Fuel Oil News

JUNE 2021

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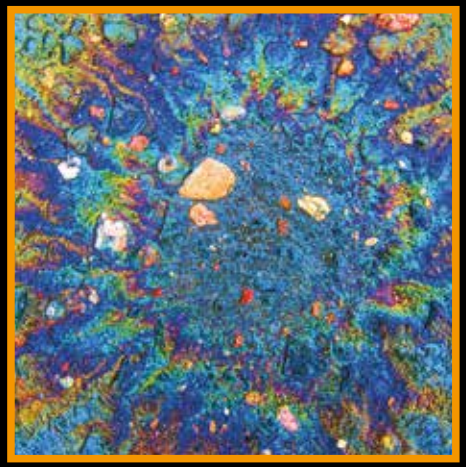

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It's all about the people

As the latest easing of lockdown restrictions comes into force, infection rates, hospitalisations and deaths are at their lowest level since September 2020, and more than two thirds of adults have received a first dose of the vaccine.

With people in the UK now able to enjoy a drink and meal inside the cosy warmth of a pub or restaurant (a key consideration with the current inclement weather!), households able to mix indoors, the ban on overseas holidays lifted for 'green list' countries, overnight stays allowed, face masks no longer needed in secondary school classrooms, university students returning to in-person teaching and cinemas and theatres reopened, the one easing that struck me the most was that we are, once again, 'allowed' to hug loved ones.

For those who like to maintain their personal space that may not be the good news that it is for others but, with caution urged, it is certainly the one thing that I have heard repeatedly expressed as the freedom that has been the hardest to give up. It is a cruel turth that the virus that has presented so many health, logistical, financial and emotional challenges has, simultaneously, kept us at more than arm's length from those we would normally draw support from.

Over the last few weeks, we have been speaking with many of you in the industry and it seems that the same thing has been the most missed – not the physical hug as such (although industry gatherings have been known to get lively at times!) – but the physical presence of people; the interaction, the face-to-face conversations, the time spent chewing the fat and the mingling in bars. With the UKIFDA Expo back next month, albeit in a virtual format, we will, once again, have that opportunity to come together as an industry – another step towards the normality we all crave.

We look forward to seeing many of you there – even if the hugs, or handshakes, will have to wait for now.

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Fuel Oil News

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

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On the cover

Our cover features the iconic lighthouse of Portland Analytics who talk about the launch of their new HVO price reporting service on page 7. We also consider the future potential of this liquid biofuel in our 'Market Report' on page 18.

In this issue

In 'Industry Analysis' on pages 12 to 14 we consider products, developments and changes made over the last 12 months to support the health, safety and mental wellbeing of those working in the industry.

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Prince Petroleum delivers to the highest standards

The Leicestershire-based independent distributor has recently been approved for two prestigious accreditations following a project that was first implemented in late 2020. With the company being recognised for excellence in administration systems, having been assessed and approved to ISO 9001 standard, as well as being awarded the Fleet Operators Registration Scheme accreditation we spoke with managing director, David Prince.

Rightfully proud of the achievements of all those involved David explained:

"We embarked on a project, late 2020, to support our B2B business development with the introduction of a Quality Management system to further assure customers of our commitment to delivering goods and services to the highest standards. I felt that we needed a universally recognised and accredited Quality Management system (QMS) that was independently audited and 'badged' so I choose ISO 9001 as the standard we wished to work to."

Team Prince from l-r: Malcom, Samantha, Isabelle, Matthew, Johnathan Prince and David Prince along with team Labrador, Winnie

"I am pleased to say that, during May 2021, we were awarded the accreditation, following a successful external audit procedure.

A double success

"In a separate project, working with our tanker fleet we recently achieved the required level to be awarded The FORS accreditation – Fleet Operators Registration Scheme."

David goes on to give credit to the successful management of these projects:

"Both projects have been internally managed here at Prince by Isabelle Sansone – our new quality manager (QM) – congrats Isabelle!"

Fuel Oil News sponsors new UKIFDA award

Fuel Oil News is proud to be the inaugural sponsor of UKIFDA's Innovation Award, which will be presented for the first time during this year's virtual EXPO.

Entries are now invited for this award with the winner, whether a single person, group of people or company, to be announced during the virtual UKIFDA EXPO which takes place on the 7th and 8th of July this year.

If you know of an individual, team or organisation that has made a significant contribution to the industry this year and wish them to be considered for this award, please send in your entries by 8th June to Dawn Shakespeare, membership manager, UKIFDA by email – ds@ukifda.org

In an industry that constantly seeks to improve, we are already aware of many impressive contributions this year and we look forward to receiving your entries and to covering these in future issues of Fuel Oil News.

Deloitte statement further highlights Stanlow concerns

Concerns surrounding money siphoned out of the Stanlow oil refinery have been raised by Deloitte, after the accounting giant quit as auditor to the parent company of the refinery – Essar Oil UK.

It has been reported that dividends and loans were siphoned out of Essar Oil UK in the period leading up to the company's participation in the government's pandemic VAT deferral scheme to the tune of £356 million.

The company has gained a 6 month stay-of-execution in the deadline to pay this VAT bill but the ability to do so will be heavily influenced by what happens at the refinery; the recovery of margins, which are still depressed and plant utilisation levels.

With refineries being largely fixed cost operations (around 90% of the total, mainly comprising personnel costs), it will need utilisation levels of at least circa 85% – the level at which US refineries are currently running. European plants have more recently been running at a percentage around the high 70s.

Alongside Deloitte, Lloyds, PwC and law firm Linklaters have all cut ties with Essar Oil UK. Deloitte's statement, originally written in October 2020, is the first time one of the professional firms advising Essar Oil UK has pinpointed governance concerns.

Current auditors, PKF Littlejohn, signed off the latest set of accounts for the year ending September 2020, which revealed a $186 million loss.

Essar, which is chaired by Prashant Ruia, claims to have invested $1 billion (£715 million) in Stanlow since purchasing it from Shell in 2011 for £801 million. It has said it received lenders' consent for the loan.

A spokesperson for Essar Oil UK said:

"EOUK is well advised by a suite of highly experienced, professional firms. We have always sought to implement the highest standards of corporate governance.

"In October 2020, PKF replaced Deloitte as our auditors after ten years. PKF remain our auditors today, alongside other high-calibre advisors.

"EOUK's financial statements for the period ending September 2019 were signed off by Deloitte. The next set of financial statements [for the period ending September 2020] were signed off by PKF."

Ministerial visit to Stanlow focuses on low carbon future

Essar was delighted to host a visit to Stanlow Refinery by Andrew Stephenson MP, minister of state at the Department for Transport last month. The minister met senior company representatives and discussed plans to create a new facility to convert non-recyclable household waste into sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) for use by airlines operating at UK airports.

The project involves Essar Oil UK, Fulcrum BioEnergy and Essar's subsidiary company Stanlow Terminals Limited and will convert several hundred thousand tonnes of pre-processed waste, otherwise destined for incineration or landfill, into approximately 100 million litres of low carbon SAF annually.

Officials also briefed the minister on Essar's wider plans to build a net zero energy industrial cluster at Stanlow, which includes the construction of hydrogen production units as part of the HyNet project to create a hydrogen economy across North West England and North East Wales. HyNet's hydrogen and carbon capture and storage (CCS) chain represents a major step forward for low carbon energy technology and innovation in the UK.

Transport minister Andrew Stephenson said:

"Sustainable aviation fuels play a critical role in delivering the UK's net zero commitment and this Government is already supporting a variety of technological developments in this area.

"With just six months to go until COP26 and as we look to tackle climate change, it was great to visit Essar today to see how they plan to convert everyday household waste into sustainable jet fuel."

Jon Barden, chief operating officer, Essar commented:

"We're delighted the minister was able to come to Stanlow and hear first-hand about our future development priorities which are aligned with the Government's own Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution."

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Portland

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Settlement Prices - Our daily and weekly prices show pence per litre (ppl) HVO prices broken down by market, including UK road, non-road and heating oil.

30 Day Tracker - Our 30 day price tracker can be set to show you prices for a variety of different end-user markets, to compare longer-term price movements.

GHG Comparison - Our greenhouse gas comparison chart allows you to compare the carbon intensity and emissions savings across several alternative fuel grades.

Contact Portland for a free, no obligation demonstration:

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Exclusive 10% discount for Fuel Oil News readers with code **FON10**

New HVO price reporting service launches

Portland Analytics is a fuel and energy consultancy that provides a range of specialist advisory and price reporting services to businesses and government organisations across the UK, Europe and the Americas. Portland's fuel pricing service, endorsed by Logistics UK and FTA Ireland, is used by more than 300 major fuel users to monitor costs and calculate fuel surcharge mechanisms.

With a new HVO pricing service set to launch, we sat down with **Portland Analytics** to learn more about the product and the reasons behind its development.

HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil), is a low-carbon alternative that can be used as a like-for-like replacement to traditional liquid fuels, without the requirement for changes to vehicles or infrastructure – known as a 'drop-in' alternative. HVO can yield up to a 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions vs traditional fuels and therefore presents an appealing option for industries looking to decarbonise, where other solutions such as battery-electric are not currently viable.

Why do you feel there is a requirement for an HVO pricing service?

