



# Your 'how to' guide for Community Energy Scheme



# We're here to help.

The Community Energy Scheme (CES) is helping the residents of Stoke tackle the cost of living crisis, we generate environmentally friendly, sustainable solar energy on the council's roof tops helping you drive down the cost of energy bills.

As energy prices skyrocket, we want to make sure you have a guide that helps you make the most of the solar panels on your roof, the more of the energy you use from these panels the more money you will save.

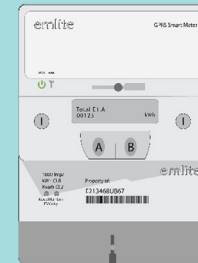
As a reminder, our Fair Market Price is currently fixed at a unit price of just 22.8p/kWh, which works out as a saving of almost 30% against the maximum unit price you'd currently be paying under the Government's Energy Price Guarantee for your grid electricity. And customers who pay all of their bills on time qualify for an effective unit price of as low as just 17.1p/kWh for their solar energy under our rebate scheme, which works out as a saving of almost 50%.\*

It's important to remember that these cheaper prices only apply to the solar energy that you use and you will still need to take some of your electricity from the grid, for example at night when your solar panels aren't generating. This grid electricity will continue to be provided by whoever you choose to be your licensed supplier and their prices which will likely be higher. In order to maximise the savings you can earn from your solar energy it's therefore important to reduce the amount of grid energy that you use. We've got some great tips to help you do this, which you can read at pages 6-9 of this leaflet. You can find our more about our Fair Market Price in your Community Energy Scheme guide booklet.

\*Energy Price Guarantee for Direct Debit customers in Midlands region applicable until 31 March 2023 is 32.121p/kWh. The CES rate effective until April 2023 is 22.8p/kWh, which amounts to a saving of 29% per kWh. Customers who have complied with our contract terms and are fully up to date with their bills as of August each year qualify for a 25% discount (or 18% with battery system installed) on the cost of the solar energy we supplied to them over the previous 12 months. We call this discount our Community Energy Rebate and, on current prices, it will bring the effective unit price for solar energy down to 17.1p/kWh, resulting in a saving of 46.7% against the Midlands Region Energy Price Guarantee of 32.121/kWh. The Community Energy Rebate is paid as a credit to customers' bills in December each year. See our Terms and Conditions for more detail.

# Your meters

If you have just 1 meter in your home, it will look like this. This meter records a number of things, all of which we can view online. The meter records:



- Grid usage
- Solar generation
- Solar usage

If you have 2 meters in your home, both should be around your consumer unit. One is the grid supplier meter and the other is your solar meter.

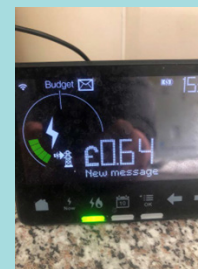
## Your Solar meter

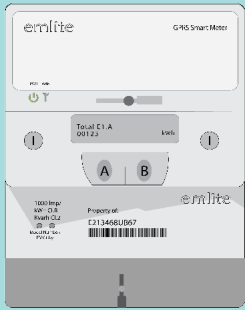
Your solar meter will look like this and records solar generation and solar usage.



## Your Grid Meter

Your grid meter could be a number of different models, so we can't show you an exact picture of your meter. However, we would advise that you speak to your grid supplier and ensure you have a smart meter. Smart meters come with display unit which shows you how much energy you are using from the grid and when. It will look something like this.





## Finding out how much solar energy you've used

### Step One:

The 1st thing you will need to do is locate your solar meter or your combined grid/solar meter, as explained above. This is usually located by your electrical mains or by your solar inverter.

### Step Two:

Press the “A” button to turn on the LED Screen.

### Step Three:

Press the “A” button 3 times and you will see a reading, this is the amount of solar energy you have used in your home.

## Video guide

To watch a step by step guide, please visit:

[www.communityenergyscheme.com/videos](http://www.communityenergyscheme.com/videos)



## Troubleshooting

If you suspect your system is not working, we have a simple check you can carry out.

### Check your RCD switch

This will be situated near or adjacent to your consumer unit.

### Step One:

The first thing you need to do is locate your RCD switches. They are usually located by your electrical mains in a white box with a lockable lid.

