

Fuel Oil News

January 2026

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Act now to shape the future for off-grid heating

The start of 2026 brings with it one of the most consequential moments our industry has faced in decades. The government's newly launched consultation into future energy solutions for rural off-grid homes will shape not only the direction of national policy, but the lived reality of the 1.7 million households that rely on liquid fuel heating today. The deadline of 10 February is fast approaching, and every single voice from across the industry matters.

The direction is, without doubt, towards electrification and that is a future for which we must all prepare – ourselves, our businesses and our customers. However, the pathway to get there must be one that leaves no-one behind.

For years, this industry has been united in advocating for a fair, pragmatic, rapid and genuinely achievable transition. Through real-world trials, technical competence and consumer engagement, the industry has demonstrated that renewable liquid fuels can offer an immediate and affordable pathway to decarbonisation for rural communities. Yet, for this pathway to be recognised, policy must reflect the realities faced by off-grid consumers: limited options, older housing stock, and the financial pressures that risk turning an essential transition into an unjust one.

This consultation is the opportunity to ensure that does not happen. The case must be made clearly and collectively: for consumer choice; for a sensible, low disruption bridging solution. This is not a barrier to decarbonisation – it is an enabler of it.

This is an industry that uniquely understands its customers. Working in their homes, in their communities, and alongside the businesses that keep rural areas running, you know what will work and what will not. But, unless you take the time to respond, that knowledge risks being absent from final policy.

So, the message is simple: Your voice matters. Whether a distributor, supplier, technician or manufacturer, your insight can help shape a fairer, more sustainable future for your off-grid customers.

The window to take part is short – but the impact will be long-lasting.



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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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The countdown has begun to the government's long-awaited rural off-grid heating consultation. As it enters its final stages, the message from industry body UKIFDA is clear: representation of rural customers through the voice of distributors has never been more important. Read more on page 11.



In this issue

On pages 25 – 27 we are Delivering Insight on fuel buying patterns. We look at 2025 and 2026 through the eyes of our community on pages 7 – 9 and hear more from a new industry leadership team on pages 13 – 16.



Certas Energy secures EcoVadis Gold sustainability rating

With significant year-on-year progress, Certas Energy has achieved an EcoVadis Gold Medal for sustainability, placing the UK's largest independent fuel distributor in the top five per cent of companies assessed globally.

EcoVadis, which rates more than 150,000 organisations worldwide, evaluates performance across 21 criteria covering environment, labour and human rights, ethics and sustainable procurement.

Certas Energy has improved its overall score from 45/100 to 78/100 in the past year, with its strongest performance in sustainable procurement (81/100). The business attributes the uplift to targeted investment and the integration of enhanced sustainability standards across its supply chain.

Operational changes have also contributed to the improved rating. Certas has continued to reduce Scope 1 emissions by switching a further 238 fleet vehicles from diesel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), expanding the number of depots supplying HVO and opening what it reports as the UK's first HVO-only bunker in Birmingham.

The distributor also reports its best recorded employee safety performance over the past year and ongoing progress in equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives, community



volunteering and in-house training.

Only 19 companies worldwide in the wholesale solid, liquid and gas fuel sector currently hold a Gold or Platinum EcoVadis rating.

Reflecting an improvement-focussed company

Richard Garnett, Head of Sustainability at Certas Energy, said: "EcoVadis is the gold standard for sustainable and responsible business practice, so we are absolutely thrilled to be rated among the top companies worldwide.

The advanced due diligence involved as part of this award will give our customers a higher degree of confidence and trust in Certas so they continue to see us as the supplier of choice.

"This achievement also demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement, epitomised by almost doubling our rating in the past year. Having reached this milestone, our ambition is to maintain this momentum and to embed best practice with our value chain partners."

Certas Energy has been a member of EcoVadis since 2021.

Federico Cobo San Miguel

The industry bids farewell to Federico Cobo San Miguel, Managing Director of Cisternas Cobo, who recently passed away at the age of 69. His career at the helm of the Cantabrian company made him one of the most influential figures in the Spanish market for the manufacturing of tankers for hydrocarbons and hazardous goods.

Leadership

Under Federico Cobo's direction, the company – founded in 1955 – solidified its position as a leader in the Spanish market as well as expanding into several European countries. In recent decades, Cisternas Cobo has become synonymous with transport engineering, with a clear focus on weight optimisation, operational safety, structural durability, and integration of new technologies into production processes.

Federico Cobo's vision drove the development of lighter, more efficient tankers, designed to meet the needs of fleets operating under increasingly demanding regulations and a constantly evolving logistics landscape.

Contribution and recognition

Highly regarded by manufacturers, workshops, logistics operators and fuel distributors, Federico Cobo stood out for his technical approach, his close client relationships, and his management of product quality. His contribution to the modernisation of tanker transport in Spain is significant – not only through the advancements he introduced, but also through his consistent defence of industrial excellence.

A enduring legacy

The structure, portfolio and after-sales service developed under his leadership remain a solid foundation for the company's future. Federico Cobo's passing marks the loss of a professional with deep expertise who leaves behind a strong and widely respected industrial legacy.

Comments shared on social media channels indicate how widely Federico's loss will be felt by those in the industry that had the pleasure of interacting with him. Saddened to hear of the passing of Federico Cobo – a



key figure in the technical evolution of tanker manufacturing – those at Fuel Oil News extend their condolences to his family, his friends and the entire Cisternas Cobo team.

Keeping rural voices at the heart of heat decarbonisation

As the government's long-awaited consultation on the future of rural off-grid heating enters its final stages, one message is becoming increasingly clear: it has never been more important that the liquid fuel distribution community makes sure that its voice, and that of its customers, is heard.

With the consultation closing on 10 February 2026, the industry stands at a pivotal moment – one that could shape rural heating choices for decades. And, once again, Mitchell & Webber is helping lead the charge.

A village that helped shape policy

The Cornwall village of Kehelland has become a powerful example of a fair, customer-led transition. Its long-running, industry-driven HVO trials – made possible by the commitment of Mitchell & Webber and local residents – played a significant role in securing the 2023 amendment to the Energy Act. That amendment opened the door to a Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Obligation (RLHFO), that would give low-carbon liquid fuels a viable route into the UK's decarbonisation plans.

Now, the village that made a pivotal contribution to elevating debate on rural energy justice is stepping forward once more.

Presenting real-world evidence

Mitchell & Webber will present a comprehensive evidence document to DESNZ in Westminster in late January 2026. This follows the village's earlier submission in 2023 and will again ensure that Kehelland's lived experience is at the centre of government thinking.

Mitchell & Webber Directors, Robert and John Weedon confirmed to Fuel Oil News that the handover will be supported by MPs



Aerial view of Kehelland with HVO users

– including Perran Moon, who represents Kehelland – along with Ken Cronin (UKIFDA) and Paul Rose (OFTEC).

Fresh rounds of resident visits are already underway. “We aim to capture a range of data and experiences in order to submit a group response from Kehelland,” John explains. The submission will highlight:

- Up to four years of reliable performance on 100% HVO
- No breakdowns reported across demonstration sites
- Older boilers running more smoothly and efficiently
- Over two years of successful 20% blends
- Strong, consistent feedback that residents “are adamant that they want to stay with HVO”

Together, this forms one of the most substantial real-world datasets available to policymakers on renewable liquid heating fuels in off-grid homes.

Why distributors must speak up now

John notes that Mitchell & Webber's work reflects a broader truth:

“We distributors are the closest link to rural heating customers. If we don't contribute, the consultation risks being shaped without the insight of those who understand both the technical realities and the human impacts of policy decisions.”

Distributors:

- Maintain deep, long-term customer relationships
- Understand the financial pressure on rural households
- See first-hand how emerging fuels perform in real homes
- Hold vital information on infrastructure, supply chains and operational readiness

This presents a unique responsibility – and opportunity – for distributors to ensure the transition to low-carbon heat is practical, affordable and fair.

Mitchell & Webber's planned presentation is one strong example of meaningful engagement. But as Robert stresses: “The sector needs many voices, not just one.”

Make your customers' voices heard

John describes the consultation as “the most important thing to happen with respect to the future of our industry since the Energy Bill change in 2023.”

When Mitchell & Webber stand in Westminster next January, they will not just be handing over data – they will be handing over the lived experiences of rural homeowners who want a low-carbon future but one that is sensible, affordable and technically viable.

As John says: “Every distributor serves communities just like Kehelland. Now is the moment to ensure those voices are heard. We must direct our customers to the Future Ready Fuel website as a matter of urgency!

The consultation closes on 10 February 2026.



John and Robert Weedon



Rory, on the left, with Paul Matson CEO of Hull4Heroes, centre, and Jim Fishburn the retiring Chair on the right.

Leadership, service and recognition

Rory Clarke, Managing Director of J R Rix & Sons Ltd, has recently been recognised for both his professional leadership and his commitment to supporting veterans and the wider community,

Most recently, Rory has been appointed Chair of Hull4Heroes, the respected Hull-based charity supporting service personnel.

A graduate of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Rory served with the United Nations in Cyprus and in Northern Ireland before building a successful career in the fuel distribution industry.

He succeeds former Royal Navy Chief Jim Fishburn, one of Hull4Heroes' founding members. During his tenure, Hull4Heroes has supported more than 5,000 veterans and their families.

Commenting on the transition, Jim said he was "immensely proud" of the charity's achievements and confident that Rory's experience would support Hull4Heroes as it evolves to meet future needs. Rory, who joined Hull4Heroes as a trustee in 2024, described the appointment as "a huge honour", paying tribute to the work undertaken by Jim and the charity since it was established in 2016, to assist service personnel transition from military life to civilian life.

Rory has been part of the Hull family firm J R Rix & Sons Ltd for over 30 years. Alongside his new role at Hull4Heroes, he holds an MBA, sits on the advisory board of Hull University Business School, and was named one of Business Week's Top 20 Most Inspirational Business Leaders in Hull and the East Riding in 2022. He also served as UKIFDA President from 2021 to 2023.

In further recognition Rory has also been named as one of five recipients of an Honorary Degree from the University of Hull

University honours

Rory will be awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters at the University's Winter Graduation ceremonies, celebrating what the institution described as his "visionary leadership and commitment to regional business growth".

A Hull University Business School alumnus, Rory earned his MBA in 2011 and is a member of the Logistics Institute advisory board. He will join fellow honourees at January's degree celebrations.

Professor Kevin Kerrigan, Interim Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hull, said the honorary awards bring together "generations of change-makers, ready to shape a fairer, brighter and better future for all".

Together, Rory's appointment as Chair of Hull4Heroes and his recognition by the University of Hull underline a career defined not only by business success, but by leadership, service and lasting impact on both those in the industry and in the communities it serves.

THE LATEST UPDATES FROM OUR DISTRIBUTOR COMMUNITY

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

Allan Stobart: Glitz, glamour and generosity

Allan Stobart Lubricants and Fuels, the Carlisle-based fuel and lubricant distributor, is proud to be supporting the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS).



The team recently enjoyed a night out at the Great North Air Ambulance charity ball. Beth Hindmarsh, Sales Office Manager, said: "A fantastic night was had by all at the Great North Air Ambulance Emerald Ball.

"We've been fortunate to fundraise and work closely with the GNAAS team throughout the year, proudly becoming a corporate partner of theirs recently.

"We would like to wish a huge well done to everyone involved for putting on such a wonderful evening and raising vital funds for such an important charity."

Compass Fuels: Supporting local charity at Christmas Markets

Lancashire-based **Compass Fuels** was proud to join forces with local Lancashire businesses to help raise money for Galloways, the charity supporting people with sight loss across the region.



David Chyriwsky, Head of Marketing, explained: "Two festive markets were held in early December. Both events were a huge success, full of festive cheer, live entertainment and local community spirit, and every penny helped support a fantastic cause."

Hampers packed with local goodness

"To raise funds, Compass Fuels created two exclusive hampers," David continued. "A wine one and a beer one, both packed with premium Lancashire products; Carron Lodge Cheeses supplied the finest local cheeses and Honeywell Farm Shop provided biscuits, crisps, meats and luxury snacks. Every item was produced or supplied locally, ensuring that the fundraiser did not just support charity, it also supported small Lancashire businesses."

"Both hampers proved extremely popular and sold out at both markets with people eager to support Galloways while taking home a taste of Lancashire.

"Thanks to the generosity of everyone who donated or bought tickets or hampers, we raised £225 to support Galloways' ongoing services, resources and community support for people living with sight loss.

Lancashire business coming together

"One of the most rewarding parts was the collaboration. Every company involved was local and every contributor gave up time, stock and support without hesitation. "It was a real demonstration of Lancashire businesses coming together with a common goal to support a local charity that makes a real difference.

"A heartfelt thank you to the community of Penwortham, Galloways staff and volunteers, the local businesses who donated products and everyone who bought tickets and entered the prize draw. Together we made a difference and proved once again that Lancashire spirit is alive and well."

How would you summarise 2025?

EACH JANUARY, WE ASK OUR FUEL DISTRIBUTOR COMMUNITY TO REFLECT ON THE YEAR JUST GONE – A TRADITION THAT CAPTURES A CLEAR SNAPSHOT OF THE CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS THAT ACCOMPANY LIFE IN THIS VITAL AND FAST-MOVING INDUSTRY.

LAST JANUARY, YOUR REFLECTIONS ON 2024 PAINTED A PICTURE OF AN INDUSTRY WEATHERING TURBULENCE – “TOUGH, UNPREDICTABLE AND ERRATIC,” “A VERY CHALLENGING YEAR,” – IN A YEAR MARKED BY SUPPLY PRESSURES, SHIFTING MARKETS AND THE GROWING PRESENCE OF HVO IN EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS. YET, THROUGH THESE PRESSURES, RAN A STRONG THREAD OF RESILIENCE AND COLLABORATION.