As a drop-in replacement for diesel, gasoil and kerosene (for both heating and aviation use), HVO represents an attractive solution for a wide variety of sectors. However, although the base product is the same, price varies by end-use due to differences in carbon reduction legislation and duty rates. As a result, there is very little visibility in the structure of HVO prices and a significant dislocation between prices seen in Europe compared to the UK. Without an accurate price index, prospective buyers are reluctant to commit to the switch despite the potential emissions reduction HVO can offer. Portland wanted to provide a solution to this.

What information is included?

Our HVO price information forms part of our wider *Renewable* pricing toolkit, which joins our existing suite of Wholesale, *Delivered-In* and *Forecourt* services at portlandpricing.co.uk. Content varies by toolkit, however our Renewable service will include tools to provide complete price transparency on HVO and several other grades (such as high-blend biodiesel) on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. This information can be used to benchmark quotes from suppliers and monitor costs accurately. The toolkit also contains a comparison of Greenhouse Gas emissions (and the reduction they offer against diesel) by grade, to enable users to compare the benefits of various alternative fuels.

How do those who are interested gain access to this new service?

It is simple to sign up directly through our website at portlandpricing.co.uk or alternatively Fuel Oil News readers can contact us by phone (01904 488803) or email (info@portland-fuel.co.uk) for a free, no-obligation demonstration of the service. Subscriptions start at just £40 per month and include access for up to 5 users within a business.

FON exclusive discount

Portland Analytics is offering an introductory discount exclusively for Fuel Oil News readers – simply quote **FON10** for 10% off your first subscription period!

Ford Fuels optimises deliveries through tech investment

Ford Fuels has invested in TouchStar's mobile computing technologies in order to boost customer service and optimise deliveries.

The South West based fuel and lubricants distributor began its relationship with TouchStar after the company's software provider, Fuelsoft, recommended the installation of TouchStar's 'Hawk' units, which were then installed in six Ford Fuels vehicles. As with any business operation, time is a critical resource. For Ford Fuels, the basing of several vehicles at terminals became problematic as employees needed to manually run paperwork between sites every day, including between two remote sites that were one-and-a-half hours away in opposite directions and this slow submission of paperwork throughout the operation soon became a key business challenge.

"Rather than being a mere inconvenience, it ended up being a real business problem. We felt that the TouchStar solution could make things slicker," explained John Ford, director at Ford Fuels.

The TouchStar handheld solution negated the need to use valuable time and resource to travel to sites, offering a far superior, streamlined solution which allows fleet drivers to print delivery notes on the spot. A customer's signature is captured on screen for proof of delivery purposes, and a proof of delivery document is printed instantly.

Following the first roll out, the benefits and capabilities of the TouchStar system were evident. This led to Ford Fuels expanding handhelds into their fleet of vehicles based at terminals, which subsequently led to a further roll out of the technology in 45 – 50 vehicles based at their own offices.

The TouchStar technology has enabled Ford Fuels to be able to focus on customer service and to continue to provide the seamless delivery of fuel within this service-based industry. Given this significant benefit, Ford Fuels is aiming to have TouchStar technology within its entire fuel fleet, comprising of 65 oil tankers by the end of 2021.

John Ford remarks:

"We differentiate ourselves by moving vehicles to places where other people can't. If someone needs fuel, they need fuel, and we'll move heaven and earth to get it, and this just makes that process more efficient.

"I don't get involved with TouchStar day-to-day, which shows that it works. It streamlines the office operation with the drivers and delivers them up-to-date information."

The technical awareness and competency of staff, together with the quality and performance of the system is highly rated by Ford Fuels.

"TouchStar has always been a pleasure to deal with – the system works, the technology is what we need, and it has been tried and tested. We look forward to rolling out the technology to the rest of our fleet."

Alpeco supply first TEX Flow Computers into ROI

Fitzgerald Commercials of Midleton, Cork, has installed the first Alpeco TEX Flow Computers to trucks in Ireland. The two East Cork Oil tankers had existing five compartment tanks remounted onto new Scania chassis along with new Alpeco MF400 metering systems incorporating new TEX CHECKMATE control module.

The TEX registers are interfaced with IMS ePOD mobile computers which capture delivery data from the meter and have the potential to monitor compartment contents via the TEX load inventory.

Robbie Fitzgerald said:

"The New TEX CHECKMATE unit is totally self-contained, the fact that there is no separate CPU to mount in the cab and that all electrical connections are 'plug and play' makes the TEX very easy to install and commission, making it a very neat solution for new and retro-fit applications".

Amber acquisition expands Greenergy presence in Ireland

In business for over 25 years, Greenergy has grown to become an established supplier and distributor of transportation fuels. It has built a reputation for providing customers with unmatched fuel resilience and customer service.

In April this year, Greenergy announced it had acquired Amber Petroleum ('Amber'), an Irish retailer and distributor, expanding its presence in Ireland where it currently markets through Inver Energy, which it acquired in 2017. Amber has service stations located around Ireland, including their own convenience shops at their company-owned sites. This announcement follows Greenergy's acquisition of BG Fuels, a leading gas and convenience retailer in Canada, in 2020, and further expands Greenergy's retail presence.

An emphasis on superior customer service

Amber was established in Fermoy in 1980, by the Fitzgerald family. Recognising that fuel prices were excessively high at that time, Amber saw a gap in the market for a fuel discounter with an emphasis on customer service, and this has been the foundation for Amber's growth.

As a long-standing customer of Inver Energy, Amber demonstrated the commitment, shared by Inver and Amber, to provide quality, competitively-priced fuels and superior customer service. When the opportunity arose for Greenergy to expand its presence in Ireland, Amber was a natural fit, bringing additional retail and convenience experience to the team, and creating a platform for further growth for Greenergy in Ireland.

"With the acquisition of Amber, we now have two recognised brands in Ireland; Inver and Amber," stated Chris O'Callaghan, Head of Greenergy Ireland. "We plan to integrate Amber with the existing Inver business, together representing Greenergy's footprint in Ireland. The Amber brand will remain, just as the Inver brand has, giving customers greater choice, and a team committed to customer service."

"It's exciting to see the staff energised and so enthusiastic to be part of Greenergy, and we are looking forward to expanding the Amber brand."

Greenergy plans to enhance and expand its retail offer in Ireland, with two new Amber forecourts to be branded later this year.

"Bringing together Inver and Amber as one team, will allow us to execute our growth strategy across all facets of the business. Amber is an exciting addition to the Greenergy business; I look forward to this next step for the business."

DCC to acquire Irish-owned fuel distributor

DCC, one of the leading fuel distribution companies in Ireland, and parent company of Certas Energy, has agreed to buy Jones Oil for an undisclosed sum.

Trading in Ireland under the Emo brand, DCC's Energy division notified the transaction to the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) on Friday 30th April. At time of writing it is in the preliminary investigation phase with third party submissions able to be made until May 18.

Jones Oil, founded in 1984 as Jones Distribution, is an entirely Irish-owned company, headquartered in Dublin. It supplies home-heating oil and commercial fuels to the agricultural, commercial, industrial and marine sectors from 15 depots in the East, Midlands and North-West of the country.

Pat Nevin, who has held the position of CEO of Jones Oil for over 20 years, was instrumental in restructuring the business as an oil distributorship. For years the company was one of the largest Esso distributors in Ireland and covered the Midlands and North of the Republic with Suttons (covering the South/South West) and Three Rivers (covering the South East). In 2007, Pat Nevin oversaw the acquisition of Three Rivers.

With a fleet of 45 tankers and 150 staff members, Jones Oil had Euro 138 million in turnover in 2019 – an increase of 13.5pc compared to 2018.

DCC, a diversified holdings company specialising in distribution and marketing, is one of the biggest Irish companies by value (£6.25bn) and is a member of the FTSE 100 index of large companies.

The company has spent £3.3bn on 280 bolt-on acquisitions in the last 26 years since the company floated on the stock market and two-thirds of its profit growth comes from its mergers and acquisitions activity. Fuel distribution accounts for three quarters of DCC's profits, with the remainder coming from healthcare and technology divisions.

Workwear and PPE innovations that offer sustainability without compromise

HAZCHEM SAFETY, A TECHNICAL WORKWEAR PROVIDER TO THE FUEL & GAS DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS, EXPLAINS TO FUEL OIL NEWS SOME OF THE WAYS IN WHICH IT IS WORKING TO SUPPLY SUSTAINABLE VARIATIONS OF HI-VIS WORKWEAR, FOOTWEAR AND PPE AS WELL AS WAYS TO RECYCLE END-OF-LIFE GARMENTS.

Working in an industry where carbon emissions are, for now, inevitable, the small efforts which businesses make to become more sustainable are crucial. Slight changes in operations from paperless transactions to eco-friendly uniforms are some of the ways to work towards net zero.

Whatever your specification of workwear or PPE, Hazchem believes that you don't have to be left out of the Green Revolution and is working to offer sustainable solutions.

Why should you consider sustainable garments?

The clothing industry contributes a shocking 10% of the planet's greenhouse gas emissions, which is more than the entire aviation or shipping industries. Most unwanted clothing ends up in landfill or is incinerated when the raw materials could be reused in further garment production, a process which uses less fossil fuel and produces less emissions, than if they were to be made from brand new materials.

