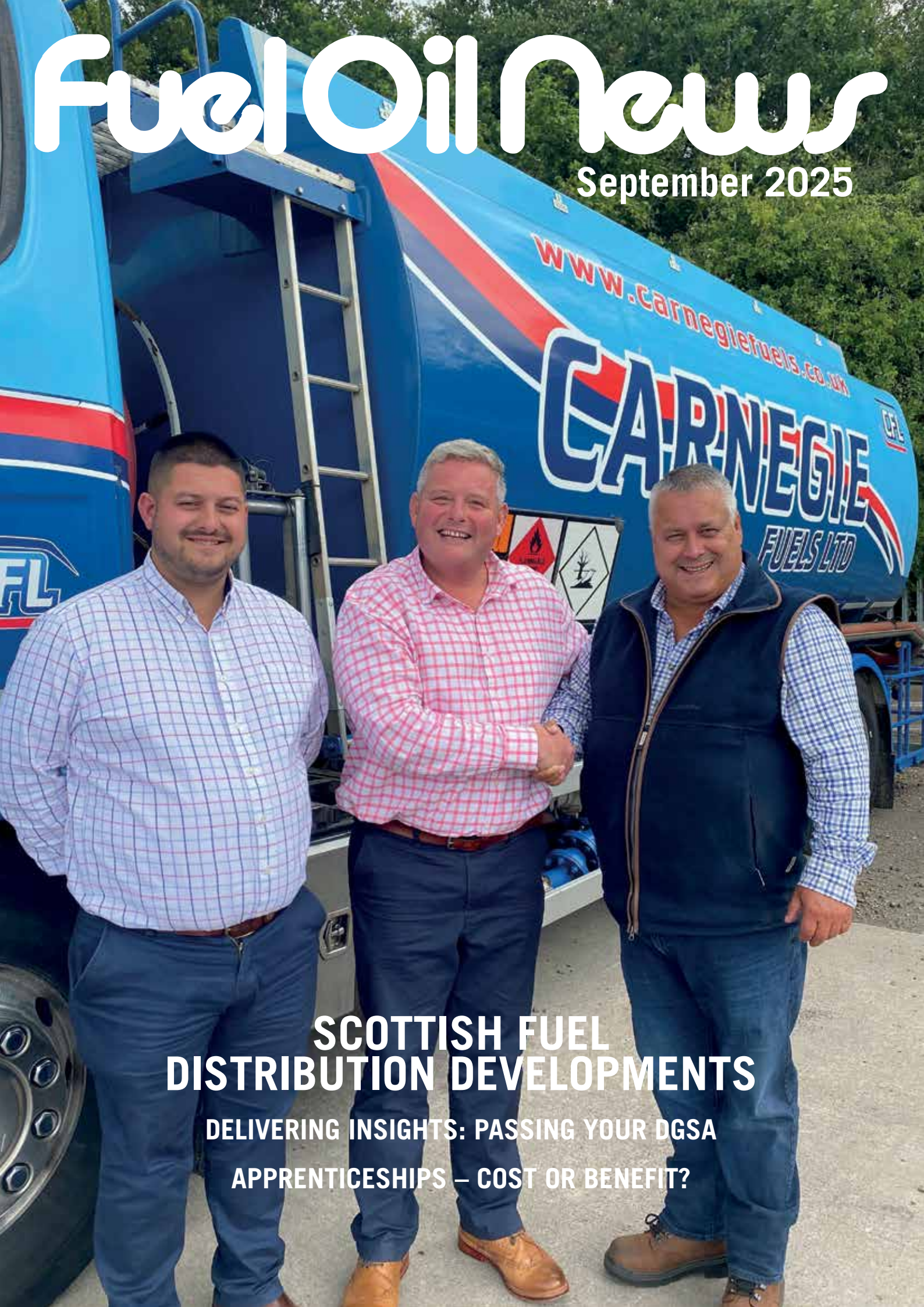


Fuel Oil News

September 2025



SCOTTISH FUEL DISTRIBUTION DEVELOPMENTS

DELIVERING INSIGHTS: PASSING YOUR DGSA

APPRENTICESHIPS – COST OR BENEFIT?

THE LAST THING ON HIS MIND IS WAXING DIESEL FUEL...

Because he doses every diesel delivery until mid November with Exocet's Anti Wax. It ensures any summer grade fuel stored in the winter months is fit for the cold weather.

	EN590 Diesel Summer 16th March - 15th Nov	EN590 Diesel Winter 16th Nov - 15th March
CFPP* (°C) Specification	-5°C	-15°C
CFPP* (°C) Typically with Exocet® Additive	-18°C	-24°C
Treat Rate Additive: Fuel	1:1,000	1:1,000



*All fuel delivered from 16th November is winter grade, so no need to add the Anti Wax after this date.

Actions have consequences.

Lack of action often has greater ones.

Something I was taught from childhood, and a truth worth revisiting.

The closure of Lindsey Oil Refinery, following that of Grangemouth only months earlier, has dominated recent headlines. Add to this the recent biofuel facility shutdowns, and UK energy production is left in a precarious state, with serious implications for UK industry, energy security, and transition.

But beyond the economic and strategic impacts are human stories. One that stood out came from Diarmaid McKay, a Process Operator at Lindsey for 18 years, who described with passion how he has “dedicated his life to keeping the lights on in this country”. His work was “not just a job – it’s been my craft, my challenge, and my way of contributing to the nation’s energy security.” Now, he along with hundreds of uniquely skilled colleagues, faces an uncertain future.

For these workers, every shift carried the weight of knowledge that one mistake could have catastrophic consequences. They met that responsibility with professionalism and pride. What they built – the skills, the commitment, the camaraderie – cannot simply be switched off. As Diarmaid asked: “Where do we find something that demands such knowledge, precision, and courage?”

And Diarmaid’s story is far from unique. Lindsey’s closure threatens 625 jobs directly, up to 1,000 more in the supply chain. Greenergy’s Immingham biofuel site and Vivergo’s Hull biodiesel plant add to that toll. Together these closures put over 5,000 jobs at risk – from refinery workers to farmers and tanker drivers.

These closures may be driven by commercial decisions, but they are shaped by policy – or the lack of it. And they are happening without a strategy to mitigate the consequences.

Without a managed transition, livelihoods will be lost, critical skills discarded, and our energy resilience weakened.

Diarmaid’s is one voice among hundreds. Unless action is taken to deliver effective policy, many more will follow.

As you continue to meet your customers’ energy needs in these challenging times, we hope you find much of value in this issue,



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Fuel Oil News

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

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On the cover

Stephen Rhodes, Managing Director of Highland Fuels, is pictured thanking Kevin Carnegie (r) and Ryan Carnegie (l) of Carnegie Fuels, as the Brechin-based distributor joins the Highland Fuels family. Read more about developments in Scottish distribution on pages 4 & 5.



In this issue

On pages 22 & 23, our new series begins. Delivering actionable, data-led insight on your chosen business-critical topics, it will enable informed decisions to be made to improve operational efficiency, profitability, and resilience. You can hear more from your customers on pages 11-13.



Reopening Carlisle depot will enable distributor to better service Southern Scotland

Cumbrian oil distributor **Allan Stobart Lubricants & Fuels** is reopening its storage depot in Carlisle.

Expanding its distribution network, the base on the Kingstown Industrial Estate will increase the firm's fuel storage capacity by more than 40%.

The firm will move some of its existing tanker fleet to the new supply location, providing easy access to the major road network, and improving service to customers in southern Scotland.

Investment

Steve Hindmarsh, General Manager of Allan Stobart Lubricants & Fuels, said the business was "responding to a changing marketplace" by reopening the site, which has been rented out for vehicle storage for several years.

"The investment in this site will help us expand our customer base while continuing

to provide a quality service to our existing customers."

Its reinstatement as a fuel depot includes the installation of new fuel storage tanks as well as onsite office space.

"Increasing our fuel storage capacity enables us to be more resilient during periods of peak demand and ensures we can meet our customers' needs and get deliveries to them as soon as possible," he explained.

The distributor was acquired by WCF Ltd in 2014, and the site, which had operated as a fuel depot for more than 20 years, was closed in 2016, to bring operations together at Allan Stobart's head office and depot at Raughton Head, near Dalston, Carlisle.

Expected to be operational by late Autumn, the new site will operate alongside Allan Stobart's existing depots at Raughton Head and Hexham.

Steve said the firm planned to move some



of its existing fleet of tankers to the Kingstown depot, improving access to the main road infrastructure and making it better placed to service customers in southern Scotland.

"This move signals our investment in the future and our commitment to ensuring we deliver the best possible service for our customers."

Allan Stobart Lubricants & Fuels delivers commercial, agricultural and domestic fuels to customers across north and West Cumbria and the Eden Valley, South West Scotland, Hexham and the wider Tyne Valley.

The firm is part of Brampton-based WCF Ltd.

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Your NRG powers into Scotland with strategic expansion and new Grangemouth office

Independent fuel distributor Your NRG has entered the Scottish fuel market for the first time, with a brand-new Scottish head office opening in Grangemouth. The move marks a major milestone in the company's nationwide growth strategy and establishes a strong operational foothold across Scotland's Central Belt.

With over one hundred years of family business heritage behind them and a reputation for customer-focused fuel supply solutions, Your NRG's expansion into Scotland is built on its proven track record across England.

"Bringing our service to Scotland is a significant step forward for the business. We are excited to introduce our trusted approach – one where we see real potential to make a difference," said Jeremy Royle, Managing Director at Your NRG.

The Grangemouth office is acting as a



central hub for operations across the Central Belt, serving a wide range of customers, including commercial operations, agriculture and off-grid homeowners. The region is to be overseen by Director Andy McAvoy, who brings extensive experience in fuel distribution, customer service and operational delivery, and will be ably supported by Manager, Millie Peart, a fourth-generation member of the

Peart family who've been supplying fuel for over a century since their humble beginnings delivering coal from horse and cart in north east England.

Your NRG'S award-winning approach, family-run roots, and investment in customer service innovation had already made it a preferred supplier to customers across many parts of England, and they look forward to delivering the same reliable, competitively priced fuel services to fuel users across Scotland.

"We've built our reputation on being dependable, personal, and responsive. We understand the unique needs of both domestic and commercial fuel users – and we're committed to replicating that standard of service and satisfaction for our Scottish customers," Jeremy added.

Additional plans are already underway to widen the Scottish service area and invest further in fleet and infrastructure.

A major deal in Scottish fuel distribution

Independent Scottish distributor, Highland Fuels has acquired Brechin-based Carnegie Fuels with employee ownership a key factor.

The deal brings together two of Scotland's longest-established energy firms and sees Highland Fuels become Scotland's leading independent fuel distributor and forecourt operator.

Employees of Carnegie Fuels are assured of 'long-term security' following the acquisition.

The partnership of two well-respected, deep-rooted Scottish businesses, is described as bringing "long-term security and laying a foundation for sustainable growth."

"This partnership is built on shared values and a commitment to long-term success." Stephen Rhodes, Managing Director – Highland Fuels

Following an extensive sale process, the Carnegie family made the decision to entrust the future of the business to Highland Fuels citing "a strong cultural alignment, shared ethos, and long-standing reputation for service excellence and community focus".

Founded in 1957, the same year as Highland Fuels, Carnegie Fuels has built a legacy of reliability, trust and local service and will continue to operate under its established name and management structure. Ryan Carnegie

has been appointed as Director and Kevin and Rosie Carnegie will be supporting a smooth transition.

Stephen Rhodes, Managing Director at Highland Fuels, comments: "This is a very positive step for both businesses and for the communities we serve. We're honoured to be continuing the Carnegie legacy and welcoming the team into the Highland Fuels family.

"This transaction lays a strong foundation for operational continuity and sustainable growth, delivered with a focus on people, communities, and service excellence. Highland Fuels and Carnegie Fuels share a deep-rooted commitment to professionalism, integrity and reliability. By uniting the strengths of the two companies customers can be confident in a trusted energy partner that is well equipped to meet Scotland's evolving energy needs – today and into the future."

Employee ownership brings staff security

One of the defining features of this transaction is the long-term security it brings to the employees of Carnegie Fuels, who now become part of an employee-owned organisation, in Highland Fuels. As beneficiaries of the Highland Fuels Employee Trust, Carnegie Fuels staff will now have the opportunity to directly contribute to, and benefit from, the ongoing success of



the expanded business.

