

Thinking Fuel is the oil buying scheme run by Norfolk RCC in partnership with AF-Affinity, Anglia Farmers bulk buying arm. Our aim is to try and provide communities with cheaper fuel. Proceeds also help support Norfolk RCC's community development services.

The scheme works on a community basis which means a local community group needs to be set up in your Parish before you can register.

If there isn't a group in your Parish but you still want to benefit you can either set up a group or join Norfolk RCC as an individual member for £20.

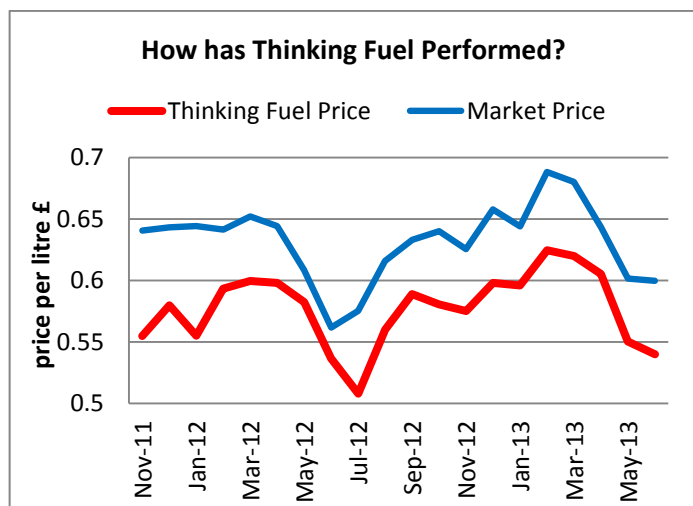
The key difference is with a community group the group pays one £20 fee and that entitles everyone in the community (apart from organisations and businesses) to join at no additional charge.

How has the scheme performed?

Comparing prices for oil is very difficult due to wide fluctuations in price between days, quantities ordered, locations and delivery times. We compare our prices to the Department of Energy and Climate Change published market price data as it is an official statistic and provides a monthly figure.

While we cannot guarantee to be the cheapest, we do aim to be consistently good value.

On average, the scheme has saved members around 9% on the market price, equivalent to 6 pence per litre or £120 a year based on 2,000 litres.



Scheme features

- The bulk order syndicate operates once a month to balance convenience with savings.
- Everyone pays the same regardless of the volume they order.
- You can order fuel at any other time and receive the day price.
- There is no obligation to buy.
- Special delivery requirements, (such as needing long hoses, small tankers or arranging access) can usually be accommodated but you need to make these clear when ordering.
- Members can also benefit from offers on other products through our wider community buying scheme, Thinking Value.

How the scheme works

Syndicate orders need to be placed by 5.00pm on the first working day of the month. However, members are normally able to place their order a couple of days earlier if they wish. We send out a reminder to those who have supplied an email address or mobile number a few days before the first working day of the month. Once you receive this message the ordering process is open.

When you ring up to order you will be told the day price as we will not know the syndicate price until orders are collated and the price negotiated. We may hold the order for up to 2 weeks to try and get the best possible price (please let us know if you need oil urgently). Generally the syndicate price will be lower than the day price; however, prices can go up as well as down. If the final syndicate price will be 3ppl higher than the price you were quoted then we will contact you to let you know. Otherwise the order will be processed as normal.

Payment can be made by direct debit, debit card or credit card (2% surcharge applies). Direct debits are only taken in months when you order. We encourage direct debits as this helps us keep the costs of the scheme down, allowing us to pass on better savings. Direct debits can also ease household's cash-flow by delaying payment until the end of the month. All payments will be adjusted to reflect the actual quantity of oil delivered.

How to set up a community group

Community groups operate on a Parish area basis. To set-up a community group we need a named local coordinator, completed membership form, signed constitution and an annual membership fee of £20. This then enables any individual in the community (business and organisations need to join the scheme separately) to benefit from Thinking Fuel by completing the registration form. There is no minimum number of members needed for a community group.

The local coordinator's role is to provide a point of contact for us in the community and help promote membership. Co-ordinators are not involved in any of the ordering process. The constitution is there to do two things - to ensure the group remains open to everyone in the community and to meet our requirements around ensuring any personal data is managed appropriately.

The Norfolk RCC team are able to attend public meetings to explain the scheme further if required.

Registering as an individual

Once you have a community group set-up in your Parish, each individual household needs to register with the scheme before they can order.

Registration forms are available online at www.norfolkrc.org.uk/thinkingfuel or from your local coordinator.

Please provide an email address if at all possible as this helps us keep in contact easier. Once Norfolk RCC receives your form arrives it can take up to a week to register you. If you have provided an email address you will receive a confirmation email once you are registered. Please try to register in good time before the next syndicate ordering day if you want to be part of that order.

Membership and Set-up Queries

To set up a community group or to register as an individual please call or email Norfolk RCC on 01362 698 216 office@norfolkrc.org.uk

Further information and forms can be found at www.norfolkrc.org.uk/thinkingfuel

Order line 01603 881888

This number is for orders and delivery information only. You need to have already registered with the scheme to order.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do you operate on a community basis?

Our ethos as an organisation is to work with communities. We believe that running the scheme like this brings communities together and helps us reach the most vulnerable in our society. It is estimated that around 72,250 households live in fuel poverty in Norfolk and with fuel costs continuing to rise this is a key social challenge.

Do you always use the same supplier?

No, we shop around to find the best deal with each order. However, we only use providers that we believe are reliable and provide a suitable quality product.

What is the minimum order volume?

The minimum order is 500 litres. This is because of trading standards regulations. The majority of fuel vehicles carry pumps that are certified to deliver a 500 litre minimum.

How much extra does the syndicate price save me over the day price?

On average, the syndicate price is about a penny per litre lower than the day price but the extra saving has sometimes been over 2 pence per litre.

Do you offer vouchers or savings plans?

In response to requests from members, we do now offer the option for people to pre-purchase vouchers to spend on oil. However, we would always encourage people to save and budget appropriately. Please contact Citizens Advice Bureaux or Norfolk Credit Union if you are having problems affording your fuel bill.

Didn't you use to use post codes for the area of community schemes?

We did and will continue to honour this for existing community schemes. However, due to the sometimes fairly odd geography of post code areas, this has occasionally caused confusion or generated anomalies. We have therefore changed to a Parish based system which we hope will be more straight-forward.

I can find a better price

Great, take it. We cannot guarantee to be the cheapest. We have also deliberately balanced the savings we can make from making larger orders with the convenience of providing monthly ordering. There are also times of the year when providers will offer especially low prices to attract new business.