

VOICES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Newsletter Vol 0008

Summer 2025

RADIO TELESWITCHING SERVICE (RTS) SWITCH OFF

650,000 homes and businesses in England, Scotland and Wales have electricity meters using the Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS)

From June 2025, the RTS signal will be switched off as it reaches the end of its operational life. This change will impact homes and businesses using RTS electricity meters, potentially affecting their heating and hot water supply.

What you need to know:

The Radio Teleswitch Service uses a radio signal to switch older electricity meters between peak and off-peak rates. It supports around 650,000 meters across England, Scotland and Wales, mainly for those using electric storage systems, panel heaters, or immersion heaters.

Why the change? Introduced in the 1980s, RTS is now outdated, and the equipment can no longer be maintained.

Book an appointment for a new meter: Ofgem expects all energy suppliers to replace RTS electricity meters before the service ends. Keep an eye out for the offer of a replacement from your energy supplier.

Contact your energy supplier to see if you have an RTS electricity meter or if you want to schedule a new meter installation.

How can I tell if I have an RTS electricity meter?

The only way of knowing for certain is by contacting your energy supplier but it's more likely that your meter uses the RTS if:

- you have a separate switch box near your meter with a radio teleswitch label
- your property uses electricity for heating or storage heaters
- there is no gas supply to the area, especially in rural locations
- you benefit from cheaper energy at different times of the day (for example, Economy 7, Economy 10)

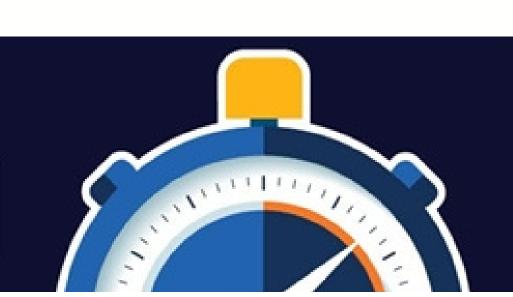
Why accept a new meter?

If you do not replace your RTS meter, this could disrupt your heating and hot water or lead to higher electricity costs.

For more information, contact your energy supplier and ensure a smooth transition before the June 2025 deadline.

You can find more information at: ofgem.gov.uk/replacing your-radio-teleswitch-electricity-meter

THE RADIO SIGNAL THAT CONTROLS RTS
ELECTRICITY METERS IS BEING SWITCHED OFF



LET'S TALK ABOUT THE PSR

The Priority Service Register (PSR) is a free service available across the UK that provides extra advice and support to customers who have communication, access, or safety needs.

The service was designed and is regulated by Ofgem. You are eligible for the free PSR Service if you:

Use medical equipment reliant on electricity or water. Live with children under five.

Are blind or partially sighted.

Are deaf or hard of hearing.

Have a chronic illness.

Have anxiety, depression, or any mental health condition.

Have a disability.

Are of pensionable age.

Loss or impairment of smell.

You can also go on the PSR temporarily if you are living on your own for the first time, suffering a bereavement or a relationship breakdown meaning you need a bit of extra support.

Registering on your energy supplier's PSR (the company you pay your bills to), should automatically put you on the register with the distribution network operator. This can be checked by giving them a call if you are unsure.

The network operator for Moray is Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN).

The PSR helps utility companies to look after their vulnerable customers better, offering extra support in electricity power cuts, or gas and water interruption. The PSR is also there to help utility companies support their customers by giving:

- ·Advance notice where possible of power cuts, especially if power is needed for medical reasons.
- ·Priority support in an emergency.
- ·The option of an identity and password scheme.

A nominee scheme, where you can nominate someone you trust to receive your bills and correspondence.

- ·Help with prepayment meter access, for example moving a meter if you can't safely top up.
- ·Meter reading service if you are unable or unsafe to take meter readings.
- ·Accessible information. For example, bills and account information is large print or braille.
- ·Help reconnecting your gas supply if needed.

LOCKING COOKER VALVES

The Gas Distribution Network company (GDN) also offers a locking cooker valve to help people with dementia or autism retain their independence at home and provide reassurance to friends, family and carers.

