

The Future for Oil and Gas Central heating boilers.

Item for Babcary Parish Council meeting held on Monday September 11th 2023

At the September meeting of the Parish Council the subject of the proposed ban of new oil and gas central heating boilers was discussed.

This was based on concerns over the potential ban of new oil boilers in 2026 and possibly also new gas boiler in 2030.

It is important to stress that there are MANY 'ifs and buts' as to whether or not this potential ban will indeed go ahead. Therefore, this report is simply to draw villagers' attention to the Energy Bill that is currently being debated in Parliament and is due to finalise this AUTUMN i.e., imminently!

The Parish Council must add a disclaimer that, as there is still uncertainty as to whether or when this ban will come into effect, we must encourage villagers to make their own investigations and decisions that are best suited to their individual circumstances.

If Energy Bill goes ahead, as currently drafted, you WILL NOT be able to replace an old boiler with a new boiler after the end of 2025.

Similarly, no new gas boilers will be allowed after 2030, but as we do not have a grid gas in Babcary that is not directly relevant to us.

Some oil supply companies are recommending that if your oil boiler is old it may be prudent to change the boiler now prior to any potential ban on new installs after 2026 (only 1-2 years way) and that is based on the confidence that, even if the ban for new boilers came in, oil would still be made able to be supplied to residential users in the future if they were 'off the grid' for alternatives e.g. mains gas.

However, before a new boiler can be installed a qualified installer would also be required to check whether the supplying oil tank was compliant with the most recent OFTEC regulations. If it wasn't compliant, they would not be able to sign off on a new boiler installation.

The new OFTEC regulations focus on Health, Safety and ecological parameters and are quite clear and are detailed here: <https://www.oftec.org/consumers/off-gas-grid-guides/home-guide-to-domestic-liquid-fuel-storage-up-to-3500-litres>

But in summary: -

The base should be adequate for the weight of the tank and its contents and be;

- Non-combustible, impermeable and level;
- Constructed of concrete, paving stones or stonework;
- Large enough to **extend 300mm beyond all sides** of the tank.

To protect tanks from an ignition source, tanks should be sited:

- 1.8m away from non-fire rated eaves of a building
- 1.8m away from a non-fire rated building or structure (e.g., garden sheds)
- 1.8m away from openings (such as doors or windows) in a fire rated building or structure (e.g., brick-built house/garage)

- 1.8m away from liquid fuel appliance flue terminals
- 760mm away from a non-fire rated boundary, such as a wooden boundary fence
- 600mm away from screening (e.g., trellis and foliage) that does not form part of the boundary.
- The tank should be banded i.e., double skinned so if the inner tank containing the oil leaks the outer should contain any spillage and prevent any eco contamination to the ground and subsoil.

Also required a distance from any drains where spilt oil could get into the drains or water supply (e.g., oil can even penetrate blue plastic mains supply pipe and taint the drinking water supply.)

You may find this form useful for full details of what an OFTEC inspector would be assessing. <https://www.devonoiltankspecialists.co.uk/ORIGINALS/OFTEC-Risk-Assessment.pdf>

Therefore, the Parish Council would be interested to know how many villagers could be impacted by this Energy Bill. Here are some recent comments on internet searches: -

Are oil boilers going to be banned in the UK?

*The Energy Security Bill and oil boiler ban is anticipated to **undergo final approval in Parliament in autumn**. A spokesman for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero said: "We have consulted on new regulations to phase out boilers in homes and non-domestic buildings off the gas grid from 2026." 9 Aug 2023*

Is there an oil boiler ban in 2025?

*New-build properties will no longer have the option of being fitted with oil boilers from 2025; **off-grid homes will not be able to replace oil boilers with a like-for-like replacement from 2026**. 15 Aug 2023*

Consequently, the only other alternative would be air source or ground source heating and the install costs of those are considerable, especially as a retro fit, and also would usually require much larger radiators to be installed inside the house to get the house temperatures to a comfortable and comparable level to those achieved with oil or gas boilers.

The Parish Council will be lobbying our local MPs i.e., Sarah Dyke to determine where they stand in this debate and to see if they will be prepared to vote against the ban on oil boilers to go through into legislation, or at least plan for a longer implementation date in order to allow affected households more time to plan alternatives.

It is possible that some oil boilers may be able to be converted to run on alternative green friendly biofuels e.g., plant-based oils which could provide a low emission alternative. But that is currently not readily available for the domestic market as it is being prioritised for industry and currently very expensive c.f. kerosene:

Author; Philip Sketchley. If you have any additional information, opinions, or updates, please email me: philsketchley8@gmail.com so that we can keep other villagers updated.

This report will be posted to the Village website so that you can log in and copy the links to the references as required. <https://bab Caryparishcouncil.org.uk>

Stop Press: (extract for The Times)

Ministers are considering delaying a 2026 ban on the installation of oil-fired boilers after a backlash from Tory MPs.

About 1.7 million off-grid houses in rural communities would be affected by the ban, which is part of the government's plan to hit net zero emissions by 2050. Under the proposals, homeowners would no longer be able to install oil-fired boilers and would have to install more expensive heat pumps instead.

The Countryside Alliance is among the organisations that have campaigned against the ban, arguing it would have a disproportionate impact on rural communities.

Rishi Sunak is conducting an audit of net zero policies before the next election, with a re-examination of green policies announced by Boris Johnson.

Ministers have already softened their stance on the 2026 ban by accepting an amendment to the government's energy bill after a rebellion of Tory MPs led by George Eustice, the former environment secretary. The amendment forces providers of liquid fuel for boilers to supply renewable products.

Eustice has likened the 2026 boiler ban to "Ulez for rural communities".

The Times now understands the government is looking at revising the 2026 date altogether. A government source said ministers wanted to take a "pragmatic" approach to reaching net zero. The audit of policies is seen as a way to address voters' cost of living concerns. A new oil-fired boiler costs about £4,700 on average, compared with £10,000 for a heat pump, according to Eco Experts, a consultancy.

The signature net zero policies that are under review include the 2025 ban on the installation of gas boilers in newbuild houses and the 2035 target date to phase out gas boilers in all properties. A No 10 source said there was an "evolving conversation" on different net zero policies.