Sustainable garments are set to become permanent fixtures within technical workwear product lines, offering the same necessary safety specifications with less damage to the planet.

In response to end users' needs for 'green' solutions to everyday operations, Hazchem is expanding its product lines to give customers a choice of sustainable options, such as the Ecovis range of hi-vis EN ISO 20471 garments, produced with 100% recycled polyester, with the same visibility and added environmental considerations, such as bio-degradable product packaging.

Something new – FR Fabrics with sustainable sources and processes

Taking advantage of innovations such as ModacrylicECO™ blend fabrics, Hazchem product manager, Rick Clark, explained how the company is developing inherent flame resistant and ARC Workwear using a sustainable and natural fibre. With customers at the focus point, Hazchem is keen to source and develop environmentally conscious workwear options which can be used seamlessly within the industry.

ModacrylicECO™ fabrics from HAZTEC® include a substantial content that is from sustainable materials and sources, and produced with eco-friendly processes requiring less transportation than that needed for the production of cotton. This content has minimal environmental impact, and even solvents used in the process are captured to be used again.

Sustainable safety footwear

Committed to providing customers with what they need, Hazchem is seeking out sustainable workwear options such as the COFRA GreenFit footwear range, constructed with eco-friendly materials.

Using COFRA's own innovative material, 'Poly-Green', a blend of virgin and recycled Polyurethane used in various parts of the shoe, makes for a perfect combination of support and shock absorption. Without compromising on necessary technical specifications, this carefully considered material is also antistatic, antibacterial, and anatomic, keeping the feet dry and the wearer safe and comfortable.

Chosen for its commitment to sustainability, the COFRA footwear range features laces and labels made from 100% recycled bottles. In addition, each pair from this range is packaged in a 100% recycled paper carton.

Want not? Waste not! End of life garment recycling

Responding to common problems experienced with technical workwear by their customers, Hazchem has developed a 100% sustainable and traceable system for securely disposing of company branded garments – through shredding end-of-life garments so they are ready to be re-used as Geotextiles, special papers, and other innovative products.

Recycling technical workwear may seem a complex, specialised process, but Hazchem's system is simple, with a straightforward collection service from your site. Whether this collection is a one-off, weekly, monthly or every 6 months, your end-of-life garments are safely shredded, re-purposed, and a certificate is issued to prove it.

Interested in exploring greener safety options?

If you would further information about sustainable options which may be suitable for your business, visit www.hazchemsafety.com or speak to the Hazchem team who will be able to guide you through the pathway to a greener future.

In Conversation with Bob Taylor

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT IN MAY THIS YEAR, FUEL OIL NEWS SPOKE WITH **BOB TAYLOR**, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF WORLD FUEL SERVICES' UK LAND BUSINESS, WHO SHARED WITH US HIS THOUGHTS ON THE HIGHS, LOWS AND FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY.

A career dedicated to fuel

Telling us more about his history in the fuel sector, Bob says:

"In a nutshell, my entire career has been in fuel. When I left school at 16, I wanted to work in computers. But I got offered a job as a clerk in a fuel company called Fuel Fast and took that instead.

"That first job taught me all sorts. I worked out on the road with drivers and in the office in sales. At the time, you only had winter prices and summer prices, which never moved. Rather than selling, it was a case of finding new customers, sharing some port and signing on the line.

"After my time in sales, I was offered a job as a depot manager. I was only 25 and hugely out of my depth, but I learned so much and ended up taking on an area, and then regional, manager role when I was in my 30s. The first time I ran a business was when I became MD of Total Butler. After this stint, I got asked to come over to World Fuels as the MD for the UK Land Business.

"All I've known is the oil industry. Cut my arm off and all you'll get is oil."

A balancing act

With a career spanning several decades and experiences gathered from several different companies in the distribution industry, Bob is well-placed to suggest what should be the top priority for any business:

"The products are all the same, the difference is the service. In every business I have worked for, there has always been a balance between delivering a great service and driving a profit. I found that the larger a distributor grows, the more difficult it is to focus on looking after employees and customers. Keeping people in sight should always be the priority."

"ALL I'VE KNOWN IS THE OIL INDUSTRY. CUT MY ARM OFF AND ALL YOU'LL GET IS OIL."

Evolving oil

Bob comments on the changes he's witnessed throughout his 40 years in the industry:

"One of the biggest industry changes I've witnessed is health and safety. It has become so much more important, and rightly so. All our colleagues should come to work and know that they won't come into harm.

"Technology has also evolved oil in a big way. We are now moving towards telemetry in tanks linked to an automated fuel delivery service, for those that want it in the future. These developments are key opportunities, but technology also comes with its challenges. More customers are buying online, so oil has become more of a commodity rather than a service that people feel loyal to.

"Of course, some things don't change. Customers have always asked 'how much?' and 'when can you deliver?'. And I suspect that they always will."

When asked about the changes that Bob sees in the not-too-distant future, he says:

"We can only sell what the consumer wants, and sustainable alternatives are becoming increasingly in demand. Companies will need to go down cleaner energy routes, and we have to find a way to offer these services over the next five to ten years. Whether we sell ground source heating, renewable energy or sustainable fuels, we need to adapt."

On the road to retirement

As Bob considers his plans for retirement, he reminisces over some of the key memories from his time in the industry:

"My career highlights are all down to the people I've worked with. I owe a lot of my success to the mentors who guided me. And if I have helped anybody in their career, I feel that I've given something back."

A decade of decisions

"My retirement date has been set in stone for the last 10 years, but what I decide to do with these years is fairly loose. I've recently realised that after 43 years of hard work, I don't have any hobbies! So, I have been getting into clay pigeon shooting and will definitely keep that up.

"WHEN YOU RUN A BUSINESS, STAY HONEST AND YOU CAN'T GO WRONG."

"Spending time with family will also take up most of my time, especially with my grandchildren. We've really missed them over the last 12 months and are desperate to make up for lost time. And of course, travelling. As soon as we can, we'll get out to the Maldives and to Venice via the Orient Express – another bucket list item ticked off the list and, at some point, we'll go to Australia for six weeks."

Telling us about the most valuable learnings from his career, Bob concluded:

"Two words: honesty and trust. When you run a business, stay honest and you can't go wrong."

Products & services for improved industry health and safety

HEALTH AND SAFETY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PRIME FOCUS IN FUEL DISTRIBUTION BUT WHEN YOU COMBINE AN INHERENTLY DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENT WITH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC, THEN THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF STAFF AND CUSTOMERS BECOMES EVEN MORE PARAMOUNT. WE SPEAK WITH DISTRIBUTORS AND SUPPLIERS OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT TO SEE WHAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND MENTAL WELLBEING OF THOSE WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY AND WHICH MEASURES THEY BELIEVE WILL REMAIN FOR THE LONG TERM.

When it comes to handling fuel oil, health and safety violations, however small, can be extremely dangerous. From oil spills to fires and explosions, the very nature of the substance being handled and transported puts the fuel oil industry in the spotlight.

Importance of safety

We have to go some years back for one of the most recently publicised instances in the UK, which involved a fire in the Stanlow Manufacturing Complex at Ellesmere Port in November 2013.

Thankfully, no one was injured during the incident but Essar Oil (UK) Ltd, the owner of the complex, was fined £1.65 million for breaching health and safety law and the fire caused internal structures to collapse, resulting in damage totalling more than £20 million. In a statement made at the time, Essar Oil UK said:

"Following the incident in November 2013, measures were put in place to ensure it could not happen again. No one at Stanlow was hurt and there were no effects on the general public off-site."

Sadly, this was not the end of incidences at the Stanlow refinery site and, in August 2018, a fire occurred at the Shell SHOP chemical plant close to the Manchester Ship Canal. Reports at the time state that a 'fire ball' was seen erupting from the site, followed by black smoke.

Since then, Essar Oil UK has worked tirelessly to improve the health and safety of the site with excellent results. Recently, Fuel Oil News shared how Essar has donated £3000 to both The Alzheimer's Society and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) charity. The funds were provided through Essar's 'Let's Give' scheme, which links the company's commitment to safety directly with charitable giving. The donations were made after one million hours without a 'Lost Time Injury' was achieved at the refinery. It is a milestone for which Essar is, rightly, very proud and, with the company's continuing commitment to excellence in this area, we look forward to reporting as each new milestone is reached.

At the depot

It is not just refineries that need a strong health and safety focus. The correct PPE is common practice at all depots, from high-vis jackets to protective gloves but, as health and safety standards increase, so do the options available to increase productivity in the safest ways possible.

Richard Coles, health, safety and risk manager, Ford Fuels, said:

"We pride ourselves on the safe working environment we offer our employees and the quality of our service to our customers. We have robust risk assessments and safe systems of work for all of our lines of work, from delivering bulk fuel to commercial and domestic customers to supply of packaged lubricants, as well as for all of our oil tank and engineering services we offer."

Many bespoke products have been developed to assist in mitigating identified risks such as the need to work safely in hazardous environments. In a slippery fuel tank, where it is not possible to incorporate fixed lighting, it is imperative that workers have a good sight of their surroundings and this is where transportable lighting comes to the fore, allowing jobs to be carried out without workers having to operate in dimly lit conditions.

