



Government of Sark

DOUZAINE

A Committee of the Chief Pleas of Sark

Committee Office, La Chasse Murette, Sark, GY10 1SE

Tel: (01481) 832118 | E-mail: douzaine247@sarkgov.co.uk

On Friday, 2nd May 2025, the Douzaine, and all Conseillers of Chief Pleas, received three notifications from the Managing Director of Sark Electricity Limited (SEL), Mr Alan Witney-Price, relating to electricity supply on Sark. These letters detail the following actions, requests and deadlines:

- The removal of underground cabling enabling the power supply to the nineteen homes in the north of the Island. SEL cabling has been used for the last four years to distribute power from Island owned and run generators to these homes. The deadline to cease using the cabling is midnight on Sunday, 11th May.
- Threats to terminate the power supply to Little Sark unless permission is granted to Mr Witney-Price by 5pm on Thursday, 8th May to bury new cabling beneath La Coupee roadway.
- A request for permission to install 7-metre exclusion zones around all switchgear which would result in many of the island's main roads being blocked or closed. The independent EIS report, published in 2021, is quoted as the justification for these measures. Mr Witney-Price asks for permissions to be granted by 5pm on Thursday, 8th May 2025.

At no point has Chief Pleas or the Electricity Price Control Commissioner obstructed investment into Sark's electricity infrastructure. Any efforts to make safe, modernise and maintain infrastructure have been supported to ensure a reliable service for all islanders. The short timescales associated with these newly proposed works come at a time after the States of Guernsey has agreed in principle to a loan to Chief Pleas, but before Chief Pleas have considered whether to accept this offer.

The remedial works proposed are impractical and impossible to implement in Sark. As has been previously advised to SEL, it is not possible to bury cables in La Coupee roadway without detailed engineering work and studies as it is constructed of steel-reinforced concrete. An alternative solution similar to the current cable (secured to the western side of La Coupee) has been repeatedly suggested by Chief Pleas and Guernsey Electricity Limited, but has not been implemented. Likewise, protective fencing around switch gear and transformers has long been an issue which needs addressing by SEL. Permissions for this must be sought from the relevant landowners and Chief Pleas has always sought to facilitate this.

Sark's government will continue to prioritise the interests of Sark's residents and safeguard the island's essential services against unwarranted disruptions. One aspect of that is continued access to a reliable and safe electricity supply.

All avenues of response, including legal options and practical contingency plans, are being investigated and considered, including with support from the States of Guernsey. Sark's government will continue to work on solutions that protect the island's interests and will take necessary actions to minimise disruption to electricity supply.

Lastly, we are also deeply concerned that, despite assurances of co-operation and a shared commitment to working together for the good of the island made during Wednesday's Chief Pleas, sensitive internal updates continue to be leaked. An update shared with Conseillers on Friday regarding communication with the Civil Contingencies Authority was apparently forwarded and subsequently responded to by Mr Witney-Price within 40 minutes. In addition to the disregard of the Conseillers' Code of Conduct provisions, this undermines effective governance and is not in the public interest.

4th May 2025