THIS YEAR'S REFLECTIONS ON 2025, CARRY THAT SAME RESILIENCE, BUT THE TONE HAS EVOLVED. THERE IS AN ADDED SENSE OF AN INDUSTRY ACTIVELY ADAPTING: NAVIGATING RAPID CHANGE, MANAGING VOLATILITY AND CONTINUING TO TRANSITION, WHILE KEEPING ESSENTIAL FUEL MOVING EVERY DAY.

TOGETHER, THEY SHOW A SECTOR THAT MAY BE CHALLENGED, BUT IS CONSTANTLY LEARNING, ADAPTING AND MOVING FORWARD – AND DOING SO WITH PRIDE, PASSION AND PURPOSE.

A tough year for a few different reasons, but we love a challenge! Bring on 2026! – Clive Morin, Managing Director Barton Petroleum

Rewarding but challenging at times with weather extremes – John Weedon, MD Mitchell & Webber.

Very challenging with increasing costs on many fronts but with margins that haven't improved in thirty years. – James Carson, Director, Knockbracken Fuels.

Working in the fuel distribution sector this year, the greatest challenge has been increased costs, i.e. insurance, national insurance, etc. – Gavin Milligan, Strangford Fuels.

Challenging at times, but full of purpose – a year where the industry once again proved how resilient and adaptable it is – Richard Wallace, CEO, LCM Environmental.

A rollercoaster ride. – Luke Nolan, Sales Manager Nolan Fuels.

Probably my most challenging year out of my 39 years in the industry Why? Very low demand meant we had to work harder to win and create opportunity – Duncan Lambert, Rix Petroleum.

Challenging to navigate rapid and unexpected changes, but as always, it remains an exciting industry where no day is ever the same – Amy Jones. Head of Organization – local, BWOC

Tough, but fun! The market seems to have been hard to guess this year, both domestically and commercially, which has kept us on our toes – Gemma Wakefield, Marketing Manager, NWF.

Working in fuel distribution is exciting and challenging every single year. This year we have had to navigate evolving energy demands, tighter regulations, and the push towards cleaner technologies, and all while keeping essential fuel flowing every day! – Emma Osborn, Director, El-Oils, Halso UK Fuels

2025 was a year marked by volatile markets and yet more upstream disruption, but we have adapted our supply chains, strengthened our customer relationships, and sought efficiencies in our operational infrastructures. – Phil Murray, CEO WCF Ltd.

2025 was a demanding year, but a very positive one – full of change, momentum, and real opportunities for businesses willing to adapt. In Ireland, there has been a big struggle across a lot of industries to attract HGV drivers. – Patrick Kirby, Tria Energy.

2025 has been a year of rapid change – but also one where local focus, flexibility and innovation have kept us delivering value reliably to Channel Islands homes, motorists and businesses. – Jon Best, Director and COO ATF Fuels.

It has been an interesting year, with many changes in the supply landscape in the north, and Scotland in particular. However, we have adapted, and I am very proud that none of our customers saw any impact from the closures of key lifting locations. – Duncan Smith, Head of Fuels & Lubricants Business Development, Carrs Billington.

Having worked in and around agriculture supply most of my career I do enjoy (mostly!) the 'challenge and reward' of the service level expected in Fuels and the fact it's still very much a people industry. – Philip Sharman, Director Fuels/ Outdoor/Marketing Carrs Billington.

Working in fuel distribution in 2025 has been fast-moving and transformative, particularly within Mobility, as we modernise sites, enhance customer experience, and adapt to a changing energy landscape. – David Weaver, Roadside Services, Certas Energy UK Ltd.

Challenging due to lack of qualified drivers. Grateful that I have a strong team in operations providing support. – John Hughes, Operations Manager, Klass Oil.

Very much a year of two halves: good market conditions in the first half of the year, but then tough across the summer and into the Autumn with the mild weather impacting market demand for heating oil and gas oil. – Chris Belsham, Chief Executive Officer, NWF Group.

What was your highlight of 2025 and what are your hopes for 2026?

WHEN WE ASKED THE COMMUNITY LAST YEAR ABOUT THEIR HOPES FOR 2025, MANY LOOKED FOR CLEARER DIRECTION, MORE STABLE CONDITIONS AND THE RETURN OF SOMETHING RESEMBLING A “NORMAL” TRADING CYCLE. WITH HINDSIGHT, 2025 HAS PROVED EVERY BIT AS CHALLENGING AS ANTICIPATED – YET, JUST AS WITH THE YEAR BEFORE, DISTRIBUTORS HAVE STILL FOUND PLENTY TO CELEBRATE – ACQUISITIONS, INNOVATION, GROWTH IN RENEWABLE FUELS, AND INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE AND INFRASTRUCTURE ALL EMERGE AS STAND-OUT ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2025, IN A LANDSCAPE THAT ONCE AGAIN DEMANDED RESILIENCE AND AGILITY.

AS THOUGHTS TURN TO 2026, THE HOPES EXPRESSED FEEL BOTH FAMILIAR AND FORWARD-FACING: A DESIRE FOR CERTAINTY IN SUPPLY, CLEARER GOVERNMENT POLICY, CONTINUED MOMENTUM IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION AND, AS ALWAYS, A YEAR THAT REWARDS THE COMMITMENT, RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY THAT DEFINE THIS SECTOR.

Amy Jones, Head of Organization – local, BWOC.

Our highlight of 2025 was building strong growth in what is largely a shrinking market, and ultimately, increasing our market share.

We hope for greater stability in 2026 – although it's a hope we've had for many years and it never quite materialises – but it's also what makes us all stay in the industry.

Clive Morin, Managing Director Barton Petroleum

We have employed a number of good, young people into the business in 2025, and the future looks rosy. Hopes for 2026? A cold winter for a start, a successful year and good health to all.

Gemma Wakefield, Marketing Manager, NWF

I'd say that our highlight was the growth of our acquisitions. It's been exciting to bring new team members and customers into NWF Fuels.

For 2026, we're hoping for a solid guideline and roadmap for the future of alternative fuels in home heating.

John Weedon, MD Mitchell & Webber

Receiving feedback from heating oil customers that the renewable solution is desired and support to continue the campaign continues to be a highlight for us.

And our hope is linked to our customers' hopes: that the Government consultation provides the way forward for a renewable heating fuel.

Richard Wallace, CEO, LCM Environmental

Working more closely with fuel distributors than ever before, helping them keep sites safe and operational through better infrastructure, maintenance and project delivery was our highlight.

Looking to 2026, we hope that we continue moving forward together – improving assets, strengthening compliance, and keeping people safe across every site we support.

Luke Nolan, Sales Manager Nolan Fuels

A 2025 highlight was introducing delivery technology with DTS and Fuelsoft to streamline our processes and make the customer's experience better.

In 2026 we hope to continue to be number one for service in the area.

Emma Osborn, Halso UK

Halso UK has strengthened its role supplying traditional and, increasingly, renewable fuel types. While continuing to offer traditional bulk fuels and lubricants, it has been an exciting year for growth for fuels like HVO and IHO and our highlight has been maintaining this diverse product mix to meet our legacy demand while shifting low carbon fuels and moving towards our net zero goals.

My hope for 2026 is to continue growing my grandad's fuel business, building on its legacy while adapting to new opportunities in the energy market.

Phil Murray, CEO WCF Ltd

In our 2025 Great Places to Work survey, 82% of our colleagues responded positively to the statement, “Taking everything into account, I would say this is a great place to work”, which was an increase on 2024's results and something everyone here at WCF feels so very proud of.

We hope that the Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Obligation (RLHFO) is finally implemented in 2026, which would then allow off-grid households across the UK to begin decarbonising in an easy, affordable and non-disruptive way by ensuring they are able to access renewable liquid heating fuels.

Duncan Lambert, Rix Petroleum

Our highlight? Rix continuing to acquire and build new startup businesses; in the last 12 months of trading, we have seen two new petroleum businesses and one very large manufacturing facility reinforce the group.

Thoughts on 2026? A need for greater supply certainty. Product availability is under the spotlight and creating concern in the industry. If demand bounces back from the lows we have experienced across all fuel sectors in 2025, will there be sufficient availability?

It is just one of many questions around industry supply and demand that are, currently, without answers.

THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS

Gavin Milligan, Strangford Fuels

We completed the purchase of Milligan Oil in April which made good business sense. They have been distributing fuel for 54 years in a similar geographical area. Not an easy process, but an interesting experience with a fair bit learned along the way. The transition has been relatively smooth, helped by great staff, so that's been our highlight.

For 2026 we can only hope for a cold winter heating season and a good summer for Agri/Marine diesel sales.

Patrick Kirby, Tria Energy

The big highlight was seeing the growth in awareness and interest around renewable and low-carbon fuels. It feels like the tide is finally turning, and that's great to see.

For 2026, I'm hoping for good health for everyone – especially our staff and customers – and more government backing to push forward the transition to cleaner fuels.

Jon Best, Director and COO ATF Fuels

Launching the new ATF Pay+ app and loyalty programme – our first digital fuel loyalty scheme in the Channel Islands – stands out for me. It reinforces our commitment to fair pricing, convenience, and long-term customer value.

In 2026 we hope to solidify ATF's role as the Channel Islands trusted, locally-owned supplier – by expanding greener fuel options, improving forecourt convenience, and staying ahead of industry shifts to alternative fuels.

Philip Sharman, Director Fuels/ Outdoor/Marketing Carrs Billington

The highlight of 2025 and beyond is without doubt our unique family owned structure, excellent service level and depth of support of our parent The Billington Group. We have invested significantly in our assets during 2025 supporting our long-term outlook and future plans, all while overcoming the challenge of short notice supply and logistical problems kindly delivered by the closure of Grangemouth Refinery and Prax Jarrow/LOR.

We are hoping that 2026 brings continued growth and support of our long-standing farming and rural customers and recognition from UK Government towards UK energy resilience (especially in the North and Scotland)

Duncan Smith, Head of Fuels & Lubricants Business Development, Carrs Billington

Nicky Donnelly's biscuit selection is always a highlight in our business!

In 2026 we hope for continued progress on the brilliant work led by UKIFDA on the future fuel scheme.

James Carson, Director, Knockbracken Fuels

That the UK Government are now prepared to start a debate on the use of low carbon fuels for heating is a welcome highlight of 2025!

And for 2026? I hope there will be a greater understanding of the true costs of fuel distribution!

David Weaver, Roadside Services, Certas Energy UK Ltd

The standout highlight of 2025 for Certas Energy Mobility has been the successful development and launch of our new Omega site, alongside continued investment in upgrading our existing network to improve reliability, service quality, and customer experience.

In 2026, we aim to build on this progress by expanding and enhancing our Mobility estate even further, strengthening operational excellence, and supporting customers through the next phase of the energy transition.

John Hughes, Operations Manager, Klass Oil

2025 saw us increase capacity in our bulk haulage fleet by introducing a 2nd GRW Artic Trailer working on a double shift basis.

I hope 2026 brings health and happiness for my family, peace in Ukraine and a win for Ireland in the 6 nations.

Chris Belsham, Chief Executive Officer, NWF Group

Our 2025 highlight was successfully delivering four acquisitions (Northern Energy Oil, Pinnocks, Booths and Harrison Oils) whilst delivering changes to our business that will make it fit for the future.

Hoping 2026 brings: A better general economic environment, a strong recovery in market demand to support the industry and a sensible outcome to the Government consultation on home heating solutions for off grid homes.

Andrea Pitts, Director, Quad Fuels Ltd

My highlight was a fantastic year end in June 2025 as we had the best and most profitable financial year as ours runs from July 2024 – June 2025

I hope for 2026, that we can avoid the software, systems and truck issues that have hampered us through 2025 and get back to some form of normality. I can then get out more and see the customers and be more present marketing the business.

Hannah Bigwood, Content Marketing & Sustainability Manager, Crown Oil

Our biggest highlight of 2025 was becoming the first company in the UK to be certified carbon neutral by BSI under the new ISO 14068-1 standard, alongside being certified on BSI's Net Zero Pathway to reach net zero by 2050. We were also proud to be the first company to be approved under the new RFAS Heat-Power-Marine scheme, a major expansion of Zemo Partnership's Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme that brings robust, independently verified fuel traceability to sectors beyond road transport.

In 2026, we hope to continue leading the shift toward more sustainable fuel solutions while supporting our customers with the same dependable, people-first service they expect from Crown Oil.



On a journey to reduce your carbon emissions?

Switching to HVO is one of the quickest and most effective steps your business can take towards decarbonisation. As members of the RFAS*, each quarter, our customers receive a Renewable Fuel Declaration for all their Renewable Diesel (HVO) ordered, showing its exact origin, feedstock type, and greenhouse gas savings – giving you complete confidence in what you're buying.

* Reference BW/P28/23 and MB/P50/24



Part of MB Energy Group



Happy New Year from all of us at UKIFDA!

It always feels a little odd at this time of year to be wishing for cold weather, but as an industry, we know how vital it is.

As we step into 2026, one thing is already clear: the Government consultation published just before Christmas could prove to be one of the most significant documents our industry has ever had to respond to.

A long road to common sense

The consultation, titled 'Exploring the role of alternative clean heating solutions to heat pumps and heat networks', has been a long time coming. Back in 2021, the Government proposed banning the sale of oil boilers (starting six days ago, in fact) and implementing a 'heat pump only' policy, beginning with rural homes. Successive governments have since rowed back, and in October 2025, the current administration finally scrapped the oil boiler ban.

Their statement was clear: *"We will continue to refine our approach and consider the supporting interventions needed to realise this outcome over the coming years. We will not take forward the previous government's proposal (published in October 2021) to implement regulations restricting fossil fuel heating installations in off-gas grid properties by 2026, and will consult on any future proposals relating to off-gas grid homes."*

This was a hard-won outcome, achieved through persistence and collaboration across our sector. For the first time, this consultation acknowledges that heat pumps and heat networks may not suit every building and, crucially, that renewable fuels could be part of the solution. It also recognises that consumers deserve choice.