However it is not enough that lighting is adequate, it also needs to be safe for operation in potentially explosive situations. Chalmit, a market leading manufacturer of lighting for industrial and hazardous environments has developed a range of LED lighting which remains cool and operates spark free, ensuring that combustible fuel won't be ignited, thus protecting the people and equipment that surround it. You can read more about Chalmit's Luna LED in our July issue.

In addition to standard PPE, the challenge of the past 12 months has certainly called for reinforcements.

Nick Goodwin, managing director, Standard Fuel Oils, said:

"Since the start of the pandemic our key focus has been to keep our employees, customers and the communities we operate in safe. We quickly updated our health and safety guidelines and procedure across the company."

"All of our drivers were handed cleaning kits and PPE for their trucks and were required to keep their contact with third parties & customers to an absolute minimum. In order to achieve this and help minimise points of close contact, we will no longer request signatures for any deliveries to confirm receipt of product.

"As we have a team of office-based workers too, social distancing rules are being adhered to and PPE is readily available to all members of staff. The wellbeing of the staff is vitally important to us. Offering the staff the opportunity to work from home, if possible, and conducting meetings with clients and colleagues via Microsoft Teams, meant we could create a safe working environment without any

distribution to our services or customers."

Richard Coles also commented:

"Ford Fuels has been able to operate safely throughout the whole pandemic by following the government guidance at all times and creating a safe working environment. Weekly communications are sent out across the business on health and safety requirements."

"Office seating was reconfigured, and desk partitioning introduced. The 2-metre distance rule was implemented and sanitiser stations and additional PPE, including Ford Fuels branded face masks and snoods, were issued. Depot cleaning was also increased and cleaning materials such as disinfectant, antibacterial wipes and fogging cans for offices and vehicles are available."

The need for additional PPE, whilst accepted, has been a challenge by itself for some, as Carrie Marsh, managing director, Marsh Fuels comments:

"The introduction of extra office PPE and clear screens has been a hinderance but accepted by office staff, particularly those like myself who wear glasses and find themselves permanently half fogged up through masks and face shields, but they have worked well with it."

As well as PPE, Covid-19 tests and 'bubbles' have now become normal practice for many places of work.

Nick Goodwin explained how this has been implemented at Standard Fuel Oils:

"We actively follow the guidance and safety recommendations of the UK. As lockdown restrictions begin to ease and more people are mixing both inside and outside of work, Standard Fuel Oils has signed up to a government run scheme which allows essential workers to take lateral flow tests twice a week.

"Standard also reviews and updates our Healthy and Safety policy on an annual basis and following this year's review and assessments we are pleased to announce we conform to the requirements of ISO 45001:2018 – Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OH&SMS) certification."

Carrie Marsh commented:

"Having bubbled the office and yard staff separately to ensure continuity in any test 'scare', we are all looking forward to getting back to a more manageable form of normal soon, but are very proud of the fact that, somehow, despite home schooling, shielding and isolation awaiting test over the last year, we have never had to interrupt the service to our customers or close for a day."

"I'm very proud of everyone involved here and thankful for their diligence."

Driver safety

Those on the road have probably experienced some of the biggest changes over the last 12 months when it comes to PPE, adjusted procedures and increased safety measures. With social distancing still very much enforced, many drivers have had to change their approach to conducting deliveries.

Commenting on recent changes for Standard's drivers that will be maintained post Covid-19, Richard said:

"The increased cleaning and sanitiser stations will remain in place as well as some revised working patterns, such as staggered start times for drivers."

Utilising technologies has also helped Ford Fuels keep drivers safe. The South-West distributor has invested in TouchStar mobile computing devices, which have been installed across its depots and office sites. The TouchStar handheld solution negated the need to use valuable time and resource to travel to sites, offering a far superior streamlined solution which allows fleet drivers to print delivery notes on the spot.

Aside from being time efficient, the technology also negates the need for fleet drivers to enter the office, enabling Ford Fuels to adhere to Covid-19 social distancing measures while operating safely.

Carrie also highlighted how Marsh Fuels drivers have easily been able to continue working whilst maintaining a distance:

"The drivers have felt little change as they are remote working anyway, usually seeing customers from a distance in the fresh air or wave from their window."

Even without the pandemic, safety measures for drivers are, of course, stringent and there are a wide range of products and technologies to help increase health and safety for drivers, from in-cab sensors to tyre monitors.

One such example is TyreWatch, a smart connected technology which monitors every tyre in the fleet and can quickly alert drivers to changes in tyre pressure and temperature. When it sees an issue developing alerts are sent via email to both the operator and tyre service provider, so action can be taken in the most efficient manner avoiding the risk of accidents or unforeseen vehicle down time. We will review Tyrewatch further in our July special focus.

From rainbows to a focus on wellbeing

May 2020 saw the 'Covid-19 special update' issue of Fuel Oil News. Over the years we've reported on many different challenges facing our industry, but this was a first. At a tough time we were conscious of delivering a balance of industry news in this issue but, as it turned out, we needn't have worried.

This issue is fondly referred to now as the 'rainbow' issue – with so many positive stories of distributors and customers keeping each other's spirits high.

Jodie Allan, manager at James D Bilsland was inspired by the rainbows popping up in so many customers windows that she decided to show appreciation for key workers as well, by asking a sign writer to create some rainbows for the tankers.

Gleaner shared news of rainbows being delivered to one of their drivers, Ian Mackenzie, nicknamed Benzie, who received the handmade drawing of a rainbow and the message 'Thank you for our oil Benzie' from one customer's children.

Similarly, Nicholl Fuel Oils shared the news that they had received hand-drawn 'thank you' notes and signs from customers when delivering during the early days of the pandemic, as well as notes of thank you through social media. A spokesperson for the company said at the time:

"It is overwhelming to see the support across not only Northern Ireland but the entire UK for our key workers. For people who put themselves at risk to help others in need, it shows the true meaning of humanity. We would like to thank our credit controller Emma White for encouraging her two daughters, Mya (aged 11) and Zoe (aged 8), to draw us some beautiful pictures of rainbows in support of the NHS and all the key workers that pass our head office on their way to and from work. They have really brightened up our office."

Who can forget the fantastic rainbow photograph, captured by Lee Westwell, a driver for Craggs Energy which certainly brought a smile to the faces of those at Fuel Oil News – so

much that we used the photograph showing the Craggs Energy tanker under a beautiful rainbow as the cover image for our November 2020 issue.

These small acts of spontaneous kindness helped to boost morale and improve mental wellbeing to so many in the industry during one of the biggest challenges that the fuel oil distribution sector may ever face, but it is even more encouraging to hear how many companies have taken this one step further.

In March last year, Certas Energy announced that it would be supporting forecourt retailers with the launch of a new online resource offering free access to personal wellbeing tools, learning courses and discounts from leading brands.

Richard Billington, retail director at Certas Energy, commented:

"I'm delighted to launch Certas Energy Dealer Rewards to help our retail network and their teams get the best from this extra time at home. With its wide range of learning and wellbeing tools, we hope our colleagues will find the platform to be a useful resource for personal and professional development as we prepare for the time when we can all return to normality."

Similarly, Richard Coles shared the ways in

which Ford Fuels supported its employees:

"At the start of lock down in March 2020 we partnered with an Employee Wellbeing provider to give our colleagues 24/7 access to confidential support, advice and counselling.

"We also partnered with an occupational health provider to support our employees who were experiencing difficulties linked to Covid-19 or other health-related concerns. We've ensured that colleagues from human resources and health and safety are visible and approachable to colleagues who have any question or concerns and we've kept in regular touch with employees who are working from home to check on their health and wellbeing."

In January this year, OGUK announced that its Diversity & Inclusion Task Group will deliver a free online event exploring how the industry supports the mental health of its colleagues. The hour-long session included insight from leading voices on the topic from within the oil and gas industry and beyond.

Craig Shanaghey, Wood's president of operations across Europe, Middle East & Africa, and D&I Task Group chair, said at the time:

"It is well reported that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant mental health challenge – it is sobering to know that not many will have been able to avoid some degree of mental health struggle over the past year.

"As a task force we have an opportunity to dial up the dialogue on the mental health challenges faced by those working in our industry, recognising that each individual, and their personal attributes and circumstances, needs different focus and support."

At time of writing, our Fuel Oil News team remains working from our homes, as have many in the industry over the past 12 months. Whilst we find ways to remain engaged and supportive as a team at the same time as keeping our own colleagues safe at all times, we look forward to when we can all meet face-to-face once more.

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DIVERSIFICATION CORNER

Craggs Environmental acquiring LCM Environmental

In December 2019 Yorkshire-based Craggs Environmental Ltd announced its acquisition of LCM Environmental Ltd, a business with a rich history of offering the industry a broad range of fuel management and environmental services. With the two companies fully integrated, we hear from Richard Wallace, managing director at Craggs Environmental, who tells us more about why the company diversified its offering in this way.

Striking the right balance

"Including LCM Environmental in our offering presented a significant opportunity for our business, as it enabled us to provide many of our customers with a turnkey solution! We had to strike the right balance," said Richard. "It all boiled down to its importance to our customers.

"Before we adopted LCM Environmental, our large corporate customers asked for more services. Diversifying through LCM Environmental provided the equipment and the experience that met the needs of our customers. This integrated new resources, strengthening and adding depth to our overall offering – a huge bonus!"

