



## FOG – IT CAN'T BE ME BLOCKING THE DRAINS... CAN IT?

*Written by Andrew Crook*

For many years I have had issues with the drains at my shop, not regularly, but every so often there will be a blockage. My shop is on a parade of shops which are mostly occupied by food premises. In the past, previous owners of some of the takeaways have been caught pouring used cooking oil down the drain so when we have had a blockage, I always put it down to the other operators as the drains run my way. With the Government's Environment Bill currently 'ping ponging' between the House of Lords and the Commons, and Cop26 taking place as I write this, it's a good time to explore this issue.



Through my work for the NFFF I met with a couple of enforcement officers from Southern Water. They are the most proactive water company and were engaging with industry to explain the problem caused by FOG (Fats, Oils and Grease) and the legislation around it. This really opened my eyes to the fact I may be contributing to the problem, but surely the biggest culprits were my neighbouring businesses. FOG is estimated to cost water companies between £100M and £200M per year so they are keen to tackle the issue, and legislation does exist to enable them to fine offenders, but they also want to engage in educating the business operators too.

As my own knowledge of FOG expanded, having met a couple of companies who install the machines and attending a couple of meetings hosted by the Grease Contractors Association, I was asked to help put together the FOG superguide as part of the review team. This document promises to be a living document that will be kept up to date with the latest legislation and best practice regarding FOG.

I decided it was time to have a Grease Removal Unit installed in my own shop to see just what impact I was having on the sewer system. Rather than going for a passive trap I decided to go for a more automated Grease Removal Unit (GRU) which heats the oil on a cycle and skims it off the surface, collecting it in a tank on the front of the unit. It also catches large particles of food waste that could cause a problem further down the sewage system. Weighing in at £2800 including the VAT it is not the cheapest option but is certainly robust enough to ensure I am compliant. I would certainly recommend getting a professional in to assess your needs.

