The information regarding the West Wratting Oil Syndicate orders is published in the parish free monthly, The Challenge, a copy of which is delivered on or before the first of each month to every house in West Wratting. You can order any quantity over the minimum of 500 litres every time we have a planned fill up. If you want to be included in a fill up, please place your order as soon as possible after it is notified in The Challenge (there will be a cut-off date), either by e-mail to me at richardholness023@btinternet.com or by ‘phoning The Chestnut Tree on 01223 290384.

I don’t organise a syndicate order in November or December, as the supply is always tight in these months (kerosene is not refined in the UK and storage capacity in the UK is limited), so I can’t drive a better price regardless of volume there is to place. Just in case you’re not used to oil central heating, kero is around 60p per litre + 5% vat at the moment (Dec 2013), so for example 1000 litres will obviously cost £630 at that price.

 Please note that, if you're a new name and / or delivery address to the oil company that is selected for the delivery, they will ask you to authorise a credit/debit card payment before they deliver, similar to the process for making a hotel booking. This will happen again if a different company is used for a subsequent fill up. For new members, my assumption is that your central heating system will operate on kerosene, sometimes known as 28 second heating oil, but I would suggest that you verify it by checking your boiler. There are some systems that use diesel (32 second), but they are mostly in agricultural accommodation.

There is nothing to sign and there is no membership fee charged for belonging to the West Wratting Oil Syndicate, all you need to do is live in West Wratting.

However, the downside is that ordering through the syndicate is a pretty customer unfriendly process, I'm afraid. You place your order, nothing happens for a couple of weeks (while the orders are collated and the best price negotiated), then the oil is delivered. You have to take the price on trust but it'll be the best price on the day, although the price can fall (or rise) in the following days. It is also geared to people who pay immediately on receipt of priced delivery note / invoice; there are no payment plans or anything like that. The price agreed and delivery dates are listed on the village website as soon as they have been set.

Richard Holness.