Customer response

Despite initial concerns, Richard tells us more about the positive response of customers to the acquisition:

"We understand our customers' needs and wants and we have noted how quickly they realised our investment ensured we could deliver ABOVE expectations that mitigated risk for them. Understandably, we experienced some cautious customers because we had acquired LCM Environmental LTD as it had gone into administration."

"But ultimately, merging our existing values and identity with LCM Environmental's experience and legacy has been well received within the industry and we're continuing to build on it. We can deliver sustainable, resilient and compliant solutions that offer our customers 'peace of mind'. Our customers have been pleased to see LCM Environmental continue to operate under a matured identity and grow and get stronger day-by-day."

Maintaining LCM's branding

Outlining the increased offering and explaining why the LCM Environmental brand has been maintained, Richard continued:

"As our existing offer had expanded significantly and at pace, it needed to be reflected in how we were known. For example, our offering now includes:

- Fuel terminal tank infrastructure maintenance (tank cleaning, inspections, maintenance, interceptor cleaning and inspections).
- Large scale fuel infrastructure projects being completed inhouse by our civil engineering team.
- Maritime vessel tank cleaning.
- Railway rail tank rolling stock testing and maintenance.

"LCM Environmental LTD has a history reaching nearly 35 years. Yes, the brand is strong but, more importantly, it is well known throughout the industry to both our partners and clients alike for delivering high quality services."

Future diversification

Richard concluded:

"We say, 'the future belongs to those who create it'. The company is alive to opportunities as they are presented. We actively look to further increase our capabilities as we move forward with an eye on the future. For us, the path to net zero is an exciting area of focus.

"We are changing the world by helping our customers on their journey of moving away from hydrocarbons towards net zero. We are moving through the transition ourselves and are working towards having an overall positive impact on our business and the planet. We aim to provide our customers with a turnkey solution that provides them with options. Our desire is to take our customers along on the journey as we manage and evolve with the future in mind."

Why is fuel filter blocking still an issue?

In a recent release, NFU Scotland said more must be done to urgently address fuel filter blocking amid reports that problems have, once again, begun to emerge across the UK. The issue was first raised in October 2019 and covered in depth in Fuel Oil News: January 2020. In our August 2020 issue we reported the findings of a working party which involved those throughout the supply chain. This task force concluded that the solution lay in good fuel housekeeping, with UKIFDA issuing guidelines specific to fuel containing FAME, along with appropriate use of bespoke fuel additives.

However, the NFUS report suggests that, despite this, farmers are once again facing filter blocking problems linked to fuel with the union expressing frustration that there is no sign of recompense nor solutions to the issue since it was first raised 18 months ago. At that time, the Union received more than 400 reports of filter blocking from across Scotland and was quick to raise this issue with UK and Scottish Governments. Joint lobbying work between NFUS and NFU saw the DfT and BSI set up a task force, in which UK farming unions still participate, to assess and resolve the problems.

However, NFUS reports that the progress through the taskforce has been painfully slow and is frustrated that, almost two years

on, 'there has been no overarching solution while the problems of fuel filter blockages continue to impact farmers and crofters throughout Scotland and the rest of the UK'.

As was understood from the outset, there is no doubt that fuel is being produced to required standards with confidence that all fuel supplied meets or exceeds the applicable specification. Rather it is the specification and standards of fuel being imposed at governmental level that are being cited as the problem. The NFUS suggesting they are 'not fit for purpose' and that the introduction of improvements to fuel specifications have been too slow, meaning that farmers are still being left with the cost of repair, new filter replacements and vehicle down-time.

Jamie Smart, NFU Scotland's transport advisor and representative on the task force, said:

"Urgent and focused action must be taken to address filter blocking. The task force has had some small wins regarding changes to fuel specifications but getting those changes into the fuel supply chain have been delayed.

"Testing of fuel samples has shown that most fuels reach current standards, however given that some fuel is still blocking filters and causing vehicle breakdowns, it is simply not fit for purpose. As a result, fuel filter blockages in tractors and motorised farm machinery remain a regular and costly problem for many Scottish farmers and crofters."

Vice president Robin Traquair added:

"The continued problems related to filter blocking are unacceptable. As farmers and crofters, we are purchasing fuel from reputable suppliers and we need that fuel to be reliable for our businesses, so we can continue to put food on the nation's table.

"The filter blocking issues have meant that some filters are lasting for a tiny proportion of their intended use. The cost of repair, down time, and replacement parts are being shouldered solely by the users. It isn't the responsibility of farmers to ensure fuel is fit for purpose, but it is the situation we keep finding ourselves in. It's up to BSI and the fuel chain to push forward with the specification changes to ensure the fuel is fit for purpose and filter blocking problems are resolved once and for all."

UKIFDA responds to the latest gasoil / FAME concerns

Following the publication of the NFUS report (above) on ongoing filter blocking problems we sought a response from UKIFDA. After asking its membership for information about any reported issues Tony Brown, the association's technical manager, said that initial feedback had concluded that there were no issues with the fuel distributed by its members which was as per BSI fuel specification (now allowing for a FAME content of up to 7%).

"If issues have occurred in the last few weeks, they are more likely to be related to the unseasonal drop in temperatures and a change by primary suppliers to a summer specification which normally occurs around the end of March although UKIFDA is continuing to gather evidence on whether there are specific equipment issues."

UKIFDA is in regular communication with the NFU and attends the BSI task force meetings with them where any fuel issues are reported. In Q4 of 2020 there were only 7 incidents reported and there was nothing of major concern or requiring further testing to understand the cause of the problem. The task force was set up to identify major issues and to find the main cause. To date no concerns by NFUS, NFU, UKIFDA or OFTEC have been raised or questioned by the DFT or BSI, but work is on-going to review standards.

UKIFDA members continue to provide advice and support to their customers and samples of issues to the primary suppliers and the results to UKIFDA. UKIFDA reiterate their advice on housekeeping which members have been using to send to their customers.

That advice is available in pdf format and covers pre-delivery tank cleaning, tank care and maintenance to keep the fuel clean and dry, care of filters, pipework and seals and recommendations on storage time.

UKIFA also recommends that members check that inline filters at tank storage depots (between the tank and the loading rack) and that filters on the customer's tank outlets are fitted and checked regularly as part of depot maintenance.

UKIFDA is working hard across the supply chain (stressing the impact this is having on their members and their customers) and will raise this at the next BSI meeting and is in discussions with relevant farming and business organisations to try and quickly get to the bottom of any issues.

Are your customers reporting any ongoing issue with filter blocking while using fuel containing FAME? Let us know your recent experiences: Margaret Major, managing editor: margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk

Pioneering future fuels.

Our Humber Refinery continues to research and develop next-generation renewable fuels.

PHILLIPS 66

PROVIDING ENERGY.
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PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

MAY IN VIEW

AS A CURRENTLY HIGH-PRICED, NICHE FUEL WITH LIMITED MASS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT WHAT IS THE TRUE POTENTIAL FOR HVO?

Whether you live or breathe the world of energy or simply take a passing interest, there is no escape from the decarbonisation journey. Government legislation, consumer behaviour and societal interest have all taken the environmental agenda to new levels of intensity. As a result, numerous renewable fuel opportunities are now presenting themselves and one of the main areas of interest is low-carbon, "drop-in" fuels.

Unlike biodiesels such as FAME (Fatty Acid Methyl Ester), which have to be mixed into liquid fuels in small doses, drop-in fuels can be used inter-changeably with normal fossil fuels. Thus, low-carbon, drop in fuels can help deliver lower emissions, without requiring expensive capital expenditure to modify existing tankage, pipelines or fuelling systems. This is of particular interest to both "hard to decarbonise" sectors (eg, construction) and those sectors that are already well on their way to low-carbon solutions (eg, electric buses), but still have to operate with high carbon legacy equipment (ie, diesel buses). In simple terms, even if every bus depot in the land decided to go electric tomorrow, they would still have numerous diesel buses on the books that need to be depreciated (ie, used) over the next 5-10 years.

"NO DROP-IN PRODUCT HAS HAD MORE FEVERISH INTEREST THAN HVO."

No drop-in product has had more feverish interest than Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), which can reduce CO2 emissions by up to 90% versus normal diesel. Even better, HVO is a high-quality paraffinic liquid (ie, more akin to kerosene) which does not invalidate engine warranties. In effect, it is a high quality, finished grade 'fossil' fuel, that happens not to come from fossil fuels! Despite containing the words 'vegetable oil' in its title, the product is not necessarily made from vegetables at all. A small amount is made from decayed vegetable matter, but it is far more common to use virgin vegetable feedstocks (sunflower, rapeseed or, more controversially, palm oil), used cooking oil (see last month's report on the Suez blockage) or by chemically processing (hydrotreating) meat carcass tallow. Nice!

