for your business and distribution network, contact Dan Webb today to discover how we can make your transition as quick and easy as possible.

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# Breaking barriers and challenging the industry: the women driving change at New Era Energy



IN A TRADITIONALLY MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY, ONE COMPANY IS STANDING OUT – NOT JUST FOR WHAT IT DOES, BUT FOR WHO IT EMPOWERS. NEW ERA ENERGY, AN ESSEX-BASED FUEL DISTRIBUTOR, IS PROUDLY CHAMPIONING BOTH SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS AND GENDER INCLUSIVITY, WITH A NUMBER OF STRONG, INFLUENTIAL WOMEN AMONG ITS LEADERSHIP TEAM.

CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, MET WITH **AMBER GEGGUS**, DIRECTOR OF RENEWABLES, **MELISSA LANCASTER**, BRAND MANAGER, AND **LAURA LEWIS**, COMMERCIAL SALES MANAGER, TO HEAR ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AS WOMEN IN FUEL DISTRIBUTION AS WELL AS THE VITAL ROLE NEW ERA'S SUSTAINABILITY AMBITIONS PLAYED IN ATTRACTING THEM INTO THE SECTOR. AMBER, MELISSA AND LAURA ALSO SHARED WITH CLAUDIA THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE INDUSTRY'S FUTURE AND ITS APPROACH TO THE ENERGY TRANSITION.

## The women of New Era

At the heart of the business team at New Era Energy are Amber Geggus and Dixie Patel, the company's trailblazing female directors. Joined by Laura Lewis, Head of Sales; Vicky Finch, Head of HR; Rebecca Goorannah, Finance Lead; and Kellie Mann, Head of Finance Operation, all of whom are setting new standards for leadership in the fuel sector.

Melissa Lancaster, Brand Manager at New Era, credits the company's strong female

presence as a defining factor in her own career: "I would never have envisioned myself working in this industry if it weren't for the incredible women at New Era. Their expertise, innovation, and commitment to change are truly inspiring.

"New Era Energy's mission certainly extends beyond breaking gender barriers," Melissa continues, explaining more about New Era's philosophy. "It's also about leading the charge in sustainability. We were one of the first fuel distributors to distribute and

champion Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in the UK, a renewable fuel that can reduce carbon emissions by up to 90%. And, New Era Energy isn't just selling it, they are using it. The company has transitioned its own fleet to HVO and is actively encouraging clients to also make the switch."

"We practice what we preach," says Amber. "We won't settle until HVO is widely recognised as a leading clean fuel option by the public and the government."

## Giving drivers the power

Now, New Era Energy is taking things a step further by forming a partnership with Safe Planet Fuels to bring HVO to forecourts. Under the partnership, the Karan Newtoll Service Station in Wisbech has become the first independent service station in the region to offer HVO at the pump – marking a major milestone in the journey towards a more sustainable fuel future for the business.

Craig Childs, Director of Safe Planet Fuels, emphasises the significance of this move: “This isn’t just about providing a fuel alternative; it’s about changing the way people think about their carbon footprint. By making HVO widely available at independent forecourts, we’re giving drivers the power to make an immediate difference.”

James Hunt, CEO of New Era Energy, echoes this sentiment: “We are committed to driving change in the fuel industry. Partnering with Safe Planet Fuels allows us to make HVO more accessible to everyone, from commercial fleets to everyday motorists.”

## The New Era team

Claudia spoke further with Amber, Melissa and Laura to find out more about these exciting business developments and their experience of working in the industry.

Looking back to what originally attracted them into the industry Amber reflected: “What drew me to the fuel industry was the opportunity to be part of something with real-world impact, especially in the renewable fuels space.

“Before this, I spent eight years in sales but often found it difficult to feel connected to the products I was selling. That changed when I began working with sustainable fuels. Being passionate about what I’m selling has completely transformed how I approach my work. It’s not just a job anymore, it feels meaningful. This industry has been a big shift from my previous experience, it has aligned with my values and given me a renewed sense of purpose in my career.”

Laura similarly had no previous connection with the sector: “I started my career cold calling homes, selling solar panels to domestic customers, then went on to a sales role at Mercedes Benz. When the opportunity came up to work at New Era, I had no expectations (and knew nothing about fuel!) but an interview with James Hunt sold me the dream and I’ve been living it ever since!

“I am now the Commercial Sales Manager. I’m responsible for nine successful Account Managers and six hard working Administrators.



It’s my job to make sure the Commercial Team is buzzed up every day and working to full capacity.”

## An ambitious sustainability focus

“Before joining New Era, I was freelancing as a Creative Lead and Brand Designer,” Melissa shared, explaining her journey into the industry. “I was building a solid client base (within the Health and Beauty industry) while also working in London at Momentum Worldwide.

“Vicky Finch from New Era Energy’s HR team reached out after I had been sending out my CV. After three years of freelancing, I realise how much I value being part of a permanent team, having the chance to make a real impact on a business and being there to celebrate the wins. Freelance work can be unpredictable and while it’s rewarding, you don’t always get recognition at the end of a project.

“I’m now the Brand Manager at New Era, responsible for keeping the brand consistent across everything we do, from designing the look of our tankers to creating strong partnerships with customers and reinforcing the values that define New Era. A key part of my role is making sure our brand not only stands out but also aligns with our mission to become the greenest fuel company in the UK.

“What really attracted me to New Era was its sustainability focus and ambition to become the greenest fuel company. That vision stood out to me, and I was intrigued by the challenge of getting this story out there. The fuel industry

is a completely new space for me, but that’s what excited me about it.

“It’s fast-moving, evolving and has a real-world impact. While my background is in creative industries, the core skill, strategic thinking, problem-solving and brand storytelling, are just as relevant here. The opportunity to bring fresh ideas to a traditionally less creative sector while supporting a company making real sustainability strides was something I couldn’t pass up.”

## Gender diversity in the industry

In common with many industrial sectors, the downstream fuel industry has traditionally been a male dominated space. Claudia was keen to hear more about the experience of gender diversity within New Era and the broader industry.

Melissa began: “At first, I was a little daunted by the fuel industry, not because it’s male-dominated, but because of the sheer amount of knowledge within the team. The male directors and transport team weren’t intimidating because of their gender, but because their expertise was so extensive. I remember thinking, “How am I ever going to learn all of this?” But from day one, they’ve been generous with their time, open to fresh ideas.

“I’ve been lucky to shape my role creatively and the focus on sustainability and real-world impact made stepping into this industry feel natural. Many women connect

with protecting mother nature and driving change, but fuel also powers healthcare, innovation, and human connection.

“New Era helps keep hospitals running and communities thriving. If the industry highlights its role in sustainability and essential services, more women will see the value in joining.

“The industry is male dominated, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t space for women to lead, innovate and make a real impact. And at New Era, I see that happening every day.

“New Era is hiring more women than ever, and it’s great to see women of all ages contributing to the company. It’s one of the best workplaces I’ve been in because there’s no discrimination, no ageism or sexism. People of all generations work side by side and make an impact.

“Colleagues can support women in this industry by encouraging women to ask for what they deserve. Women don’t always ask for what they deserve, I am guilty of this even now. It’s about changing the narrative, acknowledging our efforts without waiting for us to push for recognition.”

### A culture that values women’s input

“It can be quite intimidating coming into this industry as a woman,” Laura noted. “I think it has given me a thicker skin but also allowed me to learn to view business in a unique way. Being taught by strong minded, driven, and successful businessmen has made me realise it’s not always about gender, it’s all about mind set. It would be great to see more women managing and directing in this sector – I think it would help attract even more women into the industry.”

Amber gave some expert advice for women joining the industry: “You don’t need to know everything to start. Just start. You’ll learn, adapt, and grow as you go. And your fresh perspective might be exactly what the industry needs. Be yourself and be present. Don’t let the traditional reputation of the industry intimidate you, there’s more space than ever for fresh thinking and new voices.

“Bring your energy, your ideas, and your perspective, they’re needed. (Women get sh\*t done!) Be curious, ask questions, and most importantly, don’t be afraid to take up space.”

Melissa also added advice for women entering the industry: “My advice would be to stay confident and trust in your abilities, but don’t be afraid to ask questions or seek more information when you need it.

Keep communication open, embrace challenges. The more you learn and stay curious, the more you’ll grow.”



### Sustainability

Claudia asked for Amber and Melissa’s thoughts on the industry’s current actions and thinking on sustainability and whether they believe it can make a big difference?

Amber responded, “To be brutally honest, I do not think businesses in the industry are doing enough. As an industry, there’s a lot of talk about sustainability, but not enough action.

“Too many businesses say they want to look into greener options but then put it off or wait for a “perfect” solution that is the same price or cheaper than the current option which in reality isn’t possible. We all know you must pay more for a premium and better product.

“We need to start making changes today, not tomorrow, not next year. HVO is a ready-to-go, practical option that businesses can adopt instantly. It requires no modifications to your current fleet or equipment, it’s fully OEM-approved, and you can phase it in gradually if preferred (one tanker, one depot, one region). It’s not the final answer for 2050, but it’s the best transitional fuel available right now with the lowest barrier to entry and a minimal cost increase.”

### Make a difference, be accountable

“We all have decarbonisation goals,” Amber continued. “And we simply can’t afford to bury our heads in the sand. Yes, electric, hydrogen, solar, and LNG all have their place in the long-term energy mix. But for many sectors, diesel is still the reality, and HVO is the most effective drop-in replacement available today.

“If we truly want to make a difference, we all need to take action and be accountable.”

“The industry is making real progress in sustainability,” added Melissa. “However, awareness of HVO still needs to grow. That’s why I’m always spreading the word. I’m

personally excited about the energy transition. It offers huge potential for sustainable change and I’m proud to be part of it.

“Customers are becoming more conscious of their environmental impact too and are increasingly looking for sustainable alternatives. There’s growing demand for cleaner energy solutions.

“At New Era, we run our fleet on HVO, showing our commitment to real change. More projects are adopting it, and now it’s about driving awareness further to keep the industry moving forward. New Era Energy is focused on one thing, becoming the greenest fuel company in the UK. Growth and acquisitions might come, but everything we do is driven by that vision.”

### The best business advice

Claudia asked for their best business advice:

**Laura:** “It has to be some famous words from James Hunt, our CEO – “It’s a numbers game!”

**Melissa:** “Stay curious and never stop learning,” is a great way to live. As humans, we naturally love to learn and that’s what makes life interesting and worth living. For me, being creative is all about that constant curiosity. I also have an identical twin, and I’m still fascinated every day by how we’re so similar, yet so different. It’s amazing and it just reminds me that there’s always something new to discover.

**Amber:** “Mine is a Richard Branson quote – If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it later!”

For New Era Energy, this is just the beginning. With a team of strong, capable women at the helm, steering the company forward, it’s not only setting a new standard for gender diversity in the sector – it’s also driving momentum toward a cleaner, greener future.



# ESL Fuels Biofuel Market Update – Q1 2025

IN ASSOCIATION WITH PORTLAND ANALYTICS



## Feedstocks

Following a strong rally in the final quarter of 2024, Northwest European (NWE) UCO prices continued to strengthen across Q1, rising 10% to reach a two-year high of \$1140/mt (78 ppl) by the end of March, driven by supply constraints.

Indonesia, one of the key exporters of UCO to Europe, halted exports following reports that showed export levels had surpassed production capacity, leading to concerns that exported product may contain mislabelled crude palm oil. January customs data showed a 36% drop in Indonesian UCO exports versus December.

EU anti-dumping tariffs on Chinese UCO were published in the Official Journal of the European Union, listing tariffs of between 10% and 36.4%, expected to last five years, while the US similarly introduced an initial 10% blanket tariff on all Chinese exports.

## Biodiesel

Biodiesel markets also trended upwards during Q1, supported by demand following an increase in European biofuel obligations under the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) for 2025. The third iteration of RED (RED III), which raises the target share of renewable energy used in transport sectors to 29% (vs 14% in RED II), is set to be enforced from 21st May 2025.

A general increase in obligations has been exacerbated by decisions from the German and Dutch governments to amend compliance rollover under their national biofuels policies in response to a collapse in certificate pricing following a biodiesel surplus in recent years, due to oversupply of Chinese feedstock.

