

# Fuel Oil News

February 2026



**TANKER OF THE YEAR WINNER UNVEILED**

**UPDATED: TOP UK FUEL DISTRIBUTORS**

**INSIGHT: FLEET STRATEGY**

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## Necessity makes strange bedfellows

Forgive my hijacking of a phrase originally coined by the Bard, but it has been on my mind as I reflect on recent industry developments.

In the week leading up to this issue's deadline, I found myself on a bus bound for Westminster with a delegation from Kehelland in Cornwall. While it was no surprise to see villagers – familiar from previous issues of Fuel Oil News – on board, I was more surprised to meet climate group representatives. United by urgency, these unlikely busfellows share a desire for faster, fairer decarbonisation. With a common voice, the group pressed government for just solutions capable of delivering now. More about that discussion on page 5.

The second feature in our Transition in Action series challenges another long-held misconception. Sustainability has often been viewed as incompatible with operating in the fuel industry. Yet, we are increasingly seeing companies across the sector actively embracing their role in delivering it.

Real-world climate data on heat records and extreme weather events, alongside policy tracking and scientific evidence of persistent warming, leave little room for doubt: current climate action remains too slow and must accelerate urgently if the most severe impacts are to be avoided.

The Warm Homes Plan is reviewed on page 8. It signals a further decisive shift towards, and support for, electrification, while simultaneously scaling back expectations for heat pump deployment. It leaves, unanswered, questions around rural, off-grid homes.

To achieve the immediate emissions reductions required to meet long-term climate goals, a broader range of transitional solutions must be considered. For off-grid properties where electrification remains impractical in the short to medium term, progress cannot wait for more complex solutions to mature.

It is this challenge – holding ambition and pragmatism in tandem – that unites efforts. As distributors expand into heat pumps, solar and EVs, and climate groups increasingly recognise the role transitional fuels can play in delivering near-term carbon savings, extreme circumstances are creating unexpected, yet effective, partnerships.



**Margaret Major**, Publishing Director

✉ [margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk)

🌐 [www.fueloilnews.co.uk](http://www.fueloilnews.co.uk)

☎ 07786 267527



**Claudia Weeks**

Community Content Lead

✉ [claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk)

☎ 07436 338241



**Rhian Burge**

Marketing Director

✉ [rhian@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:rhian@fueloilnews.co.uk)

☎ 07485 372626



**Adrian Major**

Commercial Manager

✉ [adrian@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:adrian@fueloilnews.co.uk)

☎ 07909 968982

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

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### On the cover

Eamon Gildernew, of Tyrone Fuels, receives the company's latest fleet addition from James Wilson, Technical Director at Road Tankers Armagh. A departure from the distributor's usual 4x2 specification, the new Scania 6x2 is put through its paces in its bid for Tanker of the Year, on pages 9-13.



### In this issue

One of the industry's best-known figures looks back on her time in fuel distribution on pages 17 to 19, while your fleet strategy questions are answered on pages 29 to 32. On pages 23 to 25, a distributor considers the significant industry opportunity the transition brings.



## Stanlow sets domestic fuel sales record in 2025

Stanlow refinery recorded its highest-ever domestic fuel sales in 2025, despite major disruption to the UK supply chain following refinery closures. The milestone marks the strongest performance since its acquisition by Essar Energy Transition in 2011.

Throughput rose 8% year on year, with dispatch volumes nearing historic highs. Growth was supported by expansion across retail, aviation, and national distribution networks,

alongside a \$100m investment programme that increased capacity and installed the UK's first hydrogen-ready furnace.

Suggesting that the results reinforce the strategic importance of domestic refining to UK fuel security, Deepak Maheshwari, CEO of EET Fuels, reiterated calls for refining to be included in the UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, to maintain a competitive domestic refining sector.

## No restart for Lindsey refinery, as Phillips 66 secures key assets

Phillips 66 Limited has agreed to acquire the assets of the former Lindsey Oil Refinery following its liquidation, confirming that the site will not restart as a standalone refinery. Instead, key infrastructure will be integrated into the company's nearby Humber Refinery to strengthen fuel supply and domestic energy security.

The deal follows a competitive bidding process overseen by FTI Consulting, acting as special managers after Prax Lindsey Oil Refinery Limited entered liquidation in June 2025. Phillips 66 concluded that the Lindsey refinery was no longer viable in its existing form due to

scale and capability constraints.

Once completed, the acquisition will enhance storage, logistics and infrastructure – supporting Humber Refinery operations and improving resilience in UK fuel supply, while supporting hundreds of skilled jobs across site operations and future investment. The move also underpins longer-term opportunities across both conventional and renewable fuels.

Phillips 66 said the transaction represents a significant step in its continued investment in the UK energy system, alongside a separate multi-year project at Humber to enable production of higher-quality gasoline.

## Life after oil? A new initiative asks a difficult question

Across the oil and gas sector, a growing number of professionals are finding themselves at a quiet inflection point

For many, the uncertainty is not due to competence, commitment, or concerns around energy security – but a growing unease about the pace and scale of corporate action in the face of climate risk. Strategic uncertainty, shareholder pressures and public commitments increasingly sit alongside private doubts about whether current trajectories are sufficient.

Later this month, a new initiative will step into this space – creating room for a conversation that many have been having privately for years.

Launching on 11 February, alongside International Energy Week, the initiative will be introduced in a press briefing that will be followed by an informal gathering. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet those behind

the initiative, as well as individuals who have already made the move into work and lifestyles more closely aligned with their personal sense of responsibility.

While full details will be shared at the launch, the initiative centres on peer-led storytelling, pragmatic reflection, and the realities of navigating professional transition after time in the oil and gas sector. Its focus is support and exploration – rather than criticism or prescription.

For those increasingly considering what a *Life after Oil* might look like – professionally and personally – this launch may mark the beginning of a new, more honest dialogue.

To find out more, visit [www.lifeafteroil.net](http://www.lifeafteroil.net). All downstream oil professionals will be welcome at the launch drinks party – to be held at 6 pm in the basement bar of Westminster Arms, 10 Storey's Gate, London SW1P 3AT.

## Entries are open for 2026 UKIFDA Industry Awards

UKIFDA has announced that entries are now open for the UKIFDA EXPO & Conference 2026 Awards, and is encouraging companies of every size across the liquid fuel distribution industry to take part.

The deadline for all the award submissions is 26th February 2026.

Celebrating excellence across the industry, the UKIFDA Awards recognise the individuals and organisations driving progress, professionalism and pride in the UK and Ireland's liquid fuels sector.

Commenting on the 2026 Awards, Ken Cronin, CEO of UKIFDA, said: "We know that great work happens at every level of this industry, often quietly and without fanfare. The UKIFDA Awards are designed to recognise exactly that – real achievements, real improvements and real dedication. Submitting an entry is straightforward, and being shortlisted or winning offers valuable recognition from industry peers. I would encourage all our members to take part and help us highlight the best of what our sector has to offer."

This year's awards programme features six distinct categories, each focusing on a different area of excellence from outstanding safety and service to innovation, sustainability and emerging talent.

### 2026 award categories

**Driver of the Year Award** Sponsored by

*OAMPS Hazardous Industries*

**Innovation Award** Sponsored by *Fuel Oil News*

**Green Award** Sponsored by *Oilshield*

**Young Person of the Year Award** Sponsored by *Just Tankers*

**Customer Service Award 2026** Sponsored by *Worldpay*

**UKIFDA Depot of the Year Award 2026**

Sponsored by *Pen Underwriting*.

All winners will be announced and presented with their award live at the UKIFDA EXPO & Conference 2026.

### How to enter

Full details of the awards and how to enter can be found at <https://ukifda.org/ukifda-expo-2026-awards/> or contact [ds@ukifda.org](mailto:ds@ukifda.org)

# Five years of proof: Cornish community takes HVO case to Westminster

A rural Cornish community has travelled to Westminster to submit the findings of a five-year, community-led trial of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in domestic heating, calling for its formal recognition within the UK's rural heat decarbonisation strategy.

The delegation from Kehelland presented its evidence on the day the Government unveiled its long-awaited Warm Homes plan, urging policymakers to include practical, immediately deployable solutions for the UK's 1.5 million off-grid homes.

Their message was clear: rural communities want to decarbonise, but must do so affordably, with minimal disruption, and urgently.

## A community-driven transition

Over the past five years, Kehelland has become central to what is widely regarded as the UK's most comprehensive community-led trial of HVO for domestic heating.

Residents initially explored electrification, but found the cost, disruption and technical challenges of converting older rural buildings to be prohibitive. Instead, the community partnered with local liquid fuel distributor Mitchell & Webber to trial switching existing oil boilers from fossil heating oil to HVO.

One participant was Kehelland Methodist Church, a multi-use community building. Andrew Geake, representing the church, said electrification was unsuitable due to the building's intermittent use.

"We need heat on demand," he explained. "Maintaining a constant temperature in a building used sporadically would waste energy and significantly increase running costs."

The switch to HVO enabled the church to achieve substantial carbon reductions while

retaining cost- and consumption-effective 'heat on demand'.

## From village trial to national evidence base

Early success in Kehelland led to rapid expansion into a national trial supported by industry bodies OFTEC and UKIFDA. Running continuously for more than five years, the project has generated an unprecedented body of real-world data.

For many off-grid properties where electrification remains impractical in the short to medium term, the appeal of HVO lies in its ability to deliver immediate emissions reductions rather than waiting for more complex or costly upgrades to become viable.

Climate action groups United Downs Environment Group and Chacewater Energy Group also engaged with the project, recognising the role transitional fuels can play in delivering near-term carbon savings.

## Taking the case to policymakers

While MPs and select committee members have previously visited Kehelland, no minister from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) has yet done so. This prompted the decision to take the findings directly to Westminster.

"If DESNZ won't come to Kehelland, we'll take Kehelland to DESNZ," said John Weedon, director at Mitchell & Webber and organiser of the "Cornwall March to Westminster".

The delegation was met at DESNZ by Ken Cronin, UKIFDA and Malcolm Farrow, OFTEC, and by MP Perran Moon, who described HVO as "a really sensible" decarbonisation option for rural communities, adding that it should be "part of the mix of different solutions".

The findings were formally submitted to



the Government's consultation on Alternative Solutions for Rural Heat Decarbonisation, which closes on 10 February – a decision point likely to shape heating policy for millions of off-grid households.

## Industry calls for recognition

Ken Cronin, CEO of UKIFDA, described the Kehelland project as "a remarkable success story".

"It demonstrates that with the right solution, strong community partnership and clear communication, decarbonisation can begin with no upfront cost, no disruption, and only limited additional ongoing costs," he said.

"As standard bearers for millions of off-grid fuel users, Ken added, rural communities such as Kehelland have shown what can be achieved if policy reflects on-the-ground realities.

"The community believes the question is no longer whether HVO works, but whether rural and off-grid voices will be reflected in national decarbonisation policy."

As one resident commented during the journey to Westminster: "Five years of proven success – but it still feels like the government isn't listening."

With the evidence now formally before policymakers, the hope within the fuel distribution sector is that practical, certified low-carbon liquid fuels already delivering results will be recognised as a credible part of the UK's transition to net zero.

Concerns around the supply and sustainability of liquid biofuels remain important considerations.

However, in the UK, HVO supplied for heating is produced in accordance with the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) sustainability framework, supported by recognised certification schemes such as ISCC. These require full traceability of feedstocks, robust lifecycle emissions accounting and controls on land-use change. As a result, UK-certified HVO is derived from verified waste and residue feedstocks and excludes palm oil and palm oil mill effluent (POME), which is regarded as high-risk and is not permitted within RTFO-compliant supply chains.

# Oilfast opens new Dumfries fuel depot

Oilfast has expanded its South West Scotland distribution network with the opening of a new fuel depot at Cargenbridge, Dumfries and Galloway. Launched last month, the facility represents a significant investment in local infrastructure and service provision, and strengthens distribution capability across Dumfries and Galloway and parts of Cumbria.

Operated by local drivers and staff, the

depot improves delivery speed, efficiency and reliability while offering a full range of products, including heating oil, diesel, HVO and AdBlue to domestic, commercial and agricultural markets.

Managing Director Tony Stewart said the depot "represents an exciting step forward for both Oilfast and the local community" describing how the investment will support local employment and closer customer relationships.

## THE LATEST UPDATES FROM OUR DISTRIBUTOR COMMUNITY

### WP Group: A new partnership with Hampshire FA

WP Group already supports Southampton FC Women through its 'Fuelling the Game' initiative.

Keen to bring the impact closer to home and into the grassroots community, the business has partnered with Hampshire FA to become headline sponsor of Women and Girls' Football for the 2025/26 season.

A spokesperson for the business said: "By combining our expertise in renewable fuels, such as HVO, with Hampshire FA's mission to expand opportunities for women and girls, the partnership forms a powerful link between environmental responsibility and sporting development.