Still heavily weighted towards electrification.

Yet the consultation still leans heavily towards electrification. It uses the Levelised Cost of Heat (LCOH), an 18-year discounted cashflow model based on electricity price forecasts through to 2041 and Treasury Green Book discount rates, with several assumptions about asset lifetimes.

This complex model raises a question: why 18 years? Because the Government's view is that a heat pump lasts 18 years, while in their opinion, an HVO boiler would only last 15, meaning consumers would supposedly need

two boilers for every one heat pump. The model ignores that HVO is a drop-in fuel requiring no new boiler and that evidence shows boilers last at least as long as heat pumps.

Another question mark is electricity pricing. The model assumes 19p/kWh, far below today's UK average of 28p/kWh and lower than what many rural customers actually pay.

Of course, our customers weren't spending Christmas worrying about discount rates in 2041, which is why, on their behalf, we have written to the Government asking for clarity. Consumers deserve accurate, transparent information, especially that any government document shows the current cost of heating, particularly heating oil, which is especially relevant for our customers. The consultation ignores the realities households face by not concentrating on the cost to homeowners now.

Affordability cannot be ignored

The consultation archetype is a detached, 150m² off-grid home. While many of our consumers' homes are large, they are also old, and we have questioned whether the age of the property might have been a more relevant characteristic to use. The consultation estimates heat pump installation at £16,900–£17,100, with annual running costs of £1,700–£1,750. Compare that to approximately 2,500 litres of heating oil at around £1,500 per year, and the consumer's choice becomes clear.

Even with some energy bill costs shifted onto general taxation, electricity will not undercut heating oil at current rates. Affordability, not technical feasibility, remains the fundamental barrier. The consultation states 86% of our customers' homes (based on government analysis regarding sufficient thermal comfort) could have a heat pump installed. But it simply ignores the cost.

As I often say: yes, I could technically have a Ferrari parked outside my house. But could I afford to buy it, insure it, or fuel it? No. The same principle applies here.

A practical path forward

Our industry has consistently proposed a pragmatic solution, which is to start decarbonisation now by introducing a new heating oil specification with a 20% renewable blend. Thanks to the Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Obligation (RLHFO) approved

last parliament and a no-cost duty change, this could be introduced immediately, with no upfront charges, no disruption, and no need to replace boilers or tanks.

Another fundamental issue with the consultation is that it seeks 100% solutions, i.e. 100% carbon savings, but ignores the principle of Net Zero, which recognises that some sectors will not meet the target.

It also overlooks the deliverability solution in the industry's proposals. Our approach delivers real carbon savings equivalent to 347,000 heat pumps. To put that in context, fewer than 50,000 heat pumps have been installed under the Government's Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS) in the past three years. And while mass heat pump rollout would cost taxpayers and consumers £2.5bn each, our solution costs nothing.

We need you

Over the past three years, alongside OFTEC, we've built a powerful consumer campaign: Future Ready Fuel. What began with a simple leaflet has grown into a movement, with thousands writing to MPs and Ministers.

Now is the time to reignite that momentum. As this edition of Fuel Oil News lands, we're asking all distributors to reach out to their customers, explain why this consultation matters and encourage them to join the Future Ready Fuel campaign via its website.

We also urge everyone in the industry to submit their own consultation response. Later this month, we'll provide guidance to help. Our message is simple: we can deliver a decarbonisation solution that works, it can start immediately, has our customers' confidence, and respects consumer affordability and practicality. The more government hears this, the more they will listen.

Looking ahead

2026 will be a defining year. We have an opportunity to shape policy, protect consumer choice, and champion renewable liquid fuels as a credible, immediate path to decarbonisation.

So, as we raise a glass to the year ahead, let's commit to making our voices heard. Together, we can ensure that common sense, affordability and practicality remain at the heart of the UK's heating future.

Happy New Year – and let's get to work.



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**2025 GRW Engineering
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Rigid Tanker**



Choice of 3

**2025 Scania P360
Rigid Tanker**



**2022 DAF LF 290 FA
Rigid Tanker**



Choice of 2

**2021 DAF LF 290 FA
Rigid Tanker**



Choice of 2

**2021 Cobo Hnos 42000L 6
Comp ADR Fuel
Semi-trailer**



**2018 DAF LF260 FA
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A new chapter for Craggs Energy and Moorland Fuels – “What matters to you, matters to us”

EMPLOYEE-OWNED CRAGGS ENERGY AND MOORLAND FUELS HAVE RECENTLY UNVEILED A NEW BOLD, UNIFIED BRAND REINFORCING THEIR ROOTS IN THE COMMUNITIES OF YORKSHIRE AND THE NORTH-WEST AND DEVON AND CORNWALL. A NEW CHAPTER FOR CRAGGS AND MOORLAND MEANS A NEW ALL-FEMALE LEADERSHIP TEAM APPOINTED TO STEER THE BUSINESS INTO THE FUTURE.

IN THIS SECOND PART OF OUR ‘IN CONVERSATION’ FEATURE WITH THE NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM, CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD, SPOKE WITH **LISA BENNETT** (MANAGING DIRECTOR), **ABBY TURNER** (REGIONAL DIRECTOR SOUTH-WEST), AND **JULIE STEPHENS** (REGIONAL DIRECTOR NORTH-WEST) TO DISCOVER HOW THEY ARE SETTTLING INTO THEIR NEW ROLES AND TO HEAR THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE INDUSTRY.



A dynamic new team

First, Claudia spoke with Lisa, to discover more about her new role. Lisa has over 20 years’ leadership experience across FMCG, manufacturing, SaaS, and energy, building a reputation for delivering transformation in business performance, culture, and operations.

“I’m the Managing Director of Craggs Energy,” Lisa began. “Every aspect of the role matters – setting and executing our long-term strategy, delivering growth, expanding renewable fuels, and keeping our distribution strong.

“But just as important is carrying the baton of our culture – making sure our people feel part of the journey and the community we’re building together.

“We’re an employee-owned business, which means leadership isn’t about one person at the top. It’s about creating ownership and accountability, a sense of pride, across the whole team. And what a team it is.

“Every single role matters equally here – drivers on the road, schedulers, customer service, engineers, finance, and the teams behind the scenes. I’m proud of the empathy and professionalism they show every day, especially when supporting customers who may be struggling. That care is what builds trust.

“Going out with the drivers on the truck for a day, was genuinely eye opening. Seeing the effort, the challenges, and the pride that

goes into every delivery gave me a whole new perspective. It reminded me how important it is that we all try to walk in each other’s shoes — a “day in the life of” approach. It’s the only way to understand and respect what each team does.

“Being an MD is about balance, executing on strategy and growth while making sure our people feel heard, valued, and supported. When our people feel that way, our customers don’t just get fuel – they get reliability and consistency.”

Where is the fuel distribution industry heading?

“Liquid fuels will always have a role, especially in rural and hard-to-electrify areas. But we all have a responsibility to make them as sustainable as possible and to keep driving innovation. That really is the key to sustainability.

“Campaigns like Future Ready Fuel bring this to life. For many rural households, moving to a heat pump just isn’t realistic, it’s too expensive and the homes aren’t always suitable. People need choice. That’s where renewable liquid fuels like HVO are such a powerful option, they can be dropped straight in with minimal disruption. Government Policy needs to back that choice, rather than forcing one-size-fits-all solutions.

“At Craggs, we see our role as being right alongside customers on that journey, helping

them understand the options and bringing them real, workable solutions they can adopt today.”

What’s your strategy for the next 3 years?

“We’ve got three priorities: strengthen our distribution network, expand renewable fuels like HVO, and grow into wider carbon-reduction services. But none of that works without strong supplier partnerships. If supply breaks down, we can’t deliver for our customers.

“Learning of the closure of Prax’s Lindsey refinery really brought that home. What saddened me most was the impact on people and communities; hundreds of jobs lost, families disrupted, livelihoods shaken. And then of course there’s the knock-on effect on fuel supply and security. It’s a reminder that resilience in our sector isn’t just about trucks on the road, it’s about the strength of the whole supply chain.

“Our strategy is as much about building resilience with suppliers as it is about serving customers. It’s also about strengthening local infrastructure and community ties; our #ourhouse approach – because if we don’t serve the communities we operate in, we can’t truly grow.”

How is fuel demand changing?

“The perception of domestic demand is that it is slowly declining as more homes look at electrification, but that is not the case. Heating

oil is still essential, it is the buying pattern that has changed, and consumer behaviours around cost saving initiatives e.g. turning on boilers later and weather patterns changing driving usage downwards.

“One cold winter and we are back to the same levels seen in previous years. Agriculture remains steady, and it’s encouraging to see OEMs like New Holland exploring alternatives, they showcased a hydrogen tractor concept back in 2009 and now have methane-powered models. The fact these aren’t mainstream yet shows how challenging the infrastructure and cost barriers are.

“On the commercial side, it’s a more mixed picture. Some industries are adopting alternatives quickly, while others still rely on liquid fuels. A great recent example is Chiltern Railways running parts of their fleet on HVO, proof that mainstream transport providers could make the switch. That’s exciting, but it also shows adoption depends heavily on cost, supply, and infrastructure.

“Our role is to balance these realities, to help customers choose the right fuel at the right time, and to be ready with practical advice as the options grow.”

What additional services are popular?

“Tank monitoring, telemetry, automated top-ups, and carbon-saving audits are all growing fast. Renewable fuels like HVO are driving the most excitement, but services like telemetry are game changers.

“Telemetry isn’t just about technology, it’s about partnership. It helps us understand our customers’ usage, to plan with them, and make sure they’re never left without supply. Carbon calculators and energy efficiency audits are also important because they help customers understand the impact.

“These services position us as a trusted adviser, not just a fuel supplier which is exactly what we want to be.”

How do you service outlying customers profitably with declining order sizes and rising delivery costs?

“It comes down to efficiency, technology, and understanding. Route optimisation and tank telemetry reduce wasted trips, and smart scheduling lets us do more with less.

“But it’s also about mindset. Through #ourhouse, we see ourselves as part of the communities we serve, not just a business making deliveries. Even in the most remote areas, we’ll work to find sustainable ways of keeping people supplied. And we’re always exploring new technology, new models, and



new partnerships that can make serving those areas more efficient in future.”

Where will business grow as fossil fuel demand falls with electrification?

“The growth is in renewable fuels, hybrid solutions, and wider carbon-reduction services. Education is also a big part of it, helping customers understand the costs, the options, and the carbon impact so they can make confident choices.

“Because we’re employee-owned, we can take a long-term view. That means putting customers and communities at the centre of what we do and investing in innovation to support them through the transition.”

What do you think of the RFAS scheme extension?

“I think extending the RFAS is a really positive step. It gives customers confidence that what they’re buying is genuinely sustainable and independently verified and that trust matters, especially for businesses reporting on ESG.

“It also ties in with what campaigns like Future Ready Fuel are saying: we need affordable, practical ways for households and businesses to decarbonise. RFAS helps, but it can’t stand alone. Policy needs to support adoption in a positive way, duty relief, grants, or incentives rather than feeling punitive in what is already a costly environment.”

What unique perspectives do female leaders bring to this sector?

“Throughout my career, I have worked in more male-dominated industries. Along the way I’ve met incredible women, and what inspires me most is how they don’t just focus on business,

but also on the systems that both women and men must navigate. Within this sector I believe that these learnings can only support and develop a stronger environment.

“Collaboration has improved so much in the last decade in this arena, but there’s still a way to go. Initiatives like FutureWomenX show how women can help reshape those systems for the better and that has to be a positive influence in any sector.

“For me, it’s not about men versus women, it’s about bridging strengths and working in harmony. And as female leaders, we also have a responsibility to mentor and lift others up, to create more pathways into leadership. That’s how resilience and innovation will thrive.”

Who would you invite to a dinner party about the future of energy?

“I’d love to have Christiana Figueres there. She led the Paris Agreement and has such a powerful way of balancing ambition with realism. But I’d also want my father-in-law at the table. He’s full of wisdom and always challenges the norm, and I think he’d really liven up the conversation. And who knows — maybe it would even change his perspective on EV cars, which I’m not sure even Christiana could do!

“And perhaps I’d include someone from the next generation too because ultimately, it’s their future we’re talking about.”

What’s the best piece of business advice you’ve been given?

“The best advice I’ve ever had is to never stop learning, and to surround yourself with people who can enhance your journey. For me, it boils down to three values I try to live by: trust, own,

deliver. You have to be true to yourself.

"I've carried those values into every business I've worked in, and I try to pass them on to my team too. Because if you live by them, you don't just build strong businesses – you build strong people."

Regional Directors

Abby Turner and Julie Stephens are now Regional Directors for Craggs and Moorland, both bringing years of experience. Abby joined Moorland Fuels in 2003, after several years in the US working in public relations, where she gained a broad experience across a range of industries. Moorland Fuels, founded by her parents in 2003, has always been close to Abby's heart. Prior to Moorland Fuels joining the Craggs Energy Group in 2020, Abby had already built a good working relationship with the Craggs team through sharing best practice and industry insights.

Julie is new to Craggs, but has spent over 20 years in the fuel distribution industry with both independent and larger distributors. Beginning her career in sales, she has worked closely with customers and over time, extended her responsibilities, developing into managerial roles with an added focus on operations, compliance and customer service.

Congratulations on your new roles! Please tell us more about them.

Abby – "My own role hasn't changed significantly, but what is new – and really exciting – is the strength we've added to the leadership team. I now can work closely with both Lisa and Julie, who each bring a wealth of experience and fresh perspective.

"Together, we'll be focused on driving the business forward, building on our strengths, and continuing to live out our commitment that "What matters to you, matters to us."

Julie – "My role as Regional Director involves me delivering operations and sales performance for Craggs Energy and creating an energy to deliver results.

