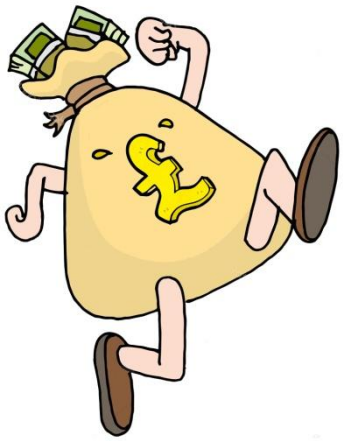
Running costs



First things first: at 6 mpg, the cost in petrol works out at £1/mile - give or take a few pence. Being a classic vehicle, you only have to reckon on insurance, which is anything between £85 to £200+ per annum. Bear in mind that, being over 3.5 tonnes, you'll need specialist recovery in the event of breaking down. This can be added to your insurance, but not all firms offer it. I ring around the firms each year and select the best value for money. All firms offer an agreed value option, but this naturally is an extra cost.

You'll need a regular supply of EP-90 GL4 gear oil to top up the wheel stations and transfer box, and less of the SAE-30 engine oil, unless you are thinking of a complete oil change. I now have both EP-90 in bulk and SAE-30 in bulk in 25 litre containers from Rye oils, costing about £50 - £60 each. If you buy the EP-90 in 5 litre containers from other suppliers, you can pay as much as £25, or £5/L or more. The cost of grease and grease guns for the steering and suspension nipples works out at £46, but this can be regarded as a one-off cost. Replacement 12 V batteries cost about £100 each.

Two 3 tonne axle stands and a trolley jack for lifting each wheel to inspect regularly for looseness set me back £23 and £120 respectively, but a bottle jack at £20 is an alternative. At some stage you'll need to repair the wheel stations and - if you can locate a suitable mechanic and the spare parts - you should reckon minimum on about £300 per wheel station plus labour costs (you'll also need lots of EP-90).

Although not running costs, you'll probably want a couple of headsets and a working vehicle harness. This can cost anything from £150 upwards but, again, should be a one-off cost. Another cost worth considering is membership of the MVT at £35 p.a. to give Personal Public Liability Insurance (PPLI) when displaying your vehicle at shows and events.

As with any hobby, the initial purchase and start-up costs account for the greatest cost over time. The first year cost me roughly £2,600 p.a. or ≈ £220 p.c.m. buying the support equipment and accessories. Over the four years I've owned the Ferret, maintenance and buying equipment has cost approximately £6,500. Of that total I regard petrol, lubricants, insurance and wages for servicing (25%) as sunk costs. Assuming the support equipment and accessories (75%) can be sold or otherwise covered upon selling the Ferret at an appreciated cost, this is a very favourable 'investment argument' to put to your other half!

In the last year or so I've spent very little on the infrastructure or vehicle harness of the Ferret, just insurance, MVT membership, a replacement battery and fuel. Insurance and MVT membership came to £125; the battery cost £99.95, so £225. Fuel costs vary widely, but I use approximately £330 worth of petrol per annum, giving a yearly cost of running the Ferret as £555 or ≈ £46 per month.

After that sentence above ('In the last year or so I've spent very little on the infrastructure or vehicle harness of the Ferret') was written, I've had to low-load the Ferret down from Oxford to Kent to have a fluid flywheel seal, a couple of wheel stations repaired and some small jobs done, including electrical circuits. The labour and parts for three days work came to £536.25, whilst the low-loading was £510.00. That alone put the monthly cost over the four years up to ≈ £68 per month.

The cost of low-loading is expensive, around £500-600 per day for a driver and vehicle. I was fortunate not only to share a load on one journey, but get a very good deal for the return. This page lists the options, but without question I recommend GC Hurrell Ltd. Ring (01634) 718330 and speak to Steve.