



Notice

Dear Residents of Sark,

Sark Electricity Limited (SEL) has posted a response to my Notice of 31st January on its web-site. I have responded directly to SEL on the many points raised. It claims that I have not checked my facts. I would like to assure residents that, where possible, I did check my facts before I wrote the note about SEL's January billing (not "February" as stated by SEL). There are many facts that I have not been able to check on account of SEL failing to provide necessary information to my Office, even though it is required to do so under the 2016 Law.

SEL explained how it decides how many whole units are covered by the monthly minimum charge. When the unit rate was 56 p/kWh in December 2021, I gather, from bills customers have sent to me, that SEL considers the £40 minimum charge paid for just 70 units, despite the fact that $£40/0.56 = 71.43$. I could understand "rounding down" to 71 units but allowing only 70 appears unfair. This translates to an extra 80p which was not itemised or explained on customers' invoices and might easily have been missed.

Of course, SEL may have undercharged in earlier months, so some recovery may be justified. However, according to the 2016 Law, SEL should have first sought agreement from my Office before "rounding down" the units covered by the minimum monthly charge. If SEL charges customers £40 for 70 units, it represents a charge of 57.1 p/kWh, i.e. higher than the maximum set by my Office for December. I have asked SEL to substantiate its claim that there has been "consistent undercharging" of customers during 2021.

Residents will remember that SEL first suggested the monthly minimum charge in July 2020 and subsequently proposed its introduction in November 2020. I believe it demonstrates a lack of foresight by SEL's management not to have incorporated an appropriate method of handling the charge in the new billing system it introduced.

I have asked SEL for the grounds on which it regards the electricity network as being "fit for purpose". Residents may recall the report by EIS, Chief Pleas' engineer, which concluded otherwise.

Anthony White
Commissioner

commissioner@epc.sark.gg

7th February 2022