Commenting on behalf of Carnegie Fuels, Kevin Carnegie said: "This (employee ownership) was a key factor in our decision. We wanted to ensure that our team, many of whom have been with us for years, are looked after not just today but into the future.

"Joining an employee-owned company like Highland Fuels gives them that stability and a real stake in what comes next."

With firm roots in the north of Scotland, Highland Fuels is Scotland's leading independent fuel distributor, operating 11 depots, 16 petrol stations and a fleet of 50 road tankers serving the country. It has 260 employees based across its operations which stretch from Lerwick, Shetland and south to Manchester. The company became employee-owned in August 2023.

UK biodiesel sector warns of collapse without urgent policy change

Britain's biodiesel sector is facing a major crisis that is putting hundreds of British jobs at risk, industry leaders have warned.

Following a meeting with various government departments, sector companies are calling for urgent talks with ministers. They are seeking to develop a clear plan of action to ensure the continuation of the UK's existing renewables sector, maintain vital skills for the transition and attract continued investment.

They argue that increasing the amount of renewable fuel that fuel suppliers are obligated to supply to the UK market through a modest increase in the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) mandate would stimulate demand, and put the UK on equal footing with Europe.

Requiring just a simple rule change, this action would deliver immediate carbon savings without any direct government spending.

The industry is urging the Government to prioritise UK production of biofuels, such as biodiesel and bioethanol, that can decarbonise road transport today. This can be achieved by raising existing biofuel mandates under the RTFO, which sets the proportion of renewable fuels blended into road fuels. Although a full review of the RTFO is scheduled for 2026, industry warns action is needed urgently.

Germany and the Netherlands have already raised blending mandates to over 14%, while Spain and Ireland have also stepped up. By contrast, UK policy lags, and by 2030, EU renewable fuel demand will be nearly double that of the UK.

Increasing the mandate would not require government handouts. However, it would help the Government deliver immediate carbon savings from the 31 million passenger cars and 500,000 Heavy Duty Vehicles that are on UK roads today, and will be for many years during the electrification transition. Latest Department for Transport data shows that road transport emissions in 2023 represented 88% of total transport emissions and 29% of UK net domestic emissions.

Tom Reid, CEO of the Renewable Transport Fuel Association – the sector's trade body, said: "The UK used to be one of the leaders in biofuels for transport in Europe, but now our sector is on the brink. The UK is falling



behind Europe and we need urgent action and policy changes to save the biodiesel (and bioethanol) industries. This will save hundreds of jobs in locations where they are needed, as there aren't new, equivalent employment opportunities in these specific areas if more plants end production."

"We support the Government's goal of moving towards greater use of electric vehicles – but that transition will take time, especially for Heavy Duty Vehicles. Whilst these investments are being made, by increasing the use of biofuels, ministers can immediately cut greenhouse gas emissions from all the vehicles that are on the road today and for years to come."

Adam Traeger, the CEO of Greenenergy, the UK's leading biodiesel producer, said: "Increasing the existing biofuel mandates will deliver a real boost to the sector and help ministers realise their targets of cutting emissions. It will also bring us back in line with other European countries, where biofuels are playing a key role in the energy transition, whilst securing a domestic industry and highly skilled domestic jobs. But this needs to become a priority now."

Joe Kenny, CEO of Olleco, UK biodiesel producer and used cooking oil collector, adds: "For years, the UK has collected and processed domestic waste, converting it into biofuels to be used on our roads. As other countries ramp up their ambitions and enhance policy support,

an increasing volume of this waste is now being exported to overseas producers of road and aviation fuels – a missed opportunity to strengthen investment in UK-based production and the domestic circular economy."

Louise Calviou, CEO of Argent Energy, one of the UK's biodiesel producers, said: "The demand for renewable fuels is driven by government policy. Whilst the use of biodiesel is one of the most cost-efficient and easiest ways to achieve reductions in transport emissions, that does not change the fundamental truth – we need government to ensure the demand is there."

"The current UK policy does not do that and so four of the seven biofuel factories in the UK have closed or are planning to close, including Argent's biodiesel plant in Motherwell. We are asking ministers to show with actions that they want continued investment in renewable fuel technology, assets and skills in the UK."

The call for action comes four weeks after Greenenergy announced that it planned to end biodiesel production at its Immingham plant in Lincolnshire. Last year, Argent Energy was forced to close its biodiesel plant in Motherwell, Scotland.

Without swift action, the UK risks losing a domestic industry that underpins both skilled jobs and fuel security. These risks – and the wider policy failures behind them – are explored in our in-depth industry analysis on pages 19 & 20.

Greenergy backs Amsterdam, as UK policy falters

Greenergy is extending its Amsterdam lease by a decade, citing strong government support and rising biofuel mandates – in stark contrast to the UK, where its Immingham facility faces closure.

The lease extension signals long-term confidence in European markets where government policy provides clear long-term support for biofuels.

Since acquiring the facility in 2018, Greenergy has invested heavily in converting to waste oil feedstocks and expanding capacity. Expansion in 2024, boosted output by 25% and broadened the range of waste oils the facility can process to meet rising demand for waste-based biofuels.

The company credits the Dutch Government's commitment to steadily raising biofuel mandates as creating the certainty needed for continued investment.

CEO Adam Traeger said: "Our extended lease demonstrates our commitment to the Netherlands, where there is support for the industry and clear long-term policies. Where we see policy certainty, we are prepared to invest."

The move contrasts with Greenergy's UK operations, where its biodiesel plant at Immingham faces closure amid weak blending mandates, high energy costs and competition from subsidised imports.

Industry leaders warn that without more ambitious action on the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), the UK risks losing production altogether while Europe accelerates ahead.

Read more on UK biofuel industry challenges on pages 19 & 20



Mitchell & Webber support harbour fleet transition with HVO refuelling hub

The facility is supported by Cornwall Council's Growth Hub Grants Programme and is delivering an immediate boost to marine emission reduction.

Initially serving the Harbour's own workboat fleet, it will later open to leisure and commercial users.

A practical bridge from fossil fuels

Having already trialled HVO in part of its fleet, Falmouth Harbour is now using it in its new £1.6 million state-of-the-art Pilot Boat Atlantic. Operationally critical, it is designed to be one of the cleanest, safest, and most fuel-efficient pilot boats in the UK.

Welcoming the immediate impact on emission reduction, Falmouth Harbour CEO Miles Carden described HVO as "a good interim fuel" adding: "We will continue to proactively explore future fuel options as technology progresses."

Environmental and safety benefits

HVO supplied to the Harbour by distributor Mitchell & Webber, is certified low-carbon and sustainably sourced under ISCC (International Sustainability & Carbon Certification) and RFAS (Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme) schemes.

Company Director Tristan Weedon said: "HVO fuel is biodegradable, non-toxic, non-carcinogenic, non-hydroscopic (it doesn't absorb water) and has a higher flashpoint – so not only is it a greener fuel, but it is safer – all of which make it an ideal fuel for a marine environment."

Councillor Loic Rich said: "Reducing our Carbon footprint is a key priority for Cornwall Council. I hope that, by switching to HVO, Falmouth Harbour will be leading the way for others to follow towards a greener future."

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Halso UK Fuels and El Oils: Supporting Staffordshire Women's Aid



Staffordshire Women's Aid is the chosen charity of **HALSO UK FUELS LTD** and **EL Oils Limited**.

For nearly 50 years, the charity has been supporting those living with, fleeing or recovering from the impact of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. Its mission is to empower victims to become survivors, to live safely and thrive.

Ahead of the distributors' latest fundraising push, Nic Edmonds from Staffordshire Women's Aid visited Halso HQ in Fradley to share more about the charity's

important work. Halso recently raised £600 through a raffle at the recent Staffordshire County Show and are planning a charity zip wire later this year.

Director Emma Osborn shared: "We will be supporting this amazing charity by holding raffles and coffee mornings as well as completing fundraising challenges to raise donations."

The company also shared a list of things that are needed to support women and families who are often forced to flee homes with nothing, and is offering its Fradley HQ as a collection centre for these much-needed items.

Following the visit, Nic thanked Halso for the opportunity to share more about the work of Staffordshire Women's Aid commenting: "Forging strong partnerships with local businesses and community groups is vital to continuing our lifesaving work in Staffordshire.

"Your commitment to fundraising, donation drives, and awareness raising is deeply appreciated by all of us at SWA – and, most importantly, by the survivors we support every single day."

Fuel Additive Science Technology: Saving Christmas! Ollie Saves Santa's Sleigh – 500 Kids to Get a Magical Visit!



A big shoutout to Ollie Clark, Relief Production Supervisor at **FAST** for rolling up his sleeves and repairing Santa's sleigh for the Rotary Club of Tettenhall! Thanks to his hard work, Santa will be bringing joy to over **500 children** this year – including many from backgrounds where this magical visit might otherwise be out of reach.

And a huge thank you to **Fuel Additive Science Technologies** for giving Ollie the time from his working week to make it happen. That's the spirit of Christmas right there – teamwork, kindness, and a dash of festive magic!

Well done, Ollie!



A winning team: Highland Fuels and ICTFC announce exciting new partnership

A comprehensive sponsorship agreement with Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club, underscores **Highland Fuels'** long-term commitment to supporting the local community and ensuring a bright future for football in the Highlands.

Proudly established in Inverness since 1957, Highland Fuels recognises the vital role that a strong and successful football club plays in the life and spirit of the city. With this in mind, the company has committed substantial support to efforts to stabilise and rebuild the club.

This work is spearheaded by club Chairman Alan Savage and his management team, and their commitment to securing the future of Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC has been the inspiration behind Highland Fuels' commitment to lasting support.

"Following open and productive discussions with Alan Savage and Andrew Benjamin, we are pleased to have put in place a sponsorship arrangement that reflects our shared values and long-term vision for the club," said Stephen Rhodes, Managing Director at Highland Fuels.

"Football in Inverness matters. It brings people together, strengthens community pride, and deserves the backing of local businesses like ours."

Alan Savage, Chairman of Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC, said: "Everyone associated with ICTFC are incredibly grateful to Highland Fuels for stepping forward with such a strong show of support. Their long-standing roots in Inverness and their commitment to the city make them a perfect partner for the club."

Commercial Director Andrew Benjamin added: "This deal is a significant milestone for the club as we work to strengthen our commercial foundation.

"We're proud to be working with a company that understands the importance of community and continuity, and we're excited about what we can achieve together."

The deal will see Highland Fuels' branding featured prominently around the stadium and across various club platforms, reinforcing the company's presence in the region while providing essential financial support to the club.

As Alan observes: "This partnership is about more than sponsorship – it's about building a sustainable future together."

New Era Energy: The importance of industry apprentices



THE NEXT GENERATION ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE FUTURE SUCCESS OF THE DOWNSTREAM INDUSTRY. CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, SPOKE WITH **VICKY FINCH**, HEAD OF HR AND TALENT AT NEW ERA ENERGY, TO DISCUSS THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME THEY OFFER, AND HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE BUSINESS.

A long-term workforce strategy

Congratulations are in order for the team at New Era Energy as they have just been awarded Platinum status under the Investors in Apprentices accreditation scheme. Claudia asked Vicky why New Era Energy consider their apprentice programme so important.

“We are proud of our apprenticeship programme and what we offer to young people entering the industry,” Vicky began.

“At New Era, we consider the Investors in Apprentices accreditation important because it recognises our commitment to nurturing talent through offering apprenticeships. It reflects our dedication to structured learning and career development. Apprenticeships are not just a recruitment tool for us; they are part of our long-term workforce strategy to grow talent from within and contribute to the wider skills gap in our organisation.”

What do apprenticeships bring to the industry and to the apprentices?

“We have found that apprenticeships bring a fresh pipeline of talent, helping to close skills gaps and future-proof the workforce,” Vicky continued. “They introduce new perspectives (which we encourage), improve diversity, and allow us as a business to shape employees’ development from the ground up, embedding strong capabilities from day one.

“Apprentices gain confidence, and hands-on skills that are directly relevant to their chosen field, setting them up for long-term career success.

“In terms of the cost to the business, we pay our apprenticeship programmes through our Apprenticeship Levy Fund, this is a government scheme to help fund apprenticeship training. We then offer the apprentice 20% of their workweek to study, which is typically one day per week.

