

Payment of SSE Electricity Supply Bill, 1 July 2019 to 30 November 2020

Proposal

To approve payment of the electricity supply bill from 1 July 2019 to 30 November 2020, noting that some charges have been cancelled and others reduced because of a lack of correct billing information and charging from SSE.

The total bill for 1 July 2019 to 30 November 2020 is £2606.86.

Background

SSE failed to bill the Parish Council for the supply of the electricity for street lights from May 2018. As bills had not been presented within a reasonable time frame SSE had agreed to cancel charges up to March 2019 and the PC was not billed for this period. Once billing had been re-established, the contract between SSE and the PC had come to an end, but there is no record that SSE advised the PC of this before putting the PC on a higher cost Variable Business Rate, rather than a contract rate. SSE confirmed that the PC should have been contacted three times to be alerted to a change in supply charges. The PC has no record of being contacted and SSE could not provide any evidence that they had contacted the PC.

Recent Developments

Since March 2020 the Clerk has been in regular contact with SSE to resolve these matters. Incorrect information provided by SSE in relation to a new contract added some considerable confusion to discussions about previous charging. Once resolved, and having explored other suppliers, the Parish Council agreed at its July meeting to enter a new contract with SSE from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.

Subsequently, and after further discussion, SSE has agreed:

- To cancel bill payments up to 30 June 2019
- That all payments from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 will be on the current contract rate.

The Clerk has received and checked 66 pages of billing information and, following further phone calls with SSE, believes that these bills now correctly reflect the cancellation of some charges and reduction in contract rates that SSE has agreed to. Once this bill is paid, ongoing bills will be paid on a monthly basis at the contract rate. As previously agreed by the Parish Council, these payments will be made by Direct Debit. (Paperwork to request monthly payments was submitted to SSE but this has not been acted upon and will be resent so these can start December.)

Reduction in Electricity Supply Costs for LED Lamps

Electricity for street lamps is supplied on an unmetered basis. When lights are changed to LEDs, SSE Supply should be informed and bills can be reduced from the date of installation. SSE Maintenance have said they will provide details of which Freshford lamps have been changed to LEDs so it is hoped that the PC will receive some payment credit for these lights.