They fit the simple safety device for free, to the existing gas cooker pipeline. When the valve is locked, the gas supply to the cooker is stopped. This eliminates the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on, or left on, and gives peace of mind to relatives or carers that the cooker cant be used when they leave the house or the room. The carer or relative can easily turn the valve using the key when the cooker is required, enabling the household to continue using the gas cooker safely.

For more information on, or help accessing the PSR or anything else mentioned, the REAP Energy Team will be more than happy to help.

You can call the office on 01542 888070 to make an appointment, or pop along to see us at 177 Mid Street, Keith.



SAVE THE NUMBER!

The emergency number for electricity power cuts is 0800 300 999.

If your gas goes off unexpectedly, call the gas emergency helpline on 0800 111999.

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

What is Carbon Monoxide (CO)?

It's an odourless, invisible and highly toxic gas, often referred to as the silent killer. Small amounts of CO can poison you. Annually, about 30 people die and thousands are affected by CO poisoning in the UK

Where does CO come from?

CO can be produced from any carbon-based appliance, including gas cookers, gas fires, gas barbecues, Calor gas heaters, paraffin heaters, etc. Other fuel and cooking appliances, such as those using charcoal, peat, coal, wood (including wood burning stoves), as well as petrol, oil, or LPG can produce CO if working inefficiently or without proper ventilation.

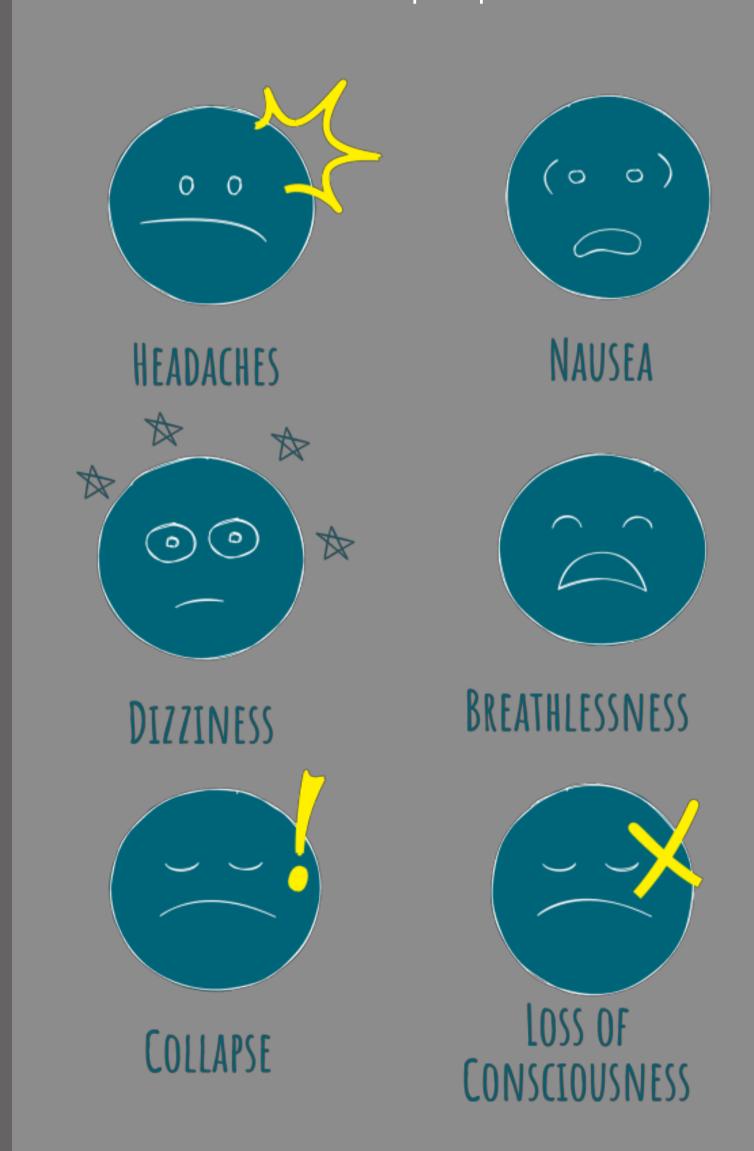
Signs and Symptoms at Home

- The flame on a cooker is lazy and is a yellow or orange colour when it should be blue.
 - Soot, yellow or brown staining on or around appliances.
 - Pilot lights that frequently blow out.
 - Too much condensation on windows or walls
- Flues, used chimneys, and vents that are blocked either on purpose or by accident, such as a bird's nest