“We’re committed to supporting our apprentices by providing them with a dedicated mentor throughout their course – usually their line manager. As they approach the end of their apprenticeship, our HR team will have a conversation with them about possible next steps. If a suitable role is available, they’re likely to be offered a permanent position.”



The impact of accreditation

Claudia asked what the accreditation would mean for New Era and how it would change things for the business? Vicky explained more: “We have recently received the Investor in Apprentices Platinum status which we are delighted about! The accreditation gives validation of the work we’re already doing and the value we place on apprenticeships.

“Internally, it helps strengthen our culture of learning and progression. Externally, it enhances our employer brand to help attract ambitious, great potential individuals.”

The apprentices

Vicky was keen to share some thoughts from three current apprentices at New Era Energy:

• Connor Limby-Newton – Transport Apprentice

“I chose to take the apprenticeship route as I wanted to gain real world experience whilst continuing to learn and earn qualifications at the same time.

“I first saw an advert online for New Era and after my interview I had better understanding of what the industry involved. I hope the apprenticeship will lead to a long-term career where I can continue to grow and challenge myself further.”

• Mia Bentley – Junior Procurement Negotiator

“I decided on an apprenticeship role after finishing college as I wanted to carry on with my education whilst starting work. I found the job for New Era advertised on Indeed which caught my eye due to it being local to where I live and being an apprenticeship which

allowed me to keep learning.

“I had never worked in the fuel industry before so, it was all new to me, however, during my interview, the team explained about the ambitions for New Era, the goals within the company as a whole and what would be expected of me.

“Now two years in, I understand the fuel industry a lot more and enjoy working within it. Now I have passed my apprenticeship, I hope to stay within the Procurement Department and increase my knowledge of New Era as a whole. I am excited to see where my qualifications get me in my future career within the business.”

• Tommy Collins – Compliance Officer

“I decided on the apprenticeship route because most businesses required some experience to even apply. As a 19-year-old with little work experience this wasn’t something I had. The apprenticeship provided the perfect opportunity to gain this experience and a route into a full-time job.

“I became aware of New Era through the apprenticeship scheme on the government website. My view on the fuel industry was very limited before joining New Era. After being here for 2 years a lot has changed. The amount of reliance on fuel is huge – it’s such an important industry for the country.

“I’m now on my second apprenticeship at New Era, taking on a more specialised role within the business. My hope is to continue growing with the business and to expand the department.”

The New Era Energy apprentices have clearly made a big impact. Evidently, offering an apprenticeship programme has many benefits for individuals, businesses and the industry as a whole.

Find out how your business can benefit from the Apprenticeship Levy Scheme on page 24.

If you would like to share details of your apprenticeship programme, or if you have an amazing apprentice in your business that you would like to shout about, then please get in touch: claudia@andpublishing.co.uk

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The downstream customer

IN THE SECOND IN OUR SERIES OF CUSTOMER CONVERSATIONS, CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, SPOKE WITH MORE DOWNSTREAM OIL USERS TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY REALLY THINK OF THE INDUSTRY, WHAT WORKS WELL, WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT AND HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT THE TRANSITION TO A GREENER FUTURE.

The customers

Claudia spoke with customers from across the country...

- **Lesley and Keith Davenport** live in a rural location in the Surrey Hills between Dorking and Guildford. Their home is a detached Victorian lodge, built in 1870 and is Grade II listed.
- **Liz Jeffries** lives in a detached bungalow in Marazion, a small coastal town in Cornwall. The property is over 200 hundred years old.
- **Alice and Jamie Westbrook**, and their two primary school aged children, live in an end of terrace cottage in the village of Chiddingfold on the Surrey/West Sussex border. The house was built in the 1800s.

Claudia asked each customer how they felt initially about moving into a property that required kerosene for home heating. Were they confident in what the process involved?

Lesley responded: "We moved into this property in 1991. At that time, it had a solid fuel (coal) boiler. We found this very difficult and not at all easy to use – particularly as we had moved from a modern house with gas

central heating.

"Within a year, we had replaced the coal fired boiler with an oil boiler which was cleaner and much more user friendly. We had no experience of oil boilers but had limited choice as there was and still is, no mains gas available for us to connect to.

"Once we were used to our oil central heating, we found it straightforward to use. Obviously, unlike gas, one needs to be aware of how much oil is in the storage tank and when it requires topping up.

"In 2022, we replaced the old oil boiler with a new Grant oil boiler which is more efficient. We also replaced the oil tank which is in the garden. This one has a simple display gauge showing the amount of oil we have. We try not to let the tank get below quarter full and have never run out."

Liz was positive about her experience of moving to oil: "When I first moved into the property in Marazion, there was a simple storage heater. Then, sixteen years ago, I had oil installed and found it to be a straightforward and easy process. I must say that it has made a

great difference."

Alice added: "It was definitely a negative factor for us. I didn't know how you went about buying oil and who from and I was concerned about the cost of filling a tank in one go."

Choosing a supplier

We were keen to know the main factors customers consider when choosing a supplier for their home oil. Perhaps unsurprisingly, cost, remains a key factor for most.

Alice summed up the views felt by many customers: "The main factor we consider is the cost and how quickly they can deliver."

Liz agreed: "For me, the cost is the deciding factor when choosing a supplier."

"Cost is also our main concern," reflected Keith, "as oil prices fluctuate depending upon world supply and demand. We have found that fuel clubs tend to be cheaper, and they use local delivery companies.

"When we need a top up, we will contact three or four different companies to find the most competitive price. It is difficult to find independent companies nowadays as many of



Lesley and Keith Davenport



Liz Jeffries



Alice and Jamie Westbrook

the smaller, once family-run suppliers, are now owned by larger conglomerates, but we have never had a problem with supply or delivery regardless of the size of the oil supplier.

“We have always found customer service good and efficient.”

The reputability of a supplier

When asked whether the reputability of their supplier mattered, and whether they look at customer service reviews; the customers we spoke with gave a mixed response.

“I would be interested and would want my supplier to have a good reputation, but I wouldn't know where to find this information,” Alice admitted.

Keith did some homework on suppliers in their early days on oil: “We investigated the reputability of companies when we first began using oil,” he shared. “But haven't done so much recently. As we are now long term and experienced customers of purchasing oil, we feel we are content with the suppliers we use.”

Liz shared how she uses and trusts BoilerJuice for sourcing her oil: “I most often use BoilerJuice to find oil. I do find that they are well established and trustworthy for the process of purchasing my oil.”

The ordering process

We asked how the customers knew how much heating oil to purchase, and how often they found themselves purchasing.

Lesley replied: “We don't really know how much heating oil we need. Our new storage tank holds 1400 litres. We rely on checking the gauge. We tend to top up with 500 -700 litres each time which is approximately four times a year. As a customer, we do find the buying process very straightforward.”

Alice added: “We use approximately two full tanks a year of oil, which is sourced via BoilerJuice. They make it easy to compare costs and delivery times. We also have a direct debit set up with them to spread the cost.”

“I purchase oil three times a year, depending on weather conditions and how cold a winter it is,” reflected Liz. “It's often very damp and wet in Cornwall so you do really need the heat to dry it out. I heat the house continually through winter to make sure I keep the damp away. To order, I always look online first to get an idea of the prices on offer and then I ring on the phone to place the actual order.”

The purchasing decision

With Liz purchasing through an online marketplace, Claudia was keen to discover why she chooses this route, and whether the others



Lesley and Keith Davenport's home

also used fuel marketplace websites or buying groups when purchasing fuel for their homes.

Liz explained: “I use BoilerJuice regularly. They often send out emails with pricing updates which are very useful and give me a good idea about the current price of oil.”

“We have used a buying group once,” Alice shared. “The challenge with buying groups is that you don't get a final price until everyone has ordered. We also find this ordering process a bit slower than if we ordered independently.”

Lesley said: “We do not use fuel marketplace websites. We use a buying group and deal with the same three or four companies. We find that our buying process is straightforward.”

How do suppliers determine pricing?

The customers we spoke with had some interest in learning more about the pricing fluctuations of oil and how suppliers determine their pricing:

- **Alice:** “I don't know much about this, but it would certainly interest me. All I know is that during the Covid lockdown we stocked up on oil as it was so cheap!”
- **Lesley:** “We know that oil dealers base their pricing on the global market. However, there can be local variations. This does interest us.”
- **Liz:** “I used to do a monthly pricing plan with BoilerJuice, but I have stopped this. I would rather have flexibility to check pricing. If you commit it to a monthly plan, then it seems to end up more expensive. I would be interested to learn how these companies set their pricing.”

An urgent requirement

We asked the customers if they felt confident that their supplier could support them if they

had run out of oil and needed an urgent supply.

Attempting to solve the problem themselves, Alice shared her dramatic experience: “We have run out before when our sensor stopped working. It was a pain as we were in the depth of winter and were desperate for oil.

“I found out via social media that a petrol station near to us sold kerosene and so I bought containers and filled them up.

“It was an awful experience because it made our car smell for days, although the worse part was that the containers were so heavy to lift into the tank, that I spilt the oil all over myself! The car smell was light relief after that!”

Looking to the industry for help, Liz had a more positive experience: “I feel that the industry is always very helpful when you are close to running out of oil. They will always deliver to you as quickly as they can if they know it is an emergency.”

Lesley added: “We've never actually had an emergency thankfully. We've never run low on fuel or run out. We assume that we'd have to pay extra for a quick/emergency delivery.”

Automated ordering

The customers offered mixed responses when Claudia asked whether they are using, or have considered using, an automated ordering system with a tank level monitor:

- **Liz:** “No – it's been offered to me but I've never used one. I would rather have more control over my finances and when to order myself.”
- **Keith:** “We have considered using an automated ordering system. However, we decided against this as the customer is required to pay an admin fee, and you are

generally unable to choose your supplier. Our own monitoring using the gauge works well for us.”

- **Alice:** “We don’t have one but it is certainly something that we would consider.”

Service and Maintenance

Care and maintenance of a fuel tank is important, as is ensuring that the tank is accessible for the driver. We asked the customers for their thoughts on service and maintenance.

“Our fuel tank is fairly new and is a modern tank with a double skin,” responded Lesley. “It is checked annually by the engineer when the boiler is serviced, the tanker driver will always check the tank and my husband, Keith, also makes sure it is all in good working order.

“The tank is easy for the driver to reach. He can park on our drive reasonably close to the tank.”

Alice said: “Our tank is in our garden, behind our locked side gate, which recently proved an issue! We ordered through BoilerJuice and as we didn’t know who was delivering the oil and they didn’t notify us of the exact delivery date, meant the driver couldn’t deliver as I hadn’t unlocked the gate. Oops!”

Liz added: “I don’t do much to maintain the tank, but the drivers always do a good job of checking it over. A standard tanker can get down the lane to the bungalow to put in the oil.”

Low carbon heating solutions

Wanting to discover whether the customers have considered acquiring a heat pump or other low carbon heating solution, Claudia asked them for their thoughts:

- **Alice:** “I am interested in a heat pump as a home heating option, but I haven’t investigated it and I imagine that the cost would be prohibitive. I’ve never heard of HVO!”
- **Lesley:** “When we are no longer able to buy a new gas or oil boiler, what is an affordable, viable alternative? At the moment, it certainly isn’t a heat pump which we seriously considered and explored when we decided to replace our old oil boiler.

“Our house wasn’t suitable and would have required major alteration and the running costs of a ground source heat pump were unaffordable.

“Solar panels are not a viable consideration for us at our time of life either. Our property is Grade II listed so would require planning permission. As we will probably downsize in the not-too-distant future, we



Liz Jeffries and her Cornish home

would not want the expense or disruption as there would be little benefit to us.

“My husband, Keith, has heard of HVO but I had not. We would not consider it for our home heating. Keith researched HVO several years ago. The cost was and still is more than twice the price of domestic oil and we have concerns over its production.”

- **Liz** also has questions around HVO: “I haven’t heard of HVO before so I’m not sure about using it for home heating. I would like to know more information about it though – is it cheaper or more expensive? What are the differences? Where is it sourced from?”

“I have friends that have had heat pumps installed and have not been impressed by them! I’m not sure that heat pumps are the best solution for home heating.”

The energy transition

We asked the customers how they felt about the government plans for net zero and the energy transition.