"The partnership will see Hampshire FA and WP Group working together on initiatives designed to offer more pathways into the grassroots game for players, coaches and referees.

"This collaboration demonstrates WP Group's vision of a more inclusive future for the game, where progress on the pitch goes hand in hand with sustainable innovation off it."

#### Teamwork, confidence and community

"Football has this amazing ability to bring people together," said Melanie Brown, Sales Operations Manager at WP Group. "It's about teamwork, confidence, and community – values that mean a lot to us at WP Group.

"The partnership highlights our ongoing investment in people, purpose, and progress – demonstrating how local business and community collaboration can help fuel positive change, both on and off the pitch.

"Through 'Fuelling the Game', we're proud already play our part in helping women and girls take their next step in football, while promoting a more sustainable future."

New for the 2025/26 season, WP Group will also work closely with Hampshire FA to introduce two new women and girls' awards to the association's annual awards ceremony.

#### Making a real difference

"We're thrilled to welcome WP Group as our new Headline Sponsor for Women and Girls' Football," said Isabella Pearson, Commercial Manager, Hampshire FA. "Their passion for



supporting the women's game really shines through, and their focus on sustainability gives this partnership an extra purpose.

Lily West, Hampshire FA Female Football Development Officer, added: "It's fantastic to see dedicated investment focused solely on the women and girls' game. The game has reached new heights in recent years, spurred on by the Lionesses' success in major tournaments.

"This partnership will play a huge role in driving progress across the grassroots game for women and girls in Hampshire."

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### Centre Tank Services Ltd: Dave Hughes celebrates 20 years

Dave Hughes, Operations Technician for CTS has celebrated 20 years with the business.

A spokesperson said: "Over the past two decades, Dave has been a key part of our journey, contributing knowledge, commitment, and experience to help CTS grow and support our customers.

"His dedication and professionalism truly reflect our values."

Matthew Terry, Managing Director, added: "It's a real pleasure to celebrate another team member reaching 20 years with us.

"Dave has been a huge part of our journey, always getting stuck into the development of new products and bringing solid build knowledge.

"Dave, thank you for everything you do. Here's to many more years working together."

*Congratulations to Dave from the Fuel Oil News team!*



### New Era Energy: Bernard Fuller celebrates 10 years

Essex-based New Era Energy is celebrating a major milestone as driver Bernard Fuller marks 10 years with the company. Known for his reliability and strong work ethic, Bernard continues to play a vital role in delivering outstanding service for the distributor.

Bernard reflected: "I've been with New Era for 10 years now, and I've seen the company grow massively in that time. It's always been a great place to work, with a brilliant team and a company that genuinely values its drivers. I've really enjoyed being part of the journey."

James Hunt, CEO, added: "An absolute gentleman and asset to the business. Here's to 10 more years Bernard."

*Congratulations from all at Fuel Oil News!*





## Come together – a critical moment for our industry

IN THE SPIRIT OF LIVERPOOL'S MOST FAMOUS EXPORT, THIS IS A MOMENT TO 'COME TOGETHER' AS AN INDUSTRY.

As this issue lands on your doorstep, we will be close to the deadline for responses to the Government's consultation on alternatives to heat pumps. If you haven't yet submitted yours, or encouraged your partner, your children, your neighbours, your employees and your customers to do the same, now is the time to come together and act. Don't look back and say you were too busy.

The reality is straightforward: if we want to stay busy in five years' time, every single response matters. You can send yours in three easy steps:

### Stand Up for the Future of Your Home Heating – three easy steps

#### 1. Visit the campaign page

Visit: [www.futurereadyfuel.info/consultation-response/](http://www.futurereadyfuel.info/consultation-response/) to go straight to the dedicated Stand Up for the Future of Home Heating page on the Future Ready Fuel website.

#### 2. Learn what's at stake

Read the key details about the Government consultation, the aims of the campaign, and the industry's proposal to introduce a renewable liquid fuel blend as a practical, affordable alternative for off-grid homes.

#### 3. Send your response in minutes

Choose the pre-written consultation response, personalise it if you wish, and it will be submitted directly to Government on your behalf.

### This moment is one of the most significant in our industry's history.

I have been genuinely moved by the scale of engagement so far. Thousands of letters, submissions and documents have already been sent to government from consumers, boiler technicians, drivers and political representatives. To everyone who has taken the time to contribute – thank you!

At the core of these submitted responses is a clear message, and that is the Government must recognise the unique circumstances of



“DON'T LOOK BACK AND SAY YOU WERE TOO BUSY.”

rural off-grid households and ensure they have access to affordable, practical decarbonisation options. People want to play their part in reducing emissions, but they cannot afford the huge upfront costs, they don't want major disruptions to their homes, and above all, they want choice, not ultimatums.

It was humbling to be in Westminster and watch residents of Kehelland deliver this message directly to the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero, speaking not just for themselves, but for all the 4.2 million customers our industry serves.

Government must also listen to local politicians who are urging caution. Their rural constituents are already navigating a cost-of-living crisis and making difficult financial decisions. The cost of installing and running a new heating system, the disruption involved, and the need for additional energy-efficiency improvements all matter. Any solution will only succeed if it offers choice, avoids imposition, and is affordable, cost-effective and convenient.

And crucially, the Government must align

all of this with the industry's own proposal, which is a pathway that requires no upfront cost to the consumer, uses their existing boiler, avoids distribution, and can be rolled out quickly.

Our industry is made up of many family-owned businesses, deeply rooted in their communities and trusted by their customers, as demonstrated so clearly by the wonderful people from Cornwall. UKIFDA and OFTEC members are a vital link in engaging households on the journey to net zero, and government must harness this trust and local expertise when shaping decarbonisation strategies for hard-to-treat homes.

### Onwards to Liverpool

And with “come together” very much in mind, it feels fitting to look ahead to our EXPO in Liverpool, which is now just two months away. It arrives at a pivotal moment for our industry, set against the backdrop of this consultation, looming elections in Wales and Scotland, and the many other challenges we are navigating. Above all, Liverpool represents opportunity, and it's a moment for us to come together to unite around the future of our industry and the direction we want to take.

I look forward to bringing everyone together in Liverpool. We have a great deal to discuss, and even more to shape collectively.

# UK Warm Homes Plan: what it means for off grid heating and the liquid fuels sector

The UK government has published its long awaited *Warm Homes Plan*, setting out how £15bn of public funding will be used between now and 2030, to upgrade up to five million homes and lift around one million households out of fuel poverty. Framed as both a cost of living and climate measure, the plan marks the most significant reset of domestic energy policy in more than a decade.

For those in the liquid fuels and off-grid heating sector, the plan is notable not only for what it includes – large scale support for electrification – but also for what it leaves unresolved about the future for oil-heated homes.

## Why domestic heating matters for climate and energy security

Homes are central to the UK's climate and energy challenge as the second-largest source of emissions after transport. They produced around 14% of the national total of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2024 – largely because around 85% of homes still rely on fossil-fuel boilers for heat.

This reliance has also left households particularly exposed to volatile global fuel markets, a vulnerability laid bare during the recent energy crisis as prices – and bills – surged. The problem is compounded by the UK's ageing, poorly insulated housing stock, which wastes energy, driving up use, bills and emissions.

Because of this, buildings are expected to deliver around 20% of the emissions reductions needed to meet the UK's 2030 climate target. Yet progress has been slow, with heat-pump and insulation installation rates consistently falling short of earlier ambitions, despite successive government support schemes.

It is against this backdrop that the Warm Homes Plan seeks to reset policy and accelerate change, addressing domestic heating as both a climate priority and a cost-of-living issue.

## A decisive shift towards electrification

At the heart of the plan is a clear policy pivot away from a traditional “fabric first” retrofit model towards rapid electrification. Ministers argue that technologies such as heat pumps, solar PV and battery storage now offer the fastest and most cost effective way to cut household energy bills, particularly when combined with smart tariffs.

Of the £15bn total:

- £5bn is earmarked to fully fund retrofit packages for low income households, covering measures such as insulation, solar panels, batteries and heat pumps.
- £2.7bn expands the existing heat pump grant scheme, offering £7,500 per installation, with air to air heat pumps included for the first time.
- £2bn will underpin a new government backed low and zero interest loans programme to remove upfront cost barriers for home upgrades.
- A further £2.7bn is allocated to “innovative finance”, including green mortgages that reward low carbon, energy efficient homes.
- £1.1bn is committed to expanding heat networks, particularly in urban and multi occupancy buildings.

The remaining funding will flow to devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which will design their own delivery mechanisms.

## Landlord standards and EPC reform

The plan also tightens energy efficiency requirements for rented homes. From 2030, private and social landlords will need to meet higher minimum standards broadly aligned with EPC band C, assessed using a new Home Energy Model.

Future EPCs will be based on four metrics – energy bills, heating demand, carbon emissions and smart-readiness – a shift that is likely to favour well-insulated, electrified homes. While spending caps and exemptions are expected for hard-to-treat properties, landlords will face growing pressure to upgrade heating systems and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

## Heat pumps: ambition tempered by realism

Despite the strong policy emphasis, the government has quietly scaled back its expectations for heat pump deployment. The new target is 450,000 installations a year by 2030 – around 250,000 retrofits and 200,000 in new builds.

This is lower than previous ambitions, and below the trajectory recommended by the Climate Change Committee. It reflects slow market growth, high installation costs and consumer hesitation – challenges that are particularly acute in older, rural and off grid properties.

Notably, the plan does not set a firm end



date for the sale of fossil fuel boilers, nor does it propose an outright ban on oil heating systems. Hydrogen is mentioned only cautiously, “not yet a proven technology” for domestic heating.

## What does this mean for oil-heated homes?

There are around 1.5 million UK homes currently heated by oil, many in rural and off grid locations. For these households, the plan presents both uncertainty and risk.

On the one hand, generous grant funding and new loan products may accelerate the switch to electric heating where properties are suitable. On the other, many off grid homes are hard to insulate, expensive to retrofit and poorly suited to standard low temperature heat pumps.

The plan offers little clarity on transitional technologies, hybrid systems or the future role of low carbon liquid fuels. While heat networks and electrification dominate, there is no dedicated pathway for decarbonising existing oil-heated homes that cannot easily make the switch.

## Implications for the liquid fuel sector

For the liquid fuels industry, the plan underlines the need to engage more actively in the policy debate. Electrification remains firmly the government's preferred route, but delivery risks remain – from installer capacity and grid constraints to consumer acceptance and real world performance.

In this context, the absence of a clear strategy for off-grid homes only emphasises the need for discussions around alternative decarbonisation options, including renewable liquid fuels, hybrid heating systems and staged transition pathways that protect households from excessive costs.

As the new standards, funding mechanisms and EPC reforms are rolled out over the next few years, their practical impact on rural and oil-heated homes will become clearer. For now, the Warm Homes Plan sends a strong signal of intent – but leaves important questions unanswered for a significant part of the UK heating market.

## WINNER! Tyrone Fuels wins the 23<sup>rd</sup> Fuel Oil News Tanker of the Year Award

“NOT SIMPLY A LARGER TANKER – IT’S A MORE INTELLIGENT ONE.”

The 2025 winning tanker, a new Scania G460 6x2 built by Road Tankers Armagh (RTA), emerged victorious from an unprecedented number of high-quality entries thanks to its significant contribution to Tyrone Fuels, delivering measurable business value on a daily basis.

This rear-steer tanker is a purpose-built, high-spec. solution to the real-world challenges of modern fuel distribution. For Tyrone Fuels, it is a step-change from traditional 4x2, 13,500-litre rigids to a smarter, more productive option that improves customer service, delivery lead times, and operational margins.

It is not simply a larger tanker – it is a more intelligent one. That is why it stood out as a deserving winner of this prestigious award.



### Specification

- **Engine Output:** 460 hp and 2550 Nm of torque – A new powerful engine with higher torque at lower revs for better drivability and fuel economy as well as excellent pulling power optimised for heavy loads in rural country roads and challenging environments
- **Wheelbase:** Shorter than comparable 4x2 builds, enhancing manoeuvrability
- **Capacity:** 20,000 litres
- **Compartments:** 5-compartment layout for multi-grade delivery flexibility
- **Metering:** Emco Wheaton Data Plus electronic metering system

### Additional equipment

- A newly developed **prototype pneumatic hose reel system** – faster deployment speed, reduced manual handling and driver fatigue
- **Extra-wide hose trays** for easier handling
- **Reversing camera system** and additional work and reverse lights for enhanced safety
- New-generation **dual-purpose side lights** that flash with directional indicators – enhancing visibility in low-light environments

### Driver environment: A new benchmark

This tanker is paired with one of the highest-spec rigid cabs in the sector:

- Premium leather, heated seats
- Full Scania interior upgrade package
- Kelsa bars with integrated LED lighting and strobes
- Enhanced cab lighting for visibility, safety, and brand presence

The result is a working environment that attracts and retains skilled drivers.