Emission reductions are at their least impressive when HVO production relies on virgin vegetable oils. Palm oil derived HVO only delivers 'well to tank' emission reductions of 26%. Used cooking oil performs much better at circa 60% CO2 reduction, but it is by using tallow (meat) where the greatest savings are made (90%). So far, so impressive, but when it comes to these high levels of CO2 abatement, the tempo of the positive mood music begins to slow. Suffice to say, renewable fuel is not necessarily the same as sustainable fuel and, when it comes to tallow supply, there are simply not enough waste animal carcasses being 'produced' globally to meet the kind of demand required to replace mineral fossil fuels. If we were to go down that route, a kind of downward circular spiral would be created, whereby people are encouraged to eat more meat (= more CO2), just so that more HVO could be produced! This was, in fact, exactly what happened with early green legislation, whereby European targets were responsible for accelerating tropical deforestation, in favour of palm oil plantations for biofuels.

A further problem associated with HVO comes with its high price. As industry veterans know only too well, consumers and businesses alike tend to be 'watermelons', ie, green on the outside ("that sounds a great product"), but red on the inside ("but I'm not willing to pay more for it"). With HVO, the cost issues around limited and expensive raw materials, are compounded by the undeveloped nature of production capacity. Only Neste (Finland / Netherlands), Total (France) and ENI (Italy) have material production capacity in Europe, whilst any product manufactured elsewhere typically gets hit by EU import tariffs designed to protect European manufacturing (US HVO for example gets whacked with a 440% tariff!). Put all of that together and you have a recipe for high prices.

In the UK, Renewable Fuels Transport Certificates (RTFCs = a form of subsidy) go some way to mitigate the high price of HVO, although it is still considerably more expensive than standard diesel, meaning that uptake for the product has been miniscule. Widespread consumption is also not helped by the RTFC system itself, which limits the use of HVO to road fuels only, whereas, in fact, it could be used in multiple different sectors. In Europe, only Scandinavia (direct government subsidy) and Germany (carbon tax) have extensive consumption of HVO. For the rest, it would seem that there are lots of 'watermelons' about, with the product's high price resulting in very low volumes. Such limited demand could all be about to change though, as covetous aviation bosses hungrily size up the fuel's huge potential. As a paraffinic liquid (ie, kerosene characteristics) drop-in HVO is aligned and interchangeable with kerosene Jet A1 and, with few options available other than liquid fuel combustion, HVO could possibly be the only game in town when it comes to low-carbon flying.

"CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES ALIKE TEND TO BE 'WATERMELONS'."

Until that point though, HVO remains a high-priced, niche fuel with limited mass environmental impact. Nonetheless, with few silver bullets available, a green source of energy that is immediately available, has universal usage and the potential for 90% CO2 reduction, does have a great deal going for it. In theory, prices should come down as manufacturing capacity grows, but equally if demand also keeps growing, then prices will still remain unattractively high. Which probably means that in the end, when it comes to HVO, Government subsidy and legislation will be the only ways to 'persuade' the watermelons…

For more pricing information, see page 26

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Products and services in review

ACROSS THE UK AND IRELAND, THE FUEL OIL DISTRIBUTOR CONTINUES TO EVOLVE TO ADAPT TO CURRENT CHALLENGES AS WELL AS TO THE LONGER-TERM ENERGY TRANSITION.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE MANY ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES DEVELOPED BY SUPPLIERS TO THE SECTOR THAT ARE DESIGNED TO DELIVER RESULTS FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN THE STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF FUEL.

IN BOTH THIS AND OUR JULY ISSUE, WE SHOWCASE SOME OF THESE, MANY OF WHICH WILL BE ON SHOW AT THE UPCOMING UKIFDA EXPO 2020 WHICH TAKES PLACE ON THE 7TH AND 8TH JULY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SPEAKING WITH YOU THERE.

Tankers and Logistics

Brit European

"For us, 2021 represents a year of opportunities," says Rob McNinch, group sales director of the Brit European Group. "By keeping a close eye on fixed and variable costs, reacting quickly and decisively to large fluctuations in client volumes, (of which bulk fuel delivery volumes were far from immune), and making sure we are always quick to adapt to meet our clients ever evolving needs, has allowed us to ride out last the 12 months and emerge stronger and healthier than ever, alive to the changes that will remain in the industry as shadows left by Brexit and the pandemic fade away".

briteuropean.co.uk

Cobo Tankers and Services

2020 was a difficult year and we hope that our friends and colleagues have not suffered the effects of Covid. Whilst it has been difficult for many, many in the industry have been busier than ever and this can be said of Cobo Tankers and Services. Last year was a good year for semi-trailers with good contracts and growth for the rigid market was as planned, with around 30 delivered into the UK and Ireland. With sales from some of our customers who have placed their 3rd or 4th orders with us we had carry over into 2021 setting us up for fantastic growth and a great 2021.

Fitzgerald Commercials

Fitzgerald Commercials' 2021 tank building order book is full for the year and the company is currently taking orders for 2022.

The company recently extended its premises to increase tank building production. Demand shows no sign of slowing down for the company, which is looking forward to filling the order book for 2022 before the third quarter of this year.

"We invested heavily in recent years in staff training, tank testing equipment and premises to enable us to deliver a first-class tank testing service. We are still the first and only Irish accredited tank testing facility in Ireland, something which we are very proud of."

Fitzgeraldcommercials.ie

Hoyer Petrolog

HOYER GROUP continues to deliver excellence in fuels and bitumen logistics, recently securing significant new business and contract extensions after a difficult 2020. The newly created Contracts Division has merged Hoyer's fuels and gas arms into a single business unit, which has now combined both the expertise of managing complex fuels and bitumen logistics services with the specialist knowledge required for gas transport.

Hoyer's head of business development, David Dykes said:

"Hoyer are now well placed to use this expertise to exploit any opportunities that arise as a result of the energy transition as we seek to increase our activity in the gas market."

hoyer-group.com

Tasca Tankers

"2020 at Tasca Tankers was a very different year, but we have all worked hard and are proud to have been able to keep producing our industry leading product, commented Ben Firth. "2021 is shaping up to be busier again and we are grateful for all the support and understanding from customers old and new, as we continue to feel the effect that both Covid-19 and Brexit have had on us all. From everyone here at Tasca, we hope you all keep safe and well and we hope to see you all at the 2022 UKFIDA Expo."

Tascatankers.ltd.uk

Tanks and Tank Equipment

Carbery Plastics Limited

With a manufacturing heritage stretching back over 40 years, Carbery tanks are the preferred choice of distributors and installers across Ireland, Great Britain and beyond.

Manufactured in West Cork, Ireland and distributed in Great Britain by Davant Products, the Carbery range includes AdBlue, diesel, heating oil and waste oil tanks.

From the 55-litre portable Fuel Caddy to the 6,000 litres capacity Fuel Point Premium, today there's a Carbery tank to suit almost any application. Whichever model you specify, you can be confident it's engineered to exceed the most demanding requirements.

carberyplastics.com

Cookson & Zinn

Hadleigh based Cookson & Zinn Limited (CZ), has been building tanks in rural Suffolk for over 65 years, and are market leaders in the design and manufacture of all types of above and below ground storage tanks for commercial and industrial applications. Capacities from 5,000 to 250,000 litres are available depending upon configuration.

Capacities at the larger end of our build capabilities are particularly suited for use on distribution and bulk storage depots and can be bunded or single skin depending upon individual client / site requirements.

Available in horizontal and vertical configurations, as well as rectangular versions where space constraints dictate dimensions, we provide a wide choice of both external and internal coatings to address the challenges of today's environment, and the changing nature of stored products.

czltd.com

Western Global

With over 50 years of experience developing fuel storage and dispensing solutions, Western Global continues to lead the market with its innovative fuel tank brands. Alongside their popular TransCube and TransTank, Western recently introduced the EnviroCube Cab to their range. This range of tanks offers superior security and versatility, ideal for fleet refuelling and fuel management. With capacities ranging from 5,331 – 50,000 Litres, a 110% bunded design, and a large full height lockable cabinet, the EnviroCube Cab guarantees to keep operations fuelled and productive.

From small mobile tanks to bulk fuel supply, Western Global provide customers with high-quality and cost-effective fuel storage solutions designed to work at any scale, in any location.

western-global.com

Tuffa Tanks

Tuffa Tanks is a long-established UK tank manufacturer. We have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to manufacture a huge range of storage and dispensing tanks for fuels, oils, AdBlue, chemicals and many more liquids. We are also small and flexible enough to offer a service which is personable and tanks which can be customised to specific site requirements. Tuffa is recognisable for the superior quality of our plastic and steel tanks and for our best-selling Fire Protected Oil Tanks. This range is unique, patented, independently fire-tested and LABC Approved enabling tank installation adjacent to buildings and boundaries or even indoors.

Tuffa.co.uk

Envirostore Tanks

ENVIROSTORE TANKS is once again not only pleased to support the industry in the promotion of safe oil storage but also to show its support for the Oil Care Campaign. An independent Irish-based manufacturer with offices in England and Wales, Envirostore Tanks has been supporting UKIFDA Expo for many years and is pleased to continue this in 2021, although under very different circumstances. Contrary to reports, the bunded oil tank market is still buoyant, and Envirostore will continue to produce quality products at the right price, such as the 750ESB pictured, which is ideal for smaller users, but still gives the fuel provider a good minimum order amount of fuel.

envirostoreuk.com

OLE (UK)

OLE (UK) is a growing business, developing products to meet the requirements of various industries including downstream fuelling and water services.