"There will be a strong focus on driving sustainable growth working within a one team culture, establishing and building robust partners and customer relationships and I'll bring my passion for leadership and continuous improvement to the business."

Where is the industry heading, in your view?

Abby – "In the short term, the increased tensions globally have led to uncertainty among our customer bases. We're seeing smaller order volumes, changes in buying

patterns and our customers are increasingly value-driven, so our role is to deliver reliability, transparency, and efficiency at a local level.

"In the medium term, we'll start to see the noise surrounding renewable liquid fuels increase as an alternative to traditional bulk fuel – not an overnight change, but steady growth in alternative fuels and efficiency measures. I believe distributors like us will play a key bridging role: making sure customers have security of supply today, while helping them explore lower-carbon options for tomorrow.

"In the long term, the industry will inevitably become more diversified. Whether that's renewable liquid fuels, hydrogen carriers, or supporting EV infrastructure, companies like ours will need to pivot from a single-fuel mindset to a customer-energy mindset. I don't think traditional bulk fuels will die, but the demand for them will decrease as we all try to meet the crucial targets for Net Zero and decarbonisation."

Julie – "In the short term there is certainly unrest with supply and demand with disruptions and refinery closures, all of which creates operational challenges, but all are manageable as we put in secure sold supply partnerships.

"Order patterns in domestic markets are starting to get back to normal after covid, but it has been noticeable that the amount of fuel each domestic customer has been ordering has reduced so it is essential that we ensure operational efficiencies.

"Medium term we will continue to hear a great deal about the requirements regarding the drive towards net zero and this is something we cannot ignore; hence we are always looking at what the opportunities will be to help, guide and ease the customers journey on their transition.

Traditional fuels as we know it are here for a while but being part of the change, delivering change and being known as experts in the bridge to alternatives will be key.

"In the long-term net zero is very much a goal for all of us both in business and the way we live day to day. Whilst fossil fuels are not going away soon, contributing to the decarbonisation journey and being on the cusp of the curve for change is essential as we move the business forwards. Whether that be hydrogen, renewable fuels, EVs, or innovative recycling methods, we are certainly in an exciting place to ease that journey.

"However, it is still forecast that by 2050, there will be a large percentage of liquid fuels to deliver in some form so we still have a job

to do, and we will look to adapt and evolve to ensure we ease the customers journey to cleaner energy."

What is happening with fuel demand?

Abby – "Domestic: demand is softening and buying behaviours are shifting. With the ongoing cost-of-living pressures, many customers are purchasing smaller volumes and being more cautious with how they manage their fuel use. We're seeing orders placed later, often when tanks are already running low, which creates an increased expectation for rapid delivery to avoid run-outs.

"Agricultural: Demand across our agricultural customer base has remained more stable, and in fact, we've seen growth in this sector over the past year. That said, the realities of farming in the South West – with drier summers, wetter winters, and rising core temperatures – continue to put pressure on farm businesses, which inevitably shapes fuel usage patterns and future resilience.

"Commercial: Demand has been steady, but we are noticing a shift in behaviour. More commercial customers are actively considering their environmental impact, which is influencing how they approach energy and fuel procurement. We've also observed a move toward smaller on-site stock holdings, with businesses opting to manage fuel more tightly as part of their operational planning."

Julie – "Domestic Markets: This market has not been like the previous years and has not been consistent in many ways from order patterns, seasons, pricing, volumes and market share is noticeably dropped and discussed, but we have seen more signs of consistent volumes over the last 12 months.

"Agricultural Markets: We have seen this grow in our areas, and it continues to do so as we head into this new year. The demand is there, the business is there, and management of these customers is key for the market share.

"Commercial: Year on year we are seeing several commercial sectors struggle in the marketplace and a huge number of businesses folding year on year, so being adaptable and providing value for key service and chosen sectors will be key for us.

"Cash flow, stock holdings and theft are also challenges for the commercial base of customers, as businesses order just in time to avoid holding high stock tying up cash, and as theft has risen, some bulk customers explore the use of fuel cards.

"There is still appetite for customers to go green and embrace renewable fuel, but with no consequences for not doing so and higher

costs to each business, the growth is steady and not expediential at the moment. However, there are benefits so the sales as such become a consultative approach to guide them rather than transactional.

"This is a lively market and knowing our place in the market sees us continue to grow, due to delivering on service levels, and demand remains high. Many larger, so-called blue-chip companies are happy to trade with us for a higher price and paying to receptive payment terms as service means more, however, the challenge remains credit risk and appetite as certain sectors are experiencing tough times."

With declining order volumes and rising delivery costs, how do you continue to service outlying customers profitably?

Abby – "It's a challenge, but it comes down to smart logistics and customer loyalty. We try to maximise efficiency and avoid unnecessary miles, and we encourage customers to use monitoring and planned delivery services – so we can fill tanks at the optimum time rather than making multiple small runs.

"Equally, being employee-owned helps, because our team genuinely cares about doing the right thing for customers – and customers recognise that. It builds loyalty, which means repeat business and a stronger long-term relationship, even when margins are tight."

Where do you see business growing as fossil fuel demand reduces with increasing electrification?

Abby – "Our growth will come from diversification. I see opportunities in:

Renewable fuels: HVO and other sustainable liquid fuels are still in their infancy but will grow.

Energy services: monitoring, resilience planning, and energy efficiency support.

Infrastructure support: as electrification grows, rural areas still need backup and hybrid systems — and we're well placed to support those.

"We'll evolve from being 'just a fuel supplier' to being an energy partner for our customers."

Will the RFAS scheme extension allay customer concerns over sustainability?

Abby – "Yes, but only if it's matched by real-world supply and affordability.

Customers want to do the right thing environmentally, but they need clarity, consistency, and cost-effectiveness

If customers know that renewable heating oil, HVO, or other biofuels are verified through a transparent, audited scheme, they are far more

likely to adopt them so expanding schemes like RFAS is a positive step.

"But distributors will have to work hard to build trust, making sure customers can access these products without excessive complexity or cost."

In your experience, what do female leaders bring to the drive for innovation and resilience – especially as the sector evolves?

Abby – "I think female leaders often bring a collaborative, empathetic, and long-term perspective. In industries like fuels and energy, which have traditionally been very operational and male-dominated, that difference can be powerful.

"We're good at listening to what customers really need, balancing short-term commercial realities with long-term sustainability goals, and leading teams through change with resilience.

"For me, it's not about gender in isolation – it's about diversity of thought. But I do believe women leaders often bring a fresh perspective that drives both innovation and trust."

Julie – "Over the years, working in a sector where senior leadership has traditionally been male dominated, I have had to be strong and resilient – quite often, more than I realised.

"As female leaders, we bring an inclusive leadership style, allowing everyone to be listened to and creating opportunities for wider contribution. Both logic and empathy are key as this often opens solutions which others have missed or overlooked.

"It is not about gender; it is about having the right people in the right jobs. However, within this industry women leaders can bring a balanced culture approach ensuring values are lived."

Who would you invite to a dinner party about the future of energy?

Abby – "Juliet Davenport, Winston Churchill and Emma Pinchbeck."

Julie – "James Dyson, such an innovative human I'm sure he would have great opinions for discussion."

What is the best piece of business advice you have been given?

Abby – "Decide fast, adapt faster as indecision kills momentum."

Julie – "Over the years I have gained lots of advice, however, a couple that resonate with me are:

"'Never be afraid to speak up and challenge the status quo,' the other being 'Feel the fear and do it anyway.'"

Inver further expands HVO at pump with Fuel Pod launch

Inver has opened its first modular "Fuel Pod" in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, introducing a new pay-as-you-go refuelling option for motorists and commercial operators. The system is designed as a fully integrated, self-contained unit aimed at reducing installation and maintenance requirements

The modular design allows the Fuel Pod to be installed on sites where space or capital constraints would otherwise limit on-site fuelling. It can also be relocated for temporary or project-based operations, offering a flexible alternative to conventional infrastructure.

Products available at the Clonmel pod include diesel, HVO, AdBlue and marked gas oil, with 24-hour access for fleet and retail customers

Ben Lenihan, Head of Retail Fuel at Inver Energy, said the solution enables the company to expand supply across Ireland through an "innovative, flexible and cost-effective" model that complements its traditional forecourt network. He highlighted the appeal for haulage, logistics and construction companies seeking on-site fuelling without major groundwork and with the option to redeploy units between depots or projects

The Clonmel installation becomes Inver's 12th site in Ireland to offer HVO at the pump, and the company plans further Fuel Pod deployments in 2026. Inver, part of the Greenergy Group, is expanding its lower-carbon fuel offering as part of wider efforts to support emissions reduction in transport and commercial operations.



What price oil? 2025 in review

IN ASSOCIATION WITH *THE OIL MARKET JOURNAL*

THE FOLLOWING PAGES PRESENT A GRAPH THAT SHOWS HOW FUEL PRICES HAVE VARIED THROUGH 2025. THE DATA PRESENTS HVO DIESEL ALONGSIDE BRENT CRUDE DATA, WITH DATA SUPPLIED BY THE OIL MARKET JOURNAL. THE MARKERS AND TEXT BOXES HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE KEY EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR THAT HAVE IMPACTED ON THE PRICING.

WE HOPE THAT IT PROVIDES AN INTERESTING AND INSIGHTFUL LOOK BACK OVER A YEAR WHICH, ONCE AGAIN, HAS PRESENTED THOSE OPERATING IN THE LIQUID FUEL SECTOR, WITH A BROAD VARIETY OF CHALLENGES.

Oil 2025

Q1 2025 – Inauguration Euphoria to Tariff Terror

2025 began with champagne corks popping, as markets priced in President Trump's promised pro-business agenda. Within weeks the mood turned to panic. Tariff chaos, a dramatic US pivot toward Russia, ARA stock builds and recession fears hammered oil, the dollar and equities. After a brief post-inauguration spike, Q1 delivered savage losses as the post-WW2 global order looked shakier than it had in eighty years.

January

Biden's parting gift was fresh sanctions on Russia; the IEA promptly warned of a tighter crude balance. A brutal US cold snap and icy weather across Northwest Europe gave demand a helpful shove. Days before Trump's inauguration, Israel and Hamas declared a ceasefire, widely seen as a response to the president-elect's blunt threats. On 20th January Trump repeated "drill baby, drill" in his inaugural speech and promised an American production boom. Initial tariff threats against Canada and Mexico were brushed off. From Davos, Trump demanded OPEC open the taps to cut inflation and free central banks to slash rates.

February

The month became a nerve-wracking "will-they-won't-they" on tariffs. Promised levies were suspended, then new threats issued almost daily, none actually implemented – thanks to frantic last-minute diplomacy. US consumer

confidence cratered in its sharpest drop since 2021. ARA gasoline stocks hit an all-time high, underlining Europe's refining woes as Nigeria's giant Dangote refinery steamed toward full output. A first jet kero tanker sneaked through the Red Sea, but the relief was fleeting.

Most disturbing was Washington's abrupt tilt toward Moscow. Trump spoke to Putin on 12th February; VP Vance tore into European allies at Munich; US and Russian officials then discussed Ukraine peace terms without Kyiv at the table. Zelensky's White House visit on 28th February to sign a minerals deal ended in a shouting match over his wartime attire and alleged ingratitude. Markets read the signals loud and clear: a possible "peace at any cost" deal could soon flood the world with cheap Russian barrels.

March

Bearish momentum rolled on. The first hard tariff (25% on steel and aluminium from all nations) finally landed. Intelligence sharing with Ukraine was paused. Europe responded with plans to smash Germany's debt brake and a proposed €800 bn defence splurge. In the US, the Atlanta Fed model flashed Q1 GDP contraction; Trump refused to rule out recession on Fox News; small-business optimism evaporated and the S&P 500 entered official correction territory. UK pump prices posted their first weekly fall since September.

Q2 2025 – Liberation Day and the Great OPEC Flood

Q2 was defined by Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs and three monster OPEC production hikes. Lower demand + surging supply = lower prices. Brent crashed below \$60/b, a four-year

low, before geopolitical flare-ups dragged it most of the way back by late June.

April

2nd April 2025 will go down as the day the post-war trade order died. "Reciprocal" tariffs were slapped on every country on Earth, even the penguin colony on Heard and McDonald Islands. The next day OPEC announced a 411 kb/d hike for May. Brent lost 10% in 48 hours.

A week later Trump unveiled 104% tariffs on China (promptly met with 84% retaliation) and crude duly sank below \$60/b.

Amid carnage in stocks, the dollar and bond markets, Trump executed a screeching U-turn: a 90-day pause on the global tariff and a reduced 10% baseline, but the China embargo escalated to 145%/115%. IEA and OPEC slashed demand forecasts. Jerome Powell warned tariffs would hurt growth; Trump threatened to fire him (he later backed off). Q1 GDP was confirmed negative, the first contraction since 2021.

May

Another 411 kb/d OPEC hike for June, then another 411 kb/d for July. A Houthi missile hit Ben-Gurion airport on 4th May; joint US-Israeli strikes followed, yet Brent still closed at \$60.23/b, the YTD low.

Relief came mid-month: a UK-US trade deal (small but symbolic) and a surprise 90-day US-China tariff truce (30%/10%). Physical markets suddenly tightened. ARA product stocks fell below the five-year average for the first time in 2025 and US distillate inventories hit the lowest since 1990. Prices tried to rally but were repeatedly capped by the next looming OPEC hike.

June

Geopolitics reclaimed centre stage. Ukraine destroyed at least 40 Russian warplanes; the Caribou Lake wildfire threatened Canadian oil-sands output; then, on 13th June, Israel hit Iranian nuclear sites. Tit-for-tat escalation sent Gasoil futures exploding through \$700/t. The US eventually joined strikes on 21st June. Late on 30th June came the shock news that the 105 kb/d Prax Lindsey refinery in Lincolnshire had entered administration.