Signs and Symptoms in People

People often say constant exhaustion was the first symptom. Other signs that could point to CO poisoning are:

- Symptoms that only happen when at home
- Symptoms that disappear or improve when people leave home and re-appear when they return
 - People in the same house experience similar symptoms around the same time
 - Pets show symptoms around the same time as people





ENERGY ADVICE IN THE COMMUNITY

Our Energy Advisors are here for you!

Visit our office at 177 Mid Street Keith AB55 5BL, or come along to one of our regular Drop In Sessions at various locations throughout Moray. If you are part of a Community Group and would like us to come along to talk about all things energy related, give our friendly team a call on 01542 888070 or email info@reapscotland.org.uk



FORRES ROTARY CLUB



GOOD RURAL ENERGY! AT TOMINTOUL

FREE DROP IN SESSIONS:



THE BUCKIE HUB

17 East Church Street, Buckie AB56 1HA

Every other Thursday 10am – 1pm



THE LINK, NEW ELGIN
Southfield Drive, New Elgin IV30 6GR
Every other Thursday 10.30am – 1pm



CUPPA CAFE, LHANBRYDE Lhanbryde Community Centre IV30 8QQ 3rd Tuesday of Month 10.30am - 1.30pm

CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

As part of Moray's climate change conference 2024 and in conjunction with the Moray Climate Action Network, REAP held talks and workshops at the Oaks Therapeutic Garden. The first talk which took place whilst touring the therapeutic garden, was about community gardens and their many benefits such as health, well-being and low carbon food production. The second talk included a demonstration of cordless electric garden tools, explaining the environmental problems of petrol powered tools and the numerous advantages of going electric, whilst dispelling the myths about battery powered tools.

The talks were followed up by a practical bulb planting workshop where each participant had the opportunity to plant four different varieties of spring bulbs that they could bring home with them. The bulbs were planted in layers in a technique often called 'Bulb lasagne' with each variety flowering at a different time of year to give a prolonged flowering display from February through to July. After flowering the bulbs can be planted in the garden where they will come back each spring to give a long flowering display year after year.









THE OAKS THERAPEUTIC GARDEN

The Team at The Oaks Therapeutic Garden have been enjoying the recent sunshine and the garden is now in full swing!

A lot of hard work was put in by everyone to prune back the Secret Garden in the Spring, and it is now a wonderful area to enjoy, complete with a willow arch to sit under and relax.

Lots of vegetable seeds have been sown and flowers are popping up everywhere you look.

Lots of weeding and watering is needed in the hot weatherm and everyone is enjoying joining in.



If you'd like to come and have a go at gardening alongside others in a safe and welcoming environment, then please email info@reapscotland.org.uk
We hold sessions on Tuesday afternoons (1:30–4pm) and Thursday mornings (10am–

12:30pm). Some funded by the National Lottery

WINDFARM COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUNDS

REAP are proud to administer two windfarm Community Benefit Funds – The Hill of Towie Windfarm owned by Renewable Energy Systems and Edintore Windfarm owned by Koehler Renewable Energy. Here are some recent local community projects that have benefited from these community funds.