Alice shared her thoughts: “We feel that the current government plans for net zero and the energy transition are a non-starter.

“There is no way we could afford to replace our oil heating system with an eco-friendly option, and if the government subsidies are anything like they were for the electric car scheme, it would still be unaffordable for the average person living in the UK.”

Liz reflected: “The energy transition is a very difficult challenge for the government. I don’t think enough support is being offered to people so they can make a positive change.”

Lesley added: “We are in favour of net zero but not at ‘any price’. It’s not going to happen unless major oil and gas users globally commit to working towards net zero.

“The UK alone will not make a significant impact. As things are at the moment, electricity in this country is far too expensive.

UK consumers pay one of the highest prices in the world. We are still importing gas and oil from abroad but at the same time shutting down some of our own supplies without an affordable, domestic alternative. The current plans for transition to net zero are not viable.”

Thank you to the industry

In our discussions with the customers, it was clear how appreciative they are of those in the downstream industry due to their many positive engagements with suppliers:

Liz: “I would like to say a big thank you to two businesses – Mitchell & Webber and BoilerJuice. They both have lovely staff who always go above and beyond and have been great to deal with. Last year, I ordered too much oil, and it wouldn’t fit in the tank so BoilerJuice refunded the difference. That was really kind of them.”

Lesley: “We use the same three or four companies as they are reliable and trustworthy. We also appreciate the drivers that come out to our home.”

Alice: “I don’t have much direct contact with people as I order our oil online and leave the gate open for the drivers, but we do appreciate those in the industry and good customer service!”

It is clear that understanding customer preferences and demands will be core to the industry as it moves forward through the energy transition.

Fuel Oil News will continue to regularly engage with the industry’s customers and will be sharing the views of agricultural and commercial customers alongside our domestic customer series. If you have any customers, across these sectors, that you would like us to speak with so they can share their thoughts and ideas, then please do let us know or put them in touch with us: claudia@andpublishing.co.uk

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Graham Slater
Allan Stobart Lubricants
and Fuels

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 **GRAHAM SLATER**, ROUTING MANAGER FOR ALLAN STOBART LUBRICANTS AND FUELS, TO DISCOVER HOW GRAHAM SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.



MY ALARM GOES OFF AT...

An alarm is something I have never set as I am always awake by 5am, and I have never been late for work. However, there is always a first time for everything!

THE FIRST THING I DO IS...

Put the kettle on and make myself a brew. I then make myself some toast and Marmite (you either love it or hate it – try it with Philadelphia cheese, it softens the blow!), or porridge, or if I'm feeling healthy then some melon with Greek yogurt.

I then turn Sky Sports News on the TV and chill out until I need to leave the house.

I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY...

Getting a workout in before I start work – this is usually by cycling between 10 and 30 miles, depending on how I'm feeling.

I CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT...

My keys and my phone.

MY TYPICAL DAY...



A typical morning begins with me arriving at work for 6:30am to start for 7am. I log onto my computer and make sure that our drivers have everything they need for their day delivering to customers.

Then I settle into a morning of planning and organising the next 2-3 days of deliveries with my colleague Rob.

I work closely with the sales team, scheduling in bulk deliveries to commercial customers and paying attention to urgent orders that

come in for customers who have run out of fuel.

I enjoy speaking with customers daily; I've built up a strong relationship with many customers over the years, and many will call me directly to book their orders in.

My mobile phone is never far from my ear, as I also have calls coming in from drivers who need answers to questions when they are out. In between planning deliveries, I will also be keeping a close eye on our stock levels and accept bulk deliveries into our storage tanks.

On an afternoon we are finalising delivery loads for the next day and making sure all paperwork is ready for the drivers.

MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT...

In the first six months of starting, I unfortunately put the wagon in

a ditch on a farm lane. When I managed to get myself out of the passenger side footwell, I walked down to the farm to phone Allan and told him what had happened, and I suggested that we might need a crane to get me out.

Long story short, the crane came and lifted the wagon out of the ditch and amazingly there was hardly any damage, and I was able to continue with my deliveries, slightly shaken and most definitely stirred!

I arrived back at the yard at 9pm and to my horror, Allan was sitting there waiting for me. As a young lad I thought I was going to get a telling off, however Allan looked at his watch and said, "Hello Graham, I was about to send that crane out to look for you!"

He never mentioned it again, apart from in jest, and I learnt a valuable lesson that day – that if somebody is truly sorry then that is enough.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB...

I can honestly say that there is nothing about my job that I don't like. Apart from when we run out of biscuits!

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB...

I love reading our Feefo reviews and hearing the positive words from our customers. It gives me a sense of satisfaction knowing we deliver a quality service!

We have a great team at Allan Stobart Fuels which enables us to give a high level of service to customers which I believe is second to none.

I RELAX AFTER WORK BY...

Cycling home. It is a great way to end the day, as it gives me time to process and reflect on the day I've had. I then spend the evening relaxing with my wife of 32 years, Ruth.

MY FAVOURITE MEAL IS...

Marmite and toast for breakfast! I usually have a light lunch, although we occasionally do a chippy or baguette run and I will always favour the chips!

Fortunately, I am married to somebody who loves to cook and travels the world with her job, so we eat various cultural cuisines, but my favourite meal is always shepherd's pie, or anything hot and spicy!

ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE IS...

The only thing on my bedside table is my charging port for my mobile phone, a coaster, my tablet and a book called The World's Greatest Cycling Climbs.

THE LAST THING I DO EACH DAY IS...

Have a chat with Ruth, usually having a laugh about something that has happened in our day. Quite often we will look at photos and videos that have been sent from our daughter, of our 10-month-old grandson, Asher.

I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY...

11:30pm.

A Solution for Every Tank

The diagram illustrates four main sensor solutions from OTODATA, each with specific applications:

- Hydrostatic Pressure Sensors:** Used for Red Diesel in all tank sizes.
- Capacitive Sensors:** Used for Heating Oil in multi-tank applications.
- Radar Solutions:** Offer non-invasive installation for IBC Tanks.
- Float Sensors:** Used for Diesel in underground tanks and more.



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Going off-road: What does the RFAS scheme extension mean for distributors?

While significant progress has been made in fleet decarbonisation, the race to reduce emissions is not just a road transport story. Domestic and commercial heating, factories, marine operators, and power generators are all under pressure to switch from fossil fuels to lower carbon alternatives. And while renewable liquid fuels can deliver massive greenhouse gas (GHG) savings, there has been a stubborn challenge:

How do you prove those claims are real?

Enter the Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme

In 2021, the Zemo Partnership launched the Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme (RFAS) to tackle exactly this problem for the road transport market.

At its core, RFAS provides independent, third-party verification that a renewable fuel:

1. Comes from a sustainable, traceable feedstock.
2. Delivers real, measurable GHG emissions savings.
3. Hasn't been double counted or mislabelled.

Complementing the UK Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) the scheme has helped commercial fleets to transition from fossil fuels with greater confidence.

For road transport fuels, the RFAS process looks like this:

- Feedstock origin verification
- Supply chain traceability
- Lifecycle emissions calculation
- Independent audits
- Renewable Fuel Declarations (RFDs)

Mind the gap

While road transport had the RFAS (and the RTFO), off-road sectors – like heating, stationary power generation, and marine – had nothing comparable.

Scheme expansion

To fill that gap, Zemo Partnership has launched RFAS Heat–Power–Marine. It applies the same robust standards as the road

transport scheme but adds market specific record keeping preventing the same fuel being claimed in multiple sectors.

By applying the same robust criteria for **heat, power and marine**, the scheme extension offers distributors a way to evidence the sustainability credentials of fuels supplied into these sectors.

Why it matters

With public scrutiny increasing around green claims, it's no longer enough for fuel suppliers to simply say their fuels are "up to 90% lower in emissions." Buyers are demanding verifiable sustainability data.

The scheme addresses three key challenges:

1. **Traceability** – Each fuel consignment's feedstock and lifecycle emissions are traced from origin through to the end user.
2. **Verification** – Approved fuel suppliers and distributors are independently audited to confirm the accuracy of sustainability claims.
3. **Double counting prevention** – By tracking consignments throughout the supply chain, the scheme prevents fraudulent or duplicated emission reduction claims.

"RFAS Heat–Power–Marine fills the same gap for off-road sectors that RFAS did for road transport."
– *Simon Lawson, Crown Group*

Benefits for distributors

- **Customer confidence:** Independently verified, auditable proof of your fuel's sustainability.
- **Regulatory readiness:** Important if your customers need to prove fuel compliance.
- **Market differentiation:** Allows smaller distributors to compete on credibility, not just cost.
- **Expansion potential:** As more sectors decarbonise, it opens the door to a growing market.

"It's a new level of assurance that gives customers the confidence to decarbonise." – *Gloria Esposito*

Inside the scheme:

MARGARET MAJOR, FUEL OIL NEWS, SPOKE WITH **GLORIA ESPOSITO**, ZEMO PARTNERSHIP, TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THE HEAT-POWER-MARINE EXPANSION.

Why it matters:

"Unlike for transport fuels under the RTFO, there was no formal verification system for fuels in these sectors. That made it harder to prove sustainability credentials and avoid double counting. RFAS Heat–Power–Marine fills that gap."

On differences:

"RFAS Heat–Power–Marine follows the original RFAS framework for the most part but also requires suppliers to maintain market-specific records.

"One key difference is that the RFAS compliance audit involves the verification of Renewable Transport Fuel Certificate (RTFC) issuance for Category A suppliers, this is obviously not relevant for RFAS Heat–Power–Marine."

On the verification process:

"Zemo's independent appointed auditors conduct an annual compliance audit of approved renewable fuel suppliers, verifying conformity with RFAS performance standards, so that their customers can have confidence in the environmental credentials of their renewable fuel supply chain."

"The Renewable Fuel Declarations provide customers with details of the raw material feedstocks (type and country of origin) and GHG emissions savings, in a consistent format. These are crossed checked against voluntary certification scheme Proof of Sustainability documentation to ensure traceability of sustainability information as it transfers down the supply chain.

"Zemo also investigates any concerns raised by customers or third parties."

On transparency:

"Approved suppliers are listed on the RFAS and RFAS Heat–Power–Marine webpages. A QR code on the declarations also allows customers to quickly verify that their supplier is approved."

On support for smaller distributors:

"New applicants are provided with example mass balance templates and guidance notes for the audit. We also offer one-to-one calls, and we're developing an online training course tailored to small and medium sized distributors.

"Zemo is on hand to offer bespoke support all suppliers throughout the process; to answer questions via email or in a virtual meeting."



On the front line:

A DISTRIBUTOR PERSPECTIVE WITH
SIMON LAWFORD, CROWN OIL

Bury-based Crown Oil has been an early and long-standing participant in the Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme (RFAS) since it launched in 2021. Crown Oil not only played a role in the development of the extended scheme but was the first UK distributor to gain RFAS H-P-M approval.

Simon Lawford, Technical Sales and Renewable Fuels Manager for Crown, describes the positive business impact of the scheme, how it levels the playing field and why he would unequivocally recommend scheme accreditation to all distributors – regardless of size.

“The scheme allows us to supply RFAS-compliant HVO fuel, provide quarterly renewable fuel declarations to customers, and demonstrate industry-leading sustainability credentials.”

– *Simon Lawford*

What originally drew you to join?

“We joined to strengthen supply chain transparency and give our customers complete confidence in the sustainability of the renewable fuels we supply.

“It provides an independently verified framework that supports both new adopters and existing users of renewable fuels with the tools and reporting needed to track fuel provenance across the entire supply chain.

“For us, it’s about instilling confidence, upholding accountability and helping customers make informed, responsible fuel choices.”

The business impacts

“Membership has delivered measurable business benefits, particularly in customer trust, competitive positioning and operational assurance.

Customer confidence. “It assures customers, especially those with ESG targets, that they’re sourcing genuinely sustainable fuels with a clear, traceable origin.”

“Being part of RFAS gives us a verifiable framework that assures customers who demand transparency and traceability across their supply chains.”

Competitive edge: “In tenders and



procurement processes, we’re increasingly seeing RFAS compliance becoming a differentiator, or even a requirement.”

Improved governance: “The reporting and fuel tracking required have enhanced our data integrity and tightened our auditing and supply chain control.”

“It has aligned well with our long-term commitment to quality, compliance and leadership in renewable fuel supply.”