An RTA spokesperson commented: “The truck itself is a very high spec. Scania with ‘all the toys’. The interior is the best of the best, with leather, heated seats and all available upgrades.”

The vehicle is one a driver can be proud of and stands out in both safety and styling.

### A perfect operational fit

Founded in 1988, by Felix and Kathleen Gildernew, Tyrone Fuels has grown into a trusted regional distributor serving Counties Tyrone and Armagh. With the next generation joining in 1995 and 2003, the company has consistently invested in fleet quality as a cornerstone of customer service.

Since purchasing their first Scania from Mark Skelton at RTA in 2005, the brand has transformed their fleet performance and reliability. Today, Tyrone Fuels operates six Scania trucks – including rigids and artics – with this G46, which was added in November 2025, marking their first 6x2 rigid tanker, built specifically to future-proof operations.

### Higher productivity, lower cost per litre

Moving from a 13,500-litre 4x2 to a 20,000-litre 6x2 delivers:

- Fewer trips per day
- More drops completed on a single run
- Lower fuel, labour, and maintenance cost

This directly improves margins in an industry where efficiency is critical.

### Exceptional manoeuvrability

Despite its increased capacity, the rear-steer axle and shorter wheelbase allow this tanker to:

- Access tight rural lanes and farmyards
- Turn confidently in restricted locations
- Outperform traditional 4x2 vehicles

Driver feedback confirms that manoeuvrability exceeds expectations.



### Faster deliveries, shorter lead times

Greater payload combined with faster, safer discharge equipment means:

- More orders fulfilled per shift
- Reduced backlog during peak demand
- Improved responsiveness to customer needs

This tanker enhances customer satisfaction.

### Driver focussed

From the equipment to the cab:

- Physical strain is reduced
- Comfort is significantly improved
- Driver pride and ownership are increased

Happy drivers deliver better service – and stay longer.

### Brand

With its quality styling, this tanker acts as a mobile brand ambassador for Tyrone Fuels.

The distributor commented: “Since we bought our first Scania truck from RTA, we have never looked back in terms of our fleet quality and ability to deliver the highest standards of customer service.

“This addition has been an operational step change. The extra horsepower and manoeuvrability are perfect for the rural country roads we travel, and the pneumatic hose reel has been well-received by the driver.

“The increased productivity has made a welcome, and immediate, business impact.”

### Summary

This build exemplifies what a modern fuel tanker should be:

- **Efficient** without sacrificing access
- **High capacity** without compromising manoeuvrability
- **Driver-focused** without excess or gimmicks
- **Built for purpose**, not just built to spec

A deep understanding of industry challenges – tight margins, demanding customers, rural infrastructure, and driver well-being has been translated into a tanker that delivers measurable business value every day.

***This is not just a new vehicle for Tyrone Fuels, it is a strategic asset – and a clear, deserving winner of Tanker of the Year 2025.***

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## Special recognition: Here we highlight three outstanding entries



**First up is the latest addition to the Watson Fuels fleet which has been designed and built to deliver maximum efficiency. It is an outstanding example of the distributor's strategy of continually developing and redefining new truck specification, with safety and sustainability in mind.**

The new DAF XD 340 includes the latest Paccar MX 11 fuel-efficient engine, fitted with a fully automated transmission and full air suspension for maximum stability and fuel economy. The truck is fitted with brushed Alcoa alloy wheels, reducing the chassis weight and improving payload. It has a Just Tankers-supplied Magyar 19,000 litre 5-compartment tank and Gardner Denver Data Plus 2 metrology system fitted.

This truck was chosen with all the safety features you would expect – from smart forward collision warnings for the driver (both visual and audible), fuel-efficient drive line and the latest camera and telemetry systems.

This tanker was manufactured by Just Tankers and Magyar who Watson Fuels describe as “giving great reliability and build quality” going on to note the value of increased flexibility and manoeuvrability offered by the DAF XD that reduces vehicle movements and mileage and ultimately, carbon footprint.

The truck is fitted with an impressive array of safety and operational features including **full idle control, a unique 7 camera safety system, telemetry integration, city-safe window, Gardner Denver Data plus 2 metrology system, high-speed pump and meter and extra-long hose.**

“The combination of the DAF Chassis and Magyar tank with GD metrology coupled with

the truck's innovative safety features, driver aid and built-in efficiency measures have resulted in an extremely safe and versatile fuel tanker, and one which helps support our goal of reducing mileage and our overall carbon footprint.”

***An impressive focus on safety and sustainability.***

**Next we review a fleet addition that embodies Rix Petroleum's commitment to deliver fuel safely, efficiently, and transparently. Designed for that one clear purpose, this new Tasca-built DAF XD 370 blends proven engineering with intelligent technology.**

Built on a 26,000kg three-axle chassis (one steer, one drive, and one tag/lift), this vehicle offers excellent stability, manoeuvrability, and payload optimisation. The Tasca-built aluminium tank provides a 20,000-litre total capacity, configured across five compartments, giving flexibility for multi-product deliveries and balanced load distribution.

While this tanker may not showcase a radical new fuel or prototype design, its strength lies in the application of innovation where it matters.

The vehicle features a Touchstar onboard computer system that digitises delivery management, and integrates seamlessly with back-office systems, improving data accuracy and accountability. Combined with the TEX metering system, it ensures every litre delivered is measured, verified, and recorded with precision. This data-driven approach is transforming the way Rix Petroleum manages deliveries – reducing paperwork, improving efficiency, and transparency for customers.

What sets this tanker apart is its role in shaping the digital evolution of Rix Petroleum's fleet. Innovation that is meaningful rather than dramatic – combining the best of modern technology with reliable, road-proven design.

“This tanker is not only a workhorse but also a benchmark. It demonstrates our continued investment in technology that enhances reliability, efficiency, and sustainability. Through precise data capture, safer operations, and seamless integration, it supports our mission to deliver fuel smarter.”



***The Rix Petroleum tanker – designed for reduced downtime, improved accuracy, and elevated customer experience – setting the standard for the fleet excellence.***

**And finally, a standout example of applied innovation, this Your NRG tanker has been recognised for pushing conventional fuel tanker design forward in a highly practical way.**

At the heart of the build is a move away from traditional PTO-driven pumps to a modern hydraulic-driven system, delivering greater flexibility in packaging, improved weight distribution, and smoother operation. This approach not only overcomes space and driveline challenges on modern chassis but also contributes to lower engine speeds, reduced fuel consumption, quieter deliveries, and improved long-term reliability.

The advanced mechanical design is paired with the MechTronic OptiMate electronic metering system, ensuring that innovation translates directly into accuracy, safety, and product integrity. With automated processes and contamination protection built in, the system supports multi-grade fuel deliveries and prepares the fleet for the increasing use of alternative fuels such as HVO. Together, the hydraulic drive and intelligent metering reflect Your NRG's commitment to engineering-led solutions that enhance efficiency, minimise downtime, and uphold the highest standards of delivery integrity.

***A tanker that quietly redefines best practice through smart design choices, operational efficiency, and future-ready thinking.***

### COULD YOU TAKE THE TITLE OF TANKER OF THE YEAR 2026?

We are delighted to announce the winner of the 2025 Tanker of the Year award built by Road Tankers Armagh for Tyrone Fuels as well as those we deemed worthy of special recognition

Congratulations to all involved.

Fuel Oil News now looks forward to receiving your entries for the 2026 tanker of the year award. Entries will be accepted until 31st

December 2026, giving you plenty of opportunity to enter a new tanker you believe adds value to your business, customers or community.

Please send details of the tanker – the manufacturer, specification and the reason you believe it would be a worthy winner of Tanker of the Year 2026 – along with a photograph to [claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk), and we could be adding your company to the 24 listed on page 12.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO SUBMITTED AN ENTRY TO OUR FUEL OIL NEWS **TANKER OF THE YEAR 2025** COMPETITION. THE STANDARD OF ENTRIES THIS YEAR HAS BEEN OUTSTANDING, AND WE APPRECIATE THE TIME YOU HAVE TAKEN TO DETAIL THE BENEFITS THESE FLEET ADDITIONS HAVE BROUGHT TO YOUR BUSINESSES AND YOUR CUSTOMERS.

THIS YEAR'S WINNER IS UNVEILED ON PAGE 9, WITH THREE ENTRIES HIGHLIGHTED FOR SPECIAL RECOGNITION ON PAGE 11. WITH SUCH A TIGHT FIELD, OTHER NOTEWORTHY ENTRIES CAN BE FOUND IN THE SHOWCASE BELOW.

COMPANY	DETAIL
<b>Vale Oils</b> (Morrow Tankers / Road Tankers Armagh) 	Vale Oils' entry highlights practical innovation focused on delivery efficiency and driver convenience. Built on a DAF LF55 290 chassis with an RTN 13,500-litre alloy barrel, the tanker features the Alpeco Tex metering system with DreamTec OTC. Remote control functionality allows drivers to manage volumes and line changes directly at the tank, speeding up deliveries. Supplied by Morrow Tankers, the vehicle also reflects strong build quality and long-standing supplier partnership.
<b>Ukay Energy</b> (SOS Sales / Road Tankers Armagh) 	Ukay Energy's entry showcases a highly capable four-wheeler designed for efficiency and regional accessibility. Built by SOS Sales and RTA on a DAF LF 290 FA chassis, the 13,000-litre tanker features EMCO technology with Data Plus integration, delivering real-time data and instant PODs. Operating from Hadleigh, it serves challenging rural routes while reinforcing Ukay Energy's commitment to renewable fuels through both supply and operation on HVO. Jack Helliwell, Sales Director Ukay Energy was impressed with the "full 5-star experience" adding that: "When the tanker arrived with me it was tested, calibrated and ready for the road."
<b>Allan Stobart</b> (Cobo) 	Allan Stobart's entry highlights a carefully specified vehicle that combines capacity, safety, and digital integration. The Volvo FM 380 6x2 rear-steer rigid, features a 12-speed I-Shift gearbox, rear air suspension, and 360-degree camera coverage to support safe operation. The 19,000-litre, five-compartment tank, manufactured by Cobo, incorporates a twin-tank additive system ensuring precise dosing. Metering and pump equipment from MechTronic marks a strategic move toward simpler, more reliable systems, while DTS onboard technology integrated with Codas, provides real-time visibility of both vehicle and driver performance. "The whole package is the best we've ever had and allows us to deliver the best service."
<b>Oilmaxx</b> - Part of the Oilfast family (Road Tankers Armagh) 	Oilfast's entry showcases a robust and versatile tanker designed for demanding operating conditions. Part of the Oilmaxx fleet, the Road Tankers Armagh build is mounted on a MAN TGS chassis and equipped with EMCO service equipment, alongside both hose reel and bulk delivery capabilities. The larger chassis has been specified to cope with harsh terrain, while operation from the Immingham depot underlines its essential role within the Oilmaxx fleet.
<b>PumpApp</b> 	PumpApp's entry focuses on strong visual identity matched with operational capability. The 36,000-litre diesel tanker, designed in-house by company director Mehdi Mohtasham, combines high-capacity efficiency with a bespoke livery, custom branding, and integrated lighting to enhance both safety and on-road presence. Frequently praised by customers, the tanker acts as a mobile ambassador for PumpApp, reinforcing professionalism, reliability, and a clear commitment to service excellence.

## ALL OUR WINNERS FROM 2003-2025

- |                                     |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Tincknell Fuels (Magyar)            | BWOC (Feldbinder)                             | Hylands Fuels (Road Tankers Armagh)                        |
| Heltor (Tasca Tankers)              | Stevenage Oils (Lakeland)                     | Crown Oil (Road Tankers Northern)                          |
| Cambria (Road Tankers Northern)     | Craggs Energy (Tasca Tankers)                 | Kettlewell Fuels (COBO)                                    |
| Kelly Fuels (Central Welding)       | Howells Fuel Oil (Road Tankers Northern)      | WCF Chandlers (Road Tankers Northern)                      |
| Cooke Fuels (Road Tankers Northern) | Inver Energy (Williams Tanker Services)       | Certa Ireland (Road Tankers Armagh) / New Era Fuels (Cobo) |
| EMO Oils (Central Welding)          | Wilton Transport Mini Tankers (Tasca Tankers) | Estuary Oils (Road Tankers Northern)                       |
| Consols Oils (Maidment)             | Donegal Oil (Road Tankers Armagh)             | Tyrone Fuels (Road Tankers Armagh)                         |
| WCF Fuels (Road Tankers Northern)   | Silvey's Fuels (Tasca Tankers)                |  |

## FleetGO strengthens UK and Irish focus with DreamTec acquisition



DreamTec

Part of  
**FleetGO**

**Fleet and logistics software specialist FleetGO Group has moved to significantly strengthen its presence in the UK and Ireland with the acquisition of Ireland-based DreamTec Systems, a business well known in fuel and food distribution circles for its specialist telematics applications.**

The deal brings together FleetGO's broad, pan-European logistics software portfolio with DreamTec's deep vertical expertise in market-specific solutions.