The Netherlands has reduced its permitted level of rollover from 25% to 10%, whilst in Germany the rollover has been suspended entirely for two years, effectively resetting compliance levels and creating a fresh blending requirement which has driven biodiesel demand.

## FAME-10 and UCOME

FAME-10 prices, whilst not quite reaching levels seen in November of last year which spiked due to a 'perfect storm' of supply outages and demand spikes, saw a steep incline throughout

## Wholesale NWE Prices (\$ per Metric Tonne)



Q1, reaching a high of \$1,330/mt (90 ppl) on 20th March after climbing more than \$100/mt (7 ppl) w/c 17th March alone, due to an increase in feedstock prices (notably rapeseed, which makes up c. 90% of the content of FAME-10) and a slow-down in production as a result of tight margins.

The UCOME market followed a similar trajectory, however the differential between UCOME and FAME-10 widened towards the end of the quarter, as blenders look to move towards summer specification biodiesel, enabling them to blend a higher content of UCOME (preferred due to double-counting under RED), which is limited in winter due to the poorer cold weather performance of UCOME in comparison to FAME-10. UCOME closed Q1 at \$1530/mt (105 ppl), up from a January low of \$1350/mt (95 ppl).

## Market Outlook

Looking ahead, the key factor expected to affect biodiesel prices will be demand. As suppliers will look to take advantage of warmer weather to increase UCOME blending and meet rising compliance levels, there will also be increased competition for UCO feedstock from other sectors, with higher 2025 targets in aviation (ReFuel EU) and maritime (FuelEU Maritime).

However, tariffs imposed by the US, particularly on imports of UCO from China, could offset this expected demand increase. Despite the EU enforcing its own measures on Chinese UCO, further US tariffs would see product flow back to Europe, increasing supply and easing prices.

Exchange rates will also play a part, as oil and refined products are traded globally in USD. GBP gained 6 cents on USD during Q1, reducing the cost of biodiesel supplied to the UK. The performance of USD as the world reacts to a shake-up in global trade will be another price factor, determining the buying power of UK biodiesel suppliers.

## HVO

At the start of Q1, the majority of HVO supply in the UK originated from the USA. However, policy uncertainty following the US election, particularly regarding the future of the Biodiesel Tax Credit (BTC), along with proposed tariff increases on key feedstocks, has reduced the pricing arbitrage between the US and Europe.

NWE prices of HVO produced from UCO, the most common grade of HVO used in the UK, rose sharply mid-January to reach a quarter high of \$1965/mt (125 ppl), before falling by more than \$310/mt (23 ppl) over the following

six-week period to a Q1 low of \$1655 mt (102 ppl). By the end of Q1, HVO (UCO) had reversed some of its losses to trade at \$1840/mt (111 ppl), however, demand sentiment remained weak.

UK market HVO prices are affected by the value of Renewable Transport Fuel Certificates (RTFCs) – as HVO from UCO qualifies for double-counting under RED, two RTFCs are generated for every litre of HVO supplied to the UK, the value of which is netted off the cost of HVO. Accounting for RTFC benefit, wholesale UK HVO prices fell from a mid-January high of 78 ppl (excl. duty and supply costs) to a six-month low of 49 ppl by the end of February, as higher RTFC prices coincided with the fall in wholesale costs.

Prices recovered as the wholesale market climbed \$140/mt (7 ppl) in March, however this was tempered by two-year high RTFC prices, with UK HVO prices at 58ppl by the end of Q1.

### Certificates

Waste-based RTFCs for the 2025 compliance period started Q1 at 23.90 ppc before rising to 26.30 ppc by the start of February, marking the highest price of RTFCs since mid-March 2023.

Waste RTFC prices reflect the cost of meeting the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) through blending a variety of biofuels produced from waste feedstock, including UCOME and HVO – the rally in UCOME prices following the Indonesian ban on UCO exports drove this early increase due to resultant higher blending costs.

Lower HVO prices caused RTFCs to drop by around 1.00 ppc in February, with the US renewable diesel market (a key source of exports to the UK) reportedly significantly oversupplied, before prices recovered back to multi-year highs of 26.50 ppc by the end of Q1 as increases on bio outstripped diesel gains.

### HVO vs ULSD (UK Pence per Litre [PPL])



### RTFC and Replacement Prices (UK Pence per Certificate [PPC])



## News and Policy

The EU will vote on whether to suspend automatic acceptance of International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC) Proof of Sustainability (PoS) certificates for a period of two and a half years. This comes in response to complaints that the organisation has not done enough to address fraudulent activity within supply chains. Under the proposal, EU member states would be allowed to decide individually whether to accept these certificates, bringing the EU's approach closer to the UK's (as per latest RTFO guidance from the Department for Transport). Without assurance that sustainability scheme certificates will be accepted by government authorities, significant risk is introduced for suppliers of biofuels, as it is often not feasible to audit supply chains directly due to factors such as commercial sensitivities, limited resources, and time constraints.

The UK's Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) has launched an investigation into US HVO supplied to the UK, following concerns that export prices are below market value, potentially undermining the domestic biodiesel market. EU anti-dumping levies on US product were lifted in the UK in 2022 following Brexit, which led to a significant increase in US imports. The investigation is another factor in the UK market shifting back to European HVO.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Claire Foster

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 **CLAIRE FOSTER**, BIOFUELS ORIGINATOR AT MABANAFT, TO DISCOVER HOW CLAIRE SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY..



Claire explained a little about her background: “I’m originally from Houston, Texas. I started working in renewables about five years ago. I spent time in business development and origination efforts at Philips 66 before moving to a renewable infrastructure firm. About a year ago, I joined Mabanaft, and it’s been great, I love living in London!”

## MY MORNING ROUTINE...

I’m usually up between 5:30-6:00am. I’ve always been an early riser. Since a lot of my team is based in Germany, starting early helps me stay in sync with them.

First thing, I will check my phone for emails and the weather, and if I’ve been organised enough to book a workout, I try to squeeze one in. It makes me feel like I’ve accomplished something before the workday starts.

## I CAN’T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT...

My phone, without a doubt. I actually carry two – one for work and one personal. I’ve definitely turned around mid-commute to go back and grab it before!

My AirPods are also a must – I love listening to music or a good podcast on my way to work.

I go through phases with podcasts, but one I always come back to is Normal Gossip. It’s just everyday people submitting wild, anonymous stories, and a journalist re-tells them to a guest – it’s hilarious and a great way to unwind.

## MY TYPICAL DAY...

No two days are ever the same! I start by catching up on market reports to keep an eye on trends, legislative updates, and competitor activity.

My job involves a lot of efforts around HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil). I support our sales teams with renewable fuels, help build internal knowledge on HVO and other materials, explore potential new markets, and (try to) stay informed of legislative trends or changes.

I also work with our Power, Gas, and Emissions team on carbon offset fuel and emissions tracking customer offerings, as well as managing lighthouse projects like our partnership with Lechner Racing on ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) topics.

A big part of my day involves working with different teams – sales, trading, logistics, aviation, sustainability – to make sure we’re aligned. A lot of my role is about balancing immediate priorities with the bigger picture.

## MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENTS...

Our partnership with Lechner Racing has been a big highlight. In January, I visited their HQ in Austria with our SVP Sales & Marketing and CEO, where we saw their operations up close, discussed carbon abatement efforts, and mapped out future ESG goals. Seeing the real-world impact of our work was amazing.

## THE HARDEST PART OF THE JOB...

Managing my time effectively. Because I work across different teams







and markets, it's easy to get pulled in a lot of directions. I'm always trying to make sure I prioritise what will have the biggest impact.

#### I RELAX AFTER WORK BY...

On my commute home, I'll put on some music or a podcast. Once I'm back, I try to do something small to mark the end of the workday – whether that's cooking a nice meal, having a social engagement or going for a short walk.

Although I like the flexibility of hybrid work, I tend to prefer coming into the office – having that physical separation makes it easier for me to switch off at the end of the day.

#### MY FAVOURITE MEAL...

Um, oh...that is tough! I am a big foodie. I have more cookbooks than any other form of books! I have five just dedicated to wine.

If I had to cook breakfast, lunch or dinner from one cookbook then it might well be from my Parisian picnic cookbook – though their idea of a 'picnic' is more like a five-course meal, so perhaps not realistic!

I'd probably most likely cook something from my veggie cookbook. That one has the most sticky notes in it. When I was trying out a plant-based diet a few years back, it made everything taste so good that I didn't even miss the meat.

#### ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE IS...

A cup of tea or water, my five-minute journal, and whatever book I'm currently reading.

I also have a small compass from a childhood visit to the Old Royal Naval College with my dad – it's a keepsake that's stayed with me over the years.

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

I write in my five-minute journal to reflect on the day – what went well, what I learned – before setting my alarm. It helps me stay grounded and keep perspective.

If there's time, I'll read a few pages of my book to unwind, which is a nice way to signal the end of the day.

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

I try to be in bed between 9:30-10:00pm, and asleep before 10:30pm, but I don't always succeed. I was good about it last night, but if a show I love drops multiple episodes, I can't just watch one. I mean, that's practically a waste of a subscription, right?

But if I don't stick to my routine, I get cranky, so I do my best!



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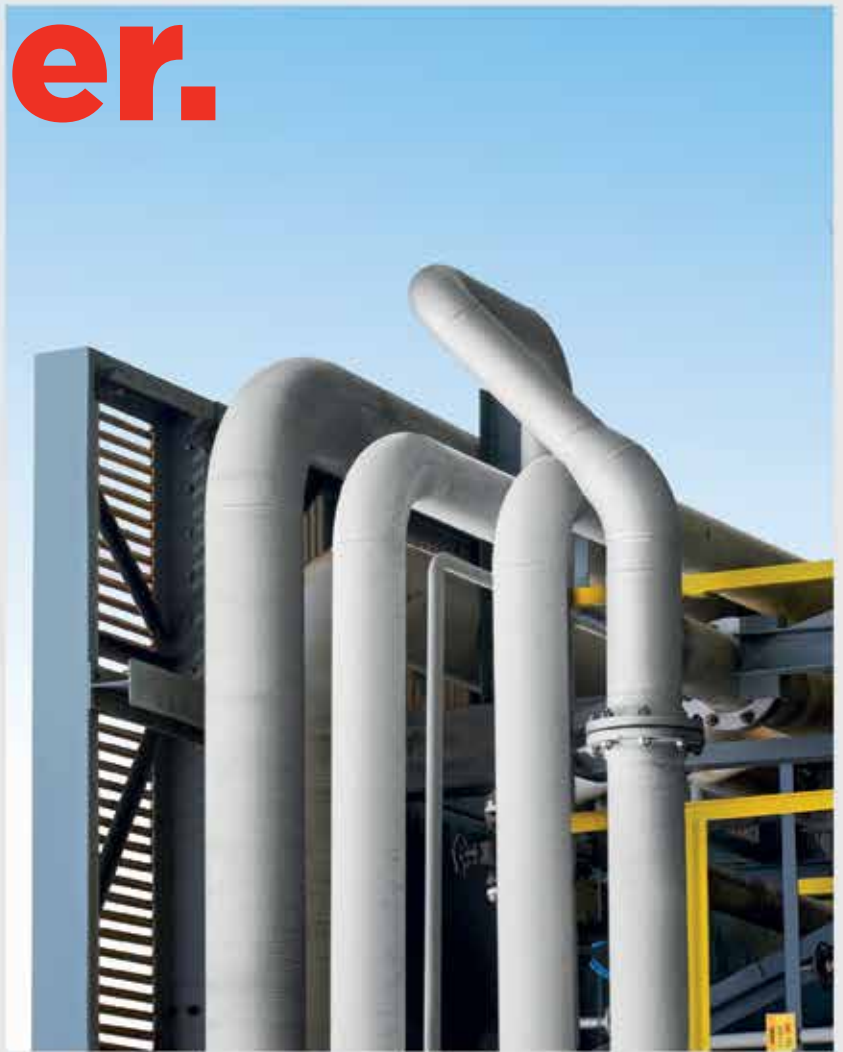
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PROVIDING ENERGY.  
IMPROVING LIVES.