The challenges

“The traceability requirements mean that we can no longer simply deliver and forget. We needed to bring all the data together into one place and developing the system to do this was certainly a challenge and, as an importer of our fuels we faced additional complexity.”

Customer scrutiny

“Following recent media coverage, we received a number of enquiries from customers seeking clarification on the provenance and certification of our renewable fuel.

“With a supply chain underpinned by robust verification and internationally recognised standards, these concerns were promptly and confidently addressed. All of our renewable fuels are supplied in full compliance with ISCC (International Sustainability & Carbon Certification) requirements, ensuring traceability from feedstock to final delivery.

“Additionally, our RFAS membership provides an independent framework for transparency as fuel passes through the UK supply chain, which ISCC is unable to do, with quarterly declarations and auditable reporting that align with Zemo Partnership standards. This gives our customers confidence that the fuels they are purchasing meet stringent sustainability criteria and regulatory benchmarks. Thanks to these certifications, we were able to quickly mitigate any concerns and reinforce trust in the integrity of our renewable fuel offering.”

The scheme extension

“The Crown Oil Group is proud to have played a role in the initial development of the RFAS

Heat-Power-Marine scheme, and we’re excited to extend this next level of assurance to our customers in these sectors.”

“As organisations outside the road transport sector face increasing pressure to decarbonise, many are seeking renewable fuel options that come with credible, independently verified sustainability claims. RFAS H-P-M provides a recognised framework for fuel traceability, carbon intensity reporting, and sustainability assurance, tailored to non-road sectors.

“For new customers evaluating alternatives to fossil fuels, RFAS gives them the confidence to make the switch. It reduces perceived risk in procurement and strengthens the business case for renewable fuel adoption.

“In competitive tenders, particularly where ESG criteria are a deciding factor, we expect RFAS accreditation to increasingly become a differentiator, and in time, potentially a requirement. By being early adopters of the scheme, we’re positioning ourselves as a trusted, forward-thinking supplier in the decarbonisation space.”

A scheme for all

“RFAS allows smaller and mid-sized distributors to compete on a level playing field with larger players.

“We would absolutely recommend the RFAS scheme to other distributors.

“RFAS brings credibility, transparency and structure to the renewable fuels market. It gives distributors a practical, independently verified framework to demonstrate fuel sustainability, helping to build customer trust and reduce scepticism. In an environment where scrutiny is rising and greenwashing concerns are high, having RFAS accreditation sets you apart.

“It also opens up commercial opportunities. More tenders now require or strongly favour suppliers who can prove sustainability credentials.

“Beyond customer acquisition, the scheme also supports internal governance. The quarterly reporting and clear documentation processes help strengthen supply chain integrity and ensure you’re audit-ready.

“Ultimately, RFAS helps raise the standard for the whole industry, and that benefits everyone.”

UK biofuel industry faces existential threat from unintended consequences

MARGARET MAJOR

The UK biofuel industry is on the brink. A series of recent announcements from domestic producers signal an industry under existential threat, not from innovation or obsolescence, but from unintended consequences of government policy – specifically, a trade deal struck to shield a different sector entirely – coupled with a broader lack of ambition in UK biofuel policy.

The latest trigger? A UK-US trade agreement designed to protect British car exports from Donald Trump-era tariffs. In a bid to preserve automotive trade, the UK agreed to drop import duties on American bioethanol. But in doing so, it opened the floodgates to cheaper US biofuel imports, undermining the viability of domestic production.

The collapse in confidence

Biofuel producers have been warning since early May, that the British bioethanol industry would collapse as a result of the deal and, in the past few months, several UK producers, including major industry players Vivergo and Ensus, have either shuttered operations or signalled likely closures.

Ensus took the decision to mothball its Teesside facility, directly attributing this to a “sudden and severe imbalance in the market” brought on by the tariff change.

Vivergo, owner of the UK’s biggest bioethanol plant, had already issued warnings about the sustainability of its operations under current market pressures. Citing both the immediate shock of US imports and longer-term policy uncertainty, it warned that concessions made in the recent US trade deal would wipe out the industry in the UK.

Following government confirmation that there would be no bail out, the closure of the Vivergo plant was confirmed on August 15th with owners Associated British Foods (ABF) stating: “Vivergo will have ceased all production of bioethanol and animal feed by 31 August 2025.”

The closure of the Hull-based facility puts 160 jobs at risk, leading the leader of Hull City Council, Cllr Mike Ross, to comment: “The Government is asleep at the wheel, and the result is job losses.”

Critics will suggest that the industry was

already unprofitable, with significant financial losses being posted by UK producers already losing out to their US rivals. Downing Street denied that Vivergo’s threatened closure was connected to the accord, saying the industry “has been facing significant challenges for some time, long before our deal with the US”.

But the playing field was far from level, with UK companies already pushing for changes to the regulations that enable US companies to earn double subsidies – long before the trade deal dealt the killer blow.

The bilateral trade deal struck by Keir Starmer in May, which came into effect in July, allows 1.4 billion litres of US ethanol into the UK tariff free (down from 19%) – a volume that equates to the size of the UK’s entire current ethanol market.

“WE’VE EFFECTIVELY GIVEN THE WHOLE OF THE UK MARKET TO THE US PRODUCERS.”

BEN HACKETT,
VIVERGO MD

Highlighting the impossibility of competing with a far better-supported industry, he added: “If we were to have the same support that the US industry has, we wouldn’t need that tariff. We would be able to compete. If we had the same energy costs. We wouldn’t need those tariffs.”

The influx of lower-cost US ethanol has drastically reduced margins for UK producers, who face higher energy and feedstock costs, and lack the economies of scale available to American giants.

The broader biofuel market

While not directly impacted by the removal of the US bioethanol tariff, another recent casualty of regulations and market conditions that disadvantage domestic biofuel production is Greenergy. With its biodiesel plant at Immingham facility a casualty of hostile

market forces and weak policy, the supplier of transportation fuels has joined industry calls for urgent government action to ‘save the sector’ (see page 6).

Though biodiesel and ethanol are different products, both are now being squeezed by the same root causes: weak UK blending mandates, policy uncertainty, and subsidised US competition.

As detailed in our August issue coverage, despite “significant cost reductions” and a May review following its acquisition by Trafigura, Greenergy cited weak UK blending mandates, competition from subsidised US Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), and high operational costs as reasons for the shutdown.

Speaking to FON at the time, Greenergy COO Paul Bateson was blunt about the situation: “It is difficult to see a change in policy in time,” noting that structural issues such as high energy costs and ageing infrastructure have been exacerbated by a lack of timely government intervention.

Unintended consequences

It’s not just the producers and their employees that will be impacted...

The crisis facing the UK’s bioethanol plants has ripple effects far beyond the factory gates. One of the sectors most exposed is farming.

Who grows the wheat?

The feedstock for UK bioethanol largely comes from UK arable farmers, particularly across the grain belts of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and East Anglia. These plants buy millions of tonnes of wheat each year, often through forward contracts, providing farmers with a dependable outlet.

Why isn’t it food-grade wheat?

The wheat used for ethanol production is typically feed wheat – grain that doesn’t meet the strict protein and quality standards required for breadmaking. Rather than going into loaves, it would otherwise be destined for animal feed or export. Crucially, the process is not a straight diversion from the food chain: when starch is converted into ethanol, the protein-rich by-product, DDGS (dried distillers’

grains with solubles), goes straight back into livestock rations as a valuable home-grown feed.

What happens if the plants close?

Lost local markets: Without domestic bioethanol buyers, farmers will be left more dependent on volatile feed markets or forced to export at thinner margins.

Increased exports: More UK feed wheat will need to be shipped abroad — likely to EU countries where biofuel obligations are stronger, effectively exporting both the raw material and the value-added opportunity.

Crop choices shift: Farmers may look to move land out of feed wheat and into alternatives such as milling wheat, oilseeds, or even set-aside if returns falter.

Feed security hit: With fewer ethanol plants, the UK livestock industry will lose access to a reliable source of DDGS. This gap may need to be filled with imported protein feeds such as soya meal — often with higher carbon footprints, creating a perverse impact on UK sustainability goals.

In short, the closure of UK bioethanol plants is not only an industrial and employment issue, but also a farmgate and food security issue. Farmers lose a stable domestic market, livestock producers lose a valuable local feed source, and the UK risks greater reliance on imports at every level of the supply chain.

Policy blind spots

This crisis exposes critical gaps in UK policy. The Zemo Partnership, a key low carbon transport advisory body, recently published its Map of Missing Policies, outlining urgent steps to align the UK's transport fuel system with net zero goals. Among these is a call to:

- Extend the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) beyond 2032.

- Transition the RTFO into a greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target scheme that rewards fuels based on emissions performance.

Voicing support for the Zemo Partnership report, Greenergy welcomed its recommendation to make the RTFO more ambitious and extend the target beyond 2032.

“With zero-emission cars representing only 3% of cars and less than 1% of HGVs in the UK, the report rightly highlights the vital role that renewable fuels, such as biodiesel and bioethanol, play in the transition.

“As a leading biodiesel producer, we are supportive of more ambitious RTFO targets. Higher targets can deliver immediate greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions in vehicles that will remain on the road for years to come. Failing to act now is a missed opportunity to accelerate decarbonisation and meet the UK government's own climate goals.

“A straightforward policy change could create long-term demand for biofuels and provide measurable emission savings today, not just in the future.”

For context, the EU has already set a 14% renewable energy in transport target for 2030 — far higher than the UK's current ambition, which remains unclear beyond 2032.

By implementing the called-for changes, the UK would move closer to the European model, where higher obligations and a clearer policy roadmap have stabilised the biofuels market and attracted continued investment.

Europe beckons

The difference in policy certainty is already influencing investment decisions. While uncertainty looms large over its Immingham facility, Greenergy has reaffirmed its commitment to operations in Amsterdam.

The company cited Europe's “more ambitious renewable fuel targets” and supportive market structure as key reasons for

its strategic focus on the continent.

This enhances the attractiveness of EU markets and underscores the increasing difficulty UK facilities face in competing on an uneven playing field.

A crisis made in Westminster

The irony is stark. In an attempt to protect the UK car industry, government negotiators may have inadvertently crippled a vital low-carbon sector. The US ethanol industry — backed by federal subsidies and vast economies of scale — can afford to undercut UK prices. And while British biofuel producers receive support under the RTFO, the current scheme lacks the ambition required to compete or to inspire long-term investment.

The Zemo Partnership has repeatedly stressed that UK transport emissions won't fall without an integrated, long-term vision — one that includes a robust biofuels industry. With domestic producers folding under pressure, that vision is slipping further from reach.

The road ahead

If the UK is serious about decarbonising transport, this moment must serve as a wake-up call. The government must urgently:

- Reassess the impact of the US trade deal on domestic fuel security.
- Strengthen and extend the RTFO beyond 2032.
- Transition the RTFO to a GHG-based target system.
- Align with EU-level ambitions to ensure a level playing field.

Otherwise, the UK risks becoming entirely dependent on imported biofuels — outsourcing not only its emissions reductions but the economic benefits of domestic production.

Unless government policy changes, the UK won't just lose an industry — it will lose control over its own clean fuel future.

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Understanding rural Britain

THE TITLE OF THE MONTH'S ARTICLE IS TAKEN FROM A RECENT, INSIGHTFUL REPORT PUBLISHED BY THE LABOUR RURAL RESEARCH GROUP, WHICH CONSISTS OF 26 RURAL LABOUR MPS – PROUDLY KNOWN AS LABOUR'S 'RURAL WALL'.

The group's mission is to support the Government in delivering meaningful change for the UK, emphasising that rural areas should be at the heart of our national ambitions. However, they stress that the distinct challenges facing rural Britain necessitate careful and thoughtful consideration.

I'm pleased to share that since the election we have engaged with many of these MPs through our discussions alongside our partners OFTEC. Collectively, these MPs represent over **250,000 oil-heated households**, highlighting the importance of this group.

At the heart of their report is the aim to create a dedicated rural strategy – an initiative I wholeheartedly support. I believe many of our customers and employees, most of whom live and work in rural areas, would also agree, and it seems we are not alone, as polling conducted by the group reveals that – **Over three-quarters (82.7%) of voters polled see the need for a defined rural strategy. There is a clear desire for rural areas to be recognised as distinctive by the Government.**

Rural Britain is different

To contextualise, consider this data: Almost all oil-heated homes, 96%, are situated in rural areas with lower electric grid capacities, and nearly 50% were built before 1919. Typically, these homes are detached and have more than four bedrooms, making them very different from the average home and certainly very different from their urban counterparts.