For fuel distributors, the combination promises a more integrated approach to fleet management, compliance and operational control.

Founded in 2009, and headquartered in Ireland, DreamTec has built a strong reputation among fuel distributors for its advanced telematics and fleet management tools.

Its systems are widely used for flow meter tracking, in-cab applications and real-time dashboards, helping operators improve stock reconciliation, safety performance and regulatory compliance.

### A tailored, end-to-end platform

FleetGO, which operates across multiple European markets, has historically had a more limited footprint in the UK and Ireland.

By acquiring DreamTec, the group gains immediate access to an established customer base in both markets, alongside proven sector-specific technology. The move also enables FleetGO to extend its existing offer – which includes transport management systems, route optimisation, telematics and tachograph compliance – into a more complete end-to-end platform tailored to the needs of distributors.

The acquisition is backed by Main Capital Partners, an investor with a long track record in scaling software companies. Main's involvement is expected to support further product development and innovation, allowing the combined group to respond to increasing digitalisation and compliance demands within the fuel distribution sector.

Commenting on the deal, FleetGO CEO Ronald van Tiel said DreamTec's expertise in fuel-market telematics "perfectly

complements" FleetGO's existing solutions and underpins its ambition to grow in the UK and Ireland.

From the DreamTec side, CEO Paul Foley described the move as a "win-win", giving customers access to a wider suite of connected technologies. "Combining our strengths will help us deliver more comprehensive, data-driven solutions that support the needs of our fuel and food distributors."

Speaking with Fuel Oil News Paul was keen to emphasise continuity, commenting: "Importantly, all key personnel at DreamTec remain in place, including myself."

"Our leadership team, support structure, and customer relationships remain unchanged. Additional investment will further strengthen our ability to serve customers reliably and consistently."

For distributors, the move appears to be a positive one signalling continued investment in specialist software solutions designed to improve efficiency, visibility and compliance in an increasingly complex operating landscape.

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# The Trident metering system



The Trident metering system is a ground-breaking design that offers a simple and effective delivery system incorporating a fully proportional control system.

A unique British-manufactured system, Trident includes in-cab complete compatibility GPS/GPRS and sim card with cloud-based software. The new Trident Bottom Socket sits within stainless steel weather-resistant housing, and quick and easy-to-use driver controls with anti-contamination software ensure safe and clean fuel deliveries. Automation also allows quicker and more efficient deliveries saving both time and money.

The unique design also means that the system is smaller and lighter, with less parts used.

For further details of this new system contact Shaun Harte on 07799463636 or shaunharte@aol.com [www.tridenttechnics.com](http://www.tridenttechnics.com) 0113 2467244



## TASCA TANKERS



Tasca Tankers are the UK's leading, award winning British based manufacturer of road tankers. Renowned for exceptional levels of reliability and build quality, and with almost 30 years of engineering excellence to our name, we are regarded as the go to experts in fuel oil, LPG and aviation tankers..

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# TOP 20

## FUEL OIL DISTRIBUTORS UK MAINLAND

2026	2025	COMPANY	NUMBER OF TANKERS	CHANGE
1	1	Certas Energy	900+	+100
2	2	Watson Fuels	210	-83
3	3	NWF Fuels	170	+10
4	4	Your NRG	144	+16
5	6	Goff Petroleum	120	+9
6	5	Johnston Oils	115	+2
7	7	Rix Petroleum	109	+9
8	7	Crown Oil	103	+3
9	9	New Era Fuels	87	+4
10	10	WCF Fuels	77	-1
11	11	Ford Fuel Oils	73	+1
12	14	Highland Fuels	65	+16
12	12	Oilfast	65	+2
14	13	Mitchell & Webber	50	+1
14	15	WP Group	50	+2
16	16	Barton Petroleum	47	+1
17	17	Craggs Energy Group	45	=
17	17	Oil4Wales	45	=
17	17	Heltor	45	+1
20	20	Gleaner Oils	43	+2

Distributors are ranked by number of tankers as supplied to Fuel Oil News in January 2026  
If you feel you should be included in the above list, which is also published on [fueloilnews.co.uk](http://fueloilnews.co.uk) please contact [margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk](mailto:margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk) with your latest tanker fleet number



# On a journey to reduce your carbon emissions?

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



Part of MB Energy Group

# Jo Ritzema retires from WCF Ltd following distinguished career

**JO RITZEMA**, FORMER EXECUTIVE CHAIR AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF WCF LTD, RETIRED TOWARDS THE END OF LAST YEAR, CONCLUDING A CAREER SPANNING MORE THAN TWO DECADES WITH THE BUSINESS.

JO JOINED WCF LTD IN 2004, AS FINANCIAL CONTROLLER, JOINED THE BOARD IN 2007, AS FINANCE DIRECTOR AND WAS APPOINTED MANAGING DIRECTOR IN 2013, BEFORE TAKING ON THE ROLE OF EXECUTIVE CHAIR IN 2024. DURING HER TIME AT THE COMPANY, SHE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN STRENGTHENING WCF'S RESILIENCE, ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUEL SECTOR AND REINFORCING THE ORGANISATION'S EMPLOYEE-OWNERSHIP CULTURE.

CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD, SPOKE WITH JO TO REFLECT ON HER CAREER IN THE INDUSTRY, HER TIME AT WCF, AND HER PLANS FOR RETIREMENT.



## Career reflection

### What are some of your standout memories from your early days in fuel distribution?

My over-riding memory is just how helpful everyone I met was, and how welcome they made a newcomer feel. I am still in contact today with some of the people I met at my very first FPS show.

As diversified as WCF was, I have never worked in an industry where we are competitors but also friends, nor where people are genuinely happy and open to share their own learnings and experiences.

As a newbie, without any oil heritage, that was so refreshing and built my confidence and hopefully I have repaid that to others in more recent years.

The industry has always been blessed with some passionate personalities and it's great to see that legacy being handed down across families.

### How would you describe the biggest changes you've seen in the industry during your career?

At a BP dinner in 2009, news filtered in about a helicopter crash in the North Sea and, of course, the industry was still recovering from the Buncefield tragedy. Buncefield had a major, long-lasting impact on the oil distribution and fuel storage industry.

Its influence extended far beyond that site and reshaped how fuel depots are designed,



Jo with the WCF Executive Board

operated, and regulated. Of course, for many of us, it was the start of the end of petrol storage. For directors it meant implementing authentic and meaningful H&S leadership and culture, something most of us had previously taken for granted.

What people do daily matters more than the booklets of processes we all had on a shelf, and I think most businesses have transformed because of Buncefield.

### What are you most proud of?

As one of only a small number of oil distributors partly owned by its employees, I am proudest of the high autonomy and high engagement culture enjoyed by the people at WCF.

The teams are genuinely empowered to put customers first, which is reflected in the Feefo reviews and scores, as well as the employee engagement survey.

### Were there any "turning point" moments in your career that shaped your path?

Personally, the acquisition of Chandlers Oil & Gas in 2012, was a huge moment both for me and for WCF. The Board delegated responsibility of the due diligence and subsequent integration to me which was a huge personal leadership opportunity and one which shaped my succession into the role of Managing Director in 2013.

Chandlers was a well-known business, and I know that it was a surprise in the industry that other operators had not been successful. I followed that with Allan Stobart Fuels in 2014 and am proud that both brands continue to be a hugely successful part of WCF's legacy.

### What were the biggest challenges you faced, and how did you overcome them?

Always the biggest challenge is getting your team motivated and engaged to trust you



Jo with husband Gary

and to believe in themselves, united behind a common cause.

At WCF we spent considerable time with the teams building their strategic plans, so they had their own roadmaps over and above the “business as usual”. That was the “fuel” for their individual and collective successes.

For me, personally, it was always making sure that I did not let the “imposter syndrome” take over and I learned to trust my own instincts.

### Is there anything you wish you’d known at the start of your career?

Being finance trained, I used to believe that if the numbers worked, the decision was sound, and I was adept at manipulating forecast models to give me the answers I wanted.

Through acquisition experience I’ve learned that the biggest risks – operational, safety, reputational, cultural – often sit outside any spreadsheet but need just as much, if not more, attention.

Now I would say I am adept at looking at the whole picture, as well as knowing when to play devil’s advocate to ensure that others have viewed things from a variety of angles.

### Industry insights

#### How has fuel distribution in the UK evolved since you began?

We have discussed already how Buncefield was a defining moment in terms of depot infrastructure, process safety and regulation.

There have been multiple refinery closures since I started with WCF in 2004. The supply chain has altered significantly, with the oil majors being replaced by independent terminal operators.

The move to import terminals means the decision around when and where to purchase oil is one of the most strategic decisions made daily at every depot. I smile when I see businesses with policies that limit how much stationery someone can buy, but that allow individuals to trade millions of litres of oil.

Distributors began to recognise their role as a logistics provider, but we still have a way to go. The sector is being left behind with delivery technology such as timed deliveries selected by the customer. We currently tell the customer when they will get their oil, when it should be the other way round.

There has been substantial consolidation across the sector – it is hard to believe that Certas did not exist in 2004. It seems that there continues to be excess capacity, so it will be interesting to see what happens next.



Jo enjoyed a memorable retirement party

#### What advancements or innovations made the most impact on your work?

Paperless routing was a game changer, although it was one of the improvements that took the longest to gain traction. Customers ordering fuel on the internet, and the start-up of price comparison websites like Boilerjuice, also challenged traditional sales channels and the familiar ways of doing business.

#### What misconceptions do people outside the industry often have about fuel distribution?

Fuel distribution is now, rightfully, recognised as part of the critical national infrastructure, not just a commercial activity.

Customers don’t realise the factors that influence oil supply and pricing, and it takes crises like Covid, driver strikes or the war in Ukraine to highlight this. Sadly, it then gets

forgotten until the next crisis when the industry comes under pressure.

#### What do you think will define the downstream fuel industry over the next decade?

The industry will be defined less by growth, and more by how safely, reliably, efficiently and intelligently it manages long-term decline while supporting the energy transition. The winners will be those who combine operational excellence, resilience, and adaptability. The days of chasing volume to be successful are over. Technology will become central, not optional.

There appears to be over capacity in the industry, so I would expect additional consolidation as businesses not wishing to invest seek to exit. We need to attract younger drivers into the sector with all the benefits that the role brings.

#### In your opinion what is unique about fuel distribution as an industry compared to others you have had insight into?

The personalities and the people which enable the industry to operate both competitively and as a cohesive whole. How everyone came together to support the HVO trials was a great example of this.

#### Energy transition

##### How do you feel about the pace and direction of the energy transition in the UK?

The industry has done some great work on liquid renewables, but we need a wider, open door politically to ensure that it is priced and taxed fairly.



Jo is already enjoying her retirement

The industry needs to be flexible in terms of the numbers of products it stores and distributes as fossil and biofuels co-exist.

### **What role do you think traditional fuel distributors will play as the energy landscape changes?**

Existing operators can use the trust and credibility they have with their customers to transition them onto bio alternatives. Distributors have proven they are adept and expert at managing different product types.

The industry voice is critical, so everyone needs to support UKIFDA in its representations to government. There is a danger that everyone adopts a “wait and see” approach and stops investing in their infrastructure, which could be a reputational risk for the industry.

### **Are there technologies or trends you believe the industry still needs to prepare for?**

Taking an order, without being able to commit at the time to when you are going to deliver it, is out of kilter with supermarkets and retailers. Real-time inventory, advanced scheduling and demand forecasting will become ever more critical.

The customer databases are a huge strategic asset and need to be better leveraged, whilst not taking cyber-security for granted.

### **If you could give one piece of advice to those entering the industry during this transition, what would it be?**

The drive for volume, which has dogged the industry since it was used to determine acquisition multiples, makes distributors their own worst enemies. Revenue and volumes are vanity, profit is sanity and cash is king. Why would you give something away you didn't have to?

Invest in your assets and your people, and recognise that the price of the product you sell needs to support, not threaten, the value you bring.

### **How can distributors both play a meaningful role in decarbonisation and continue to operate successful businesses?**

Distributors are expert at delivering liquid fuels at scale. Low carbon fuels are no different, so they can support both ends of the transition. This will require investment in existing depots. Distributors need to be thinking 5-10 years out, not just 12-18 months.

Everyone needs to play their part in improving efficiency through optimised routing, reducing waste, as well as educating customers to keep them on the journey.



**Jo enjoying a cycling holiday**

All distributors should be responding to calls to action or requests for data from UKIFDA to ensure that the industry is consistently and cohesively represented no matter what size of distributor.

### **Personal reflections**

#### **What did you enjoy most about your work day-to-day at WCF?**

The variety. I was very lucky to be able to travel round all the sites and develop meaningful relationships. No two days were ever the same.

I was given the freedom from my Board to diversify the income portfolio. I have never taken that trust or responsibility for granted.