## What does 'be part of the solution' mean?

**As I sit here a few days after the announcement of U.S. tariffs on the world, I can't help but think that whatever I write for the UKIFDA Show Guide edition of Fuel Oil News will likely be hopelessly out of date by the time of publication.**

I would like to apologise to James Spencer of Portland Fuel for the title I suggested for his UKIFDA Show 2025 conference presentation—"The Impact of Donald Trump on the Market." I suspect that the title will require a few revisions before May 14th.

When we came up with the slogan for our show and conference, it was intentionally framed to have multiple meanings and resonate differently with different people.

However, for me, what it isn't is an acknowledgement that we were part of the problem.

### **Allow me to digress slightly.**

A good number of years ago, I participated in a consumer study that examined attitudes toward energy, including its sources and the prices people were willing to pay.

During one of the focus groups, an elderly man, clearly frustrated with the conversation's direction, said to the group, "You just don't get it – I used to have to carry energy into our home." This statement was met with silence and frowns. He was referring to coal, highlighting how we've lost sight of the fundamental understanding of how energy is delivered, with many consumers interacting with energy only through direct debits and emails.

I began my career working for one of the large utilities during the summer months. My principal role was to ensure that as many meters as possible were read on time—a challenging task in a large city like London, where many people were out at work during the day. This experience taught me the value of customer interaction. A meter reader going into people's homes was essential for the company, as they could answer questions, check for vulnerabilities, and serve as an ambassador for the company.

Fast forward 38 years, and I recently spent a few days in London meeting various politicians and civil servants, including the energy minister responsible for clean heat. I found myself alongside representatives from across the energy sector to discuss decarbonising rural heating. It struck me that our sector is now one of the few that still interacts with customers face-to-face and is among the last to deliver energy directly to their homes. More importantly, our customers can see the energy they use and are acutely aware of its costs.

I couldn't help myself – I felt compelled to share this perspective with the minister, emphasising how crucial it is for policymakers to consider this direct customer interaction.

A few days later, I returned home to find the April edition of Fuel Oil News awaiting me. It featured an article about our customers' opinions on our industry and government policy, concluding with the sentence at the end of the article saying: "Understanding customer preferences and demands will be core to the industry as it moves forward through the energy transition."

Looking back at that meeting, it is clear that our understanding and knowledge of what our customers want was far superior to the others present, who, sadly, now interact primarily through smart meters. This



observation is not a criticism but rather a reality check.

So, being part of the solution starts with effectively communicating our customers' needs and wants to policymakers. This is a unique advantage we possess.

A recent example from Scotland illustrates this point well. In announcing the government's new strategic direction on heat in buildings, the minister acknowledged several factors, including a severe cost-of-living crisis, stating that it would be unaffordable for many property owners – particularly those in rural and island areas – to implement significant changes in the near future.

Consequently, the Government proposed a technology-neutral approach, recognising that different properties and people will require different solutions, clearly stating that clean heating solutions in some remote and rural areas may vary from those in urban settings, including the use of bioenergy.

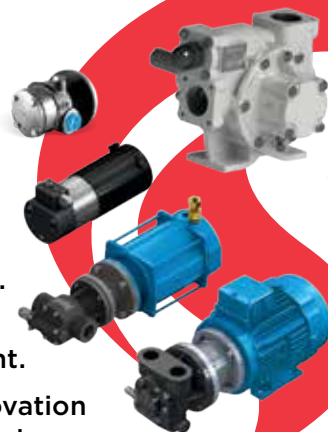
It's not often that I say this, but I commend the Government for listening to the industry and everyone involved in working with UKIFDA to achieve this outcome. This is, by far, the clearest demonstration of being part of the solution.

I hope you enjoy being part of the UKIFDA Show 2025!



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## UKIFDA SHOW 2025

BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE LIQUID FUEL DISTRIBUTOR SECTOR



**14 MAY 2025**  
FIRST DIRECT ARENA | LEEDS

Be Part Of  
The Solution



UKIFDA Show 2025 is set to be the leading trade gathering in the liquid fuel distribution sector in 2025.

Themed 'Be Part of the Solution,' the event aims to shape the industry's future and is expected to draw industry experts, national companies, independent distributorships and other stakeholders under one roof.

We look forward to seeing you there!

If you have not yet registered for this unmissable liquid fuel distribution sector gathering, please scan the QR code or contact Dawn Shakespeare: [ds@ukifda.org](mailto:ds@ukifda.org)

### AGENDA

#### Wed, May 14, 2025

9:30 AM - 5:00 PM	<b>UKIFDA SHOW 2025 OPENS</b> Location: First Direct Arena
10:30 AM - 3:00 PM	<b>SPEAKERS' CORNER OPENS</b> <b>Keynote Introduction</b> 10:30 AM - 10:40 AM Speaker: Geoff Henderson <b>Debate: The Future of Liquid Fuels across the Nations</b> 10:40 AM - 11:30 AM Speakers: Ken Cronin, Philip Hannon, John Weedon, Carys Jones, David Blevings, Stephen Rhodes <b>Customer Service Award: Sponsored by Worldpay</b> 11:30 AM - 11:40 AM Location: Speakers Corner <b>The Impact of Donald Trump on the Markets</b> 11:45 AM - 12:15 PM Speaker: James Spencer <b>Young Person of the Year Award: Sponsored by Just Tankers</b> 12:15 PM - 12:25 PM <b>LIVE PODCAST: "Be Part Of The Solution"</b> 12:30 PM - 1:15 PM Speaker: Alex Wolfe <b>Tax, Regulation &amp; Policy</b> 2:00 PM - 2:45 PM Speakers: Amy Lingard-Smith, Neil Mills, Tim Simon, Simon Lawford, Ken Cronin <b>Green Award: Sponsored by Oilshield</b> 2:45 PM - 3:00 PM Location: The Black & White Lounge
4:00 PM	<b>Fuel Oil News: Tanker of the Year Award</b> Location: Speakers' Corner
5:00 PM	<b>UKIFDA SHOW CLOSES</b>
6:30 PM - 7:30 PM	<b>PRESIDENT'S DRINKS RECEPTION</b> Location: The Foyer - First Direct Arena
7:30 PM - 11:55 PM	<b>THE UKIFDA GATHERING</b> Location: Black & White Lounge <b>Driver of the Year Award: Sponsored by OAMPS</b> 8:00 PM - 8:10 PM <b>Depot of the Year Award: Sponsored by Pen Underwriting</b> 8:45 PM - 8:55 PM <b>Innovation Award: Sponsored by Fuel Oil News</b> 9:20 PM - 9:25 PM <b>Fun Casino Opens</b> 9:30 PM - 11:55 PM

### 2025 Event sponsors

UKIFDA thanks all the sponsors of this year's event for their invaluable support.

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Phillips 66 returns as the event's main sponsor, ensuring a high calibre gathering of industry professionals.

#### Outside space sponsor



#### Café area sponsor



#### President's drinks reception sponsor



#### Awards sponsors



#### Evening Gathering Sponsor





## UKIFDA EXPO Exhibitor guide

Company Name*	Booth Number
Adler & Allan	34
Ajak Energy	30
Ajax Solutions Ltd/MCD	18
Alfons Haar	32
Alpeco	6
Auto Sock & Snow Chains	19
Boilerjuice	29
CDS	28
Celstia TST	50
Close Brothers Vehicle Hire	40
Collins Youldon	25
Dreamtec	9
DTN	43
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Emco Wheaton	10
Exolum	13
FAST	12
Fox Insights	3
Fuel Oil News	48
FuelSoft	21
Harlequin MFG LTD	51
Harvest Energy	46
Hazchem Safety	37
Hytek (GB)	7
IFC inflow	24
Integer Micro Systems	47
Intertek	27
Just Tankers	4
Just Tankers Spares	5

# UKIFDA Show 2025



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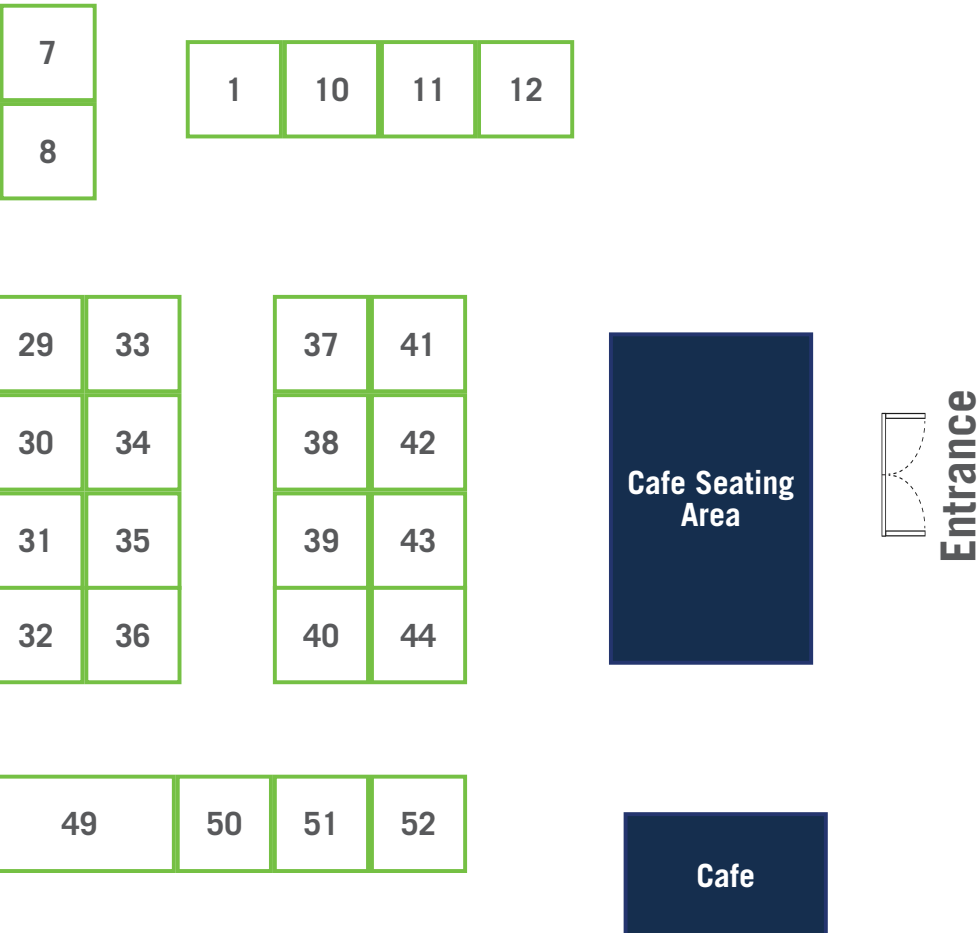
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# Floorplan



## UKIFDA EXPO Exhibitor guide

Company Name*	Booth Number
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Magnus Monitors	15
Mechtronic	41
Meller Flow Trans	33
Mitchell & Webber Industrial services	17
Nucleus Technologies	23
Oamps Hazardous Industries	16
Oilshield	36
ORTEC	42
Otodata Tank Monitors	49
Pepperl+Fuchs	22
Phillips 66	45
Precision Products Engineering	11
Sentinam Ltd	35
Shenk Tank Transport	20
SOS Sales Ltd	38 & 39
The Oil Market Journal	1
Touchstar Technologies	52
Williams Tanker Services / TIP Tankers	26
Wolf Safety	31
Worldpay	14
Yara	8

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# UKIFDA SHOW 2025 - AWARDS

UKIFDA IS PLEASED TO PRESENT THE FINALISTS FOR ITS PRESTIGIOUS 2025 AWARDS, CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN THE FUEL DISTRIBUTION SECTOR. THE SHORTLISTED NOMINEES REFLECT OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS ACROSS VARIOUS CATEGORIES, INCLUDING DEPOT OF THE YEAR, DRIVER OF THE YEAR, INNOVATION AWARD, GREEN AWARD, CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD, AND YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD.