Manufactured in the UK, its tank gauges meet the highest standard for the commercial sector, providing accuracy, consistency and reliability to suit any storage tank. OLE offer a wide range of solutions from entry level to unique ATEX approved gauges, making their product the installer's and end-user's first choice around the world.

OLE's expertise in the monitoring sector allows them to recommend their range of products for any industry bulk storing liquids or powders.

oleuk.com

Ledbury Welding & Engineering (LWE)

LWE works in collaboration with all suppliers of equipment and services within the industry. This allows us to offer a complete bespoke package, including our established tank design, from concept through to completion. We provide expert impartial advice on best practice and industry standards on an individual project basis.

LWE has grown, evolved and is continually striving to develop its staff, products and outlook to the future. A strong focus on the core market, manufacturing bulk petrol, diesel, generator sub-base storage tanks and fuelling solutions is key, whilst continuously developing a wider product range. We believe that Flexible and modular designs for the future of Vehicle Energy Stations is the solution to future development.

Lweltd.co.uk

OTS Group

OTS Group is recognised as a key leader in the fuel industry, renowned for its advanced fuel storage systems and turnkey solutions. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the company designs and delivers practical answers and fresh ideas to complex fuel storage, re-fuelling, distribution, service and maintenance issues.

OTS Group is now heading into its sixth decade with a strong commitment to its core principles of enabling and growing a strong, technically advanced work force, constant innovation and continuing to serve customers with integrity and commitment. OTS Group is very conscious of the GHG and air quality issues with fossil fuels and has therefore become involved with organisations like the Fuel Experts Association (FEA) who represent companies who are developing clean energy and clean liquid biofuels such as HVO.

www.otsgroup.co.uk.

Essential Services

BoilerJuice

"BoilerJuice is the UK's leading heating oil marketplace. Over the last 16 years, we have built a substantial customer base and are proudly trusted by over 150 suppliers to grow their online volumes and customers year after year," commented John Francis Collins, supply development manager, BoilerJuice.

"We offer dedicated supplier account management, handle all customer contacts, provide easy system integrations and invest millions of pounds in technology & marketing each year.

"We work closely with our suppliers to help them grow their businesses whilst improving operational efficiencies in both existing and new territories."

Boilerjuice.com

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Channoil Energy

Channoil Energy is a consultancy and advisory business specialised in the downstream fuels supply chain.

We have an experienced team of energy professionals with a wealth of first class international commercial and technical expertise in mid and downstream oil and gas and renewable energy.

Channoil Energy covers supply and trading, refining, terminals, pipelines, commercial evaluation, market and pricing studies, petrochemicals, base oils, LPG, biofuels, renewables and expert witness work.

Channoil Energy has recently launched a new division 'Net-Zero-Solution', specifically dedicated to our clients' growing need to address the challenges of the energy transition.

channoilenergy.com
net-zero-solution.com

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At Eleven Recruitment, we find hidden talent for the energy and commodities, speciality chemicals, lubricants and clean energy markets, working with leading oil companies, trading houses, utilities, shipowners and chemical companies in the UK and internationally.

We became recruiters for the oil industry as a natural extension of our existing presence in the market. Our parent company Ashley & Dumville established Fuel Oil News in the seventies and Eleven Recruitment was launched in 1998.

Today, Eleven Recruitment is a fourth-generation family business. Get in touch today to experience recruitment dialled up to eleven.

Elevenrecruitment.com

ElimiNOX Limited

A company committed to providing solutions for cleaner air for generations to come and distributor of ElimiNOX, a pre-combustion fuel

conditioner that can be added to fuel storage tanks prior to vehicle filling or directly into the vehicle fuel tank and a product that founder Gwyn Lewis believes will play a key role in enabling the transition to cleaner fuels and beyond to net zero by assisting fleet managers to make the transition to clean fuels as well as contributing to the bottom line.

Test results on ElimiNOX have been declared to be 'game changing' for the diesel engine, environmental pollution and the health problems associated with diesel engine pollutants. ElimiNOX Eco™ incorporates the technology of SulNOx Group Plc and is manufactured by one of the world's leading speciality chemical manufacturers, Nouryon.

Gwyn outlines the benefits of using the fuel conditioner:

"Not only does it dramatically reduce all the environmental pollutants produced by diesel engines but is also enables the engines to perform far more efficiently thus reducing fuel usage and saving money. An additional benefit of use is that ElimiNOX Eco cleans fuel when added to fuel storage tanks, and ensures diesel bug is both eliminated and prevented."

Eliminox.co.uk

Navigator Terminals

Navigator Terminals is an independent bulk storage provider based in the UK with over 1.28 million cubic metres (cbm) of storage capacity.

Navigator operates four terminals, Thames, North Tees, Seal Sands and Windmill each strategically located in major UK ports and serving key demand centres within the UK.

Across these locations, we are able to offer our customer's unique storage solutions for crude, petroleum, chemical, bitumen, liquefied gas and biofuel products. Our extensive knowledge and experience of handling such a wide range of specialist products shows our versatility in adapting to ever-changing markets.

Navigatorterminals.com

Oil Market Journal

The Oil Market Journal (OMJ) provides a wide range of oil price services.

OMJ pricing tools include customisable live price screens, detailed weather forecasts, RTFC prices and tanker reports for UK and Irish oil ports. OMJ oil price services are designed to help clients to make informed buying decisions in the fast-moving oil market.

OMJ also provides oil prices via the OMJ Smartphone App which brings real-time price updates, news and research and is essential for oil distributors and executives on the move.

the-omj.com

Online Fuels

OnlineFuels is the downstream fuel industry's digital transformation partner, facilitating remote working and improving operational efficiencies.

Buyers and sellers have been benefitting from the use of our online marketplace for four years, with more trades happening than ever before. Our newly developed distributor software helps streamline back-office processes and optimise your various pricing options from suppliers.

Our branded sales platform is a bespoke and integrated solution for wholesalers and refiners, giving your customers the ability to place orders online. Most recently, our order capture tool allows your sales team the ability to process orders made over the phone and integrate straight into your existing ETRM system.

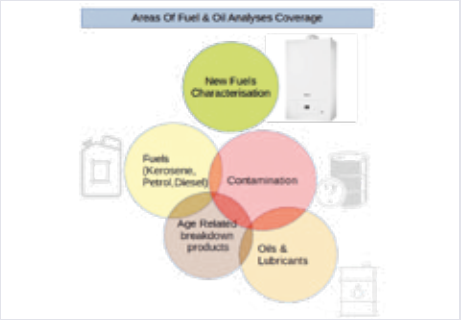
Onlinefuels.com

SMS Analytical Ltd

SMS Analytical provides specialist investigative chemistry that provides answers to a range of fuel and oil problems such contamination issues and the products of ageing.

Established 7 years ago by chemists with over 40 years of experience, SMS Analytical provides the following key benefits to clients:

- The specialist chemistry knowledge required for solving difficult analyses.
- Bespoke approach providing flexibility in methodology and interpretation.
- Information flow to keep the client 'in the loop' and up to date.
- Established Trust – SMS have a track record with more than 90% returning clients.



Fuel and Oil analyses include

- Boiling range.
- Identification of volatile contaminants.
- Oil pollution [Nordtest]
- Acidic/basic polar components
- Fatty Acid Methyl Ester (FAME) components.
- Identification of solid contaminants and discolouration of fuels e.g. yellowing of kerosene and diesel fuel instability.

Characterisation of new fuel types (e.g. plant based, HVO, derived from pyrolysis of wastes).

Smsanalytical.com

Value Oils

The tale of a short, mild winter 2020-21:

Like never before, both domestic and commercial customers have moved to online fuel ordering.

With most office personnel switching to homeworking under lock-down, school closures and shops being shut, online business has exploded. No industry has been left untouched by the huge swing to online shopping for goods and services, from everyday necessities including heating oil, to luxury products.

Price Comparison websites with their large databases remain the success story across almost every industry, including fuel distribution. ValueOils.com is a leading on-line service provider and with 100+ combined years of direct experience, we understand the fuel oil distribution business.

We provide an excellent on-line sales platform which respects the challenges faced by Suppliers and we operate with low commission charges.

Valueoils.com

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The impact of covid-19 on the UK refined oil products' market

As the UK begins to emerge, albeit with caution, from the most recent lockdown, we take a detailed look at the impact of Covid-19 on the UK oil market broken down by product grade.

High level perspective:

Now that the published data is available, it is possible to gauge the true extent of the impact of Covid-19 on the consumption of refined oil products in the UK. At the high level, this can be summarised as follows:

- Total demand declined by 23.5%, with the lion's share of the 'damage' predictably occurring during the Q2 total lockdown, when consumption was 44.3% below Q2 2019
- This compared with a global demand reduction of 8.7% in 2020 cf. 2019.
- It was the steepest year-on-year decline ever recorded.
- It resulted in total consumption, at just under 50 million mt, falling to a level not seen for over 50 years – published data is only available back to 1970.
- The above took place against a backdrop of an overall reduction in economic activity of 9.8%.

There was an upside to the decrease in oil demand in the form of reduced CO2 emissions. Overall, these fell by 10.7% with, as would be expected, the sharpest fall being in the transport sector, which saw a reduction of 19.6%. Those emissions associated with commercial activities / business sector fell by 8.7% while those from energy supply fell by 11.9%. There was, however, a small 1.8% increase in emissions from the residential sector, largely arising from the 'stay at home' restrictions.