#### **What will you miss the most – and the least – about the industry?**

The people, be it colleagues, suppliers or fellow distributors. My liver function will probably improve again over time.

#### **Who were the biggest influences or mentors in your career?**

The people who got the best out of me let me get on with it once the outcome and the direction was agreed. I hate to be micro-managed and hope that I have fed that down to my teams.

There were a couple of wise people who pushed me into roles I felt I wasn't ready for, but they could see that I was. I will always be grateful to them for identifying talents I wasn't even aware of myself.

### **The future**

#### **What are you most looking forward to in retirement?**

The luxury of time – to travel, to spend with friends, family and people I met during my working career but never truly had the time to meaningfully invest in. Being an MD is all consuming. You never stop thinking and must be consistently alert. It's a relief to be free of that.

I will be putting my strategic and leadership skills to good use as a non-executive director with a portfolio of employee-owned businesses and acting as mentor to a small number of female future stars.

#### **What plans have you lined up?**

We have purchased a camper van and intend to spend large amounts of time outdoors hiking and cycling. I arrived in France less than a week after retiring and have booked a trip to Northern Spain for March.

I will smash the 1,300 miles I walked in 2025. I own a bass guitar and intend to play Seven Nation Army by the White Stripes to the family next Christmas!

#### **What do you feel is your legacy?**

Everyone at WCF is tasked with leaving the organisation in a stronger place than when they inherited it. I hope I have successfully played my part in my 22 years.

The portfolio of acquisitions I identified, sourced and integrated leaves the company with a diverse future revenue stream that is much less reliant on the winter income generated by fuels. A focus on the databases as the biggest strategic asset and the digital transformation that is underway means that the next 5 years are going to be exciting.

#### **Any words of wisdom you'd like to share with colleagues carrying the torch forward?**

My mantra was always “you're not saving lives” so have fun, don't take yourself too seriously, understand what being part of a great team looks like, and you will deliver something amazing together.

If you are not motivated to give your best for the company, do everyone a favour and go elsewhere.

And finally, the best day to deliver bad news is never a Friday!!!

Jo's impact on WCF has been significant, and her leadership leaves a legacy across the business and the wider industry. Everyone at Fuel Oil News congratulates Jo on her retirement and wishes her every success and happiness in the next chapter.

# CODAS



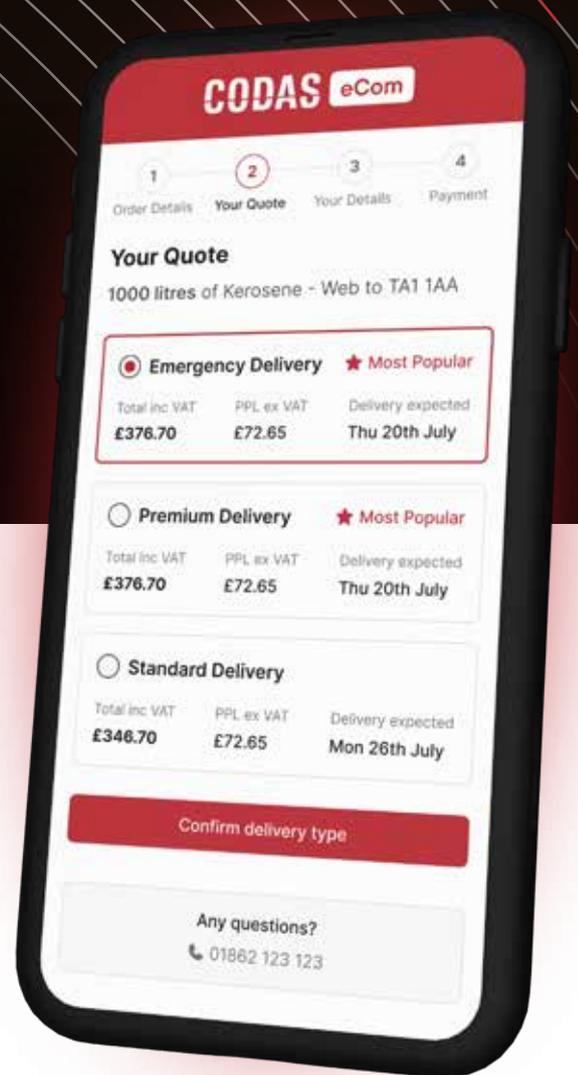
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# A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Andrea Pitts

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 **ANDREA PITTS**, DIRECTOR AT QUAD FUELS, TO DISCOVER HOW ANDREA SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.



## My alarm goes off at...

6.05am but I always lie in for another 5 minutes and get out of bed by 6.10am.

## The first thing I do is...

take the cockerpoo, Mabel, outside to do her business.

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

having my vitamin C, supplements, a cup of Yorkshire tea and then checking my phone for emails and messages.

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

three bags and the dog.



## My typical day...

Every morning, I am the first one in. My first jobs are to make sure the direct debits are run, check the OMI, review all orders emailed overnight and check for any emails to action.

Most of my day is spent taking orders, quoting prices and negotiating, as well as calling those who have lapsed, or canvassing for new business, much like the rest of the team. The customers

have built up massively over the years.

I have always believed that leading by example is the best motivator. I've tried to create a good team spirit with a personable and approachable style of management.

I manage the top accounts with the team, and ensure they are regularly ordering. I also fit tank monitors for customers as and when required. I debt collect those customers who are slow with payment, and, on a daily basis, chase the accounts which are due, and manage the credit control side before releasing the orders for scheduling.

I'm very hands-on in all roles to ensure the day runs smoothly and any customer queries are answered that day and, if a visit is required, then I am straight there.

I offer technical advice on the additive and lubricants market and upsell to those in need. No call is the same and that is why I love this industry – 32 years later and counting, right back to the basics of the oil industry and providing the ultimate in customer service.

## My most memorable work moment...

starting Quad Fuels back in January 2017, with just an office, the best sales team and the drivers recruited – waiting for the first call in on the phone which was a very proud moment!



## The worst part of my job...

letting customers down if the fuel supply or refinery has outages which means we can't load – I find this gets to me the most.

## The best part of my job...

daily catch ups with customers on the phone – they ask for you by name and you have such a great rapport with them. It is a joy to speak to them and offer them the best, quality service.

## I relax after work by...

walking the dog, going in the hot tub with a glass of wine, or sitting in our outside bar (which we have recently built in the old doghouse!) with my husband, or catching up with the family and two grandkids.

## My favourite meal is...

I just love food as everyone can confirm who knows me. I love eating out, either with a good full English breakfast or, if I'm good, its salmon, avocado and a poached egg on a thick bloomer toasted bread or eggs benedict.

## On my bedside table...

is always a good book to read before bedtime – usually a physiological thriller. It helps me switch off and get to sleep.

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

set my alarm for the following day and snuggle down with Mabel.

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

11.00pm.





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# 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.

## “Ahead of the curve”: An interview with Crown Oil on the opportunity for distributors to lead the transition

WITHIN THE FUEL DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY, CROWN OIL IS A COMPANY AHEAD OF THE CURVE IN TAKING ACTION TO MITIGATE CLIMATE IMPACTS AND LEAD THE SHIFT TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS. WITH THE DISTRIBUTOR BECOMING THE FIRST COMPANY IN THE UK TO BE CERTIFIED CARBON NEUTRAL UNDER ISO 14068-1, WITH A VERIFIED PATHWAY (BSI NET ZERO) TO REACH NET ZERO BY 2050, WE HEAR WHY, TO CROWN OIL, THE TRANSITION IS ALREADY PROVING A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY.

### 1. The moment of realisation

**What were the early signals that told you the traditional fuel distribution model would need to evolve?**

For us, the signals appeared long before sustainability became a mainstream industry conversation. Our customers were asking deeper questions about fuel origin, emissions and futureproofing their operations, while regulatory direction and societal expectations were clearly tightening. It became obvious that the traditional “deliver and forget” fuel model would not stand the test of time.

**Was there a specific moment, customer conversation or market shift that made the need for change unavoidable?**

There wasn't one single moment – it was a culmination of conversations. Customers began asking not just what fuel we were supplying, but how it was produced, where it came from and how it fitted into their own net zero plans. At that point, it became clear that we had a responsibility to lead, not follow.

**How did you balance the commercial realities of today's business with the need to plan for tomorrow?**

We've always believed that sustainability and commercial success work together hand in hand. By embedding sustainability into our strategy early, we were able to make measured, commercially sound investments while continuing to deliver reliable fuel solutions. Planning for tomorrow has strengthened today's business, not distracted from it.

### 2. The business case for transition

**How did sustainability move from a 'nice to have' to a core business strategy?**



Once we recognised that the energy transition was inevitable, sustainability became a strategic necessity rather than a marketing initiative. It now underpins how we operate, how we invest and how we support customers. It's no longer an add-on, it's fundamental to our long-term resilience.

**What risks did you see in not acting early?**

The biggest risk was irrelevance. Distributors who delay, risk losing customer trust, falling behind regulation and being unprepared for rapid change. Acting early allowed us to build credibility, capability and confidence ahead of the curve.

**How have certifications like ISO 14068-1 and RFAS (Renewable Fuels Assurance Scheme) strengthened your credibility with customers and regulators?**

Independent certification plays a vital role in building trust. Being the first UK fuel distributor to be certified carbon neutral under ISO 14068-1 proves that our environmental claims are robust, measurable and transparent. RFAS certification adds another layer of confidence by providing full traceability and assurance – something that our customers and regulators

increasingly demand. Together, these frameworks remove ambiguity and replace it with genuine credibility.

**What internal conversations were needed to align leadership and teams behind the transition?**

The transition required openness, education, and honest dialogue. Through company-wide training and clear communications, we focused on explaining why the change matters, not only from an environmental perspective, but also commercially and culturally. Once teams understood the long-term opportunity, alignment followed naturally. The launch of our Sustainability Committee further strengthened collaboration between leadership and teams.

### 3. Customers at the centre

**How have your customers' expectations around fuel transparency and emissions changed?**

Customers are far more informed and accountable than they once were. They expect verified data, transparent reporting and open, honest discussions about emissions. Many are facing increasing regulatory and stakeholder pressure themselves and are now looking to

# TRANSITION IN ACTION

partner with suppliers that can help them make credible progress.

## **What reassurance do independent certifications give customers navigating their own net zero journeys?**

They eliminate uncertainty. Independent certification allows customers to evidence due diligence, compliance and genuine progress without relying on unsubstantiated claims. That level of reassurance is invaluable during audits, tenders and stakeholder reporting.

## **Have these initiatives opened doors to new types of customers or partnerships?**

Absolutely. We're now working with organisations that may not previously have viewed a fuel distributor as a sustainability partner. Our approach has expanded conversations beyond supply into strategy. With sustainability now a core requirement in many tenders, proactive environmental initiatives are increasingly the difference between winning and losing new business.

## **How do you ensure sustainability improvements don't compromise reliability or service quality?**

Reliability remains non-negotiable. Every sustainability initiative we implement is rigorously tested against operational performance before implementation. Our customers depend on us and that trust is never compromised.

## **4. From ambition to action**

### **What were the biggest operational challenges in achieving carbon neutrality and RFAS approval?**

The most significant challenges were ensuring data accuracy, traceability, and strong governance, particularly given the complexity of measuring and reducing supply-chain (Scope 3) emissions. To address this, we partnered with an independent external agency to support our carbon reporting and ensure all claims were transparent, robust, and certified. Achieving this required detailed analysis across our operations, supply chains, and logistics, but the discipline it introduced has ultimately strengthened the business.

### **How did you bring your people along on the journey?**

By actively involving our people at every stage. Through company-wide training and



regular internal communications, we ensured everyone understood how their role contributes to the bigger picture. We also established a Sustainability Committee made up of senior leaders and colleagues from across the business, creating a space where ideas are shared, ownership is encouraged and progress towards our net zero goals is driven collectively.

### **What lessons did you learn that would help another distributor start today?**

Start sooner than you think you need to. Build strong data foundations, seek independent verification and don't wait for perfect conditions – progress matters far more than perfection.

### **What surprised you most once the transition was underway?**

How positively it was received – internally and externally. The appetite for change was already there; it just needed clear leadership and direction.

## **5. Impact beyond the P&L**

### **How do you see the distributor's role evolving in the UK's energy transition?**

Distributors will become advisors, data providers and transition partners – not just suppliers. Our role is to help customers navigate the energy transition safely, efficiently and responsibly.

### **Why is independently verified fuel traceability important beyond transport?**

Independently verified fuel traceability ensures transparency, accuracy and credibility across all sectors that rely on fuel, not just road transport. It allows businesses to confidently measure and reduce carbon emissions, comply with regulations and demonstrate sustainability commitments to stakeholders.

Beyond transport, it also strengthens

supply chain accountability, mitigates reputational and regulatory risk, and supports broader energy transition goals.