The introduction of a targeted rural strategy is not unique. Scotland, for example, recognises that the Highlands and Islands are different, with many policies needing to be assessed based on their effects on these communities, illustrating Scotland's distinct rural-urban divide.

The report from the rural Labour MPs also states that **Three quarters (74.4%) of rural voters polled believe their communities have been neglected over the past 15 years and by bringing forward policies and opportunities that work for our rural communities, rural MPs can make sure that these communities feel seen, listened to, and that they are at the heart of Labour's**

Plan for Change.

This is closely aligned with our Future Fuels programme. We recognise that for many, if not most, of the 1.7m homes we serve, the structure, location and size of oil-heated homes present distinct challenges in terms of decarbonisation. Electric-based heating technologies can be more technically and financially challenging to implement successfully in these homes.

Rural residents already pay a premium

The current proposed heat decarbonisation options do not account for the unique characteristics of rural homes and locations, ignoring the potential disruption these changes could cause in residents' lives. Such disruptions could lead to costs as high as £24,000, with limited relief from running costs. This situation conflicts with research showing that a one-size-fits-all strategy will not work.

In light of this, we have written to the Labour Rural Research Group, proposing that the Government's forthcoming Warm Homes Plan, due later this year, includes a focused section on rural heat decarbonisation, addressing the first aspiration outlined in their report.

Listening to rural voices

Furthermore, it's vital that these rural communities are genuinely listened to. A survey conducted by the Future Ready Fuel campaign found that over 95% of off-grid households desire a greater variety of low-carbon heating solutions, while more than 88% of respondents currently using oil heating expressed interest in the option to switch to renewable liquid fuel.

It's imperative that renewable liquid fuels are featured prominently in the Plan in the section on rural heat decarbonisation as an affordable, accessible, low-cost option. Additionally, actions mandated by the Government, already incorporated into legislation, should be implemented without delay.

A call to action

To meet its 2030 clean power targets, the Government must offer heating-oil consumers solutions that reflect the realities of rural life. These solutions should prioritise choice, affordability and practicality. It is essential to ensure that rural Britain is included in future plans and not overlooked.

	England and Wales		Scotland	
	Oil	All Homes	Oil	All Homes
Pre 1919	44%	20%	40%	19%
Detached	49%	17%	78%	19%
4+ Bedrooms	47%	24%	46%	18%

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MONTHLY FEATURE CREATED FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED FUEL OIL DISTRIBUTORS ACROSS THE UK AND IRELAND.

In this new series we will focus, each month, on a single, business-critical topic to enable you to assess current practice, understand industry developments, and make informed decisions to improve operational efficiency, profitability, and resilience. From optimising depot operations and managing cash flow to navigating regulation and seizing new growth opportunities, our goal is to do the research for you, present the facts clearly, and give you practical, data-led actions you can implement immediately. While larger companies may have in-house HR teams, fleet managers, compliance officers and analysts, many fuel oil distributors (FODs) operate without these. Delivering Insight is your virtual support team – a growing knowledge base that builds into a valuable reference library, helping you make informed decisions that safeguard your business for today and strengthen it for the future.

Delivering insight: Passing your dangerous goods security audit

WOULD YOU PASS WITH FLYING COLOURS? VIKI HAYMAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HASKIT LTD AND A QUALIFIED DANGEROUS GOODS SAFETY ADVISER, SHARES A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR AUDIT.

Passing a Department for Transport (DfT) Dangerous Goods Security Audit isn't just a compliance exercise – it's a vital safeguard for your business, your customers, and the wider community. For SME fuel distributors in particular, getting it right the first time saves time, money, and the stress of repeat inspections.

Drawing on years of hands-on operational experience in the fuel distribution sector, Viki shares her tried-and-tested advice for preparing effectively and making the most of your audit.

Why this matters for fuel oil distributors

If you transport High Consequence Dangerous Goods (HCDG), you are legally required to undergo a DfT Dangerous Goods Security Audit every two years. These audits ensure that your recruitment processes, training programmes, security measures, and operational procedures meet the standards set out under ADR.

Failing to prepare can lead to:

- Costly remedial actions
- Reputational damage
- Increased regulatory scrutiny
- In extreme cases, restrictions on operations

SME Focus: Unlike large operators with dedicated compliance teams, smaller distributors must often manage preparation alongside daily operations – making a clear, practical plan essential.

What the audit covers

The inspection is split into four core sections:

1. Recruitment and Training
2. Security Programme

3. Physical Security and Equipment

4. Access Control and Passes

Each section has its own set of evidence requirements.

Common audit triggers

Not all dangerous goods are high consequence. HCDG actually refers to a very specific category defined in the ADR regulations and only some products, in certain volumes, meet the criteria.

They are high consequence because, in the wrong hands, they could be misused causing high consequence destruction.

You will need an audit if you transport:

- **Petrol:** Any load over 3,000 litres
- **Kerosene, diesel, heavy fuel oils:** Any volume

If in doubt, check with your DGSA. Even a one-off high consequence delivery triggers the requirement.

The DfT will often make the initial contact, having spotted your tankers on the road sporting orange ADR plates, or even your company website and adverts showcasing that you transport dangerous goods.

You will usually get an email from them asking if that includes any high consequence dangerous goods, and if you are, then good news – they'll need to book an ADR Security Inspection in with you soon. And if you're not, go back to them and confirm so that they can take you "off their list".

How to prepare: Step-by-step

1. Recruitment and Training

Be ready to evidence of completion and

documentation of on-the-job training and assessments as well as formal qualifications.

This will include:

- ADR driver training certificates
- Evidence of Dangerous Goods Awareness training for all relevant non-driving staff – such as salespeople, routers/planners and your transport team.
- Toolbox talks, driver handbooks, induction programmes
- Security-specific training, including the DfT "Lockdown" video (which can be requested from landsecurity@dft.gsi.gov.uk) and refresher modules (e.g. FORS Counter-Terrorism, ACT e-learning)

For recruitment you will need to evidence the way you control who you are employing or subcontracting:

- Document your vetting process: advertising, background checks, licence checks, references
- Include subcontractor vetting and audits including pre-employment DBS and licence checks as well as references taken.

Viki's Tip: Inspectors focus heavily on recruitment and vetting – it's often the weakest area.

2. Security Programme

This is about evidencing your security procedures and planning:

- Maintain a written ADR Security Plan (mandatory for HCDG)
- Keep it safely stored and regularly tested
- Use drills – tabletop or live – to test your plan with staff and contractors

Viki's Tip: Templates are available on GOV.UK; customise them to your operation. Make drills dramatic but realistic – and make sure everyone knows it is a drill before they mobilise!

3. Physical Security and Equipment

With depot, tanker and in-cab technology advancing all the time, this is where most distributors get to 'show off'. Inspectors want to see robust site as well as vehicle security – not just on site but also on their journey to/from and during deliveries.

Measures could include:

- Locked, combination key safe
- Site-wide, monitored CCTV
- Tank alarms
- Fob-controlled gates
- Intruder alarms
- Vehicle immobilisers, cameras and trackers

5. Access Control and Passes

This can be summed up in one question – what do you have in place to stop someone just wandering off the street into your depot?

- Prevent unauthorised entry with fob access or codes
- Keep visitor sign-in processes tight

Viki's Tip: Don't let inspectors walk in unchallenged – the audit starts the moment they arrive and there's nothing more embarrassing than leaving your gates open allowing them to walk in unchallenged!

Emerging focus: Cyber and data security

Cyber resilience is now a key part of your security profile:

- Discuss defences with your IT provider
- Add cyber awareness training for drivers and depot staff

Viki's Tip: Download the Protect UK app and check the website – it's a great resource! Following recent cyber-attacks within the UK supply chain you will see a focus on cyber and data security – a common vulnerability for businesses.

SME-specific considerations

For smaller FODs:

- Prioritise low-cost, high-impact measures (clear signage, robust locks, training)
- Share resources with other distributors for

specialist training

- Partner with compliance consultants if you don't have in-house expertise

Worked example: Recruitment checks

Cost of a DBS check: In the region of £43 per driver

Potential cost of non-compliance: Thousands in fines, reputational damage, and possible licence restrictions.

Recommended actions

1. Confirm if you are transporting HCDG and require an audit.
2. Audit your recruitment, training, and vetting procedures.
3. Review and update your ADR Security Plan.
4. Check physical security measures and fix gaps.
5. Add or update cyber security training.

Security Audit Checklist

Recruitment and training

- ✓ Driver ADR qualifications up to date
- ✓ Non-driving staff trained in Dangerous Goods Awareness
- ✓ Recruitment/vetting procedures documented

Security Programme

- ✓ Written ADR Security Plan in place
- ✓ Regular drills conducted and recorded

Physical Security

- ✓ CCTV and monitoring in place
- ✓ Tank alarms and immobilisers fitted

Access Control

- ✓ Fob-controlled entry or access codes
- ✓ Visitor sign-in procedure enforced

Cyber Security

- ✓ Cyber awareness training delivered
- ✓ IT defences reviewed with provider

Final thought from Viki:

These audits aren't designed to trip you up. Inspectors are a valuable source of guidance, and preparation turns the audit into a constructive, confidence-building experience.

The products we transport have the potential to cause devastation in the wrong hands. It is your responsibility to make sure suitable controls are in place to try and prevent that happening. Even though I work in this area, I have to remind myself not to become

complacent about the risks associated with fuel – easily done when it becomes your day-to-day.

The audits are there to check controls are in place, and give advice where they are not, to help improve safety for everyone.

Rather than regarding them as an unwanted intrusion, take them as your opportunity to further improve your business and make the most of your time with the inspectors.

Viki has over 15 years' experience in fuel distribution and high-hazard industries.

Having held operational roles with several major fuel distributors, Viki's hands-on insight into the sector's unique safety and compliance challenges enables her to turn complex regulations into pragmatic, effective safety protocols for fuel distributors.

Viki is a qualified Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser, holds a NEBOSH diploma, and is a trained lead auditor across quality, environmental, and health and safety standards. Through her businesses, she helps distributors stay safe, compliant, and resilient – offering practical tools, expert advice, and trusted accreditation support.

Viki launched Hazkit Ltd in 2023 to meet a need for pre-qualified clothing, equipment and expert support tailored to high-risk sectors like fuel distribution.

Since then, Hazkit has grown quickly, adding two specialist divisions: N90 Consultants, offering health, safety, and environmental advice, and Help With ISO, which supports companies with ISO certification and compliance.



Delivering Insight

Helping FODs gain a competitive edge with actionable, data-led guidance.

**NEXT MONTH
IN DELIVERING INSIGHT –
WE'LL BE TACKLING THE SUBJECT OF
'SOURCING FUEL'**

Taking a look at the nature of different contracts, we'll weigh up flexibility vs security, to help you make informed decisions that give your business a competitive edge.

The Apprenticeship Levy Scheme – what you need to know

For many distributors, recruiting and retaining skilled staff is one of the biggest challenges. Whether it's preparing the next generation of tanker drivers, ensuring depot staff can manage evolving digital systems, or supporting managers to step into leadership roles, apprenticeships can be a cost-effective solution.

A business cost or a business benefit?

On page 9, we speak with New Era Energy about the positive impacts of apprenticeships. But how can your business tap into the same opportunities – and more importantly, the funding to make it happen?

If you think apprenticeships are costly to run, the truth might surprise you. The UK Government's Apprenticeship Levy scheme could fund up to 100% of training costs. Used strategically, it can address skill shortages, support succession planning, and give your team valuable new qualifications.

Why this matters

The industry faces ongoing challenges – from an ageing driver workforce to increasing digital

transformation. Apprenticeships aren't just for school leavers; they can be used to:

- Upskill tanker drivers
- Train staff in new software
- Prepare future depot managers and technical specialists
- Support staff onboarding

The basics

- **Who pays the levy?** Employers with a payroll over £3 million pay 0.5% of their annual wage bill into the scheme. This sits in a digital account for apprenticeship training.
- **Not a levy payer?** You still get 95% of costs funded by the government (you cover the remaining 5%). For apprenticeships starting before April 2019, that split is 90/10.
- **Use it or lose it:** Funds expire after 24 months. Larger businesses can transfer up to 50% of unused levy funds to smaller firms – keeping skills in the local supply chain.