### Step Two:

Lift the lid and ensure both trip switches are up.

### Step Three:

If one of the switches is down, all you need to do is flip it up to the on position. This will restore the power to your system.

### Step Four:

If the switch does not stay in the on position, please give us a call or send us an email, we will book for an engineer to visit you.



# Getting in touch with us

You can contact our Customer Support Team via:

## Email

stoke@communityenergyscheme.com

## Telephone

01782 438 427



# How to utilise your solar





# Here's how you can utilise your solar panels with Community Energy Scheme

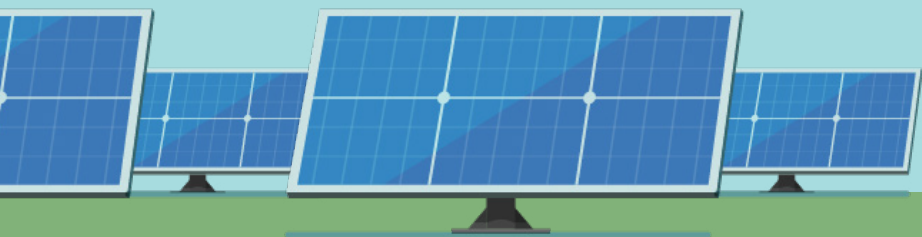
The best way to harness cheap energy is during daylight hours, as your solar panels are producing electricity.

It's important to note that you will always use your solar energy electricity first. If the system is not producing enough electricity to power your household, then you will use energy from your grid supplier.

As this electricity you use from the grid will typically be more expensive, the more of your electricity usage which comes from our solar electricity (instead of grid electricity), the more money you will save on your electricity bills. To give you an example of how big the savings can be, customers who qualify for the Community Energy Rebate by paying their bills on time will pay an effective unit price as low as 17.1p under the current CES prices which are fixed until April 2023.\* That's a saving of 49.9% against the Government Energy Price Guarantee unit price that will apply to your grid electricity supply.\*\*

\* Customers who have complied with our contract terms and are fully up to date with their bills as of August each year qualify for a 25% discount (or 18% with battery system installed) on the cost of the solar energy supplied to them over the previous 12 months. This discount - which we call the Community Energy Rebate - is paid as a credit to customers' account in December each year. See our PPA contract Terms and Conditions for more details. Customer who do not qualify for the rebate will still only pay a unit price of 22.8p/kWh under our Fair Market Price which is fixed until April 2023.

\*\* Under the Government's Energy Price Guarantee the unit price is currently fixed at 34p/kWh.



## Now how to maximise your savings:

Using one high energy usage appliance at a time means you're more likely to be able to rely entirely on solar power and not need any additional grid energy to power your household.

Putting this into practice would mean waiting until the washing machine has finished before boiling the kettle to make a coffee, for example.

If you put multiple large appliances / high energy usage appliances on all at once, you'll more than likely need assistance from the grid, as you'll need more power than is being produced.

Although you will still save a little by using solar energy in this way, you will not be maximising your savings as the system will not be producing enough energy to cover your usage. Therefore, by adapting your routine and lifestyle to be more energy conscious, you will see the benefits of your solar system and savings.



## Heating

Simple things such as moving furniture a few inches away from your radiators helps heat circulate more freely around your home. Dusting inside your radiators and regularly bleeding them to release any trapped air will also make your heating as energy efficient as possible.

Programming your boiler and heating to only come on when you need it can also save more energy. A well-maintained boiler uses energy more efficiently - and boiler cover is a great way to spread the cost of servicing and breakdown fixes over the year.

If your boiler is ready to be replaced, choosing a model rated 'A' for performing with the highest possible levels of energy efficiency can save you hundreds of pounds over many years to come.

## Bathroom

An aerating shower head will reduce your energy and water bills. And remember, when you're washing your hands or brushing your teeth, don't leave the tap running.

A dripping tap can waste more than 5,000 litres of water a year so always ensure taps are properly shut off when not in use.



## Kitchen

Try to stick to 30°C when using your washing machine - most modern laundry detergents are made to work well at that temperature - and always make sure your machine is loaded to its maximum recommended capacity.

Running one fewer load a week could add up to savings of £28\* a year. And wherever possible, avoid the tumble dryer and dry clothes outside - this could save an extra £55\* a year.