Total GHG emissions were down by 8.9% and were 48.8% below the baseline year, 1990.

We will now take a look at the trends seen in individual refined oil products.

Trends in refined oil products:

The following table summarises the impact of the pandemic across the main output categories of the 'refined barrel':

UK INLAND DELIVERIES OF REFINED OIL PRODUCTS- Main Grades (Million MTs)

	2019	2020	Change	Q2 2020 vs Q2 20019
LPG	3.11	2.82	-6.9%	-17.5%
Petrol	12.31	9.79	-20.9%	-50.2%
Jet A-1	12.38	4.98	-59.7%	-85.2%
RBO	3.40	3.71	9.1%	34.5%
Diesel	25.22	21.22	-15.9%	-60.0%
Gasoil	5.19	4.13	-20.4%	-27.9%
Fuel Oil	0.39	0.25	-34.9%	-46.0%

Source: UK Digest of Energy Statistics

Looking at some of the key trends:

- Of the two main ground transport fuels, the % impact on petrol was somewhat greater than for diesel due to its principal market being private users, whose movements were severely restricted during the lockdowns, vs. commercial transport for diesel (circa 70% of the total), which was deemed to be 'essential use'. Total petrol demand fell to its lowest annual level in over 50 years, while diesel usage was the lowest since 2011.
- As elsewhere in the world, by far the biggest impact was, and continues to be so, felt by the aviation sector, which was brought to a virtual standstill. Total Jet A-1 demand fell to its lowest annual level since 1984. The sudden, sharp demand reduction forced refineries to blend as much of the kerosene stream as specification limits allow, in to the gasoil stream, producing additional diesel.
- The only grade to show an upturn in usage was regular burning oil, of which about 60% comprises heating oil used for domestic/ residential/ space heating- where the lion's share of the 'heating season' (Q1) was largely unaffected by lockdown measures and, in any event, 'stay at home' advice probably encouraged greater use of heating!
- Gasoil usage was impacted by much reduced activity in the construction, mining and quarrying sectors as well as the substantially curtailed rail time table.

It is a matter of conjecture as to when the market will recover to 2019 levels, or thereabouts, if, indeed, it ever does so? In the immediate term, much will depend on the success in tackling the pandemic and the status of the various measures needed to tackle it. That notwithstanding, in the case of the principal ground transport fuels, diesel & petrol, it is not implausible to envisage consumption returning to near 2019 levels before the end of next year. Recovery of the aviation sector will probably take longer and so it may not be before 2024 that Jet A-1 demand returns to where it was pre-pandemic.

Meanwhile, looking beyond the next few years, it is the pace and urgency of the 'energy transition' that will be the key determinant of the trajectory of the consumption of ground transport fuels and the timing around the phasing out of oil as a heating fuel. The recent adoption by the Government of a more ambitious GHG emissions reduction target, of 78% below 1990 baseline, by 2035, will accelerate the transition away from refined oil products. So, this scenario may lend weight to a view gaining wider acceptance that 2019 could possibly have marked 'peak oil' for inland market consumption?

ROD PROWSE, worked for 30 years across the full spectrum of the downstream oil sector, in both the UK and USA, which has included leadership positions in both retail and wholesale fuels businesses. Rod draws on his extensive knowledge of this global industry to bring us 'Industry Insights'.

Wholesale Price Movements: 19th April 202 – 18th May 2021

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	32.35	33.21	32.72
Average daily change	0.39	0.41	0.41
Current duty	0.00	57.95	11.14
Total	32.35	91.16	43.86

All prices in pence per litre

Week commencing

Portland

Highest price **33.54 ppl** Wed 12 May 21 | Biggest up day **+0.90 ppl** Tue 04 May 21

Kerosene

Lowest price **31.05 ppl** Tue 20 Apr 21 | Biggest down day **-1.09 ppl** Thu 13 May 21

Highest price **34.51 ppl** Wed 12 May 21 | Biggest up day **+0.97 ppl ppl** Tue 04 May 21

Diesel

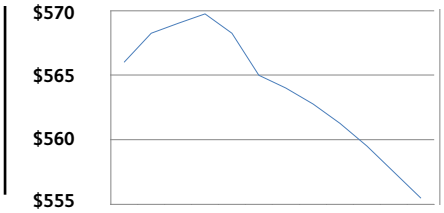
Lowest price **31.84 ppl** Tue 20 Apr 21 | Biggest down day **-1.12 ppl** Thu 13 May 21

Highest price **33.98 ppl** Wed 12 May 21 | Biggest up day **+1.00 ppl** Tue 04 May 21

Gasoil 0.1%

Lowest price **31.37 ppl** Tue 20 Apr 21 | Biggest down day **-1.08 ppl** Thu 13 May 21

Gasoil forward price in US$ per tonne



June 2021 – May 2022

The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	35.77	47.92	95.72	40.78	51.20	99.47
North East	34.72	46.55	94.80	41.62	49.59	97.55
North West	36.29	49.15	97.19	41.12	52.02	99.66
Midlands	34.79	47.08	95.26	39.46	50.08	98.25
South East	34.89	47.04	95.24	44.53	52.27	97.83
South West	35.24	46.88	95.08	41.48	49.87	97.45
Northern Ireland	35.35	48.25	n/a	39.96	51.95	n/a
Republic of Ireland	49.11	53.68	96.66	53.68	56.85	99.72
Portland	33.10	44.60	91.95			

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

Janet Kettlewell

WELCOME TO JUNE'S EDITION OF OUR SPECIAL MONTHLY FEATURE WHICH GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO 'MEET' AN INDUSTRY FIGURE AND, HOPEFULLY, TO DISCOVER ANOTHER SIDE TO THEM BEYOND THE WELL-KNOWN FACTS.

AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE INDUSTRY ONCE AGAIN BEING ABLE TO MEET AT THIS YEAR'S VIRTUAL VERSION OF THE ANNUAL UKIFDA EXPO, WE CHAT WITH **JANET KETTLEWELL**, OWNER AND DIRECTOR OF KETTLEWELL FUELS AND CURRENT UKIFDA PRESIDENT, TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PERSON BEHIND THE BUSY BUSINESS OWNER AND ENTHUSIASTIC INDUSTRY SUPPORTER.

"WORK HARD – YOU ONLY GET OUT OF LIFE WHAT YOU PUT IN."

JANET KETTLEWELL

Give your career history in 25 words or fewer.
From Office Supervisor to UKIFDA President – I can hardly believe it. Throughout my working life I have met, and been mentored by, so many lovely people.

Describe yourself in 3 words
Driven. Sensitive. Organised.

What were your childhood / early ambitions?
To live life as fully as I could, travel the world and be kind and considerate.

Describe your dream job (if you weren't doing this?)
I love and am fascinated by people, and how diverse we all are. I would have to say that psychology would be amazing. I have recently engaged the services of a dog behaviouralist – that would be great too!

What's the best business advice you've ever received?
Always stand up for what you believe in but be mindful that there is often a compromise.

Share your top tips for business success
Work hard – you only get out of life what you put in. Listen, include, share. Understand a work / life balance, ensuring that you are getting the best out of yourself and the best out of your team.

What's your most recent business achievement of note?
Successfully navigating a management buyout, taking ownership outright from the Kettlewell family.

Tell us your greatest fear
The unknown.

Which is most important – ambition or talent?
Ambition – you can create / nurture the talent to fulfil the ambition.

What's the best thing about your job?
People. It is the most amazing feeling knowing that you can help someone by just going the extra mile or by listening.

Which is the quality that you most admire?
A real positive outlook with a smile.

What are you most likely to say?
He / she is lovely.

Janet with daughter Lucy at the beach.

What are you least likely to say?
I am sorry, but I cannot help.

Describe your perfect day
Spending the day with my family and dogs, a brisk walk on the beach followed by a lovely meal on the way home. Closely followed by spending time with friends over dinner / in the garden with fizz / Pimms.

Do you have a favourite sports team?
No. I have spent a lot of time supporting my husband and two children with their preferred sports. I have now completely zoned out from sport as a result.

What's the biggest challenge of our time?
It has to be COVID. I feel like I should wake up and for it all to be a dream / nightmare. Regrettably, it is not.

Cheese or chocolate?
Can I say crisps?

Share your greatest personal achievement
Undoubtedly my two amazing children. I am so proud of the young adults that they have become.

What's your pet hate or biggest irritant?
Rudeness.

If you were elected to government what would be the first law you'd press for?
Oh my goodness, that would be fun. Not sure that it is for me though.

If your 20-year-old self saw you now what would they think?
Be proud of what you have achieved and experienced and lose weight!

What is number 1 on your bucket list?
See more of the world whilst I have the energy to do so. Perhaps a world cruise.

What 3 things would you take to a desert island?
Knowing that they are not 'things', could I say Jack Savoretti, Billy Connolly and Gordon Ramsay? For music (and for being pleasing on the eye), laughter and amazing food.

Tell us something about you that people would be very surprised by
Kettlewell Fuels was nominated for a local business award in 2010. I had a moment of stupidity and boldly declared that if we won, I would run around the yard naked…

Who would you most like to ask these questions of?
I would be interested to see how David Hodge would answer some of these questions.

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