Key funding facts for SMEs

- **Government covers 95%** of costs
- **Levy transfers** can cover 100%
- **Funds** cover apprenticeships of *any* length

- Applies to both new *and* existing employees

Getting started

1. **Review your workforce** – Identify current and future skills gaps.
2. **Register with the Digital Apprenticeship Service** – the gateway to managing funding.
3. **Find an approved training provider** – Choose one that understands your sector.
4. **Explore levy transfers** – Partner with larger firms in your network.
5. **Plan for retention** – Link apprenticeship training to long-term career paths.

Rethinking apprenticeships

Forget the image of apprenticeships as “cheap junior staff.” This is about creating a pipeline of qualified, loyal employees who know your business and your customers.

By taking advantage of the Apprenticeship Levy or non-levy funding, you can turn training from a cost into a competitive advantage. And, as New Era Energy shares, the benefits can be felt across the whole company – from improved staff retention to a stronger reputation in the community.



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Particulate matter: How distributors can benefit from tackling it

Particulate matter (PM) is a growing environmental and operational concern. While often overshadowed by more visible pollutants, PM poses serious health challenges as well as impacting fuel efficiency and equipment longevity.

With increasing pressure to meet emission standards and improve fuel efficiency, understanding and addressing PM is both a responsibility and a business opportunity.

The hidden cost

PM consists of microscopic airborne particles resulting from incomplete combustion, mechanical wear, and various natural and industrial sources. These fine particles negatively impact air quality, contribute to environmental degradation, and cause wear on engines and machinery.

“Road transportation is a major cause of particulate matter,” explains Prof. Tony Granger, Chairman of Eliminox Limited. “It arises not only from the carbon fuel burned and tailpipe emissions but also from brake and tyre wear.”

A strong advocate for clean air policy, Prof. Granger’s company, Eliminox, developed **Eliminox Eco™**, an award-winning, 100% natural fuel conditioner designed to reduce emissions and improve fuel combustion efficiency across transport, construction, agriculture, and marine.

“Mitigating harmful greenhouse gases is one thing,” Tony says. “Reducing particulate matter is entirely different, but equally important.”

Why fuel distributors should care

Beyond the public health angle, PM emissions directly affect fuel quality, engine

performance, and customer satisfaction.

Reducing PM:

- Helps meet regulatory standards
- Enhances brand credibility in sustainability
- Reduces wear and tear on engines and equipment
- Minimises customer issues linked to poor combustion

Health and environmental impacts

According to the World Health Organisation, air pollution contributes to 6.7m premature deaths annually, with PM2.5 (particles smaller than 10 micrometres) and PM10 (smaller than 2.5 micrometres and more harmful) being major culprits. These particles are small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream, causing:

- Respiratory diseases
- Cardiovascular problems
- Neurological disorders
- Lung and other cancers

Black carbon (soot), a major component of PM2.5, also accelerates climate change by contributing to atmospheric warming and glacier melting.

Primary sources include fuel combustion and industrial activities, while secondary PM forms from atmospheric reactions involving gases like NOx and SOx as well as natural sources such as pet dander, dust mites and mould.

Fuel conditioners: A practical solution

Fuel conditioners such as EliminoxEco can significantly reduce PM emissions by improving combustion efficiency and reducing fuel consumption. Here’s how EliminoxEco achieves this:

1. Improved combustion

• **Water dispersion:** Disperses microscopic water droplets that vaporise and help break fuel into finer particles.

• **Increased oxygen contact:** Promotes more complete combustion, reducing soot.

• **Reduced unburned carbon:** Lowers harmful particulate emissions.

2. Fuel system cleaning

• **Detergent action:** Cleans fuel lines, injectors, and filters.

• **Deposit removal:** Prevents build-up that can hinder combustion efficiency.

3. Additional benefits

• **Lower emissions:** Including NOx, CO2, and PM

• **Fuel savings:** Up to 8% through more efficient combustion

• **Reduced maintenance:** Cleaner engines require fewer repairs

Real-world results from Eliminox Eco™

“We’ve seen emissions reduced by up to 97% for PM and 30% for CO2,” says Prof. Grainger. “Fuel efficiency improvements of 5–8% are not uncommon, making the product cost-neutral in many cases.”

Applications across generators, vehicles, and marine engines have shown consistent results, helping clients reduce both environmental impact and operating costs.

A strategic opportunity

Fuel distributors are uniquely positioned to drive change. Offering fuel conditioners not only supports cleaner air but also delivers tangible value to customers.

With regulatory compliance, cost savings, and environmental responsibility all in play, addressing PM emissions is more than good practice – it’s good business.

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- ✓ Save money from optimised logistics

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M A B A N A F T



PORTLAND MARKET REPORT



THE EUROPEAN BLACKOUTS – CAUSES AND CAVEATS.

Spain and Portugal are still the most popular overseas holiday destinations for UK holiday makers. After all, what could be more Blightly than a Full English in Benidorm, Chips ‘n’ Gravy in Lloret del Mar and pavement pizzas outside Lineker’s Bar in the Algarve?! How many tourists this summer, we wonder, gave a second thought to the power networks of both countries? Our guess is very few, even though only a few months ago, both Spain and Portugal suffered a complete electrical shut-down...

The catastrophic power outage took place at 12.30pm on Monday 28th April, and electrical power was interrupted for over 10 hours in both Spain and Portugal. In some areas, the lack of power lasted up to 36 hours. Over 60m people across the Iberian Peninsula were without power, making it one of the worst blackouts in European history. 100 train journeys were interrupted (affecting 35,000 passengers), underground metro services were shut down (causing outbreaks of mass panic) and 500 flights were cancelled. Mobile phone networks crashed, and credit cards ceased to work, causing an estimated temporary loss to Spain’s GDP of €1.6bn Euros. Insurance claims are still being processed but are predicted to be between €300m - €500m Euros. Sadly, there were also a small number of deaths (7) as a result of cessation of hospital equipment (respirators) and indirectly through the use of faulty diesel generators for back-up power.

In the immediate aftermath of all this, the online conspiracy theory community predictably went into over-drive. Initial reactions on social media were that long-planned extra-terrestrial activity was to blame, quickly followed by cast-iron assertions that Bill Gates’ (non-existent) sun-blocking experiment was at work, along with chemical agents released via aviation chemtrails. Others were clear that the “global elite” – fresh from planning sessions in Davos – had unleashed the chaos to foster societal collapse. There were also several sabotage theories around Russian bots (not entirely unreasonable), North Korea (satellite based Electromagnetic Pulse attack), Organised Crime and Chuck Norris. Quite what was the beef all these protagonists had with

Spain and Portugal was never really bottomed out...

Once the nut-job community had their say, it was the turn of the Renewable naysayers. They suggested that an overreliance on green electricity was to blame, because the original problem emanated from a faulty solar array inverter. Traditional electricity grids are designed around fossil-fuel power stations (coal, oil, gas) which generate alternating current (AC). Renewable energy on the other hand generates direct current (DC), which means that solar generation has to be converted (via photovoltaic inversion) to AC, before it can “enter” the grid. In a country like Spain, which has a lot of solar power (about 20% of electricity comes from solar panels), a tremendous amount of inversion at a very large scale is required.

“ONE OF THE WORST BLACKOUTS IN EUROPEAN HISTORY.”

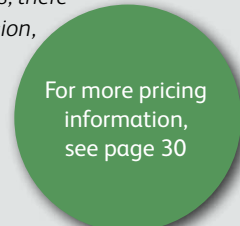
One such industrial solar inverter (in Granada) was the original cause of the power trip – hence the reaction against renewable energy. However, it does seem fairly simplistic to conclude that one faulty inverter automatically means that renewable generation is flawed. The reality is that following the initial power-down, multiple failsafe mechanisms didn’t trigger and “reactive” power support (from traditional sources) was not forthcoming. The resultant extreme “voltage oscillations” went on to sequentially knock-out sub-stations around Spain (Seville, Huelva, Badajoz and so on), which eventually brought the whole system crashing down.

In this light, a fairer conclusion would be that the failures of 28th April were the result of insufficient operational resilience and grid mismanagement. Nonetheless, solar power

(and renewables in general) cannot be immune from criticism, and part of the problem lies with the economics of renewables. Existing grid systems are not designed to receive renewable power and so we cannot ignore the fact that as a result, they must be upgraded before they can receive solar and wind. However, when assessments are made with regards the “raw” cost of renewable energy, the cost of this inversion infrastructure is almost always overlooked and becomes a forgotten consideration. Consequently, in our rush to erect wind turbines and install solar panels, the core requirement of nationwide connectivity has fallen behind.

The findings of the official Spanish government investigation pointed to “multi-factorial energy failures”, which is a government way of saying that lots of things went wrong (really?!). Equal blame was apportioned between REE (Red Electrica de Espana – the grid operator) and private energy generators, whilst the faulty solar inverter was identified as the root cause. What is probably missing is the wake-up call to those countries that are in the process of making a rapid transition from traditional “steady state” transmission (known as “high-inertia”) to the more dynamic (and inconsistent) transmission (“low-inertia”) that results from renewable energy sources. The “problems” of low inertia are solvable by the likes of large-scale battery storage (and of course, non-faulty pieces of kit!), but this takes time and is costly. As long as the investment in connectivity infrastructure lags behind renewable generation, the Spanish / Portuguese experience may not be our only blackout event, and this should worry us all.

As Andrew Cook observes in his thought-provoking short-story, “Black Start”; *“Electricity is the great glue of civilisation. With light, there is safety. With the darkness, there is menace. Take away religion, decency, goodwill and only electricity is left to maintain order”.*



Portland www.stabilityfromvolatility.co.uk



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Beyond safety: A new standard for workplace wellbeing in fuel distribution

In an industry built on resilience, trust, and community, looking out for one another has always been second nature. This autumn, that commitment takes a powerful new step forward with the launch of BS 30480, the UK's first British Standard dedicated to suicide awareness, prevention, intervention and postvention in the workplace. Published to support World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September, the framework offers organisations – like those across the fuel distribution sector – a practical and compassionate guide to addressing one of the most challenging issues we face, providing the tools to extend that culture of care beyond physical risks,

These are difficult topics to read about, and even harder topics to talk about. Anyone who has experienced depression will know that it's not just everyday sadness (which is a natural and healthy response to bereavement, loss and rejection, and usually dissipates over time with good self-care). Depression is an enduring, persistent, sense of emptiness that causes us to withdraw from those we love the most. It's hard to put the intensity of these sad feelings into words and hence depression is not often discussed in day-to-day conversation.

Another subject not often talked about is suicide – its frequency, its dangers and its impact on loved ones. One of the reasons for this is likely to be the myth that if we mention 'suicide' in our conversations, it might put the idea into someone's head, hence increasing the risk of them taking their own life.

But the opposite is true – if we talk about depression and suicide, we demonstrate to our friends and family that these are not stigmatised or 'taboo' subjects, that we won't judge or blame or call them 'soft' or 'snowflake' and that we are safe and informed people to talk to, about this distress.

We won't always be able to take the distress away, or remove the suicidal thoughts, but with a little knowledge (information resources at the end of this article), we can have supportive conversations and direct our colleagues and loved ones to

compassionate, friendly, helpful resources, used hundreds of times a day by people who feel sad and hopeless.