Q3 2025 – Refinery Shock, OPEC Avalanche, Ukrainian Drones

Lindsey's collapse, three more enormous OPEC hikes and relentless Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian refineries produced violent two-way swings. US distillate began the quarter at 20-year lows and ended it almost back to seasonal norms.

July

Lindsey administration news detonated distillate prices; front-month ICE Gasoil jumped >\$100/t by 10th July. US distillate stocks hit the lowest July level since 2005 and ARA gasoil was 13% below average. Counterbalancing bears arrived quickly: French ATC strikes crushed jet premia, Exxon brought a big new Fawley hydrotreater on line and BP reversed its Gelsenkirchen CDU closure plan. OPEC stunned markets with a 548 kb/d hike for September, the clearest signal yet that Riyadh was willing to fight for market share.

August

Dreadful US payrolls (just 73k added, huge prior-period revisions) prompted Trump to sack the BLS chair and sparked Fed Governor resignations. Trump and Putin met in Alaska, nothing achieved. Ukrainian drones, however, were brutally effective, knocking 14 Russian refineries offline during the month alone. Powell's Jackson Hole speech confirmed rate cuts were coming.

September

Shell took the giant 404 kb/d Pernis refinery down for maintenance, Stanlow suffered an extended outage and Dangote reported months-long problems, European refining took a triple hit. More weak payrolls were almost ignored when Israel struck Hamas

leaders in Qatar and Poland shot down Russian drones. By mid-month global stocks had recovered sharply; both the DoE and IEA forecast massive oversupply into 2026. Trump's surprise Gaza peace plan on 29th September knocked the legs out from under the risk premium.

Q4 2025 – Middle East Peace, Russian Sanctions, OPEC Pauses

The Israel-Hamas war ended; joy was short-lived as all eyes swung back to Ukraine and Russian supply.

October

A 43-day US government shutdown began, data vacuum made the Fed cautious. OPEC added a modest 137 kb/d for November. Israel-Hamas ceasefire implementation sent prices reeling lower. Ukraine intensified refinery drone strikes; Trump's Hungary summit with Putin was cancelled in disgust. Late-month US sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil (effective 21st November) sparked a sharp bounce.

November

Sanctions chaos and the surprise announcement that OPEC would freeze quotas through Q1 2026 propelled Gasoil briefly above \$800/t. Nigeria's aborted gasoline import duty triggered a frantic import rush before being scrapped. On 19th November the US published a 28-point Ukraine peace plan, widely seen as Moscow-friendly in its first draft. Prices collapsed into month-end as traders positioned for the eventual return of Russian barrels..

2026 Preview

Fundamentals scream oversupply: record US production, 2.74 mb/d of extra OPEC+ supply added in 2025 alone and global stocks above the 10-year average for the first time since 2017 (outside the pandemic). The Fed is cutting rates into a fragile labour market, not a booming one. If sustainable peace breaks out in Ukraine, Brent has further to fall, \$55/b is already in many bank forecasts. But in a world led by tweet, drone and tariff; data-driven insight remains our only reliable compass. One thing is certain: 2025 was the year volatility came home to roost. Fasten your seatbelts for 2026.

Biofuels 2025

Biofuels were at the mercy of the same forces as the wider oil market, only with sharper policy and supply shocks layered on top.

Q1

Biofuels began 2025 dragged down by falling ICE Gasoil. Prices were briefly supported after 9th January when the EU imposed anti-dumping duties on Chinese biodiesel. Abundant HVO supply sent premiums tumbling; by mid-February HVO less two certificates traded at a rare discount to B7 diesel for several weeks. UCOME and RME premiums widened sharply as flat price fell. Investment appetite cooled further when Neste paused its Rotterdam biorefinery expansion and BP cut biofuel capex, both citing policy uncertainty out of Washington.

Q2

Q2 felt the full force of global tariff chaos before the worst levies were paused. The UK-US trade deal announced on 8th May removed barriers to US ethanol exports, immediately threatening domestic producers. Viverno and Ensus warned of closure; Greenergy temporarily idled its Immingham biodiesel plant. Rising certificate values later in the quarter revived physical blending demand, pushing HVO premiums to six-month highs. A two-week suspension of Preem's ISCC certification at Gothenburg in June tightened the market further; FAME-O reached its highest level in two years.

Q3

Q4 brought another violent swing. HVO posted genuine three-year highs in October as traders priced aggressive German legislation, only for repeated cabinet postponements to knock premiums lower again. Trafigura confirmed permanent closure of its long-idle Immingham plant. The UK finally imposed anti-dumping duties on Chinese biodiesel and the TRA recommended similar measures against US-origin HVO.

2026 Outlook

Conventional biodiesel and bioethanol face continuing import pressure and blend-wall limits. HVO remains highly sensitive to the pace of RED III rollout, certificate pricing and any fresh fraud clampdowns. With UK production capacity shrinking fast, the market will stay tight and volatile.

All data and analysis provided by The Oil Market Journal.

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Fuel price review: 2025 highlights

JANUARY

- 9 EU imposes anti-dumping duties on Chinese biodiesel
- 10 US announces fresh sanctions on Russia
- 15 Israel-Hamas ceasefire announced
- 20 Trump inaugurated; "drill baby drill" + tariff threats vs Canada, Mexico, China
- 23 Trump demands OPEC cut prices to help central banks ease interest rates

FEBRUARY

- 12 Trump-Putin phone call
- 12 Neste pauses Rotterdam biorefinery investment
- 28 Zelensky White House visit ends in public row

MARCH

- 3 US pauses military aid and intelligence sharing with Ukraine
- 4 Atlanta Fed forecasts Q1 GDP contraction
- 5 EU proposes €800 bn defence package

APRIL

- 2 "Liberation Day" global reciprocal tariffs announced
- 3 OPEC hikes May quotas by 411 kb/d
- 8-11 US-China tariff war escalates

(104% → 145% US, 84% → 125% China)

- 9 90-day tariff pause for all countries except China
- 30 US Q1 GDP confirmed -0.3 %

MAY

- 3 OPEC agrees another 411 kb/d for June; Brent closes below \$60/b
- 8 UK-US trade deal opens door to cheap US ethanol
- 12 US-China 90-day tariff truce
- 31 OPEC agrees third 411 kb/d hike for July

JUNE

- 1 Ukraine deep drone strikes destroy 40+ Russian warplanes
- 13 Israel launches air strikes on Iranian nuclear sites
- 21 US joins strikes on Iranian nuclear sites
- 30 Prax Lindsey refinery (105 kb/d) enters administration

JULY

- 5 OPEC announces larger-than-expected 548 kb/d hike for September

AUGUST

- 1 US payrolls disaster: only 73k jobs

added + huge downward revisions

- 22 Powell signals rate cuts at Jackson Hole

SEPTEMBER

- 2-3 Major refinery outages (Pernis, Stanlow, Dangote)
- 3 Shell cancels Rotterdam biorefinery project
- 17 Fed cuts rates
- 29 Sep Trump announces Gaza peace plan

OCTOBER

- 1 43-day US government shutdown begins
- 8 Israel-Hamas formally agree Trump ceasefire
- 22 US imposes sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil

NOVEMBER

- 2 OPEC adds final 137 kb/d for December, then pauses all hikes for Q1 2026
- 19 US publishes 28-point Ukraine peace plan
- 25-26 UK imposes anti-dumping duties on Chinese biodiesel and recommends duties on US HVO



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Oil price review: 2025 highlights

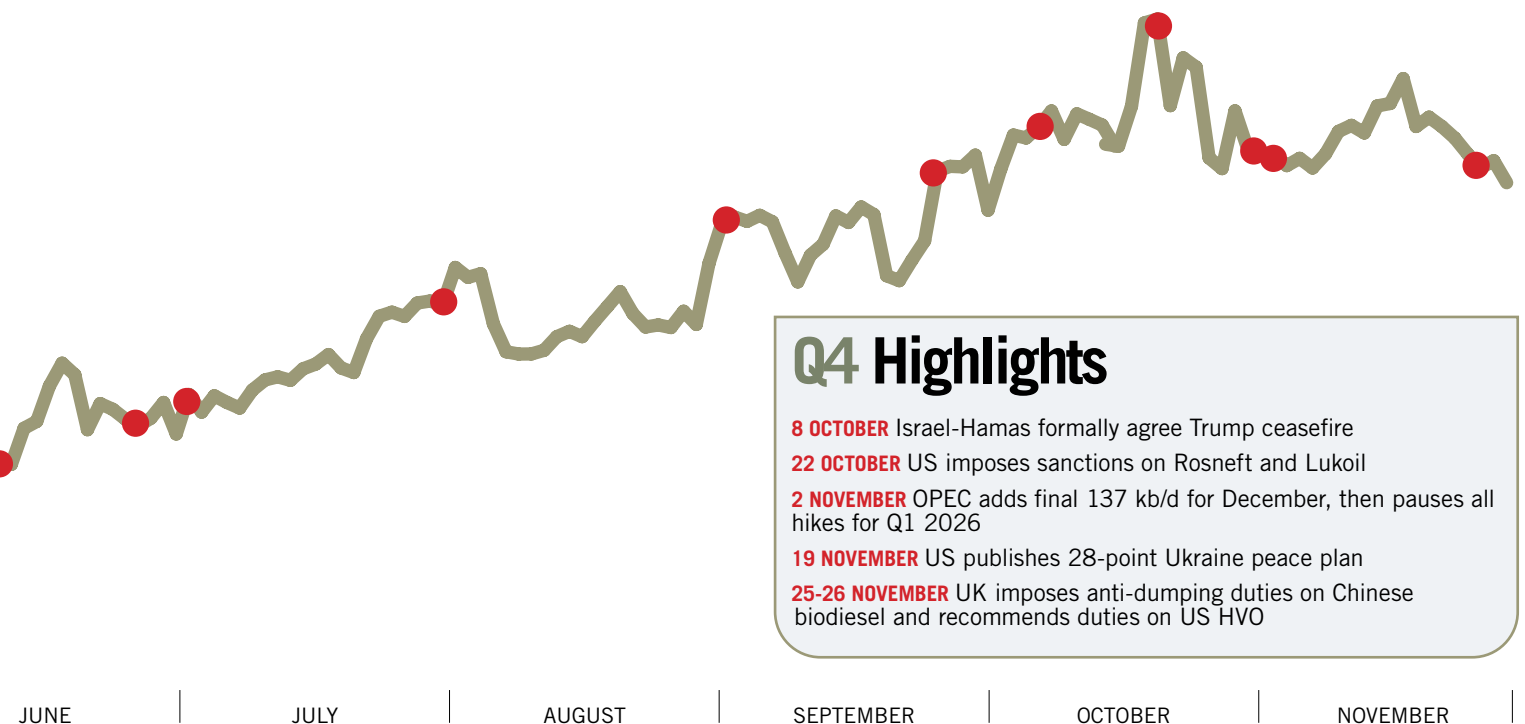
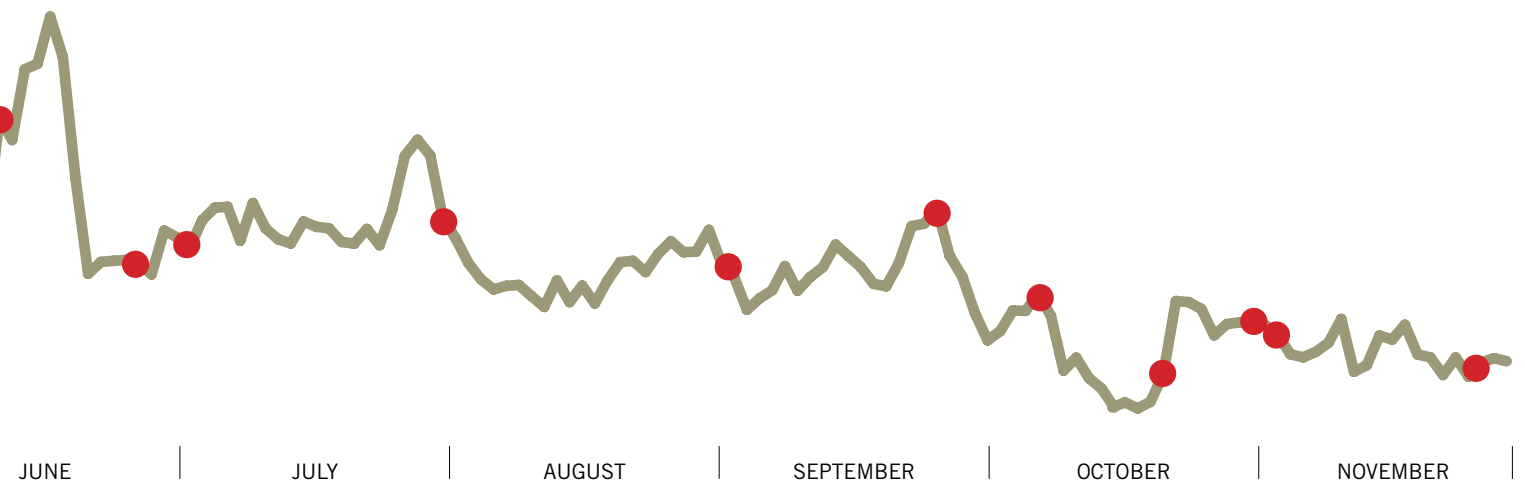


HVO price review: 2025 highlights



Q3 Highlights

- 5 JULY** OPEC announces larger-than-expected 548 kb/d hike for September
- 1 AUGUST** US payrolls disaster: only 73k jobs added + huge downward revisions
- 2-3 SEPTEMBER** Major refinery outages (Pernis, Stanlow, Dangote)
- 3 SEPTEMBER** Shell cancels Rotterdam biorefinery project
- 29 SEPTEMBER** Trump announces gaza peace plan