## **What responsibility do established distributors have in shaping lower-carbon solutions?**

Established distributors have a critical responsibility to lead the transition to lower-carbon solutions. This means not just supplying energy, but actively guiding customers, investing in sustainable technologies, and collaborating across supply chains to reduce emissions. By leveraging our expertise, data and market position, distributors can drive practical, scalable solutions that make the energy transition safe, credible and achievable.

## **How do initiatives like these contribute to wider trust in the fuel supply chain?**

They bring transparency and consistency, which are essential for confidence across the entire sector.

## **6. Positive outcomes**

### **What tangible benefits has Crown Oil seen since achieving these certifications?**

We've seen enhanced credibility with customers and partners, stronger trust across our supply chains, increased engagement in tenders and greater confidence in our sustainability claims. Internally, the process has improved operational discipline, data accuracy and governance, while also fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Collectively, these benefits have strengthened both our business resilience and our market position.

### **How has this strengthened your brand, recruitment, or customer retention?**

Achieving these certifications has reinforced Crown Oil's reputation as a trusted, responsible partner, which resonates strongly with customers and helps retain their loyalty. It has also made the company more attractive to talent, drawing employees who value sustainability and purpose-driven work. Overall, it strengthens our brand credibility, supports long-term relationships and positions us as a leader in the energy transition.

### **Has it changed internal culture or employee pride?**

Absolutely. The journey to certification has instilled a stronger sense of purpose and accountability across the business. Employees

take pride in being part of a company that leads on sustainability, embraces transparency and makes a tangible impact – fostering engagement, collaboration and a culture of continuous improvement.

**What does success now look like compared to five years ago?**

Success today goes beyond financial performance – it encompasses verified sustainability, operational transparency and measurable progress in reducing emissions.

**7. Looking ahead**

**What does leadership in fuel distribution mean in 2026 and beyond?**

Leadership will be defined by more than scale or reliability – it will be about guiding the energy transition responsibly. This means delivering lower-carbon solutions, providing trusted data and insights, supporting customers through complex regulatory and sustainability challenges, and driving innovation across the supply chain. True leaders will combine operational excellence with measurable



environmental impact and transparent, accountable practices.

**What advice would you give distributors who feel the transition is too complex or risky?**

Start early, focus on building accurate data and strong governance, and seek independent verification to build confidence. Taking disciplined, incremental steps matters far more than trying to get everything right at once. Engaging employees at all levels from the beginning is also crucial, as broad buy-in is a key driver of long-term success.

**How can the industry collaborate to accelerate progress?**

The industry can accelerate progress by sharing best practices, standardising data and reporting, and forming partnerships across the supply chain. By working together, the sector can drive innovation, build trust and make the energy transition both faster and more credible.

**How will you evolve your business further to align with the government’s ‘electrification first’ strategy**

We recognise electrification will play a major role, but it won’t be universal or immediate. Our role is to support customers during this transition – providing lower-carbon fuels, verified data and flexible solutions where electrification isn’t yet viable.

**If you could challenge one industry assumption, what would it be?**

That sustainability and fuel distribution are incompatible. We’ve proven they can – and must – go hand in hand.



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# ESL Fuels Biofuel Market Update – Q4 2025

IN ASSOCIATION WITH PORTLAND ANALYTICS



## Feedstocks

UCO prices were relatively stable between October and November, moving from \$1,155 to \$1,140/mt (75.5-75.9ppl), remaining near the three-year high of \$1,160/mt (76.3ppl) reached in September amid high demand for HVO and SAF. Reports that Indonesia could raise its export levy on UCO also supported prices, as the country seeks to fund its SAF ambitions. In the US, uncertainty remains around the impact of changes to the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Tax Credit on supply flows, although market participants expect US biofuel producers to increasingly turn to domestic feedstocks due to restrictive biofuel and trade policies. However, Chinese exports reached an eleven-month high due to stronger sales to both Europe and the US, alleviating supply concerns. Towards year-end, trading slowed on policy uncertainty, dampening demand and causing UCO prices to fall to \$1,100/mt (72.2ppl).

## Biodiesel

UK biodiesel imports fell to a six-month low in October, with reduced supply from Europe and Asia, including a sharp drop in shipments from China following the UK's anti-dumping investigation. Domestic consumption also eased as local suppliers increasingly relied on buying RTFCs to meet blend obligations. In November, biodiesel prices remained under pressure from falling Low Sulphur Gasoil futures, although strong rapeseed demand (the key feedstock for RME and accounting for 90% of FAME-10 pricing) helped limit losses, as well as being indirectly supported by rising domestic biofuel demand in Brazil and the US. Towards the end of the quarter, February 2026 rapeseed futures in Paris softened slightly amid higher supply from Canada and Australia, while global production forecasts were raised to a record 95 million tonnes (exceeding the previous season by almost 10 million tonnes). Finally, rising exports of UCO from China to the US and Europe also contributed to lower biodiesel prices, as this key feedstock became more widely available.

## FAME-10 & UCOME

A rally in the first half of October saw the UCOME premium to FAME-10 widen from a low of \$46/mt (3.0 ppl) to reach a Q4 peak of \$119/mt (7.8 ppl), with UCOME prices supported by a strong UCO feedstock market

Wholesale NWE Prices (\$ per Metric Tonne)



due to cross-sector compliance demand, whilst FAME-10 prices fell by around 5% in the same period, reaching a quarter low of \$1,364/mt (90.8 ppl) on 14th October. However, the differential then gradually fell across the remainder of Q4, as colder weather saw demand for winter-grade biodiesel increase and the premium for waste-based biodiesels faltered as markets prepared for the scrapping of double-counting to be confirmed in Germany. UCOME prices eventually fell below FAME-10 for the first time since February 2023 in mid-December, after the proposed revisions to German national biofuels policy were finally confirmed, reducing the comparative GHG reduction value between the two grades. After reaching a low of -\$40/mt (-2.6 ppl) on 29th December, the UCOME premium to FAME-10 recovered slightly to close the year at -\$11.50/mt (-0.8 ppl), with UCOME at \$1,410/mt (92.5 ppl) and FAME-10 at \$1,422/mt (93.3 ppl).

## Market Outlook

After a year of change for the European biofuels landscape, with amendments to several key national policies following the enforcement of RED III in May 2025, 2026 will be a period of adjustment as supply chains adapt to both a general increase in biofuels and other renewable fuels demand (a result of higher targets), and a shift in requirements to now higher rewarded GHG reduction fuels following

the confirmed scrapping of double-counting in Germany and the Netherlands. This will reduce the premium for waste-based biodiesel such as UCOME against other methyl ester biodiesels, in particular those produced sustainably from crop. Due to blending limitations on methyl ester biodiesel, this will also drive demand for drop-in products such as HVO, the effects of which have already significantly impacted prices throughout the second half of 2025, a trend that is unlikely to ease in the coming year. The biofuels feedstock pool is also likely to become wider and more diverse due to an increase in advanced sub-targets, as policy-makers seek to encourage the development of next-generation biofuels due to feedstock limits in existing production pathways.

## HVO

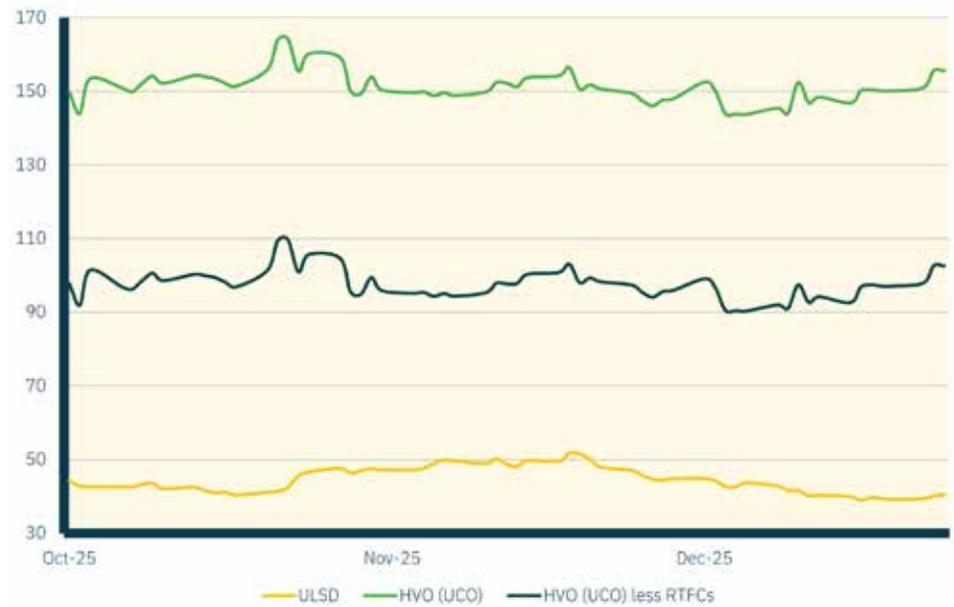
The UK market continued to import T1 product from the US, which trades at a discount to the Northwest European (T2) published wholesale price of HVO produced from UCO. The latter continued its upward trajectory in Q4, driven by increased compliance demand as the market prepares for higher European biofuels obligations in 2026. Prices reached a three-year high of \$2,810/mt (163.9 ppl) on 22nd October on supply tightness into the final quarter of 2025. Prices then saw a slight decline through November and into December, falling to a

Q4 low of \$2,455/mt (144.0 ppl) as demand softened and production levels stabilised following planned refinery maintenance at the start of the quarter. HVO prices then recovered to \$2,750/mt (159.4 ppl) by the end of December, after the German cabinet met to approve proposed changes to its national biofuels policy in line with RED III, ending a period of uncertainty for the European biofuels market. T2 prices net of RTFCs peaked at 109.62 ppl in October – the spike in wholesale prices was exacerbated by an uptick in the value of RTFCs, which rose to 27.25 ppc in the second half of the month, increasing the benefit to UK HVO buyers by 2.5 ppl due to double-counting. This saw the differential to mineral diesel widen to 68.0 ppl. Whilst the differential narrowed into November, reaching a Q4 low of 44.7 ppl, a steep decline in mineral diesel prices towards the end of the quarter saw it widen once more, with UK HVO closing December 66.8 ppl above mineral diesel.

### Certificates

Despite an overall decline in biodiesel prices in Q4, particularly UCOME, the key blend stock used to comply with the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) and therefore the effective price setter for RTFCs, non-crop certificate prices held firm throughout the quarter, trading in a narrow range of 26.0 to 27.5 ppc. This is due to the much steeper decline in diesel prices across the period, a result of oversupply concerns in the broader oil markets. As such, the gap between fossil and bio products widened, increasing the cost of blending and in turn the cost of meeting the RTFO and subsequent certificate value. Theoretical RTFC replacement prices for HVO produced from UCO spiked in October, reaching a Q4 high of 61.60 ppc, in line with rising outright HVO costs.

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



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



## News & Policy

Targets for meeting the UK's Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) will increase from 1st January, raising the volume share of renewable fuels required to be supplied to the UK market. The main obligation will rise to 14.054% in 2026, up from 13.563% in 2025, whilst the Development Fuels Obligation (DFO, the advanced subobligation within the RTFO) rises from 1.619% to 1.863%. The RTFO is currently under review, with proposed changes expected to be announced in 2026, with an implementation target of 2027, subject to industry review.

The UK Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) published its Statement of Essential Facts in late November, on HVO imports from the US, finding that subsidised imports are causing material injury to UK biodiesel producers. The TRA has proposed a fixed countervailing duty between £257.80 and £303.56 per tonne, with a final recommendation due in March. An industry response is likely to object to the proposal, raising concerns such as the absence of a domestic industry producing HVO and the impact of further price increases on imports to the UK market.

Provisional data released by the Department of Transport (DfT) in November highlighted that verified renewable fuels supplied to the UK reached 2.4 billion litres in the first ten months of 2025. According to S&P Global, biofuels now account for an estimated 6.8% of the UK's total transport fuel supply, indicating continued growth in supply and demand. Within the renewable fuel mix, bioethanol is the largest contributor at around 1.1 billion litres, followed by biodiesel at 519 million litres and HVO at an estimated 408 million litres.



# PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

JANUARY  
IN VIEW

## PRICES AND PREDICTIONS: HOW DID WE DO IN 2025, AND WHAT DOES 2026 HOLD?

*“At the same time that the global economy weakens, the floodgates for US oil and gas production will be opened, further compounding the over-supply situation. On that basis, it seems likely that once again we will have a flat-lining or a lowering of the oil price in 2025”.* So we wrote this time last year, when we made our oil price forecasts for 2025. This means that once again, we got our annual predictions correct, with Brent Crude starting the year (2nd Jan 2025) at \$75.93 per barrel (bbl) and closing the year 12 months later (31st Dec), at \$60.85.

