

**Text of an email sent to Anne Foulkes at SBV on 6<sup>th</sup> March regarding the Smart Meter installations**

6 March 13

Dear Anne,

It is really good to see that Darwin is keen to ensure that the latest electricity metering and monitoring equipment is available to owners. Our meters were changed just a few years ago but of course this was prior to Smart meter technology. We are sure that Darwin will benefit from the increased accuracy of readings, the savings in manual readings and possibly the provision of separate Day and Night rates for usage.

The change and associated letters to owners have raised a number of questions and we have had many contacts now from owners about the installation of Smart meters and the suggestion that owners will in future be asked to pay a Service Charge in addition to the usage charge.

From the various emails and correspondence that we have seen from you over the last few days it seems that you feel that the Darwin accounts team have not been billing owners for the electricity service charge and that you intend to bill owners in future for this cost as you believe that this has been a mistake.

You may not be aware that SBV owners have in fact never been billed for any electricity service charge, by either Darwin or by Swanage Town Council, or over the last 20 years or so. This is because the provision of electricity and system maintenance is part of the overall maintenance costs set out in our licence and included in the annual fee.

Owners are only responsible for the electricity used, and that is all we have been billed for in the past, and that is all we should be billed for in the future.

If there has been any mistake it is in thinking that owners should pay anything other than the cost of electricity units used.

In addition, given the increased unit cost being outlined in your letters to owners, it would also be helpful to have some explanation as this amounts to a unit cost increase of over 30%.

Please can you write again to owners to clarify the position so that owners appreciate that: -

\*The provision of Smart meters will bring no additional cost to owners (just as when the meters were last replaced a few years ago and long before that)

\*The unit rates have changed (an explanation of the changes and justification will be needed here too)

\*The only additional cost is an optional one that will be incurred only if the indoor monitor option is taken up

\*No other cost (service charge) will be passed on to owners as this is already picked up within the within the annual fee for maintenance and service provision

We believe that this should clarify the situation and reassure owners that they will not be seeing their electricity costs, in many cases, more than double.

Communicating with owners is a difficult and often challenging task and we would be happy to help and work with you to see if we can avoid any misunderstandings in the future.

Rosemary and Phil