## Finalists:

- AID Fuel Oils, Cannock
- Callow Oils, Stourport on Severn
- Tincknell Fuels, Gillingham



## Finalists:

- Corrib Oil
- New Era Energy
- NWF Fuels



## Finalists:

- Pam Arnasalam – Certas Energy
- Jack Helliwell – Ukay Fuels (Hadleigh) Limited



## Finalists:

- Sam Howells – WP Group
- Craig McCallum – Watson Fuels
- Peter Stubbington – Certas Energy



## Finalists:

- Certas Energy
- ElimiNOX
- New Era Energy



## Finalists:

- Jordan Ferlisi – New Era Energy
- Elliott Keegan – New Era Energy
- Kiegan Owens – Oil 4 Wales

The winners of these sought-after awards will be announced at the UKIFDA SHOW 2025. Join us in celebrating the best in the fuel distribution industry!

## Make the most of your visit to UKIFDA SHOW 2025 with the official event app.

Designed to enhance the attendee experience, the app leverages the powerful features of Whova to provide a seamless event journey for all participants.

With the event just around the corner, you can now download the Whova app to maximise your event experience. It is packed with user-friendly features that will make navigating the show easier than ever.

### Key Features:

**Personalised Agenda:** View the full event agenda and curate your own schedule.

**Speaker Resources:** Access to key documents shared by organisers and speakers.

**Networking:** See who else is attending and connect with fellow delegates in advance.

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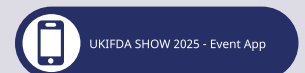
**Real-time Updates:** Stay informed with important announcements.

### Stay connected

“At UKIFDA, we understand the importance of staying connected and informed during events,” said Ken Cronin, CEO UKIFDA. “The Whova app will be an invaluable tool for our attendees, allowing them to engage more fully with the show and each other.”

The app is available for download on both iOS and Android devices. **Scan this QR code to get Whova now.**

**Join us in Leeds for UKIFDA SHOW 2025!**





# UKIFDA SHOW 2025 Speakers

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THIS YEAR'S SPEAKERS HERE.

---

**David Blevings**

Ireland Manager, OFTEC

David sits on OFTEC's strategic management team and manages OFTEC activities throughout Ireland, where many of OFTEC's manufacturing members are based.

He promotes OFTEC registration and has regular contact with officials and politicians in the Irish government and Northern Ireland Assembly, lobbying on behalf of the industry. With OFTEC's Republic of Ireland representative and Northern Ireland local inspector he answers technical queries from OFTEC registrants in Ireland. David has worked for OFTEC since 2004 and represents the interests of local oil distributors through the NI Oil Federation.

---

**Ken Cronin**

CEO, UKIFDA

Ken Cronin is the Chief Executive of UKIFDA the trade association for fuel distribution across the UK and Ireland.

Ken has more than 30 years' global experience in media, investor and government relations in the energy industry and has worked in and with many companies across the nuclear, renewables, oil and gas and power sectors. During this time Ken has taken a keen interest in the impact of climate change policy and public perception.

Prior to his role at UKIFDA Ken worked in the onshore oil and gas sector and spent 10 years at worldwide communication agency Kreab Gavin Anderson as Head of Global Energy.

---

**Philip Hannon**

Chief Executive, The Alliance for Zero Carbon Heating (TAZCH)

Philip Hannon is Chief Executive of the Alliance for Zero Carbon Heating (TAZCH) which brings together businesses from across Ireland, including members of UKIFDA, who are committed to finding new solutions that reduce emissions and create a more sustainable heating system for the country.

He leads the alliances ongoing efforts to pave the way for the introduction of new and advanced renewable liquid fuels which can help deliver zero carbon heating and make carbon neutrality a reality.

He has over 25 years of experience in public affairs, communications and advocacy. He was a Ministerial Special Advisor in five separate

Irish Government Departments, across two administrations. For almost a decade, he was Communications and Public Affairs Manager at the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association, and most recently was Policy Director at Liquid Gas Ireland.

---

**Geoff Henderson**

Wholesale Business Manager, Phillips 66

Geoff has 24 years energy industry experience with Phillips 66 and prior heritage companies. Geoff started in Supply and has held various roles including Retail and Transport before moving into a Wholesale Account Manager role 12 years ago.

Geoff worked his way up through the Wholesale Team and was promoted to his current role as Wholesale Business Manager in September 2021. He is responsible for all UK Unbranded Sales, as well as Specialty business' Marine and LPG. Geoff has a team of five Commercial Account Managers plus one Pricing Lead. The department works very closely with Value Chain Optimisation, Supply, Commercial Traders and Customer Support.

---

**Carys Jones**

Sales Director, Oil 4 Wales Carys

Carys Jones is the Sales Director and Human Resources Assistant at Oil 4 Wales, a Welsh-based fuel distribution company.

She has a First-Class Honours degree focused in Human Resources Management from the University of South Wales and was awarded Student of the Year by the CIPD in 2017.

---

**Simon Lawford**

Technical Sales and Renewable Fuels Manager, Crown Oil

Simon has over 25 years' experience in the fuel and lubricants industry.

He started career as an R&D chemist, designing and manufacturing innovative products for use as lubricants in applications such as wind turbines, hydraulic fluids and compressors. Since then, he has worked in several different functions including Sales Management, Marketing and Technical.

Simon joined Crown Oil in March 2019 where he is responsible for driving Crown Oil's efforts in the renewable and sustainable fuel sector.

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**Amy Lingard-Smith**

Fuel Duty Policy Team Leader, HMRC

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**Neil Mills**

Senior Policy Advisor, HMRC

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**Stephen Rhodes**

Managing Director, Highland Fuels

Stephen has more than 25 years' experience in the downstream petroleum industry covering the breadth of the value chain from refining and product importation, primary logistics, tank storage, secondary distribution, product sales, forecourt retailing and brand marketing.

---

**Tim Simon**

Head of Low Carbon Fuels Regulations, Department of Transport

The Department for Transport (DfT) Low Carbon Fuels team oversees policy and regulation around low carbon fuels (LCFs) aimed at decarbonising the transport sector.

---

**James Spencer**

Managing Director Portland Fuel

James has headed up Portland since establishing the business in 2009. Portland is a specialist trading company offering fuel price hedging, fixed price fuel supply, niche energy trading products and downstream advisory services.

---

**John Weedon**

Director, Mitchell & Webber

John joined the family business in 2002, having previously been a Corporate Bank Manager for Lloyds bank for 15 years.

---

**Alex Wolfe**

Podcast Host and Non-Executive Director, Wolfe Power Club & AIM Recruit  
2025 marks 20 years in the Energy industry for Alex, after leadership roles at Shell, Mabanaft, Certas Energy and Blend.

Today Alex is host of the largest energy podcast on the apple charts, Wolfe Power Club, interviewing Energy Directors, Leaders of Industry and Politicians to find out where Energy Investment is going.

In spring 2025, Alex joined Aim Recruit as a Non-Executive Director. Aim provides HR and recruitment solutions across the UK within transport and logistics, helping with everything from class 1 HGV drivers through to logistics staff.

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# How can Fuel Oil News help you and your business thrive?

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Let us know how we can best support your business today, while we work together to shape the industry future.  
Take just 2 minutes of your time to complete the form below, then:

- **Photograph it and email it straight to [info@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:info@fueloilnews.co.uk)**
- **Visit Stand 48: Fuel Oil News to drop the completed page into the box or**
- **Fill the form out in person on our stand.**

How important are these business management topics to you on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 being least, 10 being most)  
Please circle the number that best represents the importance of the topic to you.



Topics																					
<b>Staff issues: Recruitment and retention</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Online marketplaces: Menace or opportunity?</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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<b>Technological advancements: AI, telemetry, cloud-based systems, apps.</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Effective sales: Online fuel marketing vs sales team</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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<b>The customer view of our industry? Are buying patterns changing?</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Own artic fleet vs delivered to depot</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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<b>How best to buy fuel?</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Depot Manager role: is it changing?</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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<b>Tankers: Leasing vs buying</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Planning a new depot: Wet depot vs dry depot</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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<b>What makes for a good depot?</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10											
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<b>Fixed price offering: Should you have one?</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10											
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<b>Complementary services: Which should you offer?</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10											
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<b>Top-up services: A valuable offer?</b> <table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10											
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## MAKE SURE FUEL OIL NEWS DELIVERS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Please take a moment to complete the above survey and tell us which topics matter most to you.  
You can also complete the survey online: Simply scan the QR code or go to <https://qrco.de/FONsurvey2025> to give your answers which will keep Fuel Oil News a valuable resource for your business and the evolving industry.  
Survey closes at midnight on 31st June. Entries received after that time will not be included our results.  
For full terms and conditions email [info@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:info@fueloilnews.co.uk)



# Selling Kettlewell Fuels: Janet Kettlewell on navigating a business sale, legacy, and life beyond fuel distribution

IN CONVERSATION WITH MARGARET MAJOR, PUBLISHING DIRECTOR, FUEL OIL NEWS

After years at the helm of Kettlewell Fuels, a well-respected independent distributor based near Ripon, North Yorkshire, Janet Kettlewell made the decision in 2021, to sell the business she and her husband, Trevor, had built with care, a strong community focus, and professionalism. Two and a half years on, Janet sits down with Fuel Oil News to reflect on the decision, the sale process, the emotional journey, and the freedom that came after. For many fellow distributors considering their own future, her story offers honesty, practical advice, and a reassuring picture of what life can look like after letting go.

## THE DECISION TO SELL

### What led you to consider selling?

*"The decision to sell really began as a thought process triggered after we came out of COVID-19. It made us reevaluate our lives and think about life without the day-to-day responsibilities of running the business."*

Janet explains that she and Trevor had long been deeply involved in every facet of the operation – from customer service to delivery – and began to imagine a life beyond fuel. The pandemic brought a rare moment of reflection, prompting some big questions about quality of life.

*"We were proud of what we built – successful, well-respected and professionally run with a high community standing – but it came at a cost. At times, it felt like being a hamster on a treadmill."*

Age and stage of life were naturally part of the consideration, but so too were industry changes. The increasing need to pivot, diversify or scale to compete in a changing energy landscape and consolidating market raised difficult questions.

*"At this stage in our professional and personal lives, we decided we did not wish to pursue those changes."*

Importantly, they also knew their children weren't looking to join the business, and with the company in a strong position, they felt it was the right moment to pass it on while ensuring its values endured.



Life beyond distribution – Janet and Trevor enjoying their first taste of freedom in New York

### Was selling always part of your long-term plan?

*"Selling was not part of our long-term plan, but over time, we recognised the need to bring new people in to push the business forward."*

With these fresh perspectives came the realisation that a sale might be the best way to secure the company's future.

### How did you determine the right time to sell?

*"There wasn't a conscious decision; it was more of an organic process. We felt that it was the right moment when we were ready to pursue a life away from running a business."*

Whilst it was an unexpected pathway to take, what followed was a 12-month process that started from a seed of an idea and blossomed into a carefully managed exit.

## GETTING SALE-READY

### How did you prepare the business for sale?

*"We limited knowledge of our decision to sell to a very small number of people, to ensure the business continued to operate effectively."*

With no idea what the outcome would be, Janet knew that controlling information and

communication was key to preventing any distorted messaging.

Janet likens the process to preparing a house for sale – ensuring everything was presented professionally and transparently. To ensure that potential buyers truly understood the business, they put together a well-presented package, showcasing not just data, but their community-driven marketing activities and values.

### Did you work with external advisors?

*"Yes, we chose to work with a specialist advisory firm. We interviewed several to find those who shared our values."*

Their existing accountants and legal teams, who already knew the business inside out, played a crucial role. The decision to bring in an external advisory firm helped create emotional distance, allowing Janet and Trevor to navigate the process "at arm's length" and focus on running the business while managing the sale.

### How did you determine the value?

Rather than naming a price upfront, Janet and Trevor explored strategic conversations with potential buyers. The business attracted multiple offers, and the decision ultimately came down to the best fit.

*"We secured the best offer from a company that would be the right fit, prioritising a local buyer to maintain the company's local values and connections."*

## INSIDE THE SALE PROCESS

### How did you find potential buyers and what were the challenges?

*"We created a realistic list of potential buyers that included a mix of large national and regional companies."*

While fortunate to receive strong offers, time became the biggest challenge. The dual pressures of running the business and meeting sale deadlines made time management – and flexibility – essential. An agreed timeline is important, but being prepared for tasks to take longer than anticipated is more so.

## What about due diligence? Any surprises?

*"The due diligence process went very smoothly for us."*

With the right advisors in place, and a well-organised sale pack, the process was stress-free. However, managing internal communication was the most sensitive issue.