Q4 Highlights

- 8 OCTOBER** Israel-Hamas formally agree Trump ceasefire
- 22 OCTOBER** US imposes sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil
- 2 NOVEMBER** OPEC adds final 137 kb/d for December, then pauses all hikes for Q1 2026
- 19 NOVEMBER** US publishes 28-point Ukraine peace plan
- 25-26 NOVEMBER** UK imposes anti-dumping duties on Chinese biodiesel and recommends duties on US HVO





CODAS



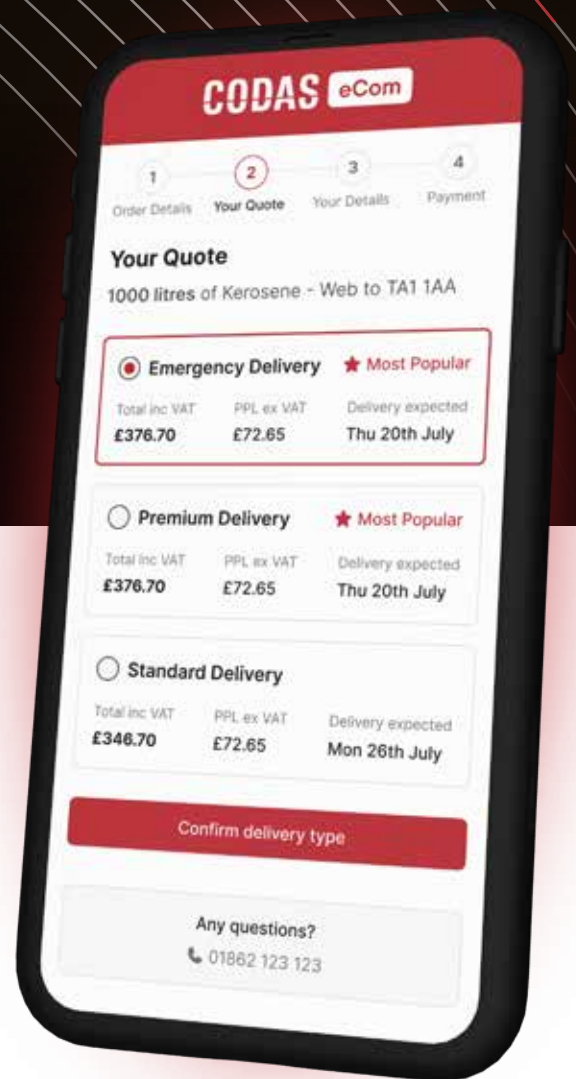
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A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Matt Ryan

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 **MATT RYAN**, SALES DIRECTOR FOR COMPASS FUELS, TO DISCOVER HOW MATT SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.



MY ALARM GOES OFF AT...

6am.

THE FIRST THING I DO IS...

Get a coffee and then I walk the dogs.

I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY...

Just getting ready for the commute into work – the usual boring but essential stuff.

I CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT...

I don't really have any superstitions; I just drive to work and prepare myself for the day that way.



MY TYPICAL DAY –

A typical day for me would be wake up, get a coffee, either take the dogs out on a walk or go for a run with a good friend of mine. I come home and get a shower, then take a 45-minute drive into the office from Warrington to Preston.

When I get into work, my first job is to do all of my daily prices for our clients and suppliers that we work closely with. We tend to get quite a lot of urgent delivery requests so the priority is to

get those sorted out in the best way we can ensuring we are reacting to anything emergency wise. At the same time we are looking after and managing our key accounts and the sales team with any of the day-to-day challenges that are thrown at us.

Typically, I speak to a lot of our key suppliers who help us out nationally regarding ongoing or new deliveries as well as new enquiries.

MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT...

The most memorable moment for me personally, has to be making the step up to Director. I was made a Director of Compass Fuel in April 2023, at the age of 28.

It was an opportunity that I was very excited by and I definitely wanted to grab it with both hands. However, it was also very daunting for me at the same time. I put myself under a lot of pressure to prove myself at a high level and the thought of working to establish myself amongst some other amazing leaders and directors within the industry was very daunting and scary – especially once the dust settled and the excitement had gone.

Now I can look back at that as an achievement, and it makes me



extremely proud of the progress I have made in my career so far. My main goal is to continue to do all I can to help make Compass a great success.

THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF MY JOB...

The most challenging part of the job is probably when it is peak winter. At that time, we have to juggle many different things to ensure we are keeping our key accounts happy as well as maintaining the standards that we set on a daily basis as high as possible.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB...

The most enjoyable and most rewarding part of the role I play is seeing both the company grow year on year and the sales team members and other key staff constantly improving and always trying to better themselves. Helping people along their journey to success is definitely the most rewarding part for me. I have genuinely made some great friendships that will last a lifetime.

I RELAX AFTER WORK BY...

I usually de-stress by doing a workout / gym session a couple of nights in the evening, or just get home and walk my dogs.

MY FAVOURITE MEAL IS (Breakfast, lunch or evening meal)...

For me you can't beat going for a good curry

ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE IS...

Very basic, just my phone charger

THE LAST THING I DO EACH DAY IS...

Chill out and watch some tv, get a shower and get ready for the next working day.

I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY...

9/10pm – ideally asleep for 10pm



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**PROVIDING ENERGY.
IMPROVING LIVES.**

Delivering Insight is your monthly business-critical briefing. Designed to give SME distributors clear, actionable guidance to work smarter and more profitably. Although larger distribution groups may have in-house HR teams, fleet managers, compliance officers and analysts, many SME FODs operate without those resources. Delivering Insight is your virtual support team – a growing knowledge base that builds into a valuable reference library for your business, helping you make informed decisions that safeguard your business today and strengthen it for the future.

This month, we're asking the question:

Are fuel buying patterns changing in the UK and Ireland domestic heating sectors?

The fuel industry has undergone major shifts in recent years and continues to evolve in response to fluctuating demand, shifting consumer habits and policy change to achieve a Net Zero transition. The domestic heating markets in the UK and Ireland are no exception, and consumer buying patterns are changing with it.

Fuel Oil Distributors (FODs) have long relied on predictable buying behaviour to manage stock levels, ensure operational efficiency, and maintain profitability. To ensure long-term resilience, FODs need a clear view of how the sector has changed, and the factors most likely to shape its future. This article explores how purchasing in the domestic heating market has transformed over time, helping you to adapt in order to stay ahead of the curve.

This edition explores how domestic fuel purchasing has evolved and what distributors should do now to stay ahead of the curve.

Kerosene demand

Kerosene, or "heating oil", is used for domestic heating in an estimated 1.5 million UK homes, representing 5 % of all homes. Additionally, an estimated 680,000 homes currently use

heating oil in the Republic of Ireland, and the Central Statistics Office (CSO) identified kerosene as the main fuel/energy source for heating for 26 % of people.

The first chart below shows total and domestic UK kerosene demand between 1998 and 2024 (Digest of UK Energy Statistics, DUKES), demonstrating a gradual 31 % decline of domestic demand across 27 years, from 3.4 billion litres to 2.3 billion litres. This sustained fall highlights a long-term downward trend that is accelerating as new technologies and policies take hold.

Factors affecting demand

i. Price

As a crude-oil derivative, the price of kerosene closely tracks global oil markets. Domestic demand is highly price-sensitive – domestic heating oil consumers typically purchase in bulk when prices are low. For example, low prices in 2020 (COVID-19) led to bulk buying despite steady demand. In 2022, demand dropped as prices spiked (Russia's invasion of Ukraine), then recovered as prices eased in later years. The second chart demonstrates the volatility of UK wholesale kerosene pricing:

ii. Geography

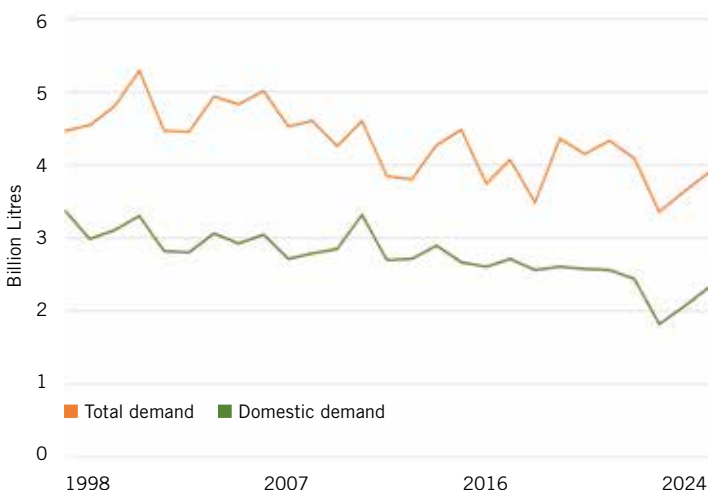
Demand also varies by region; kerosene is far more common in rural/remote households that are not connected to the mains gas network. Whilst kerosene heats about 5 % of UK homes, this figure rises to 20 % in rural areas, such as the highlands of Scotland, South West England and East Anglia. Notably, 7 out of 10 areas where oil-only heating was most common were in the East of England (Office for National Statistics).

In Ireland, kerosene usage totals 18 % in urban areas versus 41 % in rural areas, and is the main source of heating for 43 % of people in the Northern and Western Region (31 % in the Southern Region and 14 % in the Eastern and Midland Region). As demand is heavily localised, uneven demand patterns must be navigated by FODs, requiring targeted logistics, region-specific inventory planning, and rural delivery networks.

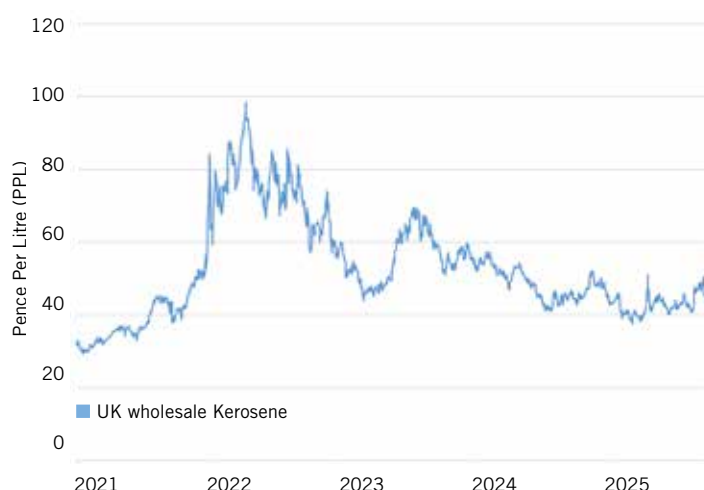
iii Seasonality

Another key demand factor is seasonality. Typically, demand rises in winter and falls as temperatures increase. Global oil demand typically peaks in the Northern Hemisphere

UK Kerosene Demand (DUKES)



UK Wholesale Kerosene Price



winter as heating oil use rises from October, pushing prices up. However, analysts note a global shift in seasonality: warmer winters are cutting demand for heating fuels, while hotter summers are encouraging travel, increasing oil demand and prices in the third quarter.

The Met Office compared two 30-year periods (1961-1990 and 1991-2020), revealing average UK temperatures have increased by 0.8°C. The average coldest day of the year has become 1.7°C milder, and there are fewer 'very cold' days (where maximum temperatures do not rise above 0°C). Additionally, UKIFDA reported that the number of 'heating degree days' in the first nine months of 2024 was 2% below 2023, and 8% below 2019. Similar trends are observed in Ireland, where the average temperature has increased by 0.8°C compared to 1990 (Environmental Protection Agency).

However, demand for heating oil tends to follow price fluctuations more closely than temperature change (DUKES). For example, domestic oil consumption in the UK (88% of which is composed of kerosene), increased by 13% from 2023 to 2024, despite comparable temperatures. However, temperatures are projected to keep rising, with more frequent heatwaves expected, ultimately decreasing heating demand in the long-term.

Looking ahead, rising temperatures and more unpredictable weather patterns will increase

operational volatility, requiring distributors to plan for both milder winters and sudden cold snaps

Consumer behaviour

As domestic kerosene demand is highly price-sensitive, increased prices may lead to smaller quantities being ordered, as consumers typically place bulk orders when prices are low. Additionally, higher prices increase the likelihood of theft, particularly in winter months when nights close in early and tanks are typically at their fullest. While theft can't be fully prevented, OFTEC (The oil-heating trade body for the UK) advises homeowners to limit oil storage, meaning consumers may order smaller quantities more frequently.

Economic pressures may also affect consumer behaviour, with UK and Ireland households reducing energy use amid the cost-of-living crisis. The UK government suggests around 11% of households in England are classed as fuel poor, 34% in Scotland, 14% in Wales, and 24% in Northern Ireland. Notably, the total fuel poverty gap in England (energy cost reduction needed to lift all fuel-poor households out of fuel poverty), increased by an estimated 47% between 2020 and 2023.

With increasing consumer awareness of energy use and costs, pricing information is becoming more widely available. Online fuel marketplaces give consumers access to a wide

range of suppliers, offering instant quotes and price comparisons.

SMEs, in particular, face heightened competitive pressure from large national suppliers with strong digital capability. As the online heating oil market grows, FODs must boost their digital presence and marketing and consider ways to deliver customer loyalty or risk falling behind competitors.

Finally, tank telemetry is an increasingly mainstream tool for domestic heating oil consumers, enabling tank level monitoring, usage tracking, and automated orders, reducing the risk of runouts and requirement for emergency deliveries. This directly impacts ordering behaviour, shifting it from manual bulk-orders to automated, more frequent top-ups.

While the minimum order quantity for domestic heating oil has traditionally been 500 litres, many FODs are now offering lower volumes, as an increasing number of customers search for 250, 300 and 400 litre prices (BoilerJuice). This trend increases delivery frequency relative to litres sold, putting pressure on operating costs unless route density and planning improve.

Ultimately, FODs may need to consider lowering their minimum order quantity to match current trends, whilst considering the impact of higher delivery and logistics costs, which may be passed on to the end-user.