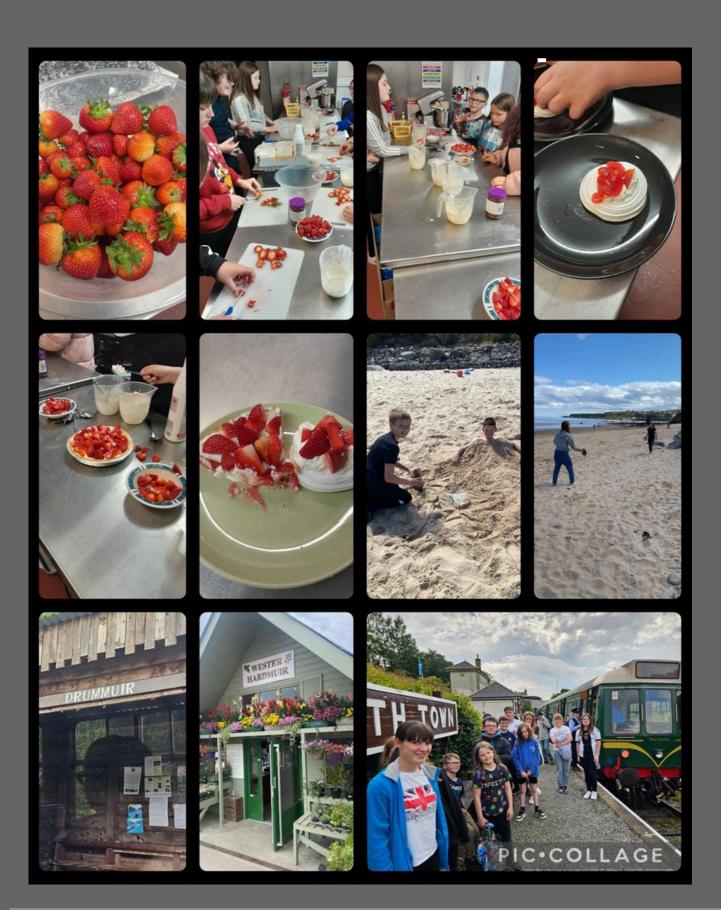
The Loft Youth Project

Awarded £9,086.40 from the Hill of Towie Fund in June 2024

Hundreds of young people in our area enjoyed Summer and October holiday activities organised by a wondeful team of volunteers.

These included summertime strawberry picking, beach trips, BBQs, and a ride on the Keith & Dufftown Railway.

At Hallowe'en there was pumpkin picking and making pumpkin cookies, soup and spice for lattes & hot chocolates. Yum!





Keith Community Show

Awarded £20,000 from the Hill of Towie Fund in June 2024

After a successful 2023, the Show was left unable to hire a marquee locally.

The grant enabled the purchase of their own marquees which are offered to the community for events throughout the year.

It also reduces the need to transport marquees long distances to and from the Show, therefore reduces their carbon footprint.



Edintore Windfarm Community Benefit Fund NOW OPEN – closes Tuesday 26th August @ 5pm.

Hill of Towie Community Fund, currently closed.

Next round to be announced shortly.



To apply for a grant for your project visit: reapscotland.org.uk/community-grants/



COMMUNITY ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Community Energy Efficiency Project, in conjunction with Moray Climate Action Network, aims to provide a transition to a fair and clean future for our Community. This is being achieved by supporting the installation of renewable energy and retro-fitting energy efficiency measures in community buildings throughout Moray. Achieved by assisting community groups to better understand their buildings and the carbon– (and cost–) reduction options open to them, as well as support to develop project plans and to secure funding to implement them.

The support available to Community Groups includes:

Discussing viable options to community space buildings, regarding the heating and Energy options, and working to obtain energy surveys of their buildings that will allow them to access available funding.

We can also offer support by providing:

Information on local suppliers for quotes.

Information on where to access funding to carry out the plans.

Guidance on ascertaining whether the proposed improvements are likely to need planning permission / building warrants / landlord or superior consent / other permissions or consents. Contacts for planning permissions if needed.





The short-term outcomes that can be achieved for your community group through this advice are:

An increased understanding of your community building/s and their renewable energy and/or energy efficiency options.

Being better prepared to move to the next stage in developing your net zero projects with funding applications, feasibility studies or / and appointing contractors.

An increased knowledge and understanding of what a just transition means, for you and the wider community.

FUNDED BY









Please contact the REAP office on 01542 888070 or email info@reapscotland.org.uk to book an appointment with our Community Energy Efficiency Advisors.