*"We wanted to ensure that our staff didn't find out before we could officially inform them; it was crucial to us that they heard from us first."*

## THE EMOTIONAL SHIFT

### How did it feel when the deal completed?

*"We were emotionally prepared. Once it was done, Trevor and I looked at each other and decided to head to the pub for dinner."*

The moment itself was quiet, almost anti-climactic, but filled with a sense of satisfaction and an excitement for the next chapter.

*"I felt satisfied knowing we had remained true to ourselves and the process and that the company could continue its onward journey."*

### What was the hardest part emotionally?

It wasn't letting go of control. For Janet, that came easily. It was telling people.

*"We arranged for all the vehicles to return to the office at a specific time to ensure the drivers were informed alongside their office-based colleagues."*

*"We made every effort to personally inform as many people as possible, including customers, suppliers and industry colleagues."*

They made personal phone calls to customers, suppliers, and colleagues in the industry. It was important to them that the news came from them – not from a press release.

### Any regrets?

*"No. The chapter was closed."*

## AFTER THE HANDOVER

### What was the transition like?

*"We had a very short transition period. The handover was swift, mainly due to the preparation that took place during the sale process."*

With a buyer who was local, experienced and highly respected, the transfer was smooth and swift. Two days after completion, Janet and Trevor were on a flight to Las Vegas to see Adam Lambert – marking their first holiday free of business responsibilities.

### How did customers and staff react?

There was shock, of course, and concerns for the future, but also a lot of goodwill.



One of the amazing images Janet captured on her recent trip to India.

*"Without exception, every one of them wished us well."*

Janet and Trevor did all they could to support staff into roles with the new owners or elsewhere while the personal engagement with long-standing customers gave them every reason to remain with the company under its new ownership.

### And now?

*"Life has been a wonderful adjustment."*

Janet has embraced hobbies, travel, family time, and new friendships. There's no business venture on the horizon, though she hasn't ruled out voluntary work.

### More than retirement

It's worth noting - Janet doesn't view this as retirement, rather a new chapter.

*"To me, it is more a sense of freedom."*

For someone who spent decades in a business where every waking hour was in some way linked to operations, staffing, delivery schedules and even the weather, the shift has been profound.

*"Bizarrely, one of the most noticeable shifts has been my relationship with the weather. I can go days without giving it a second thought!"*

Another joy? Spontaneity.

*"A privilege taken for granted by many, I've embraced it as an unexpected bonus."*

## ADVICE FOR OTHERS

### What would you say to others considering selling?

*"Be prepared! Maintain your credibility. Think through the consequences and have a post-sale plan in place, but don't overthink the process."*

Reassuringly, Janet notes that while those considering this route should "expect the unexpected" they found the challenges along the way to be "mostly manageable and easily

overcome".

Her biggest advice? Know yourself. Selling a business isn't just financial – it's deeply emotional. This is especially true for those running a family or legacy business who may feel a sense of guilt at the thought of transferring the business into new hands.

*"Once you decide to sell, it's a firm decision, and there's no going back."*

Acknowledging the demands of running a fuel distribution business where "everything starts and finishes with you" Janet suggests that the fear of what life will hold after the business is gone may be a barrier to selling.

*"If the thought of moving into the next phase fills you with anxiety, then maybe you're not ready. The emotional decision to let go comes first."*

In terms of planning for life afterwards, Janet's recommendation is to have some plans in place, but to remain open and flexible to allow for the surprises along the way.

While she misses the people and the industry community, Janet describes life as a series of chapters. Life since fuel distribution is simply the next exciting chapter, and one in which there are certainly no regrets for Janet – only the opportunity to embrace new passions, like photography, and exciting travels. Following our conversation, Janet was planning to complete her preparations for an upcoming trip to India in search of wildlife to capture through her lens.

### Final thoughts?

*"Life is what you make it. And that's the case when you are at the helm of a business and giving it your all to make it the best it can be, and it is also the case after you've stepped away into your new chapter."*

Janet suggests that the personal values that contribute to business success are the same that should be used throughout the sale process and in the post-sale life.

With the deep involvement Janet had in the industry – including a wonderful tenure as UKIFDA President – some of you may be wondering whether Janet still keeps one foot in the fuel world.

Earlier this year, she donated her wardrobe of bright, stylish workwear to a Leeds charity supporting women re-entering employment.

*"If ever there was any doubt whether I'd left my previous chapter behind, that puts it firmly to bed."*

Now often to be seen donning the more muted tones of a wildlife photographer, Janet's clothing may have toned down – but her life, it seems, is more vibrant than ever.





# PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

APRIL  
IN VIEW

## BATTERY RAW MATERIALS – COULD THEY BECOME THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO EV ROLLOUT?

Over the last 2 months, we have considered the subject of electric trucks and whether they are ever likely to take over from traditional ICE (Internal Combustion Engine) vehicles. Our focus was largely on the technology, cost and operational practicality of running battery powered Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), but as some observers have pointed out, the thorny issue of precious metal availability was never considered. With the International Energy Agency (IEA) predicting that overall mineral demand for use in EVs will grow by 30 times to 2040, this does seem a valid question. So, this month, we will look at the challenges associated with sourcing the key raw materials for automotive batteries.

Lithium-ion batteries make up over 90% of the world's EV batteries, which obviously means that the first precious metal required is lithium itself. A supporting double-act of cobalt (to improve stability – i.e. the safety – of the battery) and nickel (to enhance energy density) make up the other 2 core raw materials. A typical electric car battery contains around 10kg of lithium, 15kg of cobalt and 40kg of nickel and although there is an array of other precious and non-precious metals required (palladium, silver, copper, aluminium), this report will only focus on the 3 “main” EV metals.

Lithium can receive and store electric charge quickly, plus it is the lightest metallic element in the periodic table, which explains why it is important to weight-sensitive industries such as the automotive sector. 75% of global resources are located in the “Lithium Triangle” that straddles Chile, Argentina and Bolivia. Extraction is a (relatively) straightforward affair, although enormous amounts of water are required (circa 1.9m litres of water for one tonne of lithium) and this is highly problematic for the very arid areas (e.g. Atacama desert in Chile), where lithium is normally found. In terms of the market, prices are typically stable, with supply currently surpassing demand. This position is expected to continue until at least 2030, and as a result, lithium prices currently trade at lower levels than either cobalt or nickel; around \$9,000 / tonne, which as a comparator, makes it

cheaper than copper (\$10,000 / t). The Energy Transitions Commission (ETC) predicts that whilst total demand for lithium for the next 25 years will exceed 20m tonnes, current production technology and known global lithium reserves will generate in excess of 25m tonnes in the same period.

Cobalt on the other hand, is a more problematic metal. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the world's leading producer of cobalt, accounting for about 70% of global extraction and 50% of global reserves. Up to a fifth of known cobalt mines in the DRC are non-regulated, “rogue” mines, often worked by children in extreme hazardous conditions and where the average daily wage is less than \$10. This concentration of production in such

### “THERE IS A RAPIDLY GROWING MARKET AROUND THE RECYCLING OF USED BATTERIES.”

a politically unstable location makes for an extremely precarious supply-chain, and prices of cobalt reflect this. It currently trades around \$31,000 / t but this is cheap compared to previous years, when the price hit a staggering \$82,000 / t in April 2022 (once again as a comparator, Copper at this point was still around the \$10,000 / t mark). Global annual demand for cobalt is currently circa 200,000 tonnes, but this is expected to double by 2035, whilst supply is actually expected to decline post 2030. Forecasts for 2040 (based on current rates of extraction and known cobalt reserves) show that there will be a shortfall in cobalt of 300,000 tonnes per annum, which might make those Apr 22 prices seem remarkably good value...

Finally, we have nickel, which is less dependent on the EV market, because it has uses elsewhere, for example in the nuclear industry, stainless steel and power transmission. It is also an abundant material, with ores containing nickel located in 25

countries around the world (the major deposits being Australia, Indonesia, South Africa, Russia and Canada). 2m tonnes of refined nickel is produced and consumed annually and only about 15% of that volume is used in EV batteries. The extraction and production of nickel is a well-established process, but energy intensive smelting (temperatures in excess of 1,350 deg C) and industrial levels of toxic waste make for another environmental horror show. Because of the mineral's plentiful reserves and the fact that supply continually outstrips demand, nickel prices rarely hit stratospheric levels. It currently has a traded price of \$15,000 / t (largely reflecting the high costs of production) and even at “peak precious metal” (Spring 2022), the price did not surpass \$50,000.

It would seem then, that when it comes to lithium and nickel, there are few reasons on the supply side, why current and future demand from EV batteries cannot be met. Cobalt presents a greater problem because of geological scarcity, political instability and plain risk, all of which contribute to a deeply fragile supply chain. Such red flags would typically point to huge price hurdles in the manufacture of EV batteries in the future, but two factors may come to the rescue. Firstly, there is much scientific development now going into the development of cobalt-free or cobalt-light batteries (alternatives such as iron-phosphate or manganese are feasible) and secondly, there is a rapidly growing market around the recycling of used batteries. The World Economic Forum estimates that over 50% of end-of-life batteries will be recycled by 2030, with their original mineral content being re-smelted back into precious metals. This is forecast to reduce total demand for raw materials by 7%, whilst the IEA predicts that increased recycling of precious metals could reduce the need for new mining by as much as 40% by 2050.

For more pricing  
information,  
see page 50

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# The future for liquid fuel

## Spending cuts and a changed political landscape. What now for off-grid decarbonisation?

**MALCOLM FARROW**, HEAD OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT OFTEC

In the face of mounting economic uncertainty, the government has set out its intention to reduce public expenditure and reassess priorities across key policy areas. It's clearer than ever that achieving net zero, a commitment critical to tackling climate change, must now be pursued with far greater pragmatism and sensitivity to both financial and social realities. The government cannot ignore that the time has come for a genuine rethink on how we decarbonise our homes.

In her recent Spring Statement, the embattled Chancellor Rachel Reeves set out a clear message: government must be more efficient, reduce public expenditure, and focus on growing the economy. Yes, it's true she set this out at the start of the new Labour government, but what's different now is the overwhelming economic and political pressure from an economy that remains stubbornly slow on growth and a reduction in spending power.

The chancellor has previously stated that economic growth must take precedence over meeting net zero targets, which has widely been seen as at odds with Ed Miliband's approach in his department. Her remarks, however, underscore a growing recognition within the Labour Party that the UK's decarbonisation strategy must be grounded in economic reality and designed to avoid placing undue burden on households and businesses.

This mood of reassessment is not limited to Labour. Just recently, Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch declared that reaching net zero by 2050 is no longer an achievable goal. This is a remarkable admission from a Party that was leading the net zero charge in government less than a year ago. This underscores the changing political landscape and public opinion, something which Reform UK has been able to capitalise on, gaining ground in the polls.

Together, these political signals and economic pressures point to an urgent need for the government to revise its current approach to net zero. This is particularly true when it comes to decarbonising off-grid homes – homes which are represented by dozens of new Labour MPs for the first time. As we know, the



**Malcolm Farrow, Head of Public Affairs at OFTEC**

main solution being promoted for our sector remains the installation of heat pumps, heavily driven by public funding through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS).

But while well-intentioned, this strategy is going to cost the government billions of pounds at a time when other government schemes, from health to education, are crying out for more money. An increasing number are likely to question the viability of a political strategy which will see the government reduce funding for welfare and benefits, whilst paying out £7,500 for new heat pump installations.

Moving beyond government, we're seeing time and time again how this focus on heat pumps will put substantial costs onto households. The current generous level of government subsidy will only stretch so far, and eventually, households will likely need to pay the full cost of heat pumps if the targets for deployment are to be achieved. Again, there's mixed signals from a Labour government telling households they will have to tighten their belts when it comes to government benefit support, but then spend thousands on installing a heat pump.

The current approach also fails to consider the practical constraints facing the heating industry – constraints which are consistently

overlooked. The government has been clear that with rising employee national insurance costs, businesses are going to have to cut their cloth accordingly. The vast majority of heating firms are small businesses who are facing increased pressure to keep their books balanced. However, a nationwide transition to heat pumps requires a skilled workforce.