FOD Action Plan: How to stay competitive as buying patterns change

1. Demand and stock management

- Increase frequency of demand review, as buying patterns become more volatile.
- Review stockholding strategy for winter vs shoulder seasons.
- Build contingency plans for extreme-weather spikes (rapid stock procurement, emergency routing, overtime budgeting).
- Model the impact of various demand decline scenarios to support investment planning.

2. Pricing and margin strategy

- Review the impact of online marketplaces on pricing strategies
- Deliver clear price-communication – transparency builds loyalty.
- Offer incentives for larger drop sizes (e.g., loyalty credits, discount bands).
- Track competitor pricing daily during peak season.

3. Delivery economics and operations

- Reassess minimum order quantities

– consider flexing to meet market expectations.

- Strengthen route optimisation capability to counter smaller, more frequent orders.
- Analyse drop size vs cost-to-serve by postcode sector.
- Expand rural cluster delivery options (longer lead times, grouped runs).
- Reduce emergency deliveries by encouraging telemetry adoption.

4. Customer behaviour

- Improve online quoting options
- Implement a digital loyalty or subscription-based top-up plan.
- Promote telemetry with clear customer ROI messaging (avoid runouts, smoother budgeting).
- Integrate theft-prevention advice with seasonal customer communications.

5. Energy transition readiness

- Track local heat pump deployment – identify areas where kerosene decline will

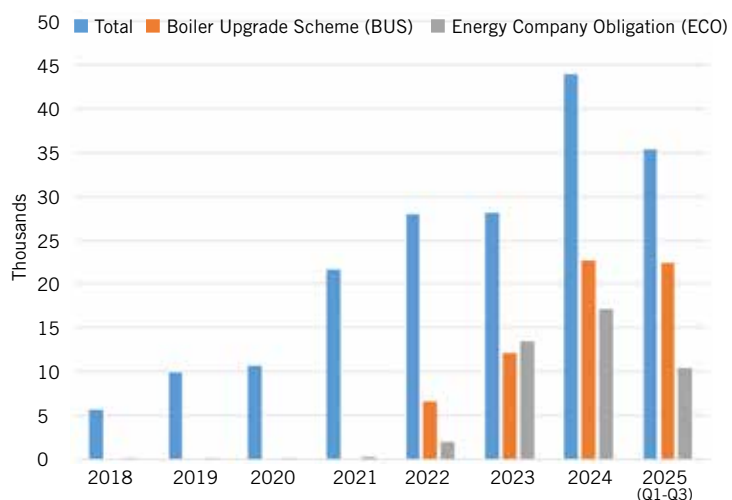
appear first.

- Evaluate the opportunity to offer HVO (blend or 100%) and associated tank services.
- Ensure customer-facing teams are able to communicate low-carbon options.
- Stay up to date with policy developments since it will shape demand.
- Talk to customers about their current and future preferences.

6. Business diversification

- Explore revenue streams beyond kerosene (HVO, lubricants, service plans, energy efficiency upgrades, alternative technologies).
- Invest in digital tools that improve forecasting, routing and customer service.
- Build partnerships (installers, trades, energy-efficiency services) to stay relevant as heating systems evolve.
- Continually review fleet strategy – consider vehicle size mix and fuel type for future conditions.

UK Government-supported Heat Pump Installations (DESNZ)



Net zero and policy

To deliver net zero 2050, UK and Ireland governments are implementing several new policies that directly impact kerosene demand and drive significant sector change. The UK's proposed phasing out of the installation of fossil fuel heating in existing homes off the gas grid has been delayed and eventually abandoned, but other initiatives, introduced by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), remain influential.

The 'Future Homes Standard' (FHS) which bans fossil-fuel boilers in new-build homes, is pending final legislation with implementation expected in 2026/2027, ultimately impacting kerosene demand.

The UK government's Clean Heat Market Mechanism (CHMM) encourages the deployment of low-carbon heat pumps by obligating manufacturers to meet targets for installation in proportion to their fossil fuel boiler sales. The scheme operates from April 2025 until at least 2029. A 2023 government review suggested 600,000 installations are required by 2028 to make heat pumps a mainstream consumer solution, projecting that heat pumps will meet 65% of domestic heat demand, shifting the market towards low-carbon heating.

Financial incentives in the form of grants schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (£7,500 grants) continue to encourage low-carbon heating adoption.

Heat pump installation numbers are rising steadily as the above chart indicates.

In Ireland, the CSO suggest 95% of new dwellings in 2023 used electricity-based heating (majority heat pumps), in the first three quarters of 2023, driven by NZEB regulations and SEAI support schemes. This compared with less than 5% in 2023 for fossil-fuel boilers (down from

79% for the period from 2010 to 2014).

Meanwhile, renewable liquid fuel alternatives, such as Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), are gaining traction. The 'Future Ready Fuel' campaign – driven by industry trade bodies UKIKDA and OFTEC – cited a successful national demonstration in which 135 UK properties had boilers converted to HVO, reducing carbon emissions by up to 88% with no reports of diminished performance. Conversion costs are around £500 and can be completed in a couple of hours.

However, the wider rollout of HVO, jointly called for by the industry trade associations, depends on government implementation of the UK's Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Obligation (RLHFO). In Ireland, the government is pressing ahead with a Renewable Heat Obligation including blended heating fuels such as a kerosene / HVO mix.

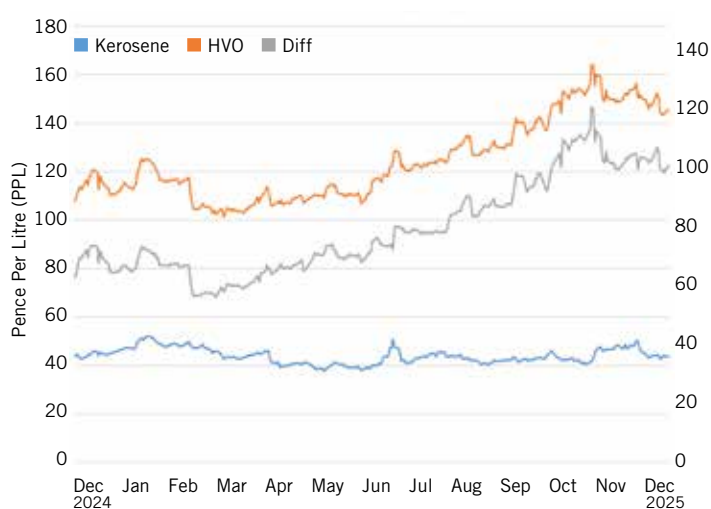
The wholesale price differential between kerosene and HVO remains significant and is also significant in its impact on uptake. This price differential remains the key barrier to rapid uptake, limiting consumer adoption without policy intervention. The chart (above right) demonstrates the difference between UK wholesale Kerosene and wholesale HVO over the last 12 months.

Summary

The domestic heating sector in the UK and Ireland is undergoing rapid and multi-layered transformation. Climate variability, namely rising temperatures and more frequent extreme weather events, is disrupting long-established seasonal demand patterns, while economic pressures are making consumers more cost-conscious, further intensifying price sensitivity of domestic kerosene demand and reshaping long-established demand patterns.

Meanwhile, digitalisation, telemetry and

UK Wholesale – HVO vs Kerosene Prices



online marketplaces are redefining how consumers purchase heating oil.

Broader net zero commitments are steadily shifting demand toward low-carbon heating systems, reducing long-term kerosene consumption. Although this transition will take time, due to the numerous barriers around cost, workforce and time, policy signals are clear.

For FODs, the challenge is to be aware of developments and adapt operating models before these shifts materially affect margins, delivery efficiency and customer retention.

Strong regional demand in rural areas reinforce the importance of efficient route planning and control of delivery costs. Online marketplaces make competitive pricing, increased digital presence and online engagement essential in order to remain competitive.

Additionally, economic pressures, theft concerns and growing use of telemetry have increased demand for smaller, more frequent top-ups. This may suggest a need for revised minimum order quantities and pricing strategies, coupled with improved planning systems.

Looking ahead FODs should:

Prepare for increasing climate volatility, whether milder winters or cold snaps, to manage stock and operational readiness.

Stay closely aligned with evolving policy frameworks and government initiatives that are accelerating the shift from fossil-fuel heating to low-carbon alternatives.

Be ready for a mixed-fuel future that includes heat pumps, HVO and blended solutions.

By diversifying offerings, investing in digital tools and aligning with customer expectations, distributors can continue to play a central role in home heating – even as the energy landscape changes.



TRANSITION IN ACTION

With fossil fuel demand gradually declining, fuel distributors are entering a defining chapter: one in which the critical question is how to sustain a profitable business while adapting to a changing energy market.

This year, Fuel Oil News will complement our ongoing support for day-to-day distribution challenges, with a closer look at tomorrow – analysing market outlooks, examining emerging end-user needs and presenting real-world case studies that highlight those in the industry already successfully reshaping their businesses to meet customers' changing energy expectations.

Their experiences show that evolution is not only possible, but already underway.

“Prepare for a dual-fuel future”: An interview with Ramsay MacDonald on the road from hydrocarbons to electrification

WITH MORE THAN 30 YEARS' EXPERIENCE ACROSS MOBIL, BP, CERTAS AND ESSAR, **RAMSAY MACDONALD** HAS SPENT HIS CAREER IMMERSSED IN THE REALITIES OF DOWNSTREAM FUEL, RETAIL OPERATIONS AND SUPPLY CHAINS. TODAY, WORKING WITH EVENLODE ROADSIDE, HE BRINGS A GROUNDED, DATA-LED PERSPECTIVE TO THE TRANSITION TOWARDS LOW-CARBON ENERGY. WE SPOKE TO RAMSAY ABOUT THE TRAJECTORY FROM FOSSIL FUELS TO ELECTRICITY AND WHY, RATHER THAN A SUDDEN SWITCH, LIQUID FUEL DISTRIBUTORS MUST PREPARE FOR A FUTURE OF MIXED ENERGY SYSTEMS.

Liquid fuel demand: A longer than expected tail

Only a few years ago, Ramsay expected petrol and diesel demand to start dipping significantly by the end of this decade. That outlook has changed. “I now think we could easily see another ten years of relatively constant demand and a more gradual decline after that for another five to ten years.”

Key reasons include:

- **HGV dominance of diesel**, with no economic alternative yet in sight.
- **Vehicle longevity**: cars and vans last 10–20 years, so even the final ICE sale creates a decade of downstream demand.
- **Consumer hesitation**: “The public hasn’t fallen completely in love with EVs,” he says. People still view ICE vehicles as more dependable, quicker to refuel and cheaper to operate.
- **Possible last-minute surges in ICE purchases** as deadlines approach – and the possibility that some deadlines may shift.

Geopolitics also plays a role. The Ukraine war and the shock of reducing reliance on Russian hydrocarbons have reshaped energy flows, adding uncertainty to timelines for fossil fuel displacement.

Which sectors electrify first?

Passenger cars are already transitioning fastest, helped by incentives such as home-charger installations and reduced benefit-in-kind rates for company car drivers. For local commuters with home chargers, EVs are financially compelling: “With an off-peak deal of around 7.5p/kWh, you’re filling your vehicle for less than a fiver.”

But take-up varies widely by journey profile

and housing type. Long-distance drivers – even in high-adoption markets like Norway – often retain an ICE vehicle for extended trips.

And when it comes to heavier vehicles, the economics deteriorate sharply. “The larger the vehicle, the less cost-effective electrification becomes,” Ramsay says. “Heavier payloads will remain dependent on liquid fuels the longest.”

Evenlode’s own modelling supports this: the Edison platform models EV uptake and home-charging potential by postcode, helping operators understand how different neighbourhoods might shift over time. This is not only a retail tool – the modelling also helps liquid fuel distributors anticipate where demand erosion may (or may not) happen geographically.

EVs are here to stay – but momentum is uneven

“EVs are here to stay,” Ramsay says confidently. Improvements in battery life, charging speeds and charger reliability are all strengthening the case for electric cars, particularly for drivers with access to home charging. But he is quick to add nuance: “*I sense the momentum has slowed.*”

Stagnant economies, a shifting political landscape and the retreat of some OEMs from overly ambitious EV targets have all created uncertainty. And Europe faces deeper practical challenges.

Ramsay highlights two in particular:

1. Grid connections are not keeping up.

“Both the price and the time to get available power connected is a huge challenge,” he notes. Red tape, rewiring constraints, and the instability created by a rising share of renewables all compound the issue. The UK’s

high electricity prices – the highest in Europe, he observes – further slow adoption.

2. No viable EV solution for heavy goods transport.

“We still don’t have a proven EV solution for HGVs,” he says. Hydrogen frequently appears in policy discussions, “but I’m not sure that – even if readily available – it will ever be economic.”

The result? A transition that is real and accelerating, but uneven, sector-dependent and constrained by infrastructure realities.

Electrification challenges: It's not just about chargers

When asked what is slowing EV adoption, Ramsay is unequivocal: “*The bottlenecks are multiple – infrastructure, grid capacity and consumer behaviour.*”

Despite more than 75,000 public EV chargers in the UK (far more than its 8,300 petrol stations), prices vary significantly – 30p to 80p/kWh publicly, versus <10p at home. And the user experience is inconsistent.

Drawing on personal experience, he recounts chargers not working, long waits, and even cable theft: “Fourteen of the sixteen cables at a charging station had been stolen.” This makes EV travel less spontaneous, more planned – and heightens range anxiety. Other challenges include:

- Grid costs that can amount to one-third of the cost of building an EV hub.
- Multi-year delays to secure sufficient power for high-speed charging.
- The misconception that ultra-fast chargers automatically improve outcomes – “it’s actually the car that determines the speed of charge.”

- Slow pathways to profitability: “It can take four years for a charging station to hit 15% utilisation and become profitable.”
- Broader energy security concerns, as ageing nuclear facilities exit the grid and gas remains the fallback.

This has implications far beyond retail: liquid fuel distributors, many of whom operate depots or logistics yards, face the same constraints if considering electrification of any aspect of their own fleets or facilities.