**“OIL PRODUCERS  
IT SEEMS ARE ON A  
KAMIKAZE MISSION  
TO INCREASE OIL  
PRODUCTION.”**

Critics might justifiably argue that a drop of 20% is hardly “flat lining” and this is probably a fair criticism. In our defence however, the oil price was very stable for great swathes of the year. In the first quarter of 2025 for example (Jan – Mar), the price started at \$75.93 and ended at \$74.74, with an average price for the 3-month period of \$75.03. There was virtually no movement in the oil price in this period. The same happened again in Q325 with the oil price starting July at \$67.11 / bbl and finishing September at \$67.02. The average price for this period was \$68.16; another decent case for a flatlining market. By comparison, both Q225 and Q425 saw much greater and consistent price falls. Apr 25 – Jun 25 saw the price fall from \$74 to \$67 (down by 9%), whilst Q4 prices went down from \$67 to \$61 (down by another 9%).

Refined prices followed a similar path in 2025 (downward trend), but in a situation that reflected the ongoing shortage of refined diesel and jet fuel, price drops were not as marked as those for crude. Diesel for example saw prices open the year (2nd Jan 2025) at \$722 per tonne (\$97 / bbl) and end (31st Dec

2025) at \$636 / t (\$85 / bbl); a fall of only 12% versus the crude drop of 20%. For UK consumers, this “good news” was tempered by the strengthening of the £GBP against the \$USD, which slowed the rate of the price reductions. Retail diesel, excluding VAT, started 2025 at 102.27 pence per litre (ppl) and finished in December, at 92.88ppl. This was a drop of only 9% versus the 12% drop in wholesale diesel. Petrol was the same story (down from 99.21ppl to 88.93ppl – a fall of 10% versus a wholesale drop of 15%).

One other prediction we made last year was as follows; *whilst the general direction of travel for prices might be downwards this year, any number of geo-political flare-ups (Ukraine, Iran, Syria, Taiwan) have the potential to generate short-term spikes in the oil price.* This forecast also came to pass during the 12 day Iran-Israel “war” in June, culminating in the USA launching “bunker-busting” missiles on Iranian nuclear facilities. In that month (Jun 25), we saw the price go up from \$64.63 to almost \$79 / bbl by 19th June, which by any standards is a significant price spike over a 14 (working) day period (22% rise). However, the fact that the oil price had dropped back again to \$67 / bbl by the start of the next month (1st July), only served to highlight the overwhelming fundamentals that were at play throughout the year.

Those fundamentals of course were that supply exceeded demand and this trend looks sure to continue in 2026. Oil producers, it seems, are on a kamikaze mission to increase oil production even though demand remains stagnant. The most optimistic growth forecasts for crude consumption only show an increase in demand of circa 1.1m bpd in 2026, versus crude supply increases of up to 3m bpd. Much of this supply growth will come from non-OPEC countries (USA, Guyana, Brazil), which means that even if OPEC did reduce their production (currently forecast to increase by about 0.7m bpd), the effect would be muted.

2026 then, looks likely to have a global surplus of oil to the tune of 2m bpd and this can only mean one thing, which is that prices will continue to fall. Obviously last year’s caveat around “geo-political flare-ups” and

corresponding price spikes remains valid, but the fundamentals of over-supply will only return as soon as any crisis passes. In the first few months of the year, we may see the “dulling” effect of tank storage, as surplus production builds-up global inventory levels. But there is only so much storage available and, at some point, those tanks will become full and the product will have to go directly into a market that doesn’t need it.

On that basis, we see a likelihood of crude prices falling below \$50 / bbl in the first half of this year. Thereafter, there should be some stabilisation or even modest rises, as first the US shale producers (some of whom will go under) and then the likes of OPEC, back-off oil production, in an attempt to push prices back-up.

**“THERE IS ONLY  
SO MUCH STORAGE  
AVAILABLE AND AT SOME  
POINT, THOSE TANKS  
WILL BECOME FULL.”**

Finally, it should be noted that all of this is before any newly “liberated” Venezuelan oil hits global markets. It goes without saying that any new production from Venezuela would simply add to the glut situation, but Trump’s confidence in Venezuelan crude is wholly misplaced.

We do not expect Venezuelan production to play any part in oil market movements in 2026 – more on that in next month’s Oil Market Report.

For more pricing  
information,  
see page 34

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

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:

# Fleet strategy for fuel distributors: when to lease, when to buy, and when to replace

Tankers and fleet vehicles are among the most significant capital assets for fuel oil distributors (FODs). Their reliability directly affects service continuity, regulatory compliance, and customer confidence, while their cost structure shapes long-term profitability.

As vehicle build lead times lengthen, compliance requirements increase, and operating margins remain under pressure, FODs face more complex choices than ever around whether to buy, lease, or rent their fleets – and when to upgrade ageing assets.

This article explores the strategic considerations behind leasing versus purchasing of tankers and support vehicles, comparing cost structures, service life, maintenance requirements and upgrade cycles. With additional consideration of long-term reliability, fuel efficiency and regulatory compliance, it aims to help fuel distributors – particularly budget-constrained SMEs – make informed, resilient fleet strategy decisions.

## Section 1: Sourcing and cost comparison

### Leasing options

#### 1. Contract hire – use without ownership

- Terms are typically 2-5 years
- Ownership is retained by the leasing company, with the customer paying a fixed monthly charge
- Maintenance is most often included

*Best suited to support fleets and predictable mileage operations where cost certainty and outsourced maintenance are priorities.*

#### 2. Operating lease – asset use for a fixed period (usually a term shorter than the economic life of the vehicle)

- As above but with the customer taking responsibility for maintenance
- The customer may be registered as the vehicle keeper (NOT owner)
- Lower monthly payments

*Often used where monthly cost minimisation is key, but places greater operational responsibility on the distributor.*

#### 3. Finance lease – customer-owned lease for the economic life of the vehicle

- Risk and rewards of ownership transfer to the customer so it is treated as owned for accounting and tax purposes
- The customer pays via a fixed-term financing contract
- The asset value is paid in full over the term of the contract with no residual value
- Monthly payments are therefore higher than an operating lease
- At the end of the lease, the asset is sold by the lessor, and the lessee receives a rebate of most of the sale proceeds (typically 95%), pre-agreed
- Other options (general UK offering) typically include: Extending the lease / restructure the agreement (This also applies to an 'operating lease')

*Remains a common choice for fuel tankers, where operators want full control over specification, lifecycle and residual value.*

#### 4. Hire purchase (HP) / Lease purchase – a purchase plan

- Suited to customers who ultimately want to own the asset and assume all associated costs of maintenance
- A commercial vehicle finance arrangement where the value of the asset plus interest is paid in instalments over a fixed term
- Ownership passes to the customer at the end of the term

*Most appropriate for long-life tanker assets where ownership and extended service life are planned.*

#### 5. Spot hire / Short-term rental

- Short-term, suitable for seasonal peaks
- Rent for several months at a time

*Increasingly used as a risk-management and contingency tool rather than a primary strategy.*

#### 6. Sale and leaseback

- Option to sell your owned tanker fleet to a leasing provider, and then lease them back

*May be used to release capital from owned tankers to funding business development or investment costs.*

In practice, fuel distributors rarely rely on a single funding model. Core tanker assets are typically owned or long-term financed, while contract hire and short-term rental are increasingly used to manage support fleets, seasonal peaks and unplanned downtime.

The tables on the following page outline some of the commonly used UK and Ireland providers, split between specialist tanker assets and wider fleet support vehicles.

### Purchasing options – providers

There are numerous tanker suppliers in the UK and Ireland and these are not exhaustive lists.

#### Manufacturers include:

- Central Tanker Services
- Cobo Tanker & Services td
- Crossland Tankers
- G Magyar
- Morrow Tanker Services
- Road Tankers Armagh
- Road Tankers Northern (RTN)
- Tankquip
- Tasca Tankers
- Valley Tankers

#### Used Tanker platforms and sellers include:

- Autotrader
- Commercial Motor
- Compton Tankers

**Table 1: Specialist fuel tanker and tanker trailer providers** Best suited to articulated tankers, rigid fuel tankers and ADR trailers

Provider	Contract Hire	Operating Lease	Finance Lease / HP	Spot / Short-Term Hire	Sale & Leaseback	UK	Ireland
TIP Group	X	X		X	X	✓	✓
Asset Alliance Group	X	X	X	Limited	X	✓	Limited
TCL Tanker Rental				X	X	✓	✓
Just Tankers				X		✓	✓
Robert Taylor Ltd				X		✓	

Specialist tanker rental providers play a critical role in bridging long build lead times, managing seasonal demand and mitigating downtime risk – particularly where compliance or specification requirements limit generic rental availability.

**Table 2: fleet support and non-tanker vehicle providers** Best suited to tractor units, rigid trucks, vans, workshops and mixed fleets

Provider	Contract Hire	Operating Lease	Finance Lease / HP	Spot / Short-Term Hire	Sale & Leaseback	UK	Ireland
Asset Alliance Group	X	X	X	X	X	✓	Limited
Fraikin	X					✓	
Novuna Vehicle Solutions	X			Flexible		✓	
Enterprise Flex-E-Rent				X		✓	✓
Hexagon Leasing	X					✓	
Lombard		Finance-led	X			✓	✓
Alltruck			X		X	✓	
Commercial Vehicle Leasing			X			✓	

N.B. Some finance providers use “operating lease” terminology for accounting purposes rather than full fleet-managed contract hire. Fuel distributors should clarify maintenance, compliance and replacement vehicle obligations before committing

- Just Tankers
- SOS Sales

While purchasing offers control and long-term value, fuel distributors should be cautious when comparing headline prices. Specification, compliance status, residual value and remaining service life can vary significantly – particularly in the used tanker market.

FODs should be wary of condition, maintenance history and specification when purchasing 2nd hand, checking:

- Vehicle history and paperwork
- Full-service history
- Compliance and certification
- Fit-for-purpose specification

#### Estimated cost comparison

Indicative costs vary significantly depending on specification, compliance requirements, maintenance inclusion and market conditions. Figures below should be treated as broad order-of-magnitude estimates.

#### Buying

For new vehicles, the price is usually quoted on application and primarily determined by size, capacity, type (e.g., rigid vs. trailer), and equipment specified)

#### Tankers (artic)

- New: £80k-£140k / €90-160
- Used: £10k-£30k / €12-35k (depending on

age, condition and specification)

#### Truck

- New: £80k-£200k+ / €90-230+
- Used: £10k-£70k+ / €12-80 (depending on mileage, age, condition)

#### Leasing (prices not publicly available)

##### Tankers

- £300-£700 / €345-800 p.m.

##### Truck

- hire prices estimated at £1,400 / €1600 p.m.
- Leasing monthly costs tend to be competitive with or below hiring costs

## Section 2: Lease vs Buy pros and cons

The primary consideration for the lease versus buy decision is cost, dependent on your company’s financial situation, which may change over time.

### i. Leasing

#### Pros

##### Financial

- Predictable monthly cost of lease payments and maintenance costs, leading to better cash flow management and budget (crucial for SMEs)
- More accessible capital for other business requirements
- 100% of lease payments tax-deductible as operating expenses

- Faster tax relief, aligned with monthly cash outflow
- VAT spread across lease payments, improving cash flow

#### Maintenance

- Limits the responsibility and removes the administrative burden or unexpected expenses of maintenance and repair (however, FODs should note that not all lease agreements work in this way)
- Track and monitor repair information, performance reporting, maintenance records and scheduling with one-click online access to your fleet

#### Upgrades

- Disposal of old vehicles without wasting time, money or energy
- Required to return (or purchase) vehicles/tankers at the end of the terms, meaning FODs will upgrade to newer models more frequently
- Upgrade since lease terms are short (2 to 5 years); better access to the latest technology, safety features, and fuel efficiency

Leasing can also reduce operational risk by transferring residual value exposure, compliance administration and replacement vehicle responsibility to the provider.