Yes, the government is providing funding through the Heat Pump Training grant but, for many businesses, the current economic uncertainty makes it too much of a risk to dedicate time and money upskilling a workforce into a technology when the market size is unclear. At a time when every penny counts, for many the current uncertainty may be too great to make this investment.

With Labour coming up to a year in office, many, even within government, are thinking about how this administration wants to be defined. Historically, Labour has long positioned itself as the party of social justice, committed to supporting lower income households and addressing inequality. But the economic reality has meant Labour, in their words, has been forced to make difficult spending decisions. So, how does Labour deliver on these core principles, maintain its commitment to fiscal responsibility and transition the off-grid sector onto low carbon heating?

Fortunately, renewable liquid fuels align with all three of these priorities. Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is a practical and low cost solution for government, it's affordable for consumers and there's an existing skilled industry and supply chain already in place. If we start with a 20% blend, the fuel could be rolled out very quickly.

The economic and political landscape has shifted. The case for a flexible, more financially sustainable approach to decarbonising home heating has never been stronger. Changing direction is never easy, but for a government under pressure to deliver results while cutting costs, this is an opportunity too good to ignore. There are very few so called 'golden eggs' or quick wins in government, but this is one of them.





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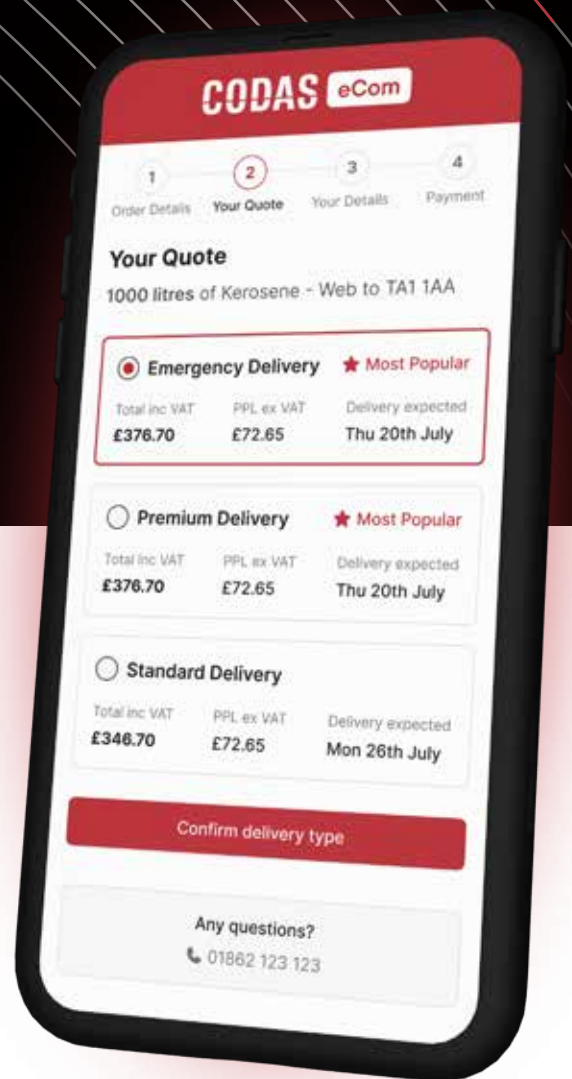
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## Tariffs, targets and trade-offs: Implications of the UK's EV pivot in a global storm

**The UK's ambitious journey toward transport electrification has hit a bump in the road. In response to the United States' imposition of a 25% tariff on imported vehicles, the UK government has relaxed its electric vehicle (EV) regulations to shield its car industry amid mounting global competition.**

We consider the implications for transport electrification, the UK's net zero ambitions and the transport fuel landscape.

### The UK's electrification drive

Historically, the UK has been at the forefront of the EV transition in line with its legal commitment to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. In 2021, transport was responsible for 26% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions – the largest emitting sector – with over half of those emissions coming from cars.

EVs are viewed by the government as central to decarbonising transport. In February 2024, the Department for Transport reiterated: "The transition to electric vehicles is a crucial step towards achieving the UK's net zero target."

The momentum began in 2020, when then Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a 2030 phase-out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans. This was later delayed to 2035 by Rishi Sunak's government in 2023, to align with EU targets.

To drive the transition, the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate was introduced in January 2024. It set legally binding, progressive targets: 22% of new car sales must be zero-emission in 2024, increasing to 80% by 2030 and 100% by 2035.

The policy was designed to offer

manufacturers certainty while supporting economic growth and the UK's climate goals. The government also committed over £2 billion to expand charging infrastructure and incentivise EV adoption. Yet, as of March 2025, EVs made up only 19% of new car sales – below the 28% target for the year.

The Labour Party's 2024 general election manifesto pledged to restore the 2030 phase-out date for internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. However, a 2024 House of Lords report warned that high upfront costs, poor charging infrastructure, and public scepticism continue to constrain EV uptake.

**"THESE TRADE-OFFS ARE ONE OF THE DEFINING TENSIONS OF THE NET ZERO JOURNEY."**

### UK industry and global competition

UK vehicle manufacturers have made substantial investments to repurpose production for the electric transition. According to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), more than £20 billion was invested in 2023 alone.

However, there is global competition for investment across the EV supply chain. China overtook other nations as the world's largest EV producer in 2023, and its exports continue to rise, placing pressure on manufacturers in Europe and the US.

Unlike other major economies, the UK has so far resisted imposing tariffs on Chinese EVs. This contrasts with measures taken elsewhere. In 2023, the US imposed 100% tariffs on EVs from China, simultaneously introducing major subsidies. The EU followed in July 2024, with tariffs of 17-38% on imported EVs from China.

UK ministers argue that avoiding tariffs helps consumers by keeping EVs affordable and avoids escalating trade tensions. However, domestic manufacturers fear an influx of cheaper Chinese models that would erode the competitiveness of British-built EVs.

A November 2023 government policy paper emphasised the UK's focus on research and innovation over protectionism, stating it would "not be drawn into a distortive subsidy battle."

### The U.S. tariff shockwave

These global pressures were thrown into sharp relief in early April, when President Trump introduced a 25% tariff on all imported vehicles in a bid to boost American manufacturing. The impact on UK exports was immediate.

The US is the UK's second-largest car export market, worth £7.6 billion in 2024. Lotus Cars responded by cutting 270 jobs, citing tariff-related pressures. Analysts warn up to 25,000 UK auto sector jobs could be at risk if exports to the US decline significantly.

### The UK's regulatory response

To mitigate the economic fallout, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government adjusted the EV mandate. Key changes include:

- Deferring fines for missing ZEV targets until 2030, and reducing penalties from £15,000 to £12,000 per vehicle
- Extending the sale of hybrid vehicles to 2035
- Exempting low-volume manufacturers such as McLaren and Aston Martin

These adjustments offer breathing space for the UK car manufacturing industry while maintaining a long-term commitment to zero-emission targets.

### Impacts beyond passenger cars: The commercial vehicle challenge

The recent adjustments to UK EV policies have significant implications for commercial vehicles, particularly vans and HGVs.

### Extended transition for vans

Under the revised ZEV mandate, the UK government has extended the deadline for phasing out new internal combustion engine (ICE) vans. Previously set for 2030, the new deadline allows the sale of new petrol and



diesel vans until 2035. This extension also applies to full hybrid and plug-in hybrid vans, providing manufacturers and fleet operators with additional time to adapt to the transition.

Even without this extension, the uptake of electric vans remains sluggish. As of early 2025, zero-emission vans accounted for only 5.7% of new van sales, falling short of the 10% target. Major manufacturers, including Ford and Stellantis, have expressed concerns that penalties for missing these targets could hinder further EV development and have already led to job cuts.

## Challenges in HGV electrification

The government has committed to phasing out diesel HGVs: those under 26 tonnes by 2035 and all HGVs by 2040. Yet operators face high vehicle costs, limited charging infrastructure, and scant financial support.

## Regulatory tweaks

The government has proposed:

- Allowing Category B licence holders to drive EVs up to 4.25 tonnes
- Reclassifying 4.25-tonne electric vans, currently treated as HGVs due to their weight, to align with diesel van rules, easing driver and regulatory burdens

Logistics UK welcomed the clarity, but its Deputy Policy Director, Michelle Gardner, noted: “The sector is fully committed to decarbonisation, but zero tailpipe emission vehicles must make commercial and operational sense. Our members still face cost and infrastructure barriers that need urgent government attention.”

## Implications for net zero

While relaxing regulations provides short-term relief, it risks undermining the UK’s long-term climate goals. Delayed targets could slow emissions reductions from the UK’s highest-emitting sector potentially jeopardising the UK’s commitment to net zero 2050.

EV sales could also be impacted by the introduction of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) on electric cars from April 2025. However, Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander downplayed concerns, saying the adjustments would have a “negligible” impact on emissions.

## A new role for HVO?

In this regulatory vacuum, interest in Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is rising. The relaxation of EV targets and the extended transition timelines for commercial vehicles – particularly vans and HGVs – is increasing interest in HVO as a near-term solution for fleet decarbonisation.

### Why HVO?

- Drop-in compatibility: Works with existing diesel engines
- GHG savings: Up to 90% lifecycle CO2 reduction
- No infrastructure upgrade needed: a practical interim pathway

### What’s holding it back?

- Higher cost
  - Supply concerns
  - Policy: Lack of targeted incentives
- Many view it as a bridge fuel – valuable now, but not a long-term solution.
- As fleet operators seek to decarbonise while navigating regulatory uncertainty and

infrastructure delays, HVO demand is likely to increase. But whether this demand can be met – and sustained – will depend on market forces, fuel pricing, and the broader transport decarbonisation strategy.

## Navigating the road ahead

The UK’s pivot on EV legislation underscores the delicate balancing act between economic resilience and environmental responsibility. Trade policy, industrial competitiveness, and climate ambition are increasingly entangled – and transport policy is one area where this complex struggle is visibly playing out.

Sustained investment in EV production, charging infrastructure, and consumer incentives will be crucial if the UK is to get back on track.

## Wider lessons for the transition

The challenge of balancing industrial competitiveness with environmental ambition – and ensuring consumers are not burdened with unsustainable costs – is not unique to the automotive sector. It reflects a broader trilemma facing governments worldwide as they navigate the energy transition.

From electricity pricing to heat decarbonisation to heavy industry reform, governments face mounting pressure to align economic security with environmental integrity.

These trade-offs are one of the defining tensions of the net zero journey and the UK’s recalibration on EVs shows how these evolving and competing pressures are shaping real-time policy decisions.

# Transport fuel shift underway, but diesel still dominates – for now



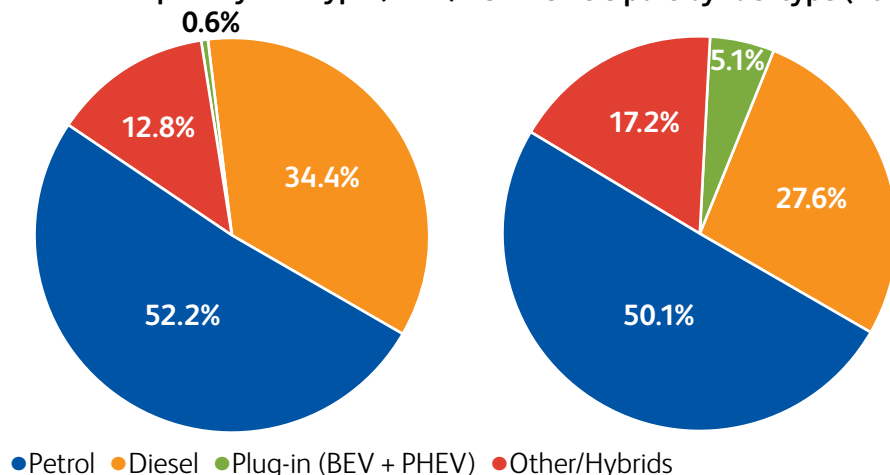
The latest Motorparc 2024 report from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), released on April 12, paints a picture of an evolving transport landscape – one that is making progress toward decarbonisation, but still heavily reliant on fossil fuels.