Why are depression and suicide important for us to talk about here? Sadly, the statistics speak for themselves:

- By 2030 mental health problems (particularly depression) will be the leading cause of mortality and morbidity globally.
- 1 in 6 adults (around 17%) report experience some depressive symptoms in any given week.
- This equates to 9 million people in the UK experiencing one or more of the following: low mood, hopelessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating and sleep disturbance
- 1 in 23 adults (around 4.4%) have been diagnosed with a major depressive disorder, which is a serious mental health condition.
- This equates to 2.3 million people in the UK experiencing at least 5 of the following symptoms every day for at least two weeks:
 - a. feeling sad
 - b. loss of interest in activities they would usually find joyful
 - c. excessive self-blame, loss of confidence
 - d. forgetfulness
 - e. excessive tiredness
 - f. changes in appetite (increase or reduced)
 - g. insomnia
 - h. loss of interest in sex
 - i. moving much slower (or the opposite – feeling restless and agitated)
 - j. recurrent thoughts of death or suicide (this can range from suicidal ideation i.e., preoccupation with thinking about death and suicide, to active planning)
 - k. About 60% of people with depression have recurrent thoughts of suicide.
- In 2023, across England and Wales, there were 6,069 people who died by suicide, this was the highest number of people since 1999.
- Men are 3 times more likely to die by suicide than women, although women attempt suicide at higher rates than men
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for men

under the age of 50

- LGBT+ communities face over twice the risk of suicide compared with their heterosexual peers, and Black LGBT+ people have 4.7 times the risk of suicide compared with their heterosexual peers.
- For every death by suicide, at least 135 people are impacted by the loss, and those people bereaved by suicide are at heightened risk of suicide themselves.
- The construction industry has the highest suicide rate across all industry sectors with construction workers nearly 4 times more likely to die by suicide than workers in low-risk industries. (Other high-risk industries include agriculture/farming, music/performing arts, healthcare professionals)

What can we do to help? – use the Standard BS 30480

Fuel oil distribution is not alone in raising the profile of mental health and recognising the pressures and risks within our industry. We are helped enormously in this task by the launch of BS 30480, the UK's first British Standard, dedicated to suicide awareness, prevention, intervention and postvention in the workplace.

"This document is a groundbreaking framework aimed at helping organisations respond effectively and compassionately to suicide-related issues."

The Standard is due for publication in September/October, to support World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th.

This Standard isn't just about suicide however, it is a psychologically nutritious manual, containing systemic and compassionate guidance, evidenced based insights, case studies, toolkits and examples of best practice in supporting people who are distressed in the workplace.

As you would expect, it covers topics such as:

- **Strategy, Policy Implementation and Monitoring**
- **Workplace Culture and Meeting Worker Needs**
- **Understanding Suicide and Prevention**
- **Support For Those Affected By Suicide**

But it also provides practical examples of what to notice in the workplace and what

Table 1: Workplace risk factors that increase emotional distress for employees

- Conflict with colleagues/line-manager
- Extreme high/low workplace demands
- Isolation including lone working
- Bullying and harassment
- Inequality and discrimination
- Redundancy and/or precarious employment
- Exposure to highly stressful situations including life and death situations

to say if you do notice people are struggling. All of this information is incredibly helpful for everything we have described here related to depression and suicide.

In the tables (above and right) are some examples of the content in the Standard. Please use this material sensitively and read the Standard or take part in good quality evidenced based mental Health training before you put this content into practice.

A call to the community

The fuel oil industry is built on reliability, resilience, and community. These same qualities can be harnessed to foster safer, more supportive workplaces for staff.

Table 2: Warning signs that colleagues are emotionally distressed in the workplace:

Behavioural changes	Increased absenteeism/presenteeism, social withdrawal, poor time-management, risk taking, self-neglect, aggression, breaches of policy or safety standards
Physical changes	Unexplained illness, fatigue, panic attacks, frequent aches and pains, weight loss/gain
Emotional changes	Irritability, tearfulness, anger, mood swings, apathy, cynicism, low confidence
Cognitive changes	Negative thinking, inability to make decisions, excessive worry, memory lapses

Table 3: Examples of helpful and unhelpful phrases when supporting distressed people

Helpful	Unhelpful
“It sounds like you are going through a really tough time at the moment”	“Why do you feel like this – you’ve got everything going for you?”
“It sounds like you’ve been feeling this way for a long time”	“Look on the bright side, there are positives in everything”
“Is there anyone else supporting you who knows how difficult this is for you?”	“Other people have a lot worse than you to deal with and they can get through”
“I’m here to listen and support – I’m not an expert, but I know how to make contact with the professionals who can help”	“If I was feeling the same way as you I this is what I would do.....”
“You are not alone, I can stay with you whilst we work out the best way forward”	“Be strong, I know this seems awful at the moment, but you’ll get through it – I know you will”

Reducing depression and preventing suicide is not just a health care issue – it’s a workplace safety issue. Information, practical changes

and recognition of valuable resources will help the industry reduce stigma, strengthen the wellbeing of the workforce, and save lives.

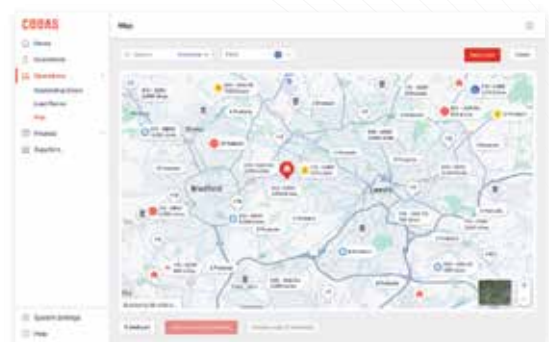


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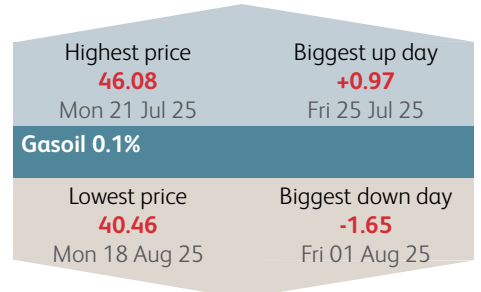
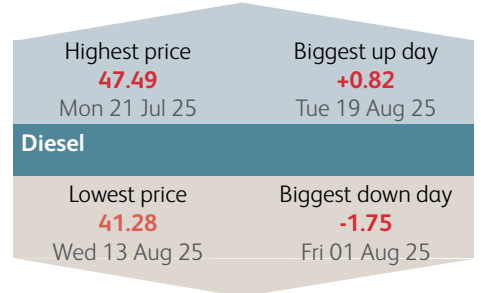
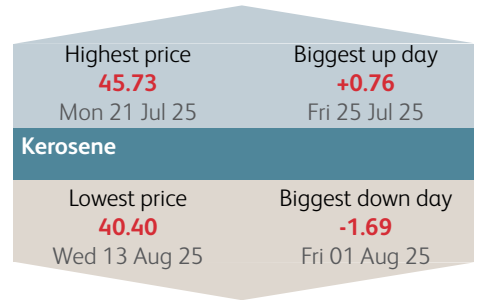
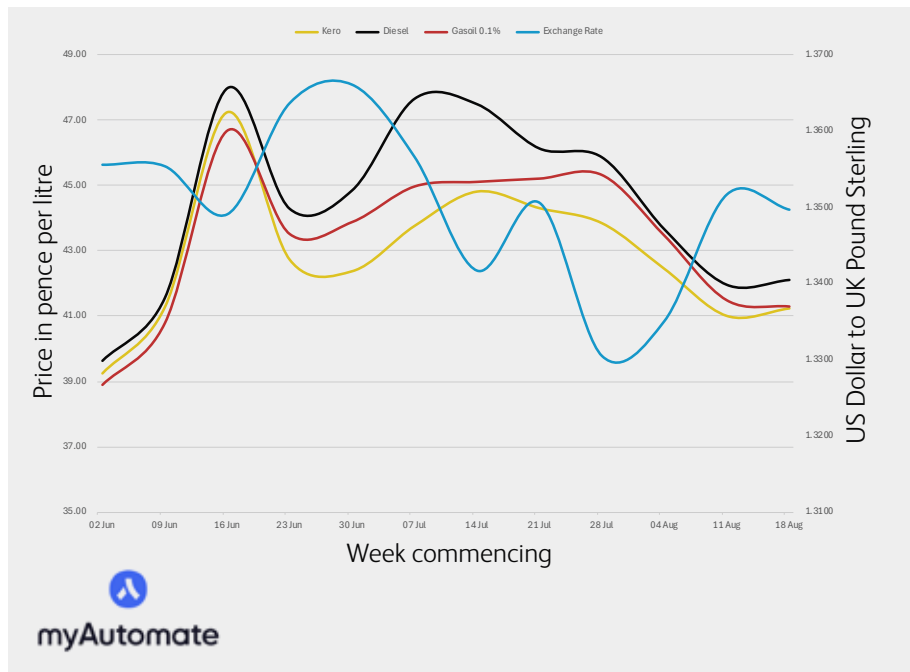
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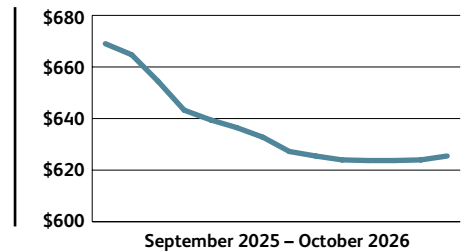
Wholesale Price Movements: 19th July 2025 – 19th August 2025

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	42.69	44.10	43.53
Average daily change	0.58	0.60	0.58
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	42.69	97.05	53.71

All prices in pence per litre



Gasoil forward price
in US\$ per tonne



The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	44.44	56.06	99.37	50.66	59.90	103.26
North East	43.39	54.69	98.45	52.02	58.26	101.31
North West	44.96	57.29	100.84	50.95	60.64	103.40
Midlands	43.46	55.22	98.91	49.29	58.74	102.01
South East	43.56	55.18	98.89	55.59	61.31	101.58
South West	43.91	55.02	98.73	51.68	58.53	101.19
N. Ireland	44.02	56.39	n/a	49.76	60.71	n/a
Republic Of Ireland	57.78	61.82	100.31	63.16	65.48	103.49
Portland	41.77	52.74	95.60			

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

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

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

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

WELCOME TO SEPTEMBER'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 **ŠÁRKA FELTWELL**, SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER UK WHOLESALE & AVIATION AT MB ENERGY.

“TREAT EVERYONE WITH RESPECT AND TRUST, UNTIL THEY PROVE OTHERWISE.”

ŠÁRKA FELTWELL

Sum up your working life in 25 words or fewer:

At the risk of sounding smug – it is a happy one. It's busy and challenging, but the people are good, and that really matters.

Describe yourself in 3 words:

Oh, please no...

What were your childhood / early ambitions?

My first ambition was to become a sanitary worker, or a 'bin man' as they were known. They used to ride on the back of the truck, just hanging on, and I was in awe of their bravery.

If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

To never again say anything I'd cringe about at 2am.

The best advice you've ever received?

If you were 'your best' every day, it wouldn't be your best.

Your top tips for business success?

Treat everyone with respect and trust, until they prove otherwise.

What's the last photo you took on your phone?

A napping cat.

If you could have dinner with any person, living or dead, who and why?

My Grandad – the kindest man I've ever met.

You can only eat one thing for the rest of your life. What is it?

Questions like this fill me with terror. Imagine having to eat just one thing forever... But also, it would definitely be bread.

The best thing about your job?

Working with people from different countries.

The quality that you most admire?

The ability to set boundaries.

What are you most likely to say?

I'm starving!

What are you least likely to say?

No, thank you – that's more than enough parmesan.

Describe your perfect day:

Early start, French toast, swim/surf with my wife, a bit

of reading on the beach, leisurely lunch, nap, friends around for dinner, laugh until we cry, in bed by 11.

Your favourite sports team?

The Lionesses.

If you could be any fictional character, who and why?

Hermione Granger. She's not just great at magic, she balances intelligence with bravery and is a brilliant friend.

Share your greatest personal achievement:

Joining the fire service as an on-call firefighter.

Share your pet hate or biggest irritant:

Forgetting something important and having to go back for it.

What would your Mastermind specialist subject be?

How to kill off houseplants in 30 days.

If you were PM, what would be the first law you'd pass?

Free school meals and school uniforms.

If you had a time machine, would you go to the future or the past?

The future.



What is number 1 on your bucket list?

Write a bucket list.

If you were Editor of Fuel Oil News magazine, what's your first article?

Why the UK still needs liquid fuels in a net zero future.

What 3 things would you take to a desert island?

Heavy-duty knife. Fire-starting device. Sleeping bag.

Something about you people would be surprised by?

I do enjoy a good reality show.



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Fuel Oil News

Founded in 1977 by James Smith
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Subscriptions

Annual subscription for the UK & Republic of Ireland is priced at £130 or €150 inc. p&p.
Overseas: £150 or €175 inc. p&p.
UKIFDA members 25% discount Back issues: £8 per copy.

Published by

A&D Publishing
01565 653283
www.fueloilnews.co.uk

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