Whether it's one cup of tea or a trayful, try to boil only the water you need in your kettle - and the same goes for boiling anything on the hob. Combine this with an inexpensive water aerator added to your kitchen tap, and you could save £33\* a year in total.



## Windows, doors and floors

Homes that are properly draught-proofed cost less to heat, as they're easier to get - and keep - warm. So it's worth looking into where rugs, curtains and draught excluders can help.

If you're comfortable carrying out simple DIY tasks, it's always worth checking doors and windows around your home for opportunities to seal gaps - it could end up saving you £40\* a year.

## Bedroom

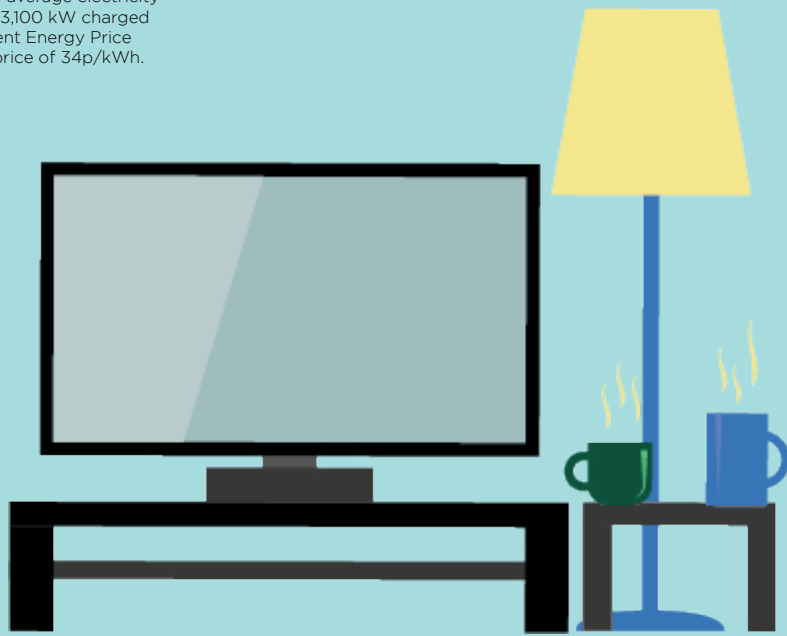
Adjust radiator controls so you don't heat rooms you aren't using. If you're not using certain rooms during the day, keeping the curtain or blinds and doors closed will help stop heat escaping.

## Living Room

Turn off as many lights and appliances as you can when not in use - and avoid leaving anything on standby mode if you can switch it off properly, it could save around £55\* a year. Keep an eye on portable electronics such as laptops or mobiles, too - leaving them on charge after they reach 100% can waste energy and damage their batteries.

Energy-efficient bulbs are a great way to reduce your electricity use. That's why we recommend replacing standard light bulbs with LED ones where possible. LEDs use less power, saving you money over the long term, and need replacing less often.

\* Based on annual average electricity consumption of 3,100 kWh charged at the Government Energy Price Guarantee unit price of 34p/kWh.



# About your direct debits, payments & more



## Decreasing your direct debit



If you're concerned your direct debit payments aren't going down, there is no need to worry. There is an easy way to find out if you need to adjust your direct debit amount:

If you do not have a smart meter, submit a monthly meter reading to your grid supplier to ensure accurate billing.

When you start using power from your solar panels you should start to see the electricity bills from your normal supplier come down as you use less grid energy. If you're concerned that your direct debit payments aren't going down, there's no need to worry - just give us a call. We'll investigate and help you work out what's going on so that you can be sure you're not paying more than you should.

## Pre-paid Meters

Recent price rises have not only affected your unit rate but also your standing charge has gone up from around 30p to between 50p and 54p. This makes it difficult to monitor how long the money lasts.

Most people top up when they need to, but if you regularly top up on the same day every week, you will see that your credit will be higher, as you have not used as much electric.

## Adding a smart meters

If you are able to add a smart meter to your home, you should really consider it as they are great tools for monitoring your usage.

How does it work?

A smart meter shows you how much energy you're using, almost in real time. Its display unit lets you track the peaks and dips of your energy use and spot opportunities to cut out any waste - 86% of smart meter users have said it's helped them reduce wasted energy.







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