Electric vehicles (EVs) hit a major milestone in 2024, with more than 1.3 million electric cars now on UK roads, a 38.9% increase year-on-year. Yet, despite this growth, 96.3% of the UK car parc still fills up with petrol or diesel. The total number of vehicles on British roads also reached a new high of 41.96 million, up 1.4%, with the vast majority continuing to depend on internal combustion engines.

Battery electric vehicles (BEVs) now account for 3.7% of all cars in use, while diesel volumes fell by 4.4% to 11.6 million units, representing 32.1% of the car parc – the fuel type’s fifth consecutive year of decline. This trend

## Fuel trends

UK Vehicle parc by fuel type (2018) UK Vehicle parc by fuel type (2024)



These charts, comparing 2024 and 2018, show the growing shift away from diesel and the rise of plug-in vehicles.

In 2018, plug-ins represented only a sliver of the parc. By 2024, they form a notable and fast-growing share – especially among fleet vehicles. Petrol and diesel still dominate, but momentum is clearly building behind electrification.

signals a steady erosion of the dominance of traditional diesel, particularly in company fleets where CO<sub>2</sub> emissions fell by 5.6%, driven by fiscal incentives and an expanding range of electrified models.

### Commercial sector: diesel holding, but changes are emerging

The commercial vehicle sector remains more firmly rooted in diesel, but the transition is beginning to impact. Vans, which underpin

much of the UK's logistics activity, hit a record 5.1 million units in 2024, with battery electric vans growing 31.6% to 80,476 units – now 1.6% of the van parc. While still a small proportion, the growth trend is clear.

Electric buses saw an even sharper rise, increasing by 81.8% year-on-year to make up 4.9% of the total bus fleet – despite overall public transport vehicle numbers falling to their lowest recorded level. Electric trucks are also beginning to appear in the fleet mix, though from a very small base and still account for less than 0.1% of heavy goods vehicles.

### Implications for fleet operators and fuel suppliers

These trends underscore the rising operational presence of EVs, particularly in van fleets and public service vehicles. However, diesel remains critical – particularly for long-haul, high-utilisation, and rural applications where electrification is not yet practical.

This transition phase presents a significant opportunity for suppliers of low-carbon liquid fuels to bridge the gap, supporting fleet operators as they move toward net zero without compromising on range or reliability in the short to medium term.

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# Fuel Oil News talks with new sector supplier Sentinam



AS SENTINAM OFFICIALLY OPENS ITS DOORS, MARGARET MAJOR, FON EDITOR, CAUGHT UP WITH MANAGING DIRECTOR NEIL TURNBULL TO GET THE STORY BEHIND THE NEW VENTURE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR UK FUEL DISTRIBUTORS.

## MOTIVATION AND STRATEGY:

### What inspired the launch of Sentinam – and why now?

The launch of Sentinam Liquid Movement Solutions is a strategic step by the MechTronic management team to expand our presence within the petroleum marketplace.

We saw outstanding performance from the Pollard Pump range on MechTronic's industry-leading OptiMate metering system. This success, combined with Pollard Pump's dynamic "to do" attitude and performance-driven approach, gave us confidence in their reliability as a manufacturing partner.

With that foundation, we established Sentinam, to support the UK and Ireland markets with innovative, cost-effective, and high-performance, land-based pump solutions.

### How does Sentinam complement MechTronic's existing industry offering to?

While Sentinam is a new name in the fuel distribution industry, it brings with it over 30 years of combined technical, application, and industry expertise, alongside 70 years of manufacturing experience. This positions us to focus clearly on land-based pumping equipment solutions.

Our product line includes a range of cutting-edge, high-performance pumps – from small portable units to large, industrial-grade systems – designed to optimise fuel flow through distribution networks.

One of our key differentiators is a strong focus on sustainability and energy efficiency. Our systems are engineered to reduce energy consumption while maintaining high reliability and performance. Backed by the robust Pollard Pump range, our systems are built to withstand the tough environments typical of fuel distribution operations, ensuring long-term durability and lower maintenance costs.

Our highly adaptable approach allows us to meet diverse fuel distribution needs, from remote depots to urban fuelling stations. Whether it's ensuring consistent flow in challenging locations or supporting large-scale facilities, our solutions are designed to overcome a wide range of industry challenges.

### What market gaps are you aiming to fill?

Our primary goal is to provide clear technical

solutions to both equipment manufacturers and end users. We focus on performance and integrated, collaborative solutions.

The result is a comprehensive approach to liquid distribution that improves operational efficiency, reduces costs, enhances safety, and supports sustainability goals.

By aligning with partners who prioritise performance and energy efficiency, we help optimise fuel flow while contributing to greener operations. This leads to reduced waste, improved fuel utilisation, and lower carbon emissions—supporting the industry's increasing commitment to environmental responsibility.

## FOR THE FON COMMUNITY:

### For distributors already working with MechTronic, what specific benefits can they expect from working with Sentinam?

Distributors can expect the same dedicated technical and customer-focused service that MechTronic is known for. By combining our expertise and resources, we offer high-quality equipment and exceptional customer support. Strengthening relationships with our industry partners will be key to our long-term success.

### Can you give a real-world example of a fuel distribution challenge solved by Sentinam's expertise?

Certainly. One of our long-standing customers faced an issue with limited pump flow rates from a competitor's system. Our technical design team evaluated the specific requirements and developed a completely new pump tailored to meet the necessary flow rate. It was a unique design solution that directly addressed the customer's challenge.

### In your view, what sets Pollard Pumps apart?

Personally, I have found Pollard Pumps to deliver top-tier technical support and customer service. They're committed to the UK and Ireland market, offering straightforward and effective support with dedicated contacts across departments.

Commercially, they are an excellent fit for our market. Their strong product range, combined with their service ethos, makes them ideal partners – both now and as we grow together.

## CUSTOMER SUPPORT AND SERVICE:

### MechTronic is known for its customer-centric support. How will Sentinam deliver that same ethos?

We've built a simple but highly effective support and product specialist team. Our goal is to meet industry demands by offering dedicated technical solutions and reliable aftersales support. With superb UK stock levels and direct support from the manufacturing facility, we're ensuring both product availability and technical support remain readily accessible.

### What kind of technical support or aftersales care can customers expect?

Great question – and something we like to keep very simple!

We combine strong engineering capability, product knowledge and technical support with back up from our manufacturing partners and system integrators. This results in a simple, yet effective, aftersales service, ensuring customers get the help they need, when they need it.

## LOOKING AHEAD:

### What's next for Sentinam?

We're actively developing strategic partnerships with land-based system integrators and equipment manufacturers. We believe in mutual business growth, and as our technology evolves – particularly in pumping, valves, and diagnostics – it's an exciting time. With hard work, we're confident new opportunities will benefit everyone involved.

Where are the biggest opportunities for growth or innovation in pumping solutions for fuel distributors?

The fuel distribution sector is evolving quickly, driven by technology, regulations, and changing market demands. Over the next 3–5 years, we see big opportunities in automation and smart systems.

We're focusing on smart pumping solutions that enable automation, reduce human error, and improve operational efficiency. IoT-integrated systems will monitor performance, detect leaks, assess fuel quality, and provide real-time data for predictive maintenance.

Ongoing feedback from industry operators planning to embrace these innovations will be key to long-term success.



# IS YOUR BUSINESS EXPOSED TO THE VOLATILE FUEL MARKET?



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For most UK businesses, fuel represents a significant and often unavoidable cost, leaving gross profit margins vulnerable to market swings. But there is a proactive solution: **fuel hedging**.

## WHY SURRENDER YOUR MARGINS TO MARKET VOLATILITY?

Fuel hedging is a strategic tool that allows businesses to manage the financial risks of fluctuating fuel prices. It offers greater cost control and allows you to provide fixed pricing to your customers — a powerful advantage in today's market.

Through hedging, you can achieve:

### BUDGET SECURITY

Lock in fuel prices for a defined period and forecast expenses accurately, eliminating price spike risks and enabling reliable financial planning.

### STABLE PROFIT MARGINS

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### COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

With predictable fuel costs, you can offer more stable pricing to your customers.

### OPERATIONAL FOCUS

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**With over 12 years of experience in commodity risk management, we're committed to helping UK businesses take control of their fuel costs.**

“

Attara's hedging tool has worked well for us by reimbursing increases in fuel costs. We still get to negotiate with multiple fuel suppliers, we have certainty over future fuel costs for the first time, providing peace of mind and better financial planning.

J. Whyberd Managing Director, WM Armstrong

”

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# The future of fuel delivery: Exploring the power of remote control

The fuel delivery industry is constantly evolving, with new technologies and innovations emerging to improve efficiency and safety. One such innovation is OptiConnect, a system that is being showcased at this month's UKIFDA Show.

Now available in the UK, this latest remote-control system from MechTronic allows drivers to operate their fuel delivery system from the point of delivery.

Ben Firth, Sales Engineer for MechTronic, developer of OptiConnect, spoke with Fuel Oil News to explain how the technology is changing the way fuel is delivered, making it more convenient and efficient for both drivers and businesses.

### How OptiConnect works

OptiConnect is a complete repeater of the OptiMate head, giving drivers total control over

the delivery process. Drivers can set up, start, stop, modify, and end the delivery all from the point of delivery. This includes the ability to change compartments and control line changes.

### Benefits

OptiConnect offers numerous advantages for fuel delivery, with one of the most significant being enhanced driver efficiency. With OptiConnect, drivers can operate and control the delivery process using just the remote. This feature saves time by allowing them to pull the hose to the customer's tank and complete the delivery without needing to return to the truck repeatedly.

OptiConnect also improves safety. By allowing drivers to operate the fuel delivery system from the point of delivery, they can



avoid potential hazards, such as moving vehicles and slippery surfaces. This is especially important for deliveries at night or in hazardous conditions.

Crucially, OptiConnect plays a key role in preventing fuel contamination. By minimising driver intervention and manual operations, the risk of human error and accidental contamination is significantly reduced. This ensures the integrity of the fuel supply and protects both the driver and the environment.

### The future of fuel delivery

OptiConnect is just one example of the many innovations that are making fuel delivery both more efficient and safer. With the industry placing a high value on both, we can expect to see even more advances in this area as technology continues to evolve.

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# INDUSTRY INSIGHT

## The power of community: How connection fuels mental well-being

IN A WORLD THAT OFTEN FEELS FAST-PACED, INDIVIDUALLY ORIENTATED AND DISCONNECTED, FINDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BELONGING HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT. AS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK APPROACHES THIS MONTH, ITS THEME – COMMUNITY AND BELONGING – REMINDS US OF THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE RELATIONSHIPS PLAY IN OUR WELL-BEING.

FOR THOSE OF US IN THE LIQUID FUEL INDUSTRY, WHERE LONG HOURS, DEMANDING SCHEDULES, SHIFT WORK, CONSTANT CHANGE AND OFTEN SOLITARY WORK CAN TAKE A TOLL ON OUR MENTAL HEALTH, **MANDY RUTTER**, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT, TRAINER, PSYCHOLOGIST, AND COUNSELLOR, SUGGEST THAT FOSTERING STRONG CONNECTIONS WITH FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, FAMILIES AND TEAMS, ISN'T JUST USEFUL, IT'S ESSENTIAL.

### Positive psychology

The positive psychology movement has had a lot to say about the importance of belonging and community, so let's start with a description of positive psychology and how its principles can be used to strengthen our mental health.

When we think about mental health, we usually think about problems of the mind; anxiety, depression, bi-polar disorder, stress, worry (many of which Mandy has covered here in previous insights), however, the forgotten part of mental health is that for most of us, most of the time, our mind works quite well. We can be ambitious, achieve goals, look after ourselves and our families, make good decisions and enjoy moments of fun, intimacy, love and laughter. The scientific study of what contributes to human beings flourishing is positive psychology.

### PERMA

According to Positive Psychologists, they are 5 essential elements of wellbeing:

**P – Positive Emotion.** This is about doing things that help you feel good, hopeful, proud and optimistic, but it's not about always feeling happy. It's about working to accept the mistakes and injustices from the past and anticipating positively what the future holds. It's about making the right decisions to help yourself feel good, including physical health (sleep, hydration, nutrition, exercise) and mental health (enjoyment, self-care, gratitude, work-life balance, ambition, fulfilment).