## Cons

- Restrictions or mileage/hour limits determined by the lease agreement (to manage vehicle depreciation), could result in additional charges
- Pay more over time compared to buying (interest)
- No ownership or residual value.
- Locked into a contract for a fixed duration, with exit penalties

## ii. Buying

### Pros

- Own the tanker/ support vehicle as valuable assets
- Fleet independence / greater control and flexibility
- Customise the vehicle, promote your company, etc.
- Fleet optimisation
- control over when and how frequently to upgrade
- Unlimited usage
- No restrictions, ideal for high mileage
- Resale value
- Capital allowance
- Writing down allowances
- Annual Investment Allowance (AIA)

### Cons

#### Financial

- Significant upfront cost (deposit, purchase price, financing charges)
- Ongoing costs: repairs, maintenance, insurance
  - Costly routine vehicle maintenance and unexpected pricey repairs
- Depreciation of the asset
- Whilst purchasing fleet vehicles puts assets on your balance sheet, it can also impact your debt-to-equity ratio, making your company appear less attractive to lenders or investors
  - Annual Investment Allowance (AIA) may allow 100% first-year relief, but limits often restrict use for large fleets
  - VAT paid upfront on the full vehicle cost, then reclaimed

#### Maintenance

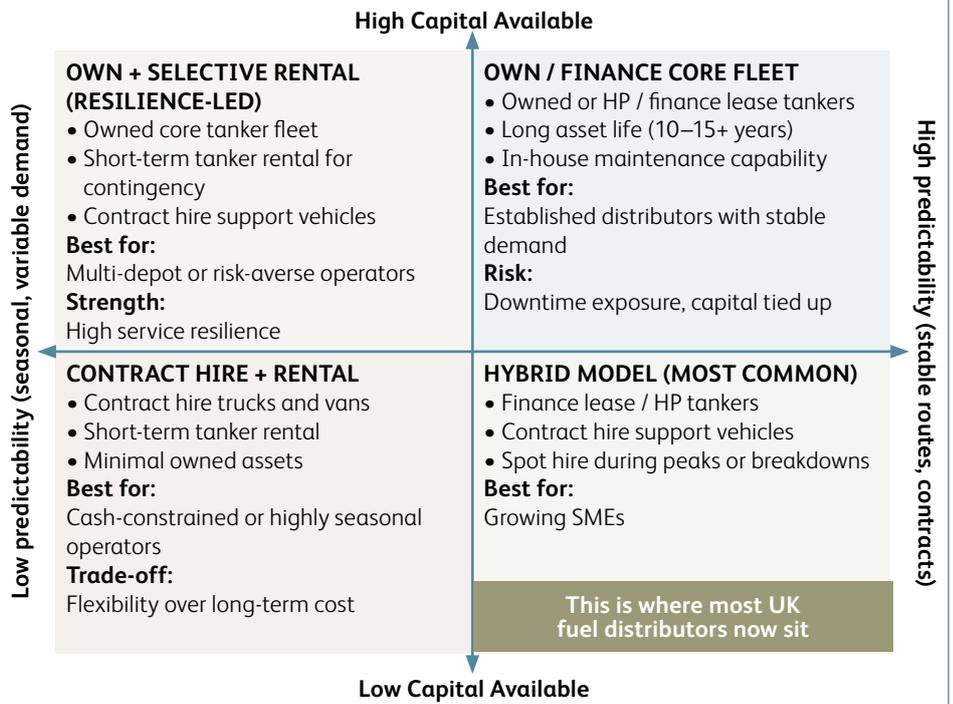
- Administrative demands: fleet maintenance management responsibilities
- Purchased vehicles tend to be on the road longer and can experience more damage or simply start showing their age

#### Disposal/Upgrade

- Owner must arrange for the disposal of the vehicle

## Fleet strategy matrix for fuel distributors

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to fleet strategy in fuel distribution. The right balance between owning, leasing and renting assets depends on your access to capital, stability of demand and tolerance for downtime risk. Most distributors operate a hybrid model, combining owned or financed tankers for core capacity with contract hire and rental to manage peaks, breakdowns and delayed new-builds. The matrix helps you assess where you sit today — and how your fleet strategy may need to evolve as your business grows.



Capital tied up in owned vehicles is capital unavailable for depot upgrades, digital systems, or fleet decarbonisation initiatives.

- ~30% of licensed HGVs in the UK are more than 10 years old. (DfT, 2020)
- ~25% of UK HGVs are 11+ years old, and ~12% are over 15 years old

## Section 3: Upgrade Cycle / Plan

Decisions around repair, replacement and upgrade cycles sit at the heart of fleet strategy, balancing capital availability against reliability, compliance and downtime risk. FODs must assess the fleet/tanker lifespan, repair vs replacement costs, etc.

### Lifespan

- In the UK/EU, there are no rules or regulations stipulating that commercial vehicles must be taken out of service after a certain age
- Articulated 36,000 litre tankers: 10–15 years is a baseline for these vehicles in heavy commercial use, with the upper range extending to 20 years in well-maintained fleets
- Rigid tankers (18-23,000 litres): 12-18 years (lower weight)
- Average HGV age on UK roads ~8 years (as of recent Department for Transport data), including all HGV types in commercial use

### Maintenance and Repair

- Preventative maintenance could save HGV operators £545 per vehicle on average (Logistics UK)
  - Average £545 per vehicle in unplanned repairs and downtime
- Almost 60% of HGV inspections identify at least one defect
- The average repair cost of a heavy good vehicle (HGV) has increased by almost 12% (2024-2025)

However, repairs can exceed these levels as can be seen in the below table of the most common claims.

The data set included a sample of 300 truck warranty claims settled between May 2024 and April 2025.

- The most expensive single claim reached £10,800 for major engine repairs

## General rule: Repair vs replace

- 5-7 years: repair
- 7-10 years: cost-benefit analysis is essential
- 10 years: replacement

### Regulatory/Safety

- ADR compliance: if repairs cannot ensure compliance
- MOT: frequent failure of tests
- Insurance: older vehicles/tankers with repeated failures may increase premiums

### Reliability & Efficiency

- Older HGVs/tankers are less fuel efficient
- New engines may reduce operating costs

### FOD Implications (Downtime)

Frequent repairs/maintenance may lead to:

- Missed deliveries (particularly for SMEs with fewer vehicles in the fleet)
- Reputational damage
- Operational difficulties: more flexibility for scheduling/route planning required

### Profitability Impact

- Lost revenues
- Temporary hire costs (short-term vehicle/tanker replacement)

Refurbishment and life-extension specialists can also influence upgrade timing, allowing fuel distributors to defer replacement while maintaining compliance and reliability.

Ultimately, FODs must align upgrade decisions with their cash flow, demand forecasts, and resale values; especially critical for SMEs working with limited budgets.

### Repair vs Replace

Upgrade cycles should consider average lifespan of HGVs/tankers: 10-15 years

FODs should consider:

- Age of the vehicle/tanker
  - Based on expected lifespan 10-15 years
- Level of repair required
  - Minor repairs (e.g. brakes, suspension) could be worth doing
  - Major failures (engine, transmission replacement, structural, tank integrity), require
- Cost of repair
  - Cost-benefit analysis required

### Summary of findings

- Leasing offers predictable monthly costs, lower upfront capital, maintenance support, and easier upgrades
- Buying provides ownership, fleet control, and potential resale value
- Preventive maintenance reduces unplanned costs and improves fleet performance
- Repair vs replacement decisions depend on the severity and cost of faults, impact on operational downtime, regulatory

Maintenance Expense	Average Cost
Preventive Maintenance (Annual)	£3,500 – £5,000 per vehicle
Unplanned Repairs (per incident)	£500 – £5,000 per incident
Roadside Assistance	£150 – £300 per incident
Towing and Recovery	£300 – £800 per incident

compliance, and fuel efficiency  
Recommended actions for FODs

- assess the current age of the vehicle/tanker vs. average lifespan, residual values, and maintenance/repair costs

gradually, minimising capital strain whilst keeping the fleet up to date

- A mix of vehicle leasing and owning may be the best approach for some FODs

### KPI modelling:

Compare leased versus owned.

- Cost per mile/litre analysis
  - Annual running cost
  - Downtime days per year
  - Impact on cash flow/ profitability
- Upgrade cycle
- FODs (particularly SMEs) should consider aligning their replacement/upgrade cycle with business growth, cash flow, etc.
  - Fleet upgrades should be planned in advance
  - Phased upgrade: replacing vehicles/tankers

### Conclusion and recommendations

Fuel distributors face increasingly complex fleet decisions, shaped by capital constraints, compliance pressure and operational risk. There is no single “right” approach: leasing offers cost predictability and flexibility, while ownership delivers control and long-term value where assets are well maintained.

The most resilient fleet strategies typically combine owned or long-term financed tankers for core capacity, contract hire for support vehicles, and selective short-term rental to manage peaks and downtime.

By modelling total lifecycle costs, downtime risk and upgrade timing, FODs – particularly SMEs – can build fleets that support both operational reliability and financial sustainability.

### Top 10 most common claims across all HGV models

	Fault	Average claim	Claim rate
1	Nox Sensor	£780.45	42.74
2	ECU	£2,538.11	5.21 %
3	Turbocharger	£4,225.76	4.32 %
4	AdBlue pump	£1,349.35	3.27 %
5	Water pump	£1,188.18	2.08 %
6	BPV	£3,778.73	1.64 %
7	Camshaft	£4,443.46	1.49 %
8	Propshaft	£938.81	1.49 %
9	EGR valve	£2,205.58	1.34 %
10	Brake chamber	£572.18	1.19 %

Source: Warranty Solutions Group

## Fleet strategy in practice

Many fuel distributors now operate a blended fleet model:

- Owned or long-term financed tankers for core delivery capacity
- Contract hire for support vehicles to control cost and administration
- Short-term tanker rental as insurance against downtime and delayed new builds



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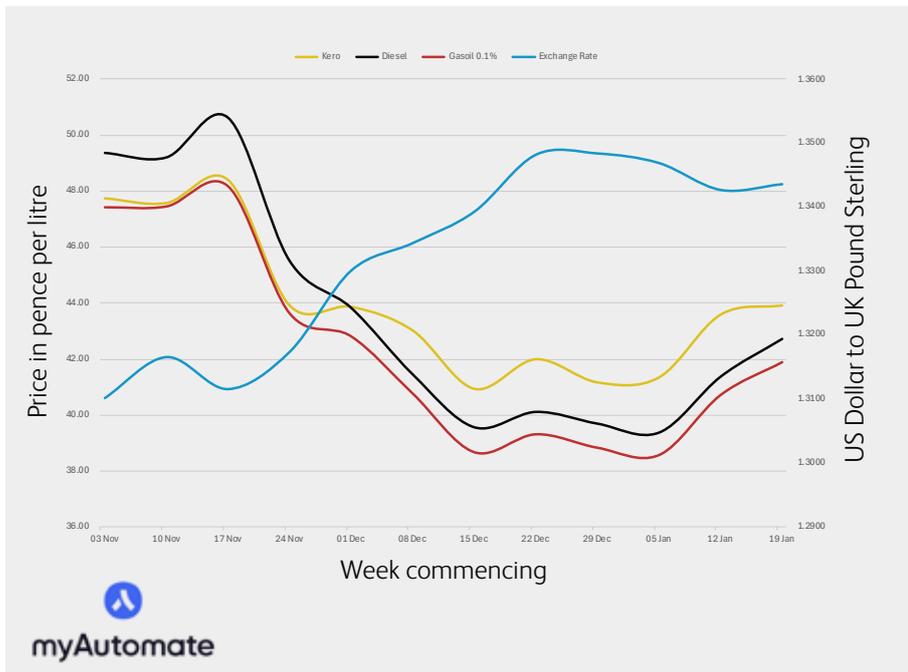


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## Wholesale Price Movements: 15th December 2025 – 21st January 2026

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	42.34	40.56	39.78
Average daily change	0.71	0.77	0.71
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	42.34	93.51	49.96

All prices in pence per litre

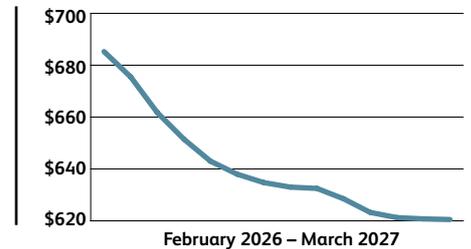


Kerosene	
Highest price 44.68 Wed 21 Jan 26	Biggest up day +1.99 Tue 13 Jan 26
Lowest price 40.12 Fri 02 Jan 26	Biggest down day -1.18 Thu 15 Jan 26

Diesel	
Highest price 43.86 Wed 21 Jan 26	Biggest up day +2.00 Tue 13 Jan 26
Lowest price 38.43 Wed 07 Jan 26	Biggest down day -0.94 Fri 02 Jan 26

Gasoil 0.1%	
Highest price 42.96 Wed 21 Jan 26	Biggest up day +1.90 Tue 13 Jan 26
Lowest price 37.77 Wed 07 Jan 26	Biggest down day -1.04 Mon 29 Dec 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	45.09	49.77	96.55	51.40	53.18	100.33
North East	44.04	48.40	95.63	52.80	51.56	98.41
North West	45.61	51.00	98.02	51.68	53.98	100.51
Midlands	44.11	48.93	96.09	50.03	52.05	99.11
South East	44.21	48.89	96.07	56.42	54.32	98.68
South West	44.56	48.73	95.91	52.45	51.84	98.30
N. Ireland	44.67	50.10	n/a	50.50	53.94	n/a
Republic Of Ireland	58.43	55.53	97.49	63.87	58.81	100.58
Portland	42.42	46.45	92.78			

The price totem figures are indicative figures compiled from the Portland base rate using calculated regional variances. Buying prices are ex-rack. Selling prices are for 1000 litres of kero, 2500 litres of gas oil and 5000 litres of ULSD (Derv in ROI). Prices in ROI are in €. Wholesale prices are supplied by Portland Analytics Ltd, dedicated providers of fuel price information from refinery to pump. For more information and access to prices, visit [www.portlandpricing.co.uk](http://www.portlandpricing.co.uk)



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