Where are the opportunities for distributors?

While much of the electrification narrative focuses on retail charging, Ramsay sees wider opportunities for liquid fuel distributors:

• Battery energy storage systems (BESS)

“With solar farms and battery storage needing space, some distributors are well placed to host or support these assets.”

• Private-wire arrangements

There are emerging opportunities to connect renewable generation to local businesses directly.

• Retail-adjacent diversification

Although cautious not to over-emphasise retail, Ramsay notes that distributors’ rich customer data could be valuable, enabling them to explore adjacent sectors. Car and van washing, he says, is experiencing strong resurgence, after years of decline.

“Locker storage and ‘click and collect’ services might also be considered,” he adds.

EV charging – selectively

Not everywhere is suitable, but some distributor sites could serve cars or even larger vehicles depending on space, opening hours and grid availability. Evenlode’s Edison platform can help assess potential demand.

Partnerships with charge-point operators or energy retailers are less essential than awareness: “It’s important to know what is changing, but I’m not sure partnerships are critical at this stage.”

Fossil fuels: A role in key sectors but for how long?

Ramsay is clear-eyed about where hydrocarbons will remain indispensable: aviation, marine and freight. “These will be the hardest to wean off fossil fuels,” he says.

Agriculture may be different, with some believing battery weight could even be advantageous for certain equipment, and quarrying is already exploring electrification.

But overall, diesel will retain a vital role in several sectors well into the 2030s and 2040s.

Government policy remains a major determinant of pace. OEMs have already adjusted production in line with emissions

targets, reducing the availability of petrol and diesel models. If governments align with industry to balance environmental goals with economic viability, the transition will be steadier and more manageable.

Renewable liquid fuels: Underused, undervalued, and essential

When asked where renewable liquid fuels fit into the picture, Ramsay is unequivocal: they deserve far higher priority.

“Liquid fuels are incredibly practical in terms of power-to-weight and ease of use. Given the strain on national grids, the cost of electrification, and challenges in generation, renewable liquid fuels should be a far bigger part of the energy strategy.”

He highlights several points:

- The closure of the Grangemouth and Lindsey refineries means the UK is importing more diesel, strengthening the case for domestically produced alternatives like HVO.
- HVO and biofuels allow minimal change to operational practices, retaining fast fuelling and vehicle compatibility.
- Synthetic fuels show promise but must be proven at scale – and industry must lobby government to include them meaningfully in policy pathways.

For distributors considering diversification, his advice is simple:

“Don’t bury your head in the sand. Listen to your customers. Keep a healthy interest in what’s happening, and don’t rush – but don’t ignore it either.”

Evenlode’s EV demand modelling: Bringing clarity to investment

One of Evenlode’s most powerful contributions to the transition is its EV-demand modelling, developed with Cenex. Ramsay explains the challenge:

“With EVs growing, providing the right types of chargers, in the right locations, with the right amenities is incredibly difficult.”

Existing roadside sites have advantages – presence, location, amenities – but owners need to know whether demand will justify investment. Edison addresses this by combining:

- Local vehicle-pool data
- Driver behaviour patterns and diversion likelihood
- Competition from other charging providers
- Ten-year forecasts of kWh sales, charger mix and financial viability

Crucially, Ramsay emphasises that the model is technology-neutral:

“If a site has limited potential for EV, that is the result the model gives. We’re independent – not tied to operators or equipment suppliers – so the aim is purely to help owners make informed decisions.”

What has surprised him most?

“There are good opportunities all over the country,” he says. While London sees high demand, it also sees heavy competition. Some northern sites, with lower grid connection costs, are equally attractive. And driver behaviour – how far they’ll travel, how long they’ll dwell – varies widely. “You can’t assume anything before modelling.”

For distributors, the implications are significant: Edison can help them understand where electrification will genuinely displace liquid fuel demand and where diesel, HVO or other fuels will remain in greater demand.

Preparing for the 2030s: What distributors must do now

Ramsay’s advice for distributors centres on three themes:

1. Know your customers better than ever.

“Understand what your key volume customers are planning. Strengthen your supply position. Ensure you have a robust interruption plan – especially with fewer refineries.”

2. Build a data-driven business.

“Daily access to the right data is essential. Track sales, margins, costs, profitability per customer. Don’t underestimate cyber security.”

3. Invest in people and resilience.

“Bring the next generation through. Train staff well. Stay positive. Change is an opportunity.”

He emphasises the sector’s history of resilience and adaptability – qualities that will be as essential in the next decade as they were in the last.

Looking ahead: A balanced, practical transition

Businesses will continue investing in liquid fuels even as electrification grows, Ramsay suggests. Many forecourt clients are upgrading tanks, pumps and infrastructure while also assessing EV opportunities with Edison. “There are still good returns in liquid fuels,” Ramsay says, “and payback on upgrades can be quick, especially when paired with data-led decisions.”

The future, then, is not either/or, but both as Ramsay reflects: “Don’t be too dependent on any one supplier or customer. Expect the unexpected.” And prepare for a world where diesel, HVO, biofuels, electricity and synthetic fuels coexist, each serving different sectors.

For distributors, that means embracing transition without abandoning the strengths that have long made the industry resilient: operational excellence, customer relationships, and informed investment.

Exhorting the industry to “keep positive”, Ramsay concludes: “The sector has always faced challenges head on and with resilience. Change is an opportunity.”

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DECEMBER
IN VIEW

WHEN THE TIDE WON'T TURN: MARKETS SURGING PAST THE PULL OF POLICY

One year ago, the USA voted in Donald Trump as its 47th President and with his election came a raft of promises around (what might be called) the re-fossilisation of the US economy. There would be a doubling down on oil, gas and coal production, whilst at the same time, renewables would be shunned.

One year on then, how much has actually changed when it comes to US energy?

On the surface, there can be few doubts that the direction of travel is different. Out went the environmentalists of the Joe Biden era, to be replaced by the oil and gas execs who came in to run government departments.

**“THE ROLLBACK
OF CLEAN ENERGY
INCENTIVES LOOKS
LIKELY TO DERAIL
AROUND \$20BN WORTH
OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
PROJECTS.”**

Of the 111 senior appointees in 2025 (across 9 federal agencies), 43 had worked directly for oil, gas or coal companies. After only 100 days in office, Trump had signed over 100 executive orders reversing many of Biden's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) policies, including the cancellation of federal subsidies for Electric Vehicles, the removal of tax credits for solar and wind projects, the scrapping of environmental rules around emission reporting and the withdrawal of the USA from the Paris Climate Agreement (for a second time – the US first pulled out in 2016).

None of this was particularly unexpected, considering Trump's previous pronouncements around climate change being a “hoax” and more recently, that renewable energy was “pathetic”. Nor was it surprising that in the President's Big Beautiful Bill (BBB), over \$30bn of new federal subsidies were added for oil, gas and coal, whilst rates on federal land exploration leases were reduced from 17% to 12.5%. At the same time, tax subsidies for low-carbon energy are to be phased out

and 3.5m acres of (previously designated) offshore Wind Energy Areas will be withdrawn. The rollback of clean energy incentives looks likely to derail around \$20bn worth of renewable energy projects and as a result, the International Energy Agency has almost halved its expectations for how much solar and wind generation will be added by the USA over the next 5 years.

However, energy headlines and energy legislation don't always reflect what is actually happening on the ground. All the while the cost of renewables – particularly solar – continues to tumble and renewables now make up more than 30% of US electricity generation (12% wind / 12% solar / 8% Hydro) versus 40% for Natural Gas and less than 15% for coal. The US Energy Information Agency (EIA) has calculated that solar added 12 Gigawatts of capacity in the first half of 2025 and that a further 21GW would be added in the second half of the year. In fact, a slightly contrary development around the removal of future tax benefits has actually been an acceleration of renewable programmes, as energy firms take advantage of the subsidies before they disappear! Finally, AI and Data Centres are springing up everywhere across the States and in the main, the tech companies are insisting that the power required by these energy monsters must be renewable. Add all of this together and we can see that renewable energy growth in the US might be slowing, but it is far from over. Between now and 2030, 280 Gigawatts of renewable capacity will be added to the US grid versus 85 Gigawatts for gas, 2GW for oil and 1GW for coal!

Turning our attention to oil, we know full well that Trump's zeal for the industry is absolute. With his “drill baby, drill” mantra there was never any mistaking his intention to try and increase US production. The BBB even had its own Oil and Gas section called the “Big Beautiful Gulf”, where offshore acreage of 80m acres has been made available for exploration. In Trump's mind, these actions will lead to increased oil production and (as a consequence) reduced gasoline prices for US

consumers. It is true that the second part of this equation has come to pass, but this has nothing to do with US legislation! Oil prices have come down because of over-supply around the world and the reality is that the last thing US producers want to do is add more oil to the mix and push prices further down. US production actually peaked in Dec 24 (13.6m bpd) and has slowly reduced since, with all the signs that the US oil industry is beginning to cut back.

**“RENEWABLE ENERGY
GROWTH IN THE US
MIGHT BE SLOWING, BUT
IT IS FAR FROM OVER.”**

In September, Conoco-Phillips (the 3rd largest US producer) announced it would cut up to 25% of its staff, whilst over the summer, Chevron said that 20% (8,000 employees) of their workforce would be laid off.

Even the mightiest President cannot win against global macro-market trends. Back in 2016, Trump made hefty promises to revitalise the coal industry only to discover that cheap natural gas (from fracking) had effectively killed US coal in a way that no amount of green legislation could ever achieve. And whilst the anti-renewables legislation of 2025 will undoubtedly slow things up, all the available evidence points to continued and inexorable growth in the area of renewables. At the same time, the oil industry is cutting its cloth accordingly and adopting the far more logical “drill maybe, drill” approach, rather than the President's preferred “drill baby, drill”. The (45th and) 47th President may have changed the mood music in the foyer, but the dancefloor is still firmly in the hands of #MC_Markets...

For more pricing
information,
see page 33

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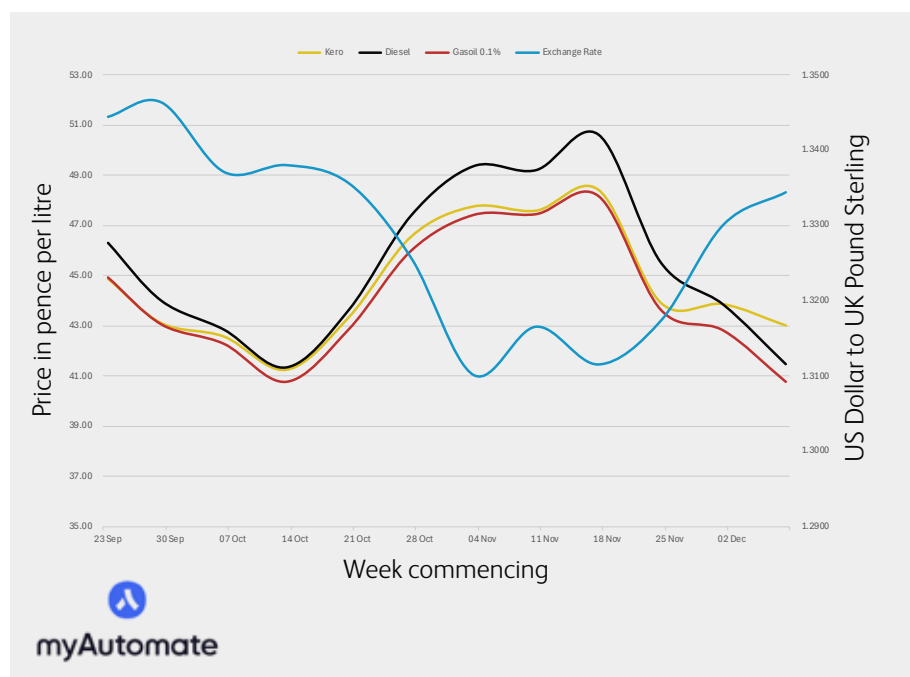
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Wholesale Price Movements: 20th November 2025 – 15th December 2025

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	43.83	44.08	42.74
Average daily change	0.74	0.85	0.74
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	43.83	97.03	52.92

All prices in pence per litre

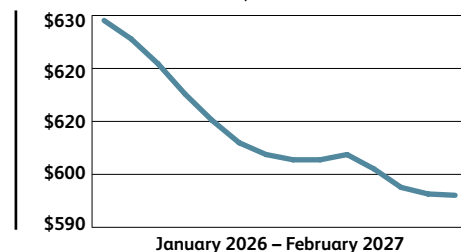


Highest price 47.90 Thu 20 Nov 25	Biggest up day +1.15 Fri 05 Dec 25
Kerosene	
Lowest price 41.27 Mon 15 Dec 25	Biggest down day -2.08 Fri 21 Nov 25

Highest price 50.74 Thu 20 Nov 25	Biggest up day +1.11 Fri 05 Dec 25
Diesel	
Lowest price 40.14 Mon 15 Dec 25	Biggest down day -2.29 Fri 21 Nov 25

Highest price 48.03 Thu 20 Nov 25	Biggest up day +1.09 Fri 05 Dec 25
Gasoil 0.1%	
Lowest price 39.28 Mon 15 Dec 25	Biggest down day -2.04 Fri 21 Nov 25

Gasoil forward price
in US\$ per tonne



The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	46.43	55.60	99.67	52.93	59.41	103.57
North East	45.38	54.23	98.75	54.40	57.77	101.62
North West	46.95	56.83	101.14	53.20	60.15	103.71
Midlands	45.45	54.76	99.21	51.55	58.25	102.32
South East	45.55	54.72	99.19	58.13	60.80	101.89
South West	45.90	54.56	99.03	54.02	58.04	101.50
N. Ireland	46.01	55.93	n/a	52.01	60.21	n/a
Republic Of Ireland	59.77	61.36	100.61	65.34	64.99	103.80
Portland	43.76	52.28	95.90			

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



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