KEITH COMMUNITY POWER HUB (KCPH)

FREE LEGAL ADVICE



Our new service offers free legal advice for vulnerable clients in Moray.

We can advise on:

- Employment law
- Consumer Protection law

100% Confidentiality – Independent Legal Advice

Last Friday of the Month – By Appointment Only CONTACT US: 01542 888070



SUCCESSFUL INTERNSHIPS

REAP were happy to support students from Aberdeen University in their Internship Placements last summer. The students worked together to produce a Community Development Plan, looking at current trends, current challenges and potential collaborations within Moray.

The project culminated with the University of Aberdeen Internship Celebration Event to showcase the success of the project.

FREE MOBILE DATA

In our digital society, equal access to the internet is not a reality. 2.5 million households struggle to afford the internet in the UK, and 1 in 14 households have no home internet access at all. This often affects vulnerable people who are already experiencing multiple inequalities.

Being able to access the internet is essential to be digitally included. You need internet access to participate in our everyday life – to connect with opportunity, services and loved ones.

REAP has introduced digital inclusion support as part of the development of our community hub in order to help tackle digital exclusion in rural communities, and we are proud to partner with the Good Things Foundation's National Digital Inclusion Network to join the National Data Bank.

The Databank offers free mobile SIM cards from partners Virgin Media O2, Vodafone and Three to help digitally excluded people get connected through any SIM enabled device (e.g. mobile phones, tablets and/or WiFi dongles).

You may apply to receive a SIM card If you are:

- Age 18+
- From a low income household
- Have insufficient access to internet
- AND/OR cannot afford your existing monthly contract or top up

Please enquire with a member of the REAP team by popping into our office at 177 Mid Street, Keith, AB55 5BL or call us on 01542 888070.



NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Changes have been happening thick and fast at REAP over the past few months. Our Board Chair and long-term supporter Lynn Geddes retired from the Board at the end of 2024, in order to travel and work in some more exotic parts of the world (though really, where could possibly be more exotic than Keith?), and I have been persuaded to step into the breach. I'm looking forward to seeing REAP continue to thrive and grow.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff who have all helped to make the transition smooth and easy for me, and also the other Board members, all volunteers, who have put in some extra work recently to make sure we all have a shared vision for the future. By the way, we are always looking for new Board members, so if you are interested please contact <u>manager@reapscotland.org.uk</u> in the first instance. You don't need any special expertise, just a willingness to get involved.

Some changes are already taking place. Congratulations to our Project Manager, Segun Adebayo, who now has the new title of CEO. This better reflects his many vital duties and responsibilities. In addition, he has recently extended our services to include free legal advice on a range of topics. Keep an eye on our website and social media to find out more.

Finally, we hope to extend our regular energy advice events soon to more locations within Moray, and we'll be updating our publicity materials and providing easier ways to stay in touch. Watch this space!

Anne Stafford (Chairperson, REAP Board of Trustees)

CONGRATULATIONS CARLEEN!

Carleen Broad, a long serving REAP volunteer was delighted to attend the Princess of Wales Christmas Together service on 6th December. She writes:

I have been a REAP volunteer with the Therapeutic Gardening project since early 2021, first at Maryhill and currently at The Oaks. I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside some really good people with a real depth of knowledge of gardening and great skills in relating to people for whom life is currently challenging. I have learnt a lot and made some very good friends. In short I have loved it! I very much believe that gardening, basically contact with nature, is a powerful force in supporting mental health. My grandmother used to say you need to have your fingers in the soil to be happy. I also volunteer for Step by Step in Moray which supports young families.

I was surprised, delighted and very honoured when I received a letter from the Lord Lieutenant of Moray saying I was one of six people from Moray invited to the Princess of Wales Carol Concert at Westminster Abbey on Sunday December 6th.

This was in recognition of contribution to the community, as the theme of the event was very much the importance of kindness and empathy. It was a wonderful occasion, combining a traditional Carol Service with modern readings and performances. I was particularly touched by a choir made up of people from a care home and the preschool children who visit them. The Abbey was beautifully lit and decorated with Christmas trees from the Windsor Estate.