**E – Engagement.** Who would have thought that absorbing yourself completely in an activity can be good for us? Whether it's reading, gardening, playing sport, yoga, painting, listening to music, DIY, or even spreadsheets and engineering – the sense of complete absorption in an experience has been shown to have a positive impact on our

emotions ('time flies when you are having fun'). Think about things you love doing, and how you feel whilst you are doing it. You will notice that time flies by as you immerse yourself in a state of 'flow'. Dopamine is released during a state of flow, enhancing focus, motivation and pleasure.

“THE SENSE OF COMPLETE ABSORPTION IN AN EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN SHOWN TO HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR EMOTIONS.”

**R – Relationships.** This is where we talk about 'community'. For most of us, it is a very natural human desire to want to connect with others and be part of a group. We are literally 'wired' for connection with the brain changing during positive interactions with others, for example:

- Renewed energy – dopamine release during connection with others helps us feel positive and motivated
- Stress reduction – oxytocin is released by the brain during meaningful social interactions with friends, family, colleagues and loved ones, which helps to lower stress levels, and repair damage to the body which occurs during stress.
- Regulating emotions – social connections stimulate and strengthen neuronal pathways in the brain that are responsible for regulating mood and maintaining perspective. Hence through positive engagement with others we can strengthen our own resilience and stress management abilities
- Clarity of thinking and learning – our

brains are tuned to notice, observe and empathise with others, so when we interact together multiple parts of the brain are stimulated and new neuronal pathways are developed. This supports new learning, co-operation and overall cognitive development.

The power of relationships works both ways – not only is our wellbeing enhanced through how others interact with us, but we can have a positive impact on our friends, family and colleagues through simple acts of kindness and compassion.

**M – Meaning.** What things are meaningful and worthwhile to you?

If we want to pursue the path of positivity and happiness, we must understand the values and beliefs in life that are important to us, and spend time engaged in activities that enable us to live out these values. Many of us have worked in jobs where the values of the organisation did not match our own values and beliefs. You will remember the impact this experience had on your mind, body and soul – it was literally soul destroying – leaving us feeling empty and incomplete. Therefore, if it's possible to find your purpose and value in your work, you can live out your personal values on a day-to-day basis, with the resulting 'feel good' factor. This is something to be grateful for. Many of us work towards our personal fulfilment outside the workplace, for example through faith groups, volunteering, fundraising for charities, mentoring, caring for other people, or campaigning for justice.

**A – Accomplishments.** Having things to work towards and achieving a sense of competence and mastery are important for cultivating hope and pride in ourselves. By setting ourselves goals and achieving them, we improve our sense of effectiveness, self-confidence and wellbeing.





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During difficult periods in our lives, it can be easy to think that we are achieving little and we become more prone to procrastination and avoidance. However, during these times, if we can boost our levels of activity beginning with small noticeable steps, it can help us feel more productive, positive and purposeful. Examples might include starting a new exercise programme, learning something new through podcasts or webinars, taking on additional work responsibilities or helping others who are struggling. Accomplishments don't have to be grand gestures of monumental change, for some people, some of the time, getting out of bed every day and doing basic tasks of the day can be a great accomplishment.

### Strengthening positive psychology and community in the fuel distribution sector

The biggest strength of our industry is its people, but how does it demonstrate this?

As we have described above, when employees feel connected – to colleagues, to customers, and to a shared purpose they are more engaged, motivated and resilient. This is why it is so essential to build a workplace culture that prioritises connection, not just for productivity but for overall positivity and wellbeing. During Mental Health Awareness week, we can all reflect on how we can strengthen our sense of belonging both in the workplace and in our wider communities. Here are some ideas:

**1. Encourage open conversation about mental health** – both the struggles and the inspirations, both the challenges and the recovery. If you have Wellbeing Champions or Mental Health First Aiders, request that they lead talks and discussions about different aspects of mental health, and how belonging to a community has

helped. These discussions can also be led by professional partners, such as Employee Assistance Providers, or Occupational Health professionals.

### 2. Strengthen workplace relationships through peer support programmes.

Employees who have a best friend at work are more engaged and productive, and it is the biggest predictor of workplace engagement (Gallup Workplace Report 2024). Promoting a culture of positive kindness and personal support starts with individual peer relationships. Establishing mentor, and reverse mentoring systems for employees at both the beginning and end of their careers. Developing buddy systems for employees returning to work after illness, or those in new roles will also promote a culture of care and positive supportive relationships.

“LEADERS CAN PROMOTE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY WITHIN THEIR ORGANISATION BY SPONSORING AND ENCOURAGING TEAM BUILDING EVENTS.”

### 3. Team building and social activities.

Leaders can promote a sense of community within their organisation by sponsoring and encouraging large and small team building events. With home working, hybrid working, and lone working, there are less and less opportunities for colleagues to come together and a well-crafted team building event can offer opportunities for positive, caring co-operation.

**4. Encourage involvement in industry groups.** Beyond, but connected to, the workplace is a wide variety of national and international organisations, associations, professional bodies, unions and accrediting panels that create their own community of professionals. Colleagues within these professional communities can become role-models and friends, with whom you can learn, share good practice and access additional personal and professional resources.

### 5. Link with community support groups.

There are many nationwide communities helping people with mental health struggles,



for example, Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous. It could be useful to invite the leader of a local group to come to the workplace and talk about their work. On the positive psychology side there are national and local groups being run by Action for Happiness ([www.actionforhappiness](http://www.actionforhappiness)), which encourages positive social change and a culture of happiness and kindness. These groups are led by trained volunteers, who would welcome the opportunity to spread the word about their work within workplaces

### 6. Volunteer with community organisations.

All commercial firms are part of the local community where they reside, and recognising their role as friends and neighbours can be a powerful driver for a positive sense of community. Volunteering at a local school, sowing seeds at a community garden, decorating outdoor fencing at an animal sanctuary or raising funds for local charities can reinforce a collective sense of purpose and belonging.

With the focus of Mental Health Awareness Week and these insights from Mandy shining a light on the importance of community and connection, it is fitting that this month sees our industry come together at this year's annual industry event.

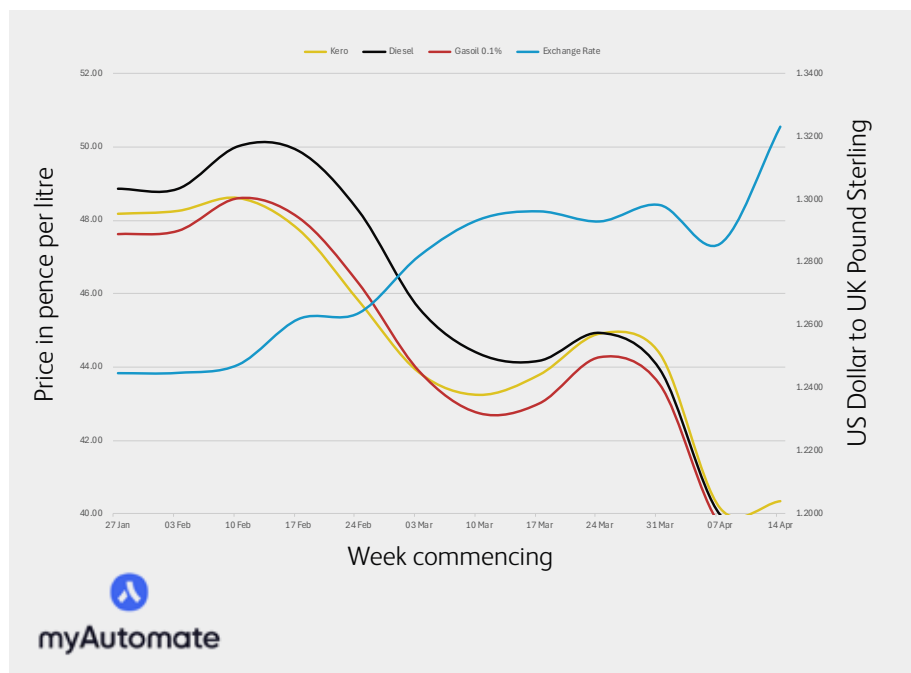
UKIFDA Show 2025 is the perfect opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, share experiences, address challenges and remind ourselves of the strength, solidarity and cooperation that define our mutually supportive, resilient community.

*Featured images are courtesy of the Mental Health Foundation*

## Wholesale Price Movements: 19th March 2025 – 18th April 2025

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	42.92	42.82	42.22
Average daily change	0.67	0.66	0.67
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	44.54	95.77	52.40

All prices in pence per litre

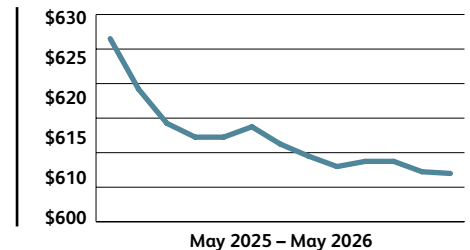


Highest price <b>46.12</b> Tue 01 Apr 25	Biggest up day <b>+1.23</b> Mon 31 Mar 25
<b>Kerosene</b>	
Lowest price <b>39.07</b> Wed 09 Apr 25	Biggest down day <b>-3.15</b> Thu 03 Apr 25

Highest price <b>45.64</b> Mon 31 Mar 25	Biggest up day <b>+1.16</b> Mon 31 Mar 25
<b>Diesel</b>	
Lowest price <b>39.01</b> Wed 09 Apr 25	Biggest down day <b>-3.20</b> Thu 03 Apr 25

Highest price <b>45.27</b> Mon 31 Mar 25	Biggest up day <b>+1.15</b> Mon 31 Mar 25
<b>Gasoil 0.1%</b>	
Lowest price <b>38.75</b> Wed 09 Apr 25	Biggest down day <b>-3.17</b> Thu 03 Apr 25

Gasoil forward price  
in US\$ per tonne



## The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	43.66	53.99	97.48	49.77	57.69	101.30
North East	42.61	52.62	96.56	51.08	56.05	99.36
North West	44.18	55.22	98.95	50.06	58.45	101.46
Midlands	42.68	53.15	97.02	48.41	56.54	100.06
South East	42.78	53.11	97.00	54.60	59.01	99.64
South West	43.13	52.95	96.84	50.76	56.33	99.25
N. Ireland	43.24	54.32	n/a	48.88	58.48	n/a
Republic Of Ireland	57.00	59.75	98.42	62.31	63.28	101.54
Portland	40.99	50.67	93.71			

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

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

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

For more information and access to prices, visit [www.portlandpricing.co.uk](http://www.portlandpricing.co.uk)



WELCOME TO MAY'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 **DAVID TODD**, MANAGING DIRECTOR AT GLEANER LTD.

**"IF YOU GET 2 OUT OF 3 DECISIONS RIGHT, YOU ARE BEATING THE ODDS."**

**DAVID TODD.**

**Give your career history in 25 words or fewer.**

Student jobs aside, I have only worked for 2 companies. The first was involved in industrial polymers, and then I joined Gleaner – over 20 years ago.

**Describe yourself in 3 words.**

Reliable. Patient. Prickly.

**What were your childhood / early ambitions?**

To reach adulthood.

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

Top Gear presenter.

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

Keep your powder dry!

**Share your top tips for business success.**

If you get 2 out of 3 decisions right, you are beating the odds.

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

Managing the business with the team through covid.

**Tell us your greatest fear**

Having to drive an EV.

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

Ambition.

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

Interacting with people, whether it be customers or colleagues.

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

Honesty.

**What are you most likely to say?**

Can you take your time and explain please?

**What are you least likely to say?**

There is absolutely no problem with you regularly turning up late for work.

**Describe your perfect day.**

Skiing in the morning and a walk on a sandy beach in the afternoon – possible where I live.

**Do you have a favourite sports team?**

Scotland Rugby union team.

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

World peace.

**Cheese or chocolate?**

Neither – a lager.

**Share your greatest personal achievement.**

Completing my first marathon at 50.

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

Cats.

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

Geography.

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

Removal of Holyrood's devolved power over income tax bands.

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

Heh baldy—you are wearing badly.

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

Remain in fine fettle into my 80s.

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

Kindle, home brew kit and a bottle of Dalwhinnie.

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

One day I might be forced to drive an EV.

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

Greta Thunberg.



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